

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 245

MEDITATION

*My meditation of him
shall be sweet.*

Psalm 104:34

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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MEDITATION

245

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A VERY PROFITABLE EXERCISE

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

My meditation of him shall be sweet.—Psalm 104:34

MEDITATION is a word that more than half of you, I fear, do not know how to spell. You know how to repeat the letters of the word; but I mean to say, you cannot spell it in the reality of life. You do not occupy yourselves with any meditation. What do many of you who are merchants know concerning this matter? You rise up in the morning just in time to take your accustomed seat in the omnibus;¹ you hasten to your countinghouse² for your letters; and there you continue all day long for business when you are busy or for gossip when business is dull; and at night you go home too tired and jaded³ for the wholesome recreation of your minds. Week by week, month by month, and year by year, it is still with you one everlasting grind, grind, grind. You have no time for meditation; and you reckon, perhaps, that if you were to set apart half an hour in the day to ponder the weighty matters of eternity, it would be to you a clear loss of time. It is very wise of you to economize your minutes; but I suppose that, if half an hour in a day could earn you a hundred pounds, you would not say that you could not afford it because you know how to estimate pecuniary⁴ profit. Now, if you equally knew how to count the great profit of meditation, you would deem it a positive gain to yourselves to spend some time therein, for meditation is most profitable to the spirit; it is an extremely healthful and excellent occupation. Far from being wasted time, it is a judicious⁵ employment of time.

Do not imagine that the meditative man is necessarily lazy; contrariwise, he lays the best foundation for useful works. He is not the best student who reads the most books, but he who meditates the most upon them. He shall not learn most of divinity⁶ who hears the greatest number of sermons, but he who meditates the most devoutly upon

¹ **omnibus** – large public road vehicle for carrying numerous passengers.

² **countinghouse** – office in which a merchant kept his accounts and transacted business.

³ **jaded** – exhausted from overwork.

⁴ **pecuniary** – financial.

⁵ **judicious** – wise; exercising sound judgment.

⁶ **divinity** – science of divine things; theology.

what he does hear. Nor shall he be so profound a scholar who takes down ponderous⁷ volumes one after the other, as he who, reading little by little, precept upon precept, and line upon line, digests what he reads and assimilates⁸ each sentiment to his heart by meditation—receiving the word first into his understanding and afterwards receiving the spirit of it into his own soul. Meditation is thus a very excellent employment. Let me for a few minutes tell you some of its uses.

First, I think meditation furnishes the mind somewhat with rest. *It is the couch of the soul.* The time that a man spends in necessary rest, he never reckons to be wasted because he is refreshing and renovating himself for further exertion. Meditation, then, is the rest of the spirit. “Oh!” says one, “I must have rest. Here have I been fagging⁹ and toiling incessantly for months; I must have a day’s excursion.¹⁰ I must do this thing and the other.” Yes, and such recreation, in its proper place, is desirable. We ought to have seasons of innocent recreation; but, at the same time, if many of us knew how to spend a little time daily in the calm repose of contemplative retirement,¹¹ we should find ourselves less exhausted by the wear and tear of our worldly duties. To meditate would be to us a salutary¹² recreation; and instead of running ourselves out of breath and laboring until a respite is compulsory,¹³ we should spread our intervals of ease and refreshing over the whole year and secure a small portion every day by turning aside from the bustling crowd to meditate upon whatever subject we wish to occupy the most honorable place in our mind.

Just as a change of posture relieves the weariness of the body, a change of thoughts will prevent your spirits becoming languid.¹⁴ Sit down in a silent chamber at eventide, throw the window up, look at God’s bright stars, and count those eyes of heaven. Or if you like it better, pause in the noontide heat, look down upon the busy crowd in the streets, and count the men like so many ants upon the anthill of this world. Or if you care not to look about you, sit down and look within yourself, count the pulses of your own heart, and examine the emotions of your own breast. At times, it is well to muse¹⁵ upon heav-

⁷ **ponderous** – massive.

⁸ **assimilates** – absorbs and incorporates into one’s thinking.

⁹ **fagging** – working hard.

¹⁰ **excursion** – journey taken for pleasure or relaxation.

¹¹ **calm...retirement** – peaceful freedom from stress by withdrawing for meditation.

¹² **salutary** – beneficial; refreshing.

¹³ **respite...compulsory** – rest period becomes necessary or required.

¹⁴ **languid** – weak; faint.

¹⁵ **muse** – be absorbed in thought; meditate continuously in silence.

en; or if thou art a man loving to revel in the prophetic future, turn over the mystic page and study the sacred visions recorded in the Book of Daniel or the Book of Revelation. As thou dost enter these hallowed intricacies¹⁶ and dost meditate upon these impressive symbols, thou wilt rise from thy study mightily refreshed. You will find it like a couch to your mind.

Again, meditation is *the machine in which the raw material of knowledge is converted to the best uses*. Let me compare it to a winepress. By reading, research, and study, we gather the grapes; but it is by meditation that we press out the juice of those grapes and obtain the wine. How is it that many men who read very much know very little? The reason is, they read tome¹⁷ upon tome and stow away knowledge with [heavy] confusion inside their heads until they have laid so much weight on their brain that it cannot work. Instead of putting facts into the press of meditation and fermenting them until they can draw out right inferences, they leave them to rot and perish. They extract none of the sweet juice of wisdom from the precious fruits of the vine. When I have read a book for about half an hour, I like to walk awhile and think it over. I shut up the volume and say, “Now, Mr. Author, you have made your speech; let me think over what you have said. A little meditation will enable me to distinguish between what I knew before and the fresh subject you have communicated to me, between your facts and your opinions, between your arguments and those I should make from the same premises.” Animals, after they have eaten, lie down and ruminate:¹⁸ they first crop the grass and afterwards digest it. So, meditation is the rumination of the soul; thereby we get that nourishment that feeds and supports the mind.

When thou hast gathered flowers in the field or garden, arrange them in proper order and bind them together with the string of memory; but take heed that thou dost put them into the water of meditation, else they will soon fade and be fit only for the dunghill. When thou hast gathered pearls from the sea, recollect that thou wilt have gathered with them many worthless shells and much mud; therefore, sort them in thy memory and only keep those that are worth preserving. Thou must also open the oyster to extract the pearl and polish it to make it appear more beautiful. Thou mayest not string it in the necklace of thy mind until it has been rubbed and garnished¹⁹ by medita-

¹⁶ **hallowed intricacies** – holy complex and mysterious details.

¹⁷ **tome** – large, heavy, scholarly book.

¹⁸ **ruminate** – think deeply about something.

¹⁹ **rubbed and garnished** – polished and adorned or beautified.

tion. Thus, you see that we need meditation to make use of what we have discovered. As it is the rest of the soul, so it is, at the same time, the means of making the best use of what the soul has acquired.

Again, meditation is to the soul what oil was to the body of the wrestlers When those old athletes went out to wrestle, they always took care before they went to oil themselves well to make their joints supple²⁰ and fit for their task. Now, meditation makes the soul supple—makes it so that it can use things when they come into the mind. Who are the men that can go into a controversy and get the mastery? Why, the men who meditate when they are alone. Who are the men that can preach? Not those who gad about²¹ and never commune with their own hearts alone, but those who think earnestly as well when no one is near them as when there is a crowd around them. Who are the authors that write your books and keep up the constant supply of literature? They are meditative men. They keep their bones supple and their limbs fit for exercise by continually bathing themselves in the oil of meditation. How important, therefore, is meditation as a mental exercise to have our minds in constant readiness for any service!

I have thus pointed out to you that meditation is useful to every man...As meditation is good for the mind, even upon worldly topics and natural science, *much more is it useful when we come to spiritual learning*. The best and most saintly of men have been men of meditation. Isaac went out into the fields at eventide to meditate (Gen 24:63). David says, “I will meditate in thy statutes” (Psa 119:48). Paul, who himself meditated continually on all that related to the gospel, writing to Timothy concerning the important things needful in a good minister of Jesus Christ, says, “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1Ti 4:15). To the Christian, meditation is most essential. I should almost question the being of a Christian, and I should positively deny his *wellbeing*, who lived habitually without meditation. Meditation and prayer are twin-sisters, and both appear to me equally necessary to Christian life. I think meditation must exist where there is prayer, and prayer is sure to exist where there is meditation.

