


The Acceptable Sacrifice

The Excellency of a Broken Heart



John Bunyan
(1628-1688)

THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

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THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

The Excellency of a Broken Heart

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”—Psalm 51:17

THIS psalm is David’s penitential psalm. It may be fitly so called because it is a psalm by which is manifest the unfeigned sorrow which he had for his horrible sin, in defiling of Bathsheba, and slaying Uriah her husband; a relation at large of which you have in the 11th and 12th of the Second of Samuel. Many workings of heart, as this psalm showeth, this poor man had, so soon as conviction did fall upon his spirit. One while¹ he cries for mercy, then he confesses his heinous offences, then he bewails the depravity of his nature. Sometimes he cries out to be washed and sanctified, and then again he is afraid that God will cast him away from His presence, and take His Holy Spirit utterly from him. And thus he goes on till he comes to the text, and there he stayeth his mind, finding in himself that heart and spirit which God did not dislike. “The sacrifices of God,” says he, “are a broken spirit”; as if he should say, I thank God I have that. “A broken and a contrite heart,” says he, “O God, thou wilt not despise”; as if he should say, I thank God I have that.

1. The text opened

The words consist of two parts: First, an assertion; Second, a demonstration of that assertion. The assertion is this, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” The demonstration is this: Because a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.

In the assertion we have two things present themselves to our consideration. First, that a broken spirit is to God a sacrifice. Second, that it is to God, as that which answereth to, or goeth beyond, all sacrifices. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.”

The demonstration of this is plain: for that heart God will not despise it. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Whence I draw this conclusion: That a spirit rightly broken, a heart truly contrite, is to God an excellent thing. That is, a thing that goeth beyond all external duties whatever; for that is intended by this saying, “the sacrifices,” because it

¹ **one while** – one moment.

answereth to all sacrifices which we can offer to God. Yea, it serveth in the room of all. All our sacrifices without this are nothing; this alone is all.

There are four things that are very acceptable to God. 1) The first is *the sacrifice of the body of Christ* for our sins. Of this you read (Heb 10); for there you have it preferred to all burnt offerings and sacrifices. It is this that pleaseth God; it is this that sanctifieth, and so setteth the people acceptable in the sight of God.

2) *Unfeigned love to God* is counted better than all sacrifices or external parts of worship. “And to love him [the Lord thy God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mar 12:33).

3) *To walk holily and humbly and obediently* towards and before God is another (Mic 6:6-8). “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1Sa 15:22).

4) And this in our text is the fourth: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: *a broken and a contrite heart*, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

But note, by the way, that this broken, this broken and contrite heart, is thus excellent only to God. “O God,” saith he, “thou wilt not despise [it].” By which is implied, the world have not this esteem or respect for such a heart, or for one that is of a broken and a contrite spirit. No, no, a man, a woman, that is blessed with a broken heart, is so far off from getting by that esteem with the world that they are but burdens and trouble houses wherever they are or go. Such people carry with them molestation and disquietment. They are in carnal families as David was to the king of Gath, troublers of the house (1Sa 21).

Their sighs, their tears, their day and night groans, their cries and prayers and solitary carriages, put all the carnal family out of order.² Hence you have them brow-beaten by some, contemned by others, yea, and their company fled from and deserted by others. But mark the text, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,” but rather accept; for not to despise is with God to esteem and set a high price upon.

2. A broken heart is an excellent heart.

But we will demonstrate by several particulars that a broken spirit, a spirit *rightly* broken, an heart *truly* contrite, is to God an excellent thing.

² This is beautifully and most impressively described in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, when the bitter feelings of poor Christian under convictions of sin alarm his family and put it quite “out of order.”—*Ed.*

First. This is evident from the comparison, “Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,” etc. Mark, he rejecteth sacrifices, offerings, and sacrifices—that is, all Levitical ceremonies under the law, and all external performances under the gospel—but accepteth a broken heart. It is therefore manifest by this, were there nothing else to be said, that proves that a heart rightly broken, a heart truly contrite, is to God an excellent thing; for as you see such a heart is set before all sacrifice; and yet they were the ordinances of God, and things that He commanded; but lo, a broken spirit is above them all, a contrite heart goes beyond them, yea, beyond them when put all together. Thou wilt not have the one. Thou wilt not despise the other. O brethren, a broken and a contrite heart is an excellent thing. Have I said a broken heart, a broken and a contrite heart is esteemed above all sacrifices; I will add,

Second. It is of greater esteem with God than is either heaven or earth; and that is more than to be set before external duties. “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa 66:1-2). Mark, God saith He hath made all these things, but He doth not say that He will look to them, that is, take complacency and delight in them. No, there is that wanting³ in all that He hath made that should take up and delight His heart. But now, let a brokenhearted sinner come before Him; yea, He ranges the world throughout to find out such an one, and having found him, “To this man,” saith he, “will I look.” I say again that such a man to Him is of more value than is either heaven or earth. “They,” saith He, “shall wax old...they shall perish” and vanish away (Heb 1:10-12); but this man he continues. He, as is presented to us in another place, under another character, he shall abide forever (1Jo 2:17).

“To this man will I look.” With this man will I be delighted; for so to look doth sometimes signify. “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse,” saith Christ to His humble-hearted, “thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes” (Song 4:9), while it is as a conduit to let the rivers out of thy broken heart. I am taken, saith He, “with one chain of thy neck” (Song 4:9). Here, you see, He looks and is ravished, He looks and is taken, as it saith in another place, “The king is held in the galleries”—that is, is taken with His beloved, with the dove’s eyes of His beloved, with the contrite spirit of His people (Song 7:5; 1:15). But it is not thus reported of Him with respect

³ **wanting** – lacking; missing.

to heaven or earth. Them He sets more lightly by. Them He reserves “unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2Pe 3:7), but the broken in heart are His beloved, His jewels.

Wherefore, what I have said as to this must go for the truth of God, to wit,⁴ that a brokenhearted sinner, a sinner with a contrite spirit, is of more esteem with God than is either heaven or earth. He saith He hath made them, but He doth not say He will look to them. He saith they are His throne and footstool, but He doth not say they have taken or ravished His heart. No, it is those that are of a contrite spirit [who] do this. But there is yet more in the words, “To this man will I look”—that is, For this man will I care, about this man will I camp, I will put this man under my protection; for so to look to one doth sometimes signify; and I take the meaning in this place to be such (Pro 27:23; Jer 39:12; 40:4). “The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down” (Psa 145:14). And the brokenhearted are of this number; wherefore He careth for, campeth about, and hath set His eyes upon such an one for good. This, therefore, is a second demonstration to prove that the man that hath his spirit rightly broken, his heart truly contrite, is of great esteem with God.

Third. Yet further, God doth not only prefer such an one, as has been said, before heaven and earth, but He loveth, He desireth to have that man for an intimate, for a companion. He must dwell, He must cohabit⁵ with him that is of a broken heart, with such as are of a contrite spirit. ‘For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I will dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,’ etc. (Isa 57:15).

Behold here both the majesty and condescension of the high and lofty One; His majesty, in that He is high, and the inhabiter of eternity. I am “the high and lofty One,” saith He, I inhabit eternity. Verily, this consideration is enough to make the brokenhearted man creep into a mousehole to hide himself from such a majesty! But behold His heart, His condescending mind: I am for dwelling also with him that hath a broken heart, with him that is of a contrite spirit. That is the man that I would converse with; that is the man with whom I will cohabit. That is he, saith God, I will choose for my companion. For to desire to dwell with one supposeth all these things; and verily, of all the men in the world, none have acquaintance with God, none understand what communion with Him, and what His teachings mean, but such as are of a broken and contrite heart. He “is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart” (Psa 34:18). These are they intended in the 14th Psalm, where it is said, “The LORD looked down from heaven...to see if...any...did

⁴ to wit – that it to say; namely.

⁵ cohabit – reside; dwell.

understand, and seek God”; that He might find somebody in the world with whom He might converse; for indeed there is none else that either understand, or that can tend to hearken to Him. God, as I may say, is forced to break men’s hearts, before He can make them willing to cry to Him, or be willing that He should have any concerns with them. The rest shut their eyes, stop their ears, withdraw their hearts, or say unto God, Be gone (Job 21:14). But now the broken in heart can tend it. He has leisure, yea, leisure and will and understanding, and all; and therefore [he] is a fit man to have to do with God. There is room also in this man’s house, in this man’s heart, in this man’s spirit, for God to dwell, for God to walk, for God to set up a kingdom.

Here, therefore, is suitableness. “Can two walk together,” saith God, “except they be agreed?” (Amo 3:3). The brokenhearted desireth God’s company. “When wilt Thou come unto me?” saith he. The brokenhearted loveth to hear God speak and talk to him. Here is a suitableness. “Make me,” saith he, “to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice” (Psa 51:8). But here lies the glory, in that the high and lofty One, the God that inhabiteth eternity, and that was a high and holy place for His habitation, should choose to dwell with, and to be a companion of the broken in heart, and of them that are of a contrite spirit. Yea, and here also is great comfort for such.

Fourth. God doth not only prefer such a heart before all sacrifices, nor esteems such a man above heaven and earth; nor yet only desire to be of his acquaintance, but He reserveth for him His chief comforts, His heart-reviving and soul-cherishing cordials. “I dwell,” saith He, with such to revive them, and to support and comfort them, “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa 57:15). The brokenhearted man is a fainting man. He has his qualms, his sinking fits. He oftentimes dies away with pain and fear. He must be stayed with flagons and comforted with apples, or else he cannot tell what to do. He pines, he pines away in his iniquity; nor can anything keep him alive and make him well but the comforts and cordials of Almighty God (Exo 33:10-11). Wherefore with such an one God will dwell, to revive the heart, to revive the spirit, “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

God has cordials, but they are to comfort them “that are cast down” (2Co 7:6); and such are the brokenhearted. As for them that are whole, they need not the physician (Mar 2:17). They are the broken in spirit that stand in need of cordials. Physicians are men of no esteem but with them that feel their sickness; and this is one reason why God is so little accounted of in the world, even because they have not been made sick by the wounding stroke of God. But now when a man is wounded, has his bones broken, or is made sick, and laid at the grave’s mouth, who is of that esteem with him as is an able

physician? What is so much desired as are the cordials, comforts, and suitable supplies of the skillful physician in those matters. And thus it is with the brokenhearted; he needs, and God has prepared for him plenty of the comforts and cordials of heaven, to succor and relieve his sinking soul.

Wherefore such a one lieth under all the promises that have succor in them, and consolation for men, sick and desponding under the sense of sin and the heavy wrath of God; and they, says God, shall be refreshed and revived with them. Yea, they are designed for them. He hath therefore broken their hearts, He hath therefore wounded their spirits, that He might make them apt to relish⁶ His reviving cordials, that He might minister to them His reviving comforts. For indeed, so soon as He hath broken them, His bowels yearn and His compassions roll up and down within Him, and will not suffer Him to abide afflicting. Ephraim was one of these; but so soon as God had smitten him, behold His heart, how it works towards him. “Is Ephraim,” saith He, “my dear son?”—that is, he is so. “Is he a pleasant child?”—that is, he is so; “for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD” (Jer 31:18-20). This therefore is another demonstration.

Fifth. As God prefers such a heart, and esteems the man that has it above heaven and earth; as He covets intimacy with such an one, and prepares for him His cordials; so when He sent His Son Jesus into the world to be a Savior, He gave Him in special a charge to take care of such. Yea, that was one of the main reasons He sent Him down from heaven, anointed for His work on earth. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” saith He; “because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,” etc. (Luk 4:18; Isa 61:1). Now that this is meant of Christ is confirmed by His own lips; for in the days of His flesh He takes this book in His hand, when He was in the synagogue at Nazareth, and read this very place unto the people and then tells them that that very day that Scripture was fulfilled in their ears (Luk 4:16-18).

But see, these are the souls whose welfare is contrived in the heavens. God consulted their salvation, their deliverance, their health, before His Son came down from thence. Doth not therefore this demonstrate that a brokenhearted man, that a man of a contrite spirit, is of great esteem with God? I have often wondered at David that he should give Joab and the men of war a charge that they take heed that they carry it tenderly to that young rebel Absalom his son (2Sa 18:5). But that God, the high God, the God against Whom we have sinned, should, so soon as He has smitten, give His Son a command, a charge, a commission to take care of, to bind up and heal the

⁶ **apt to relish** – able to enjoy or appreciate.

broken in heart—this is that which can never be sufficiently admired or wondered at by men or angels.

And as this was his commission, so he acted, as is evidently set forth by the parable of the man who fell among thieves. He went to him, poured into his wounds wine and oil. He bound him up, took him, set him upon his own beast, had him to an inn, gave the host a charge to look well to him, with money in hand and a promise at his return to recompence him in what farther he should be expensive while he was under his care (Luk 10:30-35). Behold, therefore, the care of God which He has for the broken in heart. He has given a charge to Christ His Son, to look well to them, and to bind up and heal their wounds. Behold also the faithfulness of Christ, Who doth not hide, but read this commission as soon as He entereth upon His ministry, and also falls into the practical part thereof: “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds” (Psa 147:3).

And behold again into Whose care a broken heart and a contrite spirit hath put this poor creature. He is under the care of God, the care and cure of Christ. If a man was sure that his disease had put him under the special care of the king and the queen, yet could he not be sure of life. He might die under their sovereign hands. Ay, but here is a man in the favor of God, and under the hand of Christ to be healed, under Whose hand none yet ever died for want of skill and power in Him to save their life. Wherefore this man must live. Christ has in commission not only to bind up his wounds, but to heal him. He has of Himself so expounded it in reading His commission; wherefore he that has his heart broken, and that is of a contrite spirit, must not only be taken in hand, but healed; healed of his pain, grief, sorrow, sin, and fears of death and hellfire. Wherefore He adds, that He must give unto such “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,” and must “comfort all that mourn” (Isa 61:2-3). This, I say, He has in the commission, the broken-hearted are put into His hand, and He has said Himself He will heal him. Hence He says of that same man, “I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners...and I will heal him” (Isa 57:18-19). And this is a fifth demonstration.

Sixth. As God prefers such a heart, and so esteems the man that has it; as He desires his company, has provided for him His cordials, and given a charge to Christ to heal him, so He has promised in conclusion to save him. “He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”; or, as the margin has it, that be “contrite of spirit” (Psa 34:18).

And this is the conclusion of all; for to save a man is the end of all special mercy. “He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” To save is to forgive; for without forgiveness of sins we cannot be saved. To save is to preserve one in this miserable world, and to deliver one from all those devils, temptations,

snares, and destructions that would, were we not kept, were we not preserved of God, destroy us body and soul forever. To save is to bring a man body and soul to glory, and to give him an eternal mansion house in heaven, that he may dwell in the presence of this good God, and the Lord Jesus, and to sing to them the songs of his redemption forever and ever. This it is to be saved; nor can anything less than this complete the salvation of the sinner. Now, this is to be the lot of him that is of a broken heart, and the end that God will make with him that is of a contrite spirit. He “saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” He saveth such! This is excellent!

But, do the broken in spirit believe this? Can they imagine that this is to be the end that God has designed them to, and that He intended to make with them in the day in which He began to break their hearts? No, no! They—alas!—think quite the contrary. They are afraid that this is but the beginning of death, and a token that they shall never see the face of God with comfort, either in this world or that which is to come. Hence, they cry, “Cast me not away from thy presence”; or, Now I am “free among the dead” whom God remembers no more (Psa 51:11; 88:4-5). For indeed there goes to the breaking of the heart a visible appearance of the wrath of God, and a home charge from heaven of the guilt of sin to the conscience. This to reason is very dreadful; for it cuts the soul down to the ground; “for a wounded spirit who [none] can bear?” (Pro 18:14).

It seems also now to this man that this is but the beginning of hell; but as it were the first step down to the pit, when, indeed, all these are but the beginnings of love, and but that which makes way for life. The Lord kills before He makes alive; he wounds before His hands make whole (Deu 32:39; 1Sa 2:6). Yea, He does the one in order to, or because He would do the other. He wounds, because His purpose is to heal. “He maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole” (Job 5:18). His design, I say, is the salvation of the soul. He “scourgeth,” He breaketh the heart of, “every son whom he receiveth”; and woe be to him whose heart God breaketh not.

And thus have I proved what at first I asserted, namely, that a spirit rightly broken, an heart truly contrite, is to God an excellent thing. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” For this say I: *First*. This is evident; for that it is better than sacrifices, than all sacrifice. *Second*. The man that has it is of more esteem with God than heaven or earth. *Third*. God coveteth such a man for His intimate and house companion. *Fourth*. He reserveth for them His cordials and spiritual comforts. *Fifth*. He has given His Son a charge, a commandment to take care that the brokenhearted be healed; and He is resolved to heal them. *Sixth*. And concluded, that the brokenhearted, and they that are of a contrite spirit, shall be saved, that is, possessed of the heavens.

3. What a broken heart is

I come now in order to show you what a broken heart and what a contrite spirit is. This must be done, because in the discovery of this lies both the comfort of them that have it, and the conviction of them that have it not. Now, that I may do this the better, I must propound and speak to these four things. First, I must show you what an one that heart is that is not broken, that is not contrite. Second, I must show you how, or with what, the heart is broken and made contrite. Third, show you how, and what it is, when broken and made contrite. And, fourth, I shall, last of all, give you some signs of a broken and contrite heart.

a. An unbroken heart

For the first of these, to wit, What an one that heart is that is not a broken, that is, not a contrite heart.

