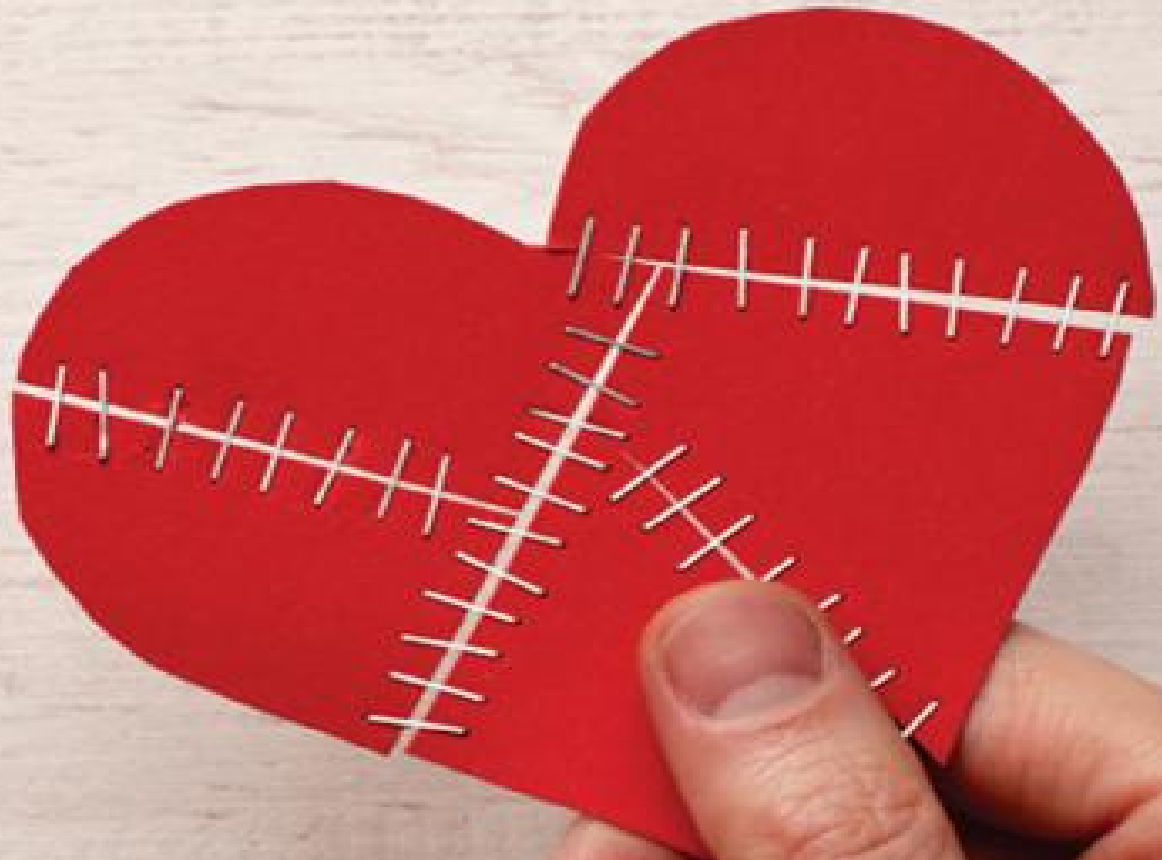


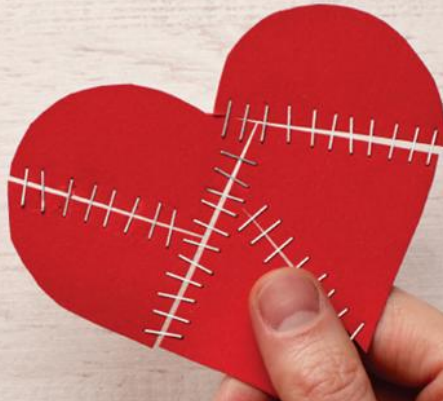
JOHN BUNYAN



**THE ACCEPTABLE
SACRIFICE**

THE EXCELLENCY OF A BROKEN HEART

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**THE ACCEPTABLE
SACRIFICE**

THE EXCELLENCY OF A BROKEN HEART

The Acceptable Sacrifice

The Excellency of a Broken Heart

by John Bunyan

showing the nature, signs, and proper effects of a contrite spirit
being the last works of that eminent preacher and faithful minister of
Jesus Christ

Mr. John Bunyan, of Bedford

with a preface prefixed thereunto by an eminent minister of the
gospel in london

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ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR

The very excellent preface to this treatise, written by George Cokayn, will inform the reader of the melancholy circumstances under which it was published, and of the author's intention, and mode of treatment. Very little more need be said, by way of introducing to our readers this new edition of Bunyan's Excellency of a Broken Heart. George Cokayn was a gospel minister in London, who became eventually connected with the Independent denomination. He was a learned man—brought up at the university—had preached before the House of Commons—was chaplain to that eminent statesman and historian, Whitelocke—was rector of St. Pancras, Soper Lane-

remarkable for the consistency of his conduct and piety of his life—but as he dared not to violate his conscience, by conformity to ceremonies or creeds which he deemed antichristian, he suffered under persecution, and, with upwards of two thousand godly ministers, was ejected from his living, and thrown upon the care of Divine Providence for daily food. The law ordered him to be silent, and not to set forth the glories of his Saviour; but his heavenly Father had ordained him to preach. There was no hesitation as to whom he would obey. At the risk of imprisonment, transportation, and death, he preached; and God honoured his ministry, and he became the founder of a flourishing church in Hare Court, London. His preface bears the date of September, 1688; and, at a good old age, he followed Bunyan to the celestial city, in 1689. It is painful to find the author's Baptist friends keeping aloof because of his liberal sentiments; but it is delightful to witness the hearty affection with which an Independent minister recommends the work of a Baptist; and truly refreshing to hear so learned a man commending most earnestly the work of a poor, unlettered, but gigantic brother in the ministry. Surely there is water enough connected with that controversy to quench any unholy fire that differences of opinion might ignite. George Cokayn appears to have possessed much a kindred spirit with John Bunyan. Some of his expressions are remarkably Bunyanish. Thus, when speaking of the jailor, 'who was a most barbarous, hard-hearted wretch; yet, when God came to deal with him, he was soon tamed, and his heart became exceeding soft and tender.' And when alluding to the Lord's voice, in softening the sinner's heart, he says: 'This is a glorious work indeed, that hearts of stone should be dissolved and melted into waters of godly sorrow, working repentance.'

The subject of a broken heart is one of vital importance, because it is essential to salvation. The heart, by nature, is hard, and cannot, and

will not break itself. Angels have no power to perform this miracle of mercy and of justice. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the NEW BIRTH. Some have supposed that God always prepares the heart for this solemn, this important change, by a stroke of his providence; but it is not so. Who dares limit the Almighty? He takes his own way with the sinner—one by a whisper, another by a hurricane. Some are first alarmed by the preaching of the Word—many by conversation with a pious friend or neighbour; some by strokes of Providence—but all are led to a prayerful searching of the holy oracles, until there, by the enlightening influence of the Spirit, they find consolation. The great question is, not as to the means, but the fact—Have I been born again? Have I been grafted into Christ? Do I bring forth the fruits of godliness in mourning over my sins, and, in good words and works, am I a living epistle known and read of all—men, angels, devils—and of the Omniscient God? These are the all-important inquiries which, I trust, will deeply influence every reader. Let two of Bunyan's remarks make an indelible impression on every mind: 'God will break ALL hearts for sin, either here to repentance and happiness, or in the world to come to condemnation and misery.' '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.' May our spirits be baptized into these solemn truths, and our broken hearts be an acceptable sacrifice to God.

GEO. OFFOR

A Preface to the Reader

The author of the following discourse, now in the presence of God, reaps the rewards of his labor, diligence, and success in serving his Master. By the grace of God, he personally experienced the nature, excellence, and comfort of a truly broken and contrite spirit. So what you will read here is simply a reflection of his own heart. God had much work for him to do, and He continued to shape him through His Word, and at times, through extraordinary trials and feelings of abandonment. The purpose, by God's goodness, was to humble him and keep him humble in his own eyes. The truth is, as he sometimes acknowledged, he always needed the thorn in the flesh. God, in His mercy, sent it to prevent him from becoming excessively proud due to his extraordinary circumstances. Perhaps, that was the sin that easily entangled him more than any other. But the Lord was pleased to use it for his good, to maintain him in a broken state that is pleasing to Him. As it is said, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). Indeed, this is a necessary quality that should always be found in the disciples of Christ, who are the most prominent and shining stars in the Church. Disciples, especially those who make the highest profession, need to be qualified in this way in every aspect of their faith and duty. This is what God primarily and especially looks for when we approach Him. It is the poor and contrite in spirit to whom God will turn His attention and with whom He will dwell (Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). And the reason God shows such respect to those who possess this qualification is because they behave fittingly towards Him. They come and humble themselves at His feet, displaying a keen sense of what may dishonor and displease God (Psalm 38:4). If the Lord even shakes His rod over them, they come trembling and submit, saying, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him" (1 Samuel 3:18). They are aware that they have sinned and gone astray like lost sheep, and therefore, they will justify God even in His severest dealings with them. A broken heart is also a pliable and flexible heart, ready to receive

whatever impressions God may make and willing to be molded into any form that pleases the Lord. They say, like Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). And like David, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, Lord, I will seek'" (Psalm 27:8). And similar to Paul, who trembled and said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

Now, without a doubt, a heart like this must be truly delightful to God. He says to us, "My son, give me your heart" (Proverbs 23:26). But undoubtedly, what He means is a broken heart. We can keep an unbroken heart for ourselves, but it is the broken heart that God wants us to give to Him. In truth, it is the only compensation we can offer for the harm we have done to God by sinning against Him. We cannot satisfy the breaking of God's laws better than by breaking our own hearts. That is all we can do of that kind. The blood of Christ alone can fully satisfy God's justice for any provocations we may be guilty of. But what we can do is accompany our confessions of wrongdoing with a broken and contrite spirit. Therefore, we find that when David committed the grievous sins of adultery and murder against God, he realized that all his sacrifices meant nothing in terms of atoning for his guilt. Therefore, he brought a broken heart before God, which expressed his deep remorse and utmost respect for Him (2 Corinthians 7:11).

The current day we live in and the circumstances faced by the people of God and our nations loudly proclaim the great necessity of being in a broken and tender frame of mind. Who can foresee the outcome of the violent turmoil among us? Who knows what will become of the sacred things of God? Therefore, it is fitting, like the aged priest Eli, to sit trembling in anticipation of what may happen. Do we not also hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of wars? Should we not, like the prophet, cry out, "My heart, my heart! I am in anguish! My heart

pounds within me, I cannot keep silent" (Jeremiah 4:19)? Just as that holy man was deeply affected by considering the potential fate of Jerusalem, the temple, and the ordinances of God under the present dark circumstances they faced, we too should assume a humble posture when confronted with humbling providences. Mercy and judgment seem to be contending in the same providential womb, and we do not know which will emerge first. But we can only meet them comfortably with a broken and contrite spirit. If judgment comes, the posture of tenderness exhibited by Josiah will be the best we can adopt. We can also say, like David, "My flesh trembles in fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments" (Psalm 119:120). It is truly disheartening when God strikes, and we remain unmoved, as the prophet laments, "You have struck them, but they felt no pain... they have made their faces harder than rock, they have refused to return" (Jeremiah 5:3).

However, those who understand the power of God's anger will deeply reverence Him in their hearts. They will have the greatest apprehension of His displeasure as they observe His every action. Thus, when He comes forth in a terrible dispensation, they will dutifully prepare to meet Him with a humble and broken heart. But even if He reveals Himself in goodness and prolongs the days of peace and liberty, a contrite disposition remains fitting. It will be an appropriate time, like Job, to abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes, and to say, like David, "Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far?" (Job 42:6; 2 Samuel 7:18).

However, we must understand that a broken and tender heart is not a plant that grows in our own soil; it is a special gift from God Himself. The One who created the heart must also be the One to break it. We may experience heart-breaking providences, yet our

hearts may remain unbroken, just like Pharaoh's heart, which remained hardened against God despite enduring ten terrible plagues one after another. The human heart is harder than anything else until God softens and breaks it. People do not move or relent, no matter how loudly God thunders. Even when God, with the utmost seriousness, sends forth firebrands, arrows, and death in the most terrifying displays of wrath and judgment, humanity remains unaffected, as if it were all a joke. It is only when God begins to work within them, when He compels them to cry out, "What have I done? What shall I do?" that they become aware of their need for repentance.

Therefore, let us turn to Him who not only gives a new heart but also a broken heart. No matter how hard people's hearts may be, if God effectively deals with them, they will become softened and tender. This was evident with the hardened Jews who, with wicked and cruel hands, murdered the Lord of life. Although they resisted for a long time, when God brought them under the impact of His Word and Spirit, through the powerful ministry of Peter, they were broken. Their hearts were pricked, and they cried out, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

We have a similar example with the jailer, who was a cruel and hard-hearted person. Yet, when God dealt with him, he was quickly tamed, and his heart became exceedingly soft and tender (Acts 16:29, 30).

People may speak at length, but their hearts may remain unmoved. However, "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic." It breaks rocks and cedars (Psalm 29:4). He turns the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of waters (Psalm 114:8). It is indeed a glorious work that hearts of stone are dissolved

and melted into godly sorrow, leading to repentance that cannot be regretted (2 Corinthians 7:10).

When God speaks effectively, even the most stubborn heart must melt and yield. Therefore, wait upon God for the softening of your heart, and avoid anything that may harden it, as the apostle warns the Hebrews, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:13).

Sin is deceitful and hardens those who indulge in it. The more one indulges their desires, the more their heart becomes hardened. There is an inherent hardness in every person's heart, and although it can be softened through the means of the gospel, if those means are neglected, the heart will return to its natural hardness, like wax or clay. Therefore, it is vital for us to remain close to God, using all the means of the gospel to keep our hearts softened. This is best achieved by continuing to engage in the same means that initially softened our hearts.

This treatise may be of great use to the people of God, with the accompanying blessing of God, to keep their hearts tender and broken, especially when so many others persist in their hardness and impenitence, storing up wrath for the day of wrath (Romans 2:5).

I implore those who read this book not to align themselves with the hardened generation, but to be companions with those who mourn in Zion, whose hearts are broken by their own sins, the sins of the church, and the sins of the nation. They are the ones most likely to stand in the gap and avert judgment. When Shishak, the king of Egypt, came against Judah with a great army and besieged Jerusalem, causing great alarm, the king and the princes humbled themselves before the Lord. In response, the Lord sent a gracious

message through the prophet Shemaiah, assuring them that He would not destroy them or pour out His wrath upon them through the hand of Shishak because they had humbled themselves (2 Chronicles 12:5–7).

The greater the number of mourning Christians, the more hope we have that the impending storm may pass, and the blessings we enjoy may continue. As long as there is a remnant who sighs and mourns, we can hope for preservation. At the very least, they will bear the mark that distinguishes them from those who will face destruction (Ezekiel 9:4–6).

But I will not prolong the preface any further, as I intend to make way for the reader's entrance into the main content of the book, where I am confident they will be pleased with the insights and provisions they find. I only want to assure them that this entire book was not only prepared by the author but also personally put into print by him. Unfortunately, before all the pages could be printed, the author, to the great loss and indescribable grief of many precious souls, was taken by the Lord.

Now, as I mentioned at the beginning, it is my desire and prayer that what was transcribed from the author's heart into this book may be transcribed from the book into the hearts of all who read it.

With love and honor for all saints,

George Cokayn

September 21, 1688

THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

or,

The Excellence 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 can rightfully be called so because it reveals the genuine sorrow he felt for his terrible sin of defiling Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah, as detailed in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12. As this psalm demonstrates, David experienced various emotions as soon as he was convicted of his wrongdoing. At times, he cried out for mercy, then he confessed his heinous offenses, then he lamented the corrupt state of his nature. Sometimes, he pleaded to be washed and sanctified, and at other times, he feared that God would reject him and withdraw His Holy Spirit completely. He continued in this manner until he reached the verse in focus, where he found solace, recognizing within himself a heart and spirit that were not despised by God. He declares, "The sacrifices of God," meaning to say, "I am grateful to God that I possess a broken spirit." He further adds, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," expressing his gratitude for possessing such a heart.

I.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED THROUGH THE VARIOUS WORKINGS OF THE HEART

The words can be divided into 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, two things are presented for our consideration. First, that a broken spirit is considered a sacrifice to God. Second, that it surpasses and fulfills all other sacrifices. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."

The demonstration of this is clear: because God will not despise such a heart. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." From this, I draw the conclusion that a genuinely broken spirit, a truly contrite heart, is an excellent thing to God. It surpasses all external duties; that is the meaning behind the saying, "The sacrifices," as it encompasses all the sacrifices we can offer to God. Without this, all our sacrifices are worthless; this alone is everything.

There are four things that are highly pleasing to God.