My brethren, there is nothing more lacking to make Christians grow in grace nowadays than meditation. Most of you are painfully negligent in this matter...How often do you, through lack of meditation, miss the entire purpose for which the [sermon] was designed!

²⁰ **supple** – capable of moving or bending freely.

²¹ **gad about** – wander about aimlessly in search of pleasure.

Unless you meditate upon the truths we declare unto you, you will gather little sweetness, you will acquire little profit, and, certainly, you will be in no wise established therein to your edification. Can you get the honey from the comb until you press it? You may be refreshed while you listen to the sermon, but *it is the meditation afterwards that extracts the honey* and gets the best and most luscious savor therefrom.

Let me tell you that *there ought to be special times for meditation*. I think every man should set apart a portion of each day for this gracious exercise. A Christian will ever be in a lean state if he has no time for sacred musings²² before his God. Those men who know most of God are such as meditate most upon Him. Those who realize most experimentally the doctrines of grace are those who meditate and soar beyond the reach of all sublunary²³ things. I think we shall never have much advancement in our churches until the members thereof begin to accept habitually the counsel, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee” (Isa 26:20); or that other, “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still” (Psa 4:4). Until the din²⁴ and noise of business somewhat abate²⁵ and we give ourselves to calmer thought, and in the solemn silence of the mind find at once our heaven and our God, we must expect to have regiments of dwarfs—and only here and there a giant. Giant minds cannot be nourished by mere casual hearing: gigantic souls must have meditation to support them. Would ye be strong? Would ye be mighty? Would ye be valiant for the Lord and useful in His cause? Take care that ye follow the occupation of the psalmist David and meditate. This is a very happy and profitable exercise.

From a sermon delivered at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark,
on a Thursday evening in the summer of 1858.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential English Baptist preacher; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England, UK.



Having attained the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ from the Scripture or by the dispensation of the truth in the preaching of the gospel, we would esteem it our duty frequently to meditate thereon.—*John Owen*

²² **musings** – periods of deep thought.

²³ **sublunary** – belonging to this world as contrasted with a more spiritual one; earthly.

²⁴ **din** – continuous, confused, distracting sound.

²⁵ **abate** – become less intense.

WHAT MEDITATION IS

Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)

IF it be inquired what meditation is, I answer, “Meditation is the soul’s secluding¹ itself, that by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections.” This description hath three branches.

1. Meditation is the soul’s secluding itself. When a Christian goes to meditate, he must lock himself up from the world. The world *spoils* meditation: Christ went apart into a mount to pray (Mat 14:23); so, go apart when you are to meditate. “Isaac went out to meditate in the field” (Gen 24:63). He sequestered² and secluded himself that he might take a walk with God by meditation. Zacchaeus had a mind to see Christ, and he got out of the crowd: “He ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him” (Luk 19:3-4) so, when we would see God, we must get out of the crowd of worldly business. We must climb up into the tree by the seclusion of meditation, and there we shall have the best prospect of heaven. The world’s music will either play us asleep or distract us in our meditations. When a mote gets into the eye, it hinders the sight; when worldly thoughts, as motes, get into the mind, which is the eye of the soul, it cannot look up so steadfastly to heaven by contemplation. Therefore, as when Abraham went to sacrifice, “He left his servant and the ass at the bottom of the hill” (Gen 22:5); so, when a Christian is going up the hill of meditation, he should leave all secular cares at the bottom of the hill that he may be alone and take a turn in heaven. If the wings of the bird are full of slime, she cannot fly. Meditation is the wing of the soul: when a Christian is beslimed with earth, he cannot fly to God upon this wing.

Saint Bernard,³ when he came to the church door, used to say, “Stay here all my worldly thoughts that I may converse with God in the temple.” So, say to thyself, “I am going now to meditate. O all ye vain thoughts, stay behind, come not near!” When thou art going up the mount of meditation, take heed the world doth not follow thee and throw thee down from the top of this pinnacle. This is the first thing,

¹ EDITOR’S NOTE: To avoid confusion regarding the author’s original words *retiring*, *retired*, and *retiredness*, the words *secluding*, *secluded*, and *seclusion* have been substituted.

² **sequestered** – isolated and hidden away.

³ **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090-1153) – French monastic reformer and theologian known for his devotion.

the soul's secluding itself: lock and bolt the door against the world.

2. The second thing in meditation is a serious and solemn thinking upon God. The Hebrew word *to meditate* signifies to recollect and gather together the thoughts with intensesness. Meditation is not a cursory⁴ work to have a few transient⁵ thoughts of religion, like the dogs of Nilus that lap and [run] away.⁶ But there must be in meditation a fixing the heart upon the object, a steeping⁷ the thoughts. Carnal Christians are like quicksilver⁸ that cannot be [fastened in place]: their thoughts are roving up and down and will not [stay focused,] like the bird that hops from one bough to another and stays nowhere. David was a man fit to meditate: “O God, my heart is fixed” (Psa 108:1). In meditation, there must be a staying of the thoughts upon the object: a man that rides post⁹ through a town or village minds nothing; but an artist or limner¹⁰ that is looking on a curious piece views the whole draught and portraiture of it: he observes the symmetry and proportion, [and] he minds every shadow and color. A carnal, flitting¹¹ Christian is like the traveler: his thoughts ride post, and he minds nothing of God. A wise Christian is like the artist: he views with seriousness and ponders the things of religion. “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (Luk 2:19).

3. The third thing in meditation is the raising of the heart to holy affections. A Christian enters meditation as a man enters the bath that he may be healed. Meditation heals the soul of its deadness and earthliness.

From “A Christian on the Mount” in *Discourses on Important and Interesting Subjects*, Vol. 1, 199-201; in the public domain.

Thomas Watson (c.1620-1686): English Nonconformist Puritan preacher and author; possibly born in Yorkshire, England, UK.



⁴ **cursory** – hasty; hurried.

⁵ **transient** – lasting a very short time; fleeting.

⁶ **dogs of Nilus** – reference to a book by Claudius Aelianus (AD c. 175-c. 235), commonly Aelian, the Roman author of *On the Nature of Animals*, in which he describes Egyptian dogs that feared to drink from the river Nile because of the creatures in it; driven by thirst, they ran along the river bank, lapping with their tongues and then ran away.

⁷ **steeping** – soaking or immersing something to extract its flavor.

⁸ **quicksilver** – liquid metal mercury, used to describe things difficult to hold or contain.

⁹ **rides post** – rides his horse as fast as possible, like a courier bringing mail or dispatches.

¹⁰ **limner** – portrait painter, sometimes a watercolor artist.

¹¹ **flitting** – flying rapidly and lightly; always on the go.

THE DUTY OF MEDITATION

Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even tide.—Genesis 24:63

I shall sum up the intent of the whole verse in this one point: It is the duty of Christians to sequester¹ and set apart some time and place for solemn meditation or exercising their souls in heavenly and holy things.

My purpose is to speak of meditation, a duty unaccustomed and unpracticed: both the practice and the knowledge of it are become strangers to us. The times are times of action and tumult, and we all think that we have so much to do with others that few desire to converse with God and themselves...Therefore, I shall make it my work to press the duty of meditation...

[1] **That it is a duty and exercise of religion appeareth by the evidence of Scripture.** It is commanded, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night” (Jos 1:8). It is made a character of a godly man: “His delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa 1:2). It is commended in the practice and example of the saints that were most famous in Scripture: Isaac (in the text), Moses, and David. And, as it is plain by the evidence of Scripture, so by the light of nature and reason. God that is a spirit deserveth the most pure and spiritual worship, as well as such as is performed by the body. The thoughts are the eldest and noblest offspring of the soul, and the solemn consecration of them is fit for God. In the gospel, meditation is called for. I find in the Old Testament the main thing there called for is meditation in the law; in the gospel, we are directed to a new object: the love of Christ. “That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph 3:17-19)—*that* is the study of saints. I confess it is more called for in the Old Testament: being gross and carnal, they needed greater enforcements to spiritual duties. But now it suiteth every way with the nature of our worship: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in

¹ **sequester** – isolate; seclude.

spirit and in truth” (Joh 4:24). Now, worship in spirit and in truth is more agreeable to our state. Meditation is a pure and rational converse with God; it is the flower and height of consecrated reason.

