

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

FRESH GRACE CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED.

A Sermon

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“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”—Psalm xcii. 10.

DAVID is very positive. He does not say “I hope I shall be anointed with fresh oil, and I have a pleasing expectation that it may be so ;” but he speaks of his future as absolutely certain : “I *shall be* anointed with fresh oil.” Nor will it appear at all wonderful that he should be so positive if you read the psalm, for his subject there is the ever-living and all-sufficient God, and when we get near to God we get into the region of positive certainty. While we depend upon man we are in the realm of “may be’s,” and hopes, and perhapses, and peradventures; but when we come to rest in God we are far removed from everything that is of chance and conjecture. Our God is the God of truth and righteousness. “He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” Man is but a treacherous quicksand where confidence is shipwrecked, but the Lord is a haven of security. We do well neither to boast in ourselves nor to place our reliance on the promises of our fellow-creatures ; but we may wisely boast in the great “I AM,” and rest our souls securely upon his word and his love. He can neither change nor fail. “He is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.” David therefore felt quite at his ease about the future. He felt certain that God, who had given him a measure of grace, would give him more grace. He entertained no suspicion that God’s great resources would run out, or that God would withhold them from his own. He says, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” Beloved, let us draw near to God, and so let us drink at the well-head which can never be dried up ; let us give up looking to the broken cisterns which do but mock us, and let us turn to the inexhaustible deep which lieth under, which is always ready to overflow for our need.

Let us think at this time of the confidence of David, and we shall remark upon it thus. First, *it was a confidence full of meaning* : “I

shall be anointed with fresh oil" is a most expressive utterance. Secondly, it was a confidence *exceedingly well grounded*; thirdly, it was a confidence which *calmed his fear*; and fourthly, it *excited his hopes*; and in the last place, if we possess it, it is a confidence which will *lead us to pity those who are destitute of it*.

I. THE CONFIDENCE HERE EXPRESSED IS FULL OF MEANING. What did he intend by saying, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil"? He meant, first, that *his strength would be renewed*. It was a common belief amongst the Orientals that anointing with oil added to a man's vigour; they regarded it as the symbol of renewed strength. So David felt and knew that God would, whenever it was required, renew his strength. Times of weakness will happen to us all: a great strain may be put upon us, and we may become exhausted, or, under severe depression of spirit, we may imagine ourselves to be ready to die; but at all such times God will supply strength to us: our extremity will be his opportunity; our time of famine will be his hour of plenty. Is not his strength made perfect in weakness? Is it not written that "he giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength"? David sung in the One Hundred and Third Psalm, "He satisfieth my mouth with good things; so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's," and he expected it always to be so. "He restoreth my soul," says he in the Twenty-third Psalm. Often do his psalms which commence in painful depression conclude with exultation, because heavenly love had poured fresh life into his swooning soul. From many a soul-sickness had the son of Jesse been recovered, from many a sinking had he been lifted up into holy joy. He here expresses his conviction that the Lord would always deal thus graciously with him. Expect this, then, my brethren, that God will give you new strength as you shall require it. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "He giveth more grace." Go thou unto him in the time of thy weakness, in the confidence of this text: "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

David meant, in the second place, that he should be *afresh assured of the divine favour*. To anoint a man with oil was a token of his welcome to your house; his feet were washed that he might be refreshed, and then the notable guest, worthy of special honour, was anointed with perfumed nard. So David says that as he had received tokens of divine favour aforetime, he should receive them yet again. O beloved, ye know what it is to revel in the smiles of God, and find a heaven in his manifested love. You have basked in the sunlight of your Father's love, many a time, and felt an ecstasy such as worldlings cannot imagine. Hath not the Lord been pleased to make the name of Jesus to your souls "like ointment poured forth"? Oftentimes has he brought you into his banqueting-house, and his banner over you has been love. He has made for you a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. You look back upon these seasons with inexpressible delight, and perhaps at this moment you are saying, "Oh, that it were with me as in months past." Pluck up courage, my brother; thou shalt be "anointed with fresh oil." There are more tokens of love awaiting thee; further signs of thy Master's love shall be afforded thee.

