

Epistles of John Chapter 4 the Anointing

by A.B. Simpson

A.B. Simpson's sermon explores the significance of the anointing in various biblical contexts, emphasizing its role in spiritual life and ministry.

Scripture: Genesis 28:18, 1 John 2:27

Topics: "Spiritual Empowerment", "The Anointing of the Holy Spirit"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the significance of the anointing in the life of believers, illustrating it through biblical examples such as Jacob's anointing, the consecration of the tabernacle, the priesthood, the leper, and the sick. He explains that the anointing represents the Holy Spirit's presence and power, which transforms and empowers believers for service and healing. Simpson highlights that true anointing requires complete surrender and obedience to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell within and guide us. He warns against the obstructions that can hinder our spiritual life, urging believers to remain vigilant and connected to God. Ultimately, the anointing is a divine gift that brings believers into a deeper relationship with Christ and equips them for ministry.

Transcript

"But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him." (1 John 2: 27.)

After the revelation of the Son and the Father, the person and work of the Holy Spirit naturally follows. This is presented under the significant symbols of the anointing.

I. THE ANOINTING OF JACOB

The first reference to the rite of anointing is in connection with the vision of Jacob in the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis, where God first appeared to the lonely wayfarer in Bethel's cave as he slept on his stony pillow, and revealed to him the mystic ladder that reached from earth to heaven. When he awoke from his wondrous sleep he realized that he had met with God, and his first act was to anoint the stone on which he had rested his head as a sacred shrine and enter into his first covenant with God. This anointing was a sign of dedication. He was setting apart his first sanctuary to God. It was a very imperfect consecration, full of doubts and fears. It was the first touch of the Holy Spirit in the awakening of the new life. And so it stands for the work of the Holy Ghost in calling the soul to God in the experience of

conversion. There was the recognition of God and the consecration of service to Him. But there was the accompaniment of much bondage and unbelief. "Surely the Lord is in this place," he cries, "and I knew it not;" but he adds with all the force of the old natural heart, "How dreadful is this place!" And then his consecration of the tenth to God is only Old Testament consecration, for the New Testament teaches us to give not a part, but the whole. But even this he accompanied with a doubtful if, "If the Lord will be with me, etc., then the Lord shall be my God." So the anointing first comes to us revealing God to the soul and calling us to yield ourselves to Him as our covenant God. But the heart still has its "ifs" and its "buts" and has much to learn before it is ready for the full anointing and indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

II. THE ANOINTING OF THE TABERNACLE

"And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shall hallow it, and all the vessels thereof; and it shall be holy. . . . Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." (Ex. 40: 9, 34.) We are now coming to the deeper meaning of this blessed anointing. The tabernacle here represents the consecration of our body and life to the Lord, and the anointing denotes the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit.

This incident marked the beginning of the second year of the history of Israel. During the first year the Holy Spirit had been present with them through the cloud as it marched before and followed behind, or sometimes covered the brow of Mount Sinai. Now, however, after the tabernacle was anointed the cloud came down and entered into the sanctuary and took its permanent residence within the Holy of Holies as the Shekinah that hovered between the cherubim. God was now residing in the midst of Israel. So we come to the second year of our spiritual record, and the Presence that has led us to Christ and guided us from a distance, now becomes resident in our inmost being, and the promise is fulfilled, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost and the anointing abides in us.

All this was preceded by a series of acts of obedience and consecration. The preceding chapter tells in full detail of the successive steps that Moses took in finishing and setting apart the various sections of the tabernacle and its furniture. Again and again we read the phrase, "As the Lord commanded Moses, so did he," until at last it is added, "According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it . . . So Moses finished the work." Then it was that the cloud descended and the Spirit came. So we shall find that there are steps of obedience and consecration to be taken, the heart and the life surrendered to God in every detail as the Lord has bidden, and when we have yielded our members and all our being completely, then the Holy Ghost comes down, and comes in, and makes the surrendered heart His dwelling place and His peculiar possession.

