

THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT AS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

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John in his first epistle presents us with a dilemma. According to John the reason why we know the truth and are not deceived as the so called antichrists are is that “we have an anointing (χρῖσμα) from the Holy One” (2:18-20). The antichrists (αντιχριστοι) are false anointed ones having an anointing from the “unholy one”. We, however, have a true anointing. The antichrists are under the influence of false spirits, we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The antichrists listen to deceiving spirits, we listen to the Spirit of Truth. The difference is in the *anointing*. There is a substitute anointing and there is a true anointing. The logical question then is: how do we know if we have the true anointing and not the false one? How do we know that we are not αντιχριστοι but χριστοι? How do we know if we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit and not under the influence of unholy spirits?

John`s answer is that we can test the spirits by the apostolic teaching (4:1-6). The apostolic teaching proclaims a Christ that came in the flesh. The spirit of the antichrist (the spirit of the false or substitute anointing) denies the apostolic message and proclaims a different Christ. There is therefore an *objective* test to discern the true anointing and the false anointing. The anointing that leads to a belief in the apostolic message is a true anointing, the anointing that denies the apostolic message is a false anointing.

Our next question then is this: how do we know that the true teaching is the apostolic teaching (and not the one proclaimed by the antichrists)? How do we know if *our* Christ is the true Christ and not theirs? John`s answer is clear: the *anointing* will guard us from false teachings (2:27). We have the Spirit of God therefore we can distinguish the true message from the false message. There is a *subjective* criterion by which we can make a decision about the question of truth. The anointing teaches and guides us. We know that we are in God because we have his Spirit *in us* (3:24).

It is not difficult to see the dilemma. Following John`s logic we ended up in a circular argumentation. 1) The only way to know the truth is through the true anointing. 2) The only way to know that we have the true anointing is to know the truth. 3) And the only way to know that we have the true criterion for truth is to have the anointing. The anointing tests the truth and the truth tests the anointing, and the anointing tests the truth. The objective criterion is judged by a subjective criterion, which is judged by an objected criterion that is judged by a subjective criterion. This seems to be a circle that begins and ends in itself, its logic is in itself, and the entry point is within itself. John is not offering a certainty that is fixed on a point outside the circle. The circle is intact from the outside. Or is it?

For the person who is looking for certainty the dilemma arising from John's reasoning is substantial.

We have to realize, however, that the dilemma is not John's but ours. It comes from an Enlightenment dichotomy between the subject and the object in the epistemological process. To understand and appreciate John's epistemological concept, we have to have a *personal* understanding of knowledge where "objective" and "subjective" gain a different significance. In the following pages I will utilize some of the philosophical concepts of Michael Polanyi (Polányi Mihály) expounded in *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (NY, Harper & Row, 1958) and in *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1983) to resolve the dilemma of circular argumentation that we face in 1 John. I will argue that the anointing is a tacit knowledge which together with the apostolic message functions as a subsidiary awareness for the focal content of our knowledge: God. The anointing is part of the process of personal knowledge that focuses on God and is initiated by God. I will argue that an objective certainty is indeed lost, but a confidence in making contact with reality is gained in a post-critical (Polanyi's term) understanding of the process. The complexity of the question is powerfully resolved in the simplicity of knowing personally and being known personally, as a result of grace, in harmony with the experience of believers throughout the centuries.

1. THE ANOINTING AS TACIT KNOWLEDGE

The presupposition behind the dilemma is that there has to be a neutral point where the uncommitted observer can find certainty for his choice, because the lack of such a fixed point outside the self would lead to subjectivism that does not have any criteria for truth outside the individual. We cannot find that fixed point in John's argument. The critical approach that looks for certainty through doubt will not find anything to rely on and the fruit of its method will therefore be an even greater doubt. The existentialist solution for the lack of certainty, a simple decision based on nothing but free deliberation, would not make sufficient contact with reality, either (if it makes any contact with reality at all). If our goal is certainty we either do not have it or we have it by a choice that is based on nothing but deliberation. In John's epistemological circle the latter is an open door for deception, the former is an impossibility.