1) The heart, before it is broken, is hard and stubborn, and obstinate against God, and the salvation of the soul (Zec 7:12; Deu 2:30; 9:27).

2) It is a heart full of evil imaginations and darkness (Gen 8:21; Rom 1:21).

3) It is a heart deceitful and subject to be deceived, especially about the things of an eternal concernment (Isa 44:20; Deu 11:16).

4) It is a heart that rather gathereth iniquity and vanity to itself than anything that is good for the soul (Psa 41:6; 94:11).

5) It is an unbelieving heart, and one that will turn away from God to sin (Heb 3:12; Deu 17:17).

6) It is a heart not prepared for God, being uncircumcised, nor for the reception of His holy Word (2Ch 12:14; Psa 78:8; Act 7:51).

7) It is a heart not single, but double. It will pretend to serve God, but will withal lean to the devil and sin (Psa 12:2; Eze 33:31).

8) It is a heart proud and stout. It loves not to be controlled, though the controller be God Himself (Psa 101:5; Pro 16:5; Mal 3:13).

9) It is a heart that will give place to Satan, but will resist the Holy Ghost (Act 5:3; 7:51).

10) In a word, it “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”—so wicked that none can know it (Jer 17:9).

That the heart before it is broken is such, and worse than I have described it to be, is sufficiently seen by the whole course of the world. Where is the man whose heart has not been broken, and whose spirit is not contrite, that according to the Word of God deals honestly with his own soul? It is one character of a right heart that it is sound in God’s statutes and honest (Psa

119:18; Luk 8:15). Now, an honest heart will not put off itself nor be put off with that which will not go for current money with the merchant—I mean with that which will not go for saving grace at the day of judgment. But alas, alas! But few men, how honest soever they are to others, have honesty towards themselves; though he is the worst of deceivers who deceiveth his own soul, as James has it, about the things of his own soul (Jam 1:22, 26).

b. With what the heart is broken

I now come to show you with what and how the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite.

[First. With what the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite.]

The instrument with which the heart is broken, and with which the spirit is made contrite, is the Word. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer 23:29). The rock, in this text, is the heart, which in another place is compared to an adamant, which adamant is harder than flint (Zec 7:11-12; Eze 3:9). This rock, this adamant, this stony heart, is broken and made contrite by the Word. But it only is so, when the Word is as a fire, and as a hammer to break and melt it. And then, and then only, it is as a fire and a hammer to the heart to break it, when it is managed by the arm of God. No man can break the heart with the Word. No angel can break the heart with the Word—that is, if God forbears to second it by mighty power from heaven. This made Balaam go without a heart rightly broken, and truly contrite, though he was rebuked by an angel; and the Pharisees die in their sins, though rebuked for them and admonished to turn from them by the Savior of the world. Wherefore, though the Word is the instrument with which the heart is broken, yet it is not broken with the Word till that Word is managed by the might and power of God.

This made the prophet Isaiah, after long preaching, cry out that he had labored for nought, and in vain; and this made him cry to God to “rend the heavens” and “come down,” that the mountains, or rocky hills, or hearts, might be broken, and melt at His presence (Isa 49:4; 64:1-2). For he found by experience that as to this no effectual work could be done, unless the Lord put to His hand. This also is often intimated in the Scriptures, where it saith, when the preachers preached effectually to the breaking of men’s hearts, “The Lord wrought with them⁷...the hand of the Lord was with them,” and the like (Mar 16:20; Act 11:21).

Now when the hand of the Lord is with the Word, then it is mighty. It is “mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds” (2Co 10:4). It is sharp, then, as a sword in the soul and spirit (Heb 4:12). It sticks like an

⁷ This quotation is from the Genevan or Puritan version of the Bible.—*Ed.*

arrow in the hearts of sinners, to the causing of the people to fall at His foot for mercy. Then it is, as was said afore, as a fire and as a hammer to break this rock in pieces (Psa 110:3). And hence the Word is made mention of under a double consideration: 1) As it stands by itself; 2) As attended with power from heaven.

1. *As it stands by itself*, and is not seconded with saving operation from heaven, it is called the Word only, the Word barely, or as if it was only the word of men (1Th 1:5-7; 1Co 4:19-20; 1Th 2:13). Because, then, it is only as managed by men, who are not able to make it accomplish that work. The Word of God, when in a man's hand only, is like the father's sword in the hand of the sucking child; which sword, though never so well pointed, and though never so sharp on the edges, is not now able to conquer a foe, and to make an enemy fall and cry out for mercy, because it is but in the hand of the child. But now, let the same sword be put into the hand of a skillful father—and God is both skillful and able to manage his Word—and then the sinner, and then the proud helpers too, are both made to stoop, and submit themselves. Wherefore, I say, though the Word be the instrument, yet of itself doth do no saving good to the soul. The heart is not broken nor the spirit made contrite thereby. It only worketh death and leaveth men in the chains of their sins, still faster bound over to eternal condemnation (2Co 2:15-16).

2. But when *seconded by mighty power*, then the same Word is as the roaring of a lion, as the piercing of a sword, as a burning fire in the bones, as thunder and as a hammer that dashes all to pieces (Jer 25:30; Amo 1:2; 3:8; Act 2:37; Jer 20:9; Psa 29:3-9). Wherefore, from hence it is to be concluded that whoever has heard the Word preached, and has not heard the voice of the living God therein, has not as yet had their hearts broken, nor their spirits made contrite for their sins.

[Second. How the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite.]

And this leads me to the second thing, to wit, to show how the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite by the Word, and verily it is when the Word comes home with power. But yet this is but general; wherefore, more particularly,

1. Then the Word works effectually to this purpose, when it findeth out the sinner and his sin, and shall convince him that it has found him out. Thus it was with our first father. When he had sinned, he sought to hide himself from God. He gets among the trees of the garden, and there he shrouds himself; but yet, not thinking himself secure, he covers himself with fig leaves; and now he lieth quiet. Now God shall not find me, thinks he, nor know what I have done. But lo, by and by, he hears “the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden” (Gen 3:8). And now, Adam, what do you mean to

do? Why, as yet, he skulketh, and hides his head, and seeks yet to lie undiscovered; but behold, the voice cries out, *Adam!* and now he begins to tremble. “Adam, where art thou?” says God; and now Adam is made to answer (see Gen 3:7-11). But the voice of the Lord God doth not leave him here. No, it now begins to search and to inquire after his doings, and to unravel what he had wrapt together and covered, until it made him bare and naked in his own sight before the face of God. Thus, therefore, doth the Word, when managed by the arm of God. It findeth out, it singleth out the sinner. The sinner finds it so. It finds out the sins of the sinner. It unravels his whole life; it strips him and lays him naked in his own sight before the face of God. Neither can the sinner nor his wickedness be longer hid and covered; and now begins the sinner to see what he never saw before.

2. Another instance for this is David, the man of our text. He sins, he sins grossly, he sins and hides it—yea, and seeks to hide it from the face of God and man. Well, Nathan is sent to preach a preaching to him, and that in common, and that in special: in common, by a parable; in special, by a particular application of it to him. While Nathan only preached in common, or in general, David was fish-whole,⁸ and stood as right in his own eyes as if he had been as innocent and as harmless as any man alive. But God had a love for David, and therefore commands His servant Nathan to go home, not only to David’s ears, but to David’s conscience. Well, David now must fall. Says Nathan, “Thou art the man”; says David, “I have sinned,” and then his heart was broken, and his spirit made contrite; as this psalm and our text doth show (2Sa 12:1-13).

3. A third instance is that of Saul. He had heard many a sermon and was become a great professor. Yea, he was more zealous than were many of his equals; but his heart was never broken, nor his spirit ever made contrite, till he heard One preach from heaven, till he heard God, in the Word of God, making inquiry after his sins. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” says Jesus; and then he can stand no longer: for then his heart brake, then he falls to the ground, then he trembles, then he cries out, “Who art thou, Lord?”

⁸ “Fish-whole” is a very striking and expressive term, highly illustrative of the feelings and position of David when he was accosted by the prophet. The word “whole” is from the Saxon, which language abounded in Bunyan’s native county of Bedford—first introduced by an ancient colony of Saxons, who had settled there. It means hale, hearty, free from disease, as a fish is happy in its native element—“They that are *whole* need not a physician; but they that are sick” (Luk 5:31). David had no smittings of conscience for his cruelty and enormous guilt. He was like a “fish whole,” in the full enjoyment of every providential blessing; while, spiritually, he was dead in sin. God loved and pitied him, and sent a cunning angler. Nathan the prophet threw in the bait, which David eagerly seized. The hook entered his conscience, and he became as a fish wounded, and nigh unto death.—*Ed.*

and, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Act 9). Wherefore, as I said, Then the word works effectually to this purpose, when it findeth out the sinner and his sin, and also when it shall convince him that it has found him out. Only I must join here a caution, for every operation of the Word upon the conscience is not saving; nor doth all conviction end in the saving conversion of the sinner. It is then only such an operation of the Word that is intended, namely, that shows the sinner not only the evil of his ways, but brings the heart unfeignedly over to God by Christ. And this brings me to the third thing.

c. How and what the heart is when broken

I am therefore come to show you how and what the heart is when broken and made contrite. And this I must do by opening unto you the two chief expressions in the text. First, what is meant by this word *broken*. Second, what is meant by this word *contrite*.

First. For this word *broken*, Tyndale renders it “a troubled heart”⁹ but I think there is more in it. I take it, therefore, to be a heart disabled as to former actions, even as a man whose bones are broken is disabled as to his way of running, leaping, wrestling, or ought else, which vainly he was wont¹⁰ to do; wherefore, that which was called a broken heart in the text, he calls his broken bones in verse the eighth: “Make me,” saith he, “to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice” (Psa 51:8). And why is the breaking of the heart compared to the breaking of the bones? But because as when the bones are broken, the outward man is disabled as to what it was wont to do; so when the spirit is broken, the inward man is disabled as to what vanity and folly it before delighted in. Hence, feebleness is joined with this brokenness of heart. “I am feeble,” saith he, “and sore broken” (Psa 38:8). I have lost my strength and former vigor as to vain and sinful courses.

This, then, it is to have the heart broken; namely, to have it lamed, disabled, and taken off by sense of God’s wrath due to sin from that course of life it formerly was conversant in; and to show that this work is no fancy, nor done but with great trouble to the soul, it is compared to the putting the bones out of joint, the breaking of the bones, the burning of the bones with fire, or as the taking the natural moisture from the bones, the vexing of the

⁹ The words of Tyndale are, “The sacrifice of God is a troubled sprete, a broken and a contrite hert, O God, shalt thou not despise.” The same Hebrew word occurs in the original, both as to the spirit and the heart. Bunyan is quite right in preferring our Authorized Version of this verse. Coverdale, Tyndale, Taverner, and Cranmer, all agree. The Genevan uses “a contrite spirit,” and the Bishops’ “a mortified spirit.”—*Ed.*

¹⁰ **wont** – used; accustomed.

bones, etc. (Psa 22:14; Jer 20:9; Lam 1:13; Psa 6:2; Pro 17:22). All which are expressions adorned with such similitudes as do undeniably declare that to sense and feeling a broken heart is a grievous thing.

Second. What is meant by the word *contrite*? A contrite spirit is a penitent one, one sorely grieved and deeply sorrowful for the sins it has committed against God and to the damage of the soul; and so it is to be taken in all those places where a contrite spirit is made mention of, as in Psalm 34:18 and Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2.

As a man, who has by his folly procured a broken leg or arm, is heartily sorry that ever he was so foolish as to be engaged in such foolish ways of idleness and vanity; so he, whose heart is broken with a sense of God's wrath due to his sin, hath deep sorrow in his soul and is greatly repentant that ever he should be such a fool, as by rebellious doings to bring himself and his soul to so much sharp affliction. Hence, while others are sporting themselves in vanity, such a one doth call his sin his greatest folly. "My wounds stink and are corrupt," saith David, "because of my foolishness." And again, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee" (Psa 38:5; 69:5).

Men, whatever they say with their lips, cannot conclude, if yet their hearts want breaking, that sin is a foolish thing. Hence it says, "The foolishness of fools is folly" (Pro 14:24). That is, the foolishness of some men is that they take pleasure in their sins; for their sins are their foolishness, and the folly of their soul lies in their countenancing of this foolishness. But the man whose heart is broken, he is none of these, he cannot be one of these, no more than he that has his bones broken can rejoice that he is desired to play a match at football. Hence, to hear others talk foolishly is to the grief of those whom God has wounded (Psa 69:26); or, as it is in another place, their words are "like the piercings of a sword" (Pro 12:18). This, therefore, I take to be the meaning of these two words, a broken and a contrite spirit.

d. Some signs of a broken heart

Lastly, As to this, I now come more particularly to give you some signs of a broken heart, of a broken and a contrite spirit.

First. A brokenhearted man, such as is intended in the text, is a sensible¹¹ man; he is brought to the exercise of all the senses of his soul. All others are dead, senseless, and without true feeling of what the brokenhearted man is sensible of.

1. He *sees* himself to be what others are ignorant of; that is, he sees himself to be not only a sinful man, but a man by nature in the gall and bond

¹¹ **sensible** – morally sensitive; capable of being affected by moral good or evil.

of sin. In the gall of sin—it is Peter’s expression to Simon (Act 8:23), and it is a saying common to all men; for every man in a state of nature is in the gall of sin. He was shapen in it, conceived in it (Psa 51:5); it has also possession of, and by that possession infected the whole of his soul and body. This he sees, this he understands. Every professor¹² sees not this, because the blessing of a broken heart is not bestowed on everyone. David says, “There is no soundness in my flesh” (Psa 38:3); and Solomon suggest that a plague or running sore is in the very heart (1Ki 8:38). But everyone perceives not this. He saith again, that his wounds stank, and were corrupted (Psa 38:5): that his “sore ran...and ceased not” (Psa 77:2). But these things the brutish man, the man whose heart was never broken, has no understanding of. But the brokenhearted, the man that has a broken spirit, he sees, as the prophet has it, he sees his sickness, he sees his wound. “When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound”—he sees it to his grief, he sees it to his sorrow (Hos 5:13).

2. He *feels* what others have no sense of. He feels the arrows of the Almighty, and that they stick fast in him (Psa 38:2). He feels how sore and sick, by the smiting of God’s hammer upon his heart to break it, his poor soul is made (Hos 5:13). He feels a burden intolerably lying upon his spirit. “Mine iniquities,” saith he, “are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me” (Psa 38:4). He feels also the heavy hand of God upon his soul, a thing unknown to carnal men. He feels pain, being wounded, even such pain as others cannot understand, because they are not broken. “My heart,” saith David, “is sore pained within me.” Why so? Why! “The terrors of death are fallen upon me” (Psa 55:4). The terrors of death cause pain, yea, pain of the highest nature; hence, that which is here called “pains” is in another place called “pangs” (Isa 21:3).

You know broken bones occasion pain, strong pain, yea, pain that will make a man or woman groan “with the groanings of a deadly wounded man” (Eze 30:24). Soul pain is the sorest pain, in comparison to which the pain of the body is a very tolerable thing (Pro 18:14). Now here is soul pain, here is heart pain. Here we are discoursing of a wounded, of a broken spirit; wherefore this is pain to be felt to the sinking of the whole man, neither can any support this but God. Here is death in this pain, death forever, without God’s special mercy. This pain will bring the soul to,¹³ and this the brokenhearted man doth feel. “The sorrows of death,” saith David, “compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow” (Psa 116:3). Ay, I’ll warrant thee, poor man, thou foundest trouble and sorrow indeed; for the pains of hell and sorrows of death are pains and

¹² **professor** – professing believer.

¹³ **bring the soul to** – check the soul’s course.

sorrow the most intolerable. But this the man is acquainted with that has his heart broken.¹⁴

3. As he sees and feels, so he *hears* that which augments his woe and sorrow. You know, if a man has his bones broken, he does not only see and feel, but oftentimes also hears what increases his grief; as, that his wounds are incurable; that his bone is not rightly set; that there is danger of a gangrene; that he may be lost for want of looking to. These are the voices, the sayings, that haunt the house of one that has his bones broken. And a brokenhearted man knows what I mean by this. He hears that which makes his lips quiver, and at the noise of which he seems to feel rottenness enter into his bones. He trembleth in himself, and wishes that he may hear joy and gladness, that the bones, the heart, and spirit, which God has broken, may rejoice (Hab 3:16; Psa 51:8). He thinks he hears God say, the devil say, his conscience say, and all good men to whisper among themselves, saying, there is no help for him from God (Psa 3:2). Job heard this, David heard this, Heman heard this; and this is the common sound in the ears of the brokenhearted.

