The Cross the Headache of Sex.

St. Paul is here speaking neither of Jews nor of heathens, but of Christians. Those ceremonies of the Cross were not blasphemers, or persecutors of the Lord of Glory, but baptized believers. Men who bore the sign and name of Christ; but by their lives buried the Son of God alive unto themselves. They were partly false apostles who began even then to degrade the Church, and by undenominated doctrine and incurable life; together with those who followed them; they were partly also the unfruitful members of the Philippians Church, who had fallen from their first faith, and lived in the lust of the world and of the flesh, still professing Christianity. To doubt St. Paul is
Speaking of gross sinners, but not of gross sinners only. He here lays down a principle, which applies to all sin, of every kind, and of every measure, whether great or small. He says of such men, that "they are enemies of the Cross of Christ." This is the special guilt of sin in Christians. Let us, therefore, see more fully what he means. He does not mean, that sinful Christians, openly and in words, deny or blaspheme the Gospel; nor that they use force to persecute the Church and body of Christ. For it often happens that Christ, as they go deeper in sin, all the more profess faith in the presence of God's face the presence of Christ's forgiveness, the proof of His one Sacrifice, the sufficiency of His atonement; that is they become Antinomian, and all the more boast of faith in words, as they are enemies of the Cross in deed.
And in truth.

Now is it there, that every sin, even the
very least, makes us sinners of the Cross
of Christ.

1. First, because it was sin, that, so to
speak, created the Cross; for, made a
Redeemer necessary. It opened some
deep breach in the order of life and in
the unity of God's Kingdom, which could
be no way healed, but by the atonement.

As by one man sin entered into this world,
and by his death: and his death passed
upon all men: even so all have sinned
an dwells. (Rom. 5:18). Was set up, where, before,
God requited alone. Out of the abyss of the
eternal world arose up some awful
power, some strong necessity, the opposite
just of God. One act of one man, the act
obedience of our will, called up a whole
world of rebellion, and let in all the pains.
Of death upon the works of God. Where we
speak of these things, we speak of what we
cannot understand. The depth is too dark
for us. The voice which issues out of the
eternal throne has said, "For in that day
wherewith thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt
die the death." "The wages of sin is death;
the soul that sinneth, it shall die." This
is all we can know until we are beyond
this grace. Then, it may be, the powers
of death will be revealed to those over
whom it had no more dominion. For
the present time, it is enough to know,
that there could be no life in the world,
when fallen, except by the atonement
of the Son of God. And he of his free
choice, and eternal love, gave himself
to die in our behalf. The cross bore
through these absolute and awful
necessities, and henceforth "hell and death" are "cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death." 2. For we may see the extremity of sin. If there had been no sin in the world until now, the sin we have committed, each one of us, this day alone have demanded the sacrifice of reconciliation. But is the extremity of our offences, such its insufficiency of guilt. We may say, Our Saviour, "Though there had been no sinners upon earth but myself, I should have created the necessity which waited the Son of God upon the tree. Though sufficient to redeem all the world, yet nothing less than His love could redeem me alone, infinite in price, His death is needed to blot out my sin alone, which is infinite in guilt."

3 And, again, not only does He, both create and multiply this necessity, but, to speak it continued to frustrate the work of the Cross.

And Passion of the Son of God. It demands His death, and it defeats its virtues: it washed it from the mercies of God, and it was against it by direct hostility: it first makes it necessary, and then would make it fruitless.

For the blood of the Son of God was shed to blot out the sin of the world; but sin bloomed again, from the soul that committed it, the blood of sprinkling wherewith it was sanctified. It plucks away, one by one, the souls from them (he said); and gives the key to those fearful words "Many are called but few chosen." "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leads to life, and few there are that find it." This is a mystery we can only refer to the mystery of the fall and to the origin of evil. The Lamb of God hath taken away the sin.

