

MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE

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Wipf and Stock Publishers

150 West Broadway • Eugene OR 97401

2001

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ISBN: 1-57910-704-4

Reprinted by *Wipf and Stock Publishers*
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Previously published by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898.

PREFACE

These addresses, delivered in various centres in the United States, were so evidently accompanied by the power and blessing of the Divine Spirit that it has seemed wise to put them in permanent form, in the hope that they may revive and quicken many hearts.

May the blessing of God continue to rest upon them in their larger ministry.

F. B. MEYER.

MARCH, 1898.

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MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

I.

GOD IS NEAR.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.

"Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."—Isaiah vi., 1-8.

One afternoon, about four o'clock, Isaiah, who was then in early middle life, found himself one of a great crowd of worshipers slowly ascending the temple's steps. Together with them he passed the lower platform and still climbed until at last he stood at the summit, at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Standing there, he little realized that that afternoon was to be the epochal moment of his life; but that afternoon was to introduce an altogether new element into his life work.

Standing there upon that highest step, in the direct line of vision lay, first, the altar upon which the afternoon sacrifice was to be made; beyond it a laver where the priests washed their feet; and beyond that the tall cedar doors that opened upon the Holy Place, which indeed would have unfolded presently, as to Zachariah in after days when he went to offer incense while the people stood without in prayer.

On either side stood probably two hundred and fifty Levites, with the instruments of David in their hands, prepared to sing the psalms which were so famous, and about which their Babylonian captives in after days said:

"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

As Isaiah stood there wrapped in thought, those who were nearest him had no idea what was transpiring; but he was swept away from all those sights and sounds, from the sun in mid sky, from the glistening marble of the temple, from the music of the Levite band, from all the crowds that pressed him on every side, and he beheld the sapphire throne of the King Himself. He heard the prayer or chant of the seraphim, and for a moment his whole soul was steeped in the rapture of that vision. But a moment after he was plunged in the profoundest contrition of soul as he contrasted himself with those who served God with sinless lips, and he cried:

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

Now why was this? Partly because after the golden years of Uzziah's reign, in which money and

splendor were corrupting the hearts of the people, it was necessary that the leaders at least, or many like Isaiah who stood in the forefront, should be lifted to a higher level. You must understand from the previous chapters of his book how the dwellers of Zion, the men and women of Jerusalem, and, indeed, all the people, were being corrupted by the sin, the fashion, the worldliness, and the money making of their time, and how needful it was, therefore, that God should raise a new standard amongst them by the hand of Isaiah, who stood closest to Him.

It may be that in this country at this time, the very prosperity of your land, the years of peace, the great influx of populations, and the increase of wealth have been subtly undermining the religious life of your people, so that some of your holy customs are being broken down. Perhaps family worship is no longer maintained as it was. The children are no longer trained, as once, in the habits of godliness. The high morale of your people, derived from your noble ancestry, may have been disintegrating while you devoted your energies in other directions than in whole-hearted devotion to God. At such times it is God's habit to call around Himself His Isaiahs, His servants, those who stand nearest to Him, the members of His church, and to lift them up to a new level of Christian living, that from that moment they may be the pivot on which a lever may work to lift the entire nation.

As I have traveled through your great country, in city after city I have met with crowds of your fellow-countrymen, especially your ministers, and I

have been struck with the hunger which exists on every hand for deeper and intenser spiritual life. It appears to me as if God were calling upon the people of His own Church in the United States to stand up before Jesus Christ as their King, to learn from Him some deeper and mightier power than that which has been vibrating lately amongst them. Let us confidently look to Him for it.

But before you and I can become what we want to be, there must first be a humbling process. We must be laid low in the dust before God. Just in proportion as we are prepared to descend, will we ascend. Let us get down in the dust before Jesus Christ, our Lord, and let each one of us become convicted, and cry:

"Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips."

There is a threefold conviction here, of personal unworthiness, of the nearness of God, and of the one method by which the heart of man can be pacified.

I.

