

THE DUTY OF SELF DENIAL

THOMAS WATSON



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A penetrating Puritan treatise on Christ's command: "**Let him deny himself.**" Watson systematically unpacks what self-denial means for the Christian life — denying carnal reason where it contradicts faith, mortifying fleshly desires, and surrendering personal ambition to God's will. With his characteristic **vivid imagery** and sharp pastoral wit, he rebukes spiritual complacency, laments the scarcity of true self-denial, and offers practical helps for cultivating it through **humility, love, and faith**. A brief but powerful work that strikes at the root of discipleship.



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INTRODUCTION



The Duty of Self-denial Briefly Opened and Urged.
By **Thomas Watson**, Minister of the Gospel.

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three **Crowns** in **Cheapside**, near **Mercers Chapel**; and at the
Bible on **London Bridge**. 1675.

TO THE READER



TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

The weightiness of the Argument here discoursed on, justly merits a larger volume: But I have contracted it, because it may possibly come into more hands. I must profess I know not a more necessary point in **Divinity**. Self-denial is the first principle of Christianity; it is the life-blood, which must run through the whole body of Religion. Self-denial is learned not out of the **Topics** of Philosophy, but the **Oracles** of Scripture. It is my request to the Reader, to peruse this Manual with seriousness, as knowing the **Practice** of Self-denial is that wherein his salvation is nearly concerned. The Lord work with his word, and cause the dew of his blessing to fall with this Manna, which is the Prayer of

Your Friend and Servant in the Gospel, **Thomas Watson**.
Dowgate. In the year **1675**.

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Luke 9.23._ And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Finis.

CHAPTER 1: A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE, WHEREIN THE PROPOSITION IS COMPRISED



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All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, 2 Timothy 3:16. The Word is compared to a **Lamp**, for its illuminating quality, **Psalm** 119:105. And to **Silver refined**, for its enriching quality, **Psalm** 12:6. Among other parts of Sacred Writ, this is not the least, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.**

These words are dropped from the lips of Christ, the **Oracle of Truth**. In the preceding verse, our Blessed Savior did foretell his Passion, **The Son of man must suffer many things**. And his suffering is set down in two expressions:

1. He must be **rejected**; Thus he was **The stone which the builders refused**, Psalm 118:22.

2. He must be **slain**. This Diamond must be cut. He who gave life to others, must himself die. And as Christ did thus **abase** himself for us, so we must **deny** ourselves for him; **And he said to**

them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself. Self-denial is the foundation of Godliness, and if this be not well laid, all the building will fall. Let me explain the words.

1. **And he said to them all]** Self-denial is of **Universal extent**, it concerns all, it respects both Ministers and People. Christ spoke it as well to his **Apostles**, as the rest of his hearers.

2. **If any man will come after me]** If he will follow me as the soldier does his **General**: if he will arrive at that place of Glory where I am going,

3. **Let him deny himself.]** **Beza** and **Erasmus** render it, let him **lay aside**, or **reject** himself. Self-denial is a kind of Self-annihilation. The words have two parts: 1. A Supposal, **If any man will come after me]** 2. An Imposal, **Let him deny himself.** This word, **Let him deny**, is not only a **permission**, but an **injunction**; it carries in it the force of a command: As if a King should say, **Let it be enacted.**

The Proposition I shall insist on, is, That a good Christian must be a Self-denier. **Let him deny himself.**

CHAPTER 2: THE EXPLAINING OF THE PROPOSITION



CHAPTER 2. THE EXPLAINING OF THE PROPOSITION.

Question 1. In what sense a Christian must not deny himself?

Response 1.1. He must not deny his **Promise**. A Man's Promise should be **sacred**, he is to keep it though it be to his loss, **Psalm** 15:1, 4. He who makes no reckoning of his Promise, God makes no reckoning of his Profession.

2. A Christian must not deny his **Grace**. He must not disown any good Work wrought in him: He ought not to say, he is **a dry tree**, when the dew of Heaven lies upon his branches. As it is a sin for a Man to make himself **better** than he is; so, to make himself **worse**. To say he has Grace when he has none, is presumption; to say he has no Grace when he has, is ingratitude: It is a bearing false witness against the Spirit of God.

Question 2. In what sense a Christian must deny himself?

Response I Answer in general, he must deny that **carnal part** which is near to him as himself, that which is as the **apple of his eye**. But more particularly,

1. A Christian must deny his **Reason**, I say not, **renounce** it, but **deny** it. Some cry up the **Diana** of Reason, making it the rule and standard of Faith. **Quod absurdum est rationi debet esse falsum**, said a **Socinian**. Indeed that there is a God, and that this God is to be worshipped is a **Law written** in the heart of Man, and is consonant to Reason; but who God is, and the right mode of Worship, this is such an **Arcanum** that Reason can no more find out, than, the **Philistines** could **Samson's riddle**. Job 11:7. **Can you by searching find out God?** Reason must be denied, in 1. **Credendis. 2. Agendis.**

1. In **Credendis, In Doctrines proposed to be believed.**

1. The Doctrine of the **Trinity. Puteus est profundus, The well is deep**, and who can with the plum-line of Reason fathom it! The Persons in the Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; they are three Subsistences, but one Essence. The Trinity is purely an object of **Faith**. There are some truths in Religion demonstrable by Reason; as that we should **fly vice**, and **do to others as we would have them do to us**: But the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of Essence, is of Divine Revelation, and must be assented to by faith. Those illuminated Philosophers who could discourse subtly of the magnitude and influence of the Stars, the nature of Plants and Minerals, could not by their deepest indagation find out the Mystery of the Trinity: This is wholly supernatural, and must be adored with humble believing.

2. The Doctrine of the **Incarnation**; That Eternity should be born; That he who rules the Stars should suck the breasts; That a **Virgin should conceive**; That the Branch should bear the Root; That in Christ there should be two Natures, yet but one Person; That the Divine Nature should not be transfused into the Human,

yet the Human Nature should be assumed into the Person of the Son of God; the Human Nature not God, yet one with God; here Reason must be denied.

