

Freshness

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that spiritual freshness, like the renewed strength of Job and the anointing of David, is vital for a vibrant Christian life and must be continually sought through genuine, heartfelt devotion and reliance on God.

Scripture: Job 29:20, Psalm 92:10, Psalm 92:14

Topics: "Faith and Devotion", "God's Providence"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the vital importance of spiritual freshness, drawing from the examples of Job's renewed strength and David's repeated anointing. He warns against placing trust in fleeting earthly glory and encourages believers to seek continual renewal through heartfelt prayer and authentic devotion. Spurgeon exhorts Christians to maintain a vibrant faith that remains fresh and powerful throughout their lives.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." Job 29:20.

"I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Psalm 92:10.

THE first text tells us of the renown of Job and of the way in which the Providence of God continued to maintain the glory of his estate, his bodily health and his prosperity. He was for many days, months, years, continuously prospered of God. Everything to which he set his hand succeeded. God had set a hedge about him and all that he had, so that none broke through to molest him. He grew richer, he grew more influential, he had more honor in the sight of his fellow men each morning that he walked to the gate. In every way he was advanced from day to day and that throughout a long stretch of years. His glory was fresh in him. He did not achieve a hasty fame and then suddenly become forgotten. He did not blaze out like a meteor and then vanish into darkness, but he seemed to be continually fresh, vigorous, strong, energetic and successful.

He says that his bow was renewed in his hand, whereas a bow usually loses its force by use and is less able to shoot arrows after a little while and needs to lie still with a slack string—but it was by no means so with Job. He could send one arrow and then another and then another—and the bow seemed to gather

strength by use! That is to say, he never seemed to be worn out in mind or body. Whatever he commenced was commenced with as great a freshness and zest as the last thing which he had accomplished and that had been commenced with the same energy as the first enterprise of his youth. However, this did not always last, for Job, in this chapter, is telling us of something that used to be—something that, the loss of, he very sorrowfully deplored—"my glory was fresh in me." He found himself suddenly stripped of riches and of honor and put last in the list instead of first, while his purposes and aims seemed all to miss their way—and he had no strength and no glory left in him. Now he had reached the winter of his discontent and those who, before, did him homage, became his assailants. So far as glory was concerned, he was forgotten as a dead man out of mind.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this gives us a lesson that we must not put our trust in the stability of earthly things. It is said of the world that God has founded it upon the floods. How, then, can we expect it to be substantial? Beneath yon moon, continually changing, what can we discover that abides the same? Where the very light of Heaven is waxing and waning, what is there but mutability? Change is written upon the face of all things. If, then, you have built your nest on high, reckon not too surely that you shall die in your nest—for the axe may fell the tree and bring it down at an untimely date. If your children are round about you in good health, be not too sure of them, for they may be carried to an early grave—and the parent may yet be childless.

If up to now you have been great in the esteem of men, think less than nothing of that, for the breath of popular applause is more fleeting than a vapor! It scarcely comes before it goes, and they who, yesterday, cried, "Hosanna," in the streets at your coming, may, before tomorrow's sun is set, be crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" They did that to the Master—marvel not if they do it to the servants! This is the respect that makes all mortal things inconsiderable to a wise man—he scarcely will put them among his treasures—for they melt before they are fairly counted, like a coinage of ice. They are but as the counters that a child plays with, having only an imaginary value. The things which are seen are shadows—the things invisible are the only substances. Reckon, then, at their fit price, this transient glory of wealth, health, or fame. Lay up treasure, "where neither moth nor rust does corrupt," and seek for stability in other things than these. Get the feet of yours joy upon the Rock of Ages and reckon all else to be but sand at its very best.

David, in the second text is talking, I think, about spiritual things, and he tells us with great joy that he should be anointed with fresh oil. He did not expect that his glory would depart, but he expected that it should be renewed. He did not reckon that the bow would lose its force in his hand, but that God would increase his strength from day to day. And if any of you, here, who are God's people have any fears about the future as to your soul matters—if you are alarmed with the fear that you will share the same lot which Job shared as to his temporal glory—I would remind you that Job, even in temporals, received at last twice as much as he had in his best. We must remember that God can turn His hand one way as well as another and brighten your prospects as well as darken them! Predict delight rather than despair. Even the lower springs shall continue to flow till you are beyond the need of them!

