No. 38
On Self Denial
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On Self-denial.
Matthew xxvii. 24.—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.

This injunction from the lips of Christ must have been felt with peculiar force by his disciples. The occasion on which it was introduced, was such as to grant a more than ordinary impression on their minds. Jesus had just been speaking to them of the sufferings and death which awaited them, with that calmness, dignity, and communicated such an unutterable sublimity to all that he uttered on this topic. But the subject was extremely unpalatable to his disciples; first, too, away from their minds the splendid associations, were connected with the name of the Messiah, the associations of honour, glory, and victory. After the time, with his usual celerity, moved, began to rebuke his Master, saying: 'Let it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee.'—But his Master turned afire him with the stern indignation of a severe reproof.
when his ambitions & loving views. If simple, there
parousest not the things that be of this, but the things
be of men."

He proceeds still farther: he does yet great
violence to the earthy feelings of his disciples by
assuring them that not only he himself must suf-
fer, but that they too must suffer. That every
one who would come after him must deny himself,
take up his cross, and endure experience not few
to them that the celestial rewards were true in the ut-
mest extent of meaning; for they who have renun-
ted the life, were indeed compelled most painfully to
deny themselves. To expose the cause of truths me-
not the same, as to renounce all that was most
endearing & desirable in life. They were the fellow-
ship of one who was despised & rejected of men, of course
they shared largely in the contempt & was shared
in him. They went forth to街道, the instruc-
tions & execute the commission of one who had died
on the cross amidst insult & groaning; consequen-
tly they were everywhere met with the threats of de-
struction & the indignation of scorn. It is easy to see
how large & how painful must have been the sacrifices
constantly required of men who were engaged in
such a cause; how they must have encountered perca-
tion & welcomed death, what a breaking up of lo-
cal attachments & domestic associations there must
have been in their hearts; how they must have de-
verted their minds to the habit of giving up their
in the hands of everyone else. The life of the first
years was in truth a constant & strenuous exercise
of self-denial. It was the unceasing, unsparing de-
those pleasures, an incessant forbearance from those
gratifications, oh, had they not escaped, they might
have been to them as to others, the common sources of
delight.

The early days of our religion were, it is true, suc-
what days, & brought with them peculiar trials &
sufferings. But, my sir, the lesson of self-denial
is one, & every time of every age must learn, & re-
member, I must practice. We indeed are not re-
quired to make such painful sacrifices as did the
Apostles. Our cross may not be so heavy as was
theirs, but still we each of us have a cross, which
must take up & bear, if we pretend to follow.
The path of the sinner is near, as well, in many of its
self-denial. The love of the world, the love of pleas-
er-s, the love of ease, is closely connected to the pursu-ant of gain, yes, he who strives to fill his heart with
mental enjoyments, are ready to murmur at the dis-
ance of the sacrifices, as it requires. But perhaps the
complaints would not be so loud, if they could see
that these sacrifices of self-denial are not beaus
religion, that they are even demanded by the one
subjects of beholders, to express all the energy of the
bonds. Do not believe, that a single important objec-
tion is the difficulty of any kind can be overthrown, nor does it require
the exercise of self-denial. We often see men in the
most trivial pursuits submitting to privations that
ship with a spirit worthy of a higher cause. How
often does the vicious man execute his most labour
subject for more pain in gratifying his passions
than it would cost him to endure them. Look
at the vicious man; if you will see him, the first
of aching case of anxiety that grows necessarily
at this heart. Now, how he submits to the most
objectionable sacrifices, in order to acquire a sobriety
how he cheerfully endures mortifications more rigor
than those of monastic discipline, that he may