3. The Doctrine of the **Resurrection**. That the body interred, nay crumbled into a Thousand Fractions, and the Ashes scattered in the Air, should rise again, is above Reason to imagine. The **Epicureans** and **Stoics** derided **Paul** when he preached to them of the Resurrection, **Acts** 17:32. Here Reason must be captivated. **John** 5:28. **Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.** The Chemist can out of several metals mingled together, extract the one from the other, the Silver from the Gold, the alchemy from the Silver, and can reduce every metal to its own **species**. So when the bodies of men are mixed with other Substances, the wise God can make a sudden extraction, and clothe every Soul with its own Body; did not the same numerical Body rise, it would be rather a **Creation** than a **Resurrection**. **Acts** 26:8, **Why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead?** God can do it because of his **Power**, **Matthew** 22:29. And he cannot but do it because of his Truth. The Doctrines of Faith do not oppose Reason, but transcend it.

2. Reason must be denied in **Agendis, In Duties enjoined to be practiced**. There are many Duties in Religion which carnal Reason quarrels at. God says, it is **The glory of a man to pass by an offence**, **Proverbs** 19:11. No says carnal reason, it is Cowardice. The Heathens thought it gallantry of spirit to revenge injuries. God says, the paths of holiness are strewed with Roses, **Proverbs** 3:17, **Her ways are ways of pleasantness**. No says **Reason**, they are severe and **Cynical**, I must crucify my delights,

and drown my mirth in Tears. God says, Religion is gainful, 1 **Timothy 6:8, Godliness is great gain.** It brings contentment arising from the favor of God, it brings Temporal riches, **Proverbs 3:16, In her left hand riches and honor.** The way to be prosperous, is to be pious. No says **Reason**, if I follow the Trade of Religion, I shall break, 2 **Chronicles 25:9, What shall I do for the hundred Talents?** In this case, carnal Reason must be denied and oppugned. He who will go no further than Reason, will come many Leagues short of Heaven.

2. A Christian must deny his **Will**. This is **Brugensis** gloss upon the Text, The will is the **primum mobile**, the great wheel in the Soul that moves all the Affections. The Will in innocency was regular, it did echo to God's Will; but since the **fall**, though it retains its freedom in moral actions, yet as to spiritual it is depraved. If the Will could cease from sinning (says **Bernard**) there would be no Hell. The greatest wound is fallen upon the Will. The Mariner's Compass being stricken with Thunder, causes the point of the Needle to stand wrong: Man's Nature being corrupted, causes the Will to point wrong, it inclines to evil. There is in the Will, not only **impotency**, but **obstinacy**, Acts 7:51, **You have always resisted the Holy Ghost.** Now here we must deny our Will, and bring it to God's Will. If a Stick that is crooked be laid upon ground that is level, we do not go to bring the ground **even** with the Stick, but to make the Stick **even** with the ground. So God's Will is not to be brought to ours, but our Will being crooked, must be brought to God's Will. We pray, **Thy will be done.** The way to have our Will, is to deny it.

3. A Christian must deny his **own righteousness**, his civilities, duties, good works. **Philippians 3:9, That I may be found in him not having my own Righteousness.** The Spider weaves a web out of her own bowels; an Hypocrite would spin a web of Salvation out of his own Righteousness: But Saint **Paul**, like the **Bee**, sucked Salvation from the flower of Christ's Righteousness. **Isaiah 64:6, Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.** Our best duties are fly-blown with sin. Put Gold in the fire and there comes out dross. Our most golden services are mixed with unbelief. The Angel pouring **sweet odors** into the prayers of the Saints, **Revelation 8:3**, shows that they are in themselves unsavory, and need Christ's sweet odors to perfume them.

Use Duty, but trust to Christ's Righteousness for Salvation. **Noah's** Dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the Ark for safety.

And if we must deny our holy things in point of Justification, then much more our Civilities. A Stake may be finely painted, but it has no root. A Man may be painted with Civility, yet have no root of Grace; a moral person is **washed**, not **changed**. The life may be Civil, when the heart is Wicked; as the Sea may be Calm, when the Water of it is Salt. The Pharisee could say he was **no Adulterer**, Luke 18:11. But could he say, he was not proud? The civilized person may have a secret antipathy against goodness, he may hate Grace as much as Vice. Civility is but a **cracked Title** to Heaven. A piece of Brass may shine, but wanting the **King's image** it will not go current. A man may shine with moral Virtues, but wanting the Image of God consisting in holiness, he will not pass current at the day of judgment. Morality is good, but God will

say, **Yet you lack one thing**, Mark 10:31. Civility is a good **Jacob's staff** to walk with among men, but it is a bad **Jacob's ladder** to climb up to Heaven.

4. A Christian must deny all **Self-confidence**. How confident was **Pendleton** of himself! **This fat of mine** (says he) **shall melt in the fire for Christ**, but instead of that, his courage melted. The same Hebrew word signifies both **confidence** and **folly**. Self-confidence betrays folly. **Peter** did presume too much upon his own strength, **Matthew 26:34, Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You**. But how soon was his confidence shaken, and blown down with the breath of a Maid? **Matthew 26:71, 72, He denied with an Oath, saying, I know not the man. Peter's** denying of Christ was for want of denying himself. Self-jealousy is good. **Romans 11:20, Be not high-minded, but fear**. The trembling reed oft stands, when the confident Cedar falls. Who that knows the fierceness of a Trial, or the falseness of his Heart, will not fear? How have some professors shined as Stars in the Churches Hemisphere, yet have been **falling stars? Porphyry, Julian, Cardinal Pool, Gardiner, Judas**. The Apostles have been called by some of the Ancients, the eyes of the World, Christ's feet, the Churches breasts: **Judas** was one of these, yet a Traitor. Nay, some of the Saints through God's withdrawing the influence of his Spirit, have for a time relapsed. As **Cranmer**, and **Origen**, whose heart fainted in the seventh persecution, and he offered incense to the Idol. Deny self-confidence. **1 Corinthians 10:12, Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall**. 'Tis just with God, that he who trusts to himself, should be left to himself. The Vine being weak, twists about the Elm to support it. A good Christian being conscious of his own im-

becility, twists by Faith about Christ. Philippians 4:13, **I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.** Samson's strength lay in his hair, ours lies in our Head Christ.

