

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE DOUBLE CLEANSING.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”—Zechariah xiii. 1, 2.

WHEN you read a letter, it is well to notice the date upon it; you may make mistakes if you do not. The promise in our text is dated, “In that day.” If we look a little way back, we shall find, in the tenth verse of the twelfth chapter, these words, “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.” When the soul learns to mourn before the cross, then it shall perceive that there is cleansing from sin. If thou hast looked to Christ whom thou hast pierced, and if so looking thou hast come to lament and loathe thy sin, it is in that day that God reveals to thee the fountain opened for thy sin and for thine uncleanness. Are any of you here broken down under a sense of sin? Then I am glad that I have such good news for you as my text contains. It is for sinners that Jesus bled and died. It is for you who are conscious of your great guiltiness that the fulness and the freeness of his grace are manifested. If you are a sinner, and Jesus is a Saviour, you are well met. If, by faith, you will look to him, it is a proof that he is looking to you, and he will take away your sin, and you shall go your way taking with you a song of love and praise unto him who has so graciously saved you. So, you see that, where there is mourning for sin, there is pardon for sin; when the eyes are full of tears of repentance, they are fittest for looking to Christ who takes all our guilt away. God help every mourner here to rejoice in Christ Jesus and his great salvation!

According to my text, this cleansing from guilt and sin is followed by a reformation. There is a fountain opened first for the putting away of sin and uncleanness as to the past and present, and there follows upon this that God takes away the idols out of the land, and even cuts off the very names and memory of them. God's flowers generally bloom double; and when he gives us the flower of pardon, he gives us the flower of regeneration with it. He that is made clean is also made anew. He that takes away the guilt of sin also takes away the tendency to sin. God will not forgive thee, and still leave thee to be what thou wast before; but, forgiving thee, he will make a great change in thee, so that thou shalt no more love the ways and the wages of iniquity, but thou shalt become henceforth a lover of holiness, one who desires to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and to walk in his ways at all times.

I should think there are some who will hear this message who will jump at such good tidings. They are saying in their hearts, "That is just what we want. We do not merely wish to be forgiven our old faults, we long to be made holy altogether. We desire to be set on the road to heaven, and to become pure in heart, and holy in life." Well, this is just what God is prepared to do for you; and they who look to Christ shall see, in the blood and water streaming from his riven side, the double cleansing that they crave,—the blood to atone for guilt, and the water to wash away the tendency towards future sin. These two things, of which I have spoken to you these many years, are what I have to speak about again at this time; but I do not want merely to speak about them, and to let it all end in talk. What is a mouthful of words worth? They will never feed the hunger of the soul. I want you to come to personal dealing with God, and to lay hold upon Christ and eternal life. I pray that you may find these two great things of which I have to speak,—first, the cleansing from uncleanness, and then, afterwards, the cleansing of the life. So will you receive a gracious answer to the prayer with which we began our service:—

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,
 Grace to cover all my sin;
 Let the healing streams abound,
 Make and keep me pure within;
 Thou of life the fountain art,
 Freely let me take of thee!
 Spring thou up within my heart,
 Rise to all eternity!"

I. To begin with the first cleansing,—I will keep to the words of the text, for there are no words like the words of God; and the words of the text are the best part of the sermon. This, then, is the first head of my discourse, A CLEANSING FOUNTAIN OPENED: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

In the first place, *uncleanness is in itself a loathsome, foul thing*. It used to be thought, in the Church of Rome, I believe, that if a person never washed himself, he might acquire the odour of sanctity, and become a great saint. We believe no such thing; we fancy that

cleanliness is the next thing to godliness; and, somehow, we loathe to be put into association with people who abhor cold water, and never wash themselves. Personal uncleanness is a disgusting thing, and those who work very much amongst the depraved find it one of the hardest parts of their work to have to put up with filthiness and uncleanness. Well now, that uncleanness of body is a picture of what uncleanness of soul is. A sinner is disgusting to God. Notwithstanding all the love that he has towards men, and his desire to bless them, yet sin is a thing which the soul of God abhors: all unrighteousness is most obnoxious to him. The doing of wrong is a thing which God cannot endure. He reckons it to be a filthy, loathsome, horrible thing. He says to the ungodly, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate." He cannot endure sin; it is contrary to his holy nature, it revolts him. This is how the Lord sets forth sin to us, it is uncleanness in his sight.