Thou needest not cry with Esau, "Hast thou but one blessing? bless me, even me, O my father," for the Lord abounds in blessings, and he delights to bestow them upon his beloved. Yea, there are even richer mercies yet to come; the past, though full of blessedness, shall be eclipsed by the happy future. David had the favour of God as a shepherd boy, he found it anew as a warrior, and he had yet other tokens when he became king in Israel. Every favour received is a pledge of more to follow. Dawn is the earnest of noon. Within the sacred circle of fellowship to which thou hast already penetrated, there is a holy of holies of yet closer communion, and there thou shalt soon enter. "Friend, come up higher," is thy Lord's sweet invitation. Have faith and be of good cheer, for thou shalt see greater things than these. Thou shalt be baptized again into the Holy Ghost, thou shalt receive anew the spirit of adoption, and thy joy shall be full. Therefore lift up thy head.

But again, David meant that he should be *confirmed in his estate*. It is noteworthy that David was anointed three times; first of all by Samuel, in prospect of his ultimately becoming king; a second time by the men of Judah, when he reigned over a part of the nation; and a third time at Hebron, when the whole Israelitish nation came together, and David was solemnly elected to be their king. Perhaps he recollected this, and looking upon those various anointings as confirmations of his kingly state, he felt that God would yet further confirm him upon his throne all his days. Many were the rebellions against David's authority, but they were all futile. When his throne was shaken by his rebellious son Absalom, and his government almost annihilated, yet God restored him to the throne again, and in fact anointed him once more. Now this day, beloved, you and I, who are believers in Jesus, are kings and priests unto God, but if Satan could do it he would soon bring our kingdom and priesthood to an end: he is plotting and devising by all manner of means to work our destruction; but it is written, "Thou maintainest my lot." The great keeper of our head is one who can never be overcome. The Lord who has set us on the throne with his Son, will neither suffer his Son nor us to be driven from it. The Lord reigneth, and while the Lord reigns his people shall reign too. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is the word of Jesus, and upon that word he hath caused our souls to hope. He will confirm you again, my brother, in your sonship; he will make you again to say, "Abba, Father," with an unfaltering tongue. He will confirm you in your position as a member of his body, he will make you feel that the anointing of the Head is still descending upon you, and you shall thus rejoice again and again in full assurance that what God has made you, you shall be even to the end. Thus, again, you see the Lord anoints his people with fresh oil, by confirming them in their estate.

Furthermore, David meant that he should be *qualified for his office* by the bestowal of fresh grace. This was, no doubt, the meaning of the anointing of a king. It was the type and token of his receiving royal wisdom and authority. So, too, in the anointing of a priest, it was the symbol of the Spirit of God being given to him that he might discharge his sacred office; and David felt that he should frequently

need to be taught of God, guided, enlightened, and instructed, so that he might, as king and leader in Israel, act rightly ; therefore he says, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Beloved, this is a very sweet confidence for us. If you are a minister of the gospel you will have a thousand reasons for feeling yourself to be incompetent, and you might well throw down the staff of your pastorate, and leave work, if you were not sure that your sufficiency is of God. In such work as the instruction of the young, the visitation of the sick, and the reclaiming of the fallen, or whatever it is that God has called you to, you will frequently tremble as you discover more and more your own unfitness to be used of God ; but this will be counterbalanced by learning more and more the divine faithfulness. Do not relinquish your work because of your feebleness, for you shall be anointed with fresh oil. Do you want wisdom ? Ask it of the Lord, for he giveth liberally. Do you want a warm and zealous spirit ? Are you conscious of growing cold ? Some drops of his dear love falling into your heart will set it on a blaze, and make you as earnest as you would desire. Do you want more power in prayer ? Go to him who understood the art of wrestling on the mountain's side at midnight, and he will teach you how to pray. In fine, is there anything you lack, in order to the full discharge of the ministry to which God has called you ? Wait upon the Lord for it with unwavering faith, and he will grant it to you, and you "shall be anointed with fresh oil."