4. The brokenhearted *smell* what others cannot scent. Alas! Sin never smelled so to any man alive as it smells to the brokenhearted. You know wounds will stink; but [there is] no stink like that of sin to the brokenhearted man. His own sins stink, and so doth the sins of all the world to him. Sin is like carrion; it is of a stinking nature. Yea, it has the worst of smells; however, some men like it. But none are offended with the scent thereof but God and the brokenhearted sinner. “My wounds stink and are corrupt,” saith he (Psa 38:5), both in God’s nostrils and mine own. But, alas, who smells the stink of sin? None of the carnal world. They, like carrion-crows, seek it, love it, and eat it as the child eats bread. “They eat up the sin of my people,” saith God, “and they set their heart on their iniquity” (Hos 4:8). This, I say, they do, because they do not smell the nauseous scent of sin. You know, that what is nauseous to the smell cannot be palatable to the taste. The brokenhearted man doth find that sin is nauseous, and therefore cries out, It stinketh. They also think at times the smell of fire, of fire and brimstone, is upon them, they are so sensible of the wages due to sin.

5. The brokenhearted is also a *tasting* man. Wounds, if sore, and full of pains, of great pains, do sometimes alter the taste of a man. They make him think his meat, his drink, yea, that cordials have a bitter taste in them. How many times doth the poor people of God, that are the only men that know

¹⁴ No one could speak more feelingly upon this subject than our author. He had been in deep waters—in soul-harrowing fear, while his heart—hard by nature—was under the hammer of the Word.—“My soul was like a broken vessel. Oh, the unthought-of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors that are affected by a thorough application of guilt, yielded to desperation!” Like the man that had his dwelling among the tombs.—*Grace Abounding*, No. 186; Vol. I p. 29.

what a broken heart doth mean, cry out that gravel, wormwood, gall, and vinegar was made their meat (Lam 3:15-16, 19). This gravel, gall, and wormwood is the true temporal taste of sin; and God, to make them loathe it forever, doth feed them with it till their hearts both ache and break therewith. Wickedness is pleasant of taste to the world; hence it is said they feed on ashes, they feed on the wind (Isa 44:20; Hos 12:1). Lusts, or anything that is vile and refuse, the carnal world think relishes well; as is set out most notably in the parable of the prodigal son. "He would fain have filled his belly," saith our Lord, "with the husks that the swine did eat" (Luk 15:16). But the brokenhearted man has a relish that is true as to these things, though, by reason of the anguish of his soul, it abhors all manner of dainty meat (Job 33:19-20; Psa 107:17-19). Thus I have showed you one sign of a brokenhearted man. He is a sensible man. He has all the senses of his soul awakened; he can see, hear, feel, taste, smell, and that as none but himself can do. I come now to another sign of a broken and contrite man.

Second. And that is, he is a very sorrowful man. This, as the other, is natural. It is natural to one that is in pain, and that has his bones broken, to be a grieved and sorrowful man. He is none of the jolly ones of the times; nor can he, for his bones, his heart, his heart is broken.

1. He is sorry for that he feels and finds in himself a pravity¹⁵ of nature. I told you before he is sensible of it, he sees it, he feels it; and here I say he is sorry for it. It is this that makes him call himself a wretched man (Rom 7:24). It is this that makes him loathe and abhor himself (Job 42:5-6; Eze 36:31). It is this that makes him blush, blush before God and be ashamed. He finds by nature no form nor comeliness in himself, but the more he looks in the glass of the Word, the more unhandsome, the more deformed he perceiveth sin has made him. Everybody sees not this, therefore everybody is not sorry for it; but the broken in heart sees that he is by sin corrupted, marred, full of lewdness¹⁶ and naughtiness.¹⁷ He sees that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18); and this makes him sorry, yea, it makes him sorry at heart. A man that has his bones broken finds he is spoiled, marred, disabled from doing as he would and should, at which he is grieved and made sorry.

Many are sorry for actual transgressions, because they do oft bring them to shame before men; but few are sorry for the defects that sin has made in nature, because they see not those defects themselves. A man cannot be sorry for the sinful defects of nature till he sees they have rendered him contemptible to God; nor is it anything but a sight of God that can make him

¹⁵ **pravity** – moral perversion; corruption.

¹⁶ **lewdness** – indulgence of lust; licentiousness.

¹⁷ **naughtiness** – wickedness.

truly see what he is, and so be heartily sorry for being so. Now “mine eye seeth thee,” saith Job, now “I abhor myself” (Job 42:5-6). “Woe is me! for I am undone,” saith the prophet, “for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD” (Isa 6:5). And it was this that made Daniel say his comeliness was turned in him into corruption; for he had now the vision of the Holy One (Dan 10:8). Visions of God break the heart, because, by the sight the soul then has of His perfections, it sees its own infinite and unspeakable disproportion, because of the vileness of its nature.

Suppose a company of ugly, uncomely, deformed persons dwelt together in one house; and suppose that they never yet saw any man or woman more than themselves, or that were arrayed with the splendors and perfections of nature. These would not be capable of comparing themselves with any but themselves, and consequently would not be affected¹⁸ and made sorry for their uncomely natural defections. But now bring them out of their cells and holes of darkness, where they have been shut up by themselves, and let them take a view of the splendor and perfections of beauty that are in others, and then, if at all, they will be sorry and dejected at the view of their own defects. This is the case. Men by sin are marred, spoiled, corrupted, depraved; but they may dwell by themselves in the dark. They see neither God, nor angels, nor saints in their excellent nature and beauty; and therefore they are apt to count their own uncomely parts their ornaments and their glory. But now let such, as I said, see God, see saints, or the ornaments of the Holy Ghost, and themselves as they are without them, and then they cannot but must be affected with and sorry for their own deformity. When the Lord Christ put forth but little of His excellency before His servant Peter’s face, it raised up the depravity of Peter’s nature before him to his great confusion and shame; and made him cry out to Him in the midst of all his fellows, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luk 5:4-8).

This therefore is the cause of a broken heart, even a sight of divine excellencies, and a sense that I am a poor, depraved, spoiled defiled wretch; and this sight having broken the heart, begets sorrow in the brokenhearted.

2. The brokenhearted is a sorrowful man; for that he finds his depravity of nature strong in him, to the putting forth itself to oppose and overthrow what his changed mind doth prompt him to. “When I would do good,” saith Paul, “evil is present with me” (Rom 7:21). Evil is present to oppose, to resist, and make head against the desires of my soul. The man that has his bones broken may have yet a mind to be industriously occupied in a lawful and honest calling; but he finds, by experience, that an infirmity attends his present condition that strongly resists his good endeavors. At this he shakes his head, makes complaints, and with sorrow of heart he sighs and says, I

¹⁸ **affected** – moved in the feelings or affections.

cannot do the thing that I would (Rom 7:15; Gal 5:17). I am weak, I am feeble. I am not only depraved, but by that depravity deprived of ability to put good motions,¹⁹ good intentions and desires into good execution, to completeness. Oh, says he, “I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me” (Psa 38:17)!

You must know that the brokenhearted loves God, loves his soul, loves good, and hates evil. Now, for such an one to find in himself an opposition and continual contradiction to this holy passion, it must needs cause sorrow, godly sorrow, as the Apostle Paul calls it. For such are made sorry after a godly sort. To be sorry for that thy nature is with sin depraved, and that through this depravity thou art deprived of ability to do what the Word and thy holy mind doth prompt thee to, is to be sorry after a godly sort. For this sorrow worketh that in thee of which thou wilt never have cause to repent; no, not to eternity (2 Cor 7:9-11).

3. The brokenhearted man is sorry for those breaches that, by reason of the depravity of his nature, are made in his life and conversation. And this was the case of the man in our text. The vileness of his nature had broken out to the defiling of his life, and to the making of him, at this time, base in conversation. This, this was it, that all to brake²⁰ his heart. He saw in this he had dishonored God, and that cut him. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psa 51:4). He saw in this he had caused the enemies of God to open their mouths and blaspheme; and this cut him to the heart. This made him cry, “I have sinned against thee,” Lord (Psa 41:4). This made him say, “I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin” (Psa 38:18).

When a man is designed²¹ to do a matter, when his heart is set upon it, and the brokenhearted doth design to glorify God, an obstruction to that design, the spoiling of this work, makes him sorrowful. Hannah coveted children, but could not have them, and this made her “a woman of a

¹⁹ The Christian, if he thinks of possessing motions, joins with such thoughts his inability to carry them into effect. “When I would do good, evil is present with me” (Rom 7:21). How different is this to the self-righteous Ignorance, so vividly pictured in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*:

“*Ignorance*—I am always full of good motions that come into my mind, to comfort me as I walk.

Christian—What good motions? Pray tell us.

Ignorance—Why, I think of God and heaven. *Christian*—So do the devils and damned souls!”

The whole of that deeply interesting dialogue illustrates the difficulty of self-knowledge, which can only be acquired by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

—See Bunyan, *Works* Vol. 3, p. 156.

²⁰ **all to brake** – an obsolete mode of expression for “altogether broke.”—*Ed.*

²¹ **is designed** – purposes; intends.

sorrowful spirit” (1Sa 1:15). A brokenhearted man would be well inwardly, and do that which is well outwardly; but he feels, he finds, he sees he is prevented, prevented at least in part. This makes him sorrowful; in this he groans, groans earnestly, being burdened with his imperfections (2Co 5:1-3). You know one with broken bones has imperfections many, and is more sensible of them, too, as was said afore, than any other man; and this makes him sorrowful, yea, and makes him conclude that he shall go softly all his days in the bitterness of his soul (Isa 38:15).

Third. The man with a broken heart is a very humble man; or, true humility is a sign of a broken heart. Hence, brokenness of heart, contrition of spirit, and humbleness of mind are put together. “To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa 57:15).

To follow our similitude. Suppose a man is in bodily health, stout and strong, and one that fears and cares for no man. Yet let this man have but a leg or an arm broken, and his courage is quelled. He is now so far off from hectoring²² of it with a man, that he is afraid of every little child that doth but offer to touch him. Now he will court²³ the most feeble that has ought to do with him, to use him and handle him gently. Now he is become a child in courage, a child in fear, and humbleth himself as a little child.

Why, thus it is with that man that is of a broken and contrite spirit. Time was, indeed, he could hector, even hector it with God Himself, saying, “What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?” or what profit shall I have if I keep His commandments? (Job 21:15; Mal 3:13-14). Ay! But now his heart is broken; God has wrestled with him, and given him a fall, to the breaking of his bones, his heart; and now he crouches, now he cringes, now he begs of God that he will not only do him good, but do it with tender hands. “Have mercy upon me, O God,” said David; yea, “according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psa 51:1).

He stands, as he sees, not only in need of mercy, but of the tenderest mercies. God has several sorts of mercies, some more rough, some more tender. God can save a man, and yet have him a dreadful way to heaven! This the brokenhearted sees, and this the brokenhearted dreads, and therefore pleads for the tenderest sort of mercies; and here we read of His gentle dealing, and that He is very pitiful, and that He deals tenderly with His. But the reason of such expressions no man knows but he that is brokenhearted. He has his sores, his running sores, his stinking sores; wherefore he is pained, and therefore covets to be handled tenderly. Thus God has broken the pride of his spirit, and humbled the loftiness of man. And his humility yet appears,

²² **hectoring** – teasing; tormenting; behaving like a bully.

²³ **court** – entreat; request.

1. In his thankfulness for natural life. He reckoneth at night, when he goes to bed, that like as a lion, so God will tear him to pieces before the morning light (Isa 38:13). There is no judgment that has fallen upon others, but he counts of right he should be swallowed up by it. “My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments” (Psa 119:120). But perceiving a day added to his life, and that he in the morning is still on this side hell, he cannot choose but take notice of it, and acknowledge it as a special favor, saying, God be thanked for holding my soul in life till now, and for keeping my life back from the destroyer (Job 33:22; Psa 56:13; 86:13).

Man, before his heart is broken, counts time his own, and therefore he spends it lavishly upon every idle thing. His soul is far from fear because the rod of God is not upon him; but when he sees himself under the wounding hand of God, or when God, like a lion, is breaking all his bones, then he humbleth himself before Him, and falleth at His foot. Now he has learned to count every moment a mercy, and every small morsel a mercy.

2. Now also the least hopes of mercy for his soul—Oh, how precious is it! He that was wont to make orts²⁴ of the gospel, and that valued promises but as stubble, and the words of God but as rotten wood; now, with what an eye doth he look on the promise? Yea, he counted a peradventure²⁵ of mercy more rich, more worth, than the whole world. Now, as we say, he is glad to leap at a crust; now, to be a dog in God’s house is counted better by him than to “dwell in the tents of the wicked” (Psa 84:10; Mat 15:26-27; Luk 15:17-19).

3. Now he that was wont to look scornfully upon the people of God, yea, that used to scorn to show them a gentle cast of his countenance; now he admires and bows before them, and is ready to lick the dust of their feet, and would count it his greatest, the highest honor, to be as one of the least of them. “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” says he (Luk 15:19).

4. Now he is, in his own eyes, the greatest fool in nature; for that he sees he has been so mistaken in his ways, and has not yet but little, if any true knowledge of God. Everyone now, says he, have more knowledge of God than I; everyone serves him better than I (Psa 73:21-22; Prov 30:2-3).

5. Now may he be but one, though the least in the kingdom of heaven! Now may he be but one, though the least in the church on earth! Now may he be but loved, though the least beloved of saints! How high an account doth he set thereon!

²⁴ **orts** – an obsolete word in England, derived from the Anglo-Saxon. Any worthless leaving or refuse. It is thus used by Shakespeare in his *Troilus and Cressida*, Act 5, s. 2: “The fractions of her faith, orts of her love: The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics Of her ore-eaten faith.”—*Ed.*

²⁵ **peradventure** – perhaps.

6. Now, when he talketh with God or men, how doth he debase himself before them! If with God, how does he accuse himself, and load himself with the acknowledgments of his own villanies, which he committed in the days wherein he was the enemy of God! “Lord,” said Paul, that contrite one, “I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him” (Act 22:19-20). Yea, I punished thy saints “oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Act 26:9-11).

Also, when he comes to speak to saints, how doth he make himself vile before them! “I am,” saith he, “the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle” (1Co 15:9). I am “less than the least of all saints” (Eph 3:8). I was a blasphemer; I was a persecutor, and injurious, etc. (1Ti 1:13). What humility, what self-abasing thoughts, doth a broken heart produce! When David danced before the ark of God, also how did he discover his nakedness to the disliking of his wife; and when she taunted him for his doings, says he, “It was before the LORD,” etc., “and I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight” (2Sa 6:20-22). Oh, the man that is, or that has been kindly broken in his spirit, and that is of a contrite heart, is a lowly, humble man.

Fourth. The brokenhearted man is a man that sees himself in spirituals to be poor. Therefore, as humble and contrite, so poor and contrite are put together in the Word. “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit” (Isa 66:2). And here we still pursue our metaphor. A wounded man, a man with broken bones, concludes his condition to be but poor, very poor. Ask him how he does, and he answers, “Truly, neighbors, in a very poor condition!” Also, you have the spiritual poverty of such as have, or have had their hearts broken, and that have been of contrite spirits, much made mention of in the Word. And they go by two names to distinguish them from others. They are called *Thy* poor, that is, God’s poor; they are also called “the poor in spirit” (Psa 72:2; 74:19; Mat 5:3). Now, the man that is poor in his own eyes—for of him we now discourse—and the brokenhearted is such an one, is sensible of his wants. He knows he cannot help himself, and therefore is forced to be content to live by the charity of others. Thus it is in nature; thus it is in grace.

1. The brokenhearted now knows his wants, and he knew it not till now. As he that has a broken bone knew no want of a bonesetter till he knew his bone was broken. His broken bone makes him know it. His pain and anguish makes him know it; and thus it is in spirituals. Now he sees to be poor indeed is to want the sense of the favor of God; for his great pain is a sense of wrath, as hath been shown before. And the voice of joy would heal his broken bones

(Psa 51:8). Two things he thinks would make him rich: 1) a right and title to Jesus Christ, and all His benefits; 2) and saving faith therein. They that are spiritually rich are rich in Him and in the faith of Him (2Co 8:9; Jam 2:5).

The first of these giveth us a right to the kingdom of heaven. The second yields the soul the comfort of it; and the brokenhearted man wants the sense and knowledge of his interest in these. That he knows he wants them is plain; but that he knows he has them is what, as yet, he wants the attainment of. Hence he says, "The poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst" (Isa 41:17). There is none in their view; none in their view for them. Hence David, when he had his broken heart, felt he wanted washing, he wanted purging, he wanted to be made white. He knew that spiritual riches lay there, but he did not so well perceive that God had washed and purged him. Yea, he rather was afraid that all was going, that he was in danger of being cast out of God's presence, and that the Spirit of grace would be utterly taken from him (Psa 51). That is the first thing. The brokenhearted is poor because he knows his wants.

2. The brokenhearted is poor, because he knows he cannot help himself to what he knows he wants. The man that has a broken arm, as he knows it, so he knows of himself he cannot set it. This therefore is a second thing that declares a man is poor, otherwise he is not so. For suppose a man wants never so much, yet if he can but help himself, if he can furnish himself, if he can supply his own wants out of what he has, he cannot be a poor man. Yea, the more he wants, the greater are his riches, if he can supply his own wants out of his own purse.

He then is the poor man that knows his spiritual want and also knows he cannot supply or help himself. But this the brokenhearted knows; therefore he in his own eyes is the only poor man. True, he may have something of his own, but that will not supply his want; and therefore he is a poor man still. I have sacrifices, says David, but Thou dost not desire them, therefore my poverty remains (Psa 51:16). Lead is not gold, lead is not current money with the merchants. There is none has spiritual gold to sell but Christ (Rev 3:18). What can a man do to procure Christ, or procure faith, or love? Yea, had he never so much of his own carnal excellencies, no, not one penny of it will go for pay in that market where grace is to be had. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" (Song 8:7).