[2] **It is not a duty of arbitrary² [importance].** It is not only a moral help that may be observed or omitted but a necessary duty, without which all graces would languish and wither. Faith is lean and ready to starve unless it be fed with continual meditation on the promises. As David saith, “Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction” (Psa 119:92). Thoughts are the caterers of the soul that purvey³ for faith and fetch in food and refresh it with the comfort of the promises. Hope is low and doth not arise to such a fullness of expectation until by meditation we take a deliberate view of our hopes and privileges: “Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee” (Gen 13:17). Our hopes arise according to the largeness of our thoughts. It is a great advantage to have our eyes open to view the riches of our inheritance and to have a distinct view of the hope of our calling. The apostle prays for the Ephesians, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18). Men of barren thoughts are usually of low hopes; and for want of getting to the top of Pisgah to view the land, our hearts sink within us. Certainly, hope thriveth best on the mount of meditation. Then for love, the sparkles of affection will not flow out unless we beat upon the will by constant thoughts. Affection is nourished by apprehension; and the more constant and deliberate the thoughts are, the love is always deeper. Those Christians that are backward to the duty of meditation find none of those impulses and meltings of love that are in others: they do not endeavor to comprehend the height and breadth and length and depth of the love of Christ. Therefore, no wonder that their hearts are so narrow and so much [impoverished] towards God... Thus, you see it is a necessary duty.

From “Sermons upon Genesis 24:63” in *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*, Vol. 17, in the public domain.

Thomas Manton (1620-1677): English Presbyterian Puritan preacher; born in Lawrence-Lydiat, Somerset, England, UK.



² **arbitrary** – based on a whim or personal feelings.

³ **purvey** – make provision.

THE NATURE OF MEDITATION

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664)

MEDITATION is a deep and earnest musing upon some point of Christian instruction to strengthen us against the flesh, the world, and the devil, and to lead us forward toward the Kingdom of Heaven; or, meditation is a steadfast bending of the mind to some spiritual matter, discoursing of it with ourselves until we bring the same to some profitable issue.

Now this meditation is either *sudden* or *set*; *occasional* or *solemn* and *deliberate*.

1. *Sudden, occasional, or external meditation* ariseth from such things as God by His providence offers to our eyes, ears, and senses. “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa 8:3-4). This meditation of David’s was occasional.

2. *Deliberate, set, or solemn meditation* ariseth out of our own hearts, when purposely we separate ourselves from all company and go apart to perform this exercise more thoroughly, making choice of such matter, time, and place as are most requisite¹ thereunto. Now, this meditation is double, for it is either conversant about matters of knowledge for finding out some hidden truth, or about matters of affection for kindling our love unto God. The former of these two we leave to the schools and prophets; the latter we shall search after, which is both of large use and such as no Christian can reject as unnecessary or over-difficult.

The Circumstances of Meditation: The circumstances of our meditation are time and place. I shall add to these (though I cannot call it a circumstance) the subject matter, which by way of preparation to the duty, we may take notice of.

1. For the *time*: No time can be prescribed to all men; for neither is God bound to hours, [nor] doth the contrary disposition of men agree in one choice of opportunities. Some find their hearts most in frame in the morning; others learn wisdom from their [hearts] in the night season; others find Isaac’s time the fitter time, who went out in the

¹ requisite – necessary.

evening to meditate (Gen 24:63). No practice of others can prescribe to us in this circumstance; it is enough that we set apart that time wherein we are [most suited] for that service.

2. For *place*: We judge solitariness and solitary places fittest for meditation, especially for set and solitary meditation. Thus, we found Jesus meditating alone in the mount, John [the] Baptist in the desert, David on his bed, Daniel in his house, Isaac in the field. The Bridegroom of our soul, the Lord Jesus Christ, is bashful, saith Bernard, and never comes to His meditating Bride in the presence of a multitude. Hence was the spouse's invitation, "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves" (Song 7:11-12). We must in this case abandon worldly society, both outward and inward. Many sequester themselves from the visible company of men, which yet carry a world within them. Both these societies are enemies to this meditation.

3. For the *matter of our meditation*: It must be divine and spiritual, that is, God's Word or some part thereof. It is woeful to think how some meditate on sin, contrary to God's Word, studying to go to hell with the least noise in the world. Others bend their thoughts only with the search of natural things, such as the motion of the heavens, the reason of the ebbing and flowing of the seas, the kinds of [plants or herbs] that grow out of the earth and the creatures upon it, with all their qualities and operations; but in the meanwhile, the God that made them, the vileness of their nature and the danger of their sin, the multitude of their imperfections, the Savior that bought them, the heaven that He bought for them, etc., are as unregarded as if they were not. The matter of our meditation must be something divine: "I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee...I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings" (Psa 63:6; 77:12).

From *Prima, Media, et Ultima, or The First, Middle, and Last Things*,
215-216, in the public domain.

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664): Anglican, then Presbyterian minister; born in Ormskirk, Lancashire, England, UK.



Meditation is the serious exercise of the understanding, whereby our thoughts are fixed on the observation of spiritual things in order to practice.—*William Bates*

OCCASIONAL MEDITATION¹

William Bates (1628-1699)

OCCASIONAL² meditation is when the soul spiritualizeth³ every object, when the understanding is like a limbec⁴ that distils something from everything it sees and views for the good of the soul. This is that spiritual chemistry that turns all metals into gold. Our blessed Savior was a most eminent example of this: He drew spiritual matter from natural objects. The gospel is full of parables upon this account.

A Christian should labor to see all things in God and God in all things. Every stream should lead him to the fountain. All things here below should be but a ladder to raise his soul to God. I shall speak more of this occasional meditation because it is of great use, and he that neglects it (1) reflects dishonor upon God; (2) is injurious to his own soul; (3) doth neglect creation. I speak now of those meditations that may be raised by those variety of objects before us.

(1) **He reflects dishonor upon God.** The end of creation is that God may have and receive a tribute of honor and praise; therefore, God hath infused a reasonable soul into the body of man so that man might be a [thinking] creature, whereby He hath fitted man for meditation. This duty doth oblige all rational beings. See Job 38:7, where the Lord speaks concerning the work of creation, when “the morning stars sang together.” As birds sing at the break of day, so in the morning of the creation the angels sang together; and God expects it from man because He hath given him a reasonable soul. Our five senses are so many doors whereby the external objects are conveyed to us, and the soul is to take notice of them. Nay, for this very end did God create man in the last day of the creation: when He had made a feast,⁵ He brought man as the guest; and when He had provided a palace,⁶ He produced man to dwell in it. And what is the reason, but that he

¹ EDITOR’S NOTE: This article has been edited more than usual for the benefit of modern readers.

² **occasional** – arising out of an occasion or serving as an occasion (in this case, observing nature becomes the occasion for meditation); not in the sense of happening from time to time.

³ **spiritualizeth** – gives a spiritual meaning to.

⁴ **limbec** – old-fashioned type of distilling apparatus.

⁵ The fruit of the trees of the Garden.

⁶ The Garden of Eden.

might glorify the Creator? When God had adorned the heavens with stars and the earth with flowers, then He brought forth man to give Him the praise of all. The first Sabbath was instituted for this end: that men might solemnly bless God for the creation of the world.

(2) **He that doth not meditate when the occasion presents itself injures his own soul.** He that makes use of [created things] and doth not learn by them robs himself of the best part of that which he should: enjoyment of them. Created things are but [foreshadows] of the infinite majesty that is above. Now, will any man content himself with painted meat for food? So, wilt thou content thyself with the bare enjoyment of [creation] and not ascend to God? He hath given thee created things upon this account that they might be instruments to raise up thy soul to Himself.

(3) **He neglects creation.** There is nothing within the whole circuit of nature but is of some use to raise our souls to God. From the sun to the stone; from the cedar to the violet; every created thing hath a voice to teach us something of God. This whole world is a school for man. All created things spell this to us: *there is a God*. Now, if we neglect this use of it by our meditation, then we neglect creation. The whole creation is a well-tuned instrument, and man is to make the music; and if we do not by meditation raise our thoughts to God, we are in the fault. I will not pass it over without reckoning what advantages the soul may get by it.

1. **This will dispose⁷ and fit the soul for admiration and praise of God.** What is the reason that men do rather wonder at the effects of art than at the works of God in nature but this: they do not meditate upon them—so that many persons set God beneath a painter or carver. Praise and admiration are the going forth of the understanding upon an excellent object. Now when you shall read the book of creation, you will have reason to praise the Author of it. When you cast your eyes upward and consider the heavens, it is God that hath stretched forth that rich canopy over our heads. When you cast your eye down and consider the vast body of the earth—it hangs in the air, which is so weak a thing that it cannot hold up a feather—it is founded upon the power of God. When you consider the vast collection of waters in the sea, that such a raging element should be bounded with the sand, which is the weakest thing; how should this teach us likewise to admire His power! He that will but converse with⁸ creation

⁷ **dispose** – prepare.

