

do more works, but not in works of grace; the more evangelical our works are, the more to God, the better they are: *We are of the circumcision, who rejoice in the Lord Jesus, worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

OF SELF-DENIAL.

SECT. I.

Of the Nature of Self-Denial.

SELF-DENIAL is a total, thorough, utter abnegation of a man's own ends, counsels, affections, and a whole prostration of himself, and of all that is his, under Christ Jesus. And thus we have the meaning of Christ, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself; i. e.* let him lay aside his own wisdom as an empty lamp, his own will as an evil commander, his own imaginations as a false rule, his own affections as corrupt counsellors, and his own ends as base and unworthy marks to be aimed at. Let him deny himself, whatsoever is of himself, within himself, or belonging to himself, as a corrupt and carnal man; let him go out of himself, that he may come to me; let him empty himself, that he may be capable of me, and that I may reign and rule within him. As in Joseph's dream, the sun, moon, and the eleven stars, did obeisance to him, and all the sheaves in the field to his sheaf; so, in the regenerate man, all the supernatural gifts and graces, all the moral endowments and abilities, all the natural powers and faculties, of the soul, with all the members of the body, and all the labours of the life, and whatsoever else, must do obeisance, and be made subject unto Jesus Christ. And this is true self-denial

SECT. II.

Of the Denial of Sinful-self.

FIRST, we must deny sinful-self, and this we are to deny simply and absolutely, whether it be the whole body of corruption and concupiscence, or those personal corruptions which we in our particulars are more notably carried unto.

1. We are absolutely to deny the whole body of corruption and concupiscence: we are to mortify and subdue, to crucify and to revenge the blood of Christ against this sin. This is the meaning of the apostle: *Mortify your members which are upon earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil*

concupiscence.—Now for the denying or mortifying of this concupiscence, observe these directions:—

1. Be sensible of it, cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

2. Endeavour we to get a willing heart to have this sin mortified.

3. Be we peremptory in denying the requests of concupiscence, bar up the doors, give it no audience: so Christ gave Peter a peremptory denial, when he would have persuaded him from his passion, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

4. Take we pains to mortify this sin. *I run not in vain, as one that beats the air:* that is, I take pains, but not in vain; I take no more pains than I must needs; if I took any less, I could not come to that I aim at: the less pains we take in subduing this corruption, the more will it increase; we must use the means God hath appointed, as the word, and praying, and fasting, and watching, and weeping, and mourning; to these I may add covenants and vows; provided that, 1. they be of things lawful; 2. that we esteem them not as duties of absolute necessity; and, 3. that we bind not ourselves perpetually, lest our vows become burdens to us; and if we will vow, let us but vow for a time, that when the time is expired, we may either renew or let them cease, as necessity requires.

5. Labour we to get the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. *The wind bloweth where it listeth;* i. e. the Spirit worketh where it listeth; yet this hinders not, but that the Spirit may list to blow in the use of the means.—Surely there are means to get the Spirit, and to hinder the Spirit; the Spirit may be won or lost, in the doing, or not doing these things:—

1. If we would have the Spirit, then we must know the Spirit; we must so know him, as to give him the glory of the work of every grace: the want of the knowledge of Christ's Spirit is the very reason why men receive not the Spirit. The first means to have the Spirit, is to know the Spirit, that we may give him the glory of every grace.

2. If we would have the Spirit, take heed that we *quench not the Spirit;* I mean not, by quenching the Spirit, a quite putting of it out: but 1. a growing careless and remiss in the duties of religion: 2. a not cherishing every good motion of the Spirit in our hearts.

3. If we would have the Spirit, take heed that we grieve not the Spirit; let us not drive him by our sins out of the temples of our souls, disturb him not in his gracious and comfortable operations there, but so demean ourselves that he may stay in our spirits, and manifest, without any eclipses or interruptions, his sweet and powerful presence within us.

We are absolutely to deny those personal corruptions which we are more notably carried unto. Now for the denying and

mortifying of this sin, whatsoever it may be, observe these directions:—

1. Labour we to see the disease: no man will seek for cure, except he see the disease; the sight of the disease is half the cure of it. Endeavour we to find out what is our special sin.

2. Abstain we from all beginnings and occasions of this sin: quench it at first; if we cannot put out a spark, how should we put out a flame? If we get not the mastery over the first motion to sin, how shall we overcome it when it is brought to maturity?

3. Turn we our delights to God, and Christ, and heavenly things: there is no true self-denial, that is only primitive; a man cannot leave his earthly mindedness, but presently he must be heavenly-minded: as a man cannot empty a vessel of water, but presently air will come in its place; so a man cannot deny sinful-self, but grace will immediately enter, and take possession of his heart. And Oh! when it is thus, when the intentions of our mind, which we spent upon vanities, are now drawn into prayer and meditations, then lusts wither.

4. Labour after further discoveries of Christ. Believe more, and depend more upon Christ; yea, let us trade immediately with Christ, for Christ is the only agent in the work of self-denial. Mistake not; I do not say that we are mere passives in self-denial; in our progress we are workers together with Christ: and therefore it is said, that we purge ourselves, and that we purify ourselves, and that we by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, because Christ still, in going on to purge us and mortify our lusts, doth it by stirring up our graces, and useth therein acts of our faith, and love, and many motives and considerations, to do it. Let us therefore use all means required, but above all let us bring our hearts to be more and more acquainted with Christ.

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### SECT. III.

#### *Of the Denial of our external Relations.*

SECONDLY, we must deny natural self; and this we must deny only conditionally, and upon supposition of God's call.

