

Heart-Surgery

by Robert Bolton (1572-1631)

“Now when they heard this, they were *pricked in their heart*, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*”
Acts 2:37

In these words, there is shown a thorough wounding of the hearts of these men when they had heard of the greatness of their sin. Therefore observe that contrition in a new-born soul, is ordinarily in proportion to his former vanity. To whom much is forgiven, they love much. This is a fountain of evangelical repentance. As a traitor condemned to die, receiving a pardon, would wonderfully break his heart to think he should be so villainous, to so gracious a prince: so it is with a Christian that beholds God’s mercy to him. Christians after their conversion, desire to see their sins to the utmost, with all the circumstances that make them hateful, such as the object, nature, person, time, etc. in which, or how they were done—so that they may be more humbled for them.

If it is not so (it may be otherwise, for God is a free agent, and is not tied to any proportion of sorrow) then such troubles as these usually seize on them:

First. They are often afflicted with this—that their conversion is not thorough and sound, and so do not perform the duties of godliness with such heartiness and cheerfulness.

Second. They are many times haunted with listlessness and coldness in their progress in Christianity.

Third. They are visited with some cross or other, which sticks by them—to make them lay a greater load upon sin.

Fourth. They are more subject to be overtaken with their *besetting sin*, because they have sorrowed for it no more; for the less it is sorrowed over—the more it ensnares men.

Fifth. Some of them have been assaulted upon their death-bed with sorrowful and strong temptations. Not that men should think this is always the reason of it, for God has aims in all His works known only to Himself; but I have known some have so been troubled, and this may be in great mercy to make a weak conversion more strong. Lest any Christian should be troubled at it, note that in true contrition, there must be sorrow of heart because of sin: there must be a dislike of it in the *will*; there must be a strong reasoning in the *mind* out of the Word of God against sin—this is the sinew of repentance; there must be a *resolution*, and striving and watching against sin, like Job who made a covenant with his eyes, Job 31:1; there must be a *grieving* that he is not excelling in all these, and here he must make up what he lacks in the former. These are in some measure—in all Christians. Some are more eminent in one part, some in another; as Joseph had little sorrow, but a strong resolution, because he had so strong a temptation, and withstood it; he had strong reasons beyond nature to resist sin, and resolve against it. So that it is not so much the *measure*—as the *truth* of every part that is required. But if they are

not excelling in great sinners, they are to mourn for the lack of them.

To help here, observe these ‘ten degrees of repentance’—or rather ‘helps to humiliation’.

First help. A sight and survey, and full apprehension of all your vileness, iniquities, transgressions, and sins, the number and nature of them.

For this purpose, take these two points:

I. Be acquainted with all the *ways* by which you can possibly analyze your sin:

1. Be perfect in the law of God, and look at yourself in the pure crystal looking-glass there: be thoroughly catechized in the commandments.
2. Take a survey of all the wrongs which we have offered to all things in heaven and earth. All things are the worse for a wicked man, so far as sin can add hurt unto them.
3. Take a perusal of yourself, from top to toe. For example, the sins of your eyes: each thing you look on, not making a holy use of them, is a sin of omission! Consider then how many sins you commit every day by only your eyes—and if one part has so many sins—what a vast amount are there in the whole body!
4. Consider all the commissions and omissions, as you stand in several relationships: as a creature—how you have behaved to your Creator; as a husband—how you have behaved to your wife; as a father—how you have behaved to your children; as a master—how you have behaved to your employees; as a neighbor—how you have behaved to them about you, or to God’s children; as a subject, and so on. Take notice of all the failings in all these, relationships and you will find sufficient matter for *awhole day* of humiliation.
5. Labor to get (as I am persuaded every Christian has) two catalogues of your sins, *before* conversion and *since* conversion; of God’s mercies, spiritual and temporal.

II. Take note of the guilt of original sin.

Now because a Christian may have his heart locked up more at one time than

at another, let him in case of barrenness, consider these six quickening points:

1. Look to the *seed*, and *sink*, and *natural inclination* of your heart to all sorts of wickedness. For suppose by the mercy of God, you were able to say that you could not possibly find any actual sin within you; yet look back to the *corrupt fountain*, and there you shall find that you, and the most holy Christian on earth, while you live in this house of flesh and tabernacle of clay—you have it in your nature to commit the greatest sins—and nothing hinders but God’s free mercy! This then, thoroughly considered, is sufficient matter to humble you! Consider with yourself, What a wretch am I yet, that I have this evil *inclination* to sin, still within me!

