

THE  
*PRACTICE*  
OF  
SANCTIFICATION:

EXEMPLIFIED IN  
THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES.

*THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGES.*

THE ENTRANCE.

YOU have heard the doctrine, precepts, and the pattern of a man in his second, or new birth: now remains what follows all his life; and therein,

1. His privileges——2. His duties.

1. His privileges, as he is now a believer in Christ, are—Justification,—Sanctification,—Glorification.

The first privilege which immediately follows our union with Christ, is justification.

A man may be said to be justified either virtually, or actually; either in Christ, or in himself.

1. Virtually, in Christ: and this is from the day of Christ's passion, and in the virtue of his satisfaction; yet this intendeth no more but that satisfaction is made, and remission purchased, by the blood of Christ.

2. Actually, in himself: when a man hath the possession of justification, immediately after his union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this justification, considered as it is a state of favour with God, which a man at his first believing is put into, is not reiterated; yet the particular acts of pardon, and imputations of Christ's righteousness, are continually by God communicated unto the believer. In this respect this actual justification, or particular acts of pardon, hath its degrees of progression: the beginning thereof is laid in our first union with Christ; the consummation of it is not till the Judge at the last day hath solemnly pronounced the sentence of final absolution. Between these, there is a progressive work of justification, by the constant actings of the Spirit applying the blood of Christ by faith, to the quiet and comfort of the

soul; the first we may term initial justification, the second progressive, the last perfective: the first is wrought and sealed in the first sacrament; the second is wrought and sealed in the second sacrament; and both these branches of sacramental justification are to us the pre-assurance of that perfect justification.

It hath been commonly said by some of our best divines, that justification is transacted in our first incorporation into Christ; at which time, it is conceived that the pardon of all sin is sealed to the believer at once. But I fear the misunderstanding of this point hath laid the ground, upon which some build that unhappy structure, which turneth the grace of God into wantonness. Who knoweth not that justification, according to the scripture, is the act of a judge pronouncing a judicial sentence, wherein he absolveth the person of the sinner from all sin and punishment due to him for sin, and that for the alone righteousness of the surety, Christ, freely imputed, and by faith received of him? And according to this, I suppose we shall not err if we say, 1. That a work of justification is even as yet to us future, viz. at the last day, when we shall receive a final discharge, and when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes: and yet, 2. That in our first union with Christ there is a work of justification, viz. actual imputation of Christ's righteousness, and actual remission of all sin, or of what sin for the present the soul stands guilty of, at once, or at that time when it is first united to Christ. I dare not say, that justification is one individual act; or that all sins, past, present, and to come, are remitted to the believer at once; but this I say, that in our first union, all our sins, past and present, are actually pardoned; and this favour received, is a pledge of assurance, that in future also, by applying ourselves to Christ, we may receive the forgiveness of our daily sins, and that at the last day we shall at once be absolved from all accusations laid in against us, and that justification, besides those particular acts of pardon, and imputation of Christ's righteousness, doth note a state of grace, and reconciliation with God, for the imputed righteousness of Christ.

And *being justified by faith, we have peace with God*; that is, Christ's righteousness being imputed, and sins pardoned, we have peace with God; not only peace from God in our consciences, but peace with God in our reconcilment to him, and in his favour towards us. This reconciliation consists in two things: 1. In our peace with God, whereby the Lord lays by-all acts of hostility against us: 2. In the love and favour of God; he now loves us, not only with a love of good-will, but with a love of complacency and delight. Oh! consider what a blessed state this is!

Adoption follows reconciliation; whereby the Lord accounts us sons: *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* The Lord accounts us just in our justification, friends in our reconciliation, sons in our adoption: now this adoption is either begun in this life, or perfected in the world to come, when we shall receive all the privileges of sons.

Sanctification follows adoption: no sooner are we sons, but we receive the image of our heavenly Father in sanctification; the manner of it is thus:

1. The Spirit works in us a principle of spiritual life: the scripture sometimes calls it a seed, sometimes a spring or fountain, sometimes the life of Christ, because it is conveyed unto us by the Spirit of Christ, by means of our union with Christ. What name soever we give it, we may not conceive it to be a new faculty added unto those which are in men by nature, but an improvement of those abilities to work spiritually, as they did naturally before regeneration; hence it is that a regenerate man in scripture is said *to walk after the Spirit,—to be led by the Spirit,—to walk in the Spirit.*

2. From this fountain spring all those habits of spiritual grace, which are severally distinguished by the name of faith, hope, love. Although, to speak properly, they are but the diversifications of that spiritual principle within us, distinguished by these names.