5. A Christian must deny **self-conceit**. Job 11:12, **Vain man would be wise.** In the Hebrew it is **empty man**. Man is a proud piece of flesh. He is apt to be highly opinionated of himself.

—Ostendit avis junonia pennas—

Acts 8:9, **There was a certain man named Simon, giving out that himself was some great one.** Sapor writes himself, Brother of the Sun and Moon. **Commodus** the Emperor called himself, **The Golden Hercules**. The **Persian** Kings would have their Images worshipped of all that came into **Babylon**. Such as view themselves in the flattering glass of self-love, appear bigger in their own eyes than they are. They think their spark a Sun, their drop a Sea. They are highly conceited of their **acumen**, their wit and parts, and are ready to despise others. The **Chinese** say that **Europe** has one eye, and they have two, and all the World else is blind.

De meliore luto Titan praecordia finxit.

Deny self-conceit. Romans 12:3, **I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.** Proverbs 23:4, **Cease from your own wisdom.** Not cease from being wise, but from conceiting yourself wise. That you may deny all high supercilious thoughts of yourselves, consider;

1. Self-conceit is no small sin. **Chrysostom** calls it the mother of Hell. It is a kind of Idolatry, a self-worshipping.

2. Whatever noble endowment you have, it is **borrowed**. As he said of that Axe which fell in the water. 2 Kings 6:5, **Alas master, for it was borrowed**. All a Man's Gifts, his pregnancy of Parts, ripeness of Wit, are borrowed from Heaven, and what wise Man would be proud of a Jewel that is lent? 1 Corinthians 4:7, **What do you have that you did not receive?** The Moon has no cause to be conceited of her light which she is beholden to the Sun for.

3. Whatever acuteness of Wit, or sageness of Judgment you have, think how far short you come.

1. How far short do you come of that knowledge which **Adam** had in innocency? He was the Oracle of Wisdom, he could unlock Nature's dark cabinet, and find out those secrets which do amuse us. **Adam** had a full inspection into the causes of things. He was a kind of earthly Angel.

But how far short do you come of him? Your knowledge is checkered with ignorance. There are many [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉], hard knots in Nature which cannot easily be untied. Why the Loadstone leaving Gold and Pearl, should draw Iron? Why **Nilus** should overflow in Summer, when waters are usually lowest? **What way the light is parted?** Job 38.24. Why the Sea should be higher than the Earth, yet not drown it? How **the bones grow in the womb?** Ecclesiastes 11.5. What is the reason of all occult qualities? He who sees clearest has a mist before his eyes. By eating **the tree of knowledge**, we lost **the key of knowledge**.

2. How far short do you come of that knowledge which Satan has. He is called [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉] from his knowledge. We read of the [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉], the **depths of Satan**, Revelation 2.24. And his [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉] his **stratagems**, 2 Corinthians 2.11. Satan is an intelligent spirit. Though he has lost his sanctity, yet not his knowledge: Though he has lost his breastplate, yet not his headpiece. He has wit enough **to deceive the Nations**, Revelation 20.3. His understanding is nimble, and being compared with ours, is like the swift flight of an Eagle, compared with the slow motion of a Snail. Why then should any be puffed up with a conceit of their knowledge, wherein the Devil far outstrips them?

3. How far short do you come of the knowledge they have, who are perfected in glory. He who is higher than a Dwarf, may be lower than a Giant. Such as excel others in natural abilities, are of a lower stature than the glorified Saints. 1 Corinthians 13.12, **We see**, in aenigmate, **through a glass darkly**. But the Saints in bliss, have a full-eyed Vision of God. Their light which did burn here like fire when it is smothered, is now blown up into a pure flame. An Infant glorified, knows more than the most profound Rabbis on earth. In Heaven all **shadows fly away**, the **Sun of Righteousness** having risen there with his illustrious beams. This may pull down the plumes of pride and self-conceit.

4. Your **dark-side** is broader than your **light-side**. Your ignorance is more than your knowledge. Your knowledge is but as the light of a Torch, your ignorance as the **Cimmerian** darkness. Job 26.14, **How little a portion is known of God?** The Septuagint renders it, **How little a drop!** To think to comprehend the Deity, is as if we should go to span the Ocean. Christians, the greatest

part of your knowledge, is not so much as the least part of your ignorance. This may demolish all high imaginations. You have no cause to be conceited of the knowledge you have, but rather to be humbled for what you want.

5. Think what an Hell of sin you carry about you. Sin is the **ac-cursed thing**. Joshua 5.13. It is the quintessence of evil. It is like a stain to beauty. It was Typified by the **menstruous cloth**, which was the most unclean thing under the Law. What though you have knowledge, sin does eclipse it: As if a Woman should have a fair Face, but a Cancer in her Breast. Your knowledge does not so much adorn you, as sin does debase you.

6. Grace can never thrive where self-conceit grows. As a Body cannot thrive in a Dropsy; so neither can the Soul thrive, which is swelled with this Dropsy of Pride and Self-conceit. A proud head makes a barren heart.

7. A Supercilious conceitedness is odious, and does much lessen any worth in a person. It is like a cloud in a Diamond. The more one values himself, the less God and Angels value him. Let a Person be eminent, yet if he be self-conceited he is loved of none; he is like a Physician that has the Plague, though he may be admired for his skill, yet none care to come near him.

