

# SERMON L

## OF SELF-DENIAL

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*"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." {Mt.16:24}*

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Our blessed Saviour having inquired of his disciples, as to what they thought of him, who he was; wherein Peter, according to his wonted forwardness, answers for himself, and the rest, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" {Mt.16:16;} upon this confession of their faith, he takes the present advantage to break to them that doleful tragedy which should ensue; to wit, of his sufferings, "from that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." {vs.21} Here Peter, as before, steps and shows as much weakness now, as he did before, advising Christ to spare and pity himself, "then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee;" {vs.22;} which cowardly counsel Christ had sharply rebuked in him, as "he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." {vs.23} Thus, he takes occasion from this selfishness exposed to lay down an infallible conclusion, which all his followers must embrace, namely, if they will come after him, they must deny themselves. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." {vs.24,25} Wherein I might note, the seasonableness of our Saviour's counsel; he plucks at the weed so soon as it peeps above ground, before it hath time to root itself; he observes the physicians rule, *principiis obsta*, {that is, resist the beginnings or nip the bud,} for delays are dangerous where poison hath fastened. I might also observe, that men often betray their own infirmities by the counsel they give to others; that self-denial is then seasonably urged, when faith is first planted, and hath taken root; else instead of a lure it will prove a scare-crow. It is true, if no self-denial, no part in Christ; but it is as true, that we must first be believers, before we can be able to deny ourselves. Christ's method can have no danger in it, but may serve for a sure pattern. But I hasten to the main thing.

The point is, they whom Christ embraces, must deny themselves. Christianity is no lazy life. There must be bustling in it, as well as in the world; which to the blinded, that understand not the gospel, is a stone of offence; insomuch, that from that time that they hear thereof, {though before, perhaps, they look after Christ,} they go backward, and will walk no more with him; as appeared in the young rich man in the gospel. Now, because this is a necessary sequel of confessing Christ, not to be separated, and yet so offensive to many, let us consider what it is to deny a man's self; why we must do it; and how we may attain to it. For the first, two things are to be enquired into. What a man's self is; and what this denial is.

A man's self in scripture is considered three ways, natural, corrupt, and spiritual. This distinction is very needful for understanding the point in hand, and will give light to resolve many doubts, which we may meet with in due place. Let us see how this distinction is bottomed; what these several 'selves' are; and which is meant in the text. The two former go together; natural self is nothing else but personal subsistence, consisting of a reasonable soul and human body united; in which self

we conclude, all the natural faculties of the soul, and members of the body; in this sense each man is himself, as he is distinct from any other, which betokens his individuality; thus Peter takes it, saying, "stand up; I myself also am a man." {Acts 10:26} And Paul speaking to the jailor, "do thyself no harm." {Acts 16:28} Sometimes this natural self is taken more largely than for the subject only; it imports often all things that conduce to the being, and well-being of nature; as food, raiment, life, liberty, and the like, because they are all appurtenances to nature, to preserve it. So you may understand that text, "do no harm to thyself;" that is, to thy life, for he was about to kill himself.

A man's corrupt self is nothing else but so much in his nature, as is contrary to the rectitude of God's revealed will. To wit, ignorance, errors, vanity, conceit, false reasonings in the mind, stubbornness, frowardness, willfulness, deadness, deceitfulness, and such like; with all sorts of inconsistent, impertinent, vain, loose, ungodly, unrighteous thoughts; all misplaced, misguided, excessive, inordinate affections, or any other way; all sleepiness, brawniness, unskillfulness, and base cowardliness of conscience; all unruliness, and predominancy of the fancy to divert; all masterfulness, looseness, offensiveness, and brutishness of the senses and members; all false erotic, self-dependence, and self-sufficiency. This I say, and such like, is man's corrupt self; and this corruptness in man is often called himself. The Lord speaking of one that hates instruction, consenting with thieves, and partaking with adulterers; at last tells him that, God kept silence, and he thought him to be such an one as himself. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." {Ps.50:21} "For I know that in me; that is, in my flesh, {saith Paul,} dwelleth no good thing." {Rom.7:18} The text opposeth man to himself.

