

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

Harry A. Ironside, Litt.D.

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ISAIAH CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

THE HEART-CRY OF THE REMNANT

THE last three chapters of the book (chaps. 64, 65, 66) are all intimately linked together. In chapter sixty-four we have what might be called the heart cry, the prayer, of the remnant in the last days, whilst suitable for God's people at any time of trial or affliction, who feel the need of divine intervention. In actual prophetic application it opens up to us the hearts of the people of Israel in the last days, suffering under the Beast and the Antichrist. They cry to the Lord to come down on their behalf.

“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (verses 1-4).

The Apostle Paul quoted these words from the Septuagint Version in the Epistle to the Corinthians, **“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him”** (I Corinthians 2:9, 10). But he immediately adds, **“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”**

An added revelation has been given, of which Isaiah knew nothing, something that God had reserved for a future day. People often quote the words as if they stand today as in Isaiah's time. They forget Paul immediately gives the added revelation, **“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit . . . But we have the mind of Christ”** (verses 10, 16).

How fitting will be the cry for help on the lips and from the hearts of the exercised remnant of Israel in the last days. They call upon God to intervene, they see no help in man, as the nations are gathering together. God has said in the book of Zechariah, **“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle”** (Zechariah 14:2). The remnant see that ominous gathering and cry, **“O God, wilt Thou not intervene? Wilt Thou not rend the heavens and come down? Wilt Thou not deal with these nations Thyself and give the deliverance for which our hearts crave?”**

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand” (verses 6-8).

The remnant take the place of confession, of self-judgment, of repentance before God, realizing that if God will undertake for them, they must take their rightful place in His presence. They know of the patience of God so often shown to Israel, so there is no self-justification. They do not ask God to intervene because of their merits or their faithfulness. They say, **“Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”** We understand why we and our fathers have been suffering through the centuries. **“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”** It is not merely filth contracted by dragging garments in the streets, but contaminated by filth from within. They are all as an unclean thing because of the corruption of the heart. But they turn to God because He has promised definitely, **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”** (Proverbs 28:13).

David cried out in Psalm 25:11, **“O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.”** “Great!” We might have expected him to say, if he had been like some of us, “O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for after all it is not very great. I didn’t really mean to do wrong. I failed, but I am sorry, but I did not mean to be bad.” That is the way people talk today. But he says, **“O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.”**

Only a great God can pardon great iniquity. And so the remnant here do not try to justify themselves, nor cover up, but make full, frank confession of their sin and iniquity and acknowledge that they have no righteousness of their own to plead. All their own fancied righteousnesses are but contaminated rags in the sight of a holy God. When we take this attitude we may count on God’s answer in blessing.

~ end of chapter 64 ~

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