



CHAPTER 11: ISAIAH

THE UNSEALING OF THE LIPS

"I CANNOT speak, I have not courage to stand up before a congregation, or in a ring in the open air. I have not nerve to speak to people about their souls, and about God, and judgment, and eternity, either in private or in public. I have not ability, I don't like, I am not called, have not the necessary gifts, am not good enough. I come and listen, and give (a little), and go out with the procession (I don't walk in the ranks), but I cannot stand up and talk. I wish I could, but I cannot."

Now, it seems to us that Isaiah felt very much after the same fashion. He could not warn the people when God wanted him, but his excuse was the correct one. He had had a vision; had seen God, and seen himself, and the result was, he perceived, and felt, and confessed the secret of his silence, and he rightly named the padlock on his lips. It was not mental or physical, or social, but SPIRITUAL inability. I am a man of unclean lips, that is, he had an unclean heart. That was the sore spot. Oh, we do love these straight, honest, Bible confessions, and all other confessions that are straight and honest, too. Out with the truth, if you know it, and, if you don't, may God soon reveal it.

Oh, in what multitudes of instances have we seen just the same sort of experience as that of Isaiah. It was the vision made the difference. Before the vision, all manner of excuses, such as we started with in this paper, and ten thousand more, but after there has been a vision of the Divine purity and the testimony of the Divine messengers, and a revealing of the Divine glory, and a moving of the posts, or of those who have hitherto been as still and as stupid as posts, and a filling of the place with the smoke of the sweet precious incense of praise and glory. Oh, then, they have lain on their faces, and all the mean, and frivolous, and worldly, and selfish, and ease-loving excuses have vanished, and the truth has come out. "Oh, my vileness, my malice, my vanity, my unfaithfulness, my back-sliding. I am a man, I am a woman, of unclean lips. That is the cause, and the only cause, of my padlocked lips. God forgive, and cleanse, and save me."



So the truth comes out. God knew it before, and we suspected it. Now Isaiah, and those likewise afflicted, see it, and God, and angels, and men hear it confessed. Uncleanness is

The Secret of Sealed Lips.

How can this be? Simple enough to those willing to know. Are you willing? Then we will try and show. There are some reasons evident enough.

1. WITH UNCLEANNESS THERE IS A SENSE OF PERPETUAL UNWORTHINESS FOR THE TASK. I am not what I profess. If I talk to the people they may reply, "Physician, heal thyself." My husband, my wife, my child, my neighbours, my workmates know that I don't live up to my profession. If I could look the crowd in the street or in the theatre, or anywhere else, in the face, and say, 'You all know what manner of life I live among you; and which of you can convince me of sin?' then I could stand up and boldly and fearlessly warn them to flee to Christ from the wrath to come."

2. UNCLEANNESS MEANS WEAKNESS. If a man is suffering from any kind of disease, he is unequal to any kind of hard work. Sin is a disease, and until the soul is perfectly cured, neither God nor man will get much hard work out of it. You feel too lazy and ease-loving to sacrifice yourself for Christ and souls. Here is the reason:

3. UNCLEANNESS MEANS IDOLS. Idols are weights, and weights hinder any man or woman running or racing or doing anything for God. These are the brakes on the wheels – here is the secret why thousands are dumb and silent while a guilty world goes on its way unwarned to hell.

4. UNCLEANNESS MEANS PERPETUAL CONDEMNATION.

Condemnation is always more or less accompanied by clouds of doubts and fears and gloom which obscure the soul's vision of Divine things. Heaven and Hell, and judgment, and Calvary, and Divine things generally, are only dimly seen, and as the result the soul is influenced and exercised by natural things, and the soul is silent – cannot or will not run and speak for God.



5. AND FURTHER, AND STILL MORE IMPORTANT – UNCLEANNESSE SHUTS OUT INSPIRATION. – God dwells not in an unsanctified heart, and, therefore, speaks not through unsanctified lips. From an unclean heart God, who only can create courage and zeal, and pity and fill with light and love and power, is absent. If you are to have your lips opened and be a messenger for the Most High God, you want a message, otherwise how can you deliver the Word of the Lord?