8. Such as are well opinionated of their own excellencies, are in the ready way to ruin. Either God infatuates them, or denies a blessing to their labours, or suffers them to fall into some great sin. **Peter**, who was so well conceited of himself, as if he had had more grace than all the Apostles besides, the Lord let him fall very far.

He denied Christ with an Oath, nay an imprecation, **Matthew** 26.74. **Peter** wished a curse on himself if he knew Christ, nay, some think he cursed Christ.

The Lord sometimes lets vain conceited persons fall not only **fouly** but **finally**. The Doves (says **Pliny**) take a pride in their Feathers, and in their flying high, at last they soar so high that they are a prey to the Hawk. So when men fly high in self-conceitedness, they become a prey to the **Prince of the Air**. Let all this make us deny ourselves, let it kill the Worm of self-conceit. If we are proud of our knowledge, the Devil cares not how much we know. Let St. **Paul** be our pattern, though he were **the chief of the Apostles**, he calls himself **the least of Saints**. Ephesians 3.8. and 2 Corinthians 12.11. [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉]—**Though I be nothing**. This illustrious Apostle, a Star of the first magnitude, did shrink into nothing in his own eyes. It is excellent to be like **Moses**, whose face had a lustre on it, but **he knew not that the skin of his face did shine**, Exodus 34.29.

6. A Christian must deny his **appetite**. The sensitive appetite is sick of a **bulimia**, it cries **give, give**. St. **Paul** did **beat down his Body**, 1 Corinthians 9.27. Such a proportion only is to be taken for the recruiting of Nature, as may help forward Gods service. —**In licitis perimus**—More are hurt by excess in lawful things, than by meddling with unlawful. As more are killed by Wine than Poison. Many make their **Belly their god**, Philippians 3.19. And to this god, they pour drink-offerings. **Clemens Alexandrinus** writes of a Fish whose heart is in its belly: An emblem of epicures whose heart is in their Belly, they are devoted to sensuality. Excess in meat or drink clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust. The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest

soil. Intemperance shortens life; as too much Oil extinguishes the Lamp. Many dig their own graves with their teeth. Christ cautioned his Apostles, Luke 21.34. **Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.** Seneca could say, he was born to higher things than to be a slave to his Body. What a shame is it that the Soul, that princely thing which sways the scepter of Reason, and is akin to the Angels, should be enslaved to the brutish part! Deny the sinful cravings of the flesh. What has God given conscience for, but to be a golden Bridle, to check the inordinacy of the Appetite?

7. A Christian must deny his **ease**, Proverbs 1.23. **Ease slays the simple.** The Flesh is full of sloth and effeminacy, it is loath to take pains for Heaven. Proverbs 19.24, **A slothful man, hides his hand in his bosom.** He is loath to pluck it out though it be to lay hold on a Crown. Weeds and vermin grow in untilled ground, and all vices grow in an idle untilled heart. How can they expect, to reap an harvest of Glory, who never sowed any seed? Is Satan so busy in his Diocese, 1 **Peter** 5.8. and are Christians idle? Are they **Like the Lilies which toil not, neither do they spin?** O deny your ease. **Seneca**, an Heathen devoted himself to labour, and spent part of the Night in study. **Hannibal** forced his way over the **Alps** and craggy Rocks. We must force our way to paradise. Let us shake off sloth, as **Paul** did the Viper. Never think to be brought to Heaven as the passengers in a ship are brought to their port sleeping. 1 Chronicles 22.16. **Arise and be doing.** God puts no difference between the **slothful** servant and the wicked. Matthew 25.26. Those people in **Etruria**, who like Drones entered into the Hive, and consumed the honey, were expelled from others, and

condemned to exile. Such as idle away the day of grace, and **fold their hands to sleep**, when they should be **working out Salvation**, God will condemn to a perpetual exile in Hell.

8. A Christian must deny carnal policy. This is **the wisdom of the flesh**, 2 Corinthians 1.12. Carnal Policy is **craft**. The Politician consults not what is **best**, but what is **safest**. The Politician is made of **willow**, he can side with all parties; his Religion is cut according to the fashion of the times; he can bow either to the **East**, or to the **Host**; zeal for truth is blotted out of the Politicians Creed. It was a speech of Sir **Thomas More**, he would not follow Truth too near the heels, lest it should dash out his brains. It is judged by some a piece of Policy not to declare against error, for fear of losing a party. The Politician is a **Latitudinarian**, he has distinctions beyond **Aquinas**, and can digest those things which others tremble at. The Ostriches wings help her to outrun other creatures. Sinful policy makes men run further than they can who are of purer Consciences. In short, the Politician is an **Ecebolius**; he like the **Chameleon** can change into all colours, and be as his company is. He can be either serious or feathery. He can imitate either **Cato** or **Catiline**. I grant Christian prudence is commendable, but the **Serpent** must not devour the **Dove**. That Policy is unjustifiable, which teaches to avoid duty. Deny carnal Policy; dare to be honest. The best Policy is to **hold fast integrity**.

9. A Christian must deny his **inordinate passions**. James 1.26, **If any man among you, seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, this mans religion is vain**. Every member of the Body is infected with sin, as every branch of Wormwood is bitter; but the Tongue is **full of deadly poison**, James 3.8. St.

