

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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REPENTANCE AFTER CONVERSION.

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## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JUNE 30TH, 1895,

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

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

THE French have a phrase which signifies in English assisting at a service. A person who has been present at some grand function of the church speaks of himself as having "assisted" at the service. I want that many of us should literally carry out that expression just now. I do not want so much to preach as to lead you in the offering of sacrifices. Somebody says, perhaps, "But I have no bullock, no lamb." No, but you have a heart; and it is a broken and a contrite heart that I propose that we should present to God. I will not invite those of you to do so who have never experienced the working of divine grace within your souls; I trust that you will be led to do so by the Spirit of God, but I cannot just now invite you to offer that sacrifice, for my appeal is to those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to those who have been restored from spiritual death, to those who are debtors to free grace and dying love. It is to them I speak, and I invite and entreat them to accompany us while we present to God the sacrifices which he will not despise, the sacrifices of a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

I would have you specially notice that, in this Psalm, David puts the sacrifice in its right position, and I would put it in the same position. You observe that he has first of all sought pardon for his sin, and he has found it. He has prayed, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." His sin, then, is forgiven. He has next asked for a restoration of purity:

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“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” That also has been done. I will suppose it, my dear friend, to have been done in your case also, that you have been renewed in the spirit of your mind by the grace of God. Then, next, joy has also been restored to David, for he says, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;” so that it is not a question with him as to whether he is saved or not, he is a man who is saved, and living in the assurance of salvation. Sin is pardoned, and the impurity engendered by grievous transgression has been put away, and he has peace with God; that is the man who brings the sacrifice, that is the man who presents to God a broken heart and a contrite spirit. More than that, he has become a preacher; his gratitude to God has led him to be useful to others, as he says in the thirteenth verse, “Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” And even more than that, he has gone from the pulpit to the choir; he has become a singer, and he sings a sweet song of thankfulness to the great God who has saved him. Now, this is the man whose lips the Lord has opened, and whose mouth is showing forth God’s praise; this is the man who says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

Perhaps you have the notion that repentance is a thing that happens at the commencement of the spiritual life, and has to be got through as one undergoes a certain operation, and there is an end of it. If so, you are greatly mistaken; repentance lives as long as faith. Towards faith I might almost call it a Siamese twin. We shall need to believe and to repent as long as ever we live. Perhaps also you have the idea that repentance is a bitter thing. It is sometimes bitter: “They shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born;” but that is not the kind of repentance that I am talking of now. Surely that bitterness is past, it was all over long ago; but this is a sweet bitterness which attends faith as long as ever we live, and becomes a source of tender joy. I do not know whether I shall quite convey my meaning to you; but I can assure you that the greatest joy I have ever known has not been when I have laughed, but when I have cried. The most intense happiness I have ever felt has not been when I have been exhilarated and full of spirits, but when I have leaned very low on the bosom of God, and felt it so sweet to be so low that one could scarcely be lower, and yet did not wish to be any higher. I quite agree with Mr. Rowland Hill, who said he supposed that there could be no tears of repentance in heaven, and that would be the only thing that he could almost regret, for sweet Sister Repentance is such charming company that we shall regret to part with her even at the gates of pearl. As we may have to part with her there, I want us to keep her company all the time this service lasts, and my object at this time is to ask you to bring to God, while we are here in this house of prayer, the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite spirit. I want you to indulge yourselves in this most rare and *recherché* delight of sorrow at the feet of Jesus,—not sorrow for unpardoned sin, but sorrow for pardoned sin, sorrow for that which is done with, sorrow for that which is forgiven, sorrow for that which will never condemn you, for it was laid on Christ long ago, and is put

away for ever. It is this sweet sorrow that I want you to indulge. Up with the sluices, then, brethren and sisters, and let these sacred streams of sorrow flow forth.

I. And, first, LET US CONSIDER WHAT THIS SACRIFICE IS. It is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.

If you and I have a broken spirit, *all idea of our own importance is gone*. What is the use of a broken heart? Why, much the same as the use of a broken pot, or a broken jug, or a broken bottle! Men throw it on the dunghill. Hence David says, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," as if he felt that everybody else would despise it. Now, do you feel that you are of no importance? Though you know that you are a child of God, do you feel that you would not give a penny for yourself? You would not wish to claim the first place; the rear rank suits you best, and you wonder that you are in the Lord's army in any rank at all. Oh, brothers, I believe that the more God uses us, the less we shall think of ourselves; and the more he fills us with his Spirit, the more will our own spirit sink within us in utter amazement that he should ever make use of such broken vessels as we are! Well now, indulge that feeling of nothingness and unimportance; not only indulge it as a feeling, but go and act upon it, and be you in the midst of your brethren less than the least, humble yourselves in wonder that God should permit your name to stand on the roll of his elect at all. Admire the grace of God to you, and marvel at it in deep humiliation of spirit. That is part of the sacrifice that God will not despise.