A man's renewed self is no more but so much of man, whether in his spirit, soul, or body, as is molded, and hath the stamp or impression of Christ upon it, and is reduced to submission or resignation of its self to his will. The scriptures plainly speak of such a self; as our Saviour speaking of the prodigal that broke out, and then growing weary of that condition, thinks of returning home to his father again; this inward consultation Christ calls a coming to himself. The apostle speaks fully to the same purpose, "if then I do that which I would not," "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me;" for "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." {Rom.7:14-25} There is nothing more frequent than the mention of these two latter selves, the one the old, the other the new man; one flesh, the other spirit.

In this diversity of selves, you will ask, what 'self' Christ here means? I answer, not every self absolutely; the last must not be denied, but maintained, yet not so as to be made our justifying righteousness; for it is Christ's own work, and this must not be denied, but confessed; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, {i. e. Christ's,} and, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." {Rom.10:10} For the former, to wit, the natural; neither is that simply to be denied as the corrupt self, only so far forth as it stands at any time in opposition to some special trial of God, which extends not to a universality; for the apostle said to the jailor, "do thyself no harm," for he would have been *felo de se*, {that is, a felon of himself.} The mind of God, in general, is for our preservation of this being, and the furthering of the perfection of it, yet so as he reserves a liberty to himself to sequester when he sees cause, even natural good; nay, the best of it, even life itself, from his people; so that this must be denied only when such occasions happen, as would set God and his people at variance, that one must be left. As for a man's corrupt self, it must be denied at all times, universally, in all parts of it, with all a man's might.

Let us consider now what this denial is, that God requires. This self-denial supposes self-solicitation, which is a kind of begging, or earnest importunate wooing; wherewith the natural, or corrupt self, entreats either the embracing or sparing of somewhat, which is suitable to it, without which it suffers damage. There is no self-denial, strictly, where there doth not precede a temptation; mere abstinence from things, whereto there is not an actual inclination, or some secret desire of reservation, is no self-denial. Men do not deny a thing which is not first moved to them, or urged upon them; as Christ did not deny the sparing or favoring himself, till Peter first moved him to it.

In denial, the thing sued for, or begged, though it seems never so plausible and good, yet it appears to him, that is solicited unto it, to have a greater weight of evil than good, which bears the sway; so that the self-denier must be a clear-sighted man, able to discern things in their proper colors; yea, and a man of faith to believe that they are worse than they appear to sense, because God hath pronounced so of them; for men cannot possibly deny things that appear only good, or better embraced than rejected; for *bonum est objectum appetitus*, {that is, it is the object of appetite or desire,} yea, and he must see {all things considered} that there is an over-topping good in the want of such things as he denies; that this is far better than the other. For example; consider life itself, when God calls for it; he that will deny his life, must see {how glorious a show soever life carries, and how many great and good things it propounds, yet then} the sparing of it is both the loss of it, and that which is far better, God himself, and an eternity of bliss; and that the denial of his life is of necessity in order to find and save it, yea, and to find bliss. The sight of faith must be the spring of self-denial; and these previous requisites preceding it stand. In a man's inexorableness to such solicitations, though they be urged with such subtilty of natural arguments, as he cannot well repel; yet, he holds the conclusion, not to be swayed by them, or moved to entertain them, but still turns the deaf ear unto them; so far as self-solicitation staggers a man, so far self-denial is shaken. See this branch of self-denial excellently shining in Paul, who, to spare himself, and not go up to Jerusalem, was solicited thereto by the danger and misery that would ensue; "but {saith he} none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, &c." {Acts 20:24} So David, much provoked to wrath by the loud cries of injuries, sustained from his enemies, mark how he expresses the denial of himself, "but I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth." {Ps.38:13} You will say, doth not a man deny himself, although fleshly, or self-solicitations, move him, who can choose but be moved with them? I answer, that by moving, I mean not that the self-denier must not be affected in any kind therewith, for it is impossible; all occurrences have some impression on the affections, much more these; but, by moving, I mean drawn, or inclined to yield to such solicitations. But it may be said, peradventure, a man may be startled by the nearness of such solicitations, especially such as concern his being, or well-being. I answer, that, in self-denial, it is with self-deniers, as with the needle in the mariner's compass, it being touched with the magnet, much jogging may make it stir this way, and that way, awhile; but, at last, it will settle towards the north-pole, and it cannot be moved to settle elsewhere; so, though self-solicitations may make a believer stir a while, yet nothing can make him settle from his north-star; which is Christ.