WHAT IS THE REMEDY? Here it is – a live coal, a red-hot coal, from off the Divine altar, that is from the Divine heart, which, touching you, will make your heart red-hot, A seraphim took one to Isaiah – never mind who brings it to YOU, whether a Seraphim or a Salvationist! You can't get it wrong if you get the right fire. Fire-mind, not ice. FIRE, and PURIFYING FIRE. The moment it touched Isaiah, his iniquity was taken away, and his sin was purged. Oh, for this fire! Blessed seraphim, come again! God is no respecter of persons. He came again at Pentecost – at least the same fire came again whoever brought it. And again and again and again since then. Repeat Thy visits, and touch the lips of every Salvation Soldier in our ranks.

But this means something on the part of Salvation Army Soldiers. What is it? It means TWO PRESENTATIONS.

1st, FOR THE PURIFYING PROCESS. To be clean. Can you do this, my comrades? Have you counted the cost of what is intended on your part by being a saint indeed?

"I can't be peculiar," said a sister the other day, as she rose from the Holiness Penitent-form. "I cannot be singular among all my friends." So she took away with her the trappings of her pride, the signs of her bondage, and went without the fire. She wanted to be useful, and felt she must have as a qualification the live coal: but she would not pay the price.

Count the cost, and honestly pay it. Better, keep your property, O Ananias and Sapphira, than give it the Lord, and then hold part of it back.

Present yourself, with honest purpose, all you have, and are, and hope to have, and



be. Wait. Expect. Trust. And now the Mighty Spirit comes with purging fire and quickening flame, and Isaiah exclaims, "My iniquity is taken away and my sin is purged, my uncleanness is gone – heart and lips unclean no longer."

Hold there, Isaiah. What is it you say? Beware of Absolute perfection. Sinlessness, Conceitedness? Beware! What, do you say? All my iniquity is taken away, and all my sin is purged? How do you know? The seraphim said so, and I believe him. It is gone; I have no iniquity now, it is taken away; and I have no sin, it is purged. All glory to God for ever. Hallelujah! I HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!

Is that all your authority? Oh, no; I have authority beyond that. I feel it, I know it. My clean heart testifies to the fact, my iniquity is taken away, and my sin is purged.

Amen, Isaiah. We believe you, and what God has cleansed, Heaven forbid that we should call unclean or common.

What follows next? Why, as a natural consequence of the whole thing, there is another presentation. What is that? Hark! the voice of Jehovah is still sounding in the depths of Isaiah's soul, and what was discord before is grandest and divinest music now. Hear it, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And the purged, cleansed soul of Isaiah rises up and goes down at Jehovah's feet, while every part and particle of his sanctified being responds

"Here am I, send me."

II. THE PRESENTATION FOR SERVICE. Send me. To Jerusalem, to France, to America, to my own town or home, ay, anywhere, to be a prophet, to be an officer, to be a private, anything, only let my cleansed lips be fired more and more, that I may with power and blessing deliver the message of my Lord.

This presentation for service is a very different thing from saying, "Here I am, and I hope here I shall be allowed to remain. But still if I should be wanted, well, I hope – I mean to be ready to go." There is no fire about that. None of the burning eagerness to go and do something worthy of the King and of His message.



Thank God we have seen not a few who with a hearty readiness to do or die, have offered themselves up when the call has been made at many a council of war. In town after town whole companies of men and women, after hearing stories of war and hardship, that could not but show them, plainly enough, to what sorrows and difficulties we are called, have come to me begging to be sent out, and hundreds have left situation, friends, and home, to become officers of the Army.

What, indeed, would be the use to us of a presentation which did not amount to this? Have you made such a presentation of yourself to God, or are you still in the "I should like" region? Oh, if you are, do come out without further delay, and render to God the things that are God's, your spirit, soul, and body – your life, your all, henceforth for evermore.