

Tozer

## *We Need Men of God Again*

THE CHURCH at this moment needs men, the right kind of men, bold men. The talk is that we need revival, that we need a new baptism of the Spirit—and God knows we must have both; but God will not revive mice. He will not fill rabbits with the Holy Ghost.

We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul, who cannot be frightened by threats of death because they have already died to the allurements of this world. Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances; their only compulsion will come from within—or from above.

This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. These free men will serve God and mankind from motives too high to be understood by the rank and file of religious retainers who today shuttle in and out of the sanctuary. They will make no decisions out of fear, take no course out of a desire to please, accept no service for financial considerations, perform no religious act out of mere custom; nor

## WE NEED MEN OF GOD AGAIN

will they allow themselves to be influenced by the love of publicity or the desire for reputation.

Much that the church—even the evangelical church—is doing these days she is doing because she is afraid not to. Ministerial associations take up projects for no higher reason than that they are being scared into it. Whatever their ear-to-the-ground, fear-inspired reconnoitering leads them to believe the world expects them to do they will be doing come next Monday morning with all kinds of trumped-up zeal and show of godliness. The pressure of public opinion calls these prophets, not the voice of Jehovah.

The true church has never sounded out public expectations before launching her crusades. Her leaders heard from God and went ahead wholly independent of popular support or the lack of it. They knew their Lord's will and did it, and their people followed them—sometimes to triumph, oftener to insults and public persecution—and their sufficient reward was the satisfaction of being right in a wrong world.

Another characteristic of the true prophet has been love. The free man who has learned to hear God's voice and dared to obey it has felt the moral burden that broke the hearts of the Old Testament prophets, crushed the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ and wrung streams of tears from the eyes of the apostles.

The free man has never been a religious tyrant, nor has he sought to lord it over God's heritage. It

is fear and lack of self-assurance that has led men to try to crush others under their feet. These have had some interest to protect, some position to secure, so they have demanded subjection from their followers as a guarantee of their own safety. But the free man—never; he has nothing to protect, no ambition to pursue and no enemy to fear. For that reason he is completely careless of his standing among men. If they follow him, well and good; if not, he loses nothing that he holds dear; but whether he is accepted or rejected he will go on loving his people with sincere devotion. And only death can silence his tender intercession for them.

Yes, if evangelical Christianity is to stay alive she must have men again, the right kind of men. She must repudiate the weaklings who dare not speak out, and she must seek in prayer and much humility the coming again of men of the stuff prophets and martyrs are made of. God will hear the cries of His people as He heard the cries of Israel in Egypt. And He will send deliverance by sending deliverers. It is His way among men.

And when the deliverers come—reformers, revivalists, prophets—they will be men of God and men of courage. They will have God on their side because they will be careful to stay on God's side. They will be co-workers with Christ and instruments in the hand of the Holy Ghost. Such men will be baptized with the Spirit indeed, and through their labors He will baptize others and send the long delayed revival.

### *New Spiritual Leadership Imperative*

SOMEONE WROTE the godly Macarius of Optino that his spiritual counsel had been helpful.

"This cannot be," Macarius wrote in reply. "Only the mistakes are mine. All good advice is the advice of the Spirit of God; His advice that I happen to have heard rightly and to have passed on without distorting it."

There is an excellent lesson here which we must not allow to go unregarded. It is the sweet humility of the man of God. "Only the mistakes are mine." He was fully convinced that his own efforts could result only in mistakes, and that any good that came of his advice must be the work of the Holy Spirit operating within him. Apparently this was more than a sudden impulse of self-depreciation, which the proudest of men may at times feel; it was rather a settled conviction with him, a conviction that gave set and direction to his entire life. His long and humble ministry which brought spiritual aid to multitudes of persons reveals this clearly enough.

In this day when shimmering personalities carry on the Lord's work after the methods of the enter-

## *The Gift of Prophetic Insight*

A PROPHET IS ONE who knows his times and what God is trying to say to the people of his times.

What God says to His church at any given period depends altogether upon her moral and spiritual condition and upon the spiritual need of the hour. Religious leaders who continue mechanically to expound the Scriptures without regard to the current religious situation are no better than the scribes and lawyers of Jesus' day who faithfully parroted the Law without the remotest notion of what was going on around them spiritually. They fed the same diet to all and seemed wholly unaware that there was such a thing as meat in due season. The prophets never made that mistake nor wasted their efforts in that manner. They invariably spoke to the condition of the people of their times.

Today we need prophetic preachers; not preachers of prophecy merely, but preachers with a gift of prophecy. The word of wisdom is missing. We need the gift of discernment again in our pulpits. It is not ability to predict that we need, but the anointed eye, the power of spiritual penetration and interpretation, the ability to appraise the religious

## THE GIFT OF PROPHETIC INSIGHT

scene as viewed from God's position, and to tell us what is actually going on.