Just now it is about spiritual matters that I want to speak—and if you have a fear that you must necessarily decline in these—I would remind you of the words of David, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" and, yet further on, of his other words, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright." Never fall into the notion that a spiritual falling off is inevitable—there need be nothing of the kind—you may be fresh as the dew even unto the end! The subject, tonight, will run in this way—First, the excellency of freshness—"My glory was fresh in me." Secondly, the fear of ill-departure. And, thirdly, the hope of its continuance, which hope is greatly encouraged by the words of our text—"I shall be anointed with fresh

oil."

I. First, then, notice THE EXCELLENCY OF FRESHNESS. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." David had been anointed, while still a youth, to be king over Israel. He was anointed, yet again, when he came to the kingdom. That outward anointing with actual oil was the testimony of God's choice and the emblem of David's authorization. Oftentimes, when his throne seemed precarious, God confirmed him in it and subdued the people under him. When his dominion became weak, God strengthened him and his servants and gave them great victories, so that, as a king, David was frequently anointed with fresh oil. David's royal brow was crowned with fresh laurels again and again and his throne was settled and established by the hands of the Lord.

It was established, not with the same old stale anointing—a repetition of that which had lost its force—but with oil freshly pressed from the green olive, namely, with a new blessing and a fresh blessing from God's right hand, as I trust, you and I may be! Freshness is a most delightful thing if you see it in another. It is a charm in Nature. The other day, when the wind blew cold, someone said to me, "Yes, but how fresh the air is and how refreshing—how different from that heavy, muggy atmosphere in which we were half drowned and almost entirely suffocated but a few days ago." We need something fresh, and when we get it, we are freshened ourselves! How pleasant to go into the garden and see the spring flowers just peeping up. How agreeable to mark the rills, with their fresh water leaping down the hills after showers of rain. The young lambs in the meadows and larks in the sky are delightful because of their freshness. Everything that is fresh seems to have a charm about it to our minds.

But, dear Friends, spiritual freshness has a double charm! Sometimes we know what it is to have a freshness of soul, which is the dew from the Lord. You remember when first your flesh was as that of a new-born child? I mean when you were newly born again and first knew the Lord. How fresh everything was to you! The pardon of sin—how it sparkled! The righteousness of Christ—how brilliant! The idea of being a child of God—how novel and how delightful! To be joint-heir with Christ—how it almost startled you—it was such a new idea to your spirit! And oftentimes since then, when your soul has been in a lively condition, everything has been bright, charming, exhilarating—nothing flat, stale, unprofitable.

Even though you heard the same things said again and again, yet, because your soul was fresh, they came to you with unusual power. Your spiritual food, if you are healthy, is always fresh to you, like the manna in the wilderness which was never stored a single night except for the Sabbath—but fresh and fresh it fell—and Israel gathered it and fed upon it then and there. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have your soul in a fresh state, filled with the ever-flowing Living Water! It is glorious to find everything about you fresh and new through the teaching of the blessed Spirit, so that you go from strength to strength and, like a roe or a young hart, leap from hill to hill! If we are now in the possession of it, may we always keep that freshness of soul and never lose it.

How that freshness is seen in a man's devotions. Oh, I have heard some prayers that are really musty! I have heard them so often that I dread the old familiar sounds! Some hackneyed expressions I remember hearing when I was a boy. I even now hear the vain repetitions—old, worn-out, good-for-nothing rubbish expressions they were then—but they are

still brought out by regular prayer-makers! Even where the words are new and original, you will hear men pray in such a style as to make you say to yourself, "That prayer came out of Noah's Ark." As far as that man is concerned, there is nothing at all in it of life, sap, or savor. It has been dead long ago and hung up

to dry till not a particle of juice remains in it.

But, on the other hand, you hear a man pray who does pray—whose soul is fully in communion with God—and what life and freshness is there! It may be that his expressions are somewhat rough, but they touch you because they come from his heart. Some of the confessions and petitions are strange to you, perhaps, and yet you feel that they are such strangers as it behooves you to be joyous at once! You are glad that such words and thoughts have passed through your spirit and blessed you! You feel that you can pray with such persons. Their prayers will go to Heaven, for they came from Heaven! God has inspired them and their originality is a part of the manual of the Spirit. I like to hear a Brother even stop and stammer because he cannot go on—his heart is too full and he cannot find words. Oh, but it is blessed to get a little freshness, even if it comes through a breakdown!