First, the sacrifice of Christ's body for our sins. This is stated in Hebrews 10, where it is deemed superior to all burnt offerings and sacrifices. It is what pleases God, sanctifies us, and makes us acceptable in His sight.

Second, sincere love for God is considered better than all sacrifices or outward forms 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" (Mark 12:33).

Third, walking in holiness, humility, and obedience before God is another pleasing aspect. Does the Lord take as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying His voice? "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams" (Micah 6:6–8; 1 Samuel 15:22).

Fourth, as stated in our text, is a broken spirit. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

However, note that this broken and contrite heart is esteemed by God alone. "O God," he says, "thou wilt not despise it." It implies that the world does not hold such a heart or a person with a broken and contrite spirit in high regard. On the contrary, those blessed with a broken heart are burdensome and troublesome wherever they go. They bring disturbance and unrest. In carnal families, they are like David to the king of Gath, causing trouble in the house (1 Samuel 21).

Their sighs, tears, day and night groans, cries, prayers, and solitary conduct disrupt the carnal family. As a result, they are browbeaten by some, scorned by others, and even abandoned and deserted by their companions. But take note of the text, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," but rather accept; for in God's eyes, not despising is equivalent to esteeming and placing a high value upon it.

II.

THE DOCTRINE, ASSERTION, DEMONSTRATION, AND
CONCLUSION, THAT A BROKEN AND TRULY CONTRITE HEART
IS AN EXCELLENT HEART

Now, let us provide several particulars to demonstrate that a broken spirit, a spirit that is RIGHTLY broken, a heart that is TRULY contrite, is an excellent thing to God.

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. Notice that He rejects sacrifices, offerings, and all Levitical ceremonies under the law, as well as external performances under the gospel. However, He accepts a broken heart. Therefore, it is clear from this, even if nothing else is said, that a heart that is rightly broken, a heart that is truly contrite, is an excellent thing to God. As you can see, such a heart is esteemed above all sacrifices. They were God's ordinances and things He commanded, yet a broken spirit surpasses them all. God does not desire the one and He does not despise the other. Brothers and sisters, a broken and contrite heart is truly an excellent thing. Have I already said that a broken heart, a broken and contrite heart, is esteemed above all sacrifices? Let me add,

Second, it holds greater esteem with God than both heaven and earth. This surpasses mere 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" (Isaiah 66:1-2). Notice that God says He made all these things, but He does not say that He will look to them, meaning take pleasure and delight in

them. No, there is something lacking in everything He has made that would captivate and delight His heart. However, when a broken-hearted sinner comes before Him, He searches the entire world to find such a person, and having found him, He says, "To this man," He says, "will I look." I repeat, this person holds more value to Him than both heaven and earth. "They," He says, "shall wax old"; "they shall perish" and fade away, but this person endures. As it is presented in another place, under a different context, "he shall abide forever" (Hebrews 1:10-12; 1 John 2:17).

"To this man will I look," signifies that He will care for this man, surround him, and place him under His protection. This is sometimes the meaning of "to look to" someone (Proverbs 27:23; Jeremiah 39:12; 40:4). "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down" (Psalm 145:14). The broken-hearted are among this number; therefore, God cares for them, surrounds them, and has set His eyes upon them for their good. This serves as a second demonstration to prove that a person with a spirit rightly broken, a heart truly contrite, holds great esteem with God.

Third, God not only prefers such a person, as previously mentioned, over heaven and earth, but He loves and desires to have that person as an intimate companion. He must dwell and cohabit with the one who has a broken heart, with those who 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. (Isaiah 57:15).

Behold here both the majesty and condescension of the high and lofty One. His majesty lies in the fact that He is high and the inhabiter of eternity. "I am the high and lofty One," He says, "I inhabit eternity." Truly, this consideration is enough to make a

person with a broken heart want to hide in a mouse-hole to escape from such majesty! But behold His heart, His condescending nature. "I am for dwelling also with him who has a broken heart, with him who is of a contrite spirit." That is the person with whom I desire to converse, with whom I will cohabit. That person, says God, I choose as my companion. To desire to dwell with someone implies all these things. Truly, among all the people in the world, only those with a broken and contrite heart have acquaintance with God, understand what communion with Him means, and comprehend His teachings. "He is nigh unto them that are of a broken spirit" (Psalm 34:18). They are the ones referred to in the 14th Psalm, where it says, "The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if any did understand and seek God." He seeks someone in the world with whom He can converse, for there is no one else who understands or is willing to listen to Him. God, so to speak, has to break people's hearts before they are willing to cry out to Him or allow Him to have any dealings with them. The rest close their eyes, stop their ears, withdraw their hearts, or tell God to be gone (Job 21:14). But the broken in heart are attentive; they have both the time and the willingness, as well as the understanding and everything else required. Therefore, they are suitable for engaging with God. There is also room in this person's house, in this person's heart, in this person's spirit for God to dwell, to walk, and to establish His kingdom.

Hence, there is compatibility. "Can two walk together," says God, "except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The broken-hearted desires God's company. "When wilt thou come unto me?" they say. The broken-hearted love to hear God speak and talk to them. This is compatibility. "Make me," they say, "to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" (Psalm 51:8). But the glory lies in the fact that the high and lofty One, the God who inhabits eternity and who has a high and holy place for His dwelling,

chooses to dwell with and be a companion to those with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Moreover, this brings great comfort to such individuals.

Fourth, God not only prefers such a heart over all sacrifices, esteems such a person above heaven and earth, and desires to be acquainted with them, but He also reserves for them His chief comforts, heart-reviving and soul-nourishing remedies. "I dwell," He says, "with such to revive them, and to support and comfort them. I revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). The broken-hearted person is weak and faint; they experience moments of despair and fear; they often languish under pain and anxiety. They need to be sustained with flagons and comforted with apples, or else they don't know what to do. They waste away in their iniquity, and nothing can keep them alive and restore their well-being except the comforts and remedies of Almighty God (Exodus 33:10, 11). Therefore, God chooses to dwell with such a person, reviving their heart and spirit. "To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

God has remedies, but they are meant to comfort those who are cast down (2 Corinthians 7:6), and such are the broken-hearted. As for those who are whole, they don't need a physician (Mark 2:17). It is the broken in spirit who require remedies; physicians are of no value except to those who feel their sickness. This is one reason why God is so little esteemed in the world—because people have not been wounded by God's striking blow. However, when a person is wounded, has their bones broken, or falls gravely ill and lies at the brink of the grave, who is esteemed as highly as a capable physician? What is desired more than the remedies, comforts, and suitable provisions of a skilled physician in such circumstances? This is the case with the broken-hearted; they need, and God has prepared an

abundance of the comforts and remedies of heaven to aid and relieve their sinking souls.

Therefore, such a person is encompassed by all the promises that provide solace and consolation to those who are sick and overwhelmed by the sense of sin and God's wrath. God says they will be refreshed and revived by these promises. Indeed, the promises are designed for them. He has broken their hearts and wounded their spirits precisely to make them receptive to His reviving remedies and to minister His comforting solace to them. As soon as He has broken them, His bowels yearn and His compassion stirs within Him, preventing Him from continuing to afflict. Ephraim was one of these individuals, and as soon as God struck him, observe how His heart reacts toward him. "Is Ephraim," He says, "my dear son?" Indeed, he is. "Is he a pleasant child?" Yes, he is. "For since I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:18–20). This serves as another demonstration.

Fifth, just as God prefers such a heart and holds the person in high esteem above heaven and earth, just as He desires intimacy with them and prepares His remedies for them, when He sent His Son Jesus into the world as a Savior, He specifically instructed Him to care for such individuals. That was one of the main reasons He sent Him down from heaven, anointed for His work on earth. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," He says, "because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," etc. (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1). This passage is clearly referring to Christ, as confirmed by His own words. During His earthly ministry, He took this book in His hand while in the synagogue at Nazareth and read this very passage to the people, declaring that it was fulfilled in their hearing (Luke 6:16–18).

Consider that the welfare of these souls was planned in heaven. God deliberated their salvation, deliverance, and restoration before His Son came down from heaven. Doesn't this demonstrate that a broken-hearted person, one with a contrite spirit, is highly esteemed by God? I have often been amazed at David's charge to Joab and the soldiers to deal gently with his rebellious son Absalom (2 Samuel 18:5). But that God, the Almighty God, the God against whom we have sinned, should, as soon as He strikes, give His Son a command, a charge, a commission to care for, bind up, and heal the broken-hearted—this is something that can never be sufficiently admired or marvelled at by men or angels.

And just as this was His commission, He acted accordingly. This is clearly illustrated in the parable of the man who fell among thieves. He went to him, poured wine and oil into his wounds, bandaged him, took him, placed him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, gave the innkeeper instructions to care for him, provided money up front, and promised to repay any additional expenses upon his return (Luke 10:30–35). Thus, behold the care that God has for the broken-hearted. He has given Christ, His Son, the charge to care for them, to bind up and heal their wounds. Behold the faithfulness of Christ, who does not conceal but proclaims this commission as soon as He begins His ministry and proceeds to fulfill it. "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Moreover, consider under whose care a broken heart and a contrite spirit have been placed. They are under the care of God and the healing touch of Christ. Even if a person were certain that their illness had placed them under the special care of the king and queen, they still couldn't be certain of their life; they might die under their royal hands. But here is a person in the favor of God, under the care of Christ for healing. No one has ever died under His hand due to a

lack of skill or power to save their life. Therefore, this person must live. Christ is not only commissioned to bind up their wounds but to heal them. He has himself explained this in the reading of His commission. Thus, a person with a broken heart and a contrite spirit must not only be attended to but healed—healed of their pain, grief, sorrow, sin, and the fears of death and hellfire. Therefore, He adds that He will give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," and "comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:2, 3). This is what His commission entails, and the broken-hearted are entrusted to His care, and He himself has proclaimed that He will heal them. Hence, He says of the same person, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and restore comforts to him and to his mourners;... and I will heal him" (Isaiah 57:18, 19). This serves as a fifth demonstration.

Sixth, just as God prefers such a heart and esteems the person, desires their company, prepares their remedies, and commands Christ to heal them, He also promises, in conclusion, to save them. "He saves those who are of a contrite spirit" or, as the margin notes, "those who are contrite in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

And this is the ultimate conclusion: to save a person is the ultimate goal of special mercy. "He saves those who are of a contrite spirit." To save means to forgive, for without the forgiveness of sins, we cannot be saved. To save means to preserve a person in this miserable world and to deliver them from all the devils, temptations, snares, and destructions that would otherwise destroy us body and soul forever if we were not kept and preserved by God. To save means to bring a person, body and soul, to glory and grant them an eternal dwelling in heaven, where they can dwell in the presence of the good God and the Lord Jesus and sing the songs of redemption to them for eternity. This is what it means to be saved, and nothing less

than this can fulfill the salvation of a sinner. Now, this is the destiny of the one with a broken heart, and it is the end that God has in store for the contrite spirit. "He saves those who are contrite in spirit." He saves such! This is truly excellent!

However, do those with broken spirits believe this? Can they imagine that this is the destiny that God has planned for them, the end that He intended when He began to break their hearts? No, unfortunately, they think quite the opposite. They are afraid that this is only the beginning of death, a sign that they will never see the comforting face of God in this world or the next. Thus, they cry out, "Cast me not away from your presence," or, "Now I am free among the dead, whom God remembers no more" (Psalm 51:11; 88:4, 5). For indeed, the breaking of the heart is accompanied by a visible display of God's wrath and a direct accusation from heaven of the guilt of sin upon the conscience. To reason, this appears dreadful, as it crushes the soul to the ground. "Who can bear a wounded spirit?" (Proverbs 18:14).

To this person, it also seems as if this is only the beginning of hell, merely the first step towards the pit. Yet, in reality, all these experiences are only the beginnings of love, the initial steps toward life. The Lord kills before He brings to life; He wounds before His hands bring healing. Yes, He does the former in order to accomplish the latter; He wounds because His purpose is to heal. "He causes injury and binds up; He wounds, and His hands make whole" (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 5:18). His intention, I repeat, is the salvation of the soul. He chastises and breaks the heart of every child whom He receives, and woe to the one whose heart God does not break.

Thus, I have proven what I initially asserted: that a spirit rightly broken, a truly contrite heart, is an excellent thing to God. "A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." For this reason, I say, firstly, it is evident that it is better than all sacrifices. Secondly, the person who possesses it is of higher esteem with God than heaven or earth. Thirdly, God desires such a person as an intimate companion and housemate. Fourthly, He reserves His spiritual comforts and cordials for them. Fifthly, He has given His Son a charge, a commandment, to ensure that the broken-hearted are healed, and He is determined to heal them. And finally, it concludes that the broken-hearted and those with a contrite spirit shall be saved, that is, they shall inherit the heavens.

III.

WHAT A BROKEN HEART, AND WHAT A CONTRITE SPIRIT IS

Now I will proceed to explain what a broken heart and a contrite spirit are. This must be done because the comfort of those who possess it and the conviction of those who do not depend on understanding it. To do this effectively, I will address four aspects. **FIRST**, I will describe what a heart that is not broken and not contrite is like. **SECOND**, I will explain how and with what the heart is broken and made contrite. **THIRD**, I will discuss what it means to have a broken and contrite heart. And **FINALLY**, I will provide some signs of a broken and contrite heart.

FIRST, let me describe what a heart that is not broken and not contrite is like.

1. Such a heart is hard, stubborn, and resistant to God and the salvation of the soul (Zechariah 7:12; Deuteronomy 2:30; 9:27).
2. It is filled with evil thoughts and darkness (Genesis 18:12; Romans 1:21).
3. It is deceitful and easily deceived, especially when it comes to matters of eternal significance (Isaiah 44:20; Deuteronomy 11:16).
4. It prefers iniquity and vanity over anything that is beneficial for the soul (Psalm 41:6; 94:11).
5. It is unbelieving and prone to turning away from God towards sin (Hebrews 3:12; Deuteronomy 17:17).
6. It is unprepared for God, uncircumcised, and unable to receive His holy word (2 Chronicles 12:14; Psalm 78:8; Acts 7:51).
7. It is double-minded, pretending to serve God but also leaning towards the devil and sin (Psalm 12:2; Ezekiel 33:31).
8. It is proud and defiant, rejecting control even from God Himself (Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 16:5; Malachi 3:13).
9. It gives room to Satan but resists the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3; 7:51).
10. In short, "it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"; so wicked that no one can fully understand it (Jeremiah 17:9).

The truth of the heart's condition before it is broken is evident from observing the world. Where is the person whose heart has not been broken, and whose spirit is not contrite, but still deals honestly with their own soul according to the Word of God? A right heart is characterized by being grounded in God's commandments and honesty (Psalm 119:18; Luke 8:15). An honest heart will not deceive itself or accept anything that does not hold value like genuine saving grace that will be valid on the day of judgment. However, alas! Only a

few people, no matter how honest they are towards others, are honest towards themselves. It is the worst kind of deception to deceive one's own soul, as James says, especially regarding matters concerning one's own soul (James 1:22, 26).

SECOND, I will now explain how and with what the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite.

First. How the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite

The instrument used to break the heart and make the spirit contrite is the Word. "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). The rock referred to here is the heart, which is also compared to an adamant (a substance harder than flint) in other passages (Zechariah 7:11, 12; Ezekiel 3:9). This rock, this adamant, this stony heart, is broken and made contrite by the Word. However, it is only accomplished when the Word is like a fire and a hammer that breaks and melts it. And it is truly so when the Word is accompanied by the power of God's hand. No human or angel can break the heart with the Word alone unless God adds His mighty power from heaven. This is why Balaam remained without a properly broken and contrite heart despite being rebuked by an angel, and why the Pharisees died in their sins even though they were admonished and rebuked by the Savior of the world. Therefore, although the Word is the instrument for breaking the heart, it does not truly break the heart unless it is accompanied by the might and power of God.

This led the prophet Isaiah, after preaching for a long time, to cry out that he had labored in vain. He pleaded for God to tear open the heavens and come down so that the mountains, or the rocky hills, or the hearts, might be broken and melt in His presence (Isaiah 44:4; 64:1, 2). He realized through experience that this work could not be

effectively accomplished unless the Lord Himself intervened. This is also frequently implied in the Scriptures when it says that when preachers effectively proclaimed the Word and broke people's hearts, "the Lord worked with them" and "the hand of the Lord was with them" (Mark 16:20; Acts 11:21).

When the hand of the Lord is with the Word, it becomes mighty and "mighty through God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). It becomes sharp as a sword in the soul and spirit, piercing the hearts of sinners and causing them to fall at His feet seeking mercy (Hebrews 4:12). As mentioned before, it becomes like a fire and a hammer, breaking this rock into pieces (Psalm 110:3). Therefore, the Word is referred to in two ways: 1. As it stands alone, and 2. As accompanied by power from heaven.