Besides the deafness in self-denial, there is also contradiction, which stands in two things. A direct and flat gain-saying, without any secret reservations or cautions, no ifs or ands. A man that denies himself, doth not only slacken his pace, but stops himself; he doth not only cut short the allowance, but takes it quite away, every jot of the motion is rejected. So then, when a man wholly disclaims his own righteousness, and deny and contradict every motive the flesh uses, that neither one nor the other can change him; but he sings the same song still; I will not consent; this or that shall find no favour. The execution intended shall stand firm as the laws of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable, although his ears be filled with never so many out-cries; such contradiction, being direct and flat, is a real denial. It is also a peremptory one; that is, it is the more stiff, by how much the more it is plied to a flexibleness, as in Christ's denial of Satan; a while he lets him argue, and Christ answers him; at last, finding him over importunate, he deals peremptorily with him, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." {Mt.4:10} So Paul, being solicited not to go up to Jerusalem, denies them peremptorily, "what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart; for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done." {Acts 21:12-14} In this kind of denial there is a vehemence or ardcy.

In self-denial there is struggling, and resistance, in which struggling note, first, that such self-solicitations exasperate or provoke anger and indignation against the flesh that will take no reasonable answer. Nay, as when beggars will not be gone, at last they will make the people of the house angry,

being over solicited. What saith the denying soul, can there be no quiet? Then begins anger to rise, and the blood to boil, which produceth threatenings; but that's not all, it sets to buckle and harness itself for resistance, and calls out for Christ, it's good neighbour, to come and aid; and so lets fly a main at himself, to beat down his own body, as Paul did, even as when thieves beset a house, the master of the house gets his ammunition ready, calls neighbors and discharges upon them; and thus denies them with powder. If the first denial will not serve, to wit, inexorableness, then must flat and peremptory contradiction, with vehemence, break forth; if self-solicitations regard not that neither, nor will be gone, then must it stand a combat, and be cast out.

Consider next, why such as come after Christ must deny themselves; for it seems hard measure to many, but to the wise in heart it will appear very reasonable and necessary.

It must be so, because we are not our own, but are bought with a price. Is it reasonable that hired servants, much more ransomed slaves, should neglect their master's business, to serve their own turn, and work for themselves? This reason Christ intimates in the text, by the phrase of coming after him he tacitly gives to understand, that such are his servants; whoso takes notice of this his relation, cannot but take notice of Christ's demand, and of the equity thereof.

Because we are in a crazy distempered condition, and therefore not fit to be our own carvers. Shall it be well in an ignorant man, out of self-will, or self-conceit, to go his way, say his guide what he can; that knows what thieves and quagmires lie in that way? Shall an illiterate rustic stand stiff against a judge in a law case? May a sick man choose his own diet, that which only pleases the palate, whatever the physician saith; is it like to go well with such persons? Nay, is it not madness, and the desperate way to ruin? A foolish man, indeed, is apt to think the brat of his own begetting is fairest, though it be a deformed monster; as the aguish man cannot be persuaded that abstinence is better for him than cold drink; though indeed, instead of eating, it enrages the disease, as sound men know, and his own experience, when it is too late, will tell him. This is certain, whatever Christ requires us to deny, or reject, is our poison, though it look never so lovely, or taste never so sweet. You will say, is not wealth useful, liberty sweet, life dear? Are not parents to be loved, and obeyed? How then can a yielding to enjoy them be poison? I answer, that which at sometimes is in itself good and wholesome, in its own nature may be, at another time, a man's bane, if he then use it; as in the case of an ague before mentioned; so may these things, though sometimes useful, yet at other times they may be poison; as "he that will save his life, shall lose it;" and, "he that will lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall find it," saith Christ. But how shall I know when things are useful, and to be embraced; and when baneful, and to be denied? I answer, by the advice and opinion of Christ, the skillful Physician; in those cases wherein he saith they are baneful, we may conclude them so. Now, in general he concludes them so, when they stand in competition with him and his will; so that not the denial of them, is the denial of him, and his will; when men choose rather to keep them, and reject him and his will, than to adhere to him by forsaking them. They being therefore thus prejudicial, it is but reasonable to deny ourselves in all such things as Christ requires to be denied.