⁸ **converse with** – pass one's life in; dwell in.

thus by way of meditation will learn to admire the unsearchable wisdom, the unspeakable goodness, and the infinite power of God.

2. As it will dispose the soul for praise, so for thanksgiving. Now, this differs from praise thus: when I praise a thing, I respect the worth of it; when I am thankful for a thing, I respect my interest in it. Now, when we consider this great world and [that] all things here below were made for the glory of God and the use of man, it will raise our thanksgiving to God and inflame our love to Him. What is the reason that we are more grateful for small courtesies of men than for the rich benefits of God but that we do not meditate on them?

3. This occasional meditation upon creation will be an excellent ground for our faith and dependence upon God. Our Lord Jesus doth urge His disciples to believe upon this account. Saith He, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these...Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father...Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Mat 6:28-29; 10:29,31). A Christian should consider thus: “God is the great master of the family of heaven and earth; He makes provision for all His creatures. And if my God takes care of these things that are inferior to me, much more will He take care of me.” For it is Christ’s argument: “Ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

4. This occasional meditation will be a means to cure the most vicious⁹ part of our lives. For what is the wickedest part of a man’s life? *It is his vain thoughts.* As in nature there is no vacuity¹⁰ or emptiness, but a vessel is either filled with liquid or air. Now, the more water you pour in, the more air goes out. So, if you would but store your souls with these occasional meditations, it would thrust out vain and vile thoughts. Oh, it is a rare temper when a Christian is always upon the wing,¹¹ when he is like the beams of the sun: they touch the earth, but the body of the sun is fixed in heaven. So it is with a Christian when he converseth with¹² the world but enjoys God.

5. This occasional meditation will enliven thy obedience to God. When thou considerest thus with thyself, that thou art always maintained by the expenses of His providence, this will encourage thee in

⁹ **vicious** – contrary to moral principles; depraved.

¹⁰ **vacuity** – emptiness consisting of the absolute absence of solid or liquid matter.

¹¹ **rare temper...wing** – rare frame of mind in which the thoughts are flying high on heavenly things.

¹² **converseth with** – dwells in.

His service. A master looks for the service of him that he feeds and maintains; so, if you consider you are always supported by the charges of free grace, and every good thing given is the fruit of God's bounty, nay, that all created things observe God by a perpetual law, this will likewise raise thy obedience to Him.

The sun always runs his course without error or alteration. All created things here below will contradict their own proper nature to be subservient to the will of God. Such meditations as these will enliven your obedience.

To sum up all, occasional meditation brings this advantage to us: the world, which is the house of man, is made the temple of God. And then are all created things used according to the design and end of God, for which they were created, when all these beams of goodness that shine from the Father of lights are reflected upon Him again.

From *The Whole Works of the Rev. William Bates*, ed. W. Farmer, Vol. 3
(Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1990), 117-120,
www.sprinklepublications.net.

William Bates (1628-1699): English Presbyterian; born in London, England, UK.



Meditation upon the Word of God is one of the most important of all the means of grace and growth in spirituality; yea, there can be no true progress in vital and practical godliness without it. Meditation on divine things is not optional but obligatory, for it is something that God has commanded us to attend unto. The order that Joshua received was not restricted to himself but is addressed to all of God's people. Nor does it by any means stand alone. "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day" (Deu 32:46). "Ponder the path of thy feet" (Pro 4:26); "Consider your ways" (Hag 1:7). "Let these sayings sink down into your ears" (Luk 9:44), which they cannot do, unless they be frequently turned over in our minds. "Whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely...*think on these things*" (Phi 4:8). It is a holy art and habit commended in the practice and example of the saints: Isaac (Gen 24:62), David (Psa 119), the mother of our Lord (Luk 1:19, 51). But though meditation be a duty and a great moral and spiritual aid, it is practiced by few. The usual plea proffered by those who neglect it is, I am too busy, my life is so crowded with a multiplicity of duties and concerns, that, alas, I have not the necessary leisure for quiet ruminating...Then you are acting in the energy of the flesh and suffering yourself to be little better than a slave. God is no Egyptian taskmaster. Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light; and if your "burden" be heavy, it is a self-imposed one.

God calls you to no manner of life that crowds out the needs of your soul and entails the neglect of your eternal interests.

—A. W. Pink

SOLEMN AND SET¹ MEDITATION

George Swinnock (1627-1673)

SOLEMN meditation is a serious applying [of] the mind to some sacred subject, until the affections be warmed and quickened, and the resolution heightened and strengthened thereby, against what is evil and for that which is good.

There are five things in this description:

1. **It is an application of the mind.** The understanding must be awake about this duty; it is not a work to be done sleeping. If the mind be not stirring, the affections² will be nodding. The understanding in this is, as it were, the master workman—if that be out of the way or missing, the servants of the affections will be idle and stand still. It is by this sun that heat is conveyed to the lower world. Darkness, like the night, is accompanied with damps and cold. The chariot of light is attended with warming and quickening beams.

2. **It is a serious applying [of] the mind.** Too quick digestion breeds crudities³ in the mind as well as in the body and doth often more distemper⁴ than nourish. There must be a retentive faculty to hold fast that which nature receiveth until a thorough concoction⁵ be wrought, or little strength will be gotten by it. Hereby it differeth from occasional meditation, which is sudden and soon vanisheth: this calls at the door, salutes us, and takes its leave; [solemn meditation] comes in and stays some time with us. Occasional meditation is transient, like the dogs of Nilus that lap and are gone;⁶ set meditation is permanent—it, as the spouse begged of Christ, lodgeth all night between the breasts. This duty cannot be done unless the mind be kept close to it; the person that is negligent cannot do this work of the

¹ set – deliberate.

² **affections** – “strong inclinations of the soul that are manifested in thinking, feeling, and acting.”—*Jonathan Edwards*; The differences between affections and emotions are that *affections* are (1) long-lasting, (2) deep, (3) consistent with beliefs, (4) always result in action, and (5) involve mind, will, and feelings. *Emotions*, on the other hand, are (1) fleeting, (2) superficial, (3) sometimes overpowering, (4) often unable to produce action, and (5) often disconnected from the mind and will.

³ **crudities** – undigested matter; this is a comparison to things not “digested” in the mind.

⁴ **distemper** – disorder the physical condition; sicken.

⁵ **retentive faculty...concoction** – ability to retain in the body until fully digested; this is a figure of meditation.

⁶ See Article 2, “What Meditation Is,” footnote 6.

Lord. Things of importance are not to be huddled up in haste; loose thoughts, as loose garments, hinder us in our business. We need our hearts united to think of God as much as to fear God. Short glances do little good...it is not once dipping the stuff into the dye vat, but frequently doing it that giveth the pure scarlet color...It is much blowing that makes the green wood to flame.

3. It is about some sacred subject. As good meat and drink breed good blood, so good subjects will breed good thoughts. There is abundant matter for our meditation: the nature or attributes of God, the states and offices of Christ, the threefold state of man, the four last things—the vanity of the creature, the sinfulness of sin, and the love and fulness of the blessed Savior, the divine Word and works. Out of these we may choose sometimes one thing, sometimes another, to be the particular subject of our thoughts (Exo 15:11; Psa 1:1; 119:148; Pro 6:22; 1Ti 4:13). To undertake more than one at a time will deprive us of the benefit of all...Whilst the dog runs after two hares—now after one and presently after the other—he loseth both... When thou hast fixed upon the subject, meditate, if it may be, on its causes, properties, effects, titles, comparisons, testimonies, contraries—all will help to illustrate the subject and to quicken and advantage thee. They do all, as so many several windows, let in those beams that both enlighten the mind and warm the affections, but they must be considered in their places and methodically. The parts of a watch jumbled together serve for no use, but each in its order make a rare and useful piece.