partly rough, is hard, is thorny. If we will travel the
way to heaven, we may not expect to tread on flowers
only. We have still in the language of truth, many other
bends to cut off, of many a right eye to pluck out,
many graces, to forget, many pleasures to remove.
Before our hearts can be humbled down to the spirit
of the God. We cannot read the S. T. without seeing
that it represents the disposition to match against
vicious inclinations, to wrestle & struggle with them,
as a fundamental part of their duty. Self-
denial, indeed, on some occasions, we must learn
to practice every day of our lives. If we cannot, there-
fore, renders that the prospect which enjoys it should
be among the foremost in the ranks of plain prospect.
He, in whom dwell all the treasures of heavenly
edge, knew human nature well, he knew how to
fool the human heart. He placed it, down
away from God & duty, I therefore, I earnestly in-
culated it as one of the first lessons of injunci-
on, that we must begin by placing the check on
love selfishness, sin every relish the enemy of affec-
tions. Yet notwithstanding we know that this
disposition must be at the foundation of virtue, we
are very apt to complain of the hardships of religious
brand was his heart's treasure, & hung this golden
chains; how he demeens himself not only the innocent
gratifications, but perhaps the common necessities of
life; how he passes in the midst of the abun-
ddance of this toil to assuage & secure
as the stream, not might have proved soft by lying
its banks, is exalted and lost in the solitude
of a sandy desert; shall we ask, does not this man
practice or demand in its most repulsive forms? Ob-
serve how the life of him, who, though he cannot pity,
be charged with insensibility, is exalted on the desire of
remaining himself in his family to endure & sustain
him; mark, too, with a firm, unshaking hand he
confines his youthful health, & his case enjoyment, &
gives the best and last of his days to the safety
of some painful employment, well perhaps brings their
its tardy revenue, when his claims of energy have passed
away or carried with them his capacity for enjoyment.
And is not this self denial? Look for a moment
at the adventurous, & enterprising man, where will
you find him? Perchance insurgents must come to from
the kindness of hospitality in the light of civiliza-
tion's expost. It may be to the most modest climates,
(taking up the block of barren mountain, of barren
and ocean rows), & going all the sweet enjoyment of
meeting the tempest in its fury & the savage in his
clamor, bravery! — is all this to acquire an unsatisfactory
acquaintance, to open a visionary fame of commerce
out perhaps, still he has gone to the land where all the
are forgotten! — Who will say that this man does
not experience the severest trials of self denial?
Mark the life of the soldiers & heroics soldiery.
See how he feels by common pleasures &connames con-
men enjoyment, so that he can not amount to the
ripe, who is not devoted to the cheerful object of
love, (now the dream of health is met with away
midnight study, that he may feast his mind on
the treasures of knowledge. And surely, upon will
not say that he does not deny himself? — Observe
ambitious man, who is contenting for fame & public
honor. He spends sleepless nights & days of content
be submit to privation. The most
tries are the most humbling, that he may supply
awake, climb in the hands of those who are necessary
to this purpose. He is pleased under the
benign & doing
for the holy cause of ambition. If all, that he may
for a few days in the breath of men, & then be forgotten. Most certainly, this man was one of the best
truest partakers of self-denial. Instances might be
multiplied, but it is unnecessary. I have mentioned
off hand any instances, because, in the first place, it
shows, that I think that self-denial is by no means
peculiar to religion; that it is the necessary concomi-
tant of every province of creation in life. Select what
object is sure to excite you will, if you would arrive at
the least degree of ease hence, you must submit to
your present circumstances; you must make many sacri-
ces, and yet we are very apt to talk as of religion was
the only thing which requires of us laborious, pain. sap.
I feel the world presented only a smooth current, where
our desires are never checked, but wishes never after obtained.
But in truth, the service of the world demands more
sacrifices of more painful sacrifices, than the service of
religion. Yet, strange propensity of man - who am-
bid, in the time of labor we, in the love of wealth,
in the passion for fame, have awakened the mind, en-
gaged its energies, - we care not what toil we sustain,
or what pleasures we forego, if we may but grasp
the object, we rush heedless of sufferings of the
sacrifice. Deem to love any in the favorite pursuit, -
but when religion calls us to take his might shaft,
severe but then, we shrink from the invitation.
and answer, perhaps, as the congregation of Israel
do one of their things - now there fore make them.
hen they arise fight, we will strive with them.
We have a
dame of fortitude of self-denial, for every thing.
hat we best deserve: When we have been
for our eyes every day instances of self-denial above
barbaric in the common pursuits of life. - is it not
bene, my friend, shall it not be our condemnation?
we have given over the pursuit of our external interest
have turned away from the career of immortal glory
because we are unwilling to submit to the sacrifice
are afraid to encounter the difficulties of our
selves?
Let us briefly consider the character, the necessity
the vice of self-denial.
1. The character of this vice. - What is meant
we are taught that we must deny ourselves, ock
the cross? - certainly, not that we must deny
the innocent pleasures of life, extinguish the in-
cent desires of God, has implanted in our heart
child, cannot consent to crushing all those natural
inclinations, all the true birth, forms, has given us,
in extinguishing all those feelings which from the existence
of reason have been engrained in our souls. It does not command us to overlook with an undiscriminating hand all those ties which bind us to the rational enjoyments of life. To shut out these sources of delight, to bind us by design to cherish and add to our wants. It presents no unanswerable arguments, no arbitrary necessities, no monstrous penances. It does not ask us to die of the moral constitution with which God has made us conform to the world; it does not point violently towards the fountain of cheerful feeling; it does not waste the energy of our powers in fruitless struggles against the self. Whatever does this is any thing rather than self-denial. The virtue, framed for pain, and not for joy, in the test conjoins upon His followers, consists in the disposition, nay in the readiness, always ready to surmount every obstacle, to overcome any obstacle, to forgive any enemy, a core of the heart, a rock from which he could not be moved, whether the world or his own heart, but to choose whom he would serve. Now it is when we are summoned to trials like these, that we know of self-denial is brought to the test. Like a pure and unsullied angel, it proceeds over the war that is going on within us, and to the troubled minds where we are to be still. It bids the soul part with all its energy in unresisting obedience to Him. Jealousy is a virtue which springs from the conflict between pure and corrupt principles, between a regard to religion and a regard to debasing pleasure, between passion and
son, but it comes with calm and majesty, though the element where it receives its birth is full of storm and tempest. It is a very common error to mistake for the virtue of self-denial any sudden, voluntary victory over our passions, or we may chance to gain. To give ourselves credit for possessing the character, when the habit of our lives is something very different from that character. It is a gross, sometimes a fatal delusion to suppose that we have denied ourselves in the mere meaning of the term, without, when we have merely for a few times, perhaps by some circumstance, effort, by an exception without principle, overcome the blandishments of pleasure, or fought successfully with our inclinations. We must not only take a cross, but we must bear it through life, and keep it by the way as an unsociable incumbent whenever we have grown weary of it. True self-denial is not an irregular task, an occasional stop of the soul, but a firm and settled habit, a disposition, a principle established in the mind. And it must not only be habitual, it must likewise be cheerful, steady. It must be exerted with all the soul, with all the mind, of with all the strength. There are many who are willing to flatter themselves, that they have practiced self-denial, because they have submitted with gazing