2. Consider and thoroughly weigh the circumstances of all your sins before salvation: at what time, in what place, with what scandal, etc.

3. In case of *barrenness* consider, we had our hands in the sin of Adam, and so brought all the sorrow, sin, and damnation, upon all men that are or shall be damned; and we are guilty of all the horrors of conscience. If we had not hearts of adamant, hewn out of a rock—or had not sucked the breast of wolves or tigers—we would be moved at this, which is able to break a thousand adamants. I speak advisedly; it is able to open a wide gap of penitent tears in the most flinty soul of the most hardened sinner.

4. Cut off all sin, both original and actual that you have taken notice of; and do but consider the *imperfections in your best actions*, the innumerable distractions of the most holy prayer that ever you made; your deadness, fruitlessness, etc. in holy duties.

5. Beyond all *personal* sins: yet consider how many ways we have had our hands in *other’s* sins, which, it may be, they have carried to hell with them. We have a world of matter from which to break our hearts—for **we may be guilty of others’ sins in thirteen ways**. There is none but are guilty of some of these ways:

1) By **encouraging** them in sin: as those prophets which cried “Peace! peace!” when there is no peace, when they are only so-called formal or polished preachers, those who sow pillows under men’s elbows, who heal the wounds of the people with fair words; when there is no real love towards them, but tumbling garments in blood, and vengeance, and devouring with fire (Isaiah 9:5: Jer. 14:14: Ezekiel 13:10).

2) By **provoking** them to sin: as Job’s wife said to him, “Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). So, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,” (Ephesians 6:4), for they then are guilty of their sins.

3) By **familiarity** with sinners, with company keeping. If you go with ale-house haunters, ungodly persons, idolaters, and to God’s enemies; look for that sharp check which the prophet gave to Jehoshaphat for associating himself with wicked Ahab, saying, “Why should you help the wicked—and love those who hate the Lord! What you have done has brought the Lord’s wrath against you!” Or, as Psalm 50:18, “When you

see a thief, you help him; and you spend your time with adulterers!" Therefore, as Moses said to the people, "Separate yourselves from the tents of Korah, lest you perish with them!" and, "Come out of Babylon, my people, have no communion with that whore, lest you perish in her sins, and be destroyed with her plagues!" (Revelation 18:4). David says, "I have not dwelt with vain persons, nor will I have fellowship with the ungodly." But for dealings in your own business calling, such as buying, selling, correspondence etc., we must have these—or we must out of this world (1 Corinthians 5:1, 11).

4) By **participation**: "Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves" (Isaiah 1:2.3). Just so, magistrates who execute not their office with justice, are guilty of all the sins which the people commit within the compass of the term of their government, and they are all set down on their score.

5) By **silence**: when you hear a holy man being slandered, and say nothing—you are dumb dogs. Their silence is the cause of all many iniquities—and all these things which others do amiss, whether by swearing, ale-house haunting, etc. all are set on their score. Just so are all those who are faint and cowardly for God's glory and truth.

6) By **defending**: "Woe to those who call darkness light, and light darkness!" (Isaiah 5:20. Therefore if any by quickness of wit will labor to maintain usury, bribery, etc. they are all guilty of those sins.

7) By **counseling**: as Jezebel counseled her husband to kill Naboth, I Kings 21:7.

8) By **commanding**: as David commanded Uriah to be set in the forefront of the battle, and was therefore guilty of his death (2 Sam. 11:15).

9) By **commending**: as those who commended Herod for his oration, saying, "It is the voice of a god!" (Acts 12:22). They were guilty of his sin in taking honor from God.

10) By **connivance**: as Eli *winked* at his sons (1 Sam. 3:13), for which you may see what a fearful judgment fell upon that house! If we had no other sins in a day of humiliation, it were able to break the hardest heart; but especially for parents, who *wink at their children sins*. If these are not guilty of the former sins, yet they are guilty in not praying with them, and bringing them to holy duties.

11) By **consenting**: as Paul bewailed that he had carried the clothes of those who slew Stephen when he was stoned (Acts 22:20).

12) By **not sorrowing** for them. David shows what Christians ought to do (Psalm 119:139, Mark 3:5).

13) By **not praying** against them for the suppression of them.