3. From these habits of grace abiding in us, proceed spiritual motions and operations. And as it is with natural habits, so it is with spiritual; they are much increased and strengthened by the use and exercise of them, and are as much weakened by disuse and neglect of such an exercise.

The excellency of this privilege appears in these particulars:

1. This is our glory and beauty, even glorification begun: what greater glory than to be like unto God? We are *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*: every degree of grace is glory; and the perfection of glory in heaven consists chiefly in the perfection of grace.

2. This will give us abundance of sweet peace. From whence come troubles, and doubts of God's favour and love? Is it not some guilt or decay here? is it not our secret dalliance with some known sin? On the other side, what was Paul's rejoicing? Hezekiah's peace? The one cried, that in all sincerity and simplicity he had his conversation among men; the other, Lord, remember I have walked before thee uprightly: not that this was the ground of their peace, (for that only is free grace in Christ) but the means of their peace: that is a cursed peace, that is kept by looking to Christ, and yet loving our lusts.

3. By this we have comfortable evidence of our justification: nor is this a running upon the covenant of works;—is not sanc-

tification, the writing of the law in our hearts, a privilege of the covenant of grace, as well as justification? and can the evidencing of one privilege by another, be a running upon the covenant of works? Oh! consider, how many evangelical promises are made to persons invested with such and such graces; as of poverty, mourning, meekness. And to what end, but that every one may take, and be assured of, his portion manifested particularly therein? Surely none are justified, but they are sanctified; or if not sanctified, they are not justified.

Glorification is the last in execution of God's eternal purpose: and herein we are made partakers of those endless and unutterable joys, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor the heart of any man conceived.

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OF DUTIES IN GENERAL.

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SECT. I.

*Of the Equity of Duties.*

No sooner is the soul translated into the state of grace, and crowned with those glorious privileges, but immediately it cries out, O Lord, what shall I do for thee? how shall I live to thee? Good reason the soul should now give up herself to Christ, for she knows she is not her own, but Christ's. Can there be such a heart in any Christian, as to continue in sin, because so much grace hath abounded? Oh no! *The love of Christ constrains us*, saith the apostle, *because we thus judge,—that he died for all, that they which live, should not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* There is a principle of love in the hearts of believers, and this love of Christ constrains them to live to Christ: *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Christ, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

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SECT. II.

*Of the Insufficiency of Duties.*

BUT, alas! what are these duties to my Lord? Or what are these duties in themselves?

1. All the duties of man are nothing at all unto God: *Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise can be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it a gain to him, that thou makest thy ways per-*

fect? *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he from thine hand?* All the service of men and angels, though they run parallel with the longest lines of eternity, are no sufficient recompense for my soul's deliverance; when we have done all, still we must say, we are unprofitable servants.

2. All the duties of man, are in some respect sinful: "Christians may distinguish between that which is the Spirit, in works after renovation, and the whole work after they have done it: now although the motions and assistance of the Spirit be pure, holy, and without skum, in the spring, (to wit, in itself,) yet by that time these motions and assistances have passed through the channels of their hearts, and have been mixed with their manifold corruptions in doing, even the whole work thereby becomes polluted. If this be so, that our best recompense to Christ for his loves be unprofitable to him, and sinful as done by man; what shall I say? how must I carry myself to my Redeemer?"

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### SECT. III.

#### *Of the Healing of Duties.*

I DARE not but obey; though all the duties in the world are insufficient to recompense those bowels of God's mercies in Christ, I must not therefore cast away duties. It is true, I cannot but sin in all I do, my best duties are tainted and mingled with sin: but will it follow, that because I cannot be more clean, therefore I must be more filthy than needs? Nay, O my soul, if thou art married to that bridegroom, Christ, duties and all things else are clean to thee. There is an healing of duties, if we be in Christ. Certainly that fruit which cometh from a root of faith, must needs be good fruit. *I believe, therefore I speak*, saith the Psalmist: O my soul, canst thou say, I believe, therefore I pray; I believe, therefore I sanctify the Lord's day; I believe, therefore I do all duties of obedience. Thy obedience then is the fruit of paradise, for it grows on the very tree of life. Christ is the sun of righteousness, that ariseth with healing in his wings: Christ is that sun, that by his heat of love extracts all the sin out of thy duties, and so thy duties are healed; the spiritual part of them being presented by the intercession of Christ, and the defects covered by the righteousness of Christ.