Augustine, compares the Tongue to a **furnace**, and too often, hot sparks of anger fly out of it. The Holy Ghost once descended **in cloven tongues of fire**, Acts 2.3. But the Apostle **James**, speaks of a Tongue that is **set on fire of Hell**, chap. 3.6. Some cannot rule their own spirit, but are carried away with their passions as a Chariot with wild Horses. Many (says **Jerome**) who will not be drunk with Wine, will be drunk with rash Anger. Ecclesiastes 7.9, **Anger rests in the bosom of fools**. Anger may be in a wise Man, but it rests in a Fool. There is (I know) an holy anger against sin, but the fury of passion, is the scum which boils off from an un-savory heart. Passion disturbs Reason, and unfits for holy Duties. Hot passions make cold prayers. O Christians deny yourselves. Pray that God will **set a watch before your lips**, Psalm 141.4. Labour to quench the fire of wrath, with a flood of tears. It is recorded of Mr. **John Bruen**, in the County Palatine of **Chester**, that though he was naturally of an hasty choleric spirit, yet at length he got the Victory over his passions, and grew so meek and calm, that his very nature seemed to be quite altered. Grace does to the Passions, as Christ did to the Sea when it was stormy. Mark 4.39, He said, **Peace, be still**, and **there was a great calm**. Grace turns the fierceness of the Lion, into the meekness of the Dove.

10. A Christian must deny his **sinful fashions**. Romans 12.2, **Be not conformed to this World. (namely)** to the guise and mode of it. Did the old Christians rise out of their graves, our strange fashions might fright them into their graves again. Was there ever such excess **in Hair?** 1 Corinthians 11.24, **If a man have long hair it is a shame**. More money is sometimes laid out for a Periwig to cover one head, than would clothe Twenty

Poor. One asking Reverend Mr. **Dod**, why he did not Preach against those Ruffians who wore long hair, he replied, If Grace comes into their heart, it will make them cut their hair.

Nor can the female sex be excused, for their excess in apparel. **Seneca** complained of those in his time, who hung two or three patrimonies at their ears; some wear half their revenues upon their backs. **Lysander** would not suffer his daughters to be too gorgeously attired, saying, it would not make them so **comely** as **common**. What spotted faces and bare shoulders appear in the congregations. And that professors should symbolize, and comply with others in their antic dresses, is the reproach of religion. A tear in the eye would more adorn than a tower on the forehead. O deny yourselves. Pull down these flags of vanity. Have not God's judgments yet humbled you? 1 Timothy 2:9, **I will therefore that women adorn themselves with modest apparel: let the hidden man of the heart** be beautified and bespangled with grace. Psalm 45:13, **The King's daughter is all glorious within.**

11. A Christian must deny **his own aims**. He must not look askance in religion, and aim at himself more than God. He must not aim at self-enriching, at self-applause.

1. He must not aim at **self-enriching**. Some espouse the Gospel only for gain. They court this Queen not for her beauty, but her jewels. It is not **the fire of the altar** they regard, but **the gold of the altar**, 1 Timothy 6:5, **Supposing that gain is godliness.** **Camero** a French Divine of **Bordeaux**, relates of one **Santangel** a Lawyer, that he turned Protestant, only out of worldly respects, that he might grow rich. **Judas** preached, and wrought miracles, but his eye was chiefly to the **bag**. How do

many heap benefice upon benefice, minding the fleece more than the flock: **Dumb dogs** are **greedy dogs**, **Isaiah** 56:10, 11. These make use of the ministerial function, only as a net to catch preferment. This is in sacred things to be profane. 'Tis sordid, and unworthy of a Christian, to make religion truckle to secular interest.

2. A Christian must not aim at **self-applause**. The Pharisees who were **animalia gloriae**, were herein guilty. They prayed and gave alms, **That they might be seen of men**, Matthew 6. The oil of vain-glory fed their lamp. Verse 5: **Verily they have their reward**. They might make their acquittance, and write, **Received in full payment**. 'Tis a saying of **Spanhemius**, That there is in every man by nature, **aliquid Pharisaei**, a spice of Pharisaism, a seeking after the glory and applause of the world. **Luther** confessed though he was never tempted with covetousness, yet he was sometimes with vain-glory. Christ's own disciples were disputing **who should be greatest?** O this Devil of vain-glory! The moth breeds in the finest cloth, and self-seeking is apt to breed in the best duties. Sinister aims do corrupt religion. A good aim, will not make a bad action good, but a bad aim, will make a good action bad.

To blame are they, who when they have done any glorious service in the Church, take the praise to themselves. Like those Heathens who sacrificed the wax to their gods, but kept the honey to themselves. **Matthew Paris** speaks of one, who having in several lectures proved strenuously that Christ was God, and being highly applauded for it, he cried out, saying, **O Jesus, thou art beholden to me for thy Divinity this day**. Whereupon this Doctor was stricken suddenly with such stupor and forgetfulness, that he could never after say the Lord's Prayer, but as a little child

said it to him. Let this cause trembling and humility in Christians. Several ships which have escaped the rocks, have been cast away upon the sands. Many who have escaped the rocks of gross scandals, have been cast away upon the sands of self-seeking. One said, he would not have **Erasmus's** fame and applause for a world. Not but that to have esteem in God's Church, is a blessing: Hebrews 11:2, **By faith the elders obtained a good report.** Much of the honour of religion, depends upon the credit of them that profess it. But the sin is, when self-applause is the only thing hunted after. Popular acclamation, is a golden arrow, which glistens in the eye, but wounds to the heart. How many have been blown to Hell with the breath of popular applause.

O let us deny, yea, abhor this vain-glorious humour. We have a famous example in **John Baptist**, who sought to lift up Christ, and beat down himself. John 1:15, **He that cometh after me is preferred before me.** As if he had said, I am but the **Herald, the voice of one crying**, Christ who cometh after me is the Prince. I am but the morning-star, he is the Sun; I baptize only with **water**, he with the **Holy Ghost**. Thus he sets the crown of honour upon Christ's head. As **Joab** when he had taken **Rabbah**, did not arrogate the praise to himself, but sent for King **David**, that he might carry away the glory of the victory, 2 **Samuel** 12:27. So when any eminent service in Church or State hath been done, the glory of all should be given to Christ and free grace. It is better God should approve, than the world applaud. If we are faithful, we shall have honour enough in Heaven. Let this be our chief aim in duty, that we may grow more in love with God, and be made more like him, and have more communion with him, and bring more revenues of honour to him. 1 Peter 4:11, **That in all things, God**

may be glorified. We should not only **advance**, but **design** God's glory. It was a worthy speech of **Philip de Mornay** upon his deathbed, That he had through the course of his life, made God's glory his end and aim. As all the rivers run into the sea, so all our actions must run into God the Infinite Ocean.