Next, if you and I have a broken and a contrite heart, it means that *frivolity and trifling have gone from us*. There are some who are always trifling with spiritual things, but he who gets a broken heart has done with that sort of spirit. A broken heart is serious, and solemn, and in earnest. A broken heart never tries to play any tricks with God, and never shuffles texts as though even Scripture itself were meant only to be an opportunity for testing our wit. A broken spirit is tender, serious, weighed down with solemn considerations. Indulge that spirit now, be solemn before God, grasp eternal things; let slip these shadows; what are they worth? But set you your soul on things divine and everlasting. Pursue that vein of thought, and so bring before God a broken and a contrite spirit.

Further, a broken spirit is one out of which *hypocrisy has gone*. That vessel, whole and sealed up, may contain the most precious otto of roses, or it may contain the foulest filth; I know not what is in it. But break it, and you will soon see. There is no hypocrisy about a broken heart. Oh, brethren and sisters, be before men what you are before God! Seem to be what you really are. Make no pretences. I am afraid that we are all hypocrites in a measure; we both pray and preach above our own actual experience full often, and we perhaps think that we have more faith than we actually have, and more love than we have ever known. The Lord make us to have a broken heart that is revealed by being broken! You know now what was in that pot, for there it lies, broken to shivers; its contents are no longer concealed, they have all run out. Now, pour out your hearts before God as you sit there in your pews, and let him see what he

really does see—all that is in your soul, for in your hidden parts he would have you to know wisdom. Reveal yourselves unto yourselves, and so reveal yourselves unto your God.

Once more, a broken spirit signifies that now *all the secrets and essences of the spirit have flowed out*. You remember what happened when that holy woman broke the alabaster box; we read that “the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” A broken heart cannot keep secrets. Now is all revealed, now its essence goes forth. Far too much of our praying, and of our worship, is like closed-up boxes; you cannot tell what is in them. But it is not so with broken hearts; when broken hearts sing, they do sing. When broken hearts groan, they do groan. Broken hearts never play at repenting, nor play at believing. There is much of religion, nowadays, that is very superficial, it is all on the surface; a very small quantity of gospel paint, with just a little varnish of profession, will go a very long way, and look very bright. But broken hearts are not like that; with broken hearts, the hymn is a real hymn, the prayer is a real prayer, the hearing of sermons is earnest work, and the preaching of them is the hardest work of all. Oh, what a mercy it would be if some of you were broken all to pieces! There are many flowers that will never yield their perfume till they are bruised. Even the generous grape lets not its juice flow forth till it is trodden under foot of men. Breaking and bruising are fit treatment for the nature of men, especially for the new nature. When God has put sweetness into our hearts, it is then that breaking develops the sweetness. Oh, to worship God in spirit and in truth! One has well said, “No one ever worshipped God with his whole heart unless he worshipped him with a broken heart; and there never was a heart that was truly broken that did not thereby become a whole heart.” The divided heart is not broken, but the broken heart is never divided. I know that I am talking in riddles, but the wise will understand me. To get unity of spirit, there must be contrition and brokenness of heart.

II. Now, in the second place, LET US OFFER THE SACRIFICE.

I have told you a little of what the sacrifice means, now we will try, as God shall help us, to bear our brokenness of heart before the Lord. Come, my brothers and sisters, let us mourn a while on account of our past sin; we will do so from several points of view.

First, let us deeply regret that *we have sinned against so good a God*. While I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin a trifle; but when I knew him to be my Father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against him. When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could have rebelled against one who loved me so, and sought my good. Will you not now think of the goodness of God, brothers and sisters, and shall it not lead you to repentance? Shall we not feel within our hearts a burning indignation against sin, because it is committed against so holy, so good, so glorious a being as the infinitely-blessed God?