1. When the Word stands alone and is not supported by the saving work of heaven, it is simply called the Word, or the Word of men (1 Thessalonians 1:5–7; 1 Corinthians 4:19, 20; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). This is because when it is solely in the hands of humans who lack the ability to bring about the desired work, it functions as if it were just the word of men. The Word of God, when in the hands of humans alone, is like a sword in the hand of a suckling child. Despite being well-sharpened and having sharp edges, it is unable to conquer an enemy or make them fall and cry out for mercy because it is held by a child. However, when the same sword is placed in the hands of a skilled and capable father—and God is both skilled and able to wield His Word—both sinners and proud helpers are compelled to submit and humble themselves. Therefore, although the Word is the instrument, it does not bring about true salvation for the soul on its own. The heart is not broken, and the spirit is not made contrite through it. Instead, it only brings about spiritual death and leaves people

bound in the chains of their sins, destined for eternal condemnation (2 Corinthians 2:15, 16).

2. But when accompanied by mighty power, the same Word is like the roar of a lion, the thrust of a sword, a burning fire in the bones, thunder, and a hammer that shatters everything (Jeremiah 25:30; Amos 1:2; 3:8; Acts 2:37; Jeremiah 20:9; Psalm 29:3–9). Therefore, it can be concluded that anyone who has heard the preached Word but has not heard the voice of the living God within it has not yet had their heart broken or their spirit made contrite for their sins.

Second. How the heart is broken, and the spirit made contrite

And now I proceed to the second point: to show how the heart is broken and the spirit made contrite by the Word. Truly, it is when the Word penetrates with power. But let me delve into this in more detail:

1. The Word works effectively toward this purpose when it discovers the sinner and their sin, convincing them that it has found them. Take the example of our first father, Adam. After he sinned, he sought to hide from God. He concealed himself among the trees of the garden and even covered himself with fig leaves, thinking he could go unnoticed. But soon he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. Adam, what do you plan to do? He continued to hide and tried to remain undiscovered, but the voice called out, "Adam!" and fear gripped him. God asked, "Adam, where are you?" and Adam had to respond (Genesis 3:7–11). Yet, the voice of the Lord God did not stop there. It began to search and inquire about Adam's actions, unraveling what he had hidden and exposing him in his own sight before God. In the same way, the Word, when wielded by

the hand of God, discovers and singles out the sinner. The sinner feels it, and the Word uncovers their sins, unravels their entire life, strips them, and leaves them exposed before God. Neither the sinner nor their wickedness can remain hidden and covered any longer. This is when the sinner begins to see what they never saw before.

2. Another example is David, the man mentioned in our text. He committed gross sins and tried to hide them from God and others. Then Nathan was sent to deliver a sermon, both in general and specifically targeted at David. When Nathan initially preached in general terms, David remained untouched, thinking he was as righteous as any other person. However, God loved David and commanded Nathan to go beyond David's ears and reach his conscience. Then David had to fall. Nathan said, "You are the man," and David confessed, "I have sinned." At that moment, his heart was broken, and his spirit was made contrite, as shown in this psalm and our text (2 Samuel 12:1–13).
3. The third example is Saul. He had heard many sermons, became a devoted follower, and was even more zealous than many of his peers. However, his heart was never broken, and his spirit was never made contrite until he heard a sermon from heaven. He heard God, through the Word of God, inquire about his sins: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Jesus said. Then Saul could no longer stand. His heart broke, he fell to the ground, trembled, and asked, "Who are you, Lord?" and "What do you want me to do?" (Acts 9). Therefore, the Word works effectively toward this purpose when it discovers the sinner and their sin and convinces them that it has found them. However, I must add a caution here. Not every operation of the Word on the conscience leads to salvation, nor does every conviction result in

the sinner's genuine conversion. Only the operation of the Word that shows the sinner the evil of their ways and truly turns their heart toward God through Christ is intended. This brings me to the third point.

THIRD. I have now come to explain how and what the heart is when broken and made contrite. To do this, I will explore the two key expressions in the text.

First, let's consider the term "broken." Tindal translates it as a troubled heart, but I believe it carries a deeper meaning. I understand it to refer to a heart that is disabled in its former actions, just as a person with broken bones is unable to run, leap, wrestle, or engage in any activities they previously enjoyed. In the same way, a broken heart in the text is likened to broken bones in verse eight: "Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice" (Psalm 51:8). Why is a broken heart compared to broken bones? Because just as broken bones disable the outward physical abilities, a broken spirit disables the inward desires for vanity and folly that the heart once delighted in. Thus, weakness is associated with this brokenness of heart. David says, "I am feeble and utterly crushed" (Psalm 38:8). He has lost his strength and former vigor in pursuing vain and sinful paths.

Therefore, to have a broken heart means to be lamed, disabled, and diverted from the previous course of life due to a sense of God's wrath upon sin. This work is no mere fancy but brings great trouble to the soul. It is likened to dislocating bones, breaking bones, burning bones with fire, draining the moisture from bones, and tormenting bones (Psalm 22:14; Jeremiah 20:9; Lamentations 1:13; Psalm 6:2; Proverbs 17:22). These vivid descriptions unequivocally

convey the grievous nature of a broken heart as experienced through senses and feelings.

Second, let's explore the meaning of the word "contrite." A contrite spirit is a penitent one, deeply sorrowful and greatly grieved for the sins committed against God, which have harmed the soul. This understanding holds true in all the places where a contrite spirit is mentioned, such as Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 57:15, and Isaiah 66:2.

Just as a person deeply regrets and mourns their own folly after suffering a broken leg or arm due to their own foolish actions, one whose heart is broken by a sense of God's wrath feels profound sorrow within their soul. They sincerely repent, deeply regretting their foolishness in rebelling and subjecting themselves to such sharp affliction. While others indulge in vanity, such a person regards their sin as the greatest folly. David says, "My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly." And again, "You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you" (Psalm 38:5; 69:5).

Those who have not experienced a broken heart, no matter what they profess with their lips, cannot truly conclude that sin is foolish. Scripture says, "Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions." In other words, the foolishness of some individuals lies in their enjoyment of sin, and their souls are tainted by this foolishness. However, a person with a broken heart cannot be counted among them any more than someone with broken bones can rejoice at the prospect of playing football. Thus, hearing others speak foolishly causes grief to those whom God has wounded, and their words are like the piercing of a sword (Psalm 69:26; Proverbs 12:18). This, then, is the meaning of a broken and contrite spirit.

FOURTH. Lastly, I now turn to provide more specific indications of a broken heart and a broken and contrite spirit.

First, a broken-hearted person, as intended in the text, is a sensitive individual who engages all the faculties of their soul. Others are dead, lacking genuine perception of what the broken-hearted person is aware of.

1. They perceive themselves to be what others are ignorant of—namely, not only a sinful individual but one naturally entrenched in the bitterness and bondage of sin. It is Peter's expression to Simon, and it applies universally: every person in a state of nature resides in the bitterness of sin. They were shaped and conceived in it, and it permeates their entire soul and body (Psalm 51:5; Acts 8:23). They see and understand this, whereas not every professing believer does because the blessing of a broken heart is not bestowed upon everyone. David states, "There is no soundness in my flesh," and Solomon implies that a plague or festering sore exists within the heart itself. But not everyone comprehends this (Psalm 38:3; 1 Kings 8:38). David also proclaims that his "wounds stink and are corrupted," and his "sore runs and does not cease" (Psalm 38:5; 77:2). However, those whose hearts remain unbroken, the individuals who lack this understanding, remain oblivious to these truths. Yet the broken-hearted person, the one with a broken spirit, perceives them, as the prophet declares—seeing their sickness and their wound. They perceive it with grief and sorrow (Hosea 5:13).
2. They experience what others are not aware of. They feel the arrows of the Almighty piercing and firmly embedded within them (Psalm 38:2). They sense the great pain and sickness inflicted upon their poor soul by God's hammer striking their heart to break it. They bear an intolerable burden upon their spirit (Hosea 5:13). As David says, "My iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me" (Psalm

38:4). They also sense the weighty hand of God upon their soul, a sensation foreign to carnal individuals. They feel pain from their wounds, a pain that others cannot comprehend due to their lack of brokenness. David laments, "My heart is in anguish within me." Why? Because the terrors of death have fallen upon him (Psalm 55:4). The terrors of death cause excruciating pain, the most intense kind. Hence, the anguish described here is also referred to as agonizing pangs elsewhere (Isaiah 21:3). Just as broken bones cause pain—strong pain, causing a person to groan like one mortally wounded—a broken spirit inflicts the most severe pain, surpassing the suffering of the body (Proverbs 18:14). Here, in this pain, in this discussion of a wounded, broken spirit, death awaits, eternal death without God's special mercy. This pain will lead the soul to the brink, and the broken-hearted person feels it. David confesses, "The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow" (Psalm 116:3). Indeed, I assure you, poor soul, you truly experienced trouble and sorrow, for the pains of hell and the anguish of death are the most unbearable. Yet the one whose heart is broken is familiar with this.

3. Just as they see and feel, they also hear what exacerbates their woe and sorrow. You know that when a person's bones are broken, they not only see and feel the pain but often hear things that intensify their grief. They hear that their wounds are incurable, that their bones are not set correctly, that there is a risk of infection or even amputation. These are the voices, the words, that haunt the home of someone with broken bones. And a broken-hearted person understands what I mean by this. They hear things that make their lips quiver, that seem to cause rottenness to enter their bones. They tremble within themselves

and long to hear joy and gladness so that the bones, the heart, and the spirit that God has broken may rejoice (Habakkuk 3:16; Psalm 51:8). They believe they hear God, the devil, their conscience, and all righteous people whispering among themselves, declaring that there is no help for them from God. Job heard this, David heard this, Heman heard this, and it is a common sound in the ears of the broken-hearted.

4. The broken-hearted also possess a sense of smell that others cannot detect. Alas! Sin has never emitted such a foul odor as it does to the broken-hearted. You know that wounds can stink, but nothing stinks as much as sin does to the broken-hearted person. Their own sins stink, as do the sins of the entire world. Sin is like carrion; it has a putrid nature and the most repugnant smell, although some individuals take pleasure in it (Psalm 38:5). Yet only God and the broken-hearted sinner are offended by its scent. "My wounds stink and are corrupt," they declare, both in the nostrils of God and in their own. But alas! Who perceives the stench of sin? None of the worldly individuals; they, like carrion crows, seek it, love it, and consume it as a child eats bread. "They feed on the sin of my people," says God, "and relish their wickedness" (Hosea 4:8). They do this because they cannot smell the repulsive scent of sin. You know that what is repugnant to the nose cannot be palatable to the taste. The broken-hearted person discovers that sin is nauseating and proclaims that it stinks. At times, they even sense the smell of fire, fire and brimstone, so aware are they of the wages due to sin.
5. The broken-hearted also possess a sense of taste. Severe wounds filled with great pain can alter a person's taste, causing them to perceive bitterness in their food, drink, and even in things that

should provide comfort. How often do the poor people of God—the only ones who truly understand the meaning of a broken heart—cry out that gravel, wormwood, gall, and vinegar have become their food (Lamentations 3:15, 16, 19). Gravel, gall, and wormwood represent the temporal taste of sin. And to make them forever loathe it, God feeds them with it until their hearts ache and break. Wickedness tastes pleasant to the world; thus, it is said they "eat ashes" and "feed on the wind" (Isaiah 44:20; Hosea 12:1). The carnal world finds enjoyment in lusts or anything vile and refuse, as exemplified vividly in the parable of the prodigal son. "He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating," our Lord says (Luke 15:16). However, the broken-hearted person has a taste that is true regarding these matters, though due to the anguish of their soul, they abhor all kinds of delicacies (Job 33:19, 20; Psalm 107:17–19). Thus, I have presented you with one sign of a broken-hearted person: they are perceptive individuals, with all the senses of their soul awakened. They can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell in a way that no one else can. Now, I will proceed to another sign of a broken and contrite person.

Second. And that is, he is a deeply sorrowful person. This, like the previous sign, is natural. It is natural for someone in pain, someone with broken bones, to be grieved and sorrowful. They are not among the merry ones of the times, for their bones, their hearts, are broken.

1. They are sorrowful because they see and recognize the corruption of their nature. As I mentioned earlier, they are aware of it, they see it, they feel it, and now I say they are sorrowful because of it. It is what causes them to call themselves wretched. It is what makes them loathe and despise themselves. It is what makes them blush before God and feel ashamed

(Romans 7:24; Job 42:5, 6; Ezekiel 36:31). They find no form or comeliness in themselves by nature, but the more they gaze into the mirror of the Word, the more they perceive how sin has made them unattractive and deformed. Not everyone sees this, and therefore not everyone is sorry for it. But the broken-hearted person sees that they are corrupted, marred, filled with wickedness and depravity. They see that within them, in their flesh, no good thing dwells. And this fills them with sorrow, a heartfelt sorrow. Just as a person with broken bones realizes they are damaged, spoiled, and unable to do what they desire and should do, they feel grief and sorrow.

Many people are sorry for their actual transgressions because those transgressions often bring shame before others. But few are sorry for the defects that sin has caused in their nature because they do not see those defects themselves. A person cannot be sorry for the sinful defects of their nature until they realize that these defects have made them contemptible before God. And it is only through a sight of God that they can truly see what they are and be genuinely sorry for it. "Now my eye sees You," says Job, "therefore I abhor myself." "Woe is me, for I am undone," says the prophet, "for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord." And it was this that made Daniel say his "splendor was turned into corruption" when he had a vision of the Holy One (Job 42:6; Isaiah 6:1–5; Daniel 10:8). Visions of God break the heart because, through the sight of His perfections, the soul realizes its own immense and indescribable disproportion due to the vileness of its nature.

Imagine a group of ugly, deformed individuals living together in one house, who have never seen anyone other than themselves or anyone adorned with the splendor and perfections of nature. They would only be capable of comparing themselves to each other and therefore

would not be affected or made sorry for their uncomely natural defects. But now, bring them out of their dark cells and holes where they have been isolated, and let them behold the splendor and perfections of beauty in others. Then, if ever, they will be sorry and dejected at the sight of their own defects. This is the case with humanity. Due to sin, people are marred, spoiled, corrupted, and depraved, but they can dwell in darkness, ignorant of God, angels, and saints, and unaware of their excellent nature and beauty. Therefore, they tend to regard their own uncomely parts as their ornaments and glory. But when such individuals, as I mentioned, see God, see saints, or witness the beauty of the Holy Spirit, and then see themselves without them, they cannot help but be affected by and sorry for their own deformity. When the Lord Jesus revealed only a little of His excellence before His servant Peter, it exposed the depravity of Peter's nature before him, causing great confusion and shame, and making him cry out in the midst of his companions, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:4–8).

Therefore, the cause of a broken heart is a sight of divine excellencies and a sense that I am a poor, depraved, spoiled, and defiled wretch. And this sight, having broken the heart, begets sorrow in the broken-hearted.

2. The broken-hearted person is sorrowful because they find the strength of their depraved nature opposing and hindering their desires to do good. As Paul says, "When I want to do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21). Evil is present to resist and contradict the desires of their soul. A person with broken bones may have the intention to be industriously engaged in a lawful and honest occupation, but they experience an infirmity that strongly resists their good efforts. And this leads them to shake their head, make complaints, and sigh with sorrow in their

heart, saying, "I cannot do the things I want to do" (Romans 7:15; Galatians 5:17). They feel weak and feeble, not only depraved but also deprived of the ability to fully carry out the good motions, intentions, and desires prompted by the Word and their renewed mind. They feel ready to stumble, and their sorrow is continually before them.

You should know that the broken-hearted person loves God, loves their soul, loves what is good, and hates what is evil. For such an individual to encounter opposition and continual contradiction to this holy passion within themselves inevitably causes sorrow, a godly sorrow, as the apostle Paul calls it. It is a sorrow that works a result in them that they will never regret, not even for eternity (2 Corinthians 7:9–11).

3. The broken-hearted person is sorry for the breaches in their life and conduct caused by the depravity of their nature. This was the case with the individual in our text. The vileness of their nature had manifested in defiling their life and making them base in their conduct at that time. This was what broke their heart. They saw that they had dishonoured God, and that cut them deeply. "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight" (Psalm 51:4). They saw that their actions had caused the enemies of God to blaspheme, and this pierced their heart. They cried out, "I have sinned against You, Lord." They declared their iniquity and expressed their sorrow for their sin (Psalm 38:18).

When a person has a purpose, when their heart is set on it, and the broken-hearted person intends to glorify God, any obstruction to that purpose, any spoiling of their work, makes them sorrowful. Hannah desired children, but she could not have them, and this

made her "a woman of a sorrowful spirit" (1 Samuel 1:15). A broken-hearted person desires internal well-being and external righteousness, but they feel, find, and see that they are prevented, at least in part. This causes them sorrow; they groan earnestly under this burden of imperfections (2 Corinthians 5:1–3). Just as a person with broken bones has many imperfections and is more aware of them than anyone else, as mentioned earlier, the broken-hearted person feels this deeply. It makes them sorrowful and leads them to conclude that they will go through life with a heavy heart, always in the bitterness of their soul (Isaiah 38:15).

Third. The man with a broken heart is a very humble man, or true humility is a sign of a broken heart. Therefore, brokenness of heart, contrition of spirit, and humbleness of mind are closely connected. "To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15).