1. We are conditionally to deny our external relations; to this purpose saith Christ, *If any man cometh to me, and hateth not father, and mother, and children, and brethren, and wife, and sisters—he cannot be my disciple.* Not that religion teaches or endures a saint to break the ties of religion or nature; you see it puts in a plea against such unnaturalness, *Honour thy father and mother.*

Relations are the blessings of God; they are God's gifts, and

bestowed on the saints in a way of promise. They are the loving tokens which Christ sends to our souls, that so he might draw our loves to him again ; and hence it is lawful and commendable to rejoice in them in their way, and especially to lift up our souls in thanksgiving to God for them ; for every creature of God is good, (much more the children of our loins, and wives of our bosoms,) if received with thanksgiving.

Yet we must deny them for God in these cases,—

1. If they retard us in the way to Christ, if they entice us to make haltings in our runnings through fire and through water to the Lord Jesus. If our dearest relations should beckon us out of the way, or retard us in the way, to Jesus Christ, we must not respect father or mother, we must not acknowledge our brethren, nor know our own children. And Christ gives the reason : *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* A man should love father and mother, and a man will love son and daughter, for love descends rather than ascends ; but if any man love father, or mother, or son, or daughter, more than Christ, he is not fit to be a disciple of Christ.

2. If they draw contrary ways ; Christ drawing one way, and relations drawing another way. In this case, as Christ said, *If a man hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* If any man hate not, *i. e.* if a man renounce not all carnal affection, if a man be not disposed, where these loves are not compatible, to hate father, and mother, and all, for the love of Christ, he cannot belong to Christ. These two cases may be summed up thus : if our relations do either retard our way to Christ, or draw us from Christ, in this sense they ought to be forgotten.

The directions of self-denial, in respect of our relations, are these :

1. Let us have them, as if we had them not ; this is the expression of the apostle : *The time is short ; it remains that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as they that wept not, and they that rejoice as if they that rejoiced not.*—1. The time is short : the apostle here alludes to sea-faring men, that have almost done their voyage, and begin to strike sail, and are even putting into the harbour ; so it is with us, our time is short, as soon as we begin our voyage, we are ready to strike sail.—2. It remains that both they that have wives, be as though they had none, &c. *q. d.* You that are ready to cast anchor, trouble not yourselves about these things, but rather be ye stedfast, gird up the loins of your minds, let your care be the greatest for heaven ; and as for these outward relations, be as if you had none, or think as soon as you are ashore

you shall have none; do not glut yourselves, but moderate your hearts in all such comforts as these.

2. Let us resign up all to God. This we have done, and this we must do still.—1. This we have done, in that day when we made our bargain for Christ. Every soul that comes to Christ, parts with all to buy that pearl; and in selling all, he sells not only his corruptions and lusts, but his father, mother, wife, children, all relations, conditionally.—2. This we must do still; we must give up all to God; we and they, and all, must be at the command of Christ, at the pleasure of God and Christ: indeed nothing is properly called our own, but God and Christ; all other things are God's gifts, lent of God, and therefore, as occasion is, we must give up all to God again.

3. Let us imitate them, as occasion is, who for Christ's sake have actually parted with their dearest relations.

Thus did Galeacius Caracciolus, the noble marquis of Vico. Vico was one of the paradises of Naples; and Naples was the paradise of Italy; and Italy is the paradise of Europe; and Europe the paradise of all the earth. Yet this marquis being brought to hear a sermon of Peter Martyr's, God pleased so to work upon his spirit, that he began to enter into serious thoughts, whether his way of popery, wherein he was trained, was right or not.—At last, having further light let into his soul, his resolutions were strong to leave the court, and his honours, together with his father, wife, and children, and whatsoever was dear to him. Many grievous combats he had betwixt the flesh and the spirit when he resolved on his departure, but the greatest troubles were his relations: for—

1. As often as he looked on his father, which he almost did every hour, so often he was stricken at the heart with unspeakable grief; his thoughts ran thus: 'What! and must I needs forsake my dear and loving father? and cannot I else have God my father? Oh! unhappy father of my body, which may stand in competition with the Father of my soul?'

2. No less was he grieved in respect of his wife; for, having no hope that she would renounce popery, and go with him, he resolved also for Christ's sake to leave her, and to follow Christ; whereupon his thoughts ran thus: "And shall I forsake my wife, the only joy of my heart in this world, and that not for a time, but for ever!—How many doleful days, how many waking nights, will she pass over?—"

3. There was yet a third care, and that was for his children; which were six in all. It was the more grief, in that they were so young, as that they could not conceive what it was to want a father. The eldest was scarce fifteen, and the youngest scarce four years old; towards them his thoughts ran thus: "Shall I within these few days utterly forsake these sweet babes, and leave them to the wide and wicked world, as though they had

never been my children, nor I their father?—Poor orphans! what will become of you when I am gone? Your hap is hard, even to be fatherless, your father yet living!—Yet thus must I leave you all, weeping and wailing one with another, and I, in the mean time, weeping and wailing for you.