buckness to some painful sacrifice, or some disfigurening deprivation, oh they could not avoid. They had denied themselves, it is true; but it was not that it that burden to taste, the gratifications which they were compelled to forgo. Now this is very far from being self-denial. It may pass for such in the actual estimate; but in the day of God's account it will not from examination. Such, my soul, is the character of the virtue of self-denial; it is not a disease, temporary struggle with our passions; but an habitual, cheerful power of pleasure or of interest to what we believe to be good or to our office.

2. We are to speak of the necessity of self-denial. This is apparent from the very nature of that condition, in which it has pleased God to place us in this world: for we know it is a condition, enmity armed, the help of obstacles to duty, temptation's means of resisting them, difficulties, disappointments, encouragements, the 3 years. We have scarcely passed the threshold of life, before our passions and inclinations start up, and our sense of forebearance, our ability to resist, that our virtue happiness, or our vice struggling principally depends. Whence comes that confusion found, dissimilarity, or
sometimes spread through families & society, that destruction of peace, health, & happiness, when misguided
steals into the miserable remnant of a life spent in
the solitude of sin. Do they not spring from the
brutal violence of those headstrong & unruly desires,
that burst forth like a torrent when mankind, sap
away every obstacle, & break down every barrier that
oposes itself to their infectious cause? Give them
the ascendancy, & that moment you touch the floor
gate of misery, & yourselves fall around you.