Once more, I think David meant that he should also *have new cause for delight*. Anointing with oil was intended to give pleasure. The element of joy in religion is looked upon with indifference by some, but they are unwise. There are some now-a-days who would like to strike out everything from mortal life which gives pleasure. We have societies now which are *anti* to every mortal thing that is pleasant and agreeable, and if there remains one solitary enjoyment to mortal men in this vale of tears, which has not some society opposed to it, I have no doubt some genius will commence a crusade against it to-morrow. The theory is, that all wholesome things are nasty, and that all gratifications are deadly. I wonder they do not make the parish pump run with wormwood tea, and paint the meadows a dun colour. Then, when we have abstained from all that is either beautiful or agreeable, and reduced ourselves to the condition of the savage who eats acorns and lives in a cavern, we shall have climbed somewhat near perfection. Now I do not believe in this theory for ordinary life, much less for spiritual life. Men used of old to anoint the heads of their guests to give them pleasure, and they were never blamed for it ; and the Lord intends that his people should have the richest pleasures in their souls. He is the happy God, and would have those round about him happy. He never intended this world to be a great workhouse, a vast drill-shed, or a convict settlement, so arranged that labour should banish joy, and a crushing sense of subjection should chase away love. He has made this world to be a happy lodging for his dear children, till he shall call them home, and he has provided for their delight many enjoyments, lawful and commendable, beneficial and spiritual. I believe the Lord intended his people to be the happiest people under the sun. When I see certain of

them repining, complaining, fretting, worrying, and calling that state of mind "*experience*," I pray, "The Lord save me from that experience, and give me to have his joy fulfilled in me." Our Lord Jesus was sorrowful, not as our example, but as our substitute ; he was put to grief that we might be joyous ; he bore our load that we might have no load to carry. He was full of cares for us, that we might have no care, but might rejoice in him all our days. "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." The atmosphere we breathe should be fragrant with thankful joy. Like flowers, we ought to load each breeze with the sweet perfume of holy gratitude. We which have believed do enter into rest, and in that rest we discover new joys each day. The banks of the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, are not dark with weeping willows, or dreary with a jungle of thorns and thistles, but they are lovely with the rose of Sharon and the lilies of the valley, and among its shady groves the righteous lie down at peace, and sing their song of loves touching their Well-beloved. Yes, we did rejoice, we have rejoiced, and we mean to rejoice again. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Put all those five thoughts together, and you have a great text before you, too big for me to preach from, but it may furnish you with many a theme for thought. It is a bough with many clusters ; eat thereof and be glad.

II. THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR TEXT IS WELL GROUNDED, because it is grounded upon God. We could not reckon upon having supplies all our lives if we depended upon the granaries of Egypt, or upon the storehouses of the wealthiest of the land ; but when we rest in God we may boast ourselves as we may. I stood the other day, as you have often done, by a spring, pleased to see it constantly bubble up with cool, refreshing water. One who came thither to fetch water for her house, said to me, "It is always the same, sir, always the same ; I never knew the sharpest frost to freeze it, or the most burning summer to dry it : the stream is equally full at all times in the year." This was very different from a fountain which I often pass, which more than half the year bears the notice, "This drinking fountain is closed during the winter ;" and very different from those brooks in our own and other lands which live upon the rains, and therefore do not contain a drop of water in time of drought. Why does the spring always remain the same ? Because it has tapped the great fountains. There is a deep that coucheth beneath ; there are vast secret reservoirs in the bowels of the earth, and if you can set these abroach, you are sure of a perpetual supply. Many a man has his water laid on, as it were, from the water company ; his dependence is on man ; and therefore it fails him ; or he depends on the circumstances which surround him, and therefore he finds his confidence to be as a deceitful brook : but if you live upon God and say, "All my fresh springs are in thee ;" you have tapped the eternal deeps, and you never need be afraid of drought, you shall drink draughts of living water—you shall be anointed with oil. Beloved, it is a grand thing to be thrown flat on God, however hard the fall ; it is a glorious thing to hang upon the eternal arm with nothing else to hold you up. Just as yon unpillared arch of heaven never starts or quivers, notwithstanding

that it is without a buttress, so does faith when it is built on God, stand gloriously serene in its mighty strength. "Trust thou in the Lord, and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