4. It is that the affections may be warmed and quickened. Our hearts and affections should answer our thoughts, as the echo the voice and the wax the character in the seal. If our meditations do not better our hearts, they do nothing. Whilst they swim in the mind, as light things floating on the waters, they are unprofitable; but when they sink down into the affections, as heavy and weighty things making suitable and real impressions there, then they attain their end. Our design in meditation must be rather to cleanse our hearts than to clear our heads. “While I was musing the fire burned” (Psa 39:3). We strike fire by meditation to kindle our affections. This application of the thoughts to the heart is like the natural heat, which digesteth the food and turneth it into good nourishment.

When we are meditating on the sinfulness of sin—in its *nature*: its contrariety⁷ to God, His being, His Law, His honor; its opposition to

⁷ **contrariety** – opposition.

our own souls: their present purity and peace, their future glory and bliss—in its *causes*: Satan, the wicked one, its father, the corrupt heart of man its mother—in its *properties*: how defiling it is, filthiness itself; how infectious it is, overspreading the whole man, polluting all his natural, civil, spiritual actions, and making his praying, hearing, singing, an abomination; how deceiving it is, pretending meat⁸ and intending murder—in its *effects*: the curse of God on all the creatures, evident by the vanity in them, the vexation they bring with them; in the anger of God on sinners, apparent in those temporal⁹ punishments, spiritual judgments, and eternal torments that He inflicteth on them—I say, when we meditate on these, we should endeavor to get our hearts broken for sin, ashamed of sin, and fired with indignation against sin!

“Oh, what a wretch am I,” should the soul think, “to harbor such a traitor against my sovereign! What a fool am I to hug such a serpent in my bosom! What sorrow for it can be sufficient! What hatred of it is enough! What watchfulness against it, what self-abhorrence because I have loved it and lived in it, can equal [what it deserves]! Oh, that I could weep bitterly for the commission of it, watch narrowly for the prevention of it, and pray fervently for pardon of it and power against it! How much am I bound to God for His patience towards so great a sinner! How infinitely am I engaged to Christ for taking upon Him my sins! It was infinite condescension in Him to take upon Him my nature; but oh, what humiliation was it to take upon Him my sins! What life can answer such love! What thankfulness should I render for such grace, such goodness!”

The close applying of our meditations to our hearts is like the applying and rubbing in oil on a benumbed¹⁰ joint, which recovers it to its due sense...David proceeds from meditation of God’s works to application of his thoughts: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers...What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa 8:3-4).

5. It is a serious applying of some sacred subject that his resolutions may be strengthened against evil and for good. The Christian must not only pray his good thoughts *but practice them*. He must not lock them up in his mind *but lay them out in his life*. A council of war or of state is wholly useless if there be none to execute what they de-

⁸ **meat** – something enjoyable.

⁹ **temporal** – existing only in time, not eternity.

¹⁰ **benumbed** – deprived of physical feeling; made numb.

termine. That kingdom flourisheth best where faithful execution followeth sound advisements:¹¹ therefore, the heathen pronounced a city safe that had the heads of old men for consideration and the hands of young men for execution. Action without consideration is usually lame and defective; consideration without action is lost and abortive. Though meditation, like Rachel, be more fair, execution, like Leah, is most fruitful. The beasts under the Law were unclean, which did not both chew the cud and divide the hoof. “Chewing the cud signifieth meditation, dividing the hoof a holy conversation,¹² without which the former will be unprofitable,” saith Augustine.¹³

Reader, hast thou thought of the beauty and excellency of holiness in its nature, its conformity to the pure nature and holy commands of the blessed God—in its *causes*: the Spirit of God [is] its principal efficient, the holy Scriptures its instrumental—in its *names*: it is the image of God, the divine nature, light, life, the travail of Christ’s soul, grace, glory, the kingdom of heaven—in its *effects* or *fruits*: [see] how it renders thee amiable¹⁴ in God’s eye, hath the promise of His ear, is entitled to pardon, peace, joy, adoption, growth in grace, perseverance to the end, and the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and [it] hast applied this so close to thy heart that thou hast been really affected with its worth and wished thyself enriched with that jewel, though thou wert a beggar all thy life. [Thus, it is] resolved with thyself: “Well, I will watch, weep, hear, and pray, both fervently and frequently, for holiness. I will follow God up and down and never leave Him until He sanctifieth my soul?”

Now, I say to thee as Nathan to David, when he told him of his thoughts and resolution of building a temple: “Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee” (1Ch 17:2). Or as God to Moses, concerning the Jews: “They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments!” (Deu 5:28-29). It is well thou art brought to any good purposes; but it will be ill if they be not followed with performances. Good intentions without suitable actions is but a false conception; or like a piece charged without a bullet, which may make a noise, but doth no good, no execution. Indeed, there is no way better to evidence the sincerity of thy intentions than by answerable actions.

¹¹ **advisements** – counsels.

¹² **conversation** – conduct; behavior.

¹³ **Augustine of Hippo** (354-430) – early Latin church theologian and philosopher who served as the bishop of Hippo.

¹⁴ **amiable** – more favorable.

David was good at this: “I thought on my ways”—there was his serious consideration—“and turned my feet to thy testimonies” (Psa 119:59)—there is his holy conversation.¹⁵ So again, “I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways” (Psa 119:15). It is in vain to pretend that, like Moses, we go into the mount of contemplation and converse with God, unless we come down as he did, with our faces shining, our conversations more splendid¹⁶ with holiness. This, saith the chief of the philosophers, will [bring] a man to perfect happiness if to his contemplation he joins a constant imitation of God in wisdom, justice, and holiness.

Thus, I have dispatched those five in meditations. The first three are but one—though for method’s sake, to help the reader, I spake to them severally—and are usually called cogitation, the other two application and resolution. Cogitation provides food, application eats it, resolution digests it and gets strength from it. Cogitation cuts out the suit, application makes it up, resolution puts it on and wears it. Cogitation betters the judgment, application the affections, and resolution the life. It is confessed [that] this duty of set meditation is as hard as rare and as uneasy as extraordinary; but experience teacheth that the profit makes abundant recompense for our pains in the performance of it. Besides, as millstones grind hard at first, but, being used to it, they grind easily and make good flour; so the Christian, wholly disused¹⁷ to this duty, at first may find it somewhat difficult, but afterwards both facile¹⁸ and fruitful.

From “The Christian Man’s Calling” in *The Works of George Swinnock*, Vol. 2, 424-429, in the public domain.

George Swinnock (1627-1673): Puritan preacher educated at Cambridge and Oxford; born in Maidstone, Kent, England, UK.



There are some who profess to be strict, disciplined Christians, but who never put aside time to meditate on the glory of Christ. Yet they tell us that they desire nothing more than to behold His glory in heaven forever. They are being wholly inconsistent. It is impossible that someone who never meditates with delight on the glory of Christ here in this world, who does not make every effort to behold it by faith as it is revealed in Scripture, should ever have any real gracious desire to behold it in heaven.

—*John Owen*

¹⁵ **conversation** – conduct.

¹⁶ **conversations more splendid** – behavior or conduct shining more brightly.

¹⁷ **disused** – unaccustomed.

¹⁸ **facile** – easy.

DANGERS OF NEGLECTING MEDITATION

Edmund Calamy (1600-1666)

I SHALL show you the woeful inconveniences and the intolerable mischiefs that come from the lack of practicing this duty of meditation...I will show you that the lack of practicing this duty is the cause of all sin, and I will instance¹ in particulars.

1. The reason why people harden their hearts in sin and do not repent of their sins, but go on obstinately,² is for lack of meditation. “I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?” (Jer 8:6). They did not repent because they did not reflect upon what they did; they did not bethink³ themselves, so the phrase is: “If they shall bethink themselves...and repent” (1Ki 8:47). They did not say, “I am undone by what I have done; I have lost God and heaven by what I have done; and if I do not repent, I am an undone creature forever.” No man repented of his wickedness because no man considered what he had done; for did you consider the evil that is in sin, did you dwell and abide upon it, did you commune with your own hearts and seriously consider what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, you durst⁴ not willingly sin against God. The reason why men go on rashly, heedlessly, obstinately in sin is for lack of the meditation of the evil of sin.

2. The reason why all the sermons we hear do us no more good is for lack of divine meditation. For it is with sermons as it is with [food]: it is not having [food] upon your table that will feed you, but you must eat it; and not only eat it, but concoct⁵ and digest it, or else your [food] will do you no good. So it is with sermons: it is not *hearing* sermons [that] will do you good, but...*digesting* them by meditation. Pondering in your hearts what you hear must do you good. One sermon well digested, well meditated upon, is better than twenty sermons without meditation...Now meditation is that which will digest

¹ **instance** – give examples.