Let me help you again, and may the arrow pierce your very hearts this time! Let us mourn to think that *we have offended against so excellent and admirable a law*. If the law of God were like the laws of men, it

might sometimes be a virtue to break it; but where a law is so balanced, so perfect, oh, how could we have run contrary to it? Brethren, the law of God, when it says to us, "Thou shalt not," only sets up a danger signal to tell us where it is injurious to go. And when the law says, "Thou shalt," it does but lift up a kindly hand to point out to us the best and safest path. There is nothing in the law of God that will rob you of happiness; it only denies you that which would cost you sorrow. We know that it is so, and therefore we stand here, and bow our head, and mourn that we should have been so foolish as to transgress, so wilfully and suicidally wicked as to do that evil thing which God hates and which so grievously injures us. We have nursed vipers when we have nursed sins, we have hatched the cockatrice's egg when we have thought upon iniquity; wherefore let us be truly sorry for our sin and for our folly.

You remember that I am talking to those of you who are saved, to those of you whose sins are forgiven. In my heart, I think that I can hear some others say, "Will you not let us join with you in repenting though we are not pardoned?" Bless your hearts, yes! God help you to join with us; and if you do, you will find pardon, too, for pardon comes in this way! A broken heart can never long be divided from the broken Saviour. You shall have peace with him when you are at war with sin. But I am specially inviting the people of God now to sweetly grieve in this house of prayer, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite heart while they recollect that they have sinned against God's perfect law.

More than that,—and this is a very tender point,—let us grieve that *we have sinned against a Saviour's love*. I like that verse we sang just now,—

"'Tis I have thus ungrateful been,  
Yet, Jesus, pity take!  
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,  
For thy sweet mercy's sake!"

The greatest crime that was ever committed against high heaven was that crime of deicide, when men nailed the Son of God to the tree, and put him to death as a criminal. Where are the wretches that did this awful deed? They are *here*; I will not say that they are before us, for each of us harbours one of them within his bosom. "'Tis I," — "'Tis *I* have thus ungrateful been." How can I speak to you thus? Well, perhaps, all the better, because from my very heart I ask that we may stand together at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops, and say, "These have washed away my sins, yet I helped to spill them. Those hands, those feet, have saved me, yet I nailed them there. That opened side is the refuge of my guilty spirit, yet I made that fearful gash by my sin. It was my sin that slew my Saviour." O sin, thou thrice-acursed thing, away with thee! Away with thee! Come, let us be filled with mournful joy, with pleasurable sorrow, while we sit beneath the bloody tree, and see what sin has done, and yet see how sin itself has been undone by him who died upon the cross on Calvary. Beloved, the more you love your Lord, the more you will hate sin. If you often sit at the table with him, and dip your hand into his dish, if you lean your head upon

his bosom with the blessed John, if you are favoured and indulged with the choicest brotherliness towards the Well-beloved, I know that you will often find occasion to seek a quiet place where you may shed tears of bitter regret that you should ever have sinned against such a Saviour as Jesus is.

Let me help you again, however, while I remind you, beloved, of *our sins against the Holy Ghost*. Oh, what do we not owe to the Holy Spirit? I speak to you who know him. It is the Holy Ghost who quickened you, the Holy Ghost who convinced you of sin, the Holy Ghost who comforted you; and oh, how sweetly does that Divine Comforter still comfort! Yet we resisted him, and grieved him. Do you not remember, in your youthful days, how you strangled your convictions, how you held down conscience, and would not let it reprove you? That blessed Spirit, whom we vexed and spurned, might have left us, and gone his way, never to strive with us again; but he loved us so that he came and took up his abode with us, and now he dwelleth in us. Within the narrow cell of our poor heart he has condescended to find a temple for his perpetual indwelling. O my soul, how couldst thou ever grieve him? How couldst thou ever have resisted that best and tenderest Friend? I do not ask you to torture yourselves, but I do invite you, beloved, now to indulge the joyful grief of sweet heavenly penitence as you remember the love of the Spirit.

Let us go a step further, and *set our sin in the light of God's countenance*. I speak to you, beloved, who are God's elect. He loved you from before the foundation of the world, and yet you have sinned against him. He chose you from among men, of his own sovereign grace, and ordained you to belong to Christ, and gave you to Jesus to be his for ever. Alas, you knew it not, and you continued to sin against this distinguishing and discriminating grace! Oh, that even the elect of God should have done this! See that you crucify the sin that suffered you to act so shamefully. Then in due time you were redeemed. For you, beloved, Jesus shed his precious blood; he shed it not for all men, but with a special view to the redemption of his elect. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for *it*. He hath redeemed us from among men. We have been the object of that special and peculiar redemption, and yet against that dear Christ, who loved us, and gave himself for us, we rebelled and transgressed. Ordained to be of the blood-royal of heaven, and yet a rebel! Ordained on earth to have the love of God within your spirit, and in heaven to behold his face for ever, ordained by divine decree to this high destiny, and yet for many a year a rebel, a wilful rebel against such wondrous love as this! I do not know what to say to myself; I despise myself, I loathe myself, that I should thus have acted against such extraordinary love.

