

Devotional Thoughts :: (Thomas Watson, "The Duty of Self-Denial" 1675)

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"Vain man would be wise." Job 11:12

In the Hebrew it is "Empty man!" Man is a proud piece of flesh! He is apt to have a high opinion of himself.

Such as view themselves in the flattering looking-glass of self-love, appear bigger in their own eyes than they are! They think their spark— is a sun! They think their drop— is a sea!

That you may deny all high, supercilious thoughts of yourselves, consider that self-conceit is a great sin. Chrysostom calls it "the mother of hell." It is a kind of idolatry, a self-worshiping. This should pull down the plumes of pride and self-conceit!

"What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

Consider that, whatever noble endowments you have, are borrowed. What wise man would be proud of a jewel which was lent to him? The moon has no cause to be proud of her borrowed light.

Consider what a hell of sin you carry about you! Sin is the accursed thing, Joshua 5:13. It is the quintessence of evil. It was typified by the menstrual cloth, which was the most unclean thing under the Law. This may demolish all proud imaginations.

Grace can never thrive where pride and self-conceit grow. As a body with cancer cannot thrive—so neither can the soul thrive, which is cancered with pride and self-conceit. A proud head—makes a barren heart!

A supercilious conceitedness is odious to God. The more one values himself—the less God values him. Such as have a high opinion of their own excellencies, are on the fast track to eternal ruin! The Lord sometimes lets vain, conceited people fall—not only foully, but finally! "The doves," says Pliny, "take pride in their feathers, and in their flying high. But they soar so high, that they are prey to the hawk!" Just so, when men fly high in pride, they become prey to the prince of the air!

All this should make us kill the worm of self-conceit!

Let Paul be our pattern. Though he was the chief of the Apostles, he says, "I am less than the least of all God's people." Ephesians 3:8. "I am nothing." 2 Corin. 12:11. This illustrious Apostle, a star of the first magnitude, shrank into nothing in his own eyes!