

Unction: Heaven's Knighthood

by E.M. Bounds

Unction is the divine anointing of the Holy Spirit that separates the preacher to God's work and qualifies them for it.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:4

Topics: "Divine Anointing", "Power Of Prayer"

Description

E.M. Bounds emphasizes the vital role of unction, or divine anointing, in preaching, asserting that it is not acquired through study or eloquence but through fervent prayer and a deep connection with the Holy Spirit. This unction empowers the preacher to convey God's message with transformative power, distinguishing true gospel preaching from mere rhetoric. Bounds warns against the dangers of simulating unction, which lacks the profound impact of genuine divine influence, and stresses that without it, the gospel loses its potency. He calls for preachers to seek this heavenly anointing, which is essential for true consecration and effective ministry, as it stirs hearts and brings about spiritual results. Ultimately, Bounds portrays unction as a conditional gift that requires continuous prayer and earnest pursuit.

Transcript

Unction comes to the preacher, not in the study, but in the closet. It is heaven's distillation in answer to prayer. It is the sweetest exhalation of the Holy Spirit. It impregnates softens, cuts and soothes. It carries the Word like dynamite, like salt, like sugar; makes the hearer a culprit or a saint, makes him weep like a child and live like a giant; opens his heart and his purse as gently, yet as strongly as the spring opens the leaves.

This unction is not the gift of genius. It is not found in the halls of learning. No eloquence can woo it. No industry can win it. No clergies hands can impart it. It is the gift of God -the signet set to His own messengers. It is Heaven's knighthood given to the chosen true and brave ones who have sought this anointed honor through many an hour of tearful, wrestling prayer.

Earnestness is good and impressive. Genius is gifted and great. Thought kindles and inspires, but it takes a diviner endowment, a more powerful energy then earnestness or genius or thought - to BREAK the chains of sin, to WIN estranged and depraved hearts to God to repair the breaches, and restore the Church to her old ways of purity and POWER! Nothing but this holy unction can do this. Unction is the anointing of the Holy Ghost, separating unto God's work and qualifying for it. Without this unction there are no true spiritual results accomplished.

Uction may be simulated. There are many things that look like it, there are many results that resemble its effects; but they are foreign to its results and to its nature. The fervor or softness excited by a pathetic or emotional sermon may look like the movements of the divine unction, but they have no pungent, penetrating, heartbreaking force. No heart-healing balm is there in these surface, sympathetic, emotional movements. They are not radical, neither sin-searching nor sin-curing.

This divine unction is the one distinguishing feature that separates true gospel preaching from all other methods of presenting truth. It backs and interpenetrates the revealed truth with all the force of God. It illumines the Word, and broadens and enriches the intellect, and empowers it to grasp and apprehend the Word. It qualifies the preacher's heart, and brings it to that condition of tenderness, of purity, of force and light that are necessary to secure the highest results. This unction gives to the preacher liberty and enlargement of thought and soul - freedom, fullness, and directness of utterance that can be secured by no other process.

Without unction on the preacher the gospel has no more power to propagate itself than any other system of truth. This is the seal of its divinity. Uction in the preacher puts God in the gospel. Without the unction, God is absent, and the gospel is left to the low forces that the ingenuity, interest, or talents of men can devise to enforce and project its doctrines.

It is in this element the pulpit often fails than in any other element. Uction is the consecration force, and its presence the continuous test of consecration. It is this divine anointing on the preacher that secures his consecration. It is this divine anointing on the preacher that secures his consecration to God and his work. Other forces and motives may call him to the work, but this only is consecration. A separation to God's work by the power of the Holy Spirit is the only consecration recognized by God as legitimate.

The divine unction, this heavenly anointing is what the pulpit needs and must have. This divine and heavenly oil put on it by the imposition of God's hand must soften and lubricate the whole man - heart, head, spirit - until it separates him with a mighty separation from all earthly, secular, worldly, selfish motives and aims, separating him to everything that is pure and Godlike. It is the presence of this unction on the preacher that creates the stir and friction in many a congregation. The same truths have been told in the strictness of the letter, but no ruffle has been seen, no pain or pulsation felt. All is quiet as a graveyard.

Another preacher comes, and this mysterious influence is on him; the letter of the Word has been fired by the Spirit, the throes of a mighty movement are felt. It is this unction that pervades and stirs the conscience and breaks the heart. Uctionless preaching makes everything hard, dry, and, dead. This unction is not a memory or an era of the past only; it is a present, realized, conscious fact. It belongs to the experience of the man as well as to his preaching. It is that which transforms him into the image of his divine Master, as well as that by which he declares the truth of Christ with power. It is so much the power in the ministry as to make all else seem feeble and vain without it, - and by its presence to atone for the absence of all other feebler forces.

This unction is not an inalienable gift. It is a conditional gift, and its presence is perpetuated and increased by the same process by which it was at first secured; by unceasing prayer to God, by impassioned desires after God, by estimating it, by seeking it with tireless ardor, by deeming all else loss and failure without it.

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