² **obstinately** – stubbornly.

³ **bethink** – collect their thoughts.

⁴ **durst** – dare.

⁵ **concoct** – prepare.

all the sermons you hear. There are some men sick with a disease that whatsoever they eat comes up presently: the meat never doth them any good. So it is the custom of many of you: you hear a sermon, you go away, and never think of it afterward. This is just like food that you vomit up.

There is a disease that some men have, that all the meat they eat goes through them: it never abides with them. Now, this meat never nourisheth. So it is with the sermons you hear, I am sure, on the weekday; and I am afraid the sermons you hear on the Sabbath day go through you: you hear them and hear them and that is all you do. You never seek by meditation to root them in your hearts. That is the reason why you are so lean in grace, though you are so fully fed with sermons!

It is with sermons as it is with a plaster:⁶ if a man hath a wound in his body and lay a plaster to the wound, this plaster will never heal him unless it abides upon the wound. If he takes it away as soon as ever it is laid on, it will never do him any good. So it is with sermons: if when you have heard a sermon, you never ponder and meditate on it, it is just like a plaster put on and then pulled off again. I am confident the great reason why we have so many hunger-starved Christians that are lean in knowledge and lean in grace, though they hear sermon upon sermon—it may be on the Sabbath day they will hear four or five sermons—is because they concoct and digest *nothing*. They never ponder and meditate upon what they hear; and this is what our Savior Christ speaks of: by the seed that was sown by the highway side is meant a man that hears the word and never thinks of it after he hath heard it, but suffereth the devil to steal it out of his heart (Luk 8:5). As the husbandman that sows the seed in the highway, you know he never plows it, he never looks that it should come to anything. [For] many of you, the sermons you hear are like the seed sown in the highway: you never cover it by meditation, you never think of it when you have heard it; and that is the reason you get no more good by what you hear.

3. The reason why the promises of God do no more affect your hearts, when the saints of God taste no more sweetness in the promises, is because you do not ponder and meditate upon them. It is with the promises of the gospel as it is with a cordial:⁷ if a man doth not chew his cordial but swallow it down whole, he will never taste any

⁶ **plaster** – cloth with medicinal salves applied to a part of the body for healing.

⁷ **cordial** – pleasant tasting medicine.

great sweetness in it. The way to taste the sweetness is to chew it: so, the promises of God are full of heavenly comfort, but you will never enjoy this comfort unless you chew them by meditation. As it is with spices, unless they be bruised, they never smell sweet. And as it is with a pomander,⁸ unless you do rub it, you will never smell the sweetness of it. No more will you ever taste the heavenly comfort that is in the promises of the gospel unless you rub them, unless you bruise them, unless you chew them by meditation. And the reason why the saints of God walk so uncomfortably all their lives long is because they do not chew these promises.

4. The reason why the threatenings of God make no more impression upon our hearts is for lack of meditation. There are terrible threatenings against sin in the Word; but, alas, there are few people affected with these threatenings. The threatenings of God in Scripture are like the rattling of hail upon the tiles:⁹ they make a great noise, but they make no impression. And what is the reason? It is for lack of meditation. We do not lay them to heart; we do not consider that these threatenings belong to us as long as we continue in our sins. Oh, if a wicked man meditates solemnly upon the threatenings of God, it would make his heart ache, especially when the spirit of bondage goes along with them.

5. The reason why the mercies of God do no more good upon us is for lack of meditation. There are many mercies that all of us have received from God—many personal mercies and many family-mercies—and all these mercies are so many motives to service. Now, what is the reason the saints of God bury the mercies of God in forgetfulness and are no more thankful for mercies? The reason is for lack of meditation: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isa 1:2-3). *That* is the reason why they are so unthankful. It is with the mercies of God as it is with the fire: if a man walks by the fire and doth not sit at it, it will never heat him much. If he be cold, he must abide at the fire or else he will never be hot. So, it is not a slight thought of the mercies of God that will affect your hearts, but it must be a dwelling upon them by meditation that will warm your hearts. Now, because we do not meditate upon these mercies, we do

⁸ **pomander** – ball or perforated container of sweet-smelling substances such as herbs and spices, suspended by a chain from the neck or waist to preserve against infection.

⁹ **tiles** – thin slabs of burnt clay used to roof a house.

not solemnly consider the mercies of God; therefore it is [that] they do no more good upon our hearts. There is a psalm spent on purpose to set out the unthankfulness of the people of Israel: “We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea” (Psa 106:6-7). What is the reason they were so unthankful? It was because they did not meditate on the mercies of God.

6. The reason why afflictions do work no more upon us and why we are never the better for the afflicting hand of God is for lack of meditation. Ecclesiastes 7:14 is a rare text: “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.” Times of affliction are times of meditation, and of what must we consider in the day of adversity? We must consider who it is that afflicts us, why we are afflicted, and [what] we shall do to have our afflictions sanctified. We must consider the meaning of God’s rod and how we may be taught spiritual things by these afflictions. Now, because we do not meditate upon God and upon His afflicting hand when we are afflicted, because we have slight heads¹⁰ under our afflictions, we get [little] good by our afflictions. I have observed [that] as soon as ever we are recovered from our afflictions, many of us (the Lord pardon it unto us) forget God presently. We never consider the mercies of God in recovering us, and then we return to our old vomit again for lack of meditation (Pro 26:11; 2Pe 2:22).

7. The reason why the providences of God take no more impression upon our hearts is for lack of this grace of meditation. The providences of God are very mysterious, and God, in the government of the world, doth walk in the clouds. And truly I am very confident that [what] God doth especially require of His children in these days is to meditate upon His providences, as well as upon His ordinances. There are many rare lessons to be learned from the consideration of the providences of God...Now, what is the reason that the providences of God of [recent] years do no more good [to us]? The reason why we are never the better by them is because we do not study the meaning of all these providences: “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” (Isa 57:1). This is the reason why we get no more good by the death of the godly and by the providences of God: we do not lay them to heart; we do not

¹⁰ **slight heads** – foolish or unwise thinking.

muse and study upon them.

8. What is the reason that the saints of God are so distrustful of God's providences when they are ready presently to sink and to say they are undone? It is for lack of meditation. And, therefore, Christ saith, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?...Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Luk 12:22-25, 27). If you considered the lilies and the ravens, if you studied the love of God to you, you would trust Him under any sad providences. The reason why the saints of God are so full of unbelief when they are in a low condition is for lack of meditation. They do not consider the ravens and the lilies; they do not study the promises that God hath made to His children in their lowest condition.

9. The reason why the professors of religion are so censorious¹¹ of other men and so little censorious of themselves, why they judge every man and examine every man but themselves (which is the condition of these days), is for lack of meditation. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote¹² that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Mat 7:1-3). If men did reflect more upon themselves, they would censure themselves more and others less. And the reason why people are so rash in censuring is for lack of self-reflection.

10. The reason why professors of religion do offer the sacrifices of fools to God when they come to worship Him, why they pray headily¹³ and rashly, why they rush upon ordinances without preparation is for lack of meditation. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God" (Ecc 5:1). Why do people rush upon [ordinances] *without preparation*, rush upon sermons, rush upon prayer, rush upon holy duties? Why, they

¹¹ **censorious** – severely or harshly critical.

¹² **mote** – speck; splinter.

¹³ **headily** – hastily.

do not consider what they do.

11. What is the reason that people prepare no more for death? Because they do not consider the shortness of life. They do not meditate of the vanity of this life, of the certainty and uncertainty of death; and therefore it is said, “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deu 32:29). Because men do not consider their latter end, therefore it is that they are so unprepared for their latter end.

12. And lastly, what is the reason that we come so unworthily to the [Lord’s Supper]? And when we are there, we gaze up and down, and carry ourselves so unseemly¹⁴ at that ordinance? What is the reason that we lose all the fruit of that ordinance, but merely for lack of preparation before we come and meditation when we are come? Now, preparation cannot be without meditation: preparation includes meditation in it.

From *The Art of Divine Meditation*,
in the public domain.

Edmund Calamy (1600-1666): English Puritan church leader and theologian; born in St. Thomas the Apostle, London, England, UK.