Dear friends, I should not wonder if we feel that, as sin is a filthy thing to the eyes of God, and he loathes it, *we look upon ourselves as filthy beings, and we loathe ourselves.* It is a good sign of the working of divine grace in the heart when a man begins to feel himself filthy, when he says, "I cannot rest till I am washed; I cannot endure this uncleanness any longer. Time was when I was willing even to wallow in sin; but something has happened to me that has woke up my conscience, and touched my heart, and I cannot bear to remain as I am. Lord, wash me; wash me; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." You are in a good way, my dear friend, when you begin to feel obnoxious to yourself, even as your sin has made you to be obnoxious to God. Self-loathing is one of the early stages of helpful spiritual life. I remember when I would have given all the world, if I had possessed it, to escape from myself,—when, as I remembered my sin, I wished I could have ceased to be, that I might have escaped from all my past iniquities, and from the sin that I felt sure would in the future come out of me while the fountain within was so foul and polluted. I pray God that every one I am now addressing who has never been washed in the open fountain may be made to be loathsome to himself, even as his sin makes him loathsome to God.

You remember, beloved friends, that in the tabernacle of old, between the tent of the congregation and the altar, was a laver, that the priests might wash themselves before they offered sacrifice to God. In Solomon's temple there was a molten sea, with ten lavers of brass, because God would not have anybody present himself unclean in his house of prayer. So, our text first represents us as being by nature unclean, and therefore *we need washing.* We cannot go into God's holy place and have fellowship with him as we are. Dost thou think that God can speak with thee as thou art? Can he have commerce with sin? Can he wink at iniquity? Can he tolerate that which his justice must condemn? Ah, no! As the unclean man, under the Jewish law, was cut off from all fellowship with the worshippers of God, so is every sinner at a distance from God until he has been washed. I wish you would look at yourself, my dear hearer. Unless you are washed in the blood of the Lamb, you must be regarded

as out of fellowship with God, shut out from his presence, under his ban, unable to draw near to God while your filthiness is upon you. This makes uncleanness a very dreadful thing; it is loathsome to God, and loathsome to ourselves, and makes us unable to have fellowship with the thrice-holy Jehovah.

At the same time, under the law, *an unclean person defiled all that he did*. Wherever he went, he polluted everything. If he sat on a chair, it became defiled; if he drank out of certain vessels, they had to be broken. If he touched other people, he spread the defilement wherever he went while he was himself in a state of ceremonial uncleanness. Such was the rigour of the law; and until thou art washed in the blood of Christ,—it matters not who or what thou art,—thou defilest everything. If thou dost pray, it is but the prayer of the unholy. If thou dost sing, there is no music in the melody to the ear of God. Thy want of a new heart has defiled it. All that thou doest, as it springs from thy heart and conscience, which are impure, must be defiled. Can a polluted spring send out clear streams? How can thy life be right till thy heart be right; and how can thy heart be right till God himself has renewed it by the power of his eternal Spirit, and the merit of the blood of Christ? So you see what an awful thing it was to be unclean. The unclean Jew could not worship, he could not do anything in the midst of his brethren, he was cut off from the tabernacle of the Lord until such time as he was purified.