Then remember also that you are God's child, adopted into his family, his twice-born, divinely regenerated. You are an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ; and yet—and yet, you have acted so sinfully! O God, thou hast forgiven thy servants; but we have never forgiven ourselves, and we never mean to, we shall always mourn, even amid our joy for pardoned guilt, that we, the favourites of heaven, should have so grieved the Lord!

Go a little further. I want you to *set sin in the light of your marvellous experiences*. Oh, there are some of us who, without boasting, can tell of answered prayer when we have come back from the top of Carmel, and we have cried, "I have won the day;" and yet to us who have been privileged thus to have power with God it was not always so. Perhaps the very lips that now prevail in prayer were once habituated to blasphemy. Oh, mourn, my brother, if it was so! Can you ever help mourning? When John Newton wrote the *Cardiphonia*, or voice of the heart, when he left us that choice treasure, I am sure that he must often and often have smitten upon his breast, and grieved over the thought that he was once in Africa, a blasphemer, and everything that was foul and bad. Oh yes, wonders of grace have been ours! Wonders of grace! Wonders of grace! We have tasted the wines on the lees well refined; yet once we drank of the wine of the clusters of Sodom and Gomorrah. What has grace not done for us, brothers and sisters? You and I have been in the King's banqueting house, and his banner of love has waved over us, and our Beloved has caught us away "from the top of Amana, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," and manifested his love to us in the secret places where no eye saw except our own and his. There did he reveal to us his great love. Yet we were the very ones who once despised him, broke his Sabbaths, refused to read his Word, neglected prayer, perhaps ridiculed holy things. We were proud, covetous, unholy; but we are washed, but we are sanctified. Oh, let us sit here, and sweetly repent, and present to our God the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit!

Besides, dear friends, think of *the injury you have done to others by your example*. What a powerful preacher a mother is to her boy! What an influential preacher is a father to his son! What a mighty preacher one workman may be to another, especially if he is a man of stronger mind than his fellows! Whatever any of us do, we are sure to have some who will copy us; it cannot be avoided. You are all writing copies every day, even though you are not schoolmasters; and there are some who will learn either bad or good writing from you, for they will copy your handwriting; I mean, that they will imitate what they see in you. In years to come, when you have forgotten what you did, some may be following your former example. I would urge young men,—and I am glad to see a great many of them present,—to pray that they may begin life in such a way that they may not have much back reckoning. Suppose a man to be converted after his children are born, if those children have seen the father do wrong, they will perhaps remember the evil better than the good example of their converted father. When your children have once left your roof, what opportunities of influencing them aright you have lost! Though you may yourselves be saved by faith in Christ, yet you cannot call back the boys and the girls from those sinful ways into which you yourself led them in the days of your ungodliness. This thought has a sharp sting in it for any who, by word or by example, have taught others to do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. If this is your case, beloved, while you praise God that he has forgiven your sin, yet mourn that you ever led any astray by your wrongdoing.