Thus resolved, he left his family, and went to Geneva; who was no sooner gone, but his friends and family were so astonished, that nothing was heard or seen amongst them but lamentations. By his father's commands, and his wife's entreaties, he was persuaded to see them once, and take his journey from Geneva to Vico: having stayed a while, and now ready to return to Geneva, his father, at his farewell, gave him many an heavy and bitter curse; his wife embraced him, and took him about the neck, beseeching him in a most loving and pitiful manner, that he would have care of himself, of his dear wife and children, and not so willingly cast them all away: his young children, all upon their knees, with arms stretched out, and hands holden up, and faces swoln with tears, cried out unto him to have pity on them, his own bowels, and not to make them fatherless before the time: his friends, with heavy countenances and watery eyes looked on him, and though for grief they could not speak, yet every look, and every countenance, and every gesture, was a loud cry and a strong entreaty that he would stay, and not leave so ancient and noble a house in such a desolate case. But above all, there was one most lamentable sight:—Among his children he had one daughter of twelve years old, who crying out amain, and wallowing in tears, fell down, and catching fast hold about his knees, held him so hard that he could by no means shake her off; and the affection of a father wrought so with him, as he could not offer with violence to hurt her: he laboured to be loose, but she held faster; he went away, but she trailed after; crying to him, not to be so cruel to her his own child, who came into the world by him. This so wonderfully wrought with his nature, that he thought, as he often reported, that all his bowels rolled about within him, and that his heart would have burst presently, and he should instantly have died. But notwithstanding all this, being armed with a supernatural fortitude, he broke through all those temptations, and for Christ's sake denied all, and so returned to Geneva.—A glorious self-denial, or a glorious denier of his natural-self!

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#### SECT. IV.

#### *Of the Denial of our Special Gifts.*

WE are conditionally to deny our special gifts and endowments; as learning, wisdom, power, or any other abilities of mind and body.

Indeed, learning, wisdom, abilities, are in themselves excellent things. Æneas Silvius said, "That if the face even of human learning could but be seen, it is more beautiful than the morning star." How much more may be said in respect of divine learning, whose subject is God, and Christ, and the things of God? In this respect therefore we must not deny them.

Yet we must deny them in these cases,—

1. In respect of any high thoughts of our own excellencies: *Be not wise in your own conceit*, saith the apostle; to which agrees that of Solomon, *Lean not thine own understanding*.

2. In respect of any use of them according to the world. Of this God speaketh when he saith, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent*. Thus the apostle triumphed, saying, *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* Worldly wisdom usually scorns the great mysteries of godliness, foolishness of preaching, simplicity of the saints; but this *wisdom descendeth not from above*, saith the apostle, *this wisdom is but earthly, sensual, devilish*.—1. Earthly; it minds only earthly things.—2. Sensual; it prefers the pleasures of sense, and pleasing the appetite, before the peace of conscience and sense of God's favour.—3. Devilish; for it imitates the devil in contriving the mischief and ruin against the glory of God, the plantation of his grace in the hearts of men: or it is devilish, because the devil usually sets those on work that have a little more wit to do him service; he knows they are more able and active to quarrel, rail, slander, disgrace the truth of God, or ministry of Christ.—O poor souls! how do you bark and snatch at those hurtless hands, which would heal and bind up your bleeding souls! O poor idiots! what wisdom is it for you to endeavour their extirpation, who are as stars in the right-hand of Christ! They that would do Christ's ministers any deadly harm, they must pluck them thence.

The directions of self-denial in respect of our special gifts, are these:—

1. Think we soberly of ourselves, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. We are not sober, in the apostle's phrase, if either we take that upon us which we have or brag of that which we have.

2. Mind the true ends of learning, wisdom, abilities. What are those ends? 1. To do God more excellent and more glorious service. 2. To furnish the soul for an higher degree, and a greater measure, of sanctification.

3. Endeavour to walk before God in lowliness of mind. What! are thy gifts more eminent than others? It is the Lord that makes thee differ; and as God hath been favourable to thee, so

should his favours be as obligations to obedience, humility, meekness.

4. Remember, it is not the greatness, but the well-using of the gift, that is the glory of the receiver. It is not the having any thing, whether much or little; but the having of Christ with it, that makes it full and satisfactory.

5. Observe and weigh well, that the issue of all depends not upon the abilities of man, but upon the all-disposing hand of God. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding.* All our abilities are under God's providence, who puts an efficacy into man's abilities, even as he pleaseth.

6. Esteem we all abilities, gifts, knowledge, as dung and dross, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord. All knowledge, art, learning, is nothing to Christ; there is no excellency in that man's knowledge that knows not Christ. If we know not Christ, it is nothing, if we know never so much. If we know Christ, it is enough, though we know nothing more; enough indeed, for in knowing him we have all knowledge. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Among wise men, he is the choicest that knows most of Christ; it is Christ that puts a fulness into our knowledge, as the shining of the sun in the air puts a fulness of light into the eyes; hence Paul made Christ crucified, the centre and circumference of his knowledge, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of his knowledge; this was the full latitude of his knowledge, to know Jesus Christ: and this is excellent knowledge, excellent for the author, matter, subject, fruits, and effects of it; this is saving knowledge, this is life eternal, to know thee, and him whom thou hast sent. Oh! never speak of learning wisdom, gifts, abilities, in comparison of Christ. Bernard could say, "If thou writest, it doth not relish with me, unless I read Jesus there; if thou disputest or conferrest, it doth not relish with me, unless Jesus sound there." All learning is but ignorance in comparison of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Come then, and down with all knowledge in this respect; come, and submit to that true, spiritual, experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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SECT. V.

Of the Denial of our Worldly Profits.

WE are conditionally to deny our common ends, which naturally men pursue and seek after, as profit, pleasure, and honour. I shall begin with the first.

It must be granted that worldly profits, such as houses, lands, possessions, are a blessing of God, because they serve for the refreshing, comforting, supporting, of our frail weak bodies, while we live in this world.

Yet we must deny them in these cases :—

1. As temptations and snares ; when they are either baits unto sin ; or when they are the fruits and wages of sin. Thus Zaccheus denies himself in all his unjust gain which he had gotten. Restitution, as it is a most necessary, so it is one of the hardest parts of self-denial. Unjust gain is like a barbed arrow, it kills if it stay within the body, and pulls the flesh away if it be drawn out.