Oh! Think of the Savior descending from the starry heights of glory and coming down to the Virgin’s womb, and then descending from that lowly manger of Bethlehem even to the cross and to the grave for you, counting it not robbery to be equal with God. Yet for your sake, He takes upon Himself the form of a servant and makes Himself of no reputation, but becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phi 2:6-8). Many of the ancient saints were accustomed to spending hours in meditating upon the wounds of Christ, and many of the martyrs have been for days engaged in solemn meditation upon those wounded hands and feet and that pierced side. Oh! Of all the volumes that were ever written, this volume, printed in crimson upon the pure, lily-like flesh of Christ, is the best to read.—*Charles Spurgeon*

He that has in his heart an understanding of divine and spiritual things, of the gospel and of the truths of it, will seek earnestly and diligently in the use of proper means after more knowledge. As he will desire to know more of Christ, His person, offices, and grace, he will follow on to know Him and not be content with the present degree of knowledge he has attained unto. He will hear and read the Word and pray and meditate in order to come to a more perfect knowledge of the Son of God.

—*John Gill*

¹⁴ **unseemly** – inappropriate; unfitting.

HELPS FOR MEDITATING ON GOD

John Owen (1616-1683)

BY disciplined meditation, I mean the art of thinking of some chosen spiritual subject in an orderly, disciplined way. The purpose of this sort of meditation is to rouse the heart and soul to feel the goodness or badness of the subject being thought of.

Disciplined meditation is different from Bible study in which the chief aim is to learn the truth and to declare it to others. It is also different from prayer, for prayer is directed to God. The aim of disciplined meditation is to arouse our hearts to experience a sense of love, delight, and humility.

Disciplined meditation is different from being spiritually minded and having spiritual thoughts arising naturally from a renewed heart. People may be skilled in spiritual thoughts who are quite unable to think of a spiritual subject in a disciplined, orderly way. Disciplined meditation is an art that must be learned. It needs the use of natural faculties and abilities that, through weakness and ignorance, some have not adequately developed...So, with many, disciplined meditation may be beyond their ability, yet they still enjoy many spiritual thoughts of God that serve them just as well.

Nevertheless, as disciplined meditation is a necessary duty and is the chief way by which our spiritual thoughts are aroused to activity, I will give you the following advice.

Whatever principle of grace we have in our hearts, we cannot easily make use of it for spiritual meditation or for any other spiritual duty without great effort and difficulty...The following is only for those who intend to set apart some time daily for holy duties, such as prayer and reading the Bible.

Choose a time that is free from all worldly concerns. The best time is that which will cost you something. We must not at any time seek to serve God with what costs us nothing. Nor must we dedicate any time that does not demand self-denial. We must not expect to grow in spiritual-mindedness if we only give to God time for worship when we have nothing else to do, or those times when because of tiredness we are not fit for anything. This is one great reason why men are so cold, formal, and lifeless in spiritual duties. When the body and mind are tired, men think they are fit to come to God to learn about those great

matters that concern His glory and the salvation of their souls. Yet this is what God condemns (Mal 1:8). Both the law of nature and holy duties require that we serve God with our very best. And shall we offer to Him that time in that we would be unfit to appear before an earthly ruler? Yet such are the times men choose for their devotions. We may do well to stop here for a moment and think of the time we have in the past offered to God as a free-will offering, so that we may be shamed into doing better in the future. The best time is when the natural strength of the spirit is most free and active. Do not trust to chance opportunities. Let the time itself be a free-will offering to God taken from the top of the heap. Let it be the best time possible.

Take time to prepare your mind for spiritual thoughts. Do not rush into heavenly thoughts without first preparing your heart and mind (Ecc 5:1-2). Make every effort to understand the awesome holiness of God and the heavenly nature of the things you intend to meditate on, that you may approach God with due reverence and fear, and heavenly matters with a holy and healthy respect. Our thoughts are like Jacob and Esau. Spiritual and carnal thoughts struggle together in the same womb. Often the Esau of carnal thoughts will come out first and for a while seem to carry the birthright. But where reverence for God has “cast out the bondwoman and her son” (Gal 4:30), the mind will be free to fix itself on spiritual things.

Do not come to meditate on heavenly things only out of a sense of duty. We must not meditate on God and heavenly things merely because we feel the need for it, or because we think we ought to do so and that it would not do to utterly neglect it.

When the soul has at any time tasted that the Lord is gracious, when its past meditations on the Lord have been joyful, when spiritual things have excited the mind and heart, then the soul comes to this duty with earnest desires to have the same experiences repeated. So, make every effort to enjoy spiritual things, and your meditations of them will be sweet.

But if you still find, after all this preparation, that you are still unable to concentrate your mind on spiritual thoughts, then take seriously the following advice.

Cry to God for help. Confess your need for more light on spiritual things to remove the darkness from your mind. Confess your weakness and inability to stop your thoughts wandering when you should be thinking of holy things, and pray that God will strengthen your mind. If your meditations only make you see and feel your darkness

and weakness of mind, causing you to cry to God for more grace and spiritual strength, then your thoughts have done a good work, though not what you had planned. Take king Hezekiah as an example. When his soul made every effort to have communion with God, it sank into broken, confused thoughts under the weight of its own weakness. Yet he still sought God for help. But though his prayer was no more than chattering, it was accepted by God. Hezekiah cried out, “O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me” (Isa 38:14). Likewise, when we are meditating and feel oppressed by the darkness and weakness of our minds, we too should say, “O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”

It is good and helpful to choose a specific subject to meditate on. Some have already been mentioned. Subjects may also be taken out of some spiritual experience we have just had, or some warning we have received from God, or something that reading or hearing the Word of God has brought to our minds. But the most frequent subject of our thoughts should be the person and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, do not be discouraged when, after all your efforts, you find you accomplish little. Do not be put off by the difficulties you meet with. Remember that it is God you are dealing with. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax (Isa 42:3). It is His will that none should despise the day of small things (Zec 4:10). And if in this duty there is a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man has and not according to what he has not. He that can bring into this treasure only the mites of broken desires and ejaculatory prayers shall not come behind those who cast in, out of their great abundance, much ability and skill. To give up because we are not immediately successful is a fruit of pride and unbelief. If we get nothing out of meditation but a renewed sense of our own vileness and unworthiness, we are still the gainers. But practice makes perfect. Those who conscientiously persist in this duty shall grow daily more enlightened, more wise, and more experienced in spiritual things, until they are able to meditate on them with ease and success.

From *Spiritual-Mindedness*, abridgement R. J. K. Law (Edinburgh; Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 120-131; this book available in print and eBook editions from www.banneroftruth.org, used by permission.

John Owen (1616-1683): English Congregational pastor, author, and theologian; born in Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, UK.



CHEWING THE BREAD OF LIFE

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

THE commands, the exhortations, the admonitions of the Bible, are not so many abstractions.¹ No, they are a revelation of God's will *for me*. I must read the Scriptures as addressed to me *personally*. When I come to some word of God that condemns my ways, I must not pass it over but be honest and take it unto myself. May God give all of us grace to daily appropriate *both* His promises *and* precepts.

After a certain portion of the food spread before me had been placed on my own plate and in my mouth, the next thing is to chew it—to chew it slowly and thoroughly. But in this matter most of us are serious offenders. We bolt² our food. We swallow it *before* it has been properly masticated.³ We eat too hurriedly. That is the chief reason why so many suffer from dyspepsia:⁴ they give their stomachs the work to do that the teeth were intended to perform. A little food thoroughly masticated will supply far more nutrition to the system than a lot of food swallowed almost whole, and our general health would be much better, too.

This is equally true spiritually. Thousands of God's children are grievous offenders here. They have never learned to use their spiritual teeth. The Bread of Life must be *chewed* if we are to derive from it the sustenance we so much need. What do I mean? This: *meditation stands to reading as mastication does to eating*. Re-read and ponder this last sentence. Dear reader, you will derive⁵ far more benefit from a single verse of Scripture read slowly and prayerfully and duly meditated upon than you will from ten chapters read through hurriedly!

Meditation is well-nigh a lost art. And it is at the root of most of our troubles. How many complain that they find it so difficult to *remember* passages of Scripture, passages that they have read perhaps many times. But this is easily explained. It is because the passage was not turned over in the mind: it was not duly pondered⁶ (Luke 2:19).

¹ **abstractions** – things that exist only as ideas.

² **bolt** – swallow hastily without chewing; gulp down.

³ **masticated** – bitten and ground with the teeth; chewed.

⁴ **dyspepsia** – digestive disorder characterized by pain, heartburn, or nausea; indigestion.