Polanyi's "novel idea of human knowledge" (TD, 4), as he calls it, might be an immense help to us to both uncover the false dichotomy behind the dilemma and to give a better explanation for the process of knowing, the process that results in the confidence from contact with reality not in the certainty of objectivity. Polanyi believed that from his concept of knowledge emerges "a harmonious view of thought and existence, rooted in the universe" (TD, 4), which

is exactly what we need for understanding John. In the following discussion I will apply Polanyian categories for John's thought-system in order to describe the nature of knowledge that we found there. I am not trying to impose a philosophical system on the apostolic worldview, but rather hope to liberate our perception of the apostolic worldview from a philosophical system that is foreign to it – with the help of another philosophical system that is more in harmony with both the apostolic teaching and the nature of things as they are. My aim is to show how “even nature teaches us” (e.g. 1 Cor 11:14) that knowledge is personal and not totally objective.

The first step in this direction is to see the anointing that true believers have as a form of *tacit knowledge*. For Polanyi tacit knowledge is that which we know before we can tell what we know. It is a foreknowledge of reality that has not been, and maybe never is, articulated. It is a knowledge that we rely on in the process of knowing. Tacit knowledge is the baggage that we bring into our epistemological endeavor. Tacit knowledge is therefore that dimension of our knowing which makes the claim for a neuter approach impossible. Polanyi's favorite illustration for tacit knowledge is physiognomy: we can recognize a face even among thousands or millions of other faces, and yet, we are unable to describe the details of the face and explain why we recognized it. The reason for this incredible achievement is our tacit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge functions as an *interpretative framework* when we come to the object of our knowledge. We look at the particulars and arrange them in a way that makes sense of the particulars and distinguishes them from a pile of unrelated data or other patterns. Our tacit knowledge integrates the particulars into one, meaningful whole. It thus functions as a grid or a pattern that we use to interpret the data that we look at. This grid is a selective tool because it turns our attention to a certain direction and away from other directions, saving us from spending all our time with observing everything by trial and error. It saves us from the paralysis of a positivist methodology. Tacit knowledge also functions as a “prophetic” tool, connecting us with reality before we could prove our assertions. In all knowledge there is a foreknowledge. “[W]e are guided by the presence of a hidden reality toward which our clues are pointing; and the discovery which terminates and satisfies this pursuit is still sustained by the same vision.” (TD, 24) In a sense we already know the whole and feel our way to it before we could “set our maths right”. Gauss was said to claim: “I have had my solutions for a long time but I do not yet know how I am to arrive at them.” (PK, 130) Tacit knowledge excludes the possibility of a fully inductive epistemological method for the simple reason that there is no neuter starting point. Tacit knowledge is a given, whether we like it or not. The observer is always a real person, and a real person is never just an observer.

When we meditate on the anointing that John talks about, the concept of tacit knowledge can be a useful tool to understand its true nature. It is clear that

the anointing in 1 John has an antecedent existence in relation to knowing God through the truth. We see the truth *because of* the anointing. In verse 20 John says: "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all *have knowledge*." He is even more emphatic about the teaching role of the anointing in verse 27: "But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as *his anointing teaches you* about everything, and is true, and is no lie –just as *it has taught you*, abide in him." As Jeremiah prophesied, there will come a day when everyone will know the Lord directly (not only through their neighbors), because the Lord himself will write his law on their hearts (Jer 31:34). This knowledge is not the knowledge of the particulars of the teaching that we can know from human teachers, but the ability to embrace and love those particulars, or rather, as we shall see, the *God* of those particulars. The anointing is the antecedent interpretative framework that makes us able to discern the correct teaching and then love God through it. The anointing is the interpretative grid that makes sense out of the particulars of apostolic teaching and integrates them into one whole: the knowledge of God. The anointing is tacit knowledge in the sense that it directs our attention to the apostolic message about Christ and away from the teachings of the false anointed ones. It is tacit knowledge also in that it makes us have a contact with the reality of the Christ of the apostles before we could analyze that contact. The anointing is that foreknowledge which is necessary in order to recognize and embrace the knowledge that is preached to us in the apostolic tradition.

The idea of a knowledge that is free from the tacit dimension is a false assumption about reality. An interpretative pattern driving our knowledge to a predetermined conclusion is not John's invention, it is the nature of all true knowledge. In one sense all knowledge is based on an "anointing". The anointing that John talks about is certainly a special case of tacit knowledge, but the principle of a hidden component present in our knowing is a universal one. The problem in John's teaching should therefore be a problem in every epistemic event.

2. THE ANOINTING AS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

In Polanyi's philosophical system every epistemic event is personal knowledge. He rejects the Enlightenment quest for objectivity as an impossible task. Whenever we have an observer, says Polanyi, we also have a perspective. Every assertion is *someone's* assertion. And if it is a person's assertion, it is influenced by that person's tacit knowledge. The tacit component makes the observer a participant in the process, he is never an indifferent outsider. All true knowing involves recognized or unrecognized passions, commitment, and often even a sort of conversion.