THERE IS, FIRST, THE CONVICTION OF UNWORTHINESS:

"Woe, is me! for I am undone."

The sixth chapter of course follows the fifth. If you read the latter you will understand how earnestly Isaiah had been pursuing his prophetic work. This man, who of all Israel seemed to be the purest and sweetest, is the man that bows the lowest and is most convinced of sin. God's children need to learn that lesson too. He had done good work, but

God saw that he could do better, and so convicted him of the comparative unworthiness of his past ministry. Thus it befell that the man by whom God had spoken through five chapters was a man who confessed to having unclean lips.

Now you may have a good record lying behind you. It may be that for five chapters of your life you have been ministering to people, to children, to the waifs and strays of your city, and you have been greatly owned. But God wants to teach you a better lesson, to make you more mightily powerful, to baptise you more with the Holy Ghost and with fire; and therefore He takes even you, true-hearted as you are, and brings you down into the place where the Holy Spirit will hold up your past life, and bid you review it until you, who have been looked up to by everyone as an example, and quoted as the most devoted and earnest of men, and idolized by many who have been moved by your eloquence—as you come beneath the light that shall fall upon you from the face of Jesus Christ, shall cry:

“I am an undone man.”

You will notice that this conviction was wrought through the vision of Jesus, and indeed that is the only vision that will really convince us of sin. We need to stand beneath the light that falls from His face. He is amongst us at this moment. He is passing through this assembly and looking down deep into your hearts; and as you look up into His face, do you not realize that there is a look of grief and sorrow there, because in your work there has been so much of yourself and so little of His love? Does He not reveal to you the poverty of your

motive, the lowness of your aim, your greater thought of what men might consider of you than of what He might say? Let the light of the living Christ fall upon you now, the light of the coming Christ, the silvery light of the second advent, the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, the light of the great white throne; and as this falls upon your heart today, and you see what He wants you to be and what you are, you shall say:

"I am undone."

There is another thought. Isaiah saw the worship of the blessed ones: "One cried to another."

I like to think of that. It was as if one of them cried, "Your strains are not lifted high enough; higher, brothers, higher!" And he cried across the intervening space to the seraphim opposite, and bade them rise to a higher note, till the chorus swelled and rose and broke. I have heard a bird in the spring morning cry to all the songsters of the glade till the whole woodland has rung again. Sometimes in our prayer meeting an earnest man has shaken the very gates of heaven and has stirred the whole meeting. That is what we want. And as I tell you of a richer, fuller life, a life more abundant than many of you know, may you be convicted of the need of a new anointing, of a fresh application to the Son of God for the touch of fire. May ours be the seraph's reverence, with the veiled face, ours his modesty, with the veiled form, ours his balance of one-third obedience to two-thirds of contemplation. Then perhaps our cry may awaken similar results to his, and we shall cry, "Undone."

II.

NEXT, THE CONVICTION THAT GOD IS NEAR.

It is said the whole earth is full of God's glory. You and I would be prepared to admit that where the glory of God shines in the spray above Niagara, or where the morning tint is seen upon the Matterhorn and the evening glow upon the Jungfrau, or where the sun rises and sets upon the broad bosom of the Atlantic, or where the wake of the ships stirs the phosphorescence of the Mediterranean at night. But to be told that the *whole* earth is full of the glory of God, that startles us.

I know a place in London where a woman in a drunken frenzy put her child upon a hot iron bar; where a man beat to death his little crippled boy whose agonizing cries were heard at night. I should not have thought that the glory of God was there. But the seraphim say the *whole* earth is full of the glory of God. We are reminded of what Elizabeth Barrett Browning says:

"Earth's crammed with Heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God,
But only he that sees takes off his shoes."

One day in London I was sitting in a dark omnibus. A man came in to examine our tickets, and I thought to myself, You will never be able to tell whether they have been punctured aright. As I watched, curious to notice, he touched a little spring on his breast, and in a tiny globe of glass a beautiful glow of electric light shone out. Manifestly the man could see anywhere, because he carried the