2. But how should I know that Christ thus takes my duties and heals them, and mingles them with his own incense, and carries them in unto God the Father?

Didst thou never find a spiritual fire come down, as it were, upon thy heart, in duty, or after duty? In the times of the Old Testament, if they offered up a sacrifice, and a material fire

came down from heaven, and burnt up the sacrifice, it was a certain testimony that the sacrifice was accepted: now, in the times of the gospel, we must not expect material fire to come down upon our duties; but hath the Lord at any time caused an inward and spiritual fire to fall down upon thy heart, warming the spirit in duty? there the Lord speaks thus much to thee, that thy sacrifice is turned into ashes, and it is accepted by Jesus Christ.

This fire issues from the blood and intercessions of Christ, our great High-Priest; it is the efficacy of his blood, and power of his glorious intercession, that, when thou feelest any good in duties, doth at that very instant prevail with God the Father for what thou feelest: say then, Do I now in this ordinance, or in this duty, feel my heart warmed, or savingly affected? Oh! I see the Lord Jesus, who sits in glory at the right hand of God, now remembers me a poor worm on earth; now I feel the fruit of his Spirit, power, grace, comfort, presence, sweetness; now I taste, I drink, I enjoy, and am abundantly satisfied with, his rivers of pleasures; and if this presence of Christ be so sweet, what is himself then? O my soul, if ever thou dost relish the blood and Spirit of Christ upon thy spirit in duties, go thy way, and give glory to God.

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#### SECT. IV.

##### *No Resting in Duties.*

And yet be wary, O my soul! It was Luther's saying, "Take heed, not only of thy sins, but also of thy duties." Couldst thou desire and pray till heaven and earth shook, till thou hadst worn thy tongue to the stumps; couldst thou fast till thy skin and bone cleave together; couldst thou purpose with resolution to be better; couldst thou reform thy heart, head, life, tongue, some, nay all sins; couldst thou live like an angel, shine like a sun, walk up and down the world like a distressed pilgrim; couldst thou die ten thousand deaths; lie in hell so many millions of years, as there are piles of grass on the earth, or sands on the sea-shore, or stars in heaven; I tell thee, not one spark of God's wrath against thy sins can be quenched by all these duties, nor by any of these sorrows or tears.

It was Austin's saying, though it sounds harsh, "That repentance damns more than sin;" meaning, thousands did perish by resting therein.

But how shall any man know that he rests in his duties?

By these signs following:

1. It is a sign that a man rests in his duties, if he never found it a hard matter to come out of his duties: if thou canst not tell the time when thou didst rest in duties, and didst groan to be

delivered from these entanglements; thou hast just cause to fear.

2. It is a sign that a man rests in duties, if he exceedingly prize the bare performance of duties: those duties that carry thee out of thyself unto Christ, make thee to prize Christ. Now tell me, dost thou glory in thyself? Dost thou say, I was before ignorant, hard-hearted; but now I understand better, now I can sorrow for my sins, I can pray with some life? Alas, poor soul! these things do argue only the Spirit of God breathing on thee, not dwelling in thee. If thou retest here, if thou thus enhancest the price of duties, then do I pronounce from God, that thou dost rest in duties: *Those things*, saith Paul, *I accounted gain*, i. e. before his conversion, *but now I account them loss*. This is the reason why a child of God, commonly after his prayers, doubts much of God's love towards him; whereas another man, that falls short of him, never so much as questions his estate: the first seeth much vileness in his best duties, and so judgeth meanly of himself; but the other is ignorant of any such vileness, and therefore esteems highly of them.

3. It is a sign that a man rests in his duties, if he never came to be sensible of their poverty, and utter emptiness of any good in them. Didst thou never feel thyself in this manner? Oh! I am ignorant as any beast, as vile as any devil; what a nest of sin and rebellion works in my heart? I once thought, at least my heart and desires were good; but now I feel no spiritual life. O dead heart! I am the poorest, basest, and blindest creature, that ever lived! If thou ever feelest thyself thus, thou never camest out of thy duties.