We are quite sure of fresh supplies, because of our union to Christ. Every Christian is a part of Christ, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Now there can be no fear that my little finger will not be supplied so long as the head is nourished. If the head shall have sufficient nutriment, so shall the meanest member of the body, and because we are one with Christ we shall therefore receive daily grace. Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, and the sacred oil descends to the very skirts of his garments ; and because without measure the Spirit resteth upon him, therefore every one of us who belong to him shall be anointed with fresh oil. Why does the branch of the tree expect to live ? It sends out no roots into the earth, it makes no search for nourishment amongst the rocks and stones. No, but the branch expects to live because the sap flows into the stem, and from the stem to itself, and we expect grace because it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. Oh, if we had a pinched and starveling Christ, we might expect to run short, but with one in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily we can have no cause for fear. If I have such a Christ as this, I *must* be anointed with fresh oil.

Again, we have another reason. We must have fresh grace because the Holy Ghost dwells in us. It was a good day for the poor widow of Zarephath upon which Elijah came to live with her. If I had been in her place I should have felt that I was safe enough, for if God did not think of me he would think of Elijah, and if Elijah lived in my house and went shares with me, I should not need to cry over that little meal in the barrel or that drop of oil in the cruse. I should feel, "Since Elijah lives with me, I shall share with Elijah ; Elijah's God will take care of him, and I shall be taken care of also." O child of God, who is it that lives in your body along with you ? Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ? and while the Holy Ghost lives within shall there ever be famine in the soul ? Shall the cruse of oil fail ; shall the barrel of meal be entirely empty, while the Holy Ghost is in us ? It cannot be. Beloved, how many forget that precious doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit in every believer, and yet if we did but realise it we should feel that while he who is the anointing oil dwells in our hearts, we must be anointed with fresh oil. There can be no fear about that.

Moreover, look at the promises of God's word, and they will at once assure us that we shall have fresh supplies of grace according to our need. You do not need that I quote them to you this morning—they are legion ; but I will tell you what I experienced myself in reference to those promises. They are to me a gradual revelation. Not but what they are all in the book now, but I cannot realise, and grasp, and understand them except by degrees. I find a promise exactly suitable for me to-day ; but there is another, I love it and bless God for it already, but I cannot get the sweetness of it to-day, it is reserved for days to come, I shall find it open to me to-morrow. Another

is laid up for me in six months' time, and another in five years' time. The promises are fruits laid up to ripen in time to come, and as most fruits become ripest and sweetest in the winter, so have we found that God's promises have a peculiar mellowness in our times of distress and affliction, such a sweetness as we did not perceive in the summer days of our prosperity. The train which starts from London to go to the North continues to traverse the distance day by day—how is it supplied with water? Why, there are trenches between the rails in several different places, and from these the engine drinks as it rushes along its iron pathway; it is supplied as it runs. That is just what our heavenly Father has done for you. You are just like an engine on the road to heaven, and between here and heaven there are many stores of grace awaiting you; you will take up fresh water without slackening your speed, and so will be able to keep on to your journey's end. To use another illustration, when the Eastern nations used to trade across the desert in the olden times, in Solomon's days for instance, there were stations built, wells sunk, and provisions stored at convenient halting-places, so that the caravans might pause and take in fresh provisions. The caravans reached their journey's end because the long way was broken up by a series of resting-places. Now, the promises are resting-places for us between here and heaven. There is a long line of them at well-ordered intervals, and as we journey through this desert world we shall be constantly coming, first to one, and then another, and then another, and another, and so we shall find fresh provision stored up, that we may not fail. The manna will fall daily till we come to Canaan. The promises of God are so numerous, that we are sure we "shall be anointed with fresh oil."

