**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**PSALMS-064**. **INVIOLABLE MESSIAHS AND PROPHETS by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"14.* … *He reproved kings for their sakes; 15. Saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm."*

*Psalm 105:14-15*

The original reference of these words is to the fathers of the Jewish people--the three wandering shepherds, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Psalmist transfers to them the great titles which properly belong to a later period of Jewish history. None of the three were ever in the literal sense of the word anointed, but all the three had what anointing symbolised. None of them were in the literal or narrow sense of the word prophets--that is to say, predicters of future events--but one of them was called a prophet even in his lifetime. And they all possessed that intimacy of communion with God which imparted the power of forth-speaking for Him. Insignificant as they were, they were bigger than the Pharaohs and Abimelechs and the other kinglets that strutted their little day beside them. Astonished as the monarch of Egypt would have been, or the king of the Philistines either, if he had been told that the wandering shepherd was of far more importance for the world than he was, it was true. He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.

Further, as Judaism, with its anointings and prophecies was a narrower system following upon a wider one, so a wider one has succeeded it; and we step into the position occupied by these patriarchs--on whose heads no anointing oil had been poured, and into whose lips no supernatural gifts of prediction had been infused. It is no arrogance, but the simplest recognition of the essential facts of the case, if we take these words of the Psalmist's and transfer them bodily to the whole mass of Christian people, and to each individual atom that makes up the mass. All are anointed; all are prophets; of all it is true that God suffers no man nor thing to do them wrong. And kings and dynasties and the politics of the world are all in the hands of One whose supreme purpose is that through men there may be made known to all mankind the significant tidings of His love. Therefore, His Church is founded upon a rock, and earth is the servant of the servants of God.

**I. Every Christian is a messiah.**

You know that the word anointed is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, or of the Greek word Christ. The meaning of the symbolic anointing was simply consecration to office by the divine will, and endowment with the capacity for that office by the divine gift. In the ancient system it was mainly employed--though not, perhaps, exclusively--as a means of designating, and when received in humble dependence on God, of fitting, a man for the two great offices of king and priest.

Oil was an appropriate symbol. Its gentle flow, its soothing, suppling effect, and in another aspect, its value as a means of invigoration and sustenance, and in yet another, as a source of light, peculiarly adapted it to be an emblem of the bestowment on a patient and trustful and submissive heart that was saying, Lord, take me, and use me as Thou wilt, of that divine Spirit by whose silent, sweet, soft-flowing, strong influences men were prepared for God's service.

Jesus was the Christ, the Messias, because that Divine Spirit dwelt in Him without measure. If we are Christians in the real sense of the word, then, however imperfectly, yet really, and by God's grace increasingly, there is such a union between us and our Saviour as that into us there does flow the anointing of His Spirit. There being a community of life derived from the Source of Life, it is no presumption to say that every Christian man is a Christ.

The word has been used of late with unwise significations, but the truth that has been inadequately expressed by such uses is the great truth of Scripture; He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, and there does flow the anointing oil from the head of the High Priest to the skirts of the garments. Every man and woman who has any hold of Jesus Christ at all, in the measure of his or her hold, is drawing from Him this unction of the Holy One. So, brethren, rise to the solemnity, the awfulness, the joyfulness of your true position, and understand that you, too, are anointed, though not for the same purposes (and in humbler and derived fashion), for which the Spirit dwelt without measure upon the First-born among many brethren.

Kings were anointed; and when that divine gift comes into a man's heart, it, and as I believe, only it, makes him lord of himself, of circumstances, of time, and of the world. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's. There is one real royalty--the royalty of the man who rules because he submits. Every Christian soul may be described as Gideon's brethren were described, As thou art, so were they: each one resembled the children of a king, for if Christ's Spirit is in the Christian's spirit, the disciple will grow like his Master, and it will be growingly true of us, that as He is, so are we in this world.

Priests were anointed. And we, if we are Christian people, have the prerogative of direct access to the Divine Presence, and need neither Church nor sacraments to intervene or mediate between us and Him. The true democracy of Christianity lies in that word Mine anointed.