2. As oblations and sacrifices ; when Christ calls us to dedicate them unto him, then we must deny them. Thus when Abraham was called from his country into a land which he knew not ; and when Daniel was called from a king's court to a den of lions ; when Moses was called from the honours of Egypt, to the afflictions of God's people ; immediately they consulted not with flesh and blood, but willingly left their own comforts to obey God's commands. All we are, or have, we have it on this condition, to use it, to leave it, to lay it out, to lay it down, unto the honour of our Master, from whose bounty we received it.

The directions of self-denial in respect of our worldly profits, are these :—

1. Look we on worldly profits as vanity, nothing. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not*, says Solomon ; *for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle.*—Observe first, that riches are not, they are nothing ; those things that make men great in the eye of the world, are nothing in the eyes of God.—2. Observe, the Holy Ghost would not have us so much as set our eyes upon riches, they are not objects worth the looking on.—3. Observe with what indignation he speaks against those that will set their eyes upon them : wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? As if he had said, what a vain, unreasonable, senseless thing is this?—4. Observe, that he says, their parting from us is by way of flight, that is, a sudden, swift, and irrecoverable motion.—5. Observe, that this flight is by the wings of an eagle, which of all birds hath the most sudden, the most swift, and the most irrecoverable motion.—6. Observe, that none needs to put wings upon them to fly away, for they make themselves wings ; there is matter enough in themselves to put them into a flight. Oh that the glory of the world were darkened in our eyes, as one day it shall be, that it might not be so dear unto us as it is !

2. Consider them as instabilities, uncertainties. All worldly things are like the sea, ebbing and flowing ; or like the moon, always increasing or decreasing ; or like a wheel, always turning up and down. Such a story we have of Sesostris, king of Egypt,

who would have his chariot drawn with four kings, and one of them had his eyes continually on the wheel ; whereupon Sesostrius asked, what he meant by it ? He answered, It put him in mind of the mutability of all earthly things, “ For I see,” said he, “ that part of the wheel, which is now up on high, is presently down beneath ; and that part which is now below, is presently up on high :” whereupon Sesostrius being moved, considering what might be his own estate, would never have his chariot drawn after that manner any more.

3. Consider them as snares and thorns. To this purpose cried Solomon, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit.*—Worldlings ! do you not feel this true ? Mark but how your worldly cares do rush upon you in the morning as soon as you awake ; mark but how they accompany you in the day ; mark but how they follow you to your beds at night ; mark but how they hinder your sleeps, and afflict you in your dreams : Oh ! what fears ! what suspicions ! what undermining one another ! what disappointments ! what vexations ! what a clutter of businesses crossing one the other ! what snares and temptations lie in your way at every hand ! You walk all the day long upon snares ; upon dangerous snares, that bring much sin and guilt, and will bring much sorrow and misery.

4. Consider them as fading in regard of use, which yet prove eternal in regard of punishment. Oh ! what a dreadful noise is that in hell !—we have lost eternity, for setting our hearts upon things that were but momentary. What will be thy thoughts at the hour of death ? It may be these : Now are all my hopes at an end, now I must bid farewell to all my comforts, I shall never have mirth any more ; the sun is set, the season is at an end for all my comforts ; now I see before me a vast ocean of eternity, and of necessity I must launch into it : O Lord, what provision have I for it ? Oh, there is a thought that will rend the heart in pieces ! Oh, what a dreadful shriek will that soul give, that sees before it that infinite ocean of eternity, and sees no provision made for it ! What will it think, but here is an ocean of hot scalding lead, and I must launch into it, and I must swim naked in it for ever and ever ? I know not how this word may work, but if it be trampled under foot, it may be within this year or two, it will be said of thee, Such an one was at such a sermon, or read such a book, and learned that worldly profits were but momentary ; but now he is gone : Or it may be thou wilt say on thy death-bed, Such a book I read, that all worldly profits were but momentary, and that I had not only a river to swim over, but an infinite ocean to launch into, and yet I would not be warned ; and now my season is gone, and I am launching into eternity, the Lord knows what will become of me.

5. Appear for God and his cause, his truth and people, though the issue may seem dangerous. Thus Esther did with that brave resolution of her's, *If I perish, I perish.* Oh ! let not a good

cause be dashed and blasted, and none have a heart to appear for it, for fear of worldly profit.

6. Let all go, rather than commit any sin : it is better to want all the profits that earth can afford, than to lose the delights that a good conscience will bring in. Oh! let the bird in the breast be always kept singing, whatsoever we suffer for it ; it is better we lose all we have, than to make shipwreck of a good conscience ; in this case we must be willing to lose all, or else we are lost in the enjoyment of all.

SECT. VI.

Of the Denial of our Worldly Pleasures.

THE next common end which men naturally pursue, and which we must deny, is pleasure.

'Tis true, some pleasures are lawful, and, in a sober, moderate, seasonable use of them, serve for the refreshing, comforting, and supporting of our frail bodies. Yet we must deny them in these cases.

1. When they are baits to draw us into sin.
2. When they are sin, or the concomitants of sin, or the fruits and wages of sin.

The directions of self-denial, in respect of worldly pleasures, are these :—

1. Look on pleasures, not only as vain, but as vanishing : they are soon gone from us, or we are soon gone from them. 1. They are soon gone from us, *the fashion of this world passeth away* : all pleasures are but like a mountain of snow, that melts away presently. 2. We are soon gone from them ; it is but a while, and then we and all our pleasures must together vanish ; if death draw the curtain, and look in upon us, then we must bid a farewell to them all, never laugh more, never have merry-meeting more ; never be in jollity any more. Oh ! when we are called to eternity, then all our delights will leave us, and bid us adieu for ever ; and how doleful will this be to all the sons and daughters of pleasure ! your season is done, you have had your time, it is gone, it is past, and cannot be recalled.