The critical methodology viewed passion as a harmful subjectivity that sidetracks the observer and creates bias in him. Polanyi, however, sees passion as an integral and necessary element of knowing. We mentioned the selective passion that saves the knower from having to observe everything. This passion which is interested in the beauty of one object and ignores the other is a constructive and useful motivation behind every investigation. But there is also a "prophetic" passion, a passion of discovery, that builds a bridge between the known and the unknown long before a chain of consecutive steps are taken to prove the original assertion. This "heuristic" passion, the passion of loving the beauty of a yet not proved assertion is an elemental part of every progress in knowledge. And then there is the passion of persuasion that wants to communicate the previous two passions, believing in its universal validity. This last passion is the proof that the knower believes that he has made contact with reality, and so his passion is not simply a subjective assertion but a subjective assertion *with universal validity*.

Personal knowledge requires commitment. This commitment is not necessarily a conscious choice. It is instead part of who we are as knowers. Commitment has to do with the tacit component of our knowledge. When we believe something or hold something to be true, we dwell in that interpretative framework as we dwell in our body. "The reliance is a personal commitment which is involved in all acts of intelligence by which we integrate some things subsidiarily to the centre of our focal awareness." (PK, 60). I will explain these last two terms in a minute, but for our present purpose it is enough to affirm that knowing is not only something that we *do* but also something that we *are*. We are responsible for our knowledge, because it is part of our existence.

Personal knowledge sometimes involves a conversion from one set of presuppositions to the other. This is the most costly part of our epistemic act, and does not often happen. But it is safe to say that behind most discoveries there is a "conversion". The difficulty of these conversions lies in the fact that the change happens in the tacit realm, the realm that we have the least influence on. When Copernicus discovered that the world was very different than what most people believed about it, he had to convert to a new set of presuppositions, just as everyone who first accepted his discovery to be true had to be converted to the new perspective. A conversion is a fully personal act, but is also something that *happens* to us, for the change is huge and it happens in the realm that we are almost or completely powerless to influence.

What follows from these ideas that touches on our understanding of the anointing in 1 John? If Polanyi is right, and knowledge is inevitably intertwined with passions, commitment, and potentially even "conversions", in other words, if knowledge is always personal, then the circle in John's epistemological description is not more threatening and not less glorious than any other epistemic act. There is no entrée into the circle of knowledge without passion, commitment

and conversion. The critical observer will remain outside the realm and the possibility of knowing God, for his indifference makes it impossible that he would know him. The only way the anointing conveys knowledge is through passion, commitment, and conversion. The passion in the anointing directs us to the beauty of the apostolic message and the God that it preaches. Our passion will be a commitment, too, because we are participants and not cool observers in the epistemic act. The objectivity of the positivist movement has nothing to do with the anointing. "You cannot formalize the act of commitment non-committally." (TD, 25) A conversion also has to take place, because the anointing changes the inner presuppositions that direct the passions and determine the commitment. When we receive the anointing, we *step into* the circle. We take full responsibility for our act and pay the price for it. The anointing is by nature the opposite of the critical disposition which looks for certainty. The condition for entering into John's epistemological circle is personal participation and presence. The playwright must appear on the stage, the general must fight at the front, and the columnist must become a politician. There is no neutrality in God's kingdom. And consequently there is no confidence in knowing without contact with reality, either.

3. THE ANOINTING AS SUBSIDIARY AWARENESS

We have further insight into the role of the anointing of the Spirit if we utilize another Polanyian category, the difference between a *subsidiary* and a *focal* awareness. The tacit nature of the anointing involves a difference between the thing that we look at and the thing that we rely on while we look. Tacit knowledge has a "from-to" structure. What we rely on is part of our awareness, but we are not aware of it in the same way we are aware of the focus of our attention. Polanyi's example is the pianist who relies on the movements of his fingers but is not aware of them in the same way he is aware of the musical piece he is playing. He is *focally* aware of the music and *subsidiarily* aware of the movements of his fingers. This is a crucial differentiation, for by "concentrating attention on his fingers, a pianist can temporarily paralyze his movement". (TD, 18)

A subsidiary awareness of the tacit component of our knowledge has to do with the *meaning* of the particulars, too. The meaning of the particulars is always more than the sum of the particulars. In a sense the meaning is always beyond the particulars, almost as if it existed at a higher level. Polanyi speaks of a hierarchy of meaning in the different realms of investigation. The meaning of the chemical procedures can only be understood on the biological level. The meaning of our biological procedures can only become meaningful on a social level. Following the same teleological logic, the meaning of our social behavior may only become

explicable in a theological framework. When we are focally aware of an object, we want to see through the particulars and understand the pattern that gives us the meaning. We subsidiarily rely on the particulars but our goal is to integrate them into one whole that is their meaning.