We have had enough of that terrible truth if you truly feel it, and personally realize it, for now our text sweetly leads us to proclaim that *God has provided a way of cleansing us from sin*: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened.” God has provided a means of putting away human sin. The newest gospel, which is no gospel at all, denies this. It will not have it that the evil of the past life can be obliterated, and the guilt of sin can be removed by the blood of Jesus; but, in the face of this lie, we declare, in the name of the everlasting God, that there is forgiveness free and full for every kind and sort of sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is a fountain open; and, though thy life may have been as black as a life can be, we are bound to tell thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, that he has come into the world to save sinners, even the very chief of them; and if thou believest in him, there shall be no condemnation unto thee. All the guilt of thy past life shall be as though it had never been; it shall be cast into the depth of the sea whence it shall never be brought up again; it shall be blotted out from the very book of divine remembrance. This is the gospel we are sent to preach to you,—

“ Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,
A pardon bought with Jesu’s blood,”

and this pardon for everyone who, with a sincere heart, looks to Christ upon the cross, and trusts in him.

Note that it is God himself who has provided this fountain. It was God himself who came from heaven to earth to be this fountain; it was the Son of God himself who had his own heart set a-broach to be the fountain out of which should flow the cleansing stream. I do delight to dwell upon this theme; were I but capable of speaking of

it as it ought to be spoken of, I would be glad to tell out day and night this blessed news,—not to you sham sinners, who have no sin, so you dream,—but to you real sinners, you out-of-the-way sinners, you who have gone farthest of all astray from God. It is to you we tell this gladsome piece of news, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.”

Next, this source of cleansing is described as a *fountain, because of its abiding efficacy*. In the tabernacle and the temple, there stood, as I have already told you, those great brazen lavers; they were enormous cisterns holding vast quantities of water; but they were only cisterns, so that, when many had washed their feet and their hands in them, there was great need that even the lavers should be cleansed, and that fresh water should be continually poured into them. But God has not given us a brazen laver or a molten sea, but a fountain, a fountain always flowing, and never itself defiled. However many sinners come and wash, the fountain washes all uncleanness away. It is not itself polluted, and the cleansing stream is ever springing up, up, up. I think I see Paul as he washed in this fountain. Oh, what filthiness came off Saul of Tarsus; but after he had washed, the fountain was just as effectual for Timothy, and all whom Paul brought to the Saviour. And now, eighteen hundred years after, we stand by the same fountain where Paul was washed, and still we sing,—

“ There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

“ The dying thief rejoiced to see
 That fountain in his day;
 And there may I, though vile as he,
 Wash all my sins away!”

It is not a cistern, nor a well into which waters run, but a fountain from which there is a perpetual welling and bubbling up of fresh cleansing power: “In that day there shall be a fountain.”

Notice, too, that this is an *opened fountain*. I know that some people say, “We like to hear about the gospel, but it does not seem as though we could get at it.” Why not? It is open. When there stands in the very middle of the street a drinking fountain, why is it put there but that everybody who is athirst may come and drink? Does anybody say, “I am not fit to drink at that fountain”? How is that? Whoever said anything about fitness? That poor boy, who has been turning Catherine wheels in the mud, may come and drink if he likes. Her ladyship is going by with her carriage and pair; she may stop and drink if she likes. Who is the more likely of the two to do it, however? It is your grand, noble, gentlefolk, as people call them, who do not like to come and drink. Some of you may fancy that you are too good for Christ to cleanse, too good to be saved; but the poor boys that make the Catherine wheels do not think themselves too good to drink at the fountain; they are thirsty, so they come and drink. May the Lord grant that many here may just come

and receive Christ in that way! He is a fountain opened, free to all who will to come; and if any do not will to come, it is their own fault, and on their own heads must the blame lie if they do not come, for the fountain is opened, and opened on purpose that the vilest of the vile may come, and wash, and be clean.