This denial is reasonable, because the contrary is an un-sufferable affront to the Divine Majesty; yea, shamefully injurious to divine goodness. Not denying of ourselves, is a casting away of God's cords from us; every refusal or denial, where God calls for it, infers what Pharaoh spake, "who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." {Ex.5:2} And what the wicked say, in Psalm 12:4, "with our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own, for who is Lord over us?" Which is a kind of dethroning or disrobing of God, as much as in a man lies; is it seemly, nay, tolerable, for a servant, when his master bids him forbear to do this or that, to say, {because his fingers itch after it,} I will not? There is nothing levels more directly against Divine Majesty, than persistence in a man's own way against divine authority; so that not to deny ourselves is, *Crimen lease majestatis*, {that is, injuring majesty or royalty; or high treason,} and therefore capital. Besides, it injures divine goodness, not only as it is a churlish requital of former kindness, but also, as it misconstrues present intended favour in the command. What can be more injurious, than to deem a man an enemy in that wherein he only aims at good, and by which it must be compassed? What can be more distasteful than to deem that poison, and therefore to be rejected,

which out of a skillful tenderness is delivered for the best cordial without which it were impossible to escape miscarriage? Christ may well take up Paul's complaint, "am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" {Gal.4:16}

Use: Is this an inseparable attendant of coming after Christ, to deny a man's self? Then are all such grossly mistaken, and far beside the mark, who think they may humour themselves, and yet have a part in Christ. As the standard is the trial of gold, so is this revealed mind of Christ, the discriminator of those that have interest in him from counterfeits; thy faith, therefore, that humoureth thyself, is a mere dream and delusion; that which thou fanciest to be faith, is but vain and dead. As cockering parents by humouring their children, and giving them the reins, never crossing them, prove in the end their ruin; so giving the reins to thyself, not checking and controlling thine own itching humours, not bridling thine inordinate judgment and affections, dost suck in thine own poison and bane; all thy stay is, that Christ will show thee mercy; but hear what he saith himself, "but whosoever {instead of denying himself} shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." {Mt.10:33} You will say, Doth not Christ take men in their blood; and doth not Christ alone, without works save? I answer, that as this is a cornerstone to those that rightly understand it; so it is a stone of offence to all those that abuse it. Know therefore, that although Christ finds men in their blood when he enters into covenant with them; yet he leaves them not in their blood when they become his, but covers their nakedness, washes them from their blood, and puts jewels upon them, and that not by imputation only, but by infusion also of actual grace. {Ez.16:1-14} When God converts Ephraim, he was a "bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," but afterwards he became "God's dear child." Paul going with fury to persecute, is met with by Christ; but, when Christ had yoked him for his own turn, he puts him into a better tune; he makes him deny his former attempts, and stoop to him, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" As for justification, by grace alone, without works, in the apostle's sense, it is true; but, in many a man's own sense, it is false. It is faith alone which justifies; works have no hand in that business. Yet, that faith justifies alone, stands not alone without works, as if there could be a faith in men, and no renovation of life. Now, such as wrest the scriptures to their own perdition, dream of a faith that hath no fruits, and James calls them vain and dead; for certainly true faith will make a man deny himself for Christ. Dost thou then establish thine own righteousness, and not deny it, saying as in Isaiah, "it is all as filthy rags?" Dost thou maintain thine own judgment of things, and conclude according to it, and not according to Christ's? Dost thou not deny thine own lusts, but make provision for them to fulfill them? Dost thou not deny thine own passions and affections, but thinkest thou dost well to give them the reins to that inordinateness they have got? Art thou not contented to part with anything, when Christ calls for it? If not, but continue a self-maintainer, then hear thy doom; "Christ shall profit thee nothing;" for every one of his must pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand, {Matt.5:29,30;} that is, deny or reject what is dearest to him, standing in competition with Christ, if he will not go to hell.