6. Consider the sins of the times. David's eyes gushed out with tears, to see men transgress the holy law of God! (Psalm 119:136). So Lot's heart was vexed daily with the sins of the people among whom he lived (2 Peter 2:8). And "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matt. 5:4). Observe these several branches well, and you shall find sins enough to mourn for.

Second help. A right apprehension of God's wrath and fiery indignation, and the pure eye of God against sin!

The Christian often complains that he cannot grasp God's wrath sufficiently. Let him take these helps.

1. The severity of God's judgments against sin, for which:

- 1) He threw down the angels from heaven to be devils forever, who might have done Him abundance of glory.
- 2) For but eating forbidden fruit, which some count a small fault, He cast Adam out of Paradise, and sent a world of misery upon him and his posterity.
- 3) He drowned the world (Genesis 7), which shows the infinite purity in God, not to abide sin.
- 4) He burnt Sodom for those very sins now reigning among us (Ezekiel 16:49, 50).
- 5) He rejected the Jews, who were His most dear people: for they so provoked God, and His wrath has so fiercely seized on them, that they have wandered as exiles in the earth for centuries.
- 6) He has created horror of conscience, which is a hell upon earth, for the punishment of sin.
- 7) But above all, consider the torments of hell, that woeful place and state prepared for the wicked, where the greater part of the world shall be howling forever.

2. Consider how hard a thing it is to get pardon for sin, in that the justice of God was hard to be satisfied.

Imagine that all the world was turned into a mass or lump of gold, the stones of the streets into precious pearls, and the sea and rivers all flowing with liquid streams of most pure gold—they would not satisfy the wrath of God for the least sin (Mic. 6:7). If all the angels and creatures in heaven and earth had joined together, and made one fervent prayer for man's sin; even if they had offered themselves to have been annihilated, it could never have been effected. Nay, if the Son of God Himself should have supplicated His Father with most earnest entreaties, He could not have been heard unless He had taken our flesh upon Him, and suffered all that devils and men could imagine to inflict upon Him. Which, well considered, is infinite cause to bring us to a sense of God's wrath—that He should lay such infinite torments to be on Jesus, that He cried out unto God, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" Though He loved Him infinitely as Himself, yet He would have His

justice satisfied.

3. The irresistible coming of God against sinners:

though He is wonderfully ready and easy to be entreated while He grants a day of visitation; but if men will withstand the day, then He comes in devouring rage, and His wrath being once kindled shall burn to the bottom of hell, then "his arrows shall drink blood and eat flesh," then will He meet them as a bear robbed of her whelps, and tear in pieces when there is none to help (Hos. 1.3:53; Psalm 72; and in Isaiah 66:15), is set down the manner of His coming, with chariots like a whirlwind.

4. God's holiness, which opposes sin, and is contrary to it, so that He looks not on the least sin with the least allowance.

Third help. A sense of the unspeakable misery you are liable to by reason of sin...

for which purpose consider all your sins, with their circumstances, as of times past, present, and to come.

Look back upon all your sins past that you ever did commit, all you have been guilty of ever since you were born, original or actual, known or unknown, of thought, word, and deed. They are written with an iron pen, and with the point of a diamond, never to be erased! They are all upon record, and now lie as so many sleeping lions, gathering strength and vigor until such time as the Lord shall awake the conscience; and then they will appear, and rend your soul in pieces!

I say, let natural men consider this point, and they shall see themselves miserable; for there are some for a small sin put to such frights, that they could not be comforted in a long space. If these for such small things, in men's account, have come to such a pass that they took no delight in any earthly thing, but are put to their wit's end, ready to make away themselves, wishing themselves annihilated, then what tearing of hair, what horror of conscience will seize upon you on your bed of death!

With what a ghastly countenance will you look upon that black and hellish catalogue of all your sins such as lies, oaths, railings, scoffing at God's people, impure speeches, mad passions, goods ill gotten, time ill spent, and killing Christ at every sacrament as all natural men do! These shall be summoned before you and charged upon your conscience by the just God; then consider in proportion what horror will be in your heart! No heart can conceive it, nor tongue of men and angels utter it. Now then attend, and let none bless

themselves and say, I never felt this misery, therefore it shall never hurt me! I tell you, it is the perfection of your misery that you are *insensible* of it: to be soul sick, and feel it not is the full completion of misery, and **the reasons why you cannot see it, are these seven:**