2. Consider, this is not the season that should be for pleasure. The apostle James lays it as a great charge upon those in his time, *that they lived in pleasure upon earth*. This is a time to do the great business for which we were born. Oh ! did we think that eternity depended upon this little uncertain time of our lives, we would not say that sensual pleasures were now in season. Surely this time should be spent in seeking to make our peace with God ; this is a time of suing out our pardon, of mourning, and sorrow and trouble of spirit, and no time for jollity, and fleshly

delights. If a condemned man had two or three days granted him that he might sue out his pardon, were that a time for pleasure and sports? Thus it is with us; the sentence of death is upon us, only a little uncertain time is granted us, to sue out a pardon; let us know then what is our work, and let us apply ourselves to it.

3. Ponder the carriage of the saints before us. You know the mean provision that John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, had; his fare was locusts and wild honey, and yet there was not a greater born of woman before. Timothy, although he was sickly, yet would not take liberty to drink a little wine, but only water, till Paul wrote to him; and in that liberty there was but little granted, and that for his stomach's sake, and his often infirmities. Basil, in an epistle to Julian, mentions the mean fare he and others with him lived on; they had no need of cooks, all their provision was the leaves of plants, and a little bread: and Hierom reports of Hilarion, that he never ate any thing before the sun went down, and that which at any time he ate was very mean: and Hierom himself lived so abstemiously, that he had nothing daily but a few dried figs with cold water.

4. Do we for Christ, as Christ hath done for us. What! was he content to part with the pleasures of heaven, the bosom of his Father, to redeem poor man? and shall not we part with the pleasure of a little meat or drink for him? Is not all his glory, revealed in his word and work, sufficient to shew him worthy of our loves, and to make us willing to part with such empty, poor, slight things, as sensual pleasures? Surely the daughters of pleasure must undress, if ever they will be beautiful in Christ's eyes; their ornament must not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5. Meditate on those pleasures above, and say, (you that have the experience of the pleasantness of God's ways,) If the nether springs be so sweet, what will the upper be? If the lower Jerusalem be paved with gold, surely that upper Jerusalem is paved with pearls! It is an excellent speech of Bernard, "Good art thou, O Lord, to the soul that seeks thee; what art thou to the soul that finds thee? If grace be pleasant, how pleasant is glory?" Therefore the saints die so pleasantly, because there is a meeting of grace and glory: grace is delightful, glory more delightful; but when both these meet together, what delight will there then be!

SECT. VII.

Of the Denial of our Honour, Praise, good Name, among Men.

THE next end which naturally men pursue, and which we must deny, is honour, praise, good name.

We grant, honour, praise, good name, are the gifts and blessings of God. David speaketh expressly, *Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all.*

Yet we must deny them for God, in these cases :—

1. When they are as snares and baits unto sin. And in all those, honour, praise, good name, there are dangerous snares ; how prone do they make a man to those sins of vain-glory, self-admiration, self-estimation ! Surely it is a great mercy of God if any man be preserved from these sins, that enjoys those blessings !

2. When we are called by God to dedicate them to God. The Lord never gave us these things, honour, praise, good name, upon any other terms, but that we should be willing to part with them for the honour of his name ; God never made us owners, but stewards of them for his service, and if ever we were brought to Christ, into covenant with God in him, we then resigned up all to him, we professed to part with all for him. And good reason, for whatsoever honour or excellency we have, it is he that gives it :—the rainbow is but a common vapour, it is the sun that gilds it, that enamels it with so many colours : the best of us are but a vapour ; and if any of us be more glorious, more honourable, than others, it is the Lord that hath shined upon us, and hath put more beauty, more lustre upon us, than upon other vapours.

The directions of self-denial in respect of our honour, favour, grace, good name, among men, are these :—

1. Look on honour, praise, favour, applause, as vanity, nothing. *Vanity of vanities*, saith the preacher ; *vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. Observe his expression ; 1. *Vanity*, not only vain, but vanity itself. 2. Excessive vanity, for it is *vanity of vanities*. 3. An heap of vanities, for it is in the plural number, *vanity of vanities*. 4. *All is vanity*, not only profit, and pleasure, but honour too ; Solomon had experience of them all, and *all is vanity*. There is no reality in honour, praise, favour, applause of men, which are so much admired and magnified ; honour is but a shadow, a fancy, a wind, a breath ; there is no internal excellency in it.

2. Beware of those attendants, or companions of honours ; vain-glory, self-love, self-admiration. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory : let us not exalt ourselves above others : let us not study to be magnified by others : let us not please ourselves in the applause of others. It is not human applause, but God's

approbation, which ministers matter of true honour to a Christian. We should rejoice to see God honoured, but fear to hear ourselves applauded, lest either we be idolized, or God's honour obscured.

3. Be convinced, that of all vices, vain-glory, self-admiration, hunting after men's praise, are the most invincible. The roots thereof are so deep and strong, and so largely spread in the heart of man, that there is no disease in the soul so hardly cured, no weed in the garden of man's heart so hardly plucked up.