To continue with our analogy, let's imagine a man who is physically healthy, strong, and fearless, not afraid of anyone. But if this man were to break a leg or an arm, his courage would diminish. He would be far from boasting or challenging others; instead, he would be afraid even of a small child attempting to touch him. His courage would shrink, and he would humble himself like a little child.

This is the state of a person with a broken and contrite spirit. In the past, they could challenge even 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; Malachi 3:13, 14). But now their heart is broken. God has wrestled with them, causing them to fall and break their bones, their heart. Now they cower, cringe, and beg God not only to do good to them but to do it gently. "Have mercy upon me, O God," said David, "according to Your loving kindness;

according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1). They stand in need not only of mercy but of the tenderest mercies. God has various types of mercy, some more severe and others more tender. God can save a person and still subject them to a difficult path to heaven! The broken-hearted person sees this and dreads it, so they plead for the tenderest kind of mercies. We read about God's gentle dealings and His great compassion towards them. However, only the broken-hearted truly understands the reason for such expressions because they have their own wounds, their festering and stinking sores. Therefore, they experience pain and desire to be handled with tenderness. God has shattered the pride of their spirit and humbled the arrogance of mankind. Their humility becomes evident in the following ways:

1. They are thankful for their natural life. When they go to bed at night, they consider that, just as a lion tears its prey to pieces before the morning light, they also deserve to be devoured. "My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments" (Psalm 119:120). But when they see that another day has been added to their life and that they are still alive in the morning, saved from destruction, they cannot help but take notice of it and acknowledge it as a special favour. They say, "God be thanked for preserving my soul and keeping me alive until now, shielding me from the destroyer" (Job 33:22; Psalm 56:13; 86:13).

Before their heart was broken, they considered time their own and wasted it on idle pursuits. They were far from fear because God's rod was not upon them. However, when they find themselves under God's chastening hand, or when God, like a lion, breaks all their bones, they humble themselves before Him and prostrate themselves

at His feet. They have learned to regard every moment as a mercy and every small provision as a mercy.

2. The smallest hope of mercy for their soul becomes precious to them. They used to disregard the gospel and consider promises as worthless as stubble and the words of God as rotten wood. But now, they look upon the promise with great reverence. They consider even a slight possibility of mercy to be more valuable than the whole world. They are glad to receive even a small blessing and consider it a great privilege to be a humble servant in God's house rather than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
3. They used to scornfully look down upon the people of God and refuse to show them any kindness. But now, they admire and bow before them. They are willing to humble themselves to the point of licking the dust off their feet. They consider it the highest honor to be counted as the least among them. They say, "Make me as one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:19).
4. In their own eyes, they are the greatest fools in nature. They realize they have been mistaken in their ways and have little, if any, true knowledge of God. They believe that everyone else knows God better and serves Him more faithfully than they do (Psalm 73:21, 22; Proverbs 30:2, 3).
5. They are content to be the least, as long as they can be part of the kingdom of heaven. They are satisfied to be the smallest and least esteemed in the earthly church. They find great value in simply being loved, even if they are the least beloved among the saints.
6. When they speak to God or to others, they humble themselves before them. When conversing with God, they accuse themselves

and acknowledge their own wickedness committed during the days when they were enemies of God. Like Paul, they say, "Lord, I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You. I stood by and consented to the death of Your martyr Stephen, and I kept the garments of those who killed him." They punished Your saints in the synagogues, forced them to blaspheme, and persecuted them even in distant cities (Acts 22:19, 20; 26:9–11).

Similarly, when they speak to fellow believers, they consider themselves as vile and unworthy. They say, "I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle" or "I am less than the least of all saints." They acknowledge their past blasphemy, persecution, and harmful actions (1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:13). A broken heart produces humility and self-abasing thoughts. Just as David danced before the ark of God and revealed his vulnerability, even to the disapproval of his wife, they are willing to be even more despised in their own sight for the sake of the Lord (2 Samuel 6:20–22). Oh, the person whose spirit has been kindly broken, who has a contrite heart, is truly humble and lowly.

Fourth. The broken-hearted person recognizes their spiritual poverty. Therefore, just as humble and contrite are associated, so are poor and contrite in the Scriptures. "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit" (Isaiah 66:1, 2). In our metaphor, a wounded person, one with broken bones, considers themselves to be in a state of great poverty. If you ask them how they are, they would respond, "Truly, my neighbours, I am in a very poor condition!" The spiritual poverty of those with broken hearts and contrite spirits is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. They are referred to as "Your poor" (God's poor) and "the poor in spirit" (Psalm 72:2; 74:19; Matthew 5:3). Now, the person who is poor in their own eyes (which is the focus of our discussion here) and has a

broken heart is aware of their own lack. They understand that they cannot help themselves and must rely on the charity of others. This holds true in both the natural and spiritual realms.

1. The broken-hearted person now recognizes their needs, which they were unaware of until now. Just as someone with a broken bone is unaware of the need for a bone-setter until they realize their bone is broken. The broken bone makes them aware of it; the pain and anguish make them aware. This also applies to spiritual matters. Now they understand that true poverty is the lack of a sense of God's favor. Their intense pain is a sense of God's wrath, as mentioned earlier. They long to hear the voice of joy to heal their broken bones (Psalm 51:8). They believe that two things would make them rich: (1) having a rightful claim to Jesus Christ and all His benefits, and (2) having saving faith in Him. Those who are spiritually rich possess Christ and have faith in Him (2 Corinthians 8:9; James 2:5).

The first of these gives us the right to the kingdom of heaven, while the second provides comfort to the soul. The broken-hearted person lacks a sense and knowledge of their personal stake in these matters. It is evident that they recognize their lack, but they have yet to attain the assurance of possessing them. Hence, they say, "The poor and needy seek water, but there is none; their tongues fail for thirst" (Isaiah 41:17). They see no provision in sight, nothing that appears to be intended for them. David, when his heart was broken, felt the need for cleansing, purification, and restoration. He knew that spiritual riches lay in this, but he did not fully perceive that God had already cleansed and purified him. Instead, he feared that everything was slipping away, that he was in danger of being cast out of God's presence, and that the Spirit of grace would depart from him

completely (Psalm 51). This is the first aspect: the broken-hearted person is poor because they recognize their needs.

2. The broken-hearted person is poor because they know they cannot help themselves obtain what they need. Just as someone with a broken arm knows it but realizes they cannot set it themselves. This is the second aspect that reveals their poverty; otherwise, they would not be considered poor. Even if someone has numerous needs, if they can help themselves, provide for themselves, and meet their own needs with their resources, they cannot be considered poor. In fact, the more they lack, the greater their wealth if they can fulfill their needs from their own pockets.

Therefore, a person is truly poor when they recognize their spiritual need and understand that they cannot provide or help themselves. The broken-hearted person knows this, and thus, they see themselves as truly poor. It is true that they may possess some things of their own, but those possessions cannot fulfill their needs, so they remain poor. David said, "You do not desire sacrifices; otherwise, I would give them. My poverty remains" (Psalm 51:16). Lead is not gold; lead is not accepted as currency among merchants. Only Christ has spiritual gold to offer (Revelation 3:18). What can a person do to obtain Christ, faith, or love? Even if they possess abundant carnal excellencies, not a single penny of it can be used as currency in the marketplace of grace. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned" (Song of Solomon 8:7).

The broken-hearted person perceives this and recognizes their spiritual poverty. Yes, they have a broken heart, which holds great value in the sight of God. However, that brokenness is not inherent to their nature; it is a gift, a work of God, and that is what constitutes

a sacrifice to God. Moreover, a person cannot find contentment and peace in a broken heart because it simply reveals their poverty and their inability to provide for their own needs. There is little comfort in a broken heart.

3. The broken-hearted person is poor and realizes it because they find themselves unable to live in any other way except by begging. Even David, a king, resorted to this when it came to the health of his soul. He cried out, and the Lord heard him and delivered him from all his troubles (Psalm 34:6). This leads us to the fifth sign.

Fifth. Another sign of a broken heart is crying, crying out. Pain, as you know, can make a person cry. Just as someone with broken bones will cry out in agony. This is what quickly follows once your heart is broken and your spirit truly contrite.

1. I must say, anguish will make you cry. David proclaimed, "Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me" (Psalm 119:143). You know that anguish naturally leads to crying. Just as a broken bone causes anguish, a broken heart causes anguish as well. The pain experienced by someone with a broken heart is likened to the agony of a woman in labor (John 16:20–22).

Anguish provokes solitary crying, crying to oneself, which is known as self-bemoaning. God said, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself," meaning that Ephraim was presently under God's disciplining and correcting hand (Jeremiah 31:18). Ephraim lamented, "You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained calf" (Jeremiah 31:18). This is also expressed by the one who said, "I moan in my complaint and make a noise." And why? Because "my heart is deeply pained within me" (Psalm 4:2–4).

This self-bemoaning occurs in private and secluded places. It is common for those distressed by anguish, even when alone, to cry out about their current pain. They may exclaim, "O my leg! O my arm! O my bowels!" or, like the son of the Shunammite woman, cry out, "My head! My head!" (2 Kings 4:19). Oh, the groans, sighs, and cries of the broken-hearted when they are alone! They utter words such as, "My sins! My sins! My soul! My soul! How burdened am I with guilt! How consumed by fear! Oh, this hard, despairing, unbelieving heart! How sin defiles my will, my mind, my conscience! 'I am afflicted and near death'" (Psalm 88:15).

If some of you worldly people could eavesdrop behind closed doors and hear Ephraim in the midst of self-bemoaning, you would be astounded to hear him lamenting the very sins in which you take pleasure. You would hear him grieving over his misspent time while you waste it pursuing your sinful desires. You would hear him reproaching his heart for its failure to comply with God's holy will, while you fear God's Word and ways and consider yourselves most righteous when farthest from God. The unruly passions and lusts of the broken-hearted often drive them into a corner where they bemoan themselves.

2. Just as they cry out in self-bemoaning to themselves, they also cry out to others and against themselves. As it is said in another case, "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" (Lamentations 1:12). Oh, the bitter cries and complaints that the broken-hearted utter to one another! Each one believes that their own wounds are the deepest, their own sores filled with the most anguish and the hardest to heal. They exclaim, "If our iniquities are upon us and we waste away because of them, how can we then live?" (Ezekiel 33:10).

Once, while visiting an honest woman's house, I asked her how she was doing. She replied, "Very badly." I inquired if she was sick, but she said no. I asked if any of her children were ill, to which she also responded no. So I asked, "Is your husband unwell, or are you experiencing setbacks in life?" She assured me that neither was the case, but expressed her fear of not being saved. She broke out with a heavy heart, saying, "Ah, good man Bunyan! If I had Christ, even if I had to beg for my bread, it would be better for me than what I think my current state is!" This woman had a broken heart, she longed for Christ, and she was concerned for her soul. There are very few women, especially wealthy women, who consider Christ and a humble pitcher more valuable than the world, their pride, and their pleasures. This woman's cries are worthy of being recorded; her cry, "Christ and a pitcher," resonated with the angels themselves!

But, I must say, only a few women cry out in this manner. Only a few women are so deeply in love with their own eternal salvation that they are willing to let go of all their desires and vanities in exchange for Jesus Christ and a simple pitcher. Good Jacob also had this sentiment: "If the Lord will provide me with food to eat and clothes to wear, then He shall be my God." He made a vow to that effect: "And Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and keep me on this journey I am taking, and give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the Lord will be my God'" (Genesis 28:20).

3. As they bemoan themselves and share their complaints with one another, they cry out to God. Heman said, "O God, I cry day and night before You." But when? It was when his soul was filled with trouble and his life approached the grave (Psalm 88:1–3). In another place, it is expressed as crying out "out of the depths"

or "out of the belly of Sheol" (Psalm 130:1; Jonah 2:2), describing the painful state they were in when they cried out.

See how God Himself describes it: "My pleasant portion has become a desolate wilderness, and in its desolation, it mourns for Me" (Jeremiah 12:11). And this is natural for those whose bones, whose hearts, are broken. Where does a child go when it is hurt, except to its father or mother? Where does it rest its head, but on their laps? To whose bosom does it pour out its complaints, especially to the father or the mother, where there is compassion, pity, and comfort? The same is true for those with broken bones or broken hearts. It is natural for them to cry out, to cry out to Him. David pleaded, "Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony; my soul is also greatly troubled" (Psalm 6:1–3). One who cannot cry feels no pain, recognizes no need, fears no danger, or is already dead.

Sixth. Another sign of a broken heart and a contrite spirit is that it trembles at God's Word. "To this person I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

The Word of God is awe-inspiring to a broken-hearted individual. Solomon says, "The word of a king is like the roar of a lion." If that is the case, then what can be said about the Word of God? It signifies the authoritative word of a king, accompanied by wrath and fear. We have a proverb, "Once bitten, twice shy." Just as someone who has been burned fears fire, and a child who has been whipped fears the rod, similarly, the broken-hearted fears the Word of God. Therefore, those who tremble at God's Word are known for their association with the godly, their adherence to boundaries, their readiness to mourn and intercede when God is angry, and their ability to turn away His wrath from a people.

It is a sign that the Word of God has taken root and worked powerfully when the heart trembles in fear and reverence before it. When Joseph's mistress tempted him to commit sin, he was afraid of God's Word. He said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He stood in awe of God's Word and dared not go against it because he remembered the dreadful consequences of rebelling against God's Word. When old Eli heard that the ark was captured, his heart trembled within him. He understood that this tragic loss signified God's anger towards Israel, and he knew the terror of God's wrath. When Samuel went to Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled in fear, anticipating that he brought a solemn message from God. They had experienced the dread of such messages before. When Ezra desired a time of mourning in Israel for the sins of the land, all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel concerning the transgressions of the exiles came to him.

Indeed, there are people who tremble at the words of God and are afraid to act contrary to them. But they are only those whose souls and spirits have been influenced by the Word. As for the rest, they are determined to continue their own way regardless of what God says. "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you. But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 44:16). Do you think these people have truly felt the power and majesty of God's Word breaking their hearts? Certainly not; otherwise, they would tremble at the words of God and be afraid. Some people may be commanded by God, yet they do as they please. They have no regard for God or His Word. Neither threats nor promises, punishments nor favors can make them obedient to God's Word because they have not experienced its power; their hearts have

not been broken by it. When King Josiah read in God's Book the punishment that God had threatened against rebellious Israel, despite being a holy and righteous man, he humbled himself. He tore his clothes, wept before the Lord, and trembled at the impending judgment (2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34). He knew the fearful nature of God's Word. As I mentioned before, there are individuals who dare to do anything, even if it goes against the Word of God. However, those who tremble at the Word dare not do so. They make the Word their guide in all they do; they consult the Holy Bible to determine what is permissible and what is not. They tremble at the Word. Therefore, this is another true sign that the heart has been broken: when the heart is filled with fear and trembling at the Word (Acts 9:4–6; 16:29, 30). Trembling at the Word is a result of believing in the deserved consequences, the threats, and the impending judgment if repentance does not intervene. Thus, the heart melts and breaks before the Lord.

IV.

THE NECESSITY OF A BROKEN HEART

Now, let me address the question at hand. Why is it necessary for the heart to be broken? Can a person be saved without a broken heart? My answer is this: Setting aside the mysterious things known only to God, there is indeed a necessity for the heart to be broken in order to attain salvation. This is because a person will not genuinely embrace the means leading to salvation until their heart is broken. Here's why:

Firstly, when a person enters this world, they are spiritually lifeless and completely indifferent to matters of faith and eternal happiness. No call or admonition, unless accompanied by the power to break the heart, can awaken them to a proper consideration of their present condition or instill in them a genuine desire to be saved.

God has demonstrated this truth in various ways. He has threatened people with temporal judgments and even sent calamities upon them repeatedly, yet they remain unresponsive. He says, "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities; I withheld rain from you; I struck your crops with blight and mildew; I sent plagues among you; I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet you have not returned to me" (Amos 4:6–11). Despite these repeated judgments and punishments, the heart remains unaffected and impervious. There is a protective shield around the heart, like a coat of mail, that prevents anything from reaching it, whether it be the doctrines of the Gospel or the consequences of transgressions (Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27). This shield, known as the foreskin of the heart and the devil's armor, hinders the access of both Gospel truth and divine punishment (Deuteronomy 10:16; Luke 11:22).

Before conversion, this shield must be removed, this coat of mail must be dismantled, in a process referred to as circumcising the heart. "I will circumcise your heart," says the Lord, "so that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart." By doing so, the devil's defenses are dismantled, and the heart is exposed (Deuteronomy 30:6; Luke 11:22). Now, the Word of God can pierce, cut, and penetrate the heart. When the heart is wounded, it bleeds, weakens, falls, and dies at the feet of God, unless it is upheld by the grace and love of God in Jesus Christ. Conversion begins with the heart, and while the shield of sin and Satan remains intact, all judgments are in vain. Thus, after recounting numerous acts of mercy and judgment to

the children of Israel, Moses suggests that what they lack is a heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear until that very day (Deuteronomy 29:2, 3). Their hearts have not yet been deeply affected, awakened, and wounded by the holy Word of God, causing them to tremble at its truth and terror.

