

This Unction of the Holy Spirit

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There are two Scriptures which refer to the Holy Spirit as the Unction or Anointing: 2 Corinthians 1: 21 shows that it is God who has anointed Christians in connection with their new position in Christ, and 1 John 2: 18-27 indicates that the youngest Christians have all the advantages which the anointing confers.

The Holy Spirit came to the company of the redeemed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and attached Himself to each of them individually, filling them by His power, and qualifying every one of them to be here intelligently and zealously in the testimony for Christ. To that company so wonderfully started in Divine power has God been adding by the work of His grace from that day to this, saving men through faith in the risen Christ, and giving to those saved ones the Holy Spirit to indwell them and to empower them to be here for Christ. The outward failure of the Christian community to walk in the truth as we see it today, does not alter the grace of God to the saved individual; the believer is as truly a child of God, and is as truly indwelt and anointed by the Holy Spirit, as in the days when all was outwardly so bright. But this produces at once the great privilege, and with it the grave responsibility, of being here in spite of the general failure, maintaining the whole truth of Christ.

Seeing now that even the youngest Christians have this unction or anointing from the Holy One, we may read two or three Old Testament passages which afford help as to what is meant by the "anointing".

1. Leviticus 8: 1-12 gives us the anointing of Aaron as priest.
2. 1 Samuel 16: 1-13 gives us the anointing of David as King.
3. 1 Kings 14: 13-16 gives us the anointing of Elisha a Prophet.

1. No one can read Exodus 18: 1 in conjunction with Leviticus 8: 1-12, without seeing that God by the anointing of Aaron sanctified him or set him apart for the office and service of priest. The whole congregation of Israel was summoned, and in a most conspicuous way Aaron was designated for the exercise of the priestly functions.

2. This is equally the case in Samuel 16: 1-13, where David superseded Saul, by the choice of the Lord, as King. The failure of the people's choice and his rejection by Jehovah cleared the way for the introduction of God's man. So Adam set in authority at first has broken down and failed, and God has introduced the second Man, Christ, who must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. But in David's anointing and designation as King, there follows in verse 13 the remarkable addition that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward". How could he who had been hitherto a simple shepherd comport himself and be in behaviour as was suitable to a king? The anointing not only marked him out for the position, but conferred upon him the necessary power and fitness to be and to walk in every way worthy of the position for which he was designated.

3. In confirmation of what has been said as to the marking out for position by the anointing, we have 1 Kings 19: 13-16. Elijah was to anoint Hazael for the kingdom of Syria, Jehu for Israel, and Elisha as prophet as a successor to himself. But the words "in thy room" at the end of verse 16 are very suggestive. Elijah had seemingly laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought and in vain, as was said later of the Messiah in Isaiah 49. But God had appreciated his faithful service, and would shortly bestow upon him the unique and splendid honour of taking him up into heaven. Yet in grace He

purposed that Elijah's faithful testimony should be continued in Elisha. We have then Elijah taken to heaven, and Elisha left on earth in the same position to represent him, "in his room", as it says. For this the anointing was to qualify and equip him; that he might be the representative of the man who was taken into heaven.

Now Christ is the One who fulfils all these types, whether of Priest, King, or Prophet. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. We may not pretend to bottom the deep glory of His Person, but while He is in His eternal and essential glory the Son, He has become in being and nature Man; as such has died and risen again, and is officially designated as Christ, i.e. the Anointed One, Priest, King and Prophet. Moreover, in the perfection of His Manhood — though ever Son — He will fulfil all the duties and responsibilities of His glorious offices by the power of the Holy Ghost. Without controversy, great is the mystery.

In 2 Corinthians 1: 21, the new position in which every believer is established, and for which he is designated is "in Christ". Once we have believed the gospel truly and have received the Holy Spirit, it is God's delight to indicate to us our new position, and to establish us in it: to settle our souls into the happy realisation by the Spirit's power of what that new position involves. But He has anointed us also. By the gift of the Spirit He has definitely set us apart and designated us for the position; by the same anointing

He has given us power to be in every respect consistent with the whole of that position and all that it involves, and in result, and in so far as we use the power given to us, we should become descriptive here on earth of the Man that has gone into heaven.