12. A Christian must deny all **ungodliness**. Titus 2:11, 12, **The grace of God hath appeared to all men, Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly**, etc. The **Turks** say in their **Quran**, That God did not give men lustful desires to be frustrated. But let their **Quran** go with the Papists' **legend**. The Scripture seals no patents for sin. It bids us deny **ungodly lusts**. It is not likely he will sacrifice his **Isaac**, his worldly profits, who will not sacrifice the **ram**, his vile lusts. A Christian must deny his malice, revenge, covetousness, uncleanness, superstition, heterodoxy. A man may as well go to Hell for a drunken opinion, as a drunken life. And let me especially instance in two sins a Christian must deny.

1. The sin of **rash censuring**, James 4:11, **Speak not evil one of another**. Some make it a part of their religion to criticize upon others, and clip their credit to make it weigh lighter. You shall hear them say, such a one is proud, factious, hypocritical, James 4:12, **Who art thou that judgest another?** Saint **Augustine** could not endure any should detract from the good name of others, therefore wrote these two verses upon his table.

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere famam, Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.

The root of censoriousness is **pride**. A person thinks by taking from another's reputation, he shall add something to his own. But let him look to it, who shall raise himself upon the ruins of another's fame. Is it no sin think you to murder a man in his name? You who are such a critic, it is to be feared, you can spy all faults but your own. Like the **Lamiae** who could see well abroad, but were blind at home. O Christian look inward, did you view your own spots more, in the looking-glass of the Word, you would not be so ready to throw the **stone** of censure at others. Deny this sin of rash censuring, or **smiting with the tongue**, Jeremiah 18:18. You who speak reproachfully of your brother without a cause, the time may come that he may be accepted, and you rejected, he may be found **gold**, and you **reprobate silver**.

2. A Christian must deny his **peccatum in delitiis**, his **complexion-sin**. Psalm 18:23, **I have kept myself from mine iniquity**. As there is one master-bee in the hive, so there is naturally one master-sin in the heart, this must be denied. The Devil can hold a man fast by one sin. A jailer can hold the prisoner fast by one fetter. One sin is enough to stop the current of mercy; one sin may damn as well as more. As one millstone is enough to sink a man into the sea. If there be any lust which we cannot deny, it will be a **bitter root**, either of scandal or apostasy.

13. A Christian must deny his **relations**. Luke 14:26, **If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, he cannot be my disciple**. The meaning is, when carnal relations come in competition with, or stand in opposition to Christ, we must hate them. When our friends would prove snares, and hinder us from doing our duty, we must either leap over them, or tread upon them. Here, **odium in suos**, is,

pietas in Deum. If my wife (saith **Jerome**) should hang about my neck, if my mother should show me her breasts that gave me suck, and persuade me to deny Christ, I would break from them and fly to the Cross. When **Peter** would be a tempter, Christ said, **Apage, Get thee behind me Satan.**

14. A Christian must deny his **estate** for Christ. A carnal heart will commend Christ, and profess him; but will part with nothing for him. The young man in the Gospel was Christ's **hearer**, but not his **follower**. He did, **superna probare**, but **terrena appetere** as one saith. When Christ said to him, **Sell all and give to the poor**, abiit tristis, **he went away sorrowful**, Matthew 19:22. When **Mercury** is in conjunction with a bad planet, it hath a bad influence: So when riches are joined with a bad heart, they do much hurt. The world lay nearer the young man's heart, than Christ. Have some of the Heathens denied the world? **Epaminondas** a **Grecian** Captain, who obtained many glorious victories, yet he was a great contemner of the world; he refused vast sums of money sent him from the King of **Persia**, insomuch that when he died, he left scarce enough to defray the charges of his funeral. Did a Heathen go thus far in denying the world, and shall not Christians much more? Let the **wedge of gold** be denied for the **pearl of price**. Matthew 19:27, **We have forsaken all, and followed thee**. A true saint esteems the gleanings of Christ, better than the world's vintage. Philippians 3:8, **For whom I have suffered the loss of all things**. **Galeacius** Marquess of **Vico** parted with a fair estate, to enjoy the pure ordinances of Christ **at Geneva**. When a Jesuit persuaded him to return to his Popish religion in **Italy**, promising him an huge sum of money, he

said, **Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit.**

15. A Christian must deny his **life** for Christ. This is in the Text, **attollat crucem, Let him take up his Cross.** Suffering for Christ must be free and spontaneous. He who suffers against his will **bears** the Cross, he who suffers willingly **takes up** the Cross. A fair Virgin falling in love with **Crates** for his learning, he showed her his **staff** and his **scrip**; this, says he, is your dowry. Christ shows us his **Cross**, if we will not have him upon these terms the match is not likely to go on. Sufferings will **abide us.** 2 Timothy 3:12. The Devil is not grown kinder now than he was. Some think of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering. **Joseph** dreamed of his **advancement**, but not of his **imprisonment.** The flesh cries out the Cross is uneasy, there are Nails in the Yoke which tear; but life must be **denied**, yea **hated** for Christ. Luke 14:26, **If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.** Love to Christ must out-weigh life. **Revelation** 12:11, **They loved not their lives to the death.** **Paul** carried the **image** of Christ in his heart as a Saint, the **message** of Christ in his mouth as a Minister, and the **marks** of Christ in his body as a Martyr. **Galatians** 6:17. The primitive worthies snatched up torments as so many Crowns, and were content to shed their blood for Christ, knowing they should exchange their sanguine for white Robes. The Prophet **Isaiah** was killed with a Saw, **Jeremiah** with Stones, **Amos** with an Iron-Bar, **Luke** was hanged on an Olive-tree. I read of **Irenaeus**, that he was carried to a place, where was set a Cross on one side, and an Idol on the other, where he was put to his choice,