How can an unawakened, unfeeling, spiritually dead person repent, cry out, bow down, and break before God's presence, seeking mercy and grace, regardless of the magnitude of the danger? Yet this is what must happen, for this is how God has ordained it, and this is how it must be for salvation to occur. But can a spiritually dead individual, someone who is unresponsive and unaware of their miserable state, accomplish this without first having their heart awakened and made to feel its desperate need? No, they cannot.

Secondly, as a person enters the world, regardless of their wisdom in worldly and temporal matters, they are foolish when it comes to spiritual and heavenly things. Paul declares that the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to them. They are, in fact, fools in regard to these matters. The natural person cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14). So, how can this fool be made wise? Wisdom must be implanted in their heart (Job 38:36). Only God can do this, and He accomplishes it by making room in the heart for wisdom, by removing the very folly and madness that dwell within. And how does He remove it? Through severe chastisement, until the person becomes weary of their foolishness. Just as a natural fool must be crushed in a mortar with a pestle, so must a spiritual fool undergo a similar process (Proverbs 19:29).

Solomon suggests that it is a difficult task to transform a fool into a wise person. "Even if you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along

with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him" (Proverbs 27:22). This illustrates the challenging nature of making a fool wise. To crush someone in a mortar is a fearsome act, especially when done with a pestle. But it appears that a whip, a mortar, and a pestle are the necessary tools. And if such methods are required to make a person wise in worldly matters, even though they may not succeed, how much more must a spiritual fool be whipped, beaten, and stripped before they can attain wisdom in spiritual matters? Yes, their heart must be placed in God's mortar and beaten, ground with the pestle of the law until it becomes receptive to heavenly truths. In Jeremiah, we read, "Through deceit they refuse to know me, declares the Lord." What follows? "Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will refine them and test them with fire, for what else can I do because of the daughter of my people?" (Jeremiah 9:6, 7). God will refine them, putting them in His furnace for testing and making them truly know Him. When David underwent spiritual chastisement for his sin and felt the breaking hand of God upon his heart, he declared that God would make him know wisdom (Psalm 51:6). In that moment, he was in the mortar, in the furnace, bruised and melted. His bones, his heart, were breaking, and his folly was departing. It was then that he exclaimed, "You will make me know wisdom." If I understand anything about God's dealings with us fools, it is this: nothing else will make us truly wise. Even a thousand breakings will not render us as wise as we ought to be.

We say that wisdom is not truly valued until it is acquired, and according to that proverb, one usually suffers for it. The fool is wise in their own imagination, so there is a twofold difficulty they face before they can attain true wisdom. Not only must their folly be removed from them, but their false wisdom as well. This can only be accomplished by deeply convicting their heart, revealing plainly that their wisdom is actually folly and will be their undoing. A fool loves

their folly, treasuring it dearly. Therefore, it must be a significant force that compels a fool to forsake their folly. Foolish individuals refuse to weigh, consider, or compare wisdom with their folly. "Folly is joy to him who lacks sense." "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats their folly" (Proverbs 15:21; 26:11). They are so reluctant to part with their folly that they cling to it even when driven away. Thus, it takes a great deal to make someone a Christian because every person is a fool, the greatest fool of all, completely unconcerned and stubborn, unwilling to turn from their folly unless their heart is broken. David, Manasseh, Saul (also known as Paul), and I myself were all fools of this kind.

Thirdly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, and proud. Pride is one of the sins that manifests itself early in children's lives and continues to grow, permeating all that they do. However, it is most deeply hidden in matters concerning their souls. Sin, by its very nature, not only leads to vileness but also conceals its own vileness from the soul. Therefore, many mistakenly believe they are doing well when they sin. Jonah thought he was justified in his anger toward God (Jonah 4:9). The Pharisees thought they were doing right by accusing Jesus of being possessed by a demon (John 8:48). Paul was convinced that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus, which he did with great fervor (Acts 26:9, 10). Sin inflates individuals with pride and self-conceit, causing them to believe they are far better than they truly are. They think they are children of God when they are actually children of the devil. They believe they are knowledgeable about Christianity when they are not, lacking understanding of what it truly means (John 8:41–44; Galatians 6:3).

What causes this? It stems from pride and a self-conceit that convinces them their spiritual state is righteous, even when they are

still in their sins and under God's curse. This pride is so deeply entrenched and powerful that all the ministers in the world cannot persuade them that their confidence is not grace but pride. As a result, they disregard all reproofs, rebukes, threats, and admonitions aimed at warning them against being deceived. The prophet exhorts, "Listen and pay attention. Do not be proud, for the Lord has spoken. But if you do not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride" (Jeremiah 13:15–17). Yet the proud individuals persist, maintaining their resistance against God and His holy prophets (Jeremiah 43:2).

Nothing can bring these individuals to salvation until their hearts are broken. Even after David defiled Bathsheba and had her husband killed, he boasted of his righteousness and justice. He passionately desired the punishment of the man who had taken a poor man's lamb, completely unaware that he himself was the great transgressor. But would he believe it? No, he staunchly defended his supposed righteousness and refused to acknowledge his guilt until Nathan, authorized by God, declared to him that he was the very man he had condemned. "You are the man," Nathan said. At those words, David's conscience awakened, his heart was wounded, and he fell under the weight of his guilt at the feet of the God of heaven, seeking mercy (2 Samuel 12:1–13).

Oh, pride, pride! You are the force that keeps many individuals bound by their sins. You cursed self-conceit, preventing them from recognizing that their spiritual state is damnable. "In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him" (Psalm 10:4). If the pride of their countenance is so influential, imagine the power of the pride in their hearts. Job proclaims that God chastises him with pain on his bed to hide pride from him and save his soul from the depths of hell. God subjects him to suffering until his bones protrude, and his life is near destruction (Job 33:17–22).

It is a difficult task to strip a person of their pride and make them see themselves as sinners, fools, and even cruel to their own immortal souls. Pride of heart possesses such power that it is likened to an iron sinew and an iron chain, rendering individuals stubborn and resistant to the Lord, repelling His Word from their hearts (Leviticus 26:19; Psalm 73:6).

This was the sin of the devils, and it is the sin of mankind, a sin that no one can be liberated from until their heart is broken. Only then will they gladly yield. If someone is proud of their strength or manhood, a broken leg will humble them. Similarly, if someone is proud of their goodness, a broken heart will humble them. This brokenness occurs through the discovery and conviction of sin, by the power of God upon the conscience.

Fourthly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, and proud but also self-willed and headstrong (2 Peter 2:10). They are stubborn and difficult to deal with before their hearts are broken. Therefore, they are often called rebels, rebellious, and disobedient, doing only as they please. "All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people who walk in ways not good." They are also compared to headstrong horses rushing into battle against their riders' commands. "Everyone turns to their own course, like a horse charging into battle" (Jeremiah 8:6). They proclaim, "With our tongues, we will prevail; our lips are our own—who is lord over us?" (Psalm 12:4).

They stop their ears, shrug their shoulders, close their eyes, and harden their hearts against the words of God, despising the counsel of the Most High (Psalm 107:11; Zechariah 7:10, 12). They resemble the rebellious son who refuses to obey his parents or the prodigal son who insists on having everything under his control, distancing

himself from his father and his father's house (Deuteronomy 21:20; Luke 15:13). For such individuals, nothing but force will suffice. The rebellious son must be stoned to death, and the prodigal must endure extreme hunger. Only then, I repeat, will their stubborn and self-willed hearts submit to the will of God (Deuteronomy 21:21; Luke 15:14–17). They are the ones referred to as the stout-hearted, far from righteousness, and will remain so until their hearts are broken, for that is how they come to know themselves (Isaiah 9:9–11).

Fifthly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, proud, and self-willed but also fearless. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18). They fear man, fearing the loss of his favor, love, goodwill, help, and friendship. This fear is evident everywhere. The poor fear the rich, the weak fear the strong, and the threatened fear those who threaten them. However, when it comes to God, none fear Him. By nature, they neither reverence His frowns nor seek His favor. They do not inquire about how to escape His avenging hand, which is raised against their sins and their souls because of sin. They fear losing trivial things, but they are not afraid to lose their souls. "They do not fear me," says the Lord (Malachi 3:5).

How many times are some individuals reminded of death through their own sickness, graves, or the death of others? How many times are they reminded of hell through reading the Word, the lashes of conscience, or witnessing others roaring in despair as they depart this world? How many times are they reminded of the day of judgment? For instance, 1. By God binding the fallen angels for judgment. 2. By the drowning of the old world. 3. By the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. 4. By the appointment of a day. 5. By the appointment of a judge. 6. By recording their crimes. 7. By

appointing and preparing witnesses. 8. And by promising, threatening, and resolving to call the entire world to His judgment seat to be judged for their deeds, words, and even their hidden sins. Yet, they do not fear God. Alas! They do not believe these things. To carnal individuals, these things are akin to Lot's preaching to his sons and daughters in Sodom. When he warned them that God would destroy the city, they regarded him as a mocker, and his words seemed like idle tales (Genesis 19:14). Fearless individuals are not swayed by words; only blows, wounds, and killings can instill fear in them. How many times did the Israelites defy God in the wilderness? How often did they declare that they did not fear Him? Notice that they were seldom, if ever, brought to fear and dread His glorious name unless they were surrounded by death and the grave. Nothing but a severe hand will make the fearless fear. Therefore, it is necessary, from a human perspective, for God to take this approach with sinners when He seeks to save their souls. He must bring them to the edge, within sight of hell and eternal damnation. There, He charges them with sin and guilt, breaking their hearts before they will fear His name.

Sixthly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, proud, self-willed, fearless, but also false believers regarding God. No matter how clearly God reveals Himself, individuals by nature refuse to believe His testimony. Instead, they become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened. Thus, they pervert the glory of God, turning His truth into a lie (Romans 1:21–25). God says He sees; they say He does not. God says He knows; they say He does not. God says there is none like Him; yet they say He is just like them. God says none shall serve Him in vain; they say it is pointless and unprofitable to serve Him. He says He will do good; they say He will neither do good nor evil. In this way, they falsely believe regarding God. Moreover, concerning

the Word of His grace and the revelation of His mercy in Christ, they do not hesitate to declare through their actions—for a wicked man speaks with his feet (Proverbs 6:13)—that it is a complete lie and unworthy of trust (1 John 5:10).

Now, what can God do to save these individuals? If He conceals His presence and glory, they will perish. If He sends His messengers to them and refrains from coming to them Himself, they will perish. If He comes to them but refrains from working in their hearts through His Word, they will perish. If He works in their hearts but not effectively, they will perish. If He works effectively, He must break their hearts, causing them to fall at His feet like mortally wounded men, pleading for mercy. Without this, no good can be accomplished in them. They will not truly believe until He shakes them out of their false belief and, through the breaking of their bones, makes them realize that He is and will be exactly as He has proclaimed Himself in His holy Word. The heart must be broken before a person can turn to what is good.

Seventhly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, proud, self-willed, fearless, false believers, but also great lovers of sin. They are captivated, enthralled, and engulfed in the pleasures of sin. The Scriptures say they love sin, delight in lies, take pleasure in iniquity and those who practice it. They revel in their own deceptions and glory in their shame (John 3:19; Psalm 62:4; Romans 1:32; 2 Peter 2:13; Philippians 3:19).

This is the natural disposition of mankind, for sin is intertwined with and has dominion over all the faculties of the soul. Hence, they are described as captives to sin, being led into its pleasures at the will of the devil (2 Timothy 2:26). Breaking the love and detaching the affections from the objects they are deeply attached to, which are

deeply rooted in the heart, is no easy task. Alas! There are many who despise the allurements of heaven, trample upon God's threats, and dismiss the flames of hell whenever they are presented as motives to turn them away from their sinful indulgences. They are so fixed, so consumed by these bestial idols. Indeed, attempting to divert their course is like trying to prevent the raging waves of the sea when driven by powerful winds.

When individuals are somewhat pressed, when reason and conscience begin to listen to a preacher or when judgment starts to hunt for iniquity, they employ numerous tricks, evasions, excuses, delays, and hiding places to conceal and preserve their cherished sins along with their souls, in the delights of those sins, leading to their own eternal damnation. They strive to suppress conscience, silence convictions, forget God, become atheists, contradict plain and honest preachers, and surround themselves only with those like-minded individuals who speak smooth words and prophesy deceit. They even say to these preachers, "Step aside, turn away from the path, and let the Holy One of Israel cease to confront us" (Isaiah 30:8–11). If they continue to be pursued and conscience and guilt, like bloodhounds, find them in their secret places, roaring against them for their wicked lives, they resort to flattery, deception, and lies against their own souls. They make promises to improve, turn around, repent, and become better shortly, all to evade convictions and disturbances in their wicked ways, so they can pursue their lusts, pleasures, and sinful delights in peace and without restraint.

Moreover, I have witnessed some individuals who, due to the weight of guilt and the torment of hell upon their conscience for their evil deeds, have roared like bears, howled like dogs, and yelled like dragons. Yet, as soon as their immediate torments and fears were alleviated, they returned to their vomit like dogs and wallowed in the

mire like pigs (Hosea 7:14; 2 Peter 2:20–22). Similarly, there have been those who tasted the good Word of God, experienced the joy of heaven, and encountered the powers of the world to come, but none of these, individually or collectively, could sever their alliance with their lusts and sins forever (Hebrews 6:4, 5; Luke 8:13; John 5:33–35). O Lord! What is man that You are mindful of him? How insignificant is he? He has sinned against You; he loves his sins more than he loves You. He is a lover of pleasures rather than a lover of God!

But how can this person be reclaimed from this sin? How can they be brought to detest it? Undoubtedly, according to what we see in the Word, it can only be achieved by wounding, breaking, and disabling the heart that loves sin, thereby making it a plague and a bitterness to the person. Sin may be turned into an affliction, gall, and wormwood for those who love it, but making it so repugnant to such individuals requires great and severe measures. I recall a recent incident in our town when a little girl loved to eat the dirty heads of tobacco pipes, and neither discipline nor kind words could reform her and make her abandon them. So her father sought the advice of a doctor to wean her off this habit, and the doctor gave him this suggestion: "Collect a large number of the filthiest tobacco pipe heads you can find, boil them in milk, and make a concoction from that milk. Then make your daughter drink it all up." The father followed the advice, giving his daughter the posset to drink. The drink became so repugnant and nauseating to her stomach, making her so sick, that she could never bear to touch tobacco pipe heads again, thus curing her of that affliction. You love your sin, and neither discipline nor kind words have yet been able to reform you. Well, be cautious. If you refuse to be reformed, God will make you drink a posset of your sins that will be so bitter to your soul, so repugnant to your taste, so loathsome to your mind, and so afflictive

to your heart that it will break you with sickness and grief until you are disgusted by it. Yes, this is what He will do if He loves you. If not, He will allow you to continue on your path and let you indulge in your tobacco pipe heads!

The children of Israel desired flesh; they wept, cried, and murmured because they lacked meat. They despised the bread from heaven, which they considered to be insignificant and unsatisfying (Numbers 11:1–6). Moses went and informed God how the people had rejected His heavenly bread and yearned, lusted, and craved for meat. God responded, "They shall have meat. I will feed them with an abundance of meat. They will eat it not for just one day, or two, or five, or ten, or twenty days, but for an entire month until it comes out of their nostrils and becomes loathsome to them. They have despised the Lord" (Numbers 11:11–20). He knows how to make the very thing on which your wicked heart is set loathsome to you. And if He loves you, He will do so. Otherwise, as I mentioned, He will not afflict you with sickness or punish you when you commit adultery. Instead, He will leave you alone until the day of judgment, when He will call you to account for all your sins. But let us move on.

Eighthly, when a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, proud, self-willed, fearless, false believers, and lovers of sin, but also wild. They belong to the wild olive tree, to that which is naturally wild (Romans 11:17, 24). In another instance, man by nature is compared to a wild donkey, to a wild donkey's colt. "Empty man would be wise, though man is born like a wild donkey's colt" (Job 11:12). Isaac was a representation of Christ and all converted individuals (Genesis 4:26). However, Ishmael represented man by nature, and the Holy Spirit described him as a wild man (Genesis 16:12). This man, I mean, represents all carnal people in their estrangement or distance from God. Hence, it is said of the

prodigal son at his conversion that he "came to himself," implying that he was previously mad, wild, or out of his senses (Luke 15:17). I understand that there is sometimes a distinction between being wild and being mad, but wildness can reach a degree where one can rightly be called mad. This is always true in spiritual matters.