III. THE ANOINTING OF THE PRIESTHOOD

The next anointing of which we read is the anointing of the priesthood represented by Aaron and his sons. "And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. . . . And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." (Lev. 8: 12, 30.)

Here the figure advances from the anointing of a building to the anointing of living persons, and still more perfectly represents the pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the consecrated believer. For we are all recognized as a holy priesthood. Aaron represented the Great High Priest and his sons represent

believers as the priests of God. Their anointing in conjunction with Him teaches us that we are baptized with the Holy Ghost in union with the Lord Jesus Christ. We share His priesthood and His anointing. Therefore the name Christ is given to Him, meaning the Anointed One, and the name Christian applied to us means anointed ones. The true Christian is one that has received the anointing of the Holy Ghost and is thus a Christ one.

In the thirtieth chapter of Exodus we have a very full account of the preparation of this anointing oil and its application. There were certain ingredients in it which were known, and certain which were unknown. Even so the person of Christ, the Anointed One, is not only human, and thus familiar to us in His human nature, but there is also the deep mystery of His deity. The anointing oil was to be separated from all other preparations as a holy anointing oil, and under the most solemn penalties all counterfeits or imitations were prohibited. "Whosoever compounds any like it, or puts any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people." (Ex. 30; 33.) It was carefully guarded from desecration by being applied to any improper object. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured," was the sacred restriction and prescription. (Ex. 30: 32.) And so the Holy Ghost is given only to the separated and consecrated life. He cannot be received by the carnal heart. He will only dwell with the holy. Nor may we imitate Him or counterfeit His blessed influences. Man's modern imitations of divine things He will not acknowledge. The operatic music, the eloquence born of mere emotion, the worship inspired by earthly feeling, the fervor that is wrought up by our feelings, the revival that is the product of human sensation and excitement -- all these things are but human counterfeits and strange fire. But in contrast with them then there is a divine anointing, a sacred fire, a heavenly inspiration, a touch of the supernatural and divine that God will give to the holy heart and the consecrated life, and through which we may draw near in our heavenly priesthood and know the living power of God as truly as when His presence shone in the Shekinah flame and the pillar of fire. Have we received this divine anointing? And has it brought us near to God in fellowship and ministry, making us the priests of God and ministers of the heavenly sanctuary?

This ancient anointing was for service, and so all true ministry must begin with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without that baptism even Jesus would not presume to preach the message of His Father, and without it our ministry is a presumption and a failure. Only through the Spirit's power can we perform any service which will be effectual to man or acceptable to God. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4: 11.)

IV. THE ANOINTING OF THE LEPER

In Leviticus 14: 15-18 we find a new link in this chain of blessing. It is the lowest link attaching all the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost to the lowest and vilest sinner. The leper represents the full effects of the curse both upon the body and the spirit of the sinner, and his condition is one of utter helplessness and ruin. In this condition he is brought unto the priest, and the first steps in his salvation and restoration are connected with the atoning blood. The sacrifice of the two birds represents the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The sprinkled blood upon the right ear, the right thumb, and the right foot tell of the quickening life of the Lord Jesus. Then comes the anointing oil mingled with the blood, representing the power of the Holy Ghost applied in turn to the different members of our being, until at last when the right ear, the right thumb, and the right toe have been successively anointed, the rest of the oil, representing the fullness of the Spirit, is poured upon the head, and the whole being bathed in the Spirit's power. Here we see the fullness of the Spirit placed within reach of the vilest sinner, until step by step he rises from the

depths of misery to the heights of grace and glory, and where sin abounded grace does much more abound. This is an uttermost salvation. It saves from the uttermost to the uttermost. It is the only salvation large and full enough for lost humanity. Is there a poor leprous life reading these lines? Beloved, this anointing is for you, and if you will receive it the measure of your fall will become the measure of your restoration and your hope, and, "As sin has reigned unto death, so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

V. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

During the ministry of our Lord we are told that He sent forth His disciples not only to preach the Gospel, but also to heal the sick. And in closing the New Testament canon we find the apostle James, who was the head of the apostolic council at Jerusalem, and especially fitted to represent the ecclesiastical action of the New Testament Church, committing to the Church of the present dispensation the permanent ordinance of anointing for healing. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This was the divine prescription for sickness among the children of God in the Early Church, and it only fell into disuse when the spirit of faith disappeared through the entrance of worldliness and unbelief. The anointing here is evidently a religious and not a medical application. It is administered by an elder and in the name of the Lord, and it is not the anointing, but the prayer of faith that saves the sick, and the Lord that raises him up. Nothing but the most strained and specious and plausible reasoning can turn aside the plain meaning of the passage, and construe it as a medical prescription. To attempt this is to handle the Word of God deceitfully and find an excuse for our unbelief and failure. In the present day God has too frequently fulfilled this promise to make it possible to deceive any longer the candid inquirer. But let it not be forgotten that divine healing, real and blessed as it is, is not a matter of mere rite or ceremony, or even intellectual faith, but the work of the Holy Spirit and connected with the divine anointing. It is nothing less than the life of Christ in our body, the very quickening of the divine Spirit in our mortal frame. We cannot come to Christ as they did in the days of His flesh, as a visible and material presence. We can only approach Him through the Holy Ghost and know Him as the Spirit reveals Him. Therefore a spiritual preparation is indispensable to receiving Him as our Healer. There is a double anointing. First the heart becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, and then it becomes also true: "Know you not that your body is the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" Beloved, have we received the physical anointing, of the divine Spirit? This will not only bring us healing from disease, but a higher type of physical life even in health. It unites us with the risen Lord and lifts every function and force into blessed fellowship with His risen life and power.

Such are some of the scriptural illustrations of the divine anointing. Turning from all figures of speech, which might be largely increased, it means simply this: that the third person of the Godhead who dwelt in the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, comes to dwell in us when we yield ourselves fully to His possession and control. He brings to the heart the revelation and realization of our union with the Lord Jesus. He quickens us with His life, comforts us with His love, and illuminates us with the vision of His person and the light of His truth. He makes the Word of God a living reality to our spiritual consciousness. He becomes to us the spirit of peace, joy, and rest. He teaches us to pray and inspires our communion with God. He gives us our messages and clothes them with power. He becomes to us the spirit of purity and holiness. He fills the heart with love, and the life with sweetness and beneficence. Even our very body He quickens with divine strength, lifts us above the power of disease, and makes us partakers of the risen

life of our glorified Lord. He is our Guide and guards us from seducing spirits and from dangers seen and unseen, and the promise becomes true, "The anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him."

Beloved, are we thus abiding and does the anointing so abide? Or have the channels become obstructed and is the divine life interrupted by some hidden cause? Let us watch and pray. Let us search and try our ways to turn again unto the Lord. And if our communion is interrupted, our peace is broken, our power is gone, our spiritual life waning and unsatisfactory, we may find, we surely shall find the cause if we will dare to be true.

Someone relates the fact that when the water supply in a certain public institution failed and an examination of the premises was made, it was found that the water was all right in the reservoir and the main supply pipe, but that at the point where it connected with the house a great toad had gotten into the pipe, and feeding on the water as it flowed by, had grown so big that he had completely blocked the channel. Is it not sometimes true that some of the devil's brood have got into the channels of faith, obedience, and of communion, and while the living water is still flowing as freely as ever around us it cannot enter our heart or satisfy our being because the channels are clogged by worldliness or sin? Therefore with peculiar fitness in this chapter has the apostle warned us against the world and all its unholy lusts as the enemy of God and the great obstruction to the spiritual life of the believer. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." May His wisdom make us watchful and wise. "And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

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