“A fountain opened”—that is, accessible, available. We try to preach about it to make it more open; but I do believe that there is some preaching that shuts it up. People cannot understand the minister’s philosophy, they cannot make head or tail of it, they say; but I have desired to use nothing but Saxon speech, and to speak to you with great plainness, that you may understand the message of the gospel. Jesus Christ took the sin of men upon himself, and suffered in their stead, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; and if *thou* believest in him, thou art washed from thine iniquity through the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ. If he paid our debts, they are paid. If he bore the penalty of our sin, it is not to be borne by us also, and we accept him by faith to stand for us. We are ourselves accepted in the Beloved, set free from guilt, and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Well did Joseph Hart sing,—

“This fountain, though rich, from charge is quite clear,
The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here;
Come needy, and guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can’t come too filthy, come just as you are.

“This fountain in vain has never been tried;
It takes out all stain whenever applied:
The water flows sweetly with virtue divine,
To cleanse souls completely, though leprous as mine.”

I do not know where you happen to be, poor despairing one; perhaps you are away there at the back of the gallery; but I am sent especially to you who are most despairing, to you who seem to be in the iron cage, and cannot get out. Behold, I wrench away the iron bars with this gospel word, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” for there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, for the great ones if they will come,—for the house of David; and for the poor ones if they will come,—for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If they do but come and wash in this fountain, they shall be cleansed.

Sing that one verse now in the middle of my sermon,—

“Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom’d Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

II. There follows, upon the opening of this cleansing fountain, A GREAT CHANGE OF CONDUCT. In the second verse of our text, we read, “It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”

When a man finds pardon, he says to himself, "Now, *away go my sins; away go my sins.* I will not spare one of them." If he has been guilty of drunkenness, away go the pots. If he has been a man who has used foul language, I have often noticed that that is a temptation that generally goes directly. It has often amazed me that men, who have for fifty years scarcely spoken without an oath, from the moment they are converted never swear again. That seems to be a sin that dies very quickly; one stroke, and away it goes. I wish that all other sins went half as easily; but the pardoned man wakes up, and finds that he has a great deal to do in clearing out all manner of mischief and rubbish and defilement; but if the Lord has really forgiven him, he says, "Out you go, all of you! None of you are going to stay here. I must have done with you for ever. I will not spare one of you guilty things that made my Saviour bleed."

" 'Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."

This clearance of sin should be *very thorough*. There are some who do not begin the new life well; they are half-hearted in giving up sin, and they always, sooner or later, give up their profession of Christianity, for there was never any reality in it; but where it is the real work of God's grace, there the man says, "No, no; I do not want any sin to live, and by God's grace it shall not." Perhaps he cannot for the moment overcome all sin. Old habits are still strong upon him; but he says, "I will never rest until they are all overthrown, for I will not continue under the power and sway of any one of these my old idols. Down they shall come. Dagon and all the hellish crew shall be broken in pieces." So did we sing just now,—

" Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my God;
Those sins that pierced and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood!

" Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers too."

And that is not all, for the Lord says, not only that the idols shall go, but he declares, "I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land;" *their very names were to be forgotten*. The Jews did not like to pronounce the names of any of the idol gods; they thought that it polluted their mouths to do so. They often gave to them names in mockery, on purpose to avoid using the real names; and the child of God says, "I do not want even to mention sin." There is great wisdom in what Paul says concerning all uncleanness, "Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints," "for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." It is defiling to the mind of the Christian even to speak about some of his

old ways. "Oh!" says one, "you are a very rigid Puritan." I am, and in this age we need a great deal more than we have of rigid Puritanism. We are to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh. Years ago, when they dug into a disused pit in a village, they took up some old rags, and, as a consequence, nearly all the people in that village died of the plague. They did not know what was in the old rags buried in the pit. So, we are afraid of the old rags of sin; we do not like digging them up. I believe that some of you, who used to drink, had better go seven miles round rather than pass some public-house doors where you formerly went in. Some of you cannot do without awful peril what other people might very freely do, because there is a special temptation for you about that particular form of evil. You must not even mention the names of the sins, for there grows up in a man who has been long inured to sin a passion for it, a passion against which he cannot readily guard himself. Keep away, keep away. Remember the old Jewish proverb about the Nazarite, who had been pledged from his youth to drink no wine. The proverb says, "O Nazarite, go about, go about; and walk not through the vineyard!" Keep as far as ever you can away from temptation.