I suppose that those dear Friends who pray by the book of Common Prayer, somehow or other manage to put freshness into their prayers. I am always glad that they do, for it shows the vigor of their piety. As for me, I am such a poor, weak thing, that after I have repeated the same words about half-a-dozen times, they do me no good. I must use words that suit the time and suit the state of my heart—and suit my desires and suit my depressions or my joys—and suit my thankful or mournful heart! One seems to need in prayer something fresh, but when the prayer is old and worn—and seems to have been brushed and turned and very little made of it, after all—why, then it does not strike us, or impress us, or help us! I like to feel freshness even in singing a hymn. It may be that we know the words, but then we must put fresh heart into them and feel them over again as much as if we were the authors of them! Then they become a grand vehicle for our praises! How sweet to sing, as it were, a new song! It is a blessed thing to have a freshness about our devotions, be they private or public, exultant or repentant.

And so, dear Friends, it is well to have a freshness about our feelings. I know that we do not hope to be saved by our feelings—neither do we put feeling side by side with faith—yet I should be very sorry to be trusting and yet never feeling. Surely it would be a dead faith! It would be a strange thing to be a living child of God and to have no feelings. I will tell you about feelings as they strike me. Sometimes I have deplored the condition of my heart before God and thought my feelings to be the worst that could be. But what a foolish judge I have been, for in a week's time I have needed to have those despised feelings over, again, and thought that now, at last, I had fallen into a worse state than before. I am persuaded that we are very poor judges of the value of our own inward feelings, and, perhaps, when we are lowest in our own esteem we are really highest in the sight of God.

And when we feel as if we did not pray, we are praying, and the heart may be wrestling with God more when it fears that it does not pray than when you come down complacently out of your closet and say, "I know that I have had a good time, for I feel perfectly self-satisfied." I long for the Truth of God in the inward parts and wisdom in the secret places of the soul. Anything is good which rids us of pretense! Oh to be broken into splinters by the hand of God! And for every grain of dust to cry out to Him! I believe this mode of praying often prospers beyond any other. At any rate, give me not stereotyped pretension to feeling, but fresh feeling. Whether it is joy or sorrow, let it be living feeling, fresh from the deep fountains of the heart! Whether it is exultation or depression, let it be true and not superficial or simulated! I hate the excitement which needs to be pumped up. There is a something delightful, to my mind, in coming to the Throne of Grace, weeping—a something delightful in coming to the Lord's Supper full of joy and gladness—to come to either place cold and dead is horrible! There is something delicious in knowing that what you feel is true and comes up from the very bottom of your soul. That it has a point and edge about it which proves how sincere it is. God keep us from stale feelings and may He give us freshness of emotion!

I believe, dear Friends, that there is a very great beauty and excellence in freshness of utterance. Do not hinder yourself from that. How I long for it as a preacher! When one has, day after day, to stand before the same assembly and to talk of the things of God, one dreads lest he should be so monotonous and full of repetition that even the things of God should come to be a weariness to God's own people! I have often thought that if some Brothers who are very careful to speak exceedingly well what they say, should be a little more careless and speak as it comes—letting their heart flow over

at their lips spontaneously—then there would be a far greater freshness about their utterance than there is when every sentence smells of the lamp and reeks of midnight oil!

God forbid that we should say a word against the deep study and the profound research of God's Word, but still, we may get to be so much students that we scarcely speak like practical men who live among the people! By aiming at a very superior style, we may fall into a thoroughly inferior one and all our freshness may be gone. I like, for my part, the wild bird's note. Men get the bullfinch and teach it to sing a few notes—and then the piping bullfinch is greatly prized. But I have finches outside my window, any one of which will beat any finch in the world that only pipes a note or two, for they pipe much more melodiously, though they were never taught except by God and Nature! There is a range of sweetness about their wild notes that a tutored bird cannot reach. Nature, pure and unsophisticated, is the best instrument for Divine Grace.