Once more, beloved, up till now our experience has proved that we shall be anointed with fresh oil, because we have been so anointed many a time already. I appeal to you who have gone for many years forward in the pathway where Jesus leads you; have you not known many times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord? You have had times of great depression, for changes are appointed us as long as we are here. Men may promise themselves they shall never see a change, but they are greatly mistaken. David said, "My mountain standeth firm; I shall never be moved," but in a very little time he sang another hymn. When I hear brethren so very confident that they shall never doubt again, I am reminded of a story I have heard of the olden times, when a young gentleman who had never travelled before went over Hounslow Heath, and was accosted by another gentleman who rode by his side, and joined in an interesting conversation. Our friend said at last, "I have always been told by my father that this is a very dangerous heath, but the old gentleman, I think, was exceedingly nervous, for we have come all this way without being molested by highwaymen." "Yes," said the other, "but now is the time for you to stop and deliver;" and he clapped his pistol to his ear. It often happens, when we say, "I shall have no more temptations," that our very confidence is in itself a temptation. O yes, there have been times of sore trial, but the Lord has appeared

for us. Up to this moment not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised.

“Thus far we prove the promise good
Which Jesus ratified with blood.”

We have no fault to find with our God. Jehovah Jireh, the Lord has provided to this day ; in the mount of the Lord shall it be seen. Ebenezer, hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Well, then, if he has done so up till now, so will he, for he is an unchangeable God ; therefore let us be assured that we “shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

III. THIS CONFIDENCE CALMS ALL OUR FEARS. Sometimes, when we are not quite as we should be, we are filled with fear on account of our soul poverty. What a poor thing I am ; how little grace I have ; how weak in prayer ; how slow in service ; how frequently depressed ; how easily tossed to and fro. How shall I hope to hold on to the end ? Here is the answer to it—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” I am poor, but I shall receive my daily pension ; I am weak, and I have no strength in reserve, but my strength is laid up in God. Imagine two Israelites talking together one day, and one of them says to the other, “Your cupboard seems to be very empty, I fear you are improvident.” “But,” says the other, “Do you know we gathered this morning an omer full of manna, and it exactly supplied my family. I have a wife and a troop of boys with mighty appetites, and very soon the omer which had been full was empty, but we look for more to-morrow.” “Nothing in the house !” said the other, “do you not feel distressed ?” “No, not at all.” “Why not ?” “Because I believe the manna will fall to-morrow morning, and that there will be just as much as I shall want, so that I have no need to lay by any in store.” “Very imprudent,” said the other ; “I believe we ought to make hay while the sun shines. If you will come to my house, I will show you the good stock of manna which I have carefully laid by.” “No,” said the other, “I do not care to see it just now ; but I will tell you what I will do ; I will come down to-morrow at dinner time and see it.” So the man gathered in the morning his own manna fresh, and his family have been satisfied with it and delighted, and after they have eaten he says, “I will go down and see my rich friend’s manna ; he was much better off last night than I was.” He goes to his friend’s door, but his friend does not seem pleased to see him. “I have come to see your manna that you stored up so carefully.” But the other blushes, and owns that he has none to show. “Why not ?” his friend enquires. “Well, the fact is, I do not want you to come into my tent at all. I must come forth from it myself. There is a most detestable smell all through the tent. I had to take away the manna and bury it, for it bred worms and stank.” “Ah,” said the other, “then after all I did well to live upon daily manna, and to have no stock in hand ; and you did foolishly to lay by a store.” Now there may be some professors here who want to feel that they are strong enough for to-morrow, or that they have grace enough for next week : they want to have such a proportion of divine strength given them that they shall feel confident about themselves for years to come. All that will breed worms, and stink ; all human confidence,

glory, and pride must rot ; but if you remain a poor sinner and nothing at all, daily depending on the bounty of God, you will have grace from heaven fresh and fresh, smelling of the hand which gives it every morning, Beloved, it calms our fears about our poverty when we remember that the granary of heaven is not exhausted, and that as each morning breaks we shall find the dew of grace lying about our tent.