But because some say, they deny themselves, but do not; others that they do not, and yet do; that neither the tender, jealous soul may be snared, nor yet the self-deceiving soul be deluded, I will endeavour to make the case plain to both, or at least to so many as will regard it. Something, for this, may be gathered from what I have spoken for the unfolding of self-denial.

Besides note, that the thing denied, is, as it were, a man's self, and yet is not favored; the trial of denial is in that which is dear and pleasant; as Abraham's, in his denying himself in his only son; such a denial as, were it not for God, a man would not be wooed or hired to part with it. Now bring this home, and make trial by this rule; suppose thy master delight, thy minion that hath ravished thine heart; suppose all thy wealth and substance, thy parent's wife, and children, lie whining and making moan, when Christ warns them away; they beg and make piteous crying, do they not only melt, but overcome thee to spare them? If thou wilt not, and dost not contentedly part with them, then dost thou not deny thyself; doubtless an eye, or an hand, would make shrewd moan to be spared, if designed to a violent disjunction; yet a denying, or stopped ear, must be given to such outcries. The denying soul doth as the Israelites, that made their sons pass through the fire; they got divine music to fill their ears, and deafen them to such outcries; many, out of common courtesy, may

deny some superfluity, that may be well spared for Christ, {and yet but few of them neither,} but his own self knows no stint. If Christ say, sell all, men must part with it; it is matter of life, and therefore being less than life, it must go; as the richest lading in a ship, though a man's whole stock be freighted in it, over-board it shall go, when the sparing of it is the ruin of life. Some may say, I know not what to do in such choice cases, not having been put to it. I answer, thou mayest know by this. How is it with the cases that are already on foot? How dealest thou with a present lust arising, and wooing for harbour? Canst thou not for pity deny them? When a naked, hungry, undone member of Christ calls for a more than ordinary portion of relief, how canst thou part with it? If God call for wife, husband, child, dear friend, sends losses, and crosses, how bearest thou them? If in these smaller things thou stick with Christ, surely when the price is raised, thou wilt not leave him.

But some will say, {being fearful every bush is a thief,} sure if this be true, I do not deny myself, and why? Because they find themselves very loath still to part with anything against the hair; therefore fain they would have this and that spared. I answer, if this be all, it makes not void self-denial, nay, it necessarily presupposes this, as you have heard; there is no denial where there is not first solicitation, and the dearer a thing, the loather a man is to part with it; if at last he can say, for all that, it is for Christ and he shall have it; the denial is so much the stronger, and the love to Christ appears to be the greater. Consider, therefore, at parting, after all parties betwixt flesh and spirit, about things that Christ calls for; is it, I say, at last left to Christ's pleasure, or hath the flesh reprieved it, overcoming by its importunity? If the last sentence be for Christ, this is self-denial; if the flesh over-rule, then is it wanting.

Use: If this denial must be, then buckle thyself to it, and let it be universal, as the apostle's rule is, "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts;" be not partial; favour neither small nor great; say not of this, oh, this is but a small one or of that, it doth nobody any hurt; but be alike resolute, cast out small and great, quench the sparkles as well as the great coals, the covered fire as well as the flame; for a spared sparkle may set the whole course of nature on fire, as well as the greatest coal, and consume all to ashes. Say not, it will go out of itself, for the least sin allowed, or the allowance of anything that is against the will of Christ, is as a sparkle lighting upon tinder; such is man's nature, therefore, likely to out, but to grow. The very Gibeonites only being left, and all the rest of the Canaanites destroyed, prove pricks in the sides, and thorns in the eyes. One knot of couch-grass being left in the ground, will soon overgrow, and choke the choice herbs.