I like to hear men speak of God as they have known Him, every man in his own order, and with his own voice. Coming fresh, perhaps, from the very haunts of sin, out of which free Grace has fetched them, let them speak like Israelites fresh from the brick kilns! Coming from the plow-tail or from the forge with all the equipment of their trade about them and speaking just as they are. Without pretending to be anything else than they are and telling of God's amazing love to them—not quoting the experience of others, but giving out their own—this will be their wisdom and strength! Oh, there is a freshness about that and a great power to catch the ear and to move the heart when God, the Holy Spirit, is present to bless it!

Now, you that have lately been converted, do not go and learn all the pretty phrases that we are accustomed to use. Do not go and sit down at the feet of your dear teacher in the class and feel that you must talk just like he. Strike out your own course. Be yourself! "But I would be odd," you say. All right—so is your pastor! You need not mind that. You will not be the only odd body about. Be encouraged by that! I think that a little of what people call oddness is just, after all, leaving God's work alone. All the trees that God makes are odd. The Dutchmen clip them round or make them into peacocks, but that style of gardening is not to our mind.

But some people say, "What a lovely tree!" I say, "What a horribly ugly thing it is." Why not let the tree grow as God would have it? Do not clip yourselves round or square, but keep your freshness! There will be no two Christians exactly alike if they do that. There should be a freshness, dear Friends, about our labor. We ought to serve the Lord, today, with just as much novelty in it as there was 10 years ago. I may even venture to say 30 years ago! Oh, I remember the seriousness with which I went out to preach the first half-dozen sermons I ever preached—and what a burden it was from the Lord! And how I did go at it with all my might? Very clumsily, but still with all my soul and spirit!

And do you remember when you began to teach the class, or began to take your tract district? Did you not pray over it? It seemed almost too good to be true that you should be trusted with doing anything for your Lord and Master! And you did it, oh, so intensely and, therefore, you had God's blessing! You did it well,

though you blundered a good deal, for all your heart was in it, your motive was pure and your faith was childlike. You blundered the right way, for you blundered with your heart and so blundered into other men's hearts! Your heart was serving God, even in the mistakes you made.

And now, perhaps, you can go round the district and you are pretty well half-asleep over it. And you can teach the class, but there is not the vigor, the force, the energy, the intense desire, the burden that there once was—perhaps not all the joy. You can stand up and preach, dear Brother, and you have got pretty well accustomed to it—and the people have got accustomed to it, too—and they can nearly go to sleep! And you can, too—preach asleep! It is an easy thing to do, if you once learn the wretched art. There is a kind of sleep-walking in preachers—they can talk in their sleep in a very precise way—much more wonderful than walking! You cannot say, "I sleep, but my heart wakes." The fact is that it is the other way around—"I wake, but my heart sleeps"—and it is a great pity when it comes to be so.

We should pray to God that we may do everything fresh, just as if we had never done it before, only doing it with all the improvements which experience will bring to us! Pray with your children, tonight, as if it were your first prayer with them! Speak with them about their souls as if you had never mentioned the subject before. Talk of Jesus as if you were telling new news! Why, aren't you? Is it not always glad tidings? Always news fresh from Heaven? May God grant us Grace that, when we come to be gray and when we totter with our staff for very age—we may still tell out the story, if

with feebleness of utterance, yet with juvenility of heart—feeling that we are bringing forth fruit even to old age, for the Lord still anoints us with fresh oil!

So much for the beauty and excellence of freshness. It ought to run into everything.

II. Now, dear Friends, in the second place, I will dwell upon the fear of losing it—THE FEAR OF ITS DEPARTURE. I have heard some express the thought that perhaps the things of God might lose their freshness to us by our familiarity with them. I think that the very reverse will turn out to be the case if the familiarity is that of a sanctified heart. In other things, "familiarity breeds contempt," but in the things of God, familiarity breeds adoration. The man who does not read his Bible much is the man who has a scant esteem of it. But he that studies it both day and night is the very man who will be impressed by its infinitude of meaning till he will be ready to cry, like Jerome, "I adore the infinity of Scripture."

I know that he that prays most loves prayer most and he that is most occupied with the praises of God is the very person who wishes that he could praise God day and night without ceasing. These things grow on you. Hence I would have no man fear that familiarity with holy things can take away from their freshness and their beauty! You may drink at other wells till you are no longer thirsty, but, strange to say, this all thirst-quenching water, nevertheless, produces a much deeper thirst after its own self. He that eats of the Bread of Heaven shall hunger for no other, but shall grow ravenous for it. His capacity for feeding upon it shall be increased by that which he has fed upon. And, whereas at first, the crumbs from under the table might have satisfied him when he knew himself to be but a dog, at last, when he knows himself to be a child of God, he wishes for everything that is set upon the table!—

"Less than Yourself will not suffice My comfort to restore."