This also removes our fears concerning violent temptations. We must all of us have felt afraid of being tempted. We are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." Sometimes our unbelief says, "If I am tempted in a certain way I shall certainly perish." My brother, you should remember that you will be anointed with fresh oil : when the temptation comes there will be a way of escape for you. What a happy circumstance it is for Christians that it is not often that the temptation and the opportunity come together. Have not you noticed that when wrong desires stir in your mind, they come to you at times when you cannot carry them out ; and at other times when you have the opportunity to sin fairly before you, you have no desire for it whatever ? That is often a way of escape for God's people. Do not be distressed about temptations. Such there will be in this world. Lay hold on the shield of your faith, and you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

But it may be you are afraid not merely of temptation, but of back-sliding, and that is a very blessed fear, but do not let it depress you, for you will be anointed with fresh oil. If you had to keep yourself, you would certainly perish ; if you had to sustain your own spiritual vigour, it would not be long before you would faint ; but since you depend upon God, and he has to preserve you, he will not suffer you to leave him, or if for a while you should depart from his way, he will bring your wandering heart back, and set you in the King's highway once more.

Or it is possible you are afraid of some great and grievous affliction. I know dear sisters who are aware that a certain disease is upon them which will one day come to such a point that either there will be a painful operation or else they may die. Dear friend, do not fret about it. You have not sufficient strength for what is coming, but you will be anointed with fresh oil. Nobody wants to-morrow's grace to-day. When you are only up to your ankles in trouble you do not require the grace which you will have when you are up to your neck in it ; you shall have grace in proportion. You shall have ballast for your sail, and sail for your ballast, for he is a good captain who intends to steer you into port. Do not be cast down, therefore.

Some of us, it may be, have been troubled about the future death of some dear one upon whom we depend, or whose life is very precious to us : we have buried them a hundred times over in our fears. Let us remember that when the trouble comes it will be time enough for us to be cast down by it ; nay, we shall not be cast down, for God, who helpeth those who are cast down, will comfort us. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

And perhaps, dear brother or sister, you have entered upon a new state of sorrow. You wear to-day the name of widow, which you

never wore before ; or, you are now called an orphan for the first time. In this new state resort to God to be anointed with fresh oil. He who made you a good wife will help you to bear well the trial of losing your husband : he who made you a dutiful child will be a Father to you, and help you to sustain the position of an orphan well. You shall be anointed with fresh oil, whenever affliction comes. I feel as if I could sit down now, and say to myself, "Cheer up, heart, cheer up, whatever ails thee ; thou shalt be anointed with fresh oil. Look into the future—nay, do not care to look into it : do not wish to look into the book of fate and see

‘What gloomy lines are writ for thee,
Or what bright scenes arise.’

Thou shalt be anointed with fresh oil.” This is a heavenly forecast of our nativity. We shall be anointed with fresh oil right to the end of our journey, and when death comes, if come it ever shall—for Christ may come, and we may not die—we shall be anointed with fresh oil. Very wonderful is the way in which God takes his people to himself? Two good men have lately gone to heaven in a manner which rebuked their own prayers. They were taught in their church to say, and did say twice every Sabbath for more than fifty years, “Lord, deliver us from sudden death.” Dear good men, the Lord knew it was a stupid prayer, and Mr. Robert Aitken, who had for many years served his Lord, fell down dead on the railway platform, and Mr. Pennefather dropped from his chair into heaven. The Lord seemed to say to them, “Why did you ask me to save you from sudden death? It was the best for you, and I gave it to you.” To die in the pulpit preaching, to go straight from testifying about Christ below to seeing him above—what better thing *could* be desired? Do not be afraid of dying : either you will be taken away gently, perhaps in your very sleep, and will never know you died at all ; or, if you have to lie a little while and linger, you will be anointed with fresh oil, and you will turn your dying bed into a chariot of fire, you will be transfigured there in the presence of your family, and they will wonder that the grace of God could do such great things for a poor, weak, trembling mortal. “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

IV. Now I must pass over the next point very briefly : THIS ASSURANCE TENDS TO RAISE OUR HOPES.

We tremble lest we should not hold on to the end, but now we know we shall be anointed with fresh oil we are filled with hope. Sometimes, when we meet with believers who are full of grace, full of patience, full of courage, full of zeal, full of love, we say, “I can never get where they are.” Yes, we can, for we shall be anointed with fresh oil ; and if we obtain fresh grace there is no place of eminence we cannot reach ; what Abraham was, what David was, what Isaiah was, what Paul was, we may be. There is nothing in the whole range of Christian attainment from which we are debarred.