Let this denial be constant, do not begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh; be not weary of this well doing; so run in this way, that you may obtain. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," saith Paul. {II Tim.4:7} You see he fights not a while only, but even till he finished his course. And let it be done in sincerity, with good will as unto the Lord; lay aside all base sinister respects, which will poison the best self-denial; it is as a dead fly in a box of precious ointment. You will say, may I not aim at mine own good in denying myself? I answer, that a man may, in subordination to God and his will. Now, a man's own end is subordinate to God, when the will of God is the *primum mobile*, {that is, first moved,} that sets a man at work to deny himself. When it is *finis ultimus*, {that is, ultimate end,} unto God's glory. In brief, a man may take notice of his own good that shall ensue his self-denial, and thereby be further moved thereto, and rejoice therein; but, because it is special service that Christ requires, he must not expect his own good as the wages thereof, nor desist when Christ only shall get the glory thereby; because we are not our own but must work for our master, not for ourselves.

Many are the encouragements to this self-denial, whereto you may reduce the reasons fore-mentioned; besides although at first it seem a yoke, yet Christ hath promised to make it easy; which encouragement he adds to that command, "take my yoke upon you, for it is easy;" difficulty is the usual discouragement of men in this case; there is a lion in the way, this makes men recoil; but, Christ you see takes it out of the way, he will make self-denial as easy as what is most natural. You will say, I cannot find it so. I answer that peradventure it is for lack of use; for after a little treading the path will be smooth. Or it may be you take not Christ actually along with you in your denial, but go about it in your own strength; and no marvel if it be harsh. If you took him with you, you would be

able to do all things, and that with ease through his strengthening you, whereas of yourself you can do nothing.

Another motive is, this self-denial issues in peace and quietness. Peace with God, whose work is done there; and consequently peace of conscience, which will not only be silent from accusations and condemnations, but also will speak peace and comfort; for God, saith conscience, will say, "well done good and faithful servant." It will afford quietness from inward disturbance; as when an enemy is in a man's house there is nothing but brawling, quarrelling, and confusion; but being cast out of the house, it is in quiet; so while self swaggers within, the heart cannot but be grieved and troubled with this master of misrule, that turns all upside down, and brings all out of order, and sets all on fire; but when it is cast out, then the occasion is taken away, and the soul returns to its rest, it falls to its wonted solaces, and freely and uninterruptedly enjoys its communion with God.

Another motive is that this self denial invites Christ and his Spirit not to withdraw; where Christ abides, he will have the government upon his shoulders, he will not be over-topped. He that will not deny any usurping thing which would set above Christ must never look to have him remain, and be as an underling. If the people will set up Absalom, David will fly from them; {II Sam.15:14;} David indeed for his own safety, but Christ and his Spirit for their prejudice that shall set up anything in his place. Now, when all such things as are offensive to Christ are packed out of doors, then he manifests himself; many a time hath Christ hid himself, when corruptions have been harbored, as when the church was in her sluggishness, not being willing to shake it off; so long as corrupt self is denied, Christ sees a faithfulness to himself, and delights to attend there.

But how shall I attain this self-denial? Answer, get a true estimate of that self of thine, that is to be denied; nothing but self-love makes self-denial difficult, and self-love proceeds from self-admiration, and an apprehension of self-usefulness; so that if a man could grow out of love with that self, it were easy to deny it; but, here lies the difficulty, to grow out of love with it. The way hereto is to sift this self impartially, and to sound it, and hereby a man shall find this self to be but a serpent in his bosom, in human shape. If a man marry a woman of great beauty, it may be it is death to him to part with her; but if he find her to be a devil in a woman's shape, then will he kick her out of doors with indignation. Men, I confess, are hardly persuaded that themselves are become monsters in nature, vultures to themselves, sucking out their own heart's blood; but so they are, and so must men be persuaded of themselves, before they will deny themselves; that they are so is plain. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," {Rom.8:13;} the members thereof are weapons of sin unto death. If men would receive this, then self-denial would come on easily, for it could not but work enmity and hatred; for it is an easy thing for an Amnon to deny the greatest importunity of a Tamar, though he loved her never so dearly before, when once he hates her. But, I confess, it must be God, and not man, that must discover effectually this deadliness, or mischievousness of a man's self, and he must put enmity between the seed of the serpent in man, and the seed of the woman; therefore God must be sought to in it; and because the thing is a promise founded on Christ, we must put him upon the suit.