He must have all that is to be had! Such is his desire. Dismiss, then, any fear from your minds about that.

When we first commenced to break bread on every first day of the week, I heard some say that they thought that the coming so often to the Table might take away the impressiveness of the holy feast. Well, I have scarcely ever missed a Sabbath, now, these 20 years, and I never was so impressed with the solemnity and the sweetness of the Master's Supper as I am now! I feel it to be fresher every time. When it was once a month, I had not half the enjoyment in it, and I think that where friends have the communion once a quarter, or once a year, as in some Churches, they really do not give the ordinance a fair opportunity to edify them. They do not fairly test the value of an ordinance which they so grossly neglect, as it seems to me. No, you may have more, and more, and more, and more of everything that Christ has instituted and ordained, especially more and more of Himself—and the more you have, the more freshness there will be!

"Yes, but we have had a fear, sometimes, that there will be a lack of freshness about ourselves." Well, that fear is a very natural one. Let me tell you some points on which, I fear, we have good ground of alarm, for we do our best to rob ourselves of all life and freshness. Christian people can lose the freshness of themselves by imitating one another. By adopting as our model some one form of the Christian life other than that which is embodied in the Person of our Lord, we shall soon manufacture a set of paste gems, but the diamond flash and glory will be unknown. Many godly people have a very deep sense of their corruption and inward sin and this, together with sorrowful spirit, combines to make them a rather gloomy race. Often deeply taught in other respects, they fail to rejoice in the Lord.

Certain of these have formed a school and they have set up a standard and judge everybody to be a deceiver or a mere babe in Grace who cannot groan as deep down as they can. This is not wise. If you do that, you will lose your freshness, for you will forever be scattering your dust and ashes over all the joys of your life. Why should the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the Bridegroom is with them? Let us be happy while we may! There is another set of Brethren who are always glad and happy, for they are healthy and competently provided for. They think they are out of the way of temptation and so they believe that they are perfect—they also set up a standard and cut down everybody who cannot sing right up into the alto notes as high as they can! Well, you will get stale, too, Brothers and Sisters, whoever you may be, for self-laudation never keeps fresh long!

When we have heard about half-a-dozen brethren boasting that they are nearly perfect, it is about as much as some of us can stomach! I cannot stand above two of them without feeling my boxing propensities set in motion! Poor fools, how have they persuaded themselves to hope that self-praise will be thought to be the height of piety? It is nauseous, even, to those of us who are prepared to make a measure of excuse for the fervid imaginations of the brethren! Drop into one par-

ticular groove and run in it—take up one line of things and stick to it—and you will very soon find yourself as far from freshness as a bit of leather which has been worked on an engine to revolve forever and ever in the same course! The beauty of real life lies much in its variety.

A Brother comes to me on Sunday morning sighing. Thank you, Brother, for that! I am glad that you are in that state, for that is where I am! And we can sympathize with each other. Perhaps tomorrow I meet this same friend and he is full of joy and delight, and I say, "Thank you, Brother, I am glad to meet with somebody who is rejoicing in the Lord. You give me a lift. Now shall I be helped to rejoice in Him, too." Sometimes, in this pilgrimage to the Celestial City, I join company with a Brother worker who laments that he has many difficulties in dealing with poor sinners. I say to him, "I am glad of that, for I have more difficulties than you, but I see that I am not alone in my anxieties." Another I meet with says that he has

been so happy in meeting with souls that have found the Lord and I reply, "Yes, and I am glad to see you, for I am happy, too, for I have met with many who have just found the Savior."