1. A wild or mad person pays no attention to good advice; the frenzy in their mind shuts everything out and forcefully leads them away from wise and sober individuals. This is how it is with worldly people; good advice is like casting pearls before swine to them. They trample it underfoot and despise the person who brings it (Matthew 7:6). "The wisdom of the poor is despised, and their words are not heard" (Ecclesiastes 9:16).
2. Leave a wild or mad person alone, and they will spend their whole life busying themselves with accomplishing something that, in the end, amounts to nothing. The work, toil, and effort of such a person amount to nothing, except to demonstrate that they were out of their minds. David, imitating such a person, scratched the gate of the king like fools do with chalk. And all the work of all worldly people in the world is similar to this (1 Samuel 21:12, 13). Therefore, such a person is said to labor in vain, or to gain no more than if they filled their belly with the east wind (Ecclesiastes 5:16; Job 15:2).
3. If you assign a task to a wild or mad person and they do it, they will do it not according to your instructions, but according to the folly of their own wild imagination. Just as Jehu carried out the command of the Lord in his own madness, paying no attention to the Lord's specific instructions (2 Kings 9:20; 10:31). This is how worldly people act when they engage in any of God's affairs, such as hearing, praying, reading, or professing. They do

everything according to their own wild imagination, disregarding the commandments of the Lord.

4. When wild or mad people adorn themselves with something, as they often do, the spirit of their wildness or frenzy is evident even in the manner and style in which they do it. Either the things they use for that purpose are mere trinkets and trifles, or if they seem to be better, they are put on in an eccentric manner, more to make them ridiculous than to portray them as sober, sensible, or wise. Likewise, unconverted individuals adorn themselves in a way that they think will gain acceptance from God. Would a sane person think of making themselves fine or pleasing to others by wearing filthy rags or painting their face with filth and dung? Yet, this is the finery of worldly people when they come into God's presence seeking acceptance (Isaiah 64:6; Philippians 3:7, 8).

Oh, the wildness, frenzy, and madness that possess the hearts and minds of worldly people! They walk according to the ways of this world, according to the spirit that is, in truth, the spirit of the devil, working in the disobedient (Ephesians 2:1–3). But do they believe that this is their state? No, in their own estimation, they are like other madmen, the only sane ones in the world. They are so captivated and delighted by their own delusions that they ridicule all others who dwell in the world. But what is the way to make a wild or mad person sober? Leaving them alone will not do it; kind words alone will not do it. No, they must be tamed; measures must be taken to tame them. "He brought down their hearts with hard labor" or continual distress, as it says (Psalm 107:10–12). The psalmist speaks there of madmen who are kept in darkness, bound in afflictions and chains because they rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.

This, therefore, is the way to deal with such individuals, and only God can handle them in this manner. They must be taken, separated from others, and restrained with chains, darkness, afflictions, and iron. They must be disciplined, deprived, whipped, purged, and treated as mad people are treated. And they must be dealt with in this manner until they come to their senses and cry out in their distress. It is then that they cry to the Lord in their troubles, and He saves them from their distress. He brings them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and breaks their chains apart (Psalm 107:13–15). This is how God tames the wild and brings prodigals to their senses and to Him for mercy.

Ninth. When a person enters the world, they are not only spiritually dead, foolish, proud, self-willed, fearless, false believers, lovers of sin, and wild, but they also have a distaste for the things of the kingdom of God. I mentioned before that an unconverted person is one who has not tasted these things, but now I add that they also have a dislike for them. They call bitter things sweet and sweet things bitter; their judgment is completely distorted. These are the people whom God pronounces a woe upon. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

The latter part of this passage clearly shows that some people have a distaste for the things of God. They call His sweet things bitter and the devil's bitter things sweet. And all this is because of a lack of a broken heart. A broken heart perceives things differently than an unbroken heart. A person who feels no pain or bodily distress cannot recognize or appreciate the virtue or goodness of the most effective remedy, even if it is applied to their arm or leg. Instead, they would say, "Get rid of these foul-smelling ointments." But place the same remedies where they are needed, and the patient will appreciate,

taste, and savor their goodness. They will value and recommend them to others.

This is how it works in spiritual matters. The world does not understand the anguish or pain of a broken heart. They say, "Who will show us anything good," meaning something better than what we find in our sports, pleasures, possessions, and achievements. Many people speak in this manner, as the Psalmist says. But what does the distressed person say? Well, "Lord, shine your light upon us." And then he adds, "You have put gladness in my heart," specifically through the light of your presence, for that is the remedy for a broken heart. "You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and wine abound" (Psalm 4:1–7). Oh, a broken heart can taste forgiveness, can taste the consolation of the Holy Spirit. Just as a hungry or thirsty person values bread and water in their need, so do those with a broken heart value and hold in high esteem the things of the Lord Jesus. His flesh, his blood, his promise, and the light of his presence are the only sweet things both to smell and taste for those who are spiritually wounded. The satisfied soul despises honeycomb; those who are whole despise the gospel and do not savor the things of God.

If twenty men were to hear a pardon read, and only one of those twenty was condemned to die, and the pardon was for none but those in his situation, which of these men, do you think, would taste the sweetness of that pardon? The condemned man, undoubtedly. This is the case at hand. The person with a broken heart is a condemned individual. Yes, it is a sense of condemnation, among other things, that has truly broken their heart. And there is nothing but a sense of forgiveness that can bind it up or heal it. But even if it could heal it, would they not taste, truly taste, or truly appreciate this forgiveness?

No, forgiveness would be to them what it is to someone who does not sense their need for it.

But, you may ask, why do some value what others despise, since both are in need of the same grace and mercy of God in Christ? Well, one sees, while the other sees nothing of this woeful and miserable state. And thus, I have shown you the necessity of a broken heart. First, man is spiritually dead and needs to be revived. Second, man is foolish and needs to be made wise. Third, man is proud and needs to be humbled. Fourth, man is stubborn and needs to be broken. Fifth, man is fearless and needs to be made to reflect. Sixth, man is a false believer and needs to be corrected. Seventh, man loves sin and needs to be weaned from it. Eighth, man is wild and needs to be tamed. Ninth, man has no taste for the things of God and cannot find pleasure in them until their heart is broken.

V.

THE REASONS WHY A BROKEN HEART IS ESTEEMED BY GOD SUCH AN EXCELLENT THING

And so, I have concluded the previous section and will now proceed to discuss the reasons behind this point. My aim is to demonstrate why and how a broken heart, a truly contrite heart, is considered such an excellent thing to God. We have already proven its significance to him through six demonstrations, explained its nature through six signs, and established its necessity through the nine

reasons previously mentioned. Now, let me reveal why a broken heart is regarded as excellent by God.

Firstly, a broken heart is the work of God himself. It is a heart that God has prepared for his own purposes. It is a sacrifice provided by him, for himself, just as Abraham said in another instance, "God will provide himself a lamb" (Genesis 22:8).

This is why it is said, "The preparations of the heart in man, etc., are from the Lord." And also, "God makes my heart soft, and the Almighty troubles me" (Job 23:16). The heart, by its very nature, is hard, dull, and impenetrable. It remains as such, and will continue to do so, until God, as mentioned before, breaks it with his hammer and melts it with his fire. It is said that God takes away the stony nature of the heart. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you," he says, "a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). I will remove the hardness, stoniness, and stubbornness from your heart, and I will give you a heart that is sensitive, soft, malleable, obedient, and penitent. Sometimes, God instructs people to rend their hearts, not because they are capable of doing so, but rather to convince them that, although it must be done, they are unable to accomplish it themselves. He also commands them to create a new heart and a new spirit for the same purpose. If God does not rend the heart, it remains unbroken; if God does not make it new, it remains old.

This is what is meant by God bending men to himself and working in them that which is pleasing in his sight (Zechariah 9:13). The heart, soul, or spirit, as it originally came from God's hands, is a precious thing, valued by God more than the entire world. However, sin has hardened this heart, the devil has deceived it, and the world has ensnared it. This beguiled heart is what God desires and covets. "My

son," he says, "give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).

But man cannot fulfill this command because his heart has dominion over him, leading him astray towards all forms of vanity. So what must be done? God must forcefully seize the heart, using his power to bring it into alignment with his Word. However, the heart itself will not comply; it is deceived and drawn towards entities other than God. Therefore, God takes up his sword, humbles the heart through labor, opens it up, casts out the strong man who guarded it, inflicts wounds upon it, and causes it to feel the pain of its rebellion, leading it to cry out. In this way, he rectifies the heart for himself. "He wounds, and his hands make whole" (Job 5:18). Having fashioned it for himself, it becomes his dwelling place. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17).

However, let us not digress from the matter at hand. I have already mentioned that a broken heart is the work of God, a sacrifice he has prepared for himself. It is a material perfectly suited to him.

1. By breaking the heart, God opens it and makes it a vessel for the graces of his Spirit. It becomes a cabinet where God stores the precious jewels of the gospel. He instills his fear in it, writes his law upon it, and fills it with his Spirit. "I will put my fear in their hearts," he declares. "I will write my law in their hearts." "I will put my Spirit within you" (Jeremiah 31:31–33; 32:39–41; Ezekiel 36:26, 27). I affirm that God chooses the heart as his cabinet, where he hides his treasures, where justice, mercy, and every grace of God reside. However, this is only true when the heart is broken, contrite, and governed by the holy Word.
2. A broken heart, when it is like fragrant gums and spices that have been beaten, releases a sweet aroma. Just as such

fragrances captivate the senses of men, a broken heart emits its sweet fragrance into the presence of God. In the past, incense, which symbolized prayer, had to be beaten or crushed before being burned in the censer. Similarly, the heart must be broken and crushed for its sweet scent to be released. It is through groans, cries, and sighs for God's mercy that a broken heart offers its pleasing fragrance to him.

Secondly, a broken heart is regarded as excellent in the sight of God because it is submissive. It humbly falls before God, giving him the glory he deserves. This truth is supported by numerous scriptures, which I need not mention here. Hence, such a heart is referred to as an honest heart, a good heart, a perfect heart, a heart that fears God, and a heart that adheres to God's statutes.

Considering this, it is clear that a broken heart is an excellent thing because it offers unfeigned obedience to the one who calls for it. Paul commended the believers in Rome, saying, "You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you" (Romans 6:17). Alas! The heart, before it is broken and contrite, possesses an entirely different disposition. "It is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be." The great conflict before the heart is broken revolves around who shall be Lord—God or the sinner. Indeed, the right of dominion belongs to the Lord, but the sinner refuses to acknowledge it and insists on being his own master, proclaiming, "Who is Lord over us?" and declaring to God, "We are lords, we will not come to you" (Psalm 12:4; Jeremiah 2:31).

This rebellion is evident in their actions. God may say what he will, but they do as they please. God says, "Observe my Sabbath," but the sinner replies, "I will not." God says, "Cease your immoral ways," but the sinner says, "I will not." God says, "Do not lie, swear, curse, or

blaspheme my holy name," but the sinner defiantly responds, "But I will." God calls for repentance, but the sinner refuses. God asserts his right to dominion, yet the sinner, like that rebellious youth (1 Kings 1:5), proclaims, "I will be king." This is intolerable, this is unacceptable, and yet every sinner, through their actions, proclaims this sentiment. They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

Here, there can be no harmony, no communion, no agreement, no fellowship. Here, enmity exists on one side, and blazing justice on the other (2 Corinthians 6:14–16; Zechariah 11:8). And what pleasure, contentment, or delight can God find in such people? None at all, even if they were mixed with the finest saints of God, and even if the best of saints were to intercede for them. Thus, Jeremiah says, "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me," meaning to pray for them, "yet my mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth" (Jeremiah 15:1).

There is nothing here but open warfare, acts of hostility, and shameful rebellion on the side of the sinners. How can God take pleasure in that? Therefore, if God desires to subdue and humble the spirit of such individuals, he must shoot an arrow at them, a barbed arrow that cannot be pulled out of the wound—a piercing arrow that causes the sinner to fall down as if dead at God's feet (Psalm 33:1, 2). Then the sinner will surrender, giving up their weapons and submitting themselves as conquered into the hands of the Lord, pleading for his forgiveness, albeit not sincerely.

And now God has emerged victorious, his right hand and holy arm have secured the triumph. He now rides in triumph with his captive at the wheel of his chariot. He now rejoices; the bells in heaven ring,

and the angels are commanded to rejoice, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep" (Luke 15:1–10). And now, as a sign of defeat, the sinner lies prostrate at God's feet, proclaiming, "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, causing the nations to fall before you" (Psalm 45:3–5).

Now the sinner submits, follows their conqueror in chains, and seeks peace. They would give up the entire world, if it were theirs, to be in God's favor and to have hope of salvation through Christ. This must be pleasing to God, it cannot be anything but acceptable in his sight. "A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." For it is the desire of his own heart, the work of his own hands.

Thirdly, another reason why a broken heart is such an excellent thing to God is that a broken heart values and highly esteems Christ. The healthy have no need for a physician, only the sick do. The sick person in the text is the broken-hearted, for God makes people sick by striking them, by breaking their hearts. That is why sickness and wounds are mentioned together, as one is a true consequence of the other (Mark 2:17; Micah 6:13; Hosea 5:13). Can anyone think that God would be pleased when people despise his Son, saying, "He has no form or comeliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him"? Yet, that is what they say about him whose hearts have not been softened by God. Even the elect themselves confess that before their hearts were broken, they also regarded him lightly. They say, "He is despised and rejected by men, and we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:2, 3).

Indeed, he is the great deliverer. But what is a deliverer to those who have never recognized their bondage, as I mentioned before? That's why it is said of the one who delivered the city, "No one remembered

that same poor man" (Ecclesiastes 9:15). He has suffered greatly and been bruised for the transgressions of mankind so that they may be spared the pain and hell they have brought upon themselves through their sins. But what does that mean to those who have only seen beauty and tasted sweetness in sin? It is Christ who, through his intercession, holds back the hand of God and prevents the drunkard, the liar, and the immoral person from being cut off, even when they are engaged in their abominable acts. But their hard hearts, their dulled hearts, have no sense of such kindness, and therefore they do not acknowledge it. How many times has God said to this caretaker of his vineyard, "Cut down the barren fig tree," while still, through his intercession, he has obtained a reprieve for another year! But they take no notice of this, they offer no thanks to Christ for such kindness. Therefore, these ungrateful, unthankful, thoughtless wretches must surely be a constant eyesore and great provocation to God. Yet, people continue in this manner until their hearts are broken (Luke 13:6–9).

As I said, Christ is called a physician. Indeed, he is the only soul-physician. He heals no matter how desperate the disease may be, and he heals forever those he undertakes. "I give them eternal life," and he does it freely, out of sheer mercy and compassion (John 10:28). But what does all this mean to someone who does not see their sickness, who does not perceive any wound? What good is the best physician alive or all the physicians in the world, when they are all combined, to someone who knows no sickness, who is oblivious to any ailment? As mentioned before, physicians may be begging for patients among the healthy. Physicians are only valued by the sick or those who are considered sick at present or at any other time.

Why is it then that Christ is held in such low regard in the world? It is because God has not afflicted them with sickness; His sword has

not wounded them, His arrow has not pierced their liver; they have not been broken by His hammer or melted by His fire. Therefore, they have no regard for His physician; they disregard all the provisions God has made for the salvation of their souls. But let such a soul be wounded, let that person's heart be broken, let them be made sick through the sting of guilt and wallow in ashes under the weight of their transgressions. Then, who but Christ, as previously shown, becomes the physician? Then, wash me, Lord, heal my wounds, pour your wine and oil into my sore. Then, Lord Jesus, let me hear the voice of joy and gladness, so that the bones you have broken may rejoice. There is nothing as welcome as healing now, and nothing, no one, is as desirable now as Christ. His name is the best of names to such a person; His love is the best of love. He is not only the best in Himself, but also the most excellent to such a soul, surpassing all others (Song of Solomon 5:10).

Just as bread is to the hungry, water is to the thirsty, light is to the blind, and liberty is to the imprisoned—so, and even more so, is Jesus Christ to the wounded and the broken-hearted. Now, as previously mentioned, this must undoubtedly be excellent in God's eyes, considering how glorious Christ Jesus is in His eyes. To despise what someone considers excellent is an offense to them, but to value, esteem, and hold in high regard what is esteemed by me is pleasing to me. What does Christ say? "My Father loves you because you loved me" (John 16:27). Those who hold Christ in high esteem are likewise held in high esteem by the Father. That is why it is said, "He who has the Son has the Father"; the Father will be theirs and will act towards them as a loving Father who esteems and honors his Son.

However, no one can or will do this except the broken-hearted, for they alone are aware of their need for and the worth of an association with Him. I dare to appeal to the whole world for the truth of this,

and I say once again that only these individuals have hearts of esteem in the sight of God. Alas! "The heart of the wicked is of little worth," for it lacks the precious esteem of Christ and cannot possess it because it is not wounded, broken, and made aware of its need for His mercy (Proverbs 10:20).

Fourthly, a broken heart is highly esteemed by God because it is a heart filled with gratitude for the understanding of sin and the grace it has received. The broken heart is a sensitive heart, as we have discussed before. It is aware of the dangers that sin leads to, and it has every reason to be aware because it has seen and experienced the nature and consequences of sin—both the guilt and the punishment that the law demands. Just as a broken heart is aware of sin, it is also aware of God's way of delivering the soul from judgment. Consequently, it must be a heart filled with gratitude. God says, "He who offers me praise glorifies me," and God delights in being glorified. His glory is precious to Him; He will not part with it (Psalm 50:23; Isaiah 42:8).

