

Whence shall my tears begin?

Covenant (66. 86. 10. 10)

The musical score is written for piano in a 2-staff system. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 54 (♩ = 54). The dynamics are marked with a forte (f) dynamic at the beginning and later with crescendo (cresc.), forte (f), decrescendo (dim.), and ritardando (rit.) markings. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff.

1. Whence shall my tears begin?
What first-fruits shall I bear
Of earnest sorrow for my sin?
Or how my woes declare?
O Thou! the merciful and gracious one
Forgive the foul transgressions I have done.

2. With Adam I have vied,
Yea, passed him, in my fall;
And I am naked now, by pride
And lust made bare of all;
Of Thee, O God, and that celestial band,
And all the glory of the promised land.

3. No earthly Eve beguiled
My body into sin:
A spiritual temptress smiled,
Concupiscence within:
Unbridled passion grasped the unhallowed sweet:
Most bitter - ever bitter - was the meat.

4. If Adam's righteous doom,
Because he dared transgress
Thy one decree, lost Eden's bloom
And Eden's loveliness:
What recompence, O Lord, must I expect,
Who all my life Thy quickening laws neglect?

5. By mine own act, like Cain,
A murderer was I made:
By mine own act my soul was slain,
When Thou wast disobeyed:
And lusts each day are quickened, warring still
Against Thy grace with many a deed of ill.

6. Thou formed'st me of clay,
O heav'nly Potter! Thou
In fleshly vesture didst array,
With life and breath endow.
Thou who didst make, didst ransom, and dost know
To Thy repentant creature pity show!

7. My guilt for vengeance cries;
But yet Thou pardonest all,
And whom Thou lov'st Thou dost chastise,
And mourn'st for them that fall:
Thou, as a Father, mark'st our tears and pain,
And welcomest the prodigal again.

8. I lie before Thy door,
O turn me not away!
Nor in mine old age give me o'er
To Satan for a prey!
But ere the end of life and term of grace,
Thou merciful! my many sins efface!

9. The priest beheld, and passed
The way he had to go:
A careless glance the Levite cast,
And left me to my woe:
But Thou, O Jesu, Mary's Son, console,
Draw nigh, and succour me, and make me whole!

10. Thou Spotless Lamb divine,
Who takest sins away,
Remove, remove, the load that mine
Upon my conscience lay:
And, of Thy tender mercy, grant Thou me
To find remission of iniquity.