So, you see, when the Lord works this great change in us, he makes us to feel that we do not like even to mention the names of our old idols; we would put them away out of our mouths altogether.

Ay, and God goes further than that, for he says that he will put away the very remembrance of them: "*they shall no more be remembered.*" Augustine, before his conversion, had been in the habit of associating with a woman of vicious life; after his conversion, she passed him in the street, and she said to him, "Augustine, it is I;" and he, as he could not go by without giving her some answer, replied, "Yes, but it is not I;" that is to say, "Augustine is another Augustine now. He can have no more to do with you, for he is a changed man, he forgets his old pursuits." This is what the Lord would have us do. If there be aught which has pleased thee, but has grieved him, if there be aught that has defiled thee, then if thou hast been washed with the blood of thy dear Saviour's heart, forget that sin; be to-day as though thou hadst never known it. Forget its sweetness, and only remember the bitterness it brought to him. Forget its charms, as thou wouldst forget the azure scales of the serpent, and remember only its sting, when it has stung thee so, ay, and stung thy Saviour to the death. God help us in this, dear friends, not even to remember the names of our old sins, or the sins themselves with any sort of love.

Notice also that the Lord went still further than that, for he said, "*I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.*" The prophets were to pass out of the land. "We have no prophets now," says one. But you know what these prophets did; they led the people to worship false gods. So, when God forgave his people, they sent these prophets packing. Have you any prophets of this sort? I will point out one. He will be outside the Tabernacle to-night to meet you; he will come to you, and say, "Now, old friend, come with me, and get to such-and-such a place." On the road he

will speak to you in such a way as will drive out of you every impression you have received. It often happens that it is absolutely necessary to say,—

“My old companions, fare ye well;
I cannot go with you to hell.”

There are connections that must be broken; and the sooner you do it, and the more fully you do it, the better for you if there are false prophets who have led you astray, companions who have jested with you, or associates who have led you into vice,—and the devil has many of these prophets who seem to be more industrious to damn men than we are to save them; they compass sea and land to make proselytes for infidelity and vice. You know the men and the women, too, and the diligence with which they pursue their evil calling. Come away from them; come away from them; there are better companions to be found than these. I like to see the workman in the workshop, when he finds that he has to toil with ungodly men, keep himself to himself, or get with some others who are of his own way of thinking and acting, and not mixing with those who are engaged in evil pursuits.

Perhaps there are some young persons here to-night, who have just left that pretty country village, and the old Baptist meeting-house where they have always gone since they were converted, and they are in London for the first time. Now, mind these false prophets that are about. You will find them everywhere; perhaps, lads of your own age, or possibly old men, steeped up to their lips in filthiness, who will count it their pleasure to degrade and pollute you. Get away from them; have nothing to do with them. Fly for your life, even if, like Joseph, you have to leave your cloak behind you. Away, away, away, if God has forgiven you. If not, get forgiveness now. Before you go out of this building, seek Jesus, that you may be washed in his precious blood, and then say to yourself, “Now I am the Lord’s. The blood that has cleansed me has bought me. I am Christ’s man, and for him I will live. I cannot, I will not, have idols; neither will I hear nor even talk about them, or seem to have any connection with them. I am, if not in the common meaning of the term, yet spiritually, I am a Nonconformist. I will not be conformed to the world, but be separated from it, that I may be conformed unto Christ, and follow him in holy ways in the midst of this evil generation.” Look thou first to my Lord upon the cross, and when thou hast looked until thy sin is gone, then lift up thy hand to him, and solemnly say, “My Lord Jesus, as thou hast died for me, I will live for thee as thou shalt help me.” Amen, so let it be, for Christ’s sake!

Expositions by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALM LI.; AND ZECHARIAH XII. 10—14; XIII. 1—6.