Therefore, the broken-hearted, being the sensitive soul, naturally becomes the grateful soul. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," David said, "and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Look at the blessings of God here! And not content with that, David continues, saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." But why? Oh, because He has "forgiven all your iniquities and healed all your diseases. He has redeemed your life from destruction and crowned you with loving kindness and tender mercies" (Psalm 103:1–4). But how did David come to be affected by this? Well, he knew what it was like to hang over the mouth of hell because of sin. He knew what it was like for death and hell to surround and besiege him, even to the point of dragging him down into the depths. This understanding broke his heart. He also saw the way of life and found relief for his

soul through faith and a sense of it, which made him a grateful man. If a person with a broken leg realizes that by breaking it, they avoided breaking their neck, they will be grateful to God for a broken leg. "It is good for me," said David, "that I have been afflicted. It preserved me from great danger, for before I went astray" (Psalm 119:67, 71).

And who can be grateful for a mercy unless they are aware of their need for it, receive it, and receive it through mercy? This is what the broken-hearted, the one with a contrite spirit, is aware of, particularly when it comes to the best kinds of mercies. Therefore, they must be grateful and, consequently, have a heart of esteem with God because they possess a heart of gratitude.

Fifthly, a broken heart is highly esteemed by God because it is a heart that now desires to become a dwelling place for the Spirit and graces of God's Spirit. It used to be the devil's dwelling, and it was content with that. But now it desires to host and be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. David said, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me; uphold me with Your free Spirit" (Psalm 51:10–12). Now he desired a clean heart and a right spirit. Now he desired the sanctifying presence of the blessed Spirit of grace—a thing that the uncircumcised in heart resist and despise (Acts 7:51; Hebrews 10:29).

Therefore, a broken heart is in harmony with the heart of God; a contrite spirit is one with Him. As I mentioned before, God desires to dwell with the broken-hearted, and the broken-hearted long for communion with Him. Now there is an agreement, a unity of mind. Now you have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. This must be an excellent spirit, better in the sight of God than thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil. But does the worldly and carnal desire

this spirit and the blessed graces that come with it? No, they despise it, as I mentioned before. They mock it, preferring and indulging in wretched, sinful lusts. And the reason is that they lack a broken heart, a heart highly esteemed by God, and they remain in their enmity towards Him.

The broken-hearted understand that the sanctification of the Spirit is a good means to avoid falling back into a state from which one cannot escape unless their heart is wounded once again. Undoubtedly, David had a broken heart at his initial conversion, and if that brokenness had remained—meaning, if he had not succumbed to hardness of heart once again—he would never have fallen into that sin from which he could only be restored through a second breaking of his bones. Therefore, I affirm that a broken heart is highly esteemed by God, for it—and I will add, as long as it maintains its sensitivity—desires nothing but God and the things of His Holy Spirit. Sin is an abomination to it.

VI.

ADVANTAGES THAT A CHRISTIAN GAINS BY KEEPING THEIR HEART TENDER

And now, in a suitable place, before I proceed any further, I will present to you some of the benefits that a Christian obtains by keeping their heart tender. Just as having a broken heart is an excellent thing, so maintaining the tenderness of this broken heart is also highly advantageous.

First. It is the way to always maintain a fear of sinning against God in your soul. Christians do not overlook or tolerate sin until their hearts begin to lose their tenderness. A tender heart is deeply affected by the sin of others, and even more so, it dreads committing sin itself (2 Kings 22:19).

Second. A tender heart readily yields to prayer, and indeed prompts and ignites it. We are never reluctant to pray until our hearts have lost their tenderness. At that point, prayer grows cold, flat, and formal, becoming merely a carnal duty devoid of fervor.

Third. A tender heart always has repentance at hand for the slightest fault, slip, or sinful thought that the soul is guilty of. Even the best of us stumble in many ways, but if a Christian loses their tenderness, and claims to have lost their repentance, their heart has grown hardened and has relinquished that spirit of repentance it used to possess. This was the case with the Corinthians; they had deteriorated and lost their tenderness, which is why their sins, even grave ones, remained unrepented (2 Cor 12:20).

Fourth. A tender heart is inclined to frequently commune with God, while someone who is hardened, although possessing the seed of grace, will be content to go on for days, eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, and going about their business without Him (Isa 17:10; Jer 2:32).

Fifth. A tender heart is an alert and vigilant heart. It watches against sin in the soul, sin in the family, sin in one's vocation, sin in spiritual duties and performances, and so on. It watches against Satan, against the world, against the flesh, and more. However, when the heart is not tender, there is drowsiness, inattentiveness, idleness, allowing the heart, family, and vocation to be greatly stained, tainted,

and marred by sin. A hardened heart drifts away from God and deviates in all these matters.

Sixth. A tender heart will practice self-denial, even in lawful matters, and will refrain from doing something if it might offend or weaken a fellow believer, whether Jewish, Gentile, or a member of the Church of God. In contrast, a Christian who lacks tenderness, who has lost their tenderness, is so far from denying themselves in lawful things that they would even venture into forbidden territory, regardless of who is offended, grieved, or weakened by it. As an example of this, we need not look any further than the man in the text who, while he was tender, trembled at trivial matters. Yet, when his heart hardened, he took Bathsheba to satisfy his lust and killed her husband to cover his wickedness.

Seventh. A tender heart—more precisely, a heart kept tender—safeguards one from many blows, lashes, and paternal chastisements, because it avoids the causes, which are the sins that provoke the corrective hand of God. "With the pure, you show yourself pure, but with the crooked, you show yourself shrewd" (2 Sam 22:27; Psa 18:25–27).

Many unnecessary rebukes and wounds befall the saints of God due to their unwise behavior. When I say unnecessary, I mean that they are not required, except to bring us back from our vanities. We would not feel the pain of them if it were not for our foolishness. That is why the afflicted is called a fool, because their folly brings affliction upon them. "Fools," says David, "because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted" (Psa 107:17). And therefore, as mentioned before, he refers to his sin as 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

transgress my laws, 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 broken their heart, to keep it tender? ANSWER: I will briefly address this. First, I will provide several cautions, and second, several directions.

[First—Several cautions]

1. Be careful not to suppress the convictions that currently break your heart by attempting to remove from your mind the things that caused such convictions. Instead, nourish and cherish those things in a deep and sober remembrance of them. Therefore, reflect upon this: What was it that initially wounded my heart? Let that remain until, by the grace of God and the redeeming blood of Christ, it is removed.
2. Avoid the company of the vain. Associating with vain company has suffocated many convictions, extinguished many desires, and caused many souls that were once fervent in seeking heaven to fall into hell. A companion who does not benefit the soul is harmful. "He who walks with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov 13:20).
3. Beware of engaging in idle talk, whether hearing or participating in it. "Leave the presence of a foolish man when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (Prov 14:7). "Evil communications corrupt good manners, and a fool's lips are the snare of his soul." Therefore, be cautious of these things (Prov 18:7; 1 Cor 15:33).
4. Guard against the slightest inclination toward sin and do not entertain it, for by permitting that, you make way for something greater. David's eye led his heart astray, and his heart, nurturing

the thought, paved the way for the company of the woman, the act of adultery, and bloody murder. Therefore, be cautious, brothers and sisters, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:12, 13). And remember that the one who wants to split a block starts with the thin end of the wedge and proceeds by driving it in.

5. Beware of bad examples among the godly; do not learn from anyone to do what the Word of God forbids. Sometimes Satan makes use of a good person's bad ways to corrupt and harden the hearts of those who follow. Peter's false actions almost corrupted Barnabas and several others. Therefore, be cautious of people, of the ways of good people, and measure both theirs and your own actions by no other standard than the holy Word of God (Gal 2:11–13).
6. Beware of unbelief or atheistic thoughts; do not question the truth and reality of heavenly things. Know that unbelief is the worst of evils, and a tender heart cannot be maintained if it nourishes or entertains unbelief. "Take heed, therefore, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12). These cautions must be diligently observed by all those who desire to keep their hearts tender when they have been made so. And now, let us move on to...

[Second]—the Directions

1. Strive for a deep knowledge of God to keep it alive in your heart —knowledge of His presence, for He fills heaven and earth. "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord (Jer 23:24). (1.) Have knowledge of His penetrating gaze that scans the earth, beholding the evil and the good. His eyes see and His eyelids test the children of men (Prov 15:3). (2.) Know His power, that He is capable of turning heaven and earth into dust and ashes; they

are in His hands like a scroll or garment (Heb 1:11, 12). (3.) Understand His justice, that the rebukes of it are like devouring fire (Heb 12:19). (4.) Embrace knowledge of His faithfulness in fulfilling promises to those to whom they are made, as well as His threats against the unrepentant (Matt 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31).

2. Strive to acquire and maintain a deep sense of the nature of sin and its soul-destroying effects on your heart. Be convinced that it is the only enemy of God, and that no one hates or is hated by God except through sin. (1.) Remember that it turned angels into devils and cast them down from heaven to hell. (2.) Recognize that it is the chain by which they are held and bound for judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). (3.) Reflect on the fact that it was the reason Adam was expelled from paradise, the cause of the flood that drowned the old world, the catalyst for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven, and the very thing for which Christ shed His blood to redeem you from the curse it brought upon you. It is what will keep you out of heaven forever and ever. (4.) Contemplate the torments of hell. Christ uses that as an argument to keep the heart tender, repeatedly describing the nature and eternal duration of the burning flames and the gnawing of the undying worm that dwells there (Mark 9:43–48).

3. Reflect on death, both in terms of its certainty and the uncertainty of its timing. We are bound to die, we must die; our days are predetermined—the number of our months is with God, though not with us. Even if we could, we cannot extend our lives; even if we possessed a thousand worlds, we could not trade them to prolong our existence (2 Sam 14:14; Job 7:1; 14:1–5). Remember that you will die only once—I mean only once in

this world. If you do not die well when you depart, you cannot return and die better. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27).

4. Consider the certainty and dreadfulness of the day of judgment, when Christ will sit on His great white throne, when the dead will be raised by the sound of God's trumpet, when the elements, along with heaven and earth, will be engulfed in a burning flame. It is the day when Christ will separate people from one another, just as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. It is the day when the books will be opened, witnesses will be presented, and each person will be judged according to their works. It is the day when heaven's gates will be open to those who will be saved, while the jaws of hell will await those who will be damned (Acts 5:30–31; 10:42; Matt 25:31, 32, 34, 41; Rev 2:11; 1 Cor 15:51; Rev 20:12, 15; 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12; Rom 2:2, 15, 16; Rev 22:12).
5. Consider that Christ Jesus did not harden His heart against the necessary sorrows He had to endure for the redemption of your soul. No, even though He could have hardened His heart against you in the way of justice and righteousness because you had sinned against Him, He instead awakened Himself, clothed Himself with all pity, compassion, and tender mercies, and did it. In His love and His pity, He saved us. His tender mercies from above have visited us. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Learn, then, from Christ to be tender towards yourself and to strive to keep your heart tender towards God and the salvation of your soul. But to conclude.

VII.

THE APPLICATION

Now let us make some practical use of this doctrine. First, **FIRST USE**. From the truth of the matter, namely, that the person who truly comes to God has had their heart broken—their heart broken as a prerequisite to coming to Him. This reveals the nature of the bond between sin and the soul, that it is so firm, strong, and inviolable that nothing can break, annul, or void it unless the heart is broken for it. This was true for David; even his new alliance with sin could not be broken until his heart was broken.

It is astonishing to consider how tightly sin grips the souls, spirits, wills, and affections of some individuals. It is more precious to them than heaven, God, the soul itself, and even salvation. This is evident because, though all these things are offered to them on the condition that they abandon their sins, they choose instead to remain in sin, to stand and fall with it. Tell me, sinner, is this not the truth? How many times have heaven and salvation been freely offered to you, if only you would break your alliance with this great enemy of God? Yes, I say, this great enemy of your soul. Yet you have never been able to do it; neither through threat nor promise have you ever been brought to break that alliance.

It is said of Ahab that he sold himself to work wickedness, and in another place, "For your iniquities you have sold yourselves" (1 Kings 21:25; Isa 50:1). But what is this iniquity? It is worthless, indeed, worse than worthless a thousand times over. Yet because it amounts to nothing, we use the term "nothing" to describe it, as God says to the people, "You have sold yourselves for nothing" (Isa 52:3). But, I repeat, how astounding it is that a rational being should make such a

poor bargain. Despite being wise in worldly matters, they become foolish in the weightiest matter. And yet, they continue to proclaim to all passersby that they are such, because they refuse to break their alliance with sin until their hearts are broken for it. Men love darkness rather than light. Indeed, they make it evident that they love darkness, for such a great offer fails to persuade them to abandon it.

SECOND USE. If it is true that the person who truly comes to God has had their heart broken, then it gives us a reason why some people's hearts are broken. It is a reason why God breaks some people's hearts on account of their sin, because He does not want them to die in it, but rather to come to Him and be saved. Behold, in this, God's resolution concerning the salvation of certain individuals! He wants them, He will save them, and He will break their hearts, but He will save them. He will kill them so that they may live; He will wound them so that He may heal them. It appears from our discussion that there is no other way. Fair means, as we say, will not suffice. Good words, a glorious gospel, pleading, entreating with blood and tears will not suffice. People are determined to test God to the utmost. If He wants them, He must pursue them, follow them, apprehend them, hinder them, and even break their bones; otherwise, He will not save them.

Some people think that an invitation, an outward call, or a rational discourse will suffice, but they are greatly mistaken. The Word must be accompanied by a power, an exceedingly great and mighty power, in order to work effectively for the salvation of the soul. I know these things are sufficient to leave people without excuse, but they are not sufficient to bring people back to God. Sin has a hold on them; they have sold themselves to it. The power of the devil has a hold on them; they are captives at his will. Moreover, their will aligns with

sin and the devil, willingly held captive by them. If God does not grant contrition, repentance, or a broken heart for sin, there will not even be a desire in a person to forsake this horrendous alliance and conspiracy against their soul (2 Tim 2:24, 25).

Therefore, individuals are said to be drawn away from these entanglements when they come or are brought to Him (Isa 26:9; John 6:44). Thus, John rightly declares, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!" Here, cost is expended, effort is expended, labor is expended, repentance is bestowed, and a heart is made sore, wounded, broken, and filled with pain and sorrow for the sake of the soul's salvation.

THIRD USE. This teaches us the value of a broken heart. A broken heart is esteemed by God and counts as more valuable than all external acts of service. A broken heart is necessary for salvation, for coming to Christ for life. The world does not understand it, nor know how to respond to someone with a broken heart. Therefore, they despise it and regard the one who carries it as a foolish, miserable, and lost soul. However, "a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, You will not despise." God takes notice of a broken heart; He chooses it as a companion. He has given His Son the charge to watch over such a person and has promised salvation, as previously demonstrated.

Sinner, have you obtained a broken heart? Has God bestowed a contrite spirit upon you? He has given you what pleases Himself. He has given you a vessel to hold His grace, a heart that earnestly desires salvation—a heart that aligns with His own. True, it is currently painful, sorrowful, penitent, and grieved. It is broken and bleeding, sobbing and sighing, mourning and crying out to God. Well, very well. All of this is because He intends to make you rejoice. He has made you sorrowful on earth so that you may rejoice in heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh" (Matt 5:4; Luke 6:21).

But, soul, be certain that you possess a broken heart. Not all hearts are broken hearts, nor is every heart that appears wounded truly broken. One may be wounded, but not in the heart. One may have another type of wound, but not a broken heart (Acts 7:54; 1 Sam 10:9). We know there is a distinction between a wound in the flesh and a wound in the spirit. Indeed, a person's sin may be wounded, yet their heart remains unbroken. This was true for Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab. None of them experienced the mercy of a broken heart. Therefore, I warn you to be cautious. Every scratch with a pin, every prick with a thorn, and every blow that God delivers through His Word upon the hearts of sinners does not necessarily break them. God struck Ahab with a blow that made him humble himself, fast, put on sackcloth—a significant act for a king—and go in a lowly manner. Yet his heart was never broken (1 Kings 21:27, 29). What more can I say? Pharaoh and Saul confessed their sins, Judas felt remorse for his actions, Esau sought the blessing with tears. Yet none of them had a truly broken heart or a genuinely contrite spirit. Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas remained Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas. Esau remained Esau. There was no genuine transformation, no complete turning to God, no sincere parting with their sins, no wholehearted flight to lay hold of the hope of glory, even though they experienced some level of conviction (Exo 10:16; 1 Sam 26:21; Matt 27:3; Heb 12:14–17).

The contemplation of these things should loudly call upon us to be careful. Do not mistake something that does not truly resemble a broken and contrite spirit for one on the day of death and judgment. Therefore, seeking soul, let me advise you to do the following, so as not to be deceived in this matter of great importance.

First, return to the beginning of this book and compare yourself with the six or seven signs of a broken and contrite heart that I have presented to you according to the Word of God. Deal with your soul impartially in this examination.