4. It is a sign that a man rests in his duties, if he gain no evangelical righteousness by duties, i. e. if he prize not, desire not, delight not in union with, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence a child of God asks himself after sermon, after prayer, after sacrament, What have I gained of Christ? Have I got more knowledge of Christ? more admiring of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have my affections been raised, my graces acted, my soul refreshed with the delights of Christ? On the contrary, a carnal heart, that rests in his duties, asketh only, what have I done? *I thank God*, saith the Pharisee, *I am not as other men are*, &c.—so, I pray, and hear, and reform, and sorrow for sin, therefore I shall be saved. No such matter: let a man have a bucket of gold, doth he think to get water because he hath a bucket? No, no, he must let it down into the well, and draw up water with it: so must thou let down all thy duties into the Lord Jesus Christ, and draw life, and light, and grace, from his fulness, otherwise thou shalt perish without Christ. Oh! that the ministers of Christ would become sons of thunder in this matter! Many have had experience of Christ's enlarging the common

gifts of his Spirit; but what have they felt of Christ's renewing, sanctifying, and healing their lusts? Oh! it is far more comfortable, to find Christ's power melting thy heart for sin, mortifying thy lusts, quickening thee to holiness, than to find ten thousand enlargements in holy performances.

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SECT. V.

*Of the Use and Ends of Duties.*

And canst thou not, O my soul, be saved by thy duties? To what end then shouldst thou pray, or hear, or sorrow, or repent, or meditate, or examine? I answer,

1. That hereby you may express obedience to God's will: *Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

2. That God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be honoured by the performance of these duties: *Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.* Abraham believed, and gave God glory. So we should pray, and meditate, and hear, and all should tend to the glory of God.

3. That duties may be as evidences of God's love to them who are in Christ Jesus: they cannot save, but they let the soul in to Christ, and follow and accompany such a man as shall be saved. Duties bring you in to Christ, and are evidences when you are in Christ, that the Lord and mercy is yours; even as at the sacrament, the elements of bread and wine are outward signs to bring Christ and the heart together. Indeed, the heart must not rest in these signs; but when the soul is let in to Christ, then faith must let go the outward elements, and treat immediately with the Lord Jesus. So grace and duties are inward signs; and while men make use of them only as signs and means to let them come in unto Christ, and their rejoicing is not in them, but in Christ, their confidence is not pitched upon them, but upon Christ, there will be no danger at all in making such use of signs; neither is it more derogatory to free grace, or to Christ's honour, for God to make such effects signs of our union with him, than it was to make outward signs of his presence: it's true, these are not full testimonies, without the Spirit of Christ.

4. That they that exercise duties may obtain the promises: *Godliness is profitable unto all things, saith the apostle, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* There are many promises scattered up and down in the word; and hereby if God be not a debtor unto thee, yet he is to himself, and to his own faithfulness.—Thou, Lord, payest debts, and owest none: it was free for thee, before thou hadst pro-

mised, whether to give me heaven, or no; but now the word is out of thy mouth, I use duties as means, though I adhere only to thee, and to thy faithfulness, who hast promised." Duties are considered, first, as services, in respect of the command; and secondly, as means to obtain blessings at God's hands, in relation to his promise: now most in the world perform duties as acts of obedience only, and so rest in the present performance; but if we do them in faith, we should have an eye to the promise, and look on duties as means to obtain some mercy, yea, salvation itself, at God's hands, Phil. ii. 12. Rom. x. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 9.

But is not this to be saved by duties?

No: for herein we speak not of duties originally, but instrumentally, and with relation to the Lord Jesus Christ; not as meritorious causes, but as subordinate means of our salvation in the name of Christ: the best of duties, in their own natures, are but mere empty pits, and dry channels, though never so curiously cut out; but Christ fills them.

5. That these duties may turn to our comforts. Not so as to put confidence in them, to take comfort from them, as causes; that cannot be, for who can look upon any thing he doth with that boldness? but as the testimony of God's love to us, and as the means of consolation. Thus Hezekiah, not as a proud Pharisee, but as a thankful acknowledger of what was in him, prayed, *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember me, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* We may therefore take comfort from duties, not so as to rest in them, but as a means, and so as to praise God thereby.

6. That others might receive good, and glorify God. *These things are good and profitable unto men,* saith the apostle; and; *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Christ doth not here encourage vain-glory, but he propounds the true ends of our visible holiness. There is an exhortation to wives, so to walk that their husbands may be won to the Lord: sweet soul, it may be thou prayest for thy husband in a carnal condition; thou desirest him to go to hear such a minister, such a sermon: go on in these duties, adding this to the rest—see that thy life also may convert him.