We will first read Psalm li. If we need any music to this Psalm, we must have the liquid melody of tears, sighs, cries, entreaties. It is above all the others, *the penitential Psalm*. It is the Psalm of David when Nathan

the prophet came to him after he had committed his great sin with Bath-sheba. Thus, David prayed:—

Psalm li. Verses 1—3. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

And there is no hope of pardon unless we do this. We must not try to cloak or hide our sin from God; but we must acknowledge our transgressions. Our sin must be ever before us,—a ghost that haunts us, a black cloud that hangs over us, which we greatly dread.

4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

Whatever God may say to us, however sharp it is, and whatever God may do to us, however terrible it is, we deserve it; and when we are in a penitential frame of mind, we feel that it is so.

5—7. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

David does not hope to wash himself, he does not trust in outward ceremonies: but he appeals to God, the God against whom he has sinned: "Lord, cleanse me. Thou alone canst do it."

8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

When God's Spirit deals with sinners, he does not play with them. A sense of sin is like the breaking of bones; but God, who breaks the bone, can heal it. He that takes away our joy, when we are under a sense of sin, can give us back that joy by a realization of pardon.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*

"And when thou hast done that, change my nature, that I may not sin again."

10, 11. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

He might well be afraid that, after so foul a fall, so disgraceful a crime, God would cast him away; but he prays that it may not be so: "Cast me not away from thy presence."

12, 13. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

"I will tell others what thou hast done. Thy free grace, thy pardoning mercy, shall not be hidden away in my breast; but I will begin to be a preacher of thy love; ay, and I shall have converts, too, for the news of thy grace to me shall draw others to thee: 'Sinners shall be converted unto thee.'"

14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

He puts his finger on the sin. He might have said, and at one time he did say, that he did not kill Uriah the Hittite. Ah, but when he is right with God, he makes no pretences! He does not mince the matter, but he confesses the blood-guiltiness, for he was guilty of Uriah's death: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness." Be honest with God. You will not receive pardon till you are. He can see through you: what is the use of attempting

to hide anything from him? Out with it, man, that God may out with it, too. Confess it, that God's pardon covering thy confession may cover all thy sin.

15—17. *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Are you bringing this sacrifice to the Lord? Are there some in this house of prayer who have greatly sinned, and who are now greatly ashamed of themselves? Take heart of hope, poor sinner, for God delights to accept a broken and contrite heart.

18, 19. *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

Now turn to the prophecy of Zechariah, chapter xii., verse 10.

Zechariah xii. Verses 10—14. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.*

Chapter xiii. Verses 1, 2. *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day,*

How much God can crowd into a single day!

2. *Saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.*

God will not only destroy the idols, but he will cut off the very names of them out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered.

3. *And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.*

It was a part of the law of God in the Book of Deuteronomy that any man who professed to be a prophet, and who sought to turn the people aside to the worship of idols, should be put to death; and it is here declared that, when God had cleansed the land, there would be no false prophets; and, if any man pretended to be a prophet of the Lord when he was not sent of God, his own father and mother would be the first to execute judgment upon him.

4. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:*

Imitating Elijah's garb, the false prophets hoped to win the attention of the people by the roughness of their dress; but all this would be dropped,

for the people would be so well instructed that they would refuse to hear the false prophet.

5. *But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman ; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.*

They shall be so ashamed of it that, to have kept cattle shall seem to be a far more noble employment than to have falsely set up to be a prophet of the Lord.

6. *And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands ?*

“You wear the marks usually seen in God’s servants ; you have scarred yourself as his prophets were accustomed to do, you have, as it were, tattooed yourself with the name of your God, what does it all mean ?” But he shall be so ashamed of it that—

6. *Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

He shall say anything rather than confess that he is a false prophet, he shall be so ashamed of himself. What a mercy it is when God makes men ashamed of sin, and when he makes them so ashamed of false doctrine that they cannot bear it, and will not any longer proclaim it! Oh, that that day were already come!

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