Second, if you are sincere in your search, turn to the Scriptures, especially where you read about the conversion of individuals, and see if your own conversion bears resemblance to theirs. But be cautious not to compare yourself with those whose conversion is not recorded in Scripture or whose broken hearts are not mentioned. Not all saints mentioned in Scripture have their conversion explicitly described.

Third, consider the true signs of repentance as laid down in Scripture. Repentance is the genuine effect of a broken heart and a wounded spirit. You can find references to this in 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, reflect on how God has described the condition of those whom He intends to save. Read the following Scriptures: (1) Jeremiah 31, where it says, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them" (v. 9). (2) Jeremiah 50:4, 5, which speaks of the children of Israel seeking the Lord with weeping and asking the way to Zion. (3) Ezekiel 6:9, where it mentions those who remember God and loathe themselves for their sins. (4) Ezekiel 7:16, which describes those who mourn for their iniquities. (5) Ezekiel 20:43, where it speaks of remembering past sins and loathing oneself for them. (6) Ezekiel 36:31, which speaks of remembering evil ways and loathing oneself for iniquities and abominations. (7) Zechariah 12:10, where it says that those whom God has poured His spirit of

grace and supplication upon will mourn and be in bitterness, looking upon Him whom they have pierced.

By engaging in these exercises, you can safeguard yourself from being deceived regarding this matter of great significance.

Now all these are the fruits of the Spirit of God and of a broken heart. Therefore, soul, take note of them. These are the promises of God, assuring that those He saves will have this heart, this spirit, and these holy effects within them. Therefore, once again, consider and examine yourself to see if this is the state and condition of your soul. To do so thoroughly, remember and do the following:

1. Acknowledge the profound sense of sin and its burdensome nature, which leads you not only to abhor sin but also to abhor yourself because of it. Take note of this, for it is significant.
2. Remember that along with self-aborrence, there is sorrowful mourning before God, acknowledging that by sin the soul has offended, disregarded, and neglected both God and His holy Word.
3. Remember that prayers and tears for mercy accompany a genuine desire to turn away from sin forever and to be firmly united with God in heart and soul.
4. Remember that these individuals, on their journey from Satan to God, from sin to grace, from death to life, are accompanied by tears, prayers, weeping, and supplication. They go forth weeping, seeking the Lord their God.
5. Remember that these people, like strangers and pilgrims, are not ashamed to seek guidance from those they encounter on the way to Zion or the heavenly country. By doing so, they confess their ignorance as fitting, and express their longing to know the path to life. This reveals that nothing in this world, under the

sun or on this side of heaven, can satisfy the longings, desires, and cravings of a broken and contrite spirit. Reader, take heed and seriously consider these things. Compare your soul with them and with whatever else you find written here for your conviction and instruction.

FOURTH USE. If a broken heart and a contrite spirit are highly valued by God, then those who possess them should be encouraged to come to God with confidence. I know the greatest encouragement for people to come to God is the fact that "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5). This is indeed the primary encouragement, and there is none like it. However, there are other encouragements that are subordinate to it, and a broken and contrite spirit is one of them. This is evident from several passages in Scripture.

Therefore, you who can carry a broken heart and a sorrowful spirit with you when you approach God, tell Him that your heart is wounded within you, that you have sorrow in your heart, and that you are remorseful for your sins. But be cautious not to lie. Confess your sins to Him and acknowledge that they are constantly before you. David used these arguments when he approached God in prayer. He said, "O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure." And why did he say this? Oh, he said, "Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of inflammation, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the

turmoil of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart pants, my strength fails me; even the light of my eyes has gone from me. My loved ones and friends stand aloof from my affliction." And he continues in this manner (Psa 38:1–4, etc.).

These words, sighs, complaints, prayers, and arguments are expressions of a broken heart pleading with God for mercy. Such words can be found in the following passage: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me" (Psa 51:1–3).

God allows poor creatures who can honestly plead and reason with Him in this manner. "I am poor and sorrowful," said the righteous man to Him, "let Your salvation, O God, set me on high" (Psa 69:29). Therefore, you who possess a broken heart, take courage, for God invites you to take courage. Say to your soul, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" as the broken-hearted often do. "And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God." "I would have lost heart," David said, "unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." So, be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart (Psa 42:11; 43:5; 27:12–14).

But alas! The broken-hearted are far from this. They faint; they consider themselves among the dead; they believe that God will not remember them anymore. Thoughts of God's greatness, holiness, and their own sins and unworthiness consume them. They feel guilt and soul anguish, mourning throughout the day. Their mouths are filled with gravel and gall, and they drink the bitter cup of

wormwood and gall. Therefore, only those skilled in faith can approach God under the weight of guilt and horror and confidently plead that a broken heart is a sacrifice acceptable to Him. They can confidently claim that "a broken and a contrite spirit, God will not despise."

FIFTH USE. If a broken heart, if a broken and contrite spirit, is highly valued by God, then why are some individuals so afraid of a broken heart and so hesitant about having a contrite spirit?

I have observed that some people are as fearful of a broken heart, or of their hearts being broken because of their sins, as a dog is of a whip. Oh, they cannot tolerate such books, sermons, preachers, or conversations that make a person aware of their sins, break their hearts, and make them contrite. As a result, they seek out teachers, books, company, and discourse that harden rather than soften them, that lead to desperation rather than sorrow for their sins. They say to such sermons, books, and preachers what Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, flee away to the land of Judah; eat bread there and prophesy there, but never prophesy again at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary and the royal residence" (Amos 7:12-13).

But do these people know what they are doing? Yes, they think so, for they believe that such preachers, books, and discussions make them melancholic or mad. They make it impossible for them to find pleasure in themselves, in their concerns, or in their lives. But, oh, you foolish one! Let me speak to you. Is it time to take pleasure and amuse yourself before you have mourned and felt sorry for your sins? That mirth that precedes repentance for sin will surely end in heaviness. Therefore, the wise man says that mourning must come first. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance (Ecclesiastes 3:4). What? Shall an unconverted

person laugh? If you saw someone singing merry songs while being led up Holborn to Tyburn to be hanged for a crime, would you not consider them to be out of their mind, if not worse? Yet, that is how it is with someone who seeks mirth while they are condemned by God's Word for their transgressions. Man! Man! You have reason to mourn; indeed, you must mourn if you ever want to be saved. Therefore, my advice to you is to desire such books, preachers, and discussions that make a person aware of their sins, break their hearts, and make them contrite. The reason is that you will never be truly concerned about or seek the salvation of your own soul until you have a broken heart and a broken and contrite spirit. Therefore, do not be afraid of a broken heart; do not shy away from a contrite spirit. It is one of the greatest mercies that God bestows upon a man or a woman. A heart that is genuinely broken and truly contrite over transgressions is a sure sign of salvation. This is evident from the six demonstrations that were initially presented to prove this point.

And to awaken you to this matter, let me tell you, and you will find it to be true, that your heart will be broken whether you like it or not. God has determined to break ALL hearts for sin sooner or later. Can it be imagined, considering what sin is and who God is—a punisher of disobedience—that a person will not suffer for sin at some point? They will indeed suffer, either to repentance or to condemnation. One who does not mourn now while the door of mercy is open will mourn for sin when the door of mercy is shut.

Shall people despise God, break His law, disregard His warnings, abuse His grace, close their eyes when He says "See" and stop their ears when He says "Hear"? And do they think they can escape? No, because they rejected His call and ignored His outstretched hand, calamity will come upon them like labor pains, and they will cry out in their destruction. Then God will laugh at their destruction and

mock them when their fear comes. As He says, "They will call out to me" (Proverbs 1:24-26). I have often noticed that this threat is repeated at least seven times in the New Testament, saying, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth," "There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). There, where? In hell and at the judgment seat of Christ, when He comes to judge the world and has closed the door to keep them out of glory because they despised the offer of His grace and overlooked the day of His patience. "There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." They will weep and wail because of this.

There are only two more scriptures that I will use, and then I will come to a conclusion. One is from Proverbs, where Solomon advises young men to beware of strange, that is, immoral, light, and ensnaring women. He warns them to be cautious of such women, lest they mourn in the end, in hell, when they are dead, when their flesh and bodies are consumed, and say, "How I have hated instruction and my heart despised correction! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me!" (Proverbs 5:11-13).

The other scripture is from Isaiah, where it is said, "Because when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did evil in my sight and chose what displeased me. Therefore, this is what the Lord God says: 'Behold, my servants will eat, but you will go hungry; behold, my servants will drink, but you will be thirsty; behold, my servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame; behold, my servants will sing for joy of heart, but you will cry for sorrow of heart and wail with a broken spirit'" (Isaiah 65:13-14).

Look at how many "beholds" there are! Each behold is not only a call to the careless ones to consider, but it also serves as a declaration

from heaven that this will eventually be the fate of all unrepentant sinners. When others sing for joy in the kingdom of heaven, they, the unrepentant sinners, will mourn in hell and wail with a broken spirit.

Therefore, I advise you not to be afraid of, but rather to desire a broken heart and value a contrite spirit. I say, desire it now, when the white flag is raised and the golden sceptre of grace is extended to you. It is better to mourn now when God inclines towards mercy and forgiveness than to mourn when the door is completely closed. And take note that this is not the first time I have given you this advice.

USE SIXTH. Lastly, if a broken heart is highly valued by God as it has been said, and if duties cannot be performed rightly by a heart that has not been broken, then this reveals the futility of those people's minds and the invalidity of their supposed Divine services who worship God without a broken heart and without a contrite spirit. There have always been great numbers of such professing individuals in the world in every age, but to little purpose, except to deceive themselves, mock God, and hinder others. For a person whose heart has never truly been broken and whose spirit has never been contrite cannot genuinely profess Christ, nor can they sincerely love their own soul. I mean, they cannot do these things in truth and seek their own well-being in the right way because they lack a foundation for it—a broken heart for sin and a contrite spirit.

What makes a person a wholehearted, genuine, and sincere seeker of their own soul's good is the sense of sin and a godly fear of falling into the danger it brings. This makes them contrite or repentant and compels them to seek Christ the Savior with heartfelt anguish and consideration. But this cannot happen where there is a lack of this sense, godly fear, and holy contrition. People may profess and make a noise, just as an empty barrel makes the loudest sound, but test

them and you will find them full of air, full of emptiness, and that is all.

Such professing individuals are not concerned about God's name or the reputation of the gospel they profess, nor can they be, for they lack what should bind them to it—a sense of pardon and forgiveness, by which their broken hearts have been replenished, comforted, and given hope in God. Paul said that the love of Christ constrained him. But what was Paul if not a broken-hearted and contrite sinner? (Acts 9:3–6; 2 Corinthians 5:14). When God reveals to a person the sins they have committed, the hell they deserve, and the heaven they have lost, and yet presents Christ, grace, and pardon as available to them, this will make them serious, melt their hearts, and break them. This will show them that there is more to religion than just air, noise, and empty words. And this is the person whose heart, life, and entire conduct will be engaged in matters concerning the eternal salvation of their precious and immortal soul.

VIII.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Objection: First. Some may object that in this statement I appear too strict and judgmental, and if I don't moderate these words with something milder afterwards, I will discourage many an honest soul. Answer: I respond, Not at all, not a single honest soul in the entire world will be offended by my words; for no one can be an honest soul, I mean concerning their concerns in the afterlife, without

having a broken heart, without ever having a contrite spirit. I will clarify, so I am understood correctly, that not everyone reaches the same degree of distress, nor do they linger in it as long as some of their brethren do. However, to go to heaven without a broken heart, or to have sins forgiven without a contrite spirit, is not a belief of mine. We are not discussing what is hidden; revealed things belong to us and our children; nor should we dare to go beyond our faith. Doesn't Christ say, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician'; that is, they don't see the need, but Christ will make them see their need before he extends his sovereign grace to them; and rightly so, otherwise he will receive little gratitude for his kindness.

Objection: Second. But there are those who are raised in a godly manner from their childhood and therefore absorb the principles of Christianity without even realizing it. Answer: I consider it one thing to receive the faith of Christ solely from human beings, and another to receive it from God through the means. Even if you are taught by an angel, if you are not taught by God, you will never come to Christ; I am not saying you will never profess him. But if God speaks, and you hear and understand him, that voice will stir something within you like never before. The voice of God is unique and distinguished by those who are taught by it (John 6:44, 45; Psalm 29; Habakkuk 3:12–16; Ephesians 4:20, 21; 1 Peter 2:2, 3).

Objection: Third. But some people are not as debauched and profane as others, so they don't need to be hammered and fired, broken and wounded, as others do. Answer: God knows best what we need. Paul was as righteous before his conversion as anyone who now claims to be civilized, I believe; and yet, even so, he was shaken and astonished at himself during his conversion. And truly, I think the more righteous a person is in their own eyes before conversion, the more they need the work of a broken heart in order to be saved; because a

person is not naturally as easily convinced that their righteousness is abominable to God as they are convinced of their debauchery and profanity.

A person's goodness is what blinds them the most, is most dear to them, and is not easily let go of. Therefore, when such a person is converted, who believes they have enough of their own goodness to commend themselves, either wholly or in part, to God, but there are few such converted individuals, a great deal of heart-breaking work is required to make them come to the same conclusion as Paul: "What! Are we better than they? No, not at all" (Romans 3:9). I mean, they must be brought to see that their glorious robes are filthy rags, and their gainful things are but loss and rubbish (Isaiah 64; Philippians 3).

This is also evident from the words: "Tax collectors and prostitutes enter the kingdom of God before the Pharisees" (Matthew 21:31). Why before them? It's because they are more receptive to the Word, more easily convinced of their need for Christ, and are thus brought to him without all the fuss that the Holy Spirit makes to bring one of the Pharisees to him, so to speak.

True, nothing is difficult for God. But I am speaking in human terms. Let anyone try to convince a morally corrupt person and a non-corrupt person that they are both in a state of condemnation by nature, and they will see that the Pharisee will appeal to God, saying, "God, I thank you"; while the tax collector hangs his head, is shaken in his heart, and beats his breast, saying, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:11–13).

Therefore, a self-righteous person is like a painted Satan or a devil in fine clothes. But does he think so of himself? No! No! He says to others, "Stand back, do not come near me, for I am holier than you."

It is almost impossible for a self-righteous person to be saved. But the one who can pass a camel through the eye of a needle can also make such a person see their lost condition and realize their need for the righteousness of God, which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. He can make them see, I mean, that their own goodness obstructs their path to the kingdom of heaven more than they are aware of. And he can also make them feel that their attachment to their own goodness is as great an iniquity as any immorality committed by others. In summary, those who are converted to God by Christ, through the Word and the Spirit—for all of this is necessary for effective conversion—must have their hearts broken and their spirits contrite. I mean, it **MUST** be so for the reasons shown earlier. Yes, even Christians who have fallen away, backslidden, or decayed must have their hearts broken, their souls wounded, their spirits contrite, and be sorrowful for their sins in order to be restored to God.

Come, come, conversion to God is not as easy and smooth as some would have you believe. Why is the human heart compared to fallow ground, God's Word to a plough, and his ministers to ploughmen? If the heart had no need of breaking in order to receive the seed of God for eternal life, why would this comparison be made? Everyone knows that fallow ground must be ploughed thoroughly before the farmer will risk sowing his seed, and even after that, it must be harrowed soundly, or else the harvest will be meagre.

Why is the conversion of the soul compared to grafting a tree if it can be done without cutting? The Word is the graft, the soul is the tree, and the Word, as the scion, must be let in through a wound. Simply sticking it on the outside or tying it with a string will not be effective here. Heart must be joined to heart, and back to back, or the pretended grafting will amount to nothing (Romans 11:17, 24; Jeremiah 1:19).

I mean, heart must be joined to heart, and back to back, in order for the sap to flow from the root to the branch, and I say, this can only be done through a wound. The Lord opened Lydia's heart just as a stock is opened to graft in the scions, and so the Word entered her soul, and her heart and the Word became one (Acts 16:14).

Why is Christ commanded to gird his sword upon his thigh? Why must he make his arrows sharp so that they pierce the heart and make it bleed? Yes, why is he commanded to do so if the people would willingly submit to him and sincerely implore his grace without it? (Psalm 45; 55:3, 4). Alas! People are too proud, too wild, too stubborn in their own ways of destruction; in their pursuits, they are like wild donkeys in the wilderness. Nothing can deter them from their purposes or prevent them from ruining their own precious and immortal souls except the breaking of their hearts.

Why is a broken heart regarded as a substitute for all sacrifices we can offer to God, and a contrite spirit regarded as a substitute for all offerings, as you can see if you compare the text with the preceding verse? I mean, why is it considered better than all the external acts of worship combined? If any one part or even all the external parts of worship were able to make a person a sound and truly renewed creature without a broken heart, then it would render a broken heart unnecessary. "A broken heart, a contrite spirit, God will not despise." But he will certainly disregard both you and your worship if, when you come to him, a broken heart is absent. So here is the point: Come broken, come contrite, come aware of and sorrowful for your sins, or your coming will not be considered a true coming to God. And if that is the case, you will not benefit from it.

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