This raises our hope of useful service. Perhaps we have not done much for the Lord yet, or, having done something in our youth, are growing dull now and do not honour him as we once did. Come, we won’t give up and say, “I shall never serve the Lord,” but we will

rejoice that we shall be anointed with fresh oil. We have seen trees bear very little fruit for years, but they will have a splendid year by-and-bye, and then they will be loaded with fruit. Sometimes an old tree looks dead, and yet at the scent of water it doth bud and bring forth fruit once more. So some of you may be like a dry, barren tree, but the Lord means to visit you, and you shall bring forth fruit to his name. I would say to every brother here who is conscious that he has neglected a great deal of what he ought to have done, and has not been as useful as he should, "Come, brother, mend thy ways, and have good hope of brighter times to come, for thou shalt be anointed with fresh oil."

Once more, this gives us hope of the fullest fellowship with Christ. Where John was when he leaned his head on his Master's bosom, I may be. Where Mary was when she sat at the Master's feet, I may be, if "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Come, lift up your heads, ye birds of heaven; do not sit moping here; lift up your heads, I say, and look the sun in the face, the glorious Sun of Righteousness, and rise with all your wings towards him. He will upbear you, he will draw you to himself. Does he not even now attract you by his own superlative beauties? "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse," says he, "with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana." Up, up Christian, higher, higher, higher. The Lord will help thee, he will give thee new strength, and the highest place of devotion, the loftiest elevation of piety shall be attained by thee.

V. Lastly, THIS MAKES US FEEL GREAT PITY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT HOPE TO BE ANOINTED WITH FRESH OIL; and such are all who are destitute of faith. You have your choice; you who do not believe in the unseen, you have your choice in the seen things which you can see and hear. They are before you, and you are very fond of them, and you think they fill your spirit. So they may for the present, but there are evil times coming. The young man's youth will not last for ever. Eyes grow dim, as every old man will tell you; the joys of youth will not come to your rescue then; the remembrance of those early joys, as past and gone for ever, will only make your cup more bitter, and going down gradually to your grave, discontented and fretful, striving still to gratify passions for which you have no strength, looking again to broken cisterns, and finding only a little mud at the bottom, where once you found what you thought crystal waters, you will begin to cry out for fresh comforts: but you will not find them. It is a blessed thing to be so rich that there is no end to your wealth, and nobody can say that but a Christian. It is a blessed thing to have a stream at your foot, which will never fail; and nobody has such a river but a Christian. If thou believest in God, God is thine; and all that thy soul can ever want is treasured up in the infinite God, for life, for death, for judgment, for eternity. Without God thou art naked, and poor, and miserable already in the highest sense, but what wilt thou be hereafter? Oh, the poverty of a man who lives without Christ; but oh, the poverty of the man who dies without Christ! Oh, the utter, utter poverty of a man who will live throughout eternity without Christ! He is a naked soul, and the blasts of wrath shall smite upon him without pause. He is a thirsty soul; oh, how he thirsts! but no

drop of consolation will ever come to him. He is a crushed and broken soul, but there is no one to heal his broken heart, nor stanch his ghastly wounds. He is for ever destroyed and banished from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ; and to that destruction no restoration can ever come ; to that agony no relief ; to that death no resurrection. To-day Christ is to be had ; to-day all that your soul wants is to be had, and to be had for nothing, to be had for the asking, to be had for the accepting ; for whosoever believeth in him receives him, and so is saved :—

“ But if your ears refuse
The language of his grace,
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews,
That unbelieving race,
The Lord in vengeance dressed,
Will lift his hand and swear,
You that despised my promised rest
Shall have no portion there ! ”

God grant it may not be so, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah xl.

HYMNS FROM “ OUR OWN HYMN BOOK ”—92, Part I, 692, 676.