This the brokenhearted man perceives; and therefore he sees himself to be spiritually poor. True he has a broken heart, and that is of great esteem with God; but that is not of nature's goodness. That is a gift, a work of God; and that is the sacrifices of God. Besides, a man cannot remain content and at rest with that; for that, in the nature of it, does but show him he is poor,

and that his wants are such as himself cannot supply. Besides, there is but little ease in a broken heart.

3. The brokenhearted man is poor and sees it, because he finds he is now disabled to live any way else but by begging. This David betook himself to, though he was a king; for he knew, as to his soul's health, he could live no way else. "This poor man cried," saith he, "and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psa 34:6). And this leads me to the fifth sign.

Fifth. Another sign of a broken heart is a crying, a crying out. Pain, you know, will make one cry. Go to them that have upon them the anguish of broken bones and see if they do not cry. Anguish makes them cry. This, this is that which quickly follows, if once thy heart be broken, and thy spirit indeed made contrite.

1. I say, anguish will make thee cry. "Trouble and anguish," saith David, "have taken hold on me" (Psa 119:143). Anguish, you know, doth naturally provoke to crying. Now, as a broken bone has anguish, a broken heart has anguish. Hence the pains of one that has a broken heart are compared to the pangs of a woman in travail (Joh 16:20-22).

Anguish will make one cry alone, cry to one's self; and this is called a bemoaning of one's self. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself," saith God (Jer 31:18)—that is, being at present under the breaking, chastising hand of God. "Thou hast chastised me," saith he, "and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke" (Jer 31:18). This is his meaning also who said, "I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise." And why? Why, "My heart is sore pained within me" (Psa 55:2-4).

This is a self-bemoaning, a bemoaning themselves in secret and retired places. You know it is common with them who are distressed with anguish, though all alone, to cry out to themselves of their present pains, saying, "Oh, my leg! Oh, my arm! Oh, my bowels!" Or, as the son of the Shunammite, "My head, my head" (2 Kings 4:19). Oh, the groans, the sighs, the cries, that the brokenhearted have, when by themselves, or alone! Oh, say they, my sins! My sins! My soul! My soul! How am I loaden with guilt! How am I surrounded with fear! Oh, this hard, this desperate, this unbelieving heart! Oh, how sin defileth my will, my mind, my conscience! "I am afflicted and ready to die" (Psa 88:15).²⁶

²⁶ This is in exact agreement with the author's experience, which he had published twenty-two years before, under the title of *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.—"I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart as water would out of a fountain. I thought that none but the devil himself could equal me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind." A sure

Could some of you carnal people but get behind the chamber-door, to hear Ephraim when he is at the work of self-bemoaning, it would make you stand amazed to hear him bewail that sin in himself in which you take delight; and to hear him bemoan his misspending of time, while you spend all in pursuing your filthy lusts; and to hear him offended with his heart, because it will not better comply with God's holy will, while you are afraid of His Word and ways, and never think yourselves better than when farthest off from God. The unruliness of the passions and lusts of the brokenhearted make them often get into a corner and thus bemoan themselves.

2. As they thus cry out in a bemoaning manner of and to themselves, so they have their outcries of and against themselves to others; as she said in another case, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam 1:12). Oh, the bitter cries and complaints that the brokenhearted have and make to one another! Still everyone imagining that his own wounds are deepest, and his own sores fullest of anguish, and hardest to be cured. Say they, if our iniquities be upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live? (Eze 33:10).

Once being at an honest woman's house, I, after some pause, asked her how she did? She said, "Very badly." I asked her if she was sick? She answered, "No." "What then," said I, "are any of your children ill?" She told me, "No." "What," said I, "is your husband amiss, or do you go back in the world?" "No, no," said she, "but I am afraid I shall not be saved." And broke out with heavy heart, saying, "Ah, Goodman Bunyan! Christ and a pitcher—if I had Christ, though I went and begged my bread with a pitcher, it would be better with me than I think it is now!" This woman had her heart broken, this woman wanted Christ, this woman was concerned for her soul. There are but few women, rich women, that count Christ and a pitcher better than the world, their pride, and pleasures. This woman's cries are worthy to be recorded. It was a cry that carried in it, not only a sense of the want, but also of the worth of Christ. This cry, "Christ and a pitcher," made a melodious noise in the ears of the very angels!²⁷

sign that God, as his heavenly Father, was enlightening his memory by the Holy Spirit.—*Ed.*

²⁷ This account of the author's interview with a pious, humble woman is an agreeable episode, which relieves the mind without diverting it from the serious object of the treatise. It was probably an event which took place in one of those pastoral visits which Bunyan was in the habit of making, and which, if wisely made, so endears a minister to the people of his charge. Christ and a crust is the common saying to express the sentiment that Christ is all in all. The pitcher has reference to the custom of pilgrims in carrying at their girdle a vessel to hold water, the staff having a crook by which it was dipped up from a well or river.—*Ed.*

But, I say, few women cry out thus. Few women are so in love with their own eternal salvation, as to be willing to part with all their lusts and vanities for Jesus Christ and a pitcher. Good Jacob also was thus: "If the Lord," said he, "will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then he shall be my God." Yea, he vowed it should be so. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God" (Gen 28:20-21).

3. As they bemoan themselves, and make their complaints to one and another, so they cry to God. "O God," said Heman, "I have cried day and night before thee." But when? Why, when his soul was full of trouble, and his life drew near to the grave (Psa 88:1-3). Or, as it says in another place, "Out of the depths...out of the belly of hell cried I" (Psa 130:1; Jon 2:2), by such words expressing what painful condition they were in when they cried.

See how God Himself words it. "My pleasant portion," says He, is become "a desolate wilderness...and being desolate it mourneth unto me" (Jer 12:11). And this also is natural to those whose hearts are broken. Whither goes the child, when it catcheth harm, but to its father, to its mother? Where doth it lay its head, but in their laps? Into whose bosom doth it pour out its complaint, more especially, but into the bosom of the father, or a mother, because there are bowels, there is pity, there is relief and succor? And thus it is with them whose bones, whose hearts are broken. It is natural to them. They must cry; they cannot but cry to Him. "LORD, heal me," said David, "for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed" (Psa 6:1-3). He that cannot cry feels no pain, sees no want, fears no danger, or else is dead.

Sixth. Another sign of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit is, it trembleth at God's Word. "To him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa 66:2).

The Word of God is an awful Word to a brokenhearted man. Solomon says, "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion" (Pro 20:2); and if so, what is the Word of God? for by the wrath and fear is meant the authoritative word of a king. We have a proverb, "The burnt child dreads the fire, the whipped child fears the rod"; even so the brokenhearted fears the Word of God. Hence you have a remark set upon them that tremble at God's Word, to wit, they are they that keep among the godly. They are they that keep within compass. They are they that are aptest to mourn and to stand in the gap when God is angry, and to turn away His wrath from a people.

It is a sign the Word of God has had place, and wrought powerfully, when the heart trembleth at it, is afraid, and stands in awe of it. When Joseph's mistress tempted him to lie with her, he was afraid of the Word of God. "How then can I do this great wickedness," said he, "and sin against God?" (Gen

39:7-9). He stood in awe of God's Word, durst not do it, because he kept in remembrance what a dreadful thing it was to rebel against God's Word. When old Eli heard that the ark was taken, his very heart trembled within him; for he read by that sad loss that God was angry with Israel, and he knew the anger of God was a great and terrible thing (1Sa 4:13). When Samuel went to Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled; for they feared that he came to them with some sad message from God, and they had had experience of the dread of such things before (1 Sam 16:1-4). When Ezra would have a mourning in Israel for the sins of the land, he sent, and there came to him "every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away" (Ezra 9:4).

There are, I say, a sort of people that tremble at the words of God, and that are afraid of doing ought that is contrary to them; but they are only such with whose souls and spirits the Word has had to do. For the rest, they are resolved to go on their course, let God say what He will. "As for the word" of the Lord, said rebellious Israel to Jeremiah, "that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth" (Jer 44:16). But do you think that these people did ever feel the power and majesty of the Word of God to break their hearts? No, verily. Had that been so, they would have trembled at the words of God. They would have been afraid of the words of God. God may command some people what He will, they will do what they list. What care they for God? What care they for His Word? Neither threats nor promises, neither punishments or favors will make them obedient to the Word of God; and all because they have not felt the power of it. Their hearts have not been broken with it. When king Josiah did but read in God's Book what punishment God had threatened against rebellious Israel, though he himself was a holy and good man, he humbled himself. "He rent his clothes," and wept before the Lord, and was afraid of the judgment threatened (2Ki 22; 2Ch 34). For he knew what a dreadful thing the Word of God is. Some men, as I said before, dare do anything, let the Word of God be never so much against it; but they that tremble at the Word dare not do so. No, they must make the Word their rule for all they do. They must go to the Holy Bible and there inquire what may or may not be done; for they tremble at the Word. This then is another sign, a true sign, that the heart has been broken, namely, when the heart is made afraid of, and trembleth at the Word (Act 9:4-6; 16:29-30). Trembling at the Word is caused by a belief of what is deserved, threatened, and of what will come, if not prevented by repentance; and therefore the heart melts, and breaks before the Lord.

4. The necessity for a broken heart

I come, in the next place, to speak to this question.

But what necessity is there that the heart must be broken? Cannot a man be saved unless his heart be broken? I answer: Avoiding secret things, which only belong to God, there is a necessity of breaking the heart in order to salvation, because a man will not sincerely comply with the means conducing thereunto until his heart is broken. For,

First. Man, take him as he comes into the world, as to spirituals, as to evangelical things, in which mainly lies man's eternal felicity, and there he is as one dead, and so stupefied, and wholly in himself, as unconcerned with it. Nor can any call or admonition, that has not a heart-breaking power attending of it, bring him to a due consideration of his present state, and so unto an effectual desire to be saved.

Many ways God has manifested this. He has threatened men with temporal judgments; yea, sent such judgments upon them, once and again, over and over, but they will not do. "What!" says He, "I...have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities...I have withholden the rain from you...I have smitten you with blasting and mildew...I have sent among you the pestilence...I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah...Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD" (Amo 4:6-11). See here! Here is judgment upon judgment, stroke after stroke, punishment after punishment, but all will not do unless the heart is broken. Yea, another prophet seems to say that such things, instead of converting the soul, set it further off. If heart-breaking work attend such strokes, "Why should ye be stricken any more?" says he, "ye will revolt more and more" (Isa 1:5).

Man's heart is fenced. It is grown gross; there is a skin that, like a coat of mail, has wrapped it up, and enclosed it in on every side. This skin, this coat of mail, unless it be cut off and taken away, the heart remains untouched, whole; and so as unconcerned, whatever judgments or afflictions light upon the body (Mat 13:15; Act 28:27). This which I call the coat of mail, the fence of the heart, has two great names in Scripture. It is called, "the foreskin of your heart," and the armor in which the devil trusteth (Deu 10:16; Luk 11:22).

Because these shield and fence the heart from all gospel doctrine, and from all legal punishments, nothing can come at it till these are removed. Therefore, in order unto conversion, the heart is said to be circumcised—that is, this foreskin is taken away, and this coat of mail is spoiled. I "will circumcise thy heart," saith He, "to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart"—and then the devil's goods are spoiled—"that thou mayst live" (Deu 30:6; Luk 11:22).

And now the heart lies open, now the Word will prick, cut, and pierce it; and it being cut, pricked, and pierced, it bleeds, it faints, it falls, and dies at

the foot of God, unless it is supported by the grace and love of God in Jesus Christ. Conversion, you know, begins at the heart; but if the heart be so secured by sin and Satan, as I have said, all judgments are, while that is so, in vain. Hence Moses, after he had made a long relation of mercy and judgment unto the children of Israel, suggests that yet the great thing was wanting to them, and that thing was “an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear” unto that day (Deu 29:2-3). Their hearts were as yet not touched to the quick, were not awakened and wounded by the holy Word of God and made tremble at its truth and terror.

But I say, before the heart be touched, pricked, made smart, etc., how can it be thought, be the danger never so great, that it should repent, cry, bow, and break at the foot of God, and supplicate there for mercy! And yet thus it must do; for thus God has ordained, and thus God has appointed it; nor can men be saved without it. But, I say, can a man spiritually dead, a stupid man, whose heart is past feeling, do this, before he has his dead and stupid heart awakened, to see and feel its state and misery without it? But,

Second. Man, take him as he comes into the world—and how wise soever he is in worldly and temporal things—he is yet a fool as to that which is spiritual and heavenly. Hence Paul says, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him,” because he is indeed a fool to them; “neither,” says the text, “can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Co 2:14). But how now must this fool be made wise? Why, wisdom must be put into his heart (Job 38:36). Now, none can put it there but God; and how doth He put it there, but by making room there for it, by taking away the thing which hinders, which is that folly and madness which naturally dwelleth there? But how doth He take that away but by a severe chastising of his soul for it, until He has made him weary of it? The whip and stripes are provided for the natural fool, and so it is for him that is spiritually so (Pro 19:29).

Solomon intimates that it is a hard thing to make a fool become wise. “Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him” (Pro 27:22). By this it appears that it is a hard thing to make a fool a wise man. To bray one in a mortar is a dreadful thing—to bray one there with a pestle; and yet it seems a whip, a mortar, and a pestle is the way. And if this is the way to make one wise in this world, and if all this will hardly do, how must the fool that is so in spirituals be whipped and beaten and stripped before he is made wise therein? Yea, his heart must be put into God’s mortar and must be beaten—yea, brayed there with the pestle of the law, before it loves to hearken unto heavenly things. It is a great word in Jeremiah, “Through deceit,” that is, folly, “they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.” And what follows? Why, “Therefore, thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try

them,” that is, with fire, “for how shall I do for the daughter of my people” (Jer 9:6-7). “I will melt them”: I will put them into my furnace, and there I will try them; and there will I make them know Me, saith the Lord. When David was under spiritual chastisement for his sin and had his heart under the breaking hand of God, then he said God should make him know wisdom (Psa 51:6). Now he was in the mortar, now he was in the furnace, now he was bruised and melted; yea, now his bones, his heart, was breaking, and now his folly was departing. Now, says he, “Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.” If I know anything of the way of God with us fools, there is nothing else will make us wise men; yea, a thousand breakings will not make us so wise as we should be.

We say, Wisdom is not good till it is bought; and he that buys it, according to the intention of that proverb, usually smarts for it. The fool is wise in his own conceit; wherefore there is a double difficulty attends him before he can be wise indeed. Not only his folly, but his wisdom, must be removed from him; and how shall that be, but by ripping up of his heart by some sore conviction, that may show him plainly that his wisdom is his folly, and that which will undo him. A fool loves his folly; that is, as treasure, so much is he in love with it. Now then, it must be a great thing that must make a fool forsake his folly. The foolish will not weigh, nor consider, nor compare wisdom with their folly. “Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom...As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly” (Pro 15:21; 26:11). So loth are they when driven from it to let it go, to let it depart from them. Wherefore there must go a great deal to the making of a man a Christian; for as to that, every man is a fool, yea, the greatest fool, the most unconcerned fool, the most self-willed fool of all fools; yea, one that will not be turned from his folly but by the breaking of his heart. David was one of these fools; Manasseh was one of these fools. Saul, otherwise called Paul, was one of these fools; and so was I—and that the biggest of all.²⁸

Third. Man, take him as he comes into the world, and he is not only a dead man and a fool, but a proud man also. Pride is one of those sins that first showeth itself to children, yea, and it grows up with them and mixeth itself with all they do: but it lies most hid, most deep in man as to his soul-concerns. For the nature of sin, as sin, is not only to be vile, but to hide its vileness from the soul. Hence, many think they do well when they sin. Jonah thought he did well to be angry with God (Jon 4:9). The Pharisees thought they did well when they said, Christ had a devil (Joh 8:48). And Paul thought verily that he “ought to do many things” against, or “contrary to the name of Jesus”; which he also did with great madness (Act 26:9-10). And thus, sin

²⁸ However hard, and even harsh, these terms may appear, they are fully justified; and with all the author’s great ability and renown, he has the grace of humility to acknowledge that, by nature and practice, he had been the biggest of fools.—*Ed.*

puffs up men with pride and a conceit of themselves that they are a thousand times better than they are. Hence, they think they are the children of God when they are the children of the devil, and that they are something as to Christianity when they neither are such, nor know what it is that they must have to make them such (Joh 8:41-44; Gal 6:3).

Now, whence flows this but from pride and a self-conceit of themselves, and that their state is good for another world, when they are yet in their sins and under the curse of God? Yea, and this pride is so strong and high, and yet so hid in them, that all the ministers in the world cannot persuade them that this is pride, not grace, in which they are so confident. Hence they slight all reproofs, rebukes, threatenings, or admonitions that are pressed upon them to prevail with them to take heed, that they be not herein deceived. "Hear ye," saith the prophet, "and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken...But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride" (Jer 13:15-17). And what was the conclusion? Why, all the proud men stood out still, and maintained their resistance of God and His holy prophet (Jer 43:2).