**II. Further, every Christian man is a prophet.**

I have already said that there is no historical warrant for supposing that the gift of prophecy, in its narrower sense, was ever bestowed upon any of these patriarchs. But prediction is only one corner of the prophetic office. The word is connected with a root which means to boil, or bubble like a fountain, and it expresses, not so much the theme of the utterance as its nature. The welling up, from a full heart, of God's thoughts and God's truth, that is prophecy. The patriarchs were prophets, not in the sense that they had the gift of beholding and foretelling visions of the future, and all the wonder that should be, but in the higher sense--for it is the higher as well as broader--of being bearers of a divine word, breathed into them by that anointing Spirit, that it might be uttered forth by them. That sort of prophetic inspiration belongs to all Christians. It is the result of the relationship between Christ and Christians of which we have been speaking. Every one who has been anointed will be thus gifted.

God's messiahs will be God's prophets. If we are in touch with God, and have our hearts and whole spiritual natures drawn and kept so near Him as that we are ever receiving from Him of His transcendent and mysterious life, then silence will be impossible. The lips will not be able to contain themselves, but will speak forth that of which the heart is full. And thus every Christian man, in the measure of his true Christianity, will be a prophet of the most High.

I do not need to point the lesson. A silent Christian is an anomaly, a contradiction in terms, as much as black light, or dark stars. If Christ is in you He will come out of you. If your hearts are full the crystal treasure will flow over the brim. It is easy to be dumb when you have nothing to say, and that is the condition of hundreds of people who fancy themselves to be, and are called by others, Christians. Mine anointed cannot help being My prophets. If you are not prophets, if there never is any bubbling up of the fountain demanding utterance, ask yourselves whether there is any fountain there at all.

**III. And so, lastly, every Christian man, in his double capacity of anointed and prophet, is watched over by God.**

One is tempted to diverge into wider considerations, and speak of the relative importance of things secular and sacred (to adopt a doubtful distinction) in the history of the world, and how the former are for the sake of the latter. But I do not yield to the temptation. Let me rather take the thought here as it applies to our own little lives.

Abraham more than once in his lifetime, though sometimes by his own fault, was brought into very perilous places. There are one or two incidents which are familiar to most of us, I dare say, in his life which are evidently referred to in the phrase He reproved kings for their sakes. The principle remains in full force to-day, and God says to every thing and person, Death included, Do My prophets no harm. They may slay; they cannot harm. If I might use a very homely metaphor, sportsmen train retriever dogs to bring their game without ruffling a feather. God trains evils and sorrows to lay hold of us, and bring us to, and lay us down at, His feet untouched.

There is no real harm in so-called evil. That is the interpretation that Christianity gives to such words as this of my text, not because it is forced to weaken them by the obstinate facts of life, but because it has learned to strengthen them by the understanding of what is harm and what is good; what is gain and what is loss. Peter shall be delivered out of prison by the skin of his teeth when they are hammering at the scaffold on the other side of the wall, and the dawn is just beginning to show itself in the sky; whilst James shall have his head cut off. Was that because God loved Peter better than James? Was one harmed and the other not? Ah! Peter's turn came all in good time. Peter and his brother Paul had both to bow their necks to the headsman's sword one day, although one of them said, Who shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? and the other said, when within sight of his death, He shall deliver me from every evil work. Were they disappointed? Let us hear how Paul ends the same verse: and shall save me into His heavenly kingdom. Ay! and he was saved into the heavenly kingdom when outside the walls of Rome; where a gaudy church stands now, he died for his Master. No harm came to him. God said to Death, Do My prophet no harm! and Death docilely did him good, and brought him to his Lord.

Only, dear friends! let us remember that the inviolableness of the ambassador depends on his function, and not on his person; and that if we want to be kept from all evil, we must do the work for which we have been sent here. So let us understand the meaning of our difficulties and sorrows. Let us set ourselves to our tasks, live up to the level of the high names which we have a right to claim, and be sure that there is no harm in the harm that befalls us; and that all evil things work together for good to them that love God.