The particulars that we rely on might at first be outside our tacit knowledge, and therefore are the focus of our attention. As we progress in our knowing, they can become part of our tacit knowledge, the same way a stick becomes the lengthening of the body for the blind man. The particulars become tools that we use, tools that we dwell in, tools that we rely on as if they were part of who we are. To use another Polanyian distinction: they become proximate tools from distal tools. The particulars are internalized and made part of the tacit dimension. When this happens we can subsidiarily rely on the particulars and see through them, seeing the meaning and the whole.

My point here is that the anointing in 1 John is our tacit knowledge in our knowledge of God, and we are only subsidiarily aware of it. The anointing is our "from-to" structure, the starting point of our knowledge, the perspective that we unconsciously have and from which we see. The Holy Spirit directs our attention to Jesus Christ without drawing our attention to himself. He is with us and behind us, focusing our full attention to Christ. We rely on Him but we are not turning to him. When the anointing receives our focal attention we lose sight of Christ and the epistemic act is destroyed. When we see *with* the anointing, we are subsidiarily aware of it, but we concentrate on Christ, of whom we are focally aware of.

But there is more that we can say about the concept of awareness in connection with the anointing. As I referred to it in the introduction, the anointing of the Spirit can be tested by the objective criteria of the content of the message preached. The Christ that the anointing shows us must follow the apostolic pattern. The interpretative framework has to be in harmony with the nature of the Christ that the apostles described (namely: he came in the flesh). The particulars that the anointing gives meaning to must be part of our tacit knowledge in order that we may know the real Christ and the true God. The anointing does not ignore the particulars. It makes them part of the epistemic act. The anointing makes us see *through* the particulars and shows us *their* meaning. The details of the apostolic teaching about Christ can never be substituted with the anointing. A mystical experience or a "divine light" (e.g. Quakers) is not enough if there is no teaching that it can rely on for the experiential knowledge of Christ. The anointing functions in a way that respects the particulars and their significance in themselves. But they are not in the focal awareness. The anointing internalizes the particulars and makes them part of the tacit knowledge that we are subsidiarily aware of. Getting to know the apostolic teaching is absolutely crucial for the right perception. But it is also crucial to dwell in them instead of focusing on them. Not the teaching but the Christ taught is the goal of our knowing. As long as we focus

on the teaching we cannot also focus on Christ. *We have to know the teaching so well that we can rely on it and see with it.* The anointing builds the teaching in its guiding principle the same way the blind man's stick becomes his lengthened arm.

The final separation of the teaching and the anointing is therefore not possible. The teaching is essential to the anointing for it is through the particulars of teaching that the meaning emerges. And the anointing is essential for the teaching because we cannot see the meaning without it. Moreover, from the interconnectedness of the teaching and the anointing logically follows that the teaching and the anointing begin to form one single tacit component. This might shed some light on the problem of many commentators in 1 John who want to decide if the anointing is the Holy Spirit or the apostolic teaching. Some say it can be both and it is not difficult to see why. There is "a structural kinship between the subject and the object" and "an indwelling of one in the other" (TD, 30). I would argue however that it is wise to maintain a distinction between the anointing and the apostolic message, as there is a difference between the body and the stick, the pianist's fingers and the piano. But it is true that both the knower's predisposition and his tools are part of the tacit realm of knowledge which makes a focal attention on the meaning possible. Both the anointing and the apostolic message serve the purpose of knowing God, and thus have a functional unity. We indwell in both of them when we love God in spirit and truth.

4. THE ANOINTING AS CONTACT WITH REALITY

Our dilemma in 1 John about the certainty of true knowing is a result of the separation of the objective from the subjective in post-Enlightenment Western thinking. In the post-Enlightenment tradition objectivity is the goal in the epistemic act, because certainty is only found in a non-biased judgment that has a fixed starting point outside the subject. A Polanyian "post-critical" understanding of the relationship between subjective and objective perspectives in knowing helps us resolve this dilemma imposed on the Johannine text.