- 1) The devil will not trouble you while you are his; he is a politician of almost six thousand years' experience, and knows, if once you see your sins, he shall lose you! Therefore he blinds you!
- 2) Your conscience is lulled asleep with carnal pleasure and worldly contentments.
- 3) A bucket of water is heavy on earth; in its own place it is not so. When men are merely natural, sin is in its own place, and the weight is not felt.
- 4) The conscience of a natural man is like a wolf in a man's body; while it is fed with carnal friends, good times, some great business of the world, and so on, it is quiet; but take this away, and then it is felt.
- 5) A natural man is spiritually dead, and a dead man feels no weight, you know.
- 6) He looks on sin through false glasses, such as upon covetousness and usury, through the glass of good business; so prodigality, through the glass of liberality.
- 7) For lack of consideration. If we would by ourselves consider when the minister presses any sin, and say, *This is my case, but now by the mercy of God I will be humbled*, this would much help us to see our misery.

Fourth help. A base esteem of yourself.

Consider, if you had looked upon that man in Matthew chapter 8, possessed with a devil, who dwelt among the tombs, went naked, chains would not hold him, the devil was so powerful in him; you would have thought him a dreadful spectacle of extreme misery, to have a legion of devils, by computation six thousand six hundred sixty-six; but I tell you—you had better have a thousand legions of devils—than one unrepented sin!

All the devils in hell cannot do you the least hurt for the salvation of your soul; but one sin willfully unrepented of, and so unpardoned, will damn your soul eternally! So it would be better to be possessed with a thousand devils—than one sin unrepealed of and unpardoned!

Sin made the devil so ugly as he is, being otherwise of an angelic nature; only sin makes him odious! Therefore sin is worse than either the tongue of men and angels can express.

Fifth help. An inward sorrow of heart and bleeding of soul.

Here take these aids:

1. Your heart has been the fountain, or rather sink, from which have issued

many foul streams, where all evil has been forged—all evil words, raging passions, and wicked thoughts. Now then, by the rule of proportion, let your heart be a fountain of sorrow for sin. If Christ opens a fountain of mercy for mourners, let them not be excluded for lack of sorrow.

2. Consider the heart of Christ; He would not have taken upon Himself a heart of flesh, but for sin; which for your sake was filled with that singular depth of sorrow and grief, that if all the godly sorrow of all the Christian souls from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, in heaven or in earth, dead or alive, were collected into one heart—they could not counterbalance the depth of His anguish! Shall then His blessed soul be assaulted with all the wrath of God? Shall His soul be like a scorched hearth, and so pressed with the flames of God's revenging wrath, which wrung from Him those bloody drops and woeful cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" The wrath of God was so fierce on Him, that drops of blood fell from Him! And shall your heart be as a stone within your breast, and never be moved? Oh astonishing hardness, and worse than heathenish ingratitude!

3. If your heart is not wounded here in some measure truly, it shall hereafter be filled with such endless horror—which would grieve and break ten thousand hearts to think on it! Is it not better then to mourn a little here for sin—than to have our hearts enlarged, to endure unto all eternity the horror of hell? Is any man so senseless as to think he shall go to heaven as in a bed of down, and never be touched for his sin, which is as impossible as for you to reach heaven with your hand! When Hezekiah, a man perfect in all his ways, complained and chattered like a crane (Isaiah 38:14); David roared all the day long (Psalm 32:3); Job complained, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the venom whereof does drink up my spirit" (Job 6:4); nay, Christ Himself cried out in the agony of His spirit.

4. With this broken heart in your breast you shall bring down the glorious majesty of heaven: God Almighty with His chair of state, to sit in your soul; for He has two habitations:

- 1) in heaven;
- 2) in a humble heart.

5. Get this and get all, if you have a true title and interest unto the death of Christ, and all the comforts in the book of God; the promises both of this life, and of that to come.

Sixth help. An outward bewailing with heart piercing confession.

1. Consider the practice of the saints of God. They poured out tears, as men water out of buckets. Mary washed Christ's feet with her tears. The publican struck on his breast with a sorrowful acknowledgment of his sins.

2. Consider your hands, and eyes, and tongue, and heart—have been

instruments of God's dishonor; therefore, by the rule of proportion, you should have the works of your *hands* instrumental demonstrations of repentance; your *eyes* fountains of tears; your *tongue* should utter, and *heart* suffer, grief.