If that is not enough, I want to lead you a little further, and bid you think of all *the opportunities that we lose whenever we fall into sin*. I do repent of sin unfeignedly because it has hindered my progress. I am now speaking only to the people of God, mark you. If any of you sinners want to creep in among them, you may; still, I am specially addressing them. There is one here who, not long ago, was a pilgrim on the road to the Celestial City, and he went part of the way up the Hill Difficulty, climbing splendidly on his hands and knees. He made the best of his way up, but it came to pass that, when he had gone about half-way up the hill, he found a little arbour by the road-side. It was built there by the Lord of the way that he might rest himself a little in it, and then go on his way; but this brother sat down in the arbour, and he sat on till he went to sleep; and he slept there I do not know how long. Just lately, he has been awaked, and he has gone on his way again, climbing up, but he has discovered that he has lost the roll that he used to carry in his bosom. It was a roll that he had when first he started at the head of the way, and he meant to present it to the Lord of the Celestial City when he came to his journey's end. But he has lost his roll. You know what Mr. Bunyan says of this matter. It was getting late, but Christian had lost his roll, so he had to go back; and he wisely went back to the place where he had fallen asleep, all the way moaning and sighing and crying to himself, "I have lost my evidences, I have lost my roll. Where shall I find it?" He was so glad, when he looked under the settle, to see the roll there. I warrant you that he quickly picked it up, and put it in his bosom again; but then, you see, he had to go over that part of the road three times. If he had not lost his roll, and had to go back, he might by that time have been much further on the road. There were lions in that region, and that was ugly for him. If he had got into the House Beautiful earlier in the day, he would not have suffered the fears he now had; so he went along in a very sad state of mind, and all through that careless sleeping in the arbour. Oh, what some of you might have been if it had not been for your sins since conversion! What a preacher I might have been! What workers in the Sunday-school you might have been! Oh, what winners of souls you might have become by this time! But you have been asleep, and had to go back, perhaps, and so you have missed many opportunities of serving Christ.

Let us sit and think this matter over, and begin to say, "Lord, we do present to thee a broken and contrite heart, mourning and lamenting, for if we are straitened, we are straitened in ourselves, and not in thee. If we are mourning in darkness, we ourselves made the darkness. If we are desponding, we have in a large measure created the despondency. Lord, we grieve and sorrow for all this." Since I have been in this house to-night, I have heard of a dear brother, whose prayers I remember among the first I heard when I came to be pastor of this church. He has passed away to-day, and gone to his reward, an old man and full of years. That brother is where you and I will be very soon. Do not talk about years; they go so quickly, and our friends pass away quickly, too. But the other day, a man of God sat at his table writing; he had dipped his pen in the ink, but he never laid

it on the paper, for he fell asleep there and then, and he was gone home. We, too, shall soon pass away. "Perhaps in a few days I shall be among the angels,"—say that to yourself, my brother. "Perhaps in a few weeks I shall behold the face of him I love,"—say that, my sister. It will come true. Perhaps in a few years; nay, drop the "perhaps" now, and say, "Certainly, within a few years, I shall behold the beatific vision."

"Father, I long, I faint to see  
The place of thine abode."

I see myself walking over that street of gold that shines like glass. Earthly gold is dull, you cannot see into it. If you could, you would see the tears of the oppressed and sometimes the blood of crushed-down men in it; but the gold of heaven is good, and you can see into it, as you could into a sea of glass. I think I am walking there. I hardly know myself, and there I meet one and another of you whom I knew here, and we go together down that golden street, and look in at the many mansions, whence come out many to welcome us; and we thread our way into the centre. There is no temple there, no tabernacle of worship there; but we get into the centre, and we stand upon the glassy sea, into which all the streets seem to run; and as we look around, we see angels and elders bowing there before the throne of the infinite majesty, and we are there ourselves, and we bow with them; and when we lift up our eyes to that light we sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Now I want you to *think of your sins in the light of that glory*. Oh, how could those who are predestinated to these heavenly seats ever have wandered into sin? What! Was it so—that we, who were born to behold the face of God, ever loved the theatre, and all its abominations? What! Did we, who were ordained to be peers with cherubim and seraphim, ever love the race-course and all its gambling? What! Were we, whom God has made to be conformed to the image of his firstborn Son, ever seen to be drunken, and staggering through the streets, defiled with unchastity, or polluted with gluttony, or guilty of covetousness, or cursed with pride? What! We whom the Lord has loved with an everlasting love, and without whom Christ himself will not be content to reign in heaven, grovelling in iniquity? Oh, I think these questions must have helped to make sin seem contemptible and loathsome! I point at it the finger of scorn. O dear children of God, scorn your sins, lament your sins, weep over your sins! Indulge that feeling, and God will accept it when it is mixed with faith in his dear Son; for "the sacrifices of God"—that is, all sorts of sacrifices put together, sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, scape-goats, and all together—"the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." One broken spirit is worth them all. "A broken and a contrite heart,"—though there be but one such,—  
"O God, thou wilt not despise."

God bless you, beloved, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

## PSALM LI.

This is a portion of Scripture which can never be read too often. If any among us have never found mercy, let them use this Psalm as their own personal prayer; while those who have found mercy can read between the lines, and read the sweetness of pardon into the bitterness of sorrow for sin. This Psalm was written by David when Nathan came to him after his great sin with Bath-sheba. He needed Nathan to come to him to rebuke him. If David had not been in a very sad state of heart, he would not have fallen into the sin; and it was that state of heart which left him so hardened, so obdurate, that he needed Nathan pointedly to say to him, "Thou art the man." After that, he wrote and prayed this truly penitential Psalm.