According to Polanyi the relationship between the subject and the object that the critical tradition popularized would effectively exclude the subject from the process. In this tradition the mechanization of observation and judgment serves the purpose of creating more objective criteria at every area of life, especially in the exact sciences. In Polanyi's view this is nonsensical. The observer can never be excluded from the process in which he is the observer. For a useful and creative science the human element is not only necessary but also inevitable. An assertion is always someone's assertion, an observation is someone's observation, and a discovery is someone's discovery. Even the choice of the direction of observation is decided upon by a human being. The exclusion of the

subject is simply impossible and would not even be desirable. Looking from outside, the epistemic act will always be seen as a *subjective* knowledge. When we look at the knower and the known in the act of knowing, we will always see close connections between the two. The known is the known only from the point of view of the knower, and the knower is the knower because there is a known. Knowledge will always seem to have a fiduciary element, an element which makes the knowledge relative to one's own judgments and beliefs about reality. The known will always seem to depend on the knower.

Does it mean that the existentialists are right and all knowledge is a result of a free choice? Does this mean that we choose our beliefs from a zero point and act upon these choices in a way that creates new realities? Does it mean that the reality that we know is a reality created by our choice? Does this mean that the subject can transcend his ontological framework and thus determine the object of his knowing? Polanyi clearly disagrees. It is true that all knowledge is subjective knowledge in the sense that it is the knowledge of a subject. But the existentialists are wrong for at least two reasons. First, the existentialist claim of choosing our beliefs from zero is absurd (TD, xi). We always rely on our tacit knowledge or are converted to another set of tacit knowledge. This latter one is the least likely event in most cases, because the tacit dimension is almost entirely irreversible. There are not many Copernicuses in the history of mankind. But Augustine might be right, says Polanyi, and not just in his famous sentence "credo ut intelligam" but also in his belief that faith is a gift. But a gift is not the same as a choice from a zero point. Secondly, the existentialists are wrong because knowledge is not subjective in an ultimate sense. Yes, when we look at it from the outside, it is a subjective process. But looking at it from inside, *we are making contact with objective reality*. The knower pursues the object of his knowledge which is outside himself and is real. The purpose of the epistemic act is to make contact with that outside entity about which the knower has the vision that drives him.

The objectivity in Polanyi's system is not the objectivity of the critical tradition but the objectivity that is necessitated by his realist epistemology. There is an outside object, a reality that can be known. A truth claim is based on a contact with reality. The validation (not necessarily verification) of the claim is another contact with reality. If reality is there, the contact and the repetition of the contact is possible. What is born out of the contact is not *certainty* but *confidence*. Let me use the apostle Paul's phrase again: "Does not even nature teach us" that we gain such confidence from a contact with reality that makes certainty unnecessary? Is not love proven much more forcefully by a kiss than by a definition or a syllogism? Reality can be known confidently without critical certainty - if we make contact with it. A separation of the object from the subject gets rid of this confidence for a certainty that is ultimately not possible to be found.

What is the relevance of this when we think again about the anointing in 1 John? The dilemma that we started with has to be seen in the larger context of personal knowledge. The anointing is a subjective criterion for the truth because we rely on it when we make a decision about the different teachings that rival with the apostolic message. Because the anointing works as a tacit knowledge, the anointing is that which we *are* under the influence of the Holy Spirit, just as the knowledge of the pianist is he himself when he plays the musical piece. Looking at the believer from outside, when he claims that in his heart he knows that the apostolic message is the true one, we can say that his knowledge is a subjective claim. And we are right when we say that, for the assertion is *his* assertion. But we also have to see his claim in the larger context of personal knowledge. Personal knowledge is a contact with reality. A contact with the "God who is there" (to use Francis Schaeffer's expression). The validity of the claim is based on the knower's contact with the reality of God. If such a contact happens through the anointing, the confidence that emerges from the encounter is significantly more powerful than the certainty demanded by the critical tradition. And this explains why the Church could stand so many waves of false teaching and withstand so many intellectual attacks on the apostolic faith. The contact with the reality of the true Christ and the true God that the anointing made possible proved to be stronger than the arguments that questioned the apostolic teaching about this God. Since reality is outside the subject, the same contact was possible for all subjects who had the anointing. The validity of the claim that the apostolic Christ is the true Christ was confirmed by the other encounters with the same reality under the influence of the anointing, through the particulars of the apostolic teaching. When the same meaning is formed and the same contact is made with the same reality, and the experiences can be shared (e.g. in the testimonies of believers in the church), a confidence emerges that does not need certainty anymore.

5. KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN

There is one more aspect in our discussion of the anointing that has to be dealt with: the special "object" of the knowledge in this case. So far we only spoke about the personality of the human knower. But it is just as significant that the anointing teaches us concerning a Person, that is God. There is a personal aspect at both ends, the knower and the known. Knowing a chemical structure or knowing the nerve system of the brain is personal knowledge because the observer is a person. Knowing God is doubly personal because the observer as well as the observed is a person. It is even more complex, because the observed in this case is not simply a person, but an infinite and self-existent person, the origin of our existence, our judge and our savior. And so we have to adjust our language as soon as we realized *who* we are talking about. My last remark about the

anointing touches exactly on this point and gives our whole discussion a different spin.

So far we talked about ourselves as knowers and the object of our knowledge as the known. In this case we have to reverse the roles and talk about God as the subject and us as the object. John uses his words carefully: we *received* an anointing. There are different ways that our tacit knowledge can be changed, even though the change is difficult. Often the change happens to us and we do not know where it came from. This is exactly what happens in the case of the anointing. The anointing is a means of a major change in our disposition that determines our outlook and serves as a new interpretative framework. Where does this change come from? John says that we *received* the anointing. It is not our inherent faculty or possession, it is a gift that was given to us. The origin of this gift is unquestionably God himself who gave us his Spirit. It is a gift of grace. The logical consequence of this assertion is that God is in control of the epistemic act. We are caught up in his knowing and observe him only as he is observing us. It is not clear anymore if we are more knowers or known in this contact.

This last point makes the epistemological dilemma that we started with almost irrelevant. The subjective-objective counterpart and the old-new paradigm of personal knowledge only deal with the problem from the point of view of the human knower. The process described in the pages above was an attempt to resolve the dilemma from a horizontal perspective, a perspective that would function well in any epistemic situation. But there is much more than that in the case of this anointing. This anointing is God's gracious intervention in the process. It is God's epistemic act. It is God producing both knowledge and confidence in that knowledge. It is God making contact with us. It is God's powerful act by which the knower and the known are linked in one relationship. By God we abide in God. He knows us by us knowing him in a personal way. The traditionally relational language of the Church, expressed in her songs, and the belief in the sovereign initiative of God are united and justified in John's teaching on the anointing.

CONCLUSION

We started our discussion with the dilemma of John's circular argumentation. The *objective* criterion for testing the real anointing is the apostolic message, the *subjective* criterion of testing the true message is the real anointing. The critical thinker is right when he says that John's reasoning does not offer him any certainty against deception. In these pages I argued that a critical pursuit of objectivity is actually an obstacle not just for certainty but also for confidence. Utilizing Polanyi's epistemology I pointed out that there is no neuter starting point because we all have a tacit knowledge that determines the course of our

investigations. The anointing that God gives us is one such tacit knowledge. It functions as an effective interpretative framework for the purpose of recognizing the correct pattern of the particulars of teaching. It creates in us a vision of reality long before we could prove and even explain what we see. There are two ways by which confidence in the rightness of our standing can be gained.

Knowing God is the first one. The purpose of the anointing is that we would “abide in him”. The anointing brings us into contact with God’s reality in a personal way. With its help we break into the epistemic circle in order to wholeheartedly embrace its reality. This contact with reality is a passionate involvement in observing, loving, and cherishing the beauty of the vision of God. It requires from us a personal commitment and a responsible participation, but it also creates that disposition in us as part of our tacit knowledge. When we make contact with Christ and see that other people have made a similar contact with the same reality, we gain confidence. Knowing God is a contact with reality that does not need further proof, just as a personal contact with our wives or husbands does not need any further proofs. In this regard there is no essential difference between a tangible object and an invisible object.

Being known by God is the second way to gain confidence. And this is the stronger of the two, for this is not only the source of our knowledge, but the source of the anointing, too, which is the source of our knowledge. Our strongest confidence is a confidence of being known. Our final reason for courage to stand up and proclaim the apostolic gospel is that God has made contact with our reality through his Holy Spirit. The confidence that we have is not primarily based on our commitment to knowing him, it is essentially based on *his* commitment to *make us* know him. For the person outside the circle, for the critical observer, there is no confidence in this. But for the one who made contact with this reality, can there be more than that?

The Church of Jesus Christ must think in a system of knowledge in which even believing children can have a justified confidence in their relationship with God. A confidence that is not of the clever and wise but of the humble and obedient. I hope that the understanding of the anointing that I presented in this short discussion of the topic can serve that purpose.

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