either to bow to the Idol, or suffer on the Cross, he chose the latter. **Basil** speaks of a Virgin condemned to the fire who having her life and estate offered her, if she would bow down to an Image, answered, **Let life and money go, welcome Christ.** Though every Christian is not actually a Martyr, yet he has a preparation of mind, and is ready to suffer if God calls. **Luther** said, he had rather be a **Martyr** than a **Monarch.** Let us then take up the Cross. Can wicked men be content to suffer for their lusts, and shall not we suffer for Christ? We are to look upon our sufferings as a badge of **honour.** If when we are **reproached** for Christ, much more when we **die** for him, **A Spirit of God and of glory rests upon us.** 1 Peter 4:14. Our sufferings for Christ propagate Religion. **Paul's** being bound made the Gospel to be more enlarged. Philippians 1:12. **Justin Martyr** was converted to the Faith, by beholding the heroic patience and courage of the Christians in their sufferings. — **Patiamur ut potiamur** — The Cross leads to the Crown. 2 Timothy 2:12, **If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.** Who would not be willing to venture on the Seas, though rough and tempestuous, if he were sure to be Crowned as soon as he came ashore? Persecutors may take away from us our goods, not our God; our liberty, not our freedom of Conscience; our head, not our Crown. **Revelation** 2:10.

He who cannot deny his life for Christ, will deny Christ. And he who is ashamed of Christ, Christ will be ashamed of him. Mark 8:38. **Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with his holy Angels.**

CHAPTER 3: CONTAINING THE GROUND OF THE PROPOSITION



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The grand Reason why we must deny ourselves is, because we can be saved no other way. A Town or Castle may have several ways leading to it, but there is but one way leads to the celestial Paradise, and that is self-denial. Without self-denial, we can never come up to Christ's terms. If the World be not denied, Christ cannot be loved. If self-righteousness be not denied, Christ cannot be trusted. If the will be not denied, Christ cannot be obeyed. Therefore self-denial is of as absolute necessity as Heaven.

CHAPTER 4: AN INFERENCE DRAWN FROM THE PROPOSITION



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From all that has been said, see how hard a thing it is to be a Christian. Were it only to put on the mantle of profession, it were easy, even **Satan can transform himself into an Angel of light**, 2 Corinthians 11:14. But a man must deny himself; this self-emptying, or self-annihilation is the **Strait Gate** through which a Christian must enter into the Kingdom of God. He is to deny not only those things which are **without him**, his worldly profits; but which are **within him**, his **sins**, nay, **his righteousness**. **Self** is an **Idol**, and it is hard to sacrifice this Idol; but this must be done. Either **Carnal** Self must be denied, or **Natural** Self damned.

CHAPTER 5: A CHECK TO EPICURES AND SENSUALISTS



CHAPTER 5. A CHECK TO EPICURES, AND SENSUALISTS.

This justly indicts those who live in a contradiction to the Text, who instead of denying themselves, let loose the reins, and give themselves up to all manner of pleasure and licentiousness. Ecclesiastes 7:4, **The heart of fools is in the house of mirth.** Such the Prophet deciphers, who do not **mortify**, but **gratify** the flesh. Amos 6:4, 5, **That lie upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, that chant to the sound of the vial, that drink wine in bowls,** etc. Pleasure, like **Circe**, enchants men's minds, and transforms them into beasts. There is a place in **Africa**, called **Tombutium**, where the inhabitants spend all their time in piping and dancing. And have not we many who consume their hours in plays and stews? As if God had made them like the **Leviathan**, **To play in the water**, Psalm 104:26. How will their countenances be changed, when God shall say, **Give an account of your stewardship!** These frolic sensualists live as if there were no world to come. They pamper their bodies, but starve their souls. As if one should feed his

slave, but starve his wife. Do Epicures deny themselves? Indeed in one sense they do, for the enjoying their lusts, they deny themselves a part in Heaven. In the country of **Sardinia**, there is an herb like Balm, that if a man eat much of it, he shall die laughing. Such an herb is pleasure, if one feeds immoderately on it, he will go laughing to Hell. **Esau** lost the blessing while he was hunting. O! How many while they are hunting after worldly pleasures lose blessedness? There is a sad cup brewing, which will spoil the sinners' mirth. Psalm 75:8, **In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, the wine is red, it is full of mixture.** This wine is the wrath of God, and it is **mixed**, the **worm** and the **fire**, help to mix the cup. The Lord will proportion a sinner's torment to his pleasure. Revelation 18:7, **How much she has lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.**

CHAPTER 6: THE WANT OF SELF-DENIAL LAMENTED



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In the next place we may sadly lay to heart the want of Self-denial. O Self-denial, Where have you gone? **Terras Astraeca reliquit** We live in a **knowing** Age, yet few know how to deny themselves. **Selfishness** is the reigning sin of the World. This makes the times have a bad aspect. 2 **Timothy** 3:1, 2, **Perilous times shall come, for men shall be [reconstructed: philautoi], lovers of themselves. Self** may have diverse **Actions** brought against it. It is an enemy to the public. **Whence come wars?** James 4:1. Whence is robbery and bribery? Whence is oppression and circumvention, but from those selfish lusts which men cannot conquer? When **Lentulus** had in his Will declared **Tiberius Caesar** to be his Heir, so basely selfish was **Caesar**, that he sent and killed **Lentulus**, that he might have present possession of his Goods. Self-denial lodges but in a few breasts. It is, **Rara herba**, a Sacred **exotic** herb which is grown very scarce. Luke 18:8, **When the son of man cometh, shall**

he find faith on the earth? May it not be said, **Shall he find Self-denial on the earth?** Self-denial is gone a long Pilgrimage, and who can tell when it will return?