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness :*

He used to talk about being God's servant; but he says nothing about that now. He used to speak of God's great love to him; but he cannot realize that now. Yet he appeals to God for mercy: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness."

1. *According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

"There they are, they stare me in the face; nobody but thyself can blot them out; do it, Lord, for thy sweet mercy's sake. Blot them out of existence, and out of memory; and when thou hast blotted them from thy book of remembrance, then blot them from me, too."

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

"If washing will not do, use fire, use blood, use anything; but cleanse me from my sin."

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

"Lord, do help me. There is my sin; I cannot shut my eyes to it. I dare not deny it, or excuse it; I make a clean breast of it. 'I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.'"

4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight :*

"I have sinned against others; but this is the foulness of the blot, the venom of the sting, that I have sinned against my God."

4, 5. *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

"Behold,' for this is a wonder, and I look at it, and I mourn over it; behold, before I had a shape, I was out of shape. Before I saw anything, still there was sin antecedent to my very existence."

6. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

"But, alas! Lord, what thou desirest, is not there. In my inward part, I find falsehood; in my hidden part, I find folly. Lord, what thou desirest thou must also bestow, or else I shall never have it. Oh, hear thy servant's supplication now!"

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

This is delightful pleading on David's part. He had seen the priest take the sprigs of hyssop, and dip them in the blood, and then sprinkle the leper therewith; so his prayer is, "Lord, give me purification through the

atonement. 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.' It requires strong faith, when under a deep sense of sin, to be quite sure that God can put the sin away. It is a grand thing to be able to say, "Wash me, foul as I am; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness;*

"Lord, I have heard nothing but groans lately, and I have made no sound but sighs; 'Make me to hear joy and gladness.'"

8. *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

When God makes us feel the weight of sin, it is a bone-breaking operation. He seems to strike as though he would kill; and only he that thus strikes can afterwards heal. Then he makes each fragment of the bone to sing and praise him.

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

You see that the psalmist has many names for sin, for evil, like a great rogue, has many *aliases*. So it is sometimes sin; sometimes it is transgression, passing over the line of right; and sometimes it is in-equity, or a departure from perfect equity. "Call it by whatever name it may be called, Lord, let me be rid of it. 'Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.'"

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

"My Creator, I am spoiled; come and make me over again. My heart has grown foul. Thou who didst make me, clean me." The watchmaker best cleans the watch that he made. "Create in me a clean heart, O my Creator, and renew a right spirit within me."

11. *Cast me not away from thy presence;*

"I have acted as if thou wert not present, but, oh, do not fling me away! Do not take away thy presence from me."

11, 12. *And take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;*

"I was so happy once. Oh, give me back my joy!"

12. *And uphold me with thy free spirit.*

"I have fallen foully; let me not fall again. Henceforth, I cannot trust myself; do thou uphold me. I have made free to sin. Lord, send me a freer spirit, that I may be free to follow after righteousness."

13. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;*

He would turn preacher if God would but bless him. He would tell others what great things God had done for him.

13. *And sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

He felt sure that, if he once told his tale of love, others would be melted, and would turn to God; and no doubt it was the case.

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

"Once cleanse me from my sin, and I will sing thy praises for ever; and I will sing earnestly, too: 'My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.'"

15. *O Lord, open thou my lips;*

He felt as if he was going too fast when he promised to speak and to sing, so he prayed: "O Lord, open thou my lips;"—

15. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

When good men have had a fall, they walk very tenderly afterwards. Once put them on their legs, and they are very careful how they move. They are afraid to speak except as God opens their lips.

16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it:*

David remembered that, under the law, there was no sacrifice appointed for the expiation of adultery. There were some sins that were left out of the catalogue, and this was one of them.

16, 17. *Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:*

Even for the man who has committed the most atrocious crimes, there is still acceptance if he brings to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit.

17, 18. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*

Now that he feels himself forgiven, he begins to pray for the good estate of the Church of God and the Lord's people everywhere. We cannot do that when sin is breaking our bones; but when we get peace and rest, then the first instinct of the newborn life is to pray for God's kingdom: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

19. *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

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"THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL."

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