4. Let us herein conform ourselves to Christ. He came from the bosom of his Father, and from that infinite glory he had with him before the world was. He left the honour which he might have had from all the angels, and all to save poor wretched sinful creatures: he that was equal with God, so emptied himself that he became man; nay, he was made a scorn of men, he made himself of no reputation, he came in the form of a servant, he was made a curse, as if he had been the vilest of men living; and yet this was the honour of Christ himself, because it was all for God. Oh! then, who is he that knows any thing of Jesus Christ, that can think it much to lay down all his honour for him? What can be more unworthy, what more detestable, than that a man should magnify himself after he had seen God humbled. It is intolerable impudence, that where majesty hath emptied himself, a worm should be puffed up.

5. Let us submit to the meanest service of our God, though it darken our honours, never so much in the eyes of the world. Thus Hierom writ to Panachius a young nobleman, that he would have him to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, hands to the weak, yea, if need were, to carry water, and cut wood, and make fires; for what are all these, saith he, to bonds, buffetings, spittings, whippings, death?

6. Let us willingly join with those of lower degree in any way of honouring God. *Mind not high things*, saith the apostle, *but condescend to men of low estate*. Who knows but that the poorest creature may be far more honourable in the eyes of God and of his saints, than we? Where greater graces sit below us, let us acknowledge their inward dignity.

7. We must bear our reproaches wisely. Though we should not be insensible, yet we should not take too much notice of every reproach. But how then should we stop their mouths? I answer: 1. Let us walk innocently; innocency will overcome all in time. 2. Let us labour to be eminent in that which is quite contrary to that we are reproached for. Perhaps you are reproached for a dissembler, labour for the greatest eminency of plainness and sincerity: perhaps you are reproached for covetousness, labour to be eminent in liberality, in heavenly mindedness, in doing good.

8. We must bear reproaches patiently. What are we? or

what is our names, that we should think much to bear reproach? Consider, have not other of God's servants, far holier than we are, been under exceeding reproach? Nay, how is God and Christ reproached? how is the name of God slighted? how is the majesty, and sovereignty, and authority of God contemned in this world? what reproaches endured Christ in his own person, in his preaching? how was he contemned when he preached against covetousness? The Pharisees scorned him: the word signifies they blew their noses at him. He was called a devil, a Samaritan, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; what worse can be imagined than was cast upon Christ? they spat on his face, that blessed face of his, that the waves of the sea were afraid of, and that the sun withdrew his light from, as not being fit to behold it; they put thorns on his head, and bowed to him in reproach. This argument should, methinks, move us to bear reproaches patiently.

9. Make we our moans to God, and lay our case before him, as Hezekiah (when Rabshakeh came and reviled God and the people of God) went and spread the letter before God; if we can but do likewise, we shall find unspeakable refreshments to our souls, and that will be a great argument of our innocency. *My friends scorn me, saith Job, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.—The mouth of the wicked, saith David, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me; but I give myself unto prayer.*

10. We must bear reproaches fruitfully. Christians should not think it enough to free themselves from reproach, but they must improve it for good; and to that end—

1. Consider what ends God aims at by it, and labour to work them upon ourselves.

2. Draw what good instructions we can from the reproaches of others, as thus: when I hear men reproach and revile,—Oh what a deal of evil is there secretly in the heart of man, that is not discovered till it have occasion! Again, do I see another so vigilant over me, to find out any thing in me to reproach me,—How vigilant should I be over myself, to find out what is in me to humble me!

SECT. VIII.

Of the Denial of our Life for Jesus Christ.

I HAVE done with the denial of natural self in regard of well-being, I now consider the denial of natural self in regard of very being, and so it imports our life, together with the faculties and powers of nature, our understanding, will, affections, senses, fleshly members; all within us must be captivated to

Christ, and all without us must endure to suffer for the name of Christ.

1. The understanding must be captivated, as it hinders from Christ. Suppose the word of Christ be contradicted or checked by reason. In this case I must deny my reason, and believe Christ; I must captivate my understanding to the obedience of faith.

2. The will must be renounced in reference to Christ. Servants must not follow their own will, but their master's directions; how much more ought we, who always may justly suspect ourselves, and can never suspect the will of Christ. It is meet that Hagar should stoop to Sarah, our will to Christ's will.

3. Our affections and senses must be denied, as they are cherishers of evil, or opposers of good. This latter is that crucifying of the flesh, with the lusts and affections, which the apostle mentions. But all these being within the compass of natural life, I shall only insist on that.

Life, as it is the gift, so it is the blessing, of God; hence the promise of life, and of long life, is made to obedient children; and this, turned into prayer by the believing parents, is usually called by the name of blessing.

Yet we must deny it for God, in these cases:—

1. As a sacrifice. If God will rather be honoured by death than life, by the sufferings than by the services, of his saints, in this case we should be willing to submit to God. Thus many of the martyrs who had opportunity of flight, yet tarried to witness the truth, and gave their lives to the flames.

2. As temptation. Thus, rather than sin, the primitive Christians, when apprehended, chose willingly to die. And if it be on this condition that we may avoid sin, that by losing life we may go to Christ, in whom we shall find, with an infinite overplus, whatsoever we can lose for his sake; then we must deny life itself.

The directions of self-denial in respect of our natural being, or life, are these:—

1. Apprehend God's love to our souls in his Son: he thought nothing too good for us, *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*; and this he did for us, when we were enemies; nay, God hath not only given us his Son for a Saviour, but he hath given us himself for an husband; let us often by sad and solemn meditation renew the sense of his love to us in Christ, and we cannot but give up all we have, and all we are, to God.

2. Maintain a godly jealousy of our own hearts; for want of this, all the disciples fainted, especially Peter, and shamefully denied Christ. Memorable is that story of Pendleton and Sanders: Sanders, as fearful he should not endure the fire; Pendleton seemed resolute, "Be not fearful," saith he to Sanders, "for

thou shalt see me, and this fat flesh of mine, fry in the fire before I will yield." Yet he that was so strong in his own strength, fell away; and the other, so fearful, was enabled by God to burn for his truth.