7. That duties may carry us to the Lord Jesus Christ: he alone is *able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,* i. e. in the use of the means. Hear a sermon, to carry thee to the Lord Jesus; fast and pray, and get a full tide of affections in them, to carry thee to Jesus Christ, i. e. to get more love of him, more acquaintance with him, more union in him, and communion with him: use thy duties as Noah's dove did her wings, carry thee to the ark of the Lord Jesus Christ.

where only there is rest: if she had never used her wings, she had fallen into the waters; and if she had not returned to the ark, she had found no rest. So, if thou shalt use no duties, but cast them all off, thou art sure to perish; and if they convey thee not to Christ, thou mayest lie down in sorrow.

8. That the Lord Christ may be exalted, and advanced by duties. The main end of duties, is the glory of him who hath redeemed us with the price of his blood, and the power of his Spirit; this sets the crown on his head. How many perform duties, not to set the crown on Christ's head! But this is the main end of right obedience, that the crown may be set on Christ's head, that he who is King of saints, may have the honour given him due to his kingly office. O my soul, in respect of all those ends, use and exercise duties; but be sure of Christ in all, above all, more than all: O let Christ have the crown set on his head, give him all the glory. Cast not away duties, but cast them down at the feet of Jesus Christ, as the twenty-four elders cast their crowns, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, (all duties,) and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

And yet let me warn you of one dangerous snare: some think, if they fetch in their comfort by duties, as by prayer, meditation, &c. that then it would be a comfort only of their own hammering out, and not the genuine joy of the Holy Ghost. A desperate mistake! they set the workings of God's Spirit and their own spirit in opposition; when their spirits must stand in subordination to God's: God's Spirit usually works our comforts, by setting our own spirits awork upon the promises, and by raising our thoughts to the objects of our comforts. And yet I deny not, that if any should so think to work out his comforts by meditation, prayer, reading the word, as to attempt the work in his own strength, and do not all in subordination to God, and the Spirit's assistance, the comfort will be nothing but vanity, a comfort indeed of their own hammering out.

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## SECT. VI.

### *Of the essential Requisites in Duties.*

BUT what are they we call duties? or what are those essential requisites in duties? Many by duties intend nothing but that which is external, as, coming to the church, and receiving of sacraments.

I answer, these are like clothes upon a dead man, that cannot warm him, because there is no life within. The soul of all duties is that which is internal; in which respect three ingre-

dients are necessary, viz. 1. that they be from God, 2. through God, and 3. to God.

1. From God: it is of the very essence of a duty; that it be commanded by God. Look to this in thy duties; know the commands, and do them because they are commanded; if thou dost them, and yet knowest not that God commands them, this is no true obedience; or if thou knowest they are commanded, but yet dost them not because they are commanded, neither is this obedience to God. In all duties, rightly performed, there must be a knowledge of, and an eye to, the will of God, Rom. xii. 2. Eph. v. 17.

2. Through God, i. e. 1. Through the Spirit, who doth spiritualize them. 2. Through Christ, who presents them, and makes them acceptable to God.

(1.) Through the Spirit of God: now the Spirit works on our spirits to the performance of our duties; and therefore look, how much there is of the holy Spirit in duty, so far it is sanctified, so far it is accepted, and no further. *God is my witness, saith Paul, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.* In every service we perform, our spirit, stirred up by God's Spirit, must needs have a hand in it, or it is but the carcase of a right service: the soul, will, and affections, must go together with our duties, (that I mean by our spirit,) or the vitals are wanting. If a man come to confess his sins; and yet slights them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconciliation with God, and yet have no longing in his heart after it; if he ask grace, or the spirit of mortification, and yet his heart doth not inwardly seek it;—he prays not in the spirit, and therefore God will not accept it.

(2.) Through Christ: for Christ perfects, perfumes, and presents our duties to his heavenly Father: As duties come from us, they savour of flesh, but the angel of the covenant mingleth incense with them, and so he offers them upon the golden altar which is before the throne. Here is sweet comfort, O my soul! what though thy duties are weak, and cold, and confused; yet through Christ they are enlivened with his intercessory Spirit; through Christ they are perfumed with the precious odours of his fresh bleeding merits and blessed mediation, and so they are made acceptable to God, that he may receive them.

Observe here a double intercessor:

One is the Spirit, that helps our infirmities:

The other is Christ, that makes them acceptable to God.

3. To God: that is, to set forth his glory; for as his name is blasphemed when we walk in wickedness, so it is glorified in doing our duties. This is the end of all our duties, indeed of all our doings: *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* One duty sanctifying Christ in the heart, is more than a thousand. Young Christians, it may be,

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.*

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OF SELF-DENIAL.

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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

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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*