3. Consider, that for outward things men will weep tears: such as for losses, or crosses in wife or children; as David for Absalom, so it is with many. What wringing their hands, tearing their hair, bitter crying! Then the loss of Christ, who is infinitely better than husband, wife, child, or anything in the world; this, this, how should it break your heart! If all Job's troubles were on you, and could wring one *tear* from you; then one sin should wring *blood* from your heart.

Seventh help. A hatred and aversion in your will from sin.

- 1) Consider what sin is in itself.
- 2) Consider how God is provoked with it.
- 3) Consider how you are hurt by it.

1. What sin is.

Sin in itself is fouler than any fiend in hell, because it made them so vile; as fire is hotter than water that is heated.

It is **extremely evil**, nothing comes near to its evil. I consider of sin here in the abstract: sin is a greater evil—than the damnation of a man's soul; for when two evils fight together, that which conquers, must needs be the greater; now, when a man has lain in hell ten thousand years, he is as far from coming out as ever; for the eternal duration in hell cannot expiate sin.

It is most **infectious**. It is compared to a leprosy; for the first sin that entered into the world stained the beauty of it. No sooner was sin committed by Adam, than the stars seemed impure in God's sight, the beasts were at variance, the earth full of brambles, and all things cursed!

Sin soured all natural, religious, and civil actions. If a man in authority is sinful, all under him will be infected.

Sin is most **filthy**, and compared to the most vile things that can be named. No dirt or filthy thing, can stain a sunbeam; but sin stains a more glorious creature—the soul of man!

Sin is of that **hellish** nature, that it draws out and takes in to itself the wrath of God.

Sin is full of **cursed consequences**: deprivative and positive.

Deprivative: sin brings the *loss of God's favor*; the blood of Christ; peace of conscience, etc.

Positive: sin brings brings all misery— spiritual deadness, hardness of heart, blindness of mind, horror of conscience, despair, etc. with all temporal losses and crosses here, and hereafter eternal torments of soul and body

2. God is provoked with sin.

Sin is the only object of God's infinite hatred. His *love* is diversified to Himself, His Son, the angels, the creatures; but His *hatred* is confined only to sin. What infinite of infinities of hatred you have on your soul, with all your sins, when each sin has the infinite hatred of God upon it!

Each sin is against the majesty of that awesome Lord of heaven and earth, who can turn all things into hell; nay, He can turn heaven and hell into nothing, by His sheer word. Now, against this God you sin, and what are you but dust and ashes, and all that is nothing! And what is your life, but a span, a bubble, a dream, a *shadow* of a dream? And shall such a pitiable thing as yourself—offend such an awesome God?

Every sin strikes at the glory of God's pure eye!

Sin is that which killed His Son! The least sin could not be pardoned, except by Christ's carrying His heart blood to His Father, and offering it for sin.

Each sin is an offense to all His mercies. This aggravated the sin upon Eli (1 Sam. 2:29), and of David (2 Sam. 12:8, 9). Mercy is the most eminent attribute of God, and therefore the sin against it is the greater. What therefore are our sins in the time of the gospel

3. Consider how you are hurt by it, for:

Each sin ruins your *soul*, which is better than the *world*.

Each sin, though it brings ever so much pleasure in the committing, leaves a threefold sting: 1. Natural; 2. Temporal; 3. Immortal.

1) A Natural sting. After worldly pleasure—comes melancholy; properly, either because it lasted no longer, or they had no more delight in it, and so on. Just as all waters end in the salty sea—so all worldly joys are swallowed up in sorrow's bottomless gulf.

2) A Temporal sting. There is labor in getting, care in keeping, and sorrow in parting with worldly goods!

3) An Immortal sting. God will call you to judgment for it. Each sin robs you of abundance of comfort. What a vast difference do we see in *conquering* sin—and being *conquered* by sin. As, for instance, in Joseph and David: the one raised after his conquest to much honor; the other, scarcely

enjoyed one good day after he was conquered—but walked heavily in the bitterness of his soul all his days.

Your own conscience will accuse you one day for every sin, though now it seems hidden to you; and your conscience is more than a thousand witnesses; therefore you will certainly be overthrown. For the sins which perhaps you live in now, and count but of no consequence—many poor souls are at this instant burning in hell for! What misery and hurt then, awaits you for the same!

Eighth help. A strong reasoning in your mind against sin.

1. The horror of hell. Therefore Christians wrong themselves who will not use this as a motive: the unquenchable wrath of God shall feed upon your soul, if you commit this sin!