3. Be acquainted with the promises of self-denial; have always a word at hand to relieve ourselves in the worst of sufferings. Now these promises are of several sorts.—1. Of assistance,—2. of acceptance,—3. of reward. And again, the promises of reward are,—1. of this life; *He that forsakes all for Christ, shall receive an hundred fold*; the joy, the peace he shall have shall be an hundred times better than the comfort of these outward things. 'Oh! but,' may some say, 'what will become of my children? I shall leave them fatherless and helpless.' To this, by way of answer, God often styles himself *the Father of the fatherless*, and if of any fatherless, then surely of those whose parents have lost their lives for Jesus Christ. *Leave thy fatherless children*, saith the Lord, *I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.*—2. Of eternal life; such shall inherit eternal life. "Be of good comfort," says Bradford to his fellow martyr, "we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night."—Christians! what would we have? The soul indeed is of a large capacity, all things here below can never satisfy it; but eternal life, the inheritance above, will fill the understanding with knowledge, and the will with joy; and that in so great a measure, that the expectation of the saints shall be exceeded; for he shall be admired of them that believe.

4. Mind the principle that must carry us through death, and make death itself honourable. We read, Heb. xi.—that *by faith some quenched the violence of fire.—Others were tortured.—They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain by the sword; and all this by faith.*—Faith is the grace that enables us to deny ourselves, yea, life itself; other graces may do much, but faith hath the principal work in this. *By faith ye stand*, said the apostle to his Corinthians: it is faith that makes a man stand in his greatest trials; and therefore when Christ saw how Peter should be tempted, he tells him, that he had *prayed that his faith should not fail*; noting, that while his faith held, all would be sure.

SECT. IX.

Of Self-denial, even with regard to the Graces of God.

NOTWITHSTANDING these are God's special gifts, yet we must deny them comparatively, and in some respects:—

1. In point of justification. It is a dangerous thing to hang the weight of a soul upon any thing which hath any mixture of

weakness, imperfection, or corruption in it, as the purest and best of all our duties have ; it is a dangerous thing to teach that faith, or any other evangelical grace, as it is a work done by us, doth justify us : there is nothing to be called our righteousness, but *the Lord our Righteousness*. Faith itself doth not justify habitually, as a thing fixed in us, but instrumentally, as that which receives the righteousness of Christ shining through it upon us ; as the window enlightens by the sun-beams which it lets in, or as the cup feeds by the wine which it conveys. So then, in point of justification, we are to renounce all our duties and graces.

2. In point of sanctification : for we are to attribute the glory of all our graces and duties unto Jesus Christ, and nothing to ourselves. And yet understand we aright, though every believer is thus to deny himself in spiritual things, even in the point of sanctification, yet he is not to speak evil of the grace of God within himself : he may not miscall his duties and graces, saying, these are nothing but the fruits of hypocrisy, for then he should speak evil of the Spirit, whose works they are ; neither is he to trample on those graces of God. For a man to say, all this is nothing but hypocrisy, that is not self-denial ; properly, self-denial in spiritual things, as to the matter of justification, is, to renounce all ; and as to the matter of sanctification, it is to attribute the strength and the glory of all unto Jesus Christ, and nothing to one's self.

The directions of self-denial in this respect, are these :—

1. Let us be sensible of, and humbled for, our pride in spiritual things. There is nothing that a Christian is more apt to be proud of than spiritual things. It was Mr. Fox's speech : " As I get good by my sins, so I get hurt by my graces." It is a dangerous thing to be proud of man's duties and spiritual gifts ; we had better be proud of clothes, or friends, or honours ; for this pride of spiritual things is directly opposite to a man's justification. The first step to humility is, to see one's pride ; the first step to self-denial is, to be convinced of one's desire after self-exalting, self-admiring, self-advancing.—O what a proud heart have I ! What a self-advancing heart have I !—There is no believer, till he is fully renewed, but what hath something of self. We had need therefore to be jealous of ourselves ; and if at any time self break out, if at any time the soul begins to be advanced in regard of duty or spiritual things, let us fall down before God, and humble ourselves for—the pride of our hearts.

2. Have Christ in your eye.—The more we see an humble Christ, a self-denying Christ, the more shall we learn humility and self-denial. Christ was the most eminent example of self-denial that ever was. *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God ; and he humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a servant*. Was there ever such a self-denial as this ?—Christians !

consider your Christ, and the more will you learn even in spiritual things.

3. Rest not on any thing below Jesus Christ. Neither grace, nor duties, nor holiness, are to be trusted in. We must hold them fast in point of practice and obedience; but it is our sin and danger to hold them fast in reliance and confidence.—I desire to be rightly understood in this truth: Some, because they need not rely on duties, let go their duties; they let prayer, and repentance, and sorrow for sin, go; they say, it is no matter for duties, they need not to trouble themselves, Christ hath done all. This is to turn the grace of God into wantonness: we must let go both our graces and duties in point of justification, but hold them we must as our lives. Prayer, hearing, fasting, repenting, must not die whilst we live; do them we must, but glory in them we must not: we must not rest in any thing whatsoever below Jesus Christ.—I shall instance in these particulars:

1. We must not rest upon our own preparations for duties. It is a commendable thing to prepare our hearts; we must pray that we may pray; we must have secret communion with our God, before we come to seek communion with him in a sermon: but we must not rest upon our own preparation when we have prepared; if we advance that into the throne of Jesus Christ, and rest upon that when we should only rest upon him, it is the way to make all our preparations miscarry.