There has probably never been another time in the history of the world when so many people knew so much about religious happenings as they do today. The newspapers are eager to print religious news; the secular news magazines devote several pages of each issue to the doings of the church and the synagogue; a number of press associations gather church news and make it available to the religious journals at a small cost. Even the hiring of professional publicity men to plug one or another preacher or religious movement is no longer uncommon; the mails are stuffed with circulars and "releases," while radio and television join to tell the listening public what religious people are doing throughout the world.

Greater publicity for religion may be well and I have no fault to find with it. Surely religion should be the most newsworthy thing on earth, and there may be some small encouragement in the thought that vast numbers of persons want to read about it. What disturbs me is that amidst all the religious hubbub hardly a voice is raised to tell us what God thinks about the whole thing.

Where is the man who can see through the ticker tape and confetti to discover which way the parade is headed, why it started in the first place and, particularly, who is riding up front in the seat of honor?

Not the fact that the churches are unusually active these days, not what religious people are doing,

should engage our attention, but *why* these things are so. The big question is *Why?* And no one seems to have an answer for it. Not only is there no answer, but scarcely is there anyone to ask the question. It just never occurs to us that such a question remains to be asked. Christian people continue to gossip religious shoptalk with scarcely as much as a puzzled look. The soundness of current Christianity is assumed by the religious masses as was the soundness of Judaism when Christ appeared. People know they are seeing certain activity, but just what it means they do not know, nor have they the faintest idea of where God is or what relation He has toward the whole thing.

What is needed desperately today is prophetic insight. Scholars can interpret the past; it takes prophets to interpret the present. Learning will enable a man to pass judgment on our yesterdays, but it requires a gift of clear seeing to pass sentence on our own day. One hundred years from now historians will know what was taking place religiously in this year of our Lord; but that will be too late for us. We should know right now.

If Christianity is to receive a rejuvenation it must be by other means than any now being used. If the church in the second half of this century is to recover from the injuries she suffered in the first half, there must appear a new type of preacher. The proper, ruler-of-the-synagogue type will never do. Neither will the priestly type of man who carries out his duties, takes his pay and asks no questions,

nor the smooth-talking pastoral type who knows how to make the Christian religion acceptable to everyone. All these have been tried and found wanting.

Another kind of religious leader must arise among us. He must be of the old prophet type, a man who has seen visions of God and has heard a voice from the Throne. When he comes (and I pray God there will be not one but many) he will stand in flat contradiction to everything our smirking, smooth civilization holds dear. He will contradict, denounce and protest in the name of God and will earn the hatred and opposition of a large segment of Christendom. Such a man is likely to be lean, rugged, blunt-spoken and a little bit angry with the world. He will love Christ and the souls of men to the point of willingness to die for the glory of the one and the salvation of the other. But he will fear nothing that breathes with mortal breath.

We need to have the gifts of the Spirit restored again to the church, and it is my belief that the one gift we need most now is the gift of prophecy.

## *The Prophet Is a Man Apart*

THE CHURCH is God's witness to each generation, and her ministers are her voice. Through them she becomes vocal. By them she has spoken always to the world, and by them God has spoken to the church herself. The testimony of her godly laymen has ever been a mighty aid in the work she seeks to accomplish. But her laymen can never do, and assuredly are not called to do, the work of her ministers. By gift and calling the minister is a man apart.

It is not enough, however, that the man of God preach the truth. He has no right to take up a man's time telling him what is true merely. It is a doubtful compliment to any preacher to nod the head and say, "That is true." The same might properly be said if he were doing no more than reciting the multiplication table. It also is true.

A church can wither as surely under the ministry of soulless Bible exposition as it can where no Bible at all is given. To be effective the preacher's message must be alive; it must alarm, arouse, challenge; it must be God's present voice to a particular people.

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Then, and not till then, is it the prophetic word and the man himself a prophet.

To fulfill perfectly his calling the prophet must be under the constant sway of the Holy Ghost; and further, he must be alert to moral and spiritual conditions. All spiritual teaching should be related to life. It should intrude into the daily and private living of the hearers. Without being personal, the true prophet will yet pierce the conscience of each listener as if the message had been directed to him alone.

Really to preach the truth it is often necessary that the man of God know the people's hearts better than they themselves do. People are frequently confused and inwardly at cross-purposes. The anointed prophet must speak to this confusion with clarifying wisdom. He must surprise his hearers with his unsuspected knowledge of their secret thoughts.

The work of a minister is, in fine, altogether too difficult for any man. He is driven to God for wisdom. He must seek the mind of Christ and throw himself on the Holy Spirit for spiritual power and mental acumen equal to the task.