Nor is there anything that will prevail with these to the saving of their souls, until their hearts are broken. David, after he had defiled Bathsheba and slain her husband, yet boasted himself in his justice and holiness, and would by all means have the man put to death that had but taken the poor man's lamb, when, alas, poor soul, himself was the great transgressor. But would he believe it? No, no. He stood upon the vindicating of himself to be a just doer; nor would he be made to fall until Nathan, by authority from God, did tell him that he was the man whom himself had condemned. "Thou art the man," said he, at which word his conscience was awakened, his heart wounded, and so his soul made to fall under the burden of his guilt, at the feet of the God of heaven for mercy (2Sa 12:1-13).

Ah, pride, pride! Thou art that which holds many a man in the chains of his sins. Thou art it, thou cursed self-conceit, and keepest them from believing that their state is damnable. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God" (Psa 10:4). And if there is so much in the pride of his countenance, what is there, think you, in the pride of his heart? Therefore, Job says it is to hide pride from man, and so to save his soul from hell, that God chasteneth him with pain upon his bed, until the multitude of his bones stick out, and until his life draws nigh to the destroyer (Job 33:17-22).

It is a hard thing to take a man off his pride, and make him, instead of trusting in and boasting of his goodness, wisdom, honesty, and the like, to see himself a sinner, a fool, yea, a man that is cruel as to his own immortal soul. Pride of heart has a power in it, and is therefore compared to an iron

sinew, and an iron chain, by which they are made stout,²⁹ and with which they are held in that stoutness, to oppose the Lord, and drive His Word from their hearts (Lev 26:19; Psa 73:6).

This was the sin of devils, and it is the sin of man, and the sin, I say, from which no man can be delivered until his heart is broken; and then his pride is spoiled, then he will be glad to yield. If a man be proud of his strength or manhood, a broken leg will maul him; and if a man be proud of his goodness, a broken heart will maul him; because, as has been said, a broken heart comes by the discovery and charge of sin, by the power of God upon the conscience.

Fourth. Man, take him as he comes into the world, and he is not only a dead man, a fool, and proud, but also self-willed and head-strong (2Pe 2:10). A stubborn ungain³⁰ creature is man before his heart is broken. Hence, they are so often called rebels, rebellious, and disobedient. They will only do what they list.³¹ “All day long,” says God, “have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people.” And hence, again, they are compared to a self-willed or headstrong horse, that will, in spite of his rider, rush into the battle. “Every one,” says God, “turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle” (Jer 8:6). They say, “With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?” (Psa 12:4).

Hence, they are said to stop their ears, to pull away their shoulder, to shut their eyes, and harden their hearts, “against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High” (Psa 107:11; Zec 7:10, 12). They are fitly compared to the rebellious son who would not be ruled by his parents, or to the prodigal, who would have all in his own hand, and remove himself far away from father and father’s house (Deu 21:20; Luk 15:13). Now for such creatures, nothing will do but violence. The stubborn son must be stoned till he dies; and the prodigal must be famished out of all. Nothing else, I say, will do. Their self-willed stubborn heart will not comply with the will of God before it is broken (Deu 21:21; Luk 15:14-17). These are they that are called the stout-hearted. These are said to be far from righteousness, and so will remain until their hearts are broken; for so they must be made to know themselves (Isa 9:9-11).

Fifth. Man, as he comes into the world, is not only a dead man, a fool, proud, and self-willed, but also a fearless creature. “There is,” saith the text, “no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom 3:18). No fear of God! There is fear of man, fear of losing his favor, his love, his goodwill, his help, his friendship; this is seen everywhere. How do the poor fear the rich, the weak fear the

²⁹ **stout** – resolute; obstinate.

³⁰ **ungain** – unreasonable; obstinate.

³¹ **list** – desire.

strong, and those that are threatened, them that threaten! But come now to God. Why, none fear Him; that is, by nature, none reverence him. They neither fear His frowns, nor seek His favor, nor inquire how they may escape His revenging hand that is lifted up against their sins and their souls because of sin. Little things they fear the losing of them; but the soul they are not afraid to lose. They “fear not me, saith the LORD” (Mal 3:5).

How many times are some men put in mind of death by sickness upon themselves, by graves, by the death of others? How many times are they put in mind of hell by reading the Word, by lashes of conscience, and by some that go roaring in despair out of this world? How many times are they put in mind of the day of judgment. As, 1) By God’s binding the fallen angels over to judgment. 2) By the drowning of the old world (2Pe 2:4-5; Jude 1:6-7). 3) By the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven (2Pe 2:6; Jude 1:7). 4) By appointing a day (Act 17:29-31). 5) By appointing a judge (Act 10:40-42). 6) By reserving their crimes in records (Isa 30:8; Rev 20:12). 7) By appointing and preparing of witnesses (Rom 2:15). 8) And by promising, yea, threatening, yea, resolving, to call the whole world to His bar, there to be judged for all which they have done and said, and for every secret thing (Mat 25:31-33; 12:36; Ecc 11:9; 12:14).

And yet they fear not God. Alas, they believe not these things. These things, to carnal men, are like Lot’s preaching to his sons and daughters that were in Sodom. When he told them that God would destroy that place, he seemed unto them as one that mocked; and his words to them were as idle tales (Gen 19:14). Fearless men are not won by words. Blows, wounds, and killings are the things that must bring them under fear. How many struggling fits had Israel with God in the wilderness? How many times did they declare that there they feared him not? And observe, they were seldom, if ever, brought to fear and dread His glorious name, unless He beset them round with death and the grave. Nothing, nothing but a severe hand, will make the fearless fear. Hence, to speak after the manner of man, God is put upon it to go this way with sinners when He would save their souls—even bring them, and lay them at the mouth, and within sight of hell and everlasting damnation; and there also charge them with sin and guilt, to the breaking of their hearts, before they will fear His name.

Sixth. Man, as he comes into the world, is not only a dead man, a fool, proud, self-willed, and fearless, but he is a false believer concerning God. Let God report of Himself never so plainly, man by nature will not believe this report of Him. No, they are become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened; wherefore they turn the glory of God, which is His truth, into a lie (Rom 1:21-25). God says He sees; they say He seeth not. God saith He knows; they say He doth not know. God saith none is like Himself; yet they say He is altogether like to them. God saith none shall keep His door

for naught; they say it is in vain and to no profit to serve Him. He saith He will do good; they say He will neither do good nor evil (Job 22:13-14; Psa 50:21; Job 21:14-15; Mal 3:14; Zep 1:12). Thus they falsely believe concerning God; yea, as to the Word of His grace, and the revelation of His mercy in Christ, they stick³² not to say by their practice—for a wicked man “speaketh with his feet” (Pro 6:13)—that that is a stark lie, and not to be trusted to (1Jo 5:10).

Now, what shall God do to save these men? If He hides Himself and conceals His glory, they perish. If He sends to them by His messengers, and forbears to come to them Himself, they perish. If He comes to them and forbears to work upon them by His Word, they perish. If He worketh on them, but not effectually, they perish. If He works effectually, He must break their hearts, and make them, as men wounded to death, fall at His feet for mercy, or there can be no good done on them. They will not rightly believe until He fires³³ them out of their misbelief, and makes them to know, by the breaking of their bones for their false faith, that He is, and will be, what He has said of Himself in His holy Word.³⁴ The heart, therefore, must be broken before the man can come to good.

Seventh. Man, as he comes into the world, is not only a dead man, a fool, proud, self-willed, fearless, and a false believer, but a great lover of sin. He is captivated, ravished, drowned in the delights of it. Hence it [the Word] says, they love sin, delight in lies, do take pleasure in iniquity, and in them that do it; that they sport themselves in their own deceivings, and glory in their shame (Joh 3:19; Psa 62:4; Rom 1:32; 2Pe 2:13; Phi 3:19).

This is the temper of man by nature; for sin is mixed with and has the mastery of all the powers of his soul. Hence, they are said to be captives to it, and to be led captive into the pleasures of it at the will of the devil (2Ti 2:26). And you know it is not an easy thing to break love, or to take the affections off that object on which they are so deeply set, in which they are so deeply rooted, as man’s heart is in his sins. Alas! How many are there that contemn all the allurements of heaven, and that trample upon all the threatenings of God, and that say, “Tush,” at all the flames of hell, whenever these are propounded as motives to work them off³⁵ their sinful delights! So fixed are they, so mad are they, upon these beastly idols. Yea, he that shall take in

³² **sticks** – hesitates.

³³ **fires** – drives by fire.

³⁴ Man must be burnt out of the stronghold in which he trusted. “Saved; yet so as by fire...baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire...Is not my word like as a fire?” (1Co 3:15; Mat 3:11; Jer 23:9). Reader, the work of regeneration and purification is a trying work; may each inquire, Has this fire burnt up my wood, hay, stubble?—*Ed.*

³⁵ **work them off** – dissuade them from.

hand to stop their course in this their way is as he that shall attempt to prevent the raging waves of the sea from their course, when driven by the mighty winds.

When men are somewhat put to it, when reason and conscience shall begin a little to hearken to a preacher, or a judgment that shall begin to hunt for iniquity, how many tricks, evasions, excuses, demurs,³⁶ delays, and hiding-holes will they make, invent, and find, to hide and preserve their sweet sins with themselves and their souls, in the delights of them, to their own eternal perdition? Hence, they endeavor to stifle conscience, to choke convictions, to forget God, to make themselves atheists, to contradict preachers that are plain and honest, and to heap to themselves such of them only as are like themselves, that speak unto them smooth things, and prophesy deceits. Yea, they say themselves to such preachers, “Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (Isa 30:8-11). If they be followed still, and conscience and guilt shall, like blood-hounds, find them out in their secret places, and roar against them for their wicked lives, then they will flatter, cog,³⁷ dissemble, and lie against their soul, promising to mend, to turn, to repent, and grow better shortly; and all to daff³⁸ off convictions and molestations in their wicked ways, that they may yet pursue their lusts, their pleasures, and sinful delights, in quiet, and without control.

Yea, further, I have known some that have been made to roar like bears, to yell like dragons, and to howl like dogs, by reason of the weight of guilt and the lashes of hell upon their conscience for their evil deeds (Hos 7:14); who have, so soon as their present torments and fears were gone, returned again with the dog to his vomit and as “the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2Pe 2:20-22).

Once again, some have been made [to] taste of the good Word of God, of the joy of heaven, and of the powers of the world to come, and yet could not by anyone, nay, by all of these, be made to break their league forever with their lusts and sins (Heb 6:4-5; Luk 8:13; Joh 5:33-35). O Lord! “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psa 8:4). “Wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isa 2:22). He has sinned against Thee; he loves his sins more than Thee. He is a lover of pleasures more than he is a lover of God!

But now, how shall this man be reclaimed from this sin? How shall he be brought, wrought, and made, to be out of love with it? Doubtless it can be

³⁶ **demurs** – pauses; hesitations.

³⁷ **cog** – deceive.

³⁸ **daff** [or doff] – do off or throw aside—used by Shakespeare, but now obsolete: “Where is his son, The nimble-footed madcap, Prince of Wales, And his comrades, that daft the world aside And let it pass?”—*Ed.*

by no other means, by what we can see in the Word, but by the wounding, breaking, and disabling of the heart that loves it, and by that means making it a plague and gall unto it. Sin may be made an affliction, and as gall and wormwood to them that love it; but the making of it so bitter a thing to such a man will not be done but by great and sore means. I remember we had in our town some time since, a little girl that loved to eat the heads of foul tobacco pipes, and neither rod nor good words could reclaim her and make her leave them. So her father takes advice of a doctor to wean her from them, and it was this: Take, saith he, a great many of the foulest tobacco pipe heads you can get, and boil them in milk, and make a posset³⁹ of that milk, and make your daughter drink the posset drink up. He did so, and gave his girl it, and made her drink it up; the which became so irksome and nauseous to her stomach, and made her so sick, that she could never abide to meddle with tobacco pipe heads any more, and so was cured of that disease. Thou lovest thy sin, and neither rod nor good words will as yet reclaim thee. Well, take heed; if thou wilt not be reclaimed, God will make thee a posset of them, which shall be so bitter to thy soul, so irksome to thy taste, so loathsome to thy mind, and so afflicting to thy heart, that it shall break it with sickness and grief, till it be loathsome to thee. I say, thus He will do if He loves thee. If not, He will suffer thee to take thy course and will let thee go on with thy tobacco pipe heads!

The children of Israel will have flesh, must have flesh. They weep, cry, and murmur, because they have not flesh. The bread of heaven, that is but light and sorry stuff in their esteem (Num 11:1-6). Moses goes and tells God how the people despised His heavenly bread, and how they longed, lusted, and desired to be fed with flesh. Well, says God, they shall have flesh. They shall have their fill of flesh; I will feed them with it. They shall have to the full; and that “ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because ye have despised the LORD” (Num 11:11-20). He can tell how to make that loathsome to thee on which thou most dost set thine evil heart. And he will do so if He loves thee; else, as I said, he will not make thee sick by smiting of thee nor punish thee for or when thou committest whoredom, but will let thee alone till the Judgment Day, and call thee to a reckoning for all thy sins then. But to pass this.

Eighth. Man, as he comes into the world, is not only a dead man, a fool, proud, self-willed, fearless, a false believer, and a lover of sin, but a wild man. He is of the wild olive tree, of that “which is wild by nature” (Rom 11:17, 24). So, in another place, man by nature is compared to the ass, to a wild ass.

³⁹ **posset** – milk curdled with wine or other liquor.

“For vain [or empty] man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12). Isaac was a figure of Christ, and of all converted men (Gal 4:28). But Ishmael was a figure of man by nature; and the Holy Ghost, as to that, saith this of him, “And he will be a wild man” (Gen 16:12). This man, I say, was a figure of all carnal men, in their wildness or estrangedness from God. Hence it is said of the prodigal, at his conversion, that “he came to himself” then, implying that he was mad, wild, or out of his wits before (Luk 15:17). I know there is a difference sometimes betwixt one’s being wild and mad; yet sometimes wildness arriveth to that degree as to give one rightly the denomination⁴⁰ of being mad. And it is always true in spirituals; namely, that he that is wild as to God is mad or besides himself, and so not capable, before he is tamed, of minding his own eternal good as he should. There are these several things that are tokens of one wild or mad; and they all meet in a carnal man.

1. A wild or mad man gives no heed to good counsel; the frenzy of his head shuts all out, and by its force leads him away from men that are wise and sober. And thus it is with carnal men. Good counsel is to them as pearls are that are cast before swine. It is trampled underfoot of them, and the man is despised that brings it (Mat 7:6). “The poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard” (Ecc 9:16).

2. A wild or mad man, let him alone, and he will greatly busy himself all his life to accomplish that which, when it is completed, amounts to nothing. The work, the toil, the travel⁴¹ of such a one comes to nothing, save to declare that he was out of his wits that did it. David, imitating of such a one, scabbled upon the gate of the king, as fools do with chalk; and like to this is all the work of all carnal men in the world (1Sa 21:12-13). Hence, such a one is said to labor for the wind, or for what will amount to no more than if he filled his belly with the east wind (Ecc 5:16; Job 15:2).

3. A wild or mad man, if you set him to do anything, and he does it, he will yet do it, not by or according to your bidding, but after the folly of his own wild fancy, even as Jehu executed the commandment of the Lord. He did it in his own madness, taking no heed to the commandment of the Lord (2Ki 9:20; 10:31). And thus do carnal men do when they meddle with any of God’s matters, as hearing, praying, reading, professing. They do all according to their own wild fancy. They take no heed to do these after the commandment of the Lord.

4. Wild or mad men, if they deck or array themselves with ought, as many times they do, why, the spirit of their wildness or frenzy appears even in the mode and way in which they do it. Either the things themselves which

⁴⁰ **denomination** – designation.

⁴¹ **travel** – travail; labor; toil.

they make use of for that purpose are very toys and trifles; or if they seem to be better, they are put on after an antic manner, rather to the rendering of them ridiculous, than to bespeak them sober, judicious, or wise; and so do natural men array themselves with what they would be accepted in with God. Would one in his wits think to make himself fine or acceptable to men by arraying himself in menstruous cloths, or by painting his face with dross and dung? And yet this is the finery of carnal men, when they approach for acceptance into the presence of God (Isa 64:6; Phil 3:7-8).

Oh, the wildness, the frenzy, the madness, that possesses the heart and mind of carnal men! They walk according to the course of this world, according to or after that spirit which is in truth the spirit of the devil, which worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph 2:1-3). But do they believe that thus it is with them? No, they are, in their own account, as other madmen are, the only ones in the world. Hence, they are so taken and tickled with their own frantic notions and deride all else that dwell in the world. But which is the way to make one that is wild, or a madman, sober? To let him alone will not do it. To give him good words only will not do it. No, he must be tamed. Means must be used to tame him. "He brought down their heart with labour," or by continual molestation, as you have it (Psa 107:10-12). He speaketh there of madmen that are kept up in darkness and "bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High."

This, therefore, is the way to deal with such, and none but God can so deal with them. They must be taken; they must be separated from men. They must be laid in chains, in darkness, afflictions, and irons. They must be blooded, half-starved, whipped, purged, and be dealt with as mad people are dealt with. And thus they must be dealt with till they come to themselves and cry out in their distresses. And then they cry to the Lord in their troubles, and He saveth them out of their distresses. Then He brings them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and breaks their bands in sunder (Psa 107:13-15). Thus, I say, God tames the wild, and brings mad prodigals to themselves, and so to Him for mercy.