2. We must not rest upon our enlargements in duties.—It may be we have a spring-tide of assistance comes in; a minister preaches with great presence of the Spirit of God, and a saint prays (as we find it) in the Holy Ghost: *i. e.* he finds the holy Spirit of God sending him from petition to petition, melting with brokenness when he is confessing sin, filling him with rejoicing when he is remembering mercy, raising him with an high wing, as it were, of importunity, when he is begging of favour; and now as soon as the duty is done, it may be, he goes away, and strokes himself,—‘O what an admirable prayer was here! surely I shall do well this day!’—This is the very way to miscarry, thousands have found it; so that when he comes to pray again, it may be, he prays most dully and flatly; the Spirit is grieved and gone, and he can say little or nothing.

3. We must not rest upon the comforts we have in duty, or after duty. It may be, when we have been at duty, and have had some ravishments; Oh! now we think our nest is built very high, and our rock is firm, and we shall go on vigorously. Chrysostom hath a saying to this purpose, “Methinks,” saith he, “a saint, when he comes from a sacrament, should be able to fly in the face of a devil; and though he walk in the midst of snares, yet he should be able to encounter with them all.” Comforts are very sweet things, and indeed strengthening things: *The joy of*

the Lord is our strength, saith Nehemiah. Nothing more animates the soul than joy; only here is the danger, if we rest on these joys and comforts; the Spirit of God is a most choice and tender thing, it dwells in none but a clean, pure temple.

4. We must not rest upon graces. This was Peter's fault; he had grace, and he rested on it, *Lord, though all forsake thee, yet will not I*; yet soon after Peter did forsake and deny his Master: and we do not find Peter so confident afterwards. When Christ said to him, *Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than these?* no comparative words now; no more than, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee.*

5. Be often putting forth new faith in Jesus Christ. Self-denial in spiritual things is not to be found in the law, but in the gospel: the law, though it hath its use, and we dare not but use it, yet it will not make a man deny himself, but rather seek himself, in spiritual things: 'Obey and live,' saith the law, 'but if thou failest in any one point, thou art lost for ever.' In this case, if there were no other way, who would deny his own righteousness? Nay, who would not seek to save himself by his own righteousness? 'But now,' saith the gospel, 'by works thou canst not live; but if thou wilt throw down all thy own righteousness at the feet of Christ, and believe on him, and rest only on him, thou shalt be saved.' This will make a man deny his own righteousness, and deny himself in spiritual things. Go we therefore to Christ, let us maintain believing apprehensions of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the humble, self-denying person, that seeks justification, not by works, but by faith only.

6. Let it be the joy of our souls to exalt and set up Christ within our souls. Though in order to justification we must deny our graces, eye Christ without us; yet in order to sanctification we must have a care to see and feel Christ's kingdom within us, to set up Christ in our hearts, and to discern him ruling and commanding there, as a king in his throne. And there is true self-denial in this, for wherever Christ reigns, there sin goes down. As the people would have all men put to death, which would not have Saul to reign over them; so doth a true believing soul mortify whatsoever opposeth Christ's kingdom: he removeth whatsoever may hinder Christ's spiritual dominion, he makes all stoop for Christ's exaltation within him. O then let Christ reign over all within us: in our understandings, as a prophet enlightening us; in our wills, as a king commanding us; in our affections, as a priest mortifying us; in our loves, as a husband marrying us; let the whole man be subject unto the whole Christ. This is the character of a true self-denier; Christ rules within him, he every way subjects himself to Christ:—in his understanding, to know Christ; in his will, to choose Christ; in his thoughts, to meditate upon Christ; in his fear, to serve and honour Christ; in his faith, to trust and depend upon Christ;

in his love, to affect Christ; in his joy, to delight in Christ; in his desire, to long after Christ; in his endeavours, to exalt Christ; in all his duties, graces, gifts, abilities, to make them serviceable unto Christ: this is to attribute the glory of all our duties and graces to Jesus Christ, and nothing to ourselves. Now is Christ all in all; now we truly deny ourselves.

OF THE LIFE OF FAITH.

SECT. I.

Of the Nature of the Life of Faith.

To live by faith, is, by faith in Christ, to possess the whole word of God as our own in all states and conditions, resting quietly upon his gracious and faithful promise, and yielding ourselves unto his good pleasure, in sincere, universal, and constant obedience: or, to live by faith, is to feed upon the several promises of God made in his word, and to apply them to our ourselves, according to our needs; and so to uphold, comfort, and encourage ourselves against all temptations, and unto every good duty. This life of faith is a very heaven upon earth, a sweet sanctuary to any hunted soul; hereby our hearts will be cheered, our life will be sweet to us, God will be glorified, and the glory of his truth advanced. O blessed duty!

That we may live by faith, we must endeavour two things,

1. To get matter for our faith to work upon.

2. That we may provide matter for our faith to work upon, we must observe three things: 1. That we store up all the good promises of God, and our own experiences.

2. That we lay in promises of all kinds. We had better leave than lack: it is the wisdom of a man, that he may not live feebly and poorly, but to have somewhat to spare.

3. That we so lay them up, that we may have them at hand. It is a folly to say, "I have as good provision as can be, but I have it not here." *Let the word of God dwell in you plenteously and richly in all wisdom.*

That we order our faith aright in the work, observe these directions:

1. Take possession of the promises, and value them as our own. There is no godly man or woman but is a great heir. Whensoever they look in God's book, and find there any promise, they make it their own; just as an heir that rides over divers fields and meadows, saith, 'This meadow is my heritage, and this corn-field is my heritage.' And then he sees a fair house, and saith, 'This fair house is my heritage.' And he looks upon