These changes and ups and downs are like the delicious variations of the seasons—they are not always autumn, not always spring, not always winter, not always, even, the plenitude of summer. So with our souls, we are never so long in one place as to find monotony in life. No, the monotony is in death—the freshness is in life! These changes and varieties create a splendid freshness which we might not hope to have if we tied ourselves to one man's chariot and resolved that our experience should be uniformly like his. Another way of spoiling your freshness is by repression. The feeble sort of Christians dare not say, feel, or do, until they have asked their leader's permission. I have known a little village chapel in which, when the preacher had delivered a sermon, the people did not know whether he was sound or not till they had asked the principal deacon! Or they waited till they got outside and consulted a little knot of good old men and women who had to act as tasters for all the others and give a verdict as to the orthodoxy of the performance! A few good souls thought the sermon to be very sweet—the man seemed to be preaching the Gospel—but they did not like to commit themselves to the tune till they had got the key note. And when they had seen the Brother that led them all, then they knew! If he said that it was all right, why, then it was all right!

Now, dear Friend, if you feel that God is blessing you in any religious exercise, mind that you are blessed and let other people who do not like to be blessed go without it if they must. But as for you, be blessed when you can! Do not be ashamed to enjoy that which others despise. Sit down and quietly feast on the kernel while others are breaking their teeth over the shells. If you feel that you must sing, sing without stint! Why not? In the kitchen—in the parlor—sing! Never mind if remarks are made. Do not worldlings sing to their own liking—why shouldn't you? If sometimes you feel that you cannot sing, well, then, do not sing! Be yourself and be natural as Divine Grace makes you natural—that is the thing. Let your mind have freedom and do not feel as if you went about in fetters, bound to this and pledged to that!

In the living kingdom of the living God there is no rule that you groan at eight o'clock in the morning and sing at noon; that you sigh at half-past three and get the plenitude of the Spirit at a quarter past seven! Nothing of the kind! It is a free Spirit under whose power we dwell and He comes like the wind and goes like the wind—and acts according to His own pleasure. Lord, uphold me with "Your free Spirit." Do not repress Him. "Quench not the Spirit." Yield yourselves to His influences and if you feel inclined to shout, be brave enough to do so—and give the praise to God! This is a successful way of keeping up freshness—to be rid of repression and to be free before God.

If we want to keep up our freshness, however, the main thing is never to fall into neglect about our souls. Do you know what state the man is generally in when you are charmed by his freshness? Is he not in fine health? Some of my dear friends were known to call and see me when I was laid up some time ago—and I am afraid that they did not find much freshness about me, then! On the contrary, they heard much the same old story—weary nights and painful days. I hope I did not display much impatience, but still, the tendency is to give a good deal of telling of what one has to endure! There is not much freshness about that.

But a man is fresh, generally, when he is well and everything is going right within his internal economy. Then he thinks fresh thoughts and uses fresh words, for all around him life is in its flowery age and sparkles like the morning! I am sure that it is so with the soul. When the soul is healthy—when you are feeding on the Bread of Heaven; when you are living near to God; when you are believing the promises

and embracing them; when you are getting into the very sunlight of the Lord's fellowship—oh, it is then that fresh words and striking words not often heard will drop from you!

Pearls will fall from your lips if those lips have been with Jesus, and He has kissed you with the kisses of His mouth! Do not neglect yourself, then! Let the fountain of the heart be right and then the freshness will speedily be seen.

I have shown you the things by which a man may lose his freshness—avoid them carefully. Those of you who are workers for God may have a fear that you will lose the freshness of your utterances—a fear which haunts a good many of us. Now, that may happen to us by our own fault if there is a need of searching the Word of God; if there is a need of fresh acquisitions of sacred knowledge. And it may happen to us, again, if we are always gathering the thoughts of others and do not think, ourselves. Then we shall lose freshness and become mere dealers in second-hand observations. Many thoughtful Brothers and Sisters are afraid that they may lose it through age. It does happen to men, as they grow old, that much of the vivacity of youth departs. And we all know ministers who have lost much of their power to edify because their freshness and variety have gone. It is a sad thing that it should have to be so with any of us, but what a blessed thing it is if we can fall back upon that assurance, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

Nature decays, but Grace shall thrive. The Holy Spirit will renew our youth. The Grace of God can give us freshness after Nature has ceased to yield it. And it shall be a better freshness—not the dew of our youth, but the dew of the Spirit of the Lord! If Jesus Christ is preached, age becomes an important help in bearing testimony to His faithfulness and power to bless. I can imagine it to be the duty of the aged minister to retire from the prominent sphere where he has long been the preacher—and I hope in my own case I shall not occupy this pulpit an hour too long! But the man of God can find another pulpit—and when he has found it, I can suppose him often beginning his youth, again, as he tells out the story of the Cross and talks of Jesus—and proclaims the Doctrines of Grace again! He can begin in his country sphere much in the same way as he set out at the first. At any rate, he has always this to fall back upon, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." The Holy Spirit will abide with him continually and give him an anointing of freshness.

