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ANointed WITH FRESH OIL.

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THE Hebrew Psalmist in the delightful confidence of a sweet assurance, sings, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." The anointing with oil was one of the expressions of affectionate respect payed to a guest at a feast. It was a welcome with honor. On one occasion our Lord being invited to eat with one Simon, a Pharisee, this token of regard was not given, and He did not suffer it to pass without rebuke. A heartless invitation to a social repast is a discourtesy and it may even be an insult. In the Shepherd Psalm the sweet singer of Israel rejoices in this blessed experience—"thou anointest my head with oil." In both instances we take the reference to be to spiritual experience. The outward act being employed as the symbol. What the anointing at the feast was to the body—refreshing, reinvigorating, resting the whole physical system, and imparting to it a feeling of relief and joy and strength—that, the spiritual anointing of the Holy Ghost is to the soul. It is a breath of new life. It revives the spirit and comforts the heart. It arms the nature with gracious energy. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart" Prov. xxvii. 9. There was an uplifting of the physical nature through the anointing of the body, and in like manner there is a spiritual uplifting and a spiritual enlargement through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's fitness for the work to which He was called was through the anointing of the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, etc." And it was because of accord with the holy law in every respect that the stream of oil increased upon him; "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Hence, we have the remarkable note by Luke "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness." This stands at the opening of our Lord's public life, and it characterized the whole of it. He was evermore anointed with fresh oil. And this is what every one living the life of God, and especially every one who seeks to lead others to the knowledge of Christ needs—anointing with fresh oil. The oil of yesterday shall not serve for to-day. Fresh oil is required for to-day. And there is fresh oil in great plenty for every one to-day. The reason why we become so faint is that we have not got a fresh anointing. The reason why our work is so inefficient, so unproductive of the highest and best results is that we are not sufficiently careful to work under the inspiration and direction of the Spirit of God. We do not seek the anointing with fresh oil. We go a warfaring at our own charges.

To all who venture forth thus, there is but one result to be expected, it matters nothing what the talent, the education, the eloquence, the force may be,

there is, and can only be, failure: dismal and distressing failure. The battle is the Lord's. We so often forget that, and assume the whole responsibility ourselves. He has said, "the Lord fighteth for you," and yet we go as if we alone were in the field. Oh how much we need to be anointed with fresh oil! When by the grace of God we come to feel that, we shall wait on God for the bestowment of His Spirit. We shall ask for the promised Comforter in terms of God's own Word "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Mark "Ask Him." This is a direction for all. Are you like the parched desert in heart? "Ask"! Are you mourning over your own emptiness? "Ask"! Are you in trouble because you see no fruit in your family, or in your class in Sunday School, or in your sphere of work? "Ask"! Are you anxious for a rich and wide-spread work of grace? "Ask"! To the Lord God himself for the anointing with fresh oil! And wait upon the Lord till it comes. The Rev. A. A. Bonar was once struck by the remark of one who visited him, who said, "O sir, get much for yourself, remember what you said about the rain coming first upon the mountain tops." He who would do much for others must be first anointed himself. First anointing then service. First fitness then work. God alone can gird us for the commission with which he entrusts us. One of Andrew A. Bonar's sayings was, "If we are filled with the Spirit, God will bless everything about us, the tones of our voice, even the putting out of our hand." And so we are told God used him. No one knew better how to speak "a word in season." Going up a stair in Grace street one day he met a lamplighter. "David," he said to him, "have you the inner light?" The question struck the man and was the means of blessing to him. Mr. Pennefather, whose name was long linked with the famous Mildmay Conferences, says truly "Prayer is the golden pipe through which the oil of the Holy Spirit flows into the Church." What can we do without prayer and the Spirit who comes in answer to prayer? Nothing of consequence. In the activities of a Spiritual life, the energy of the Holy Ghost is indispensable. Without Him we can do nothing. We are as other men. But anointed what cannot one do? Agnes Jones in the workhouse at Liverpool England, through the anointing became a ministering angel. Caroline Fry was an elect lady, wielding a pen that spake of the things belonging to the King with winning and persuasive force. Francis Ridley Havergal became one of the most potent spiritual energies of her time. Francis E. Willard the leader in a mighty movement of moral reform. F. E. Clark the originator of an organization which has blessed the Church of God with new hopes and helps. Mrs Margaret Bottomo the worker of transformation of ordinary women into Daughters of the King, who go forth "in his name" to do whatsoever the King saith unto them. And scores of others who seek to perform distinctive service according to their gifts differing according to the grace that is given to them.

No anointed soul ever works in vain. He is like the vine in his fruitage. Fragrant in his blossom, and plentiful and luscious in his fruit. A vision of bewitching beauty to the eye of every onlooker. A testimony to the uprightness and faithfulness of God.