2. The joys of heaven. I shall dwell with God forever, if, believing, I make conscience of every sin as an *evidence* and *fruit* of saving faith.

3. And above all, the *glory of God*. If God's glory and the damnation of our souls were in a balance—His glory should preponderate and prevail. So we should prefer God's glory above our own salvation.

Likewise, from every line in *God's book*: His attributes, as: His justice and His mercy; His *justice* to terrify sinners, His *mercy* to allure us to Him; His judgments; His promises etc.

Also, from *examples* in Scripture: "How shall I do this, and sin against God?" says Joseph. From your former estate: "You were darkness, but now you are light," etc. From the end of all things: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives?"

Also, from *yourself*. Your *soul* is immortal—all the devils in hell cannot kill it. Your *body* is frail—all human helps cannot uphold it for long.

Also, from *Christ*. Look upon Him weeping, nay, bleeding on the cross, and saying thus, "Sin brought Me from the bosom of My Father to die for it."

Also, from the *incomprehensible excellency of God*, against whom you are sinning.

Ninth help. A sincere opposition in your life to sin.

These are several aids:

1. When any bait of Satan, or old companions, would allure you to sin, take this dilemma: "If I commit this sin—then I must repent of it. Then this sin will give me more sorrow than pleasure. If I do not repent, then this sin will be the damnation of my soul."

2. Consider your madness, which lays most desperately in one scale of the balance—heaven, the favor of God, the blood of Christ, and your own soul; in the other scale—a little dust, money, base lust, etc. Think—sin may bring rottenness to your bones, perhaps loss of your good name.

3. And that you may yet be further armed to withstand the assaults of your three grand enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, which daily seek the destruction of your soul; consider these twelve antidotes:

1) Consider the *shortness of the pleasure of sin*—with the length of the punishment; the one for a moment—the other everlasting!

2) Consider the *companions of sin*; for one sin never goes alone, but, being once entertained, it sets all the faculties of the soul on fire, and so procures a spiritual judgment, if not temporal, upon estate and person.

3) Consider, your life is but a span, a breath, a blast soon gone! Now if we had all the pleasure in the world, yet being so soon to lose it—it is not worth esteeming.

4) Consider, sin causes us to lose the greatest good than that can be—as the favor of God, interest in Christ, eternal glory, and so on.

5) Consider the uncertainty of repentance: God may not grant you the ability to repent after you have sinned, and so you would be damned.

6) Consider the nearness of death to you: some have not lived out above half their time, others die shortly after they are born; young and old often die suddenly.

7) Consider, that one moment in hell will be worse than all the pleasure that sin could give, though it should have lasted a thousand years! So, on the contrary, one moment in heaven does more good than all the hardness and pains in godly duties, or persecution for them, did hurt.

8) Consider the dignity of your soul; it is more worth than a world. Lose it not then, for any sin.

9) Consider the preciousness of a good conscience, which is a continual feast. This you lose by sin.

10) Consider, your sin against a world of mercies which God has sent to you, such as to soul, body, good name, estate, and others.

11) Consider, nothing can wash away any sin—but the blood of Christ. And will you now pollute yourself again, as it were, to have Him killed afresh to wash away your sin?

12) Consider, the ancient martyrs and worthies chose rather to burn at a stake—than they would sin; and will you so easily be *drawn* to it, or rather *run* to it? Anselm said, "If the flames of hell were on the one side, and sin on the other side, I would rather lie in those flames than sin!" We have as precious means as they and, if our hearts were as good, we would

have the like affections.

Tenth help. A sincere grieving that you can do these things no better:

Considering,

1. Though you had a thousand *eyes*, and could weep them all out, and shed rivers of tears. And though you had a thousand *hearts* to burst, yet all were not sufficient for the least sin or vanity, either of the eye or heart! How much more when our hearts are barren and dry, had we need to labor for this sorrow!

2. Consider, that when you have made the best prayer, or watched most diligently over yourself, or spent a day in repentance and humiliation—that you had need to cry and burst your heart again, for the imperfections and failings thereof.

In this sorrow, that you can perform good duties no better, weave up the web, what's lacking in any of the rest, here make it up. And to encourage you, you have this happiness joined with it: that though your grief is small, and if it causes you to sell all, that is, to part from every sin for Christ, and take Him as a husband and a Lord, both for protection and government, then it is certainly godly sorrow, and certainly accepted in Christ!