And so with you, dear Friends. You think, when you have done addressing the class, "Well, I am pretty well spun out. I shall never be able to get another address." Shall you not? Read that— "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." And you that go out preaching in the villages and often cry, "I do not know what I shall do for a sermon next Sunday," think of this and be consoled—"I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Fall back on that! If you are called to speak to the same people for any length of time, it will make the promise all the more dear to you, as you can plead it before God, "Lord, anoint Your servant with fresh oil." I pray that all of us in heart, soul, life, utterance and labor may always be kept fresh and may God grant that we do not backslide, for that would kill our freshness and put in the place of its sweet smell the foul odors of sin!

Oh to be holy, sweet and vigorous to the end! The Lord grant that we may make large drafts upon Himself for greater faith, greater love, and greater joy—then shall we have greater freshness! May we also be sustained from within by His blessed Spirit and so may our freshness continue to our dying day.

III. I close with the third point, which is this precious Word of God which gives us HOPE OF ITS RENEWAL. Let us not think that we must grow stale and heavenly things grow old with us, for, first, our God in whom we trust renews the face of the year. He is beginning His work, again, in the fair processes

of Nature. The dreary winter has passed away. The time of the singing of birds is coming on and the sweet flowers are peeping out from their graves, enjoying a resurrection of glory and beauty.

Now, this is the God whom we serve, and if we have been passing through our wintertime, let us look for our spring. If any of you have been growing cold of late—if any of you have grown stale and mechanical and have fallen into ruts— come, look up! Look up and pray the great Renewer to visit you—

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, With all Your quickening powers." "He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." It will not take the Lord long to restore you. "His word runs very swiftly." He speaks even to ice and frost and by His word they pass away. He has but to will it and all the genial days of spring and summer come hastening on and the banner of harvest is waving. "Awake you that sleeps and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Be hopeful! Be joyful! There are better days for you. Put your trust in God, who renews the face of the earth, and look for His Spirit to revive you.

Moreover, there is an excellent reason why you may expect to have all your freshness coming back—it is because Christ dwells in you! Do you not know it? Christ is formed in you the hope of Glory and, if so, your glory will be fresh

about you, for He never grows stale. It is God that said of Him, "You have the dew of Your youth." Oh, the doctrine of the indwelling of Christ in the Believer—let us never forget it! As long as that is a Truth of God, there is always a hope for us. Then there is the other grand doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in you! If your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, shall He not always be to you a fountain of new life—a spring of fresh delights? Why, it must be so! The Holy Spirit is not exhausted. His power is not lessened in any degree whatever. He can make your face shine, again, and your tongue sing again! He can make your heart leap, again, with unspeakable joy!

Come, you that sit in the dust, begin to rejoice, for God the Spirit is still with you and shall be with you—the Comforter whom Christ has given—never to be taken away! Rejoice in Him and ask Him, now, in His mercy, to restore your soul, and He will do it! Oh, what a blessing it is to get right deep down into God's Word, for that Word is always new and the source of new thoughts in those who feed upon it! This is the Book of yesterday, today and forever—the Book which, though many of its verses were written thousands of years ago, is as new as though it were only written yesterday! From the mouth of God come the promises, at this moment, full of life and freshness and power! Come to it! It is all yours—every acre of this blessed land of Canaan is yours and will yield you corn and wine and oil!

There is not a star in the great firmament of Scripture but shines for you! There is not a text in all this mighty treasury of God but you may take it and spend it and live upon the produce! Therefore, while the Word of the Lord is so fresh and so full, it cannot be that you shall be stale in thought and conversation. You shall be anointed with fresh oil! God Himself is with you and He is always full! God Himself is with you and He is always living! God Himself is with you and He is always fresh—and He shall refresh your spirit! Why stay away? Come from all that is stale and flat and from all the dead past—and enter into eternal life where flowers forever bloom, fruits forever ripen—and the fresh springs forever flow!

Come and eat the new corn of the land and drink the new wine of the kingdom! And may the Lord make you glad in His House of Prayer for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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