Ninth. Man, as he comes into the world, is not only a dead man, a fool, proud, self-willed, fearless, a false believer, a lover of sin, and a wild man; but a man that disrelishes the things of the kingdom of God. I told you before that unconverted man is such as did not taste things; but now I add that he disrelishes things. He calls bitter things sweet, and sweet bitter. He judges quite amiss. These are they that God threateneth with a woe. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa 5:20).

This latter part of this text shows us evidently that the things of God are disrelished by some. They call His sweet things bitter, and the devil's bitter

things sweet; and all this is for want of a broken heart. A broken heart relishes otherwise than a whole or unbroken one doth. A man that has no pain or bodily distress cannot find or feel virtue or good in the most sovereign⁴² plaster,⁴³ were it applied to arm or leg. No, he rather says, Away with these stinking daubing things. Oh, but lay the same plasters where there is need, and the patient will relish, and taste, and savor the goodness of them; yea, will prize and commend them to others.

Thus it is in spirituals. The world, they know not what the anguish or pain of a broken heart means. They say, “Who will shew us any good”—that is, better than we find in our sports, pleasures, estates, and preferments. “There be many,” says the Psalmist, speak after this sort. But what says the distressed man? Why, “LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us”; and then adds, “Thou hast put gladness in my heart”; namely, by the light of Thy countenance, for that is the plaster for a broken heart. “Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased” (Psa 55:1-7). Oh, a broken heart can savour pardon, can savour the consolations of the Holy Ghost. Yea, as a hungry or thirsty man prizes bread and water in the want thereof, so do the broken in heart prize and set a high esteem on the things of the Lord Jesus. His flesh, His blood, His promise, and the light of His countenance are the only sweet things both to scent and taste to those that are of a wounded spirit. The full soul loatheth the honeycomb. The whole despise the gospel; they savor not the things that are of God.

If twenty men were to hear a pardon read—and but one of those twenty were condemned to die, and the pardon was for none but such—which of these men, think you, would taste the sweetness of that pardon, they who are not, or he that was condemned? The condemned man, doubtless. This is the case in hand. The broken in heart is a condemned man. Yea, it is a sense of condemnation, with other things, that has indeed broken his heart; nor is there anything but sense of forgiveness that can bind it up or heal it. But could that heal it, could he not taste, truly taste, or rightly relish this forgiveness? No, forgiveness would be to him as it is to him that has not sense of want of it.

But, I say, what is the reason some so prize what others so despise, since they both stand in need of the same grace and mercy of God in Christ? Why, the one sees, and the other sees nothing, of this woeful miserable state. And thus have I shown you the necessity of a broken heart. 1) Man is dead and must be quickened; 2) Man is a fool and must be made wise; 3) Man is proud and must be humbled; 4) Man is self-willed and must be broken; 5) Man is

⁴² **sovereign** – effectual.

⁴³ **plaster** – a medicinal application firmer than an ointment.

fearless and must be made to consider; 6) Man is a false believer and must be rectified; 7) Man is a lover of sin and must be weaned from it; 8) Man is wild and must be tamed; 9) Man disrelishes the things of God and can take no savor in them until his heart is broken.

5. Why a broken heart is esteemed by God

And thus have I done with this and shall come next to the reasons of the point, namely, to show you why or how it comes to pass that a broken heart, a heart truly contrite, is to God such an excellent thing. That to Him it is so, we have proved by six demonstrations. What it is, we have showed by the six signs thereof. That it must be is manifest by those nine reasons but now urged; and why it is with God or in His esteem an excellent thing, that is shown by that which follows.

First. A broken heart is the handiwork of God, an heart of His own preparing, for His own service. It is a sacrifice of His own providing, of His providing for Himself, as Abraham said in another case: “God will provide himself a lamb” (Gen 22:8).

Hence it is said, “The preparations of the heart in man...is from the LORD” (Pro 16:1). And again, “God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me” (Job 23:16). The heart, as it is by nature hard, stupid, and impenetrable, so it remains, and so will remain, until God, as was said, bruise it with His hammer, and melts it with His fire. The stony nature of it is therefore said to be taken away of [by] God. “I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you,” saith He, “an heart of flesh” (Eze 36:26). “I will take away the stony heart,” or the stoniness, or the hardness of your heart; “and I will give you a heart of flesh”—that is, I will make your heart sensible, soft, wieldable, governable, and penitent. Sometimes He bids men rend their hearts, not because they can, but to convince them rather that, though it must be so, they cannot do it. So He bids them make themselves a new heart and a new spirit for the same purpose also; for if God doth not rend it, it remains unrent. If God makes it not new, it abides an old one still.

This is that that is meant by His bending of men for Himself, and of His working in them that which is pleasing in His sight (Zec 9:13). The heart, soul, or spirit, as in itself, as it came from God’s fingers, [is] a precious thing, a thing in God’s account worth more than all the world. This heart, soul, or spirit, sin has hardened, the devil has bewitched, the world has deceived. This heart, thus beguiled, God coveteth and desireth: “My son,” saith He, “give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Pro 23:26).

This man cannot do this thing; for that his heart has the mastery of him and will not but carry him after all manner of vanity. What now must be

done? Why, God must take the heart by storm, by power, and bring it to a compliance with the Word; but the heart of itself will not. It is deluded, carried away to another than God. Wherefore God now betakes Him to His sword, and bring down the heart with labor, opens it, and drives out the strong man armed that did keep it. [He] wounds it and makes it smart for its rebellion, that it may cry; so He rectifies it for Himself. “He maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole” (Job 5:18). Thus having wrought it for Himself, it becomes His habitation, His dwelling-place: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph 3:17).

But I would not swerve from the thing in hand. I have told you a broken heart is the handiwork of God, a sacrifice of His own preparing, a material fitted for Himself.

1. By breaking of the heart, He openeth it and makes it a receptacle for the graces of His Spirit. That is the cabinet, when unlocked, where God lays up the jewels of the gospel. There He puts His fear. “I will put my fear in their hearts” (Jer 32:40). There He writes His law: “I will write my law in their heart” (see Jer 31:33). There He puts His Spirit: “I will put my spirit within you” (Eze 36:27). The heart, I say, God chooses for His cabinet; there He hides His treasure. There is the seat of justice, mercy, and of every grace of God—I mean, when it is broken, made contrite, and so regulated by the holy Word.

2. The heart, when broken, is like sweet gums and spices when beaten; for as such cast their fragrant scent into the nostrils of men, so the heart when broken casts its sweet smells in the nostrils of God. The incense, which was a type of prayer of old, was to be beaten or bruised, and so to be burned in the censer. The heart must be beaten or bruised, and then the sweet scent will come out: even groans, and cries, and sighs, for the mercy of God; which cries, etc., to Him are a very excellent thing and pleasing in His nostrils.

Second. A broken heart is in the sight of God an excellent thing because a broken heart is submissive. It falleth before God and giveth to Him His glory. All this is true from a multitude of scriptures, which I need not here mention. Hence such a heart is called an honest heart, a good heart, a perfect heart, a heart fearing God, and such as is sound in God’s statutes.

Now, this cannot but be an excellent thing, if we consider that by such a heart, unfeigned obedience is yielded unto Him that calleth for it. “Ye have obeyed from the heart,” says Paul to them at Rome, “that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Rom 6:17). Alas, the heart, before it is broken and made contrite, is quite of another temper: “It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom 8:7). The great stir before the heart is broken is about who shall be lord, God or the sinner. True, the right of dominion is the Lord’s; but the sinner will not suffer it, but will be all himself, saying

“Who is Lord over us?” and again say they to God, “We are lords; we will come no more unto thee” (Psa 12:4; Jer 2:31).

This also is evident by their practice. God may say what He will, but they will do what they list. Keep my sabbath, says God; I will not, says the sinner. Leave your whoring, says God; I will not, says the sinner. Do not tell lies, nor swear, nor curse, nor blaspheme My holy name, says God. Oh, but I will, says the sinner. Turn to me, says God; I will not, says the sinner. The right of dominion is Mine, says God; but, like that young rebel, “I will be king,” says the sinner (1Ki 1:5). Now, this is intolerable, this is unsufferable, and yet every sinner by practice says thus; for they “have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom 10:3).

Here can be no concord, no communion, no agreement, no fellowship. Here, here is enmity on the one side, and flaming justice on the other (2Co 6:14-16; Zec 11:8). And what delight, what content, what pleasure, can God take in such men. None at all; no, though they should be mingled with the best of the saints of God; yea, though the best of saints should supplicate for them. Thus says Jeremiah, “Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me,” that is, to pray for them, “yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth” (Jer 15:1).

Here is nought but open war, acts of hostility, and shameful rebellion on the sinner’s side; and what delight can God take in that? Wherefore, if God will bend and buckle the spirit of such an one, He must shoot an arrow at him, a bearded⁴⁴ arrow, such as may not be plucked out of the wound: an arrow that will stick fast and cause that the sinner falls down as dead at God’s foot (Lam 3:12). Then will the sinner deliver up his arms, and surrender up himself as one conquered into the hand of [God], and beg for the Lord’s pardon, and not till then; I mean not sincerely.

And now God has overcome, and His right hand and His holy arm has gotten Him the victory. Now He rides in triumph with His captive at His chariot wheel. Now He glories. Now the bells in heaven do ring. Now the angels shout for joy, yea, are bid to do so. “Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost” (Luk 15:6). Now also the sinner, as a token of being overcome, lies groveling at his foot, saying, “Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under thee” (Psa 45:5).

Now the sinner submits; now he follows his conqueror in chains. Now he seeks peace, and would give all the world, were it his own, to be in the favor of God, and to have hopes by Christ of being saved. Now this must be pleasing, this cannot but be a thing acceptable in God’s sight: “A broken and

⁴⁴ bearded – barbed.

a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa 51:17). For it is the desire of His own heart, the work of His own hands.

Third. Another reason why a broken heart is to God such an excellent thing is this: a broken heart prizes Christ and has a high esteem for Him. The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick (Mar 2:17). This sick man is the broken-hearted in the text; for God makes men sick by smiting of them, by breaking of their hearts (Mic 6:13). Hence sickness and wounds are put together; for that⁴⁵ the one is a true effect of the other (Hos 5:13). Can any think that God should be pleased when men despise His Son, saying, “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa 53:2)? And yet so say they of Him, whose hearts God has not mollified. Yea, the elect themselves confess that, before their hearts were broken, they set light by Him also. “He is,” say they, “despised and rejected of men...and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa 53:3).

He is indeed the great deliverer; but what is a deliverer to them that never saw themselves in bondage, as was said before? Hence it is said of him that delivered the city, “No man remembered that same poor man” (Ecc 9:15). He has sorely suffered and been bruised for the transgression of man, that they might not receive the smart and hell, which by their sins they have procured to themselves. But what is that to them that never saw ought but beauty, and that never tasted anything but sweetness in sin? It is he that holdeth by his intercession the hands of God, and that causes Him to forbear to cut off the drunkard, the liar, and unclean person, even when they are in the very act and work of their abomination; but their hard heart, their stupefied heart, has no sense of such kindness as this, and therefore they take no notice of it. How many times has God said to this dresser of His vineyard, “Cut down the barren fig-tree,” while he yet, by his intercession, has prevailed for a reprieve for another year (see Luk 13:6-9)! But no notice is taken of this, no thanks is from them returned to Him for such kindness of Christ. Wherefore such ungrateful, unthankful, inconsiderate wretches as these must needs be a continual eye-sore, as I may say, and great provocation to God; and yet thus men will do before their hearts are broken.

Christ, as I said, is called a physician; yea, He is the only soul-physician. He heals, how desperate soever the disease be; yea, and heals who He undertakes forever—“I give unto them eternal life” (Joh 10:28)—and doth all of free cost, of mere mercy and compassion. But what is all this to one that neither sees his sickness, that sees nothing of a wound? What is the best physician alive, or all the physicians in the world put all together, to him that knows no sickness, that is sensible of no disease? Physicians, as was said,

⁴⁵ **for that** – because.

may go a-begging for all the healthful. Physicians are of no esteem save only to the sick, or upon a supposition of being so now, or at any other time.

Why, this is the cause Christ is so little set by in the world. God has not made them sick by smiting of them. His sword has not given them the wound; His dart has not been struck through their liver. They have not been broken with His hammer, nor melted with His fire. So they have no regard to His physician; so they slight all the provision which God has made for the salvation of the soul. But now, let such a soul be wounded; let such a man's heart be broken. Let such a man be made sick through the sting of guilt, and be made to wallow himself in ashes under the burden of his transgressions; and then, who but Christ, as has been showed afore, then the physician; then, wash me, Lord, then supple my wounds, then pour Thy wine and oil into my sore. Then, Lord Jesus, cause me to hear the voice of "joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Psa 51:8). Nothing now so welcome as healing; and so nothing, no man, so desirable now as Christ. His name to such is the best of names. His love to such is the best of love. Himself being now not only in Himself, but also to such a soul, the chiefest of ten thousand (Song 5:10).

As bread to the hungry, as water to the thirsty, as light to the blind, and liberty to the imprisoned; so, and a thousand times more, is Jesus Christ to the wounded, and to them that are broken-hearted. Now, as was said, this must needs be excellent in God's eyes, since Christ Jesus is so glorious in His eyes. To contemn what a man counts excellent is an offence to him; but to value, esteem, or think highly of that which is of esteem with me, this is pleasing to me, such an opinion is excellent in my sight. What says Christ? "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me" (Joh 16:27). Who hath an high esteem for Christ, the Father hath an high esteem for them. Hence it is said, "He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1Jo 2:23). The Father will be his, and will do for him as a Father, who receiveth and sets an honorable esteem on his Son.

But none will, none can do this, but the brokenhearted, because they, and they only, are sensible of the want and worth of an interest in Him.

I dare appeal to all the world as to the truth of this; and do say again, that these, and none but these, have hearts of esteem in the sight of God. Alas, "the heart of the wicked is little worth" (Pro 10:20), for it is destitute of a precious esteem of Christ, and cannot but be destitute, because it is not wounded, broken, and made sensible of the want of mercy by Him.

Fourth. A broken heart is of great esteem with God, because it is a thankful heart for that sense of sin and of grace it has received. The broken heart is a sensible heart. This we touched upon before. It is sensible of the dangers which sin leadeth to; yea, and has cause to be sensible thereof,

because it has seen and felt what sin is, both in the guilt and punishment that by law is due thereto. As a broken heart is sensible of sin, in the evil nature and consequences of it, so it is also sensible of the way of God's delivering the soul from the day of judgment. Consequently, it must be a thankful heart. Now he that praises Me, glorifies Me, saith God (Psa 50:23); and God loves to be glorified. God's glory is dear unto Him; He will not part with that (Isa 42:8).

The brokenhearted, say I, forasmuch as he is the sensible⁴⁶ soul, it follows that he is the thankful soul. "Bless the LORD, O my soul," said David, "and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psa 103:1). Behold what blessing of God is here! And yet not content herewith, he goes on with it again, saying, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (v. 2). But what is the matter? Oh! He has forgiven "all thine iniquities" and healed "all thy diseases." He has redeemed "thy life from destruction," and "crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (vv. 3-4). But how came he to be affected with this? Why, he knew what it was to hang over the mouth of hell for sin. Yea, he knew what it was for death and hell to beset and compass him about. Yea, they took hold of him, as we have said, and were pulling him down into the deep. This he saw to the breaking of his heart. He saw also the way of life and had his soul relieved with faith and sense of that, and that made him a thankful man. If a man who has had a broken leg is but made to understand that by the breaking of that he kept from breaking his neck, he will be thankful to God for a broken leg. "It is good for me," said David, "that I have been afflicted." I was by that preserved from a great danger; for before that "I went astray" (Psa 119:67, 71).

And who can be thankful for a mercy that is not sensible that they want it, have it, and have it of mercy? Now, this the brokenhearted, this the man that is of a contrite spirit, is sensible of; and that with reference to mercies of the best sort, and therefore must needs be a thankful man, and so have a heart of esteem with God, because it is a thankful heart.

Fifth. A broken heart is of great esteem with, or an excellent thing in, the sight of God, because it is a heart that desires now to become a receptacle or habitation for the spirit and graces of the Spirit of God. It was the devil's hold before and was contented so to be. But now it is for entertaining of, for being possessed with, the Holy Spirit of God. "Create in me a clean heart," said David, "and renew a right spirit within me...Take not thy holy spirit from me...Uphold me with thy free spirit" (Psa 51:10-12). Now he was for a clean heart and a right spirit. Now he was for the sanctifying of the blessed Spirit of grace, a thing which the uncircumcised in heart resist and do despite unto (Act 7:51; Heb 10:29).

⁴⁶ **sensible** – morally sensitive.

A broken heart, therefore, suiteth with the heart of God. A contrite spirit is one spirit with Him. God, as I told you before, covets to dwell with the broken in heart, and the broken in heart desire communion with Him. Now here is an agreement, a oneness of mind. Now the same mind is in thee which was also in Christ Jesus. This must needs be an excellent spirit. This must needs be better with God, and in His sight, than thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil. But does the carnal world covet this, this spirit, and the blessed graces of it? No, they despise it, as I said before. They mock at it. They prefer and countenance any sorry, dirty lust rather; and the reason is because they want⁴⁷ a broken heart, that heart so highly in esteem with God, and remain for want thereof in their enmity to God.