of the world, yet the elect alone are saved; 
and the whole world is sealed in wickedness. 
In every soul, sin is still striving to tear
it away from the life to which, through the
Cross, it is united. In every one of us this
whole mystery is at work: St. Michael and
his angels fighting against the devil and
his angels: a fearful conflict between two
hosts contending for our eternal destiny.
And in all the earth the same warfare is
renewed: the world wrestling against the
Church; and worst of all, the regenerate,
who have made themselves again servants
of sin, against the Spirit of their regenera-
tion which is given to us by Our Eucharistic
Redeemer.
3 And, once more,sin makes more enemies
of the Cross, because it is, in virtue and
Spirit, a renewal of the Crucifixion.
St. Paul says, "It is impossible for those, who were once enlightened, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have moreover tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away; to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery. It sets the crucifixion over again. And therefore our Lord, though He was already in the bliss and glory of the Father, cried saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' In like manner to every one of us He stretches forth His pierced hands and saith, 'See what I bare for thee, and boundest thee again?" St. John also writes

2 Heb vi. 4-6
"Behold, it cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him." It does not only mean Pilate and Herod, the priests and His crucifiers on Mount Calvary, but all nations, both before and since His Passion, the whole conspiracy of sinful and rebellious wills, by whom He has been betrayed and bound, buffeted and wounded, from the beginning until His coming again. In truth, it was not the hammer and the nails which crucified Him, nor the Roman soldiers who wielded the weapons of His Passion, nor the arm and the hand which wrote His sharp wound into the wood—these were but the blind material instruments of His agency. His true crucifiers were our sins, and He, Himself, the sinners.
for whom he died. This was the real power
of darkness which let us imagine all the
array of death. Useful their record, the
justice and by implication, the wounds
that were suffered on Mount Calvary.
And this reveals to us the true depth
and measure of our guilt. By our
offences we not only create the cause
by for an abomination while we frustrate
its effects, but the wound is in again,
to, while we have yet deplore, need
for us. The chief guilt of men is its
ingratitude - the unthankfulness of
heart which induces to act once again
the Passion of our Redeemer. The deep
naturals of nature would shrink from
such unfeeling hardness. Let us best
just it to ourselves: let us call to mind
the sufferings of every one whose love has
ended and tended in pain: the
lights and the friends of their dark
hours in which we saw them bowing
under the burden of mortal agony,—
all these things are fixed in our souls
as stores which can never be plucked
out. Every remembrance of them pierces
to the quick: Some sudden and太快
recollective thrill through us. The
visions of sorrow, which a tune or a
strain of music, or the first lights
of morning when in our memories,
break up fountains of tears, and make
our hearts to flow with emotion. Hope
she being all these back again? Would
We learned all these torments and pains once more? Do our hearts as much as sincerely consent to the mere passing thought of their enduring affright the last struggles of distress? Would you slight their known danger? Would you do what they forbade, or looked upon Their dearest, most loved, and loving reproach? And yet, when we do, what else do we towards Him who for us hanging upon the Cross? The ingratitude of our Lord teaches, as far as can be, the very art of ingratitude. It is, then, not mere figure of speech, but a very deep and appalling reality, that He makes every soul that willingly offers an offering of the Cross of Christ, by consenting to it into a direct spiritual antagonist of the will and intent of His Merciful Lord in the Mystery of His Passion. And yet, how little do we lay this to heart.
We shall do well to go somewhat into detail, and to bring this subject to bear upon the particulars of our life.

I. Hence we may see, first, the exceeding condescension of every single act of wilful sin. We deceive ourselves by dealing with our sins as a heap. If we would weigh them by a just measure, we must treat them singly. Each one, taken alone, contains the whole principle of rebellion against God. Deep is united to the necessity of the Crucifix. Our whole will, that is, our whole moral power and being, is in every deliberate act. We all acknowledge this in the greater sins such as bloodshed, blasphemy, hypocrisy, cruelty, and the like. Of these there is no question. But what was the sin by which the world fell, and Man crucified upon the earth? Was that first transgression,

