

COMMENT: HYMN – GOD'S ANOINTING

I wrote this hymn in 1985 because there was, at that time, virtually no hymn that majored on the theme of anointing.

The Prayer Book's only Hymn, of course, has -

*Thou the anointing Spirit art
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life and fire of love. . .
Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of thy grace;*

The lack of more hymns on anointing was a surprising omission given that Jesus was God's **Anointed** [e.g. Luke 4:18]; that it is the meaning of the title '**Christ**'; that Christians share Christ's anointing [II Corinthians 1:21]; that the disciples anointed the sick [Mark 6:13] and that James instructed later Christians to do the same [James 5:14-16]. It is not every week that we have a Coronation with its anointing, but there are some churches that use oil in both Baptism and Confirmation. [See my article **ANOINTING WITH OIL – IN THE BIBLE AND TODAY.**]

It is difficult for me to be apathetic about anointing when my mother, after being a cripple for the first twenty years of my life, was anointed, and stood up and walked instantly!

There is an optional verse (v.4) for use when folk are being anointed at the service, and the option between 'one' and 'ones'. I feel that when there is a **public anointing** of the sick, that the sufferer and congregation are probably *both* helped if the congregation can sing about the meaning of what is happening. This diverts attention away from the sufferer to God. The sufferer may well be the focus of our prayer, but should not be the focus of our attention.

My original version ended with Julian of Norwich's phrase 'all will be well'. The last verse is about the proclamation of the Gospel, and I later felt that in that context some worshippers might view it as a vague spiritual hope for all, and so undermine the necessity for Christ's saving work. I therefore dropped the quotation, and turned it into a Gospel promise.

[The hymn *Spirit divine, attend out prayers*, likens the Spirit to the *light*, to the *fire*, and to the *dove*. I once wrote an additional verse for it likening the Spirit to *oil*,

Spirit divine, come with your balm,
Anoint us from above.
Upon our sickness pour your calm
And heal us by your love.]

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Suggested tune: 'St. Andrew' (E.H.Thorne) 8.7.8.7

Based on James 5:13-16

- 1.
Father, sending your Anointed
Christ to save, forgive and heal,
and through him, your Holy Spirit
to make our salvation real.**

- 2.
Look upon our ills and troubles
and on those who suffer much.
Send your church the Spirit's unction,
in Christ's name to heal and touch.**

- 3.
Grant forgiveness to the faithful,
bring to unity their prayer;
use it for your work unhindered
both through sacrament and care.**

- 4. (*Optional for when anointing takes place*)
May the *one/ones* to be anointed
outwardly with oil this hour,
know Christ's fullest restoration
through the Holy Spirit's power.**

- 5.
Heal your church. Unite, anoint us
with the Spirit's power to tell
to the world the Gospel message
how, in Christ, all can be well.**