CHAPTER 7: CONTAINING A SUASIVE TO SELF-DENIAL



CHAPTER 7. CONTAINING A PERSUASIVE TO SELF- DENIAL.

My next work is to persuade Christians to the **Practice** of this momentous duty of Self-denial. Man lost himself at first by self-exaltation, and he must recover himself by self-denial.

1. Self-denial is just and equal. How much has Christ denied himself for us? He eclipsed his Glory; Philippians 2:7. **He emptied himself.** What wonderful self-denial was it, for Christ to leave his Father's bosom and be incarnate? For Christ to be made flesh, was more than for all the Angels to be made worms. Christ denied his name and reputation; Hebrews 12:2, **He endured the shame.** He denied worldly grandeur and riches; 1 Corinthians 8:9. **For our sakes he became poor.** The manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains. He denied his Life, Philippians 2:8, **He became obedient to death.** It is but equity we should deny ourselves for Christ.

2. Self-denial is the sign of a sincere Christian. Hypocrites may have great knowledge, and make fair pretenses, but it is only the sincere Saint can deny himself, and lay his life at Christ's feet. This was a touchstone of **Moses'** sincerity, he denied the pleasures of the Court, and chose affliction rather than iniquity, **Hebrews** 11:25. I have read of a holy Man who was once tempted by Satan, to whom Satan said, why do you take all these pains, what do you do more than I? Are you no Drunkard, no Adulterer? No more am I. Do you watch? I never sleep. Do you fast? I never eat. What do you do more than I? Why, said the good Man, I tell you Satan, I give myself to Prayer; nay more, I deny myself. Nay, then says the Devil, you go beyond me, for I exalt myself; and so vanished.

3. Self-denial is a **rational** thing. For, if **self** is an **enemy**, then it is wisdom to discard it. There is a **rationality** in all God's commands. Why would he have us deny **fleshly lusts**, but because **They war against our souls?** 1 Peter 2:11. Why would he have us deny Pride, but because of its noxious quality? Proverbs 16:18, **Pride goes before destruction.** Where Pride leads the van, Destruction brings up the rear. God would have us deny nothing for him, but that which will damn us if we keep.

4. There is nothing lost by self-denial. We shall be abundantly compensated. Matthew 19:29, **Every one that has forsaken houses, and lands for my sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit life everlasting.** If we deny our name and reputation for Christ, God will give us inward peace, there is a **hundredfold** in this life; and will honor us before the Angels; how many hundredfolds that amounts to, I am not able to tell. If we deny our estate, to keep our conscience, God will give us a

Kingdom. **Luke 12:32.** What does he lose, who parts with a flower, and gets a jewel? We may lose all we have for Christ, yet lose nothing by him.

CHAPTER 8: CONTAINING HELPS TO SELF-DENIAL



CHAPTER 8. CONTAINING HELPS TO SELF-DENIAL.

For the attaining of Self-denial, let these Rules be observed.

1. Be convinced of the Incomparable **excellency** of Christ. He has an equality and consubstantiality with God the Father, **Colossians** 2:9. He is the quintessence of Goodness. He is compared to an **Head of gold**, for riches, **Canticles** 5:10. To the **Rose of Sharon** for perfume, **Canticles** 2:1. To a **bright morning-star** for beauty, **Revelation** 22:16. Jesus Christ is all that God can require for satisfaction, or we can desire for Salvation. He is fully commensurate to our wants. He has **eye-salve** to anoint us, **White raiment** to cover us, the balm of his Blood to heal us.

We shall never deny ourselves for Christ, till we see a glory and a beauty in him. Christ is all marrow and sweetness, he is better than life, estate, Heaven.

2. Endeavor after a **Vital principle** of Grace. Grace will do that which **flesh and blood** cannot. A Man may do that by art, which he cannot do by strength. A burden of great weight, may be

lifted up by screws and pulleys, which cannot be lifted up by strength of arm. Grace will teach one the art of Self-denial, which cannot be done by strength of Nature. In particular, labor for three Graces:

1. **Humility.** A proud Man admires himself, therefore cannot deny himself. An humble Man lays his mouth in the dust, he has lower thoughts of himself than others can have of him, he goes out of himself, he renounces himself, he opens to God, as the Flower to the Sun. He will do what God will have him do, he will be what God will have him be, he is like melting Wax, God may set what stamp and impression he will upon him. The humble Man is the self-denier.

2. **Love.** Who will not deny himself for a Friend whom he loves? He will part with anything he has, he will gratify him he loves, though it be to his own loss. He whose heart is fired with love to Christ, will stick at nothing for his sake. **Gregory Nazianzen** said of his **Athenian** Learning, he was glad he had anything of worth, to esteem as nothing for Christ. Love to God would devour self-love.

3. **Faith.** **Abraham** was a great Self-denier, he left his Kindred, and Country, and would travel into any place where God would have him. Whence was this? It was from his Faith. Hebrews 11:8, **By faith Abraham obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.** He who believes Christ is his, and Heaven is his, what will not he relinquish for Christ's sake? The stronger a Christian's faith is, the more eminent will his self-denial be.

3. **Pray** much for self-denial. Prayer sets God to work, **Psalm 10:17**. Some pray for **assurance**, but want **self-denial**, as if God would set Seal to a Blank. Let this be your grand request, a self-denying frame of heart. Self-denial does not grow in nature, it is a **fruit of the Spirit**. Beg of God that he will plant this heavenly flower in your Soul. Say, Lord, whatever thou deniest me, deny me not self-denial. Let me rather want great parts, nay, let me rather want the comforts of the Spirit, than want self-denial. There may be going to Heaven without comfort, but there is no going there without self-denial.

THANKS FOR READING



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