According to the measures which we have
sinned, for the Eternal Judge, a great sin or a small? Was it a sin of the Spirit or of the flesh? A ‘refused’ or a ‘good’ sin? A sin implying corruption of the heart, or consistent with purity, and the blunder that in which man place their perfection? What was that sin in its true and reality? It was a wilful variance with the will of God, a constant of the heart to what God had foreseen. And what then, is pride, vanity, anger, worldliness, self-love, ill-temper, falsehood, inconstancy? What are these, that men make such little count? Are they not every one, as they are committed, these in single acts, sins of a high and guilty character? Is not every constant of the will to sin, a deliberate participation in the woful rebellion against the will of God, which pierced the Son of God? Shall we say, ‘And not think of thee’? Can we say in this day of His coming?
"Lord, I did not know, or I did not remember, or I did not understand," and the like? Well. He not uncles, "But why did you not think and remember? Was it as hard to remember the cross for thy sake, as it was to die upon it for your? Will you clear yourselves by pleading incredibility? To be forgetful of thy agony, is it not to be ungrateful? And in a redeemed soul, what love is greater? Shall we, then, dare to say now what we shall not dare to plead at that day? No; let us believe it: the cross is the only true measure of our sin. Let us not weight it in the false balances of sinners, or by the double weight of our own self-love. Let us try it by this true and only measure. The lives of our whole life, manhood, youth, and childhood, we must bring them, one by one, to the foot of the cross, and there learn their true meaning, which is nothing less than the death and passion.
of our Lord.

2 Another practical truth we may learn is, the
sinfulness of every habitual state or tendency of
mind contrary to the spirit of our Saviour.
I have hitherto spoken of acts, in which the consent
of the will is given. There is a still more subtle
danger which besets us. When a man's conscience
is awakened, he leaves off, by degrees, his out-
ward acts of sin. And yet the inward sins of
the Spirit are often privately cherished in secret.
A great amount of concealed mental sinfulness
may lie hid under a life which is outwardly
without blame. The soul may converse to itself
in its own images and thoughts of sin, and
is kept up the vivacity of sin, though never
suffered to betray itself in acts.
This needs but little illustration; at least in
some of its chief forms. There are, however, a
few examples we may take, not without ad-
vantage. For instance, how commonly a live
to secret pride. It may inwardly betray itself, and yet it may be interior . Worldly pride, whether of birth, rank, riches, or what is still more sandard and incalculable, pride of intellectual power, is often the true disarming spirit of the heart, when least suspected. Pride is, so to speak, too proud to expose itself. It would be offended, if it were to become utterance and censure. It therefore dwells apart, keeping itself up in secret, and giving to all the affections of the soul a high and supercilious tone. What is more at variance with the spirit of the Cross? Perhaps nothing, unless we except spiritual pride. And this kind of pride, also, shows itself in many ways. Sometimes in the pride of strictness; that is, in rigour of observance, and regularity; in a sort of Christian Pharisaism, which leads to want of tenderness, and of leniency towards the weak, penitent, and poor; to uncharitable
judgments, deep separation from brethren; though this, perhaps, is the least injurious sort of spiritual pride; because it is the most open and visible; the most human and material, if I may so say—there is a far worse kind, which, instead of building itself upon regularity, sets itself up upon disobedience. It does not take a system, but of itself for its support, but ears itself upon itself, upon the conceit of its own sufficient strength. It is its own centre, and its own foundation. This is the pride which owns no rule of interpretation but its own judgment, or its own private spirit; or what is more dangerous, its own supposed illumination. Such spirits make it a point of pride to be superior to legal appointments and casual ordinances; to Catholic tradition, General Councils, the visible church, the Christian priesthood, the order of bishops.
worship, the matter of the Holy Sacrament. In a word, they will be found, at last, to own no revelation but their own thoughts of God, his Church, but themselves. Sett as such people think it, they claim to be prophets, except that their predictions are not verified, to be Apostles, except that they neither labour nor suffer for the Gospel of Christ. It may be said, that this is an overcharged picture. Granted that it is a full-length exposure of the Spirit which relies upon itself, conforms to the Church as a thing indifferent, and calls the Holy Sacrament an ordinance. But it is the same spirit differing only in degree. The common forces of it are, of course, greater and less pronounced. Outward conformity to the order of the Church arising from custom in private relations, marks this fault in
Many characters, in them it shews itself chiefly by slighting the grace of God in humbler souls, and by testifying obedience to the Church, formality, fasting, self-righteousness, and faith superstition. What fellowship has such a temper with Him who received a Simon's baptism in Jordan, and washed His disciples' feet?