The brokenhearted know that the sanctifying of the Spirit is a good means to keep from that relapse out of which a man cannot come unless his heart be wounded a second time. Doubtless, David had a broken heart at first conversion, and if that brokenness had remained, that is, had he not given way to hardness of heart again, he had never fallen into that sin out of which he could not be recovered but⁴⁸ by the breaking of his bones a second time. Therefore, I say, a broken heart is of great esteem with God; for it—and I will add, so long as it retains its tenderness—covets none but God, and the things of His Holy Spirit. Sin is an abomination to it.

6. Advantages to keeping the heart tender

And here, as in a fit place, before I go any further, I will show you some of the advantages that a Christian gets by keeping of his heart tender. For, as to have a broken heart is to have an excellent thing, so to keep this broken heart tender is also very advantageous.

First. This is the way to maintain in thy soul always a fear of sinning against God. Christians do not wink at, or give way to sin, until their hearts begin to lose their tenderness. A tender heart will be affected at the sin of another, much more it will be afraid of committing sin itself (2Ki 22:19).

Second. A tender heart quickly yieldeth to prayer, yea, prompteth to it, puts an edge and fire into it. We never are backward to prayer until our heart has lost its tenderness; though then it grows cold, flat, and formal, and so carnal to and in that holy duty.

Third. A tender heart has always repentance at hand for the least fault or slip or sinful thought that the soul is guilty of. In many things, the best offend; but if a Christian loseth his tenderness, if he says he has his repentance to seek, his heart is grown hard—has lost that spirit, that kind

⁴⁷ **want** – lack; do not have.

⁴⁸ **but** – except.

spirit of repentance it was wont to have. Thus it was with the Corinthians. They were decayed and lost their tenderness; wherefore their sin—yea, great sins—remained unrepented of (2Co 12:20).

Fourth. A tender heart is [eager] for receiving often its communion with God, when he that is hardened, though the seed of grace is in him, will be content to eat, drink, sleep, wake, and go “days without number” without Him (Isa 17:10; Jer 2:32).

Fifth. A tender heart is a wakeful, watchful heart. It watches against sin in the soul, sin in the family, sin in the calling, sin in spiritual duties and performances, etc. It watches against Satan, against the world, against the flesh, etc. But now, when the heart is not tender, there is sleepiness, unwatchfulness, idleness, a suffering⁴⁹ the heart, the family, and calling to be much defiled, spotted, and blemished with sin; for a hard heart departs from God, and turns aside in all these things.

Sixth. A tender heart will deny itself, and that in lawful things, and will forbear⁵⁰ even that which may be done—for some Jew, or Gentile, or the church of God, or any member of it, should be offended or made weak thereby; whereas the Christian that is not tender, that has lost his tenderness, is so far off of denying himself in lawful things, that he will even adventure to meddle in things utterly forbidden, whoever is offended, grieved, or made weak thereby. For an instance of this, we need go no further than to the man in the text, who, while he was tender, trembled at little things; but when his heart was hardened, he could take Bathsheba to satisfy his lust, and kill her husband to cover his wickedness.

Seventh. A tender heart—I mean, the heart kept tender—preserves from many a blow, lash, and fatherly chastisement, because it shuns the causes, which is sin, of the scourging hand of God. “With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury” (2Sa 22:27; Psa 18:25-27).

Many a needless rebuke and wound doth happen to the saints of God through their unwise behavior. When I say needless, I mean they are not necessary, but to reclaim us from our vanities; for we should not feel the smart⁵¹ of them, were it not for our follies. Hence the afflicted is called a fool because his folly brings his affliction upon him. “Fools,” says David, “because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted” (Psa 107:17). And therefore it is, as was said before, that he call his sin his foolishness. And again, God “will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly” (Psa 38:5; 85:8). “If his children

⁴⁹ **suffering** – allowing; permitting.

⁵⁰ **forbear** – abstain from.

⁵¹ **smart** – sharp pain.

forsake my law...Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes” (Psa 89:30-32).

[How to keep the heart tender.]

Question. But what should a Christian do, when God has broke his heart, to keep it tender?

Answer. To this I will speak briefly. And, first, [I will] give you several cautions; secondly, [I will give] several directions.

[First—Several cautions.]

1. Take heed that you choke not those convictions that at present do break your hearts, by laboring to put those things out of your minds which were the cause of such convictions; but rather nourish and cherish those things in a deep and sober remembrance of them. Think, therefore, with thyself thus, What was it that at first did wound my heart? And let that still be there, until, by the grace of God and the redeeming blood of Christ, it is removed.

2. Shun vain company. The keeping of vain company has stifled many a conviction, killed many a desire, and made many a soul fall into hell, that once was hot in looking after heaven. A companion that is not profitable to the soul, is hurtful. ‘He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed’ (Pro 13:20).

3. Take heed of idle talk, that thou neither hear nor join with it. “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge” (Pro 14:7). “Evil communications corrupt good manners...[And] a fool’s...lips are the snare of his soul” (1Co 15:33; Pro 18:7). Wherefore take heed of these things.

4. Beware of the least motion to sin, that it be not countenanced, lest the countenancing of that makes way for a bigger.⁵² David’s eye took his heart, and so his heart nourishing the thought, made way for the woman’s company, the act of adultery, and bloody murder. Take heed, therefore, brethren, “lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:12-13). And remember that he that will rend the block puts the thin end of the wedge first thereto, and so, by driving, does his work.

5. Take heed of evil examples among the godly. Learn of no man to do that which the Word of God forbids. Sometimes Satan makes use of a good man’s bad ways to spoil and harden the heart of them that come after. Peter’s false doing had like⁵³ to have spoiled Barnabas, yea, and several others more.

⁵² “Sin will at first, just like a beggar, crave One penny or one halfpenny to have; And if you grant its first suit, ’twill aspire From pence to pounds, and so will still mount higher To the whole soul!”—Bunyan’s *Caution Against Sin.*—*Ed.*

⁵³ **like** – likely; probably.

Wherefore take heed of men, of good men's ways, and measure both theirs and thine own by no other rule but the holy Word of God (Gal 2:11-13).

6. Take heed of unbelief, or atheistical thoughts. Make no question of the truth and reality of heavenly things: for know unbelief is the worst of evils; nor can the heart be tender that nourisheth or gives place unto it. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12). These cautions are necessary to be observed with all diligence of all them that would, when their heart is made tender, keep it so. And now to come,

[Second]—to the Directions.

1. Labor after a deep knowledge of God to keep it warm upon thy heart—knowledge of His presence that is everywhere. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD" (Jer 23:24). 1) Knowledge of His piercing eye, that it runneth to and fro through the earth, beholding in every place the evil and the good; that "his eyes behold, and his eyelids try, the children of men" (Pro 15:3; Psa 11:4). 2) The knowledge of His power, that He is able to turn and dissolve heaven and earth into dust and ashes; and that they are in His hand but as a scroll or vesture (Heb 1:11-12). 3) The knowledge of His justice, that the rebukes of it are as devouring fire (Heb 12:19). 4) The knowledge of His faithfulness in fulfilling promises to them to whom they are made, and of His threatenings on the impenitent (Mat 5:18; 24:35; Mar 13:31).

2. Labor to get and keep a deep sense of sin in its evil nature, and in its soul-destroying effects upon thy heart. Be persuaded, that it is the only enemy of God, and that none hate, or are hated of God, but through that. 1) Remember it turned angels into devils, thrust them down from heaven to hell (2Pe 2:4). 2) [Remember] that it is the chain in which they are held and bound over to judgment (Jude 1:6). 3) [Remember] that it was for that that Adam was turned out of Paradise; that for which the old world was drowned; that for which Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with fire from heaven; and that which cost Christ His blood to redeem thee from the curse it has brought upon thee; and that, if anything, will keep thee out of heaven for ever and ever. 4) Consider the pains of hell. Christ makes use of that as an argument to keep the heart tender; yea, to that end repeats and repeats, and repeats, both the nature and durableness of the burning flame thereof, and of the gnawing of the never-dying worm that dwells there (Mar 9:43-48).

3. Consider of death, both as to the certainty of thy dying, and uncertainty of the time when. We must die, "we must needs die" (2Sa 14:14). Our days are determined—the number of our months are with God, though not with us; nor can we pass them, would we, had we them, give a thousand worlds to do it (Job 7:1; 14:1-5). Consider thou must die but once—I mean

but once as to this world; for if thou, when thou goest hence, dost not die well, thou canst not come back again and die better. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb 9:27).

4. Consider also of the certainty and terribleness of the Day of Judgment, when Christ shall sit upon His great white throne, when the dead shall, by the sound of the trump of God, be raised up; when the elements, with heaven and earth, shall be on a burning flame; when Christ shall separate men one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; when the books shall be opened, the witnesses produced, and every man be judged according to his works; when heaven’s gate shall stand open to them that shall be saved, and the jaws of hell stand gaping for them that shall be damned (Act 5:30-31; 10:42; Mat 25:31-32, 34, 41; Rev 2:11; 1Co 15:51; Rev 20:12, 15; 2Pe 3:7, 10, 12; Rom 2:2, 15-16; Rev 22:12).

4. Consider, Christ Jesus did use no means to harden His heart against doing and suffering those sorrows which were necessary for the redemption of thy soul. No, though He could have hardened His heart against thee in the way of justice and righteousness, because thou hadst sinned against Him, He rather awakened Himself, and put on all pity, bowels, and compassion; yea, tender mercies, and did it. In His love and in His pity He saved us. His tender mercies from on high hath visited us. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Learn, then, of Christ, to be tender of thyself, and to endeavor to keep thy heart tender to Godward, and to the salvation of thy soul. But to draw to a conclusion:

7. Applications

Let us now, then, make some use of this doctrine.

a. Sin’s league with the soul

[The first application comes] from the truth of the matter, namely, that the man who is truly come to God has had his heart broken—his heart broken in order to his coming to Him. And this shows us what to judge of the league that is between sin and the soul, to wit, that it is so firm, so strong, so inviolable, as that nothing can break, disannul, or make it void, unless the heart be broken for it. It was so with David, yea, his new league with it could not be broken until his heart was broken.

It is amazing to consider what hold sin has on some men’s souls, spirits, will, and affections. It is to them better than heaven, better than God—than the soul, ay, than salvation; as is evident, because, though all these are offered them upon this condition, if they will but leave their sins, yet they will choose rather to abide in them, to stand and fall by them. How sayest thou, sinner? Is not this a truth? How many times hast thou had heaven and

salvation offered to thee freely, wouldst thou but break thy league with this great enemy of God? Of God, do I say; if thou wouldst but break this league with this great enemy of thy soul? But [thou] couldst never yet be brought unto it; no, neither by threatening nor by promise couldst thou ever yet be brought unto it.

It is said of Ahab he sold “himself to work wickedness”: and in another place, yea, “for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves” (1Ki 21:25; Isa 50:1). But what is this iniquity? Why, a thing of nought; nay, worse than nought a thousand times; but because nought is as we say nought, therefore it goes under that term, where God saith again to the people, “Ye have sold yourselves for nought” (Isa 52:3). But, I say, what an amazing thing is this, that a rational creature should make no better a bargain; that one that is so wise in all terrene⁵⁴ things should be such a fool in the thing that is most weighty? And yet such a fool he is, and he tells everyone that goes by the way that he is such an one, because he will not break his league with sin until his heart is broken for it. Men love darkness rather than light (see Joh 3:19). Ay, they make it manifest they love it, since so great a proffer⁵⁵ will not prevail with them to leave it.

b. God breaks hearts to save them

Is this a truth, that the man that truly comes to God in order thereto has had his heart broken? Then this shows us a reason why some men’s hearts are broken; even a reason why God breaks some men’s hearts for sin; namely, because He would not have them die in it, but rather come to God that they might be saved? Behold, therefore, in this how God resolved as to the saving of some men’s souls! He will have them, He will save them, He will break their hearts, but He will save them. He will kill them, that they may live; He will wound them, that He may heal them. And it seems by our discourse that now there is no way left but this. Fair means, as we say, will not do. Good words, a glorious gospel, entreatings, beseeching with blood and tears, will not do. Men are resolved to put God to the utmost of it. If He will have them, He must fetch them, follow them, catch them, lame them—yea, break their bones, or else He shall not save them.

Some men think an invitation, an outward call, a rational discourse, will do; but they are much deceived. There must a power, an exceeding great and mighty power, attend the Word, or it worketh not effectually to the salvation of the soul. I know these things are enough to leave men without excuse, but yet they are not enough to bring men home to God. Sin has hold of them; they have sold themselves to it. The power of the devil has hold of them; they

⁵⁴ **terrene** – earthly; terrestrial.

⁵⁵ **proffer** – offer.

are his captives at his will. Yea, and more than all this, their will is one with sin, and with the devil, to be held captive thereby; and if God gives not contrition, repentance, or a broken heart for sin, there will not be no not so much as a mind in man to forsake this so horrible a confederacy and plot against his soul (2Ti 2:24-25).

Hence men are said to be drawn from these breasts, that come, or that are brought to Him (Isa 26:9; Joh 6:44). Wherefore John might well say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (1Joh 3:1). Here is cost bestowed, pains bestowed, labor bestowed, repentance bestowed; yea, and an heart made sore, wounded, broken, and filled with pain and sorrow, in order to the salvation of the soul.

c. How we should esteem a broken heart

This then may teach us what estimation to set upon a broken heart. A broken heart is such as God esteems, yea, as God counts better than all external service. A broken heart is that which is in order to salvation, in order to thy coming to Christ for life. The world know not what to make of it, nor what to say to one that has a broken heart, and therefore do despise it, and count that man that carries it in his bosom a moping⁵⁶ fool, a miserable wretch, an undone soul: But "a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa 51:17). A broken heart takes Thine eye, Thy heart. Thou chooseth it for Thy companion, yea, has given Thy Son a charge to look well to such a man, and has promised him Thy salvation, as has afore been proved.

Sinner, hast thou obtained a broken heart? has God bestowed a contrite spirit upon thee? He has given thee what Himself is pleased with. He has given thee a cabinet to hold His grace in. He has given thee a heart that can heartily desire His salvation, an heart after His own heart, that is, such as suits His mind. True, it is painful now, sorrowful now, penitent now, grieved now. Now it is broken, now it bleeds, now, now it sobs, now it sighs, now it mourns and crieth unto God. Well, very well; all this is because He hath a mind to make thee laugh. He has made thee sorry on earth that thou mightest rejoice in heaven. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted...Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh" (Mat 5:4; Luk 6:21).

But, soul, be sure thou hast this broken heart. All hearts are not broken hearts, nor is every heart that seems to have a wound a heart that is truly broken. A man may be "cut to," yet not into the heart. A man may have "another," yet not a broken heart (Act 7:54; 1Sa 10:9). We know there is a difference betwixt a wound in the flesh and a wound in the spirit. Yea, a man's sin may be wounded, and yet his heart not broken. So was Pharaoh's, so was

⁵⁶ moping – stupid.

Saul's, so was Ahab's; but they had none of them the mercy of a broken heart. Therefore, I say, take heed. Every scratch with a pin, every prick with a thorn, nay, every blow that God giveth with His Word upon the heart of sinners, doth not therefore break them. God gave Ahab such a blow that He made him stoop, fast, humble himself, gird himself with, and lie in sackcloth, which was a great matter for a king, and go softly, and yet he never had a broken heart (1Ki 21:27, 29). What shall I say? Pharaoh and Saul confessed their sins, Judas repented himself of his doings, Esau sought the blessing, and that carefully with tears, and yet none of these had a heart rightly broken, or a spirit truly contrite. Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas were Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas still. Esau was Esau still. There was no gracious change, no thorough turn to God, no unfeigned parting with their sins, no hearty flight for refuge, to lay hold on the hope of glory, though they indeed had thus been touched (Exo 10:16; 1Sa 26:21; Mat 27:3-4; Heb 12:14-17).

The consideration of these things calls aloud to us to take heed that we take not that for a broken and a contrite spirit that will not go for one at the day of death and judgment. Wherefore, seeking soul, let me advise thee, that thou mayest not be deceived as to this thing of so great weight.

First. Go back towards the beginning of this book, and compare thyself with those six or seven signs of a broken and contrite heart, which there I have, according to the Word of God, given to thee for that end; and deal with thy soul impartially about them.

Second. Or, which may and will be great help to thee if thou shalt be sincere therein, namely, to betake thyself to the search of the Word, especially where thou readest of the conversion of men, and try if thy conversion be like, or has a good resemblance or oneness with theirs. But in this have a care that thou dost not compare thyself with those good folk of whose conversion thou readest not, or of the breaking of whose heart there is no mention made in Scripture; for all that are recorded in the Scripture for saints have not their conversion, as to the manner or nature of it, recorded in the Scripture.

Third. Or else, do thou consider truly of the true signs of repentance which are laid down in Scripture; for that is the true effect of a broken heart and of a wounded spirit. And for this see Matthew 3:5-6; Luke 18:13; 19:8; Acts 2:37-40; 16:29-30; 19:18-19; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11.

Fourth. Or else, take into consideration how God has said they shall be in their spirits that He intends to save. And for this read these scriptures: 1) "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them" (Jer 31:9). 2) "In those days, and in that time...the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their

faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten” (Jer 50:4-5). 3) “And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations” (Eze 6:9). 4) “But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity” (Eze 7:16). 5) “And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed” (Eze 20:43). 6) “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations” (Eze 36:31). 7) “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” (Zec 12:10).

