

Classic Christian Writings:

The prophet Isaiah lived in a time when Israel was in a backslidden condition. Her cup of iniquity had become almost full and she was soon to be carried away captive to a heathen land. There were mountains of difficulties in the way of God's work. The people were divided, and nothing, it seemed, could bring them together. The worst thing was their lukewarmness--the hardest thing in the world with which to deal.

The adversaries were ridiculing and mocking, saying, "Where is your God?" These taunts did not trouble Israel very much, because there was very little fear of God among the people. In the midst of this situation, Isaiah perceived that if God would only come down, that is, if He would manifest His presence, it would solve every problem of the nation.

"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!" (Isa 64:1,2).

The mountains would flow down at His presence. Nothing could stand in the presence of Almighty God, and His manifested presence would break down every barrier and sweep away everything that hindered. He saw that God's fire would melt the people and bring them together by His power. He saw that the waters would be made to boil, so that lukewarmness would vanish.

Best of all, God's name would be made known to the adversaries. Skepticism would be swept away, and His people would tremble in His presence.

Similar Conditions Today

Without a doubt we are living in a time similar to that of Isaiah's day. We see conditions in America are terrible. There are divisions among God's people. False doctrines and cults have swept thousands into fanaticism and delusions of vast variety. On every hand there is a lukewarmness that is appalling.

Thousands have lost their faith and left their first love. The only thing that can solve the problem is the manifest presence of God! All our programs, our great preaching, our organizations, our choirs and orchestras, radio and TV--everything that man can do--has failed to solve the problem.

But if we can get God to come down and manifest Himself, the mountains will flow down at His presence, the divisions among God's people will vanish, and we will be brought into one great united body.

More than that, the lukewarm people will be set on fire for God. The waters will be made to boil. The enemies of Christ will be made to know that His power is real, and His name will be made known to the adversaries.

The words of Isaiah take us to the very heart of today's problem of getting God to come down and manifest His presence among us:

"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" (Isaiah 64:7).

Let us face the truth. God has declared exactly why He does not come down. His people are backslidden, and not a man can be found who will stir himself up to take hold of God in effectual prayer. It is clearly the meaning of this Word that God will come down, however bad conditions may be, provided He can get His people to call upon His name.

Many instances in the history of the Church prove this. The greatest men who have lived to shake the world with God's power have been, every one of them, men of prevailing prayer. The one effectual means for bringing back the presence of God to the people is prevailing prayer!

The greatest lack among God's people is that of travailing prayer. We should be reminded that there has never been a Holy Ghost revival in the history of the world that has not been prayed down! And the praying had to be prevailing prayer--prayer that was desperate; prayer that stirred people up to such fervency of spirit that they fairly took hold of God.

I have seen many times in revival meetings when God's Spirit began to move on people whose hearts were open, and who were hungry for God until that heavenly urge was upon them, and they would pray all night long, wrestling with God like Jacob of old! (Gen. 32:24-30).

I have seen such tremendous results come after such travailing prayer that I am certain that wherever there is real travailing prayer that takes hold of God, it will bring the presence of God down.

"As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8).

Prayer Means Warfare

The devil in all his wisdom knows that the power of prayer is the greatest weapon that God has put in our hands against the enemy. He knows that if he can keep the people from praying, he will stop a revival, and knowing this, he will do anything and everything in the world that he can to choke down a real spirit of Holy Ghost praying.

The devil knows that if we recognize that prayer is a real battle, we would be willing to fight in the battle of prayer and not give down because of the pressure of the enemy. For that reason the devil has camouflaged his movements in these days, and he is making a battleground in other places.

The devil gets us disputing over doctrines, and fighting over other things--a camouflage to sidetrack us from the real place of battle. There is only one real battleground today and that is the battleground of prayer!

Busy With Good Things

If you start to pray through, you are going to meet with a real battle in the spiritual realm. The devil brings drowsiness upon you. He will divert your mind onto something else. He will do anything under the sun to keep you from praying through.

The devil knows that if you can get your prayers answered you can solve any problem in the world and accomplish any purpose for God.

While preaching has a place in the plan of God and a wonderful place at that, yet the greatest preaching in the world, unless backed up by travailing prayer, cannot bring the Holy Ghost revival we must have today! The prayer of faith can do anything. Jesus said, "Nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20).

The devil knows this and for that reason the real attack he is making on God's people today is an attack against the spirit of prayer. He wants to keep God's people from seeing the importance of it and really taking hold of God.

Shall we face the responsibility for God's holding Himself aloof in the heavens? We cannot escape it. We can refuse to acknowledge it now, but it will meet us at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Then it will be too late!

The opportunity for mighty conquest through the power of God will be gone forever. Lost souls that might have been saved must be met. We cannot roll the responsibility upon someone else. Each of us must face it as our own!

God has given us the reason why He doesn't come down. He says it is because "none have called upon His name." That expression "called" has a tremendous significance. It denotes desperation. It denotes importunity and a stirred-up condition that puts men into a desperate place.

The main thing is, God says, "There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of God" (Isa. 64:7). Because prayer is a battleground and because the enemy does everything he can to choke down and hinder a spirit of prayer, a man must necessarily stir himself up in order to be able to pray effectually.

The Great Problem Today

We must get the people of God to see that they must stir themselves up if they really want to prevail in prayer. Unless they do prevail in prayer, God will not come down and manifest His presence.

We must see that the battle lies right here. It is the battle against ourselves--the battle against the flesh that

would become slothful and indulgent and indifferent to the great needs today!

To stir yourself up means something! It means that you have to go against the tendencies of your own flesh, even against the desires of your flesh. You have to recognize that you need to be stirred up or otherwise there would be no necessity for such a command that you stir yourself up.

God demands a real heart of love in us that has a true interest in His work. He is looking for that heart of love before He can cooperate with us. We must take it upon ourselves to stir ourselves up. Our hearts must be in tune with God and He must have a manifestation of love in our heart and of faithfulness to His cause before He can trust us with His blessing and His power.

The great call to God's people all over the world today is to stir themselves up to take hold of God! If we do this, God will come down and manifest His presence.

Whosoever you are, recognize the tremendous importance of prayer. See the crying need for the presence of God, and acknowledge there is only one way to get God's presence manifested and that is for you, through real, intercessory, prevailing prayer, to stir yourself up to take hold of God. If you will do that, God will manifest Himself.

Resolve this very moment that, by God's grace, you are not going to shirk the battle. You can expect when you start on this line, to meet a tremendous opposition from the devil--a real conflict before you will ever be able to pray through to glorious victory.

You can expect the devil to beset you on every hand, to oppose you in every way possible, and to do everything in his power to choke you down and to discourage you, but brother, sister, pray through! Face the battle and fight it through to the finish!

Get on your face before God and stay there until you have taken hold of God. If you feel yourself getting drowsy, or your mind wandering, take an attitude against your own flesh. Like Daniel, set your face unto the Lord, and with purpose of heart and all the determination of your soul, stir yourself up to take hold of God!