Take again the mental sins of lying, envy, vainglory, profane conversation, love of useless, glittering, and festivities. Is not the indulgence of these faults an habitual protestation of that Divine zeal which conduces our Master to the sacrifice of Himself? What was the fervor of His ardent burning love? Of His heart all on fire for us? Can we be all lukewarm and languid in return, and be held guiltless?

What then shall we be, if, through each
of love, we sink into softness, self-indulgence, self-pampering, and love of ourselves; into a delicate self-considering carefulness which fixes all our thoughts upon our own pleasures, comfort, health, happiness, and the like. A love of self is, in truth, the very soul of sin. All souls are but as circles issuing out from this one productive centre, expanding, issuing out, some less widely, including a narrower, or a larger field of our spiritual life. And what is such a temper but a deliberate contradiction of the Cross and character of Him who "did not please Himself," who "gave His body to the wicked and His cheeks to them that plucked them."* And when He could give no more, "by the Holy Ghost offered Himself without spot to God."† Such sins as are most dangerous, because they

*Rom. xv. 3.  †Matt. i. 6.  ‡Heb. ix. 14.
are less gross; because they do not issue in
startling acts, but are wrought into the
state and texture of the mind itself. They
have no little that is unusual about them,
and are so refined; they are so free from
backward transgressions of the second table
of the Law; they bear so much of the
array of light. But, nevertheless they
concentrate themselves with a fatal intensity
against the spirit of humiliation; against
meekness, self-surrender, self-abasement;
compassion, and love.
So bring this home to our own case:
how does our past life appear, seen thus
under the light of the Crucifixion? How
will our said deeds bear to be measured
by this rule? What is the secret temper
of our spirit now at this present time?
Is it humbled, broken, mortified, or 
feared, self-supported, and erect?
These are questions we must ask, keep 
awake with sincerity and a godly 
fear: for they will be asked in the day 
when we shall see our Redeemer in the 
Judgment. Let us clearly discover and 
what we must confess at that day.
If we be living in a high-minded, selfish 
selfless spirit, let us lose no time 
to lay down the arms of our rebellion 
at the foot of the Cross; let us there 
breathe the weapons of our pride in 
Sorrow, and bow down our will 
below His pierced feet.
And as a part of our submission, let 
us take two very simple practical 
Rules.
Our is. When we are tempted by any approach of evil, to fix our eyes inwardly upon their, hanging upon the cross. Let us then call to mind His five wounds, and His Crown of thorns. This will abate our pride, beat our will, and cast out our evil thoughts. If the temptation be strong and abiding, keep your eyes upon Him until you are delivered. Look upon Him, as upon the true Serpent of brass, till the fever and the poison of your sin be healed. Go, if you can, into some secret place, and kneel down in His light; keep there, stay upon your knees till the string of sin is allayed. And the temptation passeth away. 

The other rule is: to pray day by day, that our will may be crucified with Him. This prayer, if we persevere, will, by His Grace, slay the sin from that is in us, and make us, not sinners but lovers.
of His Cross. St. Paul says, "They that are crucified with Christ, have crucified their flesh, with the deeds and conceits of the world." He says still more, "with Christ You nailed to the Cross." This shall be your state at last. Happy, and blessed are they who are dead to themselves, alive to Him alone. Let us therefore pray: 
Hear us, to write us to the Spirit of His Crucifixion, that we may die to sin, to the world, to our own will; to all that flatters, fosters, strengthens the love of ourselves. As in Baptism we were baptized with His life-giving sign, and charged to fight manfully under His Name, so let us pray, that in life and in death we may be under the Shadow of His Cross. Therefore let us pray with all sincerity: It may be the Lord will hear.
you, sickness, or sorrow, or contradiction of success, or suffering of some kind. For your prayer is an appeal to His Passion. He may suffer you to receive the Suggnas which the world printed on Him. Be it so. Let come what may, if only we have upon us, the marks of our Crucified Master at that day when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear, and the Angels "shall gather together His elect from the four winds."