Now all these are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and of the heart, when it is broken: wherefore, soul, take notice of them. Because these are texts by which God promiseth that those whom He saveth shall have this heart, this spirit, and these holy effects in them, therefore consider again and examine thyself, whether this is the state and condition of thy soul. And that thou mayest do it fully, consider again, and do thou,

1. Remember that here is such a sense of sin and of the irksomeness thereof as maketh the man not only to abhor that, but himself because of that. This is worth the noting by thee.

2. Remember again that here is not only a self-abhorrence, but a sorrowful kind [of] mourning unto God, at the consideration that the soul by sin has affronted, contemned, disregarded, and set at nought both God and His holy Word.

3. Remember also that here are prayers and tears for mercy, with desires to be now out of love with sin forever, and to be in heart and soul firmly joined and knit unto God.

4. Remember also that this people here spoken of have all the way from Satan to God, from sin to grace, from death to life, scattered with tears and prayers, with weeping and supplication. They shall go weeping and seeking the Lord their God.

5. Remember that these people, as strangers and pilgrims do, are not ashamed to ask the way of those they meet with to Zion, or the heavenly

country; whereby they confess their ignorance, as became them, and their desire to know the way to life: yea, thereby they declare that there is nothing in this world, under the sun, or this side heaven, that can satisfy the longings, the desire, and cravings of a broken and a contrite spirit. Reader, be advised, and consider of these things seriously, and compare thy soul with them, and with what else thou shalt find here written for thy conviction and instruction.

d. Encouragement to come to God

If a broken heart and a contrite spirit be of such esteem with God, then this should encourage them that have it to come to God with it. I know the great encouragement for men to come to God is, for that there is a “mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1Ti 2:5). This, I say, is the great encouragement, and in its place there is none but that; but there are other encouragements subordinate to that, and a broken and a contrite spirit is one of them: this is evident from several places of Scripture.

Wherefore, thou that canst carry a broken heart and a sorrowful spirit with thee, when thou goest to God, tell Him thy heart is wounded within thee, that thou hast sorrow in thy heart, and art sorry for thy sins; but take heed of lying.⁵⁷ Confess also thy sins unto Him, and tell Him they are continually before thee. David made an argument of these things when he went to God by prayer. “O Lord,” saith he, “rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure” (Psa 38:1). But why so? “Oh,” says he, “Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light for mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore”; and so he goes on (Psa 38:1-11).

⁵⁷ This is faithful dealing. How many millions of lies are told to the all-seeing God, with unblushing effrontery, every Lord’s Fay—when the unconcerned and careless, or the saint of God, happy, most happy in the enjoyment of divine love, are led to say, “Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.” Take heed of lying in approaching the heart-searching God, who knows our most secret thoughts, whether it be in public worship, at the family altar, or in private communion with Heaven. Beware of uttering words of solemn import, unless they come from the heart.—*Ed.*

These are the words, sighs, complaints, prayers, and arguments of a broken heart to God for mercy; and so are the following: “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” (Psa 51:1-3).

God alloweth poor creatures that can, without lying, thus to plead and argue with Him. “I am poor and sorrowful,” said the good man to him, “let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high” (Psa 69:29). Wherefore, thou that hast a broken heart, take courage. God bids thee take courage. Say therefore to thy soul, “Why are thou cast down, O my soul?” as usually the broken-hearted are. “And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God...I had fainted,” if I had not been of good courage; therefore “be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart” (Psa 42:11; 43:5; 27:12-14).

But alas, the brokenhearted are far off from this. They faint. They reckon themselves among the dead. They think God will remember them no more. The thoughts of the greatness of God, and His holiness, and their own sins and vilenesses will certainly consume them. They feel guilt and anguish of soul. They go mourning all the day long. Their mouth is full of gravel and gall, and they are made to drink draughts of wormwood and gall; so that he must be an artist indeed at believing, who can come to God under his guilt and horror and plead in faith that the sacrifices of God are a broken heart, such as he had; and that a broken and a contrite spirit God will not despise.

e. Fear of a broken heart

If a broken heart, if a broken and contrite spirit, is of such esteem with God, then why should some be, as they are, so afraid of a broken heart, and so shy of a contrite spirit?

I have observed that some men are as afraid of a broken heart, or that they for their sins should have their hearts broken, as the dog is of the whip. Oh, they cannot away with⁵⁸ such books, with such sermons, with such preachers, or with such talk as tends to make a man sensible of, and to break his heart, and to make him contrite for his sins. Hence, they heap to themselves such teachers, get such books, love such company, and delight in such discourse, as rather tends to harden than soften; to make desperate in, than sorrowful for their sin. They say to such sermons, books, and preachers, as Amaziah said unto Amos, “O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court” (Amo 7:12-13).

⁵⁸ away with – tolerate.

But do these people know what they do? Yes, think they, for such preachers, such books, such discourses tend to make one melancholy or mad. They make us that we cannot take pleasure in ourselves, in our concerns, in our lives. But, O fool in grain,⁵⁹ let me speak unto thee! Is it a time to take pleasure and to recreate thyself in anything before thou hast mourned and been sorry for thy sins? That mirth that is before repentance for sin will certainly end in heaviness. Wherefore the wise man, putting both together, saith that mourning must be first. There is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (Ecc 3:4). What, an unconverted man, and laugh! Shouldst thou see one singing merry songs that is riding up Holborn to Tyburn⁶⁰ to be hanged for felony, wouldst thou not count him besides himself, if not worse? And yet thus it is with him that is for mirth while he standeth condemned by the Book of God for his trespasses. Man, man! Thou hast cause to mourn. Yea, thou must mourn if ever thou art saved. Wherefore my advice is, that instead of shunning, thou covet both such books, such preachers, and such discourses as have a tendency to make a man sensible of and to break his heart for sin; and the reason is because thou wilt never be, as thou shouldst, concerned about, nor seek the salvation of thine own soul, before thou hast a broken heart, a broken and a contrite spirit. Wherefore be not afraid of a broken heart; be not shy of a contrite spirit. It is one of the greatest mercies that God bestows upon a man or a woman. The heart rightly broken at the sense of, and made truly contrite for transgression, is a certain forerunner of salvation. This is evident from those six demonstrations which were laid down to prove the point in hand at first.

And for thy awakening in this matter, let me tell thee, and thou wilt find it so, thou must have thy heart broken whether thou wilt or no. God is resolved to break *all* hearts for sin some time or other. Can it be imagined, sin being what it is, and God what He is—to wit, a revenger of disobedience—but that one time or other man must smart for sin?—smart, I say, either to repentance or to condemnation. He that mourns not now, while the door of mercy is open, must mourn for sin when the door of mercy is shut.

Shall men despise God, break His law, contemn His threats, abuse His grace, yea, shut their eyes when He says, See; and stop their ears when He

⁵⁹ **in grain** – a term used in dyeing, when the raw material is dyed before being spun or woven; the color thus takes every grain and becomes indelible. So with sin and folly: it enters every grain of human nature.—*Ed.*

⁶⁰ These frightful exhibitions, by drawing a criminal from Newgate to Tyburn to be executed, were of common occurrence until the reign of George III, when such numbers were put to death that it was found handier for the wholesale butchery to take place at Newgate by a new drop, where twenty or thirty could be hung at once! When will such brutalizing exhibitions cease?—*Ed.*

says, Hear; and shall they so escape? No, no, because He called, and they refused; He stretched out His hand, and they regarded it not; therefore shall calamity come upon them, as upon one in travail; and they shall cry in their destruction, and then God will laugh at their destruction and mock when their fear cometh. Then, saith he, they shall cry (Pro 1:24-28). I have often observed that this threatening is repeated at least seven times in the New Testament, saying, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”; “there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Mat 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luk 13:28). There. Where? In hell, and at the bar of Christ’s tribunal, when He comes to judge the world, and shall have shut to the door to keep them out of glory that have here despised the offer of His grace and overlooked the day of His patience. “There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” They shall weep and wail for this.

There are but two scriptures that I shall use more, and then I shall draw towards a conclusion. One is that in Proverbs, where Solomon is counselling young men to beware of strange, that is, of wanton, light, and ensnaring women. Take heed of such, said he, lest “thou mourn at the last,” that is, in hell, when thou art dead, “when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!” (Pro 5:11-13).

The other scripture is that in Isaiah, where he says, “Because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit” (Isa 65:12-14).

How many *beholds* are here! and every *behold* is not only a call to careless ones to consider, but as a declaration from heaven that thus at last it shall be with all impenitent sinners—that is, when others sing for joy in the kingdom of heaven, they, they shall sorrow in hell, and howl for vexation of spirit there.

Wherefore, let me advise that you be not afraid of, but that you rather covet a broken heart, and prize a contrite spirit. I say, covet it now, now the white flag is hung out, now the golden scepter of grace is held forth to you. Better mourn now [while] God inclines to mercy and pardon, than mourn when the door is quite shut up. And take notice that this is not the first time that I have given you this advice.

f. Vanity of unbroken hearts in worship

Lastly, If a broken heart be a thing of so great esteem with God as has been said, and if duties cannot be rightly performed by a heart that has not been broken, then this shows the vanity of those peoples' minds, and also the invalidity of their pretended divine services, who worship God with a heart that was never broken, and without a contrite spirit. There has, indeed, at all times been great flocks of such professors in the world in every age, but to little purpose, unless to deceive themselves, to mock God, and lay stumbling-blocks in the way of others; for a man whose heart was never truly broken, and whose spirit was never contrite, cannot profess Christ in earnest, cannot love his own soul in earnest. I mean, he cannot do these things in truth, and seek his own good the right way, for he wants a bottom for it, to wit, a broken heart for sin and a contrite spirit.

That which makes a man a hearty, an unfeigned, a sincere seeker after the good of his own soul, is sense of sin, and a godly fear of being overtaken with the danger which it brings a man into. This makes him contrite or repentant, and puts him upon seeking of Christ the Savior, with heart-aching and heart-breaking considerations. But this cannot be, where this sense, this godly fear, and this holy contrition is wanting. Profess men may, and make a noise, as the empty barrel maketh the biggest sound; but prove them, and they are full of air, full of emptiness, and that is all.

Nor are such professors tender of God's name, nor of the credit of that gospel which they profess; nor can they, for they want that which should oblige them thereunto, which is a sense of pardon and forgiveness, by the which their broken hearts have been replenished, succored, and made to hope in God. Paul said the love of Christ constrained him. But what was Paul but a brokenhearted and a contrite sinner? (Act 9:3-6; 2Co 5:14). When God shows a man the sin he has committed, the hell he has deserved, the heaven he has lost; and yet that Christ, and grace, and pardon may be had; this will make him serious, this will make him melt, this will break his heart, this will show him that there is more than air, than a noise, than an empty sound in religion; and this is the man whose heart, whose life, whose conversation and all will be engaged in the matters of the eternal salvation of his precious and immortal soul.

8. Objections answered

Objection. First. But some may object that in this saying I seem too rigid and censorious; and will, if I moderate not these lines with something milder afterward, discourage many an honest soul.

Answer. I answer, Not a jot.⁶¹ Not an honest soul in all the world will be offended at my words; for not one can be an honest soul—I mean with reference to its concerns in another world—that has not had a broken heart, that never had a contrite spirit. This I will say, because I would be understood aright, that all attain not to the same degree of trouble, nor lie so long there under, as some of their brethren do. But to go to heaven without a broken heart, or to be forgiven sin without a contrite spirit, is no article of my belief. We speak not now of what is secret. Revealed things belong to us and our children (Deu 29:29); nor must we venture to go further in our faith. Doth not Christ say, “The whole have no need of a physician” (see Luk 5:31)?—that is, they see no need, but Christ will make them see their need before He ministers His sovereign grace unto them; and good reason, otherwise He will have but little thanks for His kindness.

Objection. Second. But there are those that are godly educated from their childhood, and so drink in the principles of Christianity they know not how.

Answer. I count it one thing to receive the faith of Christ from men only, and another to receive it from God by the means. If thou art taught by an angel, yet if not taught of God, thou wilt never come to Christ; I do not say thou wilt never profess Him. But if God speaks, and thou shalt hear and understand Him, that voice will make such work within thee as was never made before. The voice of God is a voice by itself and is so distinguished by them that are taught thereby (Joh 6:44-45; Psa 29; Hab 3:12-16; Eph 4:20-21; 1Pe 2:2-3).

Objection. Third. But some men are not so debauched and profane as some, and so need not to be so hammered and fired as others, so broken and wounded as others.

Answer. God knows best what we need. Paul was as righteous before conversion as any that can pretend to civility now, I suppose; and yet that notwithstanding he was made to shake and was astonished at himself at his conversion. And truly I think the more righteous any is in his own eyes before conversion, the more need he has of heart-breaking work in order to his salvation; because a man is not by nature so easily convinced that his righteousness is to God abominable, as he is that his debauchery and profaneness is.

A man’s goodness is that which blinds him most, is dearest to him, and hardly parted with; and therefore when such an one is converted, that thinks he has goodness of his own enough to commend him in whole or in part to God, but, but few such are converted, there is required a great deal of breaking work upon his heart to make him come to Paul’s conclusion, “What

⁶¹ jot – bit.

then? are we better than they? No, in no wise” (Rom 3:9). I say, before he can be brought to see his glorious robes are filthy rags, and his gainful things but loss and dung (Isa 64; Phil 3).

This is also gathered from these words, “Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before” the Pharisees (Mat 21:31). Why before them? But because they lie fairer⁶² for the Word, are easier convinced of their need of Christ, and so are brought home to Him without, as I may say, all that ado that the Holy Ghost doth make to bring home one of these to Him.

True, nothing is hard or difficult to God. But I speak after the manner of men. And let who will take to task a man debauched in this life, and one that is not so, and he shall see, if he laboreth to convince them both that they are in a state of condemnation by nature, that the Pharisee will make his appeals to God, with a great many “God, I thank thee”; while the publican hangs his head, shakes at heart, and smites upon his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luk 18:11-13).

Wherefore a self-righteous man is but a painted Satan, or a devil in fine clothes; but thinks he so of himself? No, no! He saith to others, Stand back, come not near me, I am holier than thou. It is almost impossible that a self-righteous man should be saved. But he that can drive a camel through the eye of a needle can cause that even such a one shall see his lost condition, and that he needeth the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ. He can make him see, I say, that his own goodness did stand more in his way to the kingdom of heaven than he was aware of; and can make him feel too that his leaning to that is as great iniquity as any immorality that men commit. The sum then is that men that are converted to God by Christ through the Word and Spirit—for all this must go to effectual conversion—must have their hearts broken and spirits made contrite. I say, it *must* be so, for the reasons showed before. Yea, and all decayed, apostatized, and backslidden Christians must, in order to their recovery again to God, have their hearts broken, their souls wounded, their spirits made contrite, and sorry for their sins.

Come, come, conversion to God is not so easy and so smooth a thing as some would have men believe it is. Why is man’s heart compared to fallow ground, God’s Word to a plough, and His ministers to ploughmen if the heart indeed has no need of breaking in order to the receiving of the seed of God unto eternal life (Jer 4:3; Luk 9:62; 1Co 9:10)? Who knows not that the fallow ground must be ploughed, and ploughed too before the husbandman will venture his seed; yea, and after that oft soundly harrowed, or else he will have but a slender harvest?

⁶² **lie fairer** – are a better target.

Why is the conversion of the soul compared to the grafting of a tree, if that be done without cutting? The Word is the graft, the soul is the tree, and the Word, as the scion, must be let in by a wound; for to stick on the outside, or to be tied on with a string, will do no good here. Heart must be set to heart, and back to back, or your pretended ingrafting will come to nothing (Rom 11:17, 24; Jam 1:21).

I say, heart must be set to heart, and back to back, or the sap will not be conveyed from the root to the branch; and I say, this must be done by a wound. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, as a man openeth the stock to graft in the scions, and so the Word was let into her soul, and so the Word and her heart cemented and became one (Act 16:14).

Why is Christ bid to gird His sword upon His thigh? And why must He make His arrows sharp, and all, that the heart may with this sword and these arrows be shot, wounded, and made to bleed? Yea, why is He commanded to let it be so, if the people would bow and fall kindly under Him, and heartily implore His grace without it? (Psa 45; 55:3-4). Alas, men are too lofty, too proud, too wild, too devilishly resolved in the ways of their own destruction. In their occasions, they are like the wild asses upon the wild mountains. Nothing can break them of their purposes or hinder them from ruining their own precious and immortal souls, but the breaking of their hearts.

Why is a broken heart put in the room of all sacrifices which we can offer to God, and a contrite spirit put in the room of all offerings, as they are, and you may see it so, if you compare the text with that verse which goes before it? I say, why is it counted better than all, were they all put together, if any one part or if all external parts of worship, were they put together, could be able to render the man a sound and a rightly made new creature without it? A broken heart, a contrite spirit, God will not despise; but both thou and all thy service He will certainly slight and reject if, when thou comest to Him, a broken heart be wanting; wherefore, here is the point, Come broken, come contrite, come sensible of, and sorry for thy sins, or thy coming will be counted no coming to God aright; and if so, consequently thou wilt get no benefit thereby. ❧