That is in truth no dodge, a hint that I serve
the passions. Of all tyrants they are the most un
controlling & insufferable. They pass over the heart,
like the searching wind of the desert, blank &
with every good plant it had taken root
there. It is this force, to debase & unman the soul
to sublimate the strength & tarnish the brightness
of its noblest powers, - to chain down the sense of
religion & duty in absolute slavery, - to wrest from
us the only hope on which we can rely, of the only reasons
of happiness we will not fail, - to furnish prin
cles to apologize for our own excesses by extravagances,
to rob us of all that is delightful in the claim to
immortality, to doubt every thing & despise every
thing except what they command. Nor there can
be no doubt, whether it be necessary for the plan
of the universe, if these passions, to exist with these desires,
to subdue these inclinations, - if consequently we doubt
whether self-denial be a necessary duty. I see it to
be an indispensable ingredient in the true character of
what must be what strength is there in nature if
we have no temptation? Do we otherwise than in this,
But when we say, that habitual efforts to resist
deprecated inclinations are absolutely necessary, we do not
mean that they are necessary in the same degree to
persons, nor to the same persons, at all times. These
may be difficulties in the outset of our cases, in the
first stages of life, in which afterwards be entirely
overcome, & leave a smooth & vigorous & duty, resided &
2 in the assault of passion, the temptation to not fail,
will life be never without trials, in which a loss of
the most established duties will need to summon
all his strength & employ the divine assistance of
he may come off with honours & victory in the conflict.
We do we say, that no man can possibly persevere
from a single good action, without first conquering
some opposing rebellious inclination. We know

that we may frequently do virtuous deeds, even when the intensification of passion is strongest, without committing violence upon our feelings. When, for instance, we have kind offers to perform, we may be born along by the mere impulse of humanity, without any interfering of reasoning interest. But the question is, how do wetelephone as we have strong inclinations at once with duty to contend with? Is it evident, that he who does what is right so long as he meets no temptation, has no opportunity to contend with, but habitually violates the laws of God, the moment he finds these patterns set by his own inclinations, that such a person can lay very little claim to merit for the good he may inadvertently perform. The very definition of virtue implies active and vigorous endeavor, not merely the opposite. It has been very justly observed, that "the more virtuous seems to be appropriated to human creatures, or to a human ob-ject. We never say the Deity is virtuous, or even that angels are virtuous. The term virtue is em-placed to denote the social conduct of man-kind in their present state of trial and discipline for a higher one." Now this being the case, we see at once, that in this probationary condition, in which God has placed us, we must make many sacrifices. We must overcome many obstacles, that we must resign without the remembrance of long cherished desires, and have turning the wheels around our hearts, and we may see the friends objects of hope or fear vanishing away. The that will not discern the authority of the Maker to forget the nature of man, will deny the necessity of self-denial.

Such is, if I am not mistaken, the necessity of the virtue of self-denial. And now are you ready to complain of what is so hard, so painful, a task, that you are called upon to deny yourselves? members that you are required to resign no pleasure that is innocent, no express enjoyment is pure. It does not make your sacrifice a work of your heart, a triumph. Remember, too, is the year of your sacrifice. Think how this life was a test of the denial of your sorrows, how God tested the millions of the soul, the spirit, how the world might have to pay the price of your wrong, for a wrong it must have to pay. And the great that when taken, like a sort of provocation in the most alluring forms, measures your heart in its most unwieldy shape, it draws upon the spirit of the desires you may be able to say one.
the desert, eloquent Paul, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!"

Oct. 1819.
Other eternal fountain of holiness & purity, give us we extract the strength of its duty, & support in our temptations. Enable us to take up our cross, & follow after our Lord. Suffer us to humble every rebellious desire, & to subdue every passion which is at war with thy holy command. May we learn to deny ourselves every vicious pleasure, & endure unlawful indulgence, to act with a sole regard to thy will, as declared to us in the word of truth. May we ever feel that there is no other Propriety that all we have or hope is from thee, that therefore we should cheerfully relinquish every enjoyment from which they lead us to forbear. And we pray that by the exercise of pure & virtuous self-denial, & by an unreserved submission to thy holy will in all things, we may become prepared for that better world, where we shall do thy will as the angels in heaven, through J. C.
At home, Oct. 24th, 1819—afternoon.
At Malden, Nov. 21st, 1819—afternoon.
At Griswold's, No. 28th, 1819—afternoon.
At Salem, Dec. 9th, 1819—afternoon.
At Boston, Jan. 4th, 1820—afternoon.
At M. Greenwald's (Boston) Jan. 23rd, 1820—afternoon.
At M. Fishingham's (Boston) April 16th, 1820—afternoon.
At M. Hare's (Boston) Jan. 18th, 1820—afternoon.
At M. C. Bischof's (Boston) Sept. 10th, 1820—afternoon.
At M. Bischof (Boston) April 15th, 1821—afternoon.
At Mrs. Relley's, May 13th, 1821—afternoon.
At home, June 27th, 1821—afternoon.