⁵ **derive** – obtain by reasoning.

⁶ **duly pondered** – sufficiently or carefully considered.

Did you ever notice that the “blessed man” of Psalm 1 “meditated” in God’s Law day and night? Meditation is a wonderful aid to fixing in our minds verses and passages of Scripture.

Let us give an illustration of what we mean by meditation. We select one of the most familiar verses in all the Bible (Psa 23:4): “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Now, as I begin to meditate upon this I take *each* word or expression separately and then ask them questions.

The first thing that strikes my attention is the way in which the verse opens. It does not say, “*When I shall* walk through the valley,” but, “*Yea, though* I walk.” I ponder this over. I ask it a question: I say, why this indefinite language? Is it not certain that one day I shall be called on to walk through the valley of shadows? And then I remember that blessed word in 1 Corinthians 15:51, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Then I see *why* the Holy Spirit caused this [verse] to open thus.

Next, I turn to the central thing in this verse: “the valley of the shadow of death” through which the believer, who *does* die, passes. I ask, “*Why* is dying likened to walking through a ‘valley’? What are the thoughts suggested by this figure?” As I turn this question over in my mind, it soon occurs to me (as it should to anyone who gives it a little thought). Why, a “valley” suggests peacefulness, fertility, beauty, and particularly, easy travel. A “valley” is the antithesis of a “mountain,” which is *difficult and dangerous* to climb. In contradistinction⁷ then, from climbing a mountain which is arduous and hazardous, death is likened to walking through a valley which is delightful and safe!

Then I go back to the beginning of the verse and note thoughtfully each single word. As the believer comes to the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he learns that death is simply like passing through a valley. Note he *walks*, not runs, as though afraid. Then, observe, “though I walk *through*.” He does not stay in the “valley,” but walks through it. Death is only a door through which the believer passes from these scenes of sin and sorrow to the realm of glory and bliss.

Next, I observe that this “valley” is called the “*shadow* of death.” Why is this? I must not hurry, or I shall be the loser. Let me continue pondering each word separately, so that I may extract its own peculiar sweetness. What is a “shadow”? Ah, how often it terrifies! How

⁷ **contradistinction** – distinction made by contrasting the different qualities of two things.

many of us, especially during childhood, were frightened by shadows! But if we had only walked right up to them, we should have quickly discovered they were powerless to injure us. And how many a believer has filled the valley of death with terrifying phantoms! How fearfully has he contemplated these images of his own unbelief! O fellow-believer, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, for thee to fear in death should it overtake you before the Lord Jesus returns. This valley is called “the valley of the *shadow* of death” because a “shadow” is the most *harmless* thing there is!

And now, as though at last the believer has fully grasped the blessedness of these beautiful figures, having discovered that death is not a difficult and dangerous mountain to climb, but a “valley”—peaceful and easy-going—to pass through. Having learned that in this valley there is nothing more terrifying than a “shadow,” he now cries with exulting confidence, “I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.”

Here, then, is an example of what we mean by feeding on God’s Word. *Meditation stands to reading as mastication does to eating.* Take a single verse of Scripture at the beginning of the day, write it out on a slip of paper, and carry it with you wherever you go. Refresh your memory as opportunity occurs by re-reading it. Pray over it and ask God to give you a blessing out of this verse—to reveal to you its beauty and preciousness. Then ponder each word separately. Ask the verse questions and seek to discover its deeper meaning.

Suppose you are meditating on Psalm 34:7: “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” Ask such questions as these: Why “*the* angel”? Who is it? “Encampeth”—note the perfect tense (continuous)—what is suggested by this figure? “Round about”—what is meant by this? “Them that fear him”—am I one of them? “And delivereth them”—from what? [Then,] find answers from other Scriptures that speak of “deliver” and “deliverance.”

*Assimilation*⁸—this is the result of appropriation, mastication, and the chief end in view. The food that I eat is to supply the waste of the body. The food that I have masticated and digested is now taken up into my system and is transmuted⁹ into blood and tissue, thereby affording health and strength. The food thus assimilated appears in the vigor of my step, the strength of my arm, the glow on my face. And now equipped, my system is able to ward off the disease germs

⁸ **assimilation** – process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas.

⁹ **transmuted** – changed in nature; transformed.

that attack my body.

All of this has its counterpart in the spiritual man. The food that I have taken into my soul, if properly digested, will build up the new nature. It will nourish faith and supply the needed strength for my daily walk and service. Moreover, it will be a safeguard against the germs of temptation that assail me: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa 119:11).

Here, then, is the grand end in view. God’s Word is given us to feed upon, and this feeding is for the purpose of translating the Scriptures into the terms of daily living. The principles and precepts of the Bible must be incorporated into my life. The Word has not been assimilated until it has become the regulator of my walk and the dynamo of my service.

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, author; born in Nottingham, England, UK.



Let your thoughts of Christ be many, increasing more and more each day. He is never far from us as Paul tells us (Rom 10:6-8). The things Christ did were done many years ago, and they are long since past. “But,” says Paul, “the word of the gospel where these things are revealed and by which they are brought home to our souls is near us, even in our hearts, that is, if we are true believers and have received the word by faith.” So, the gospel exhibits Christ and all the benefits of His mediatory work to us. If, therefore, the Word is in our hearts, Christ is near us. If we at any time turn into ourselves to converse with the Word in us by meditation, we shall find Him ready to receive us into communion with Himself. By the light of the knowledge of Christ that we have by the Word, unexpected thoughts of Him will continually come to mind. But if our minds and hearts are filled with other things, how can we expect to have fellowship with Him in beholding His glory?—*John Owen*

If the heart meditates on understanding, the mouth will speak of wisdom; and a man should think before he speaks, especially the ministers of the Gospel. They ought to meditate on the Word of God, the gospel, and the truths of it that their profiting may appear to all, that they may understand divine things themselves and deliver them out to the understanding of others. Their concern should be that through meditation, they may have a good treasure of wisdom and knowledge in their hearts, that out of it they may bring forth things pleasant and profitable unto others.—*John Gill*

Meditation puts life and strength into all other duties and parts of God’s worship.

—*John Ball*

MATTER FOR MEDITATION

Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

MEDITATION [is] a duty wherein the very heart and lifeblood of religion lies...[It] may be thus described: it is an holy exercise of the mind, whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves...We are the more to provoke ourselves to this duty, because,

Meditation is so cross¹ to flesh and blood. Naturally, we shun holy meditation. To meditate on worldly, secular things, if it were all day, we can do it without any diversion; but to have our thoughts fixed on God, how hard do we find it! How do our hearts quarrel with this duty? What pleas and excuses have we to shift it off²?...

Satan doth what he can to hinder this duty. He is an enemy to meditation. The devil cares not how much we hear nor how little we meditate. Hearing begets knowledge, but meditation begets devotion. Meditation doth ballast³ the heart and make it serious; and Satan labors to keep the heart from being serious. What need, therefore, is there of offering violence to ourselves in this duty? But I think I hear some say [that] when they sit alone, they know not what to meditate of; I shall therefore furnish them with matter of meditation.

1. Meditate seriously upon the corruption of your nature. We have lost that pure, quintessential⁴ frame of soul that once we had. There is a sea of sin in us. Our nature is a source and seminary⁵ of all evil—like Peter's sheet, wherein were "wild beasts and creeping things" (Act 10:12). This sin cleaves to us as a leprosy. This original pollution makes us guilty before the Lord; and though we should never commit actual sin, this merits hell. The meditation of this would be a means to pull down our pride...

2. Meditate seriously upon the death and passion of Christ. His soul was overcast with a cloud of sorrow when He was conflicting with His Father's wrath; and all this, *we* should have suffered: "He was wounded for our transgressions" (Isa 53:5)...(1) *The serious medi-*

¹ **cross** – contrary; opposed to.

² **shift it off** – evade or avoid performing it.

³ **ballast** – give stability to.

⁴ **quintessential** – representing the perfect example of its kind.

⁵ **seminary** – place of early development or cultivation.

tation of this would produce repentance. How could we look upon Him “whom we have pierced” and not mourn over Him? When we consider how dear our sins cost Christ, how should we shed the blood of our sins that shed Christ’s blood? (2) *The meditation of Christ’s death would fire our hearts with love to Christ.* What friend shall we love, if not Him Who died for us? His love to us made Him cruel to Himself. As Rebecca said to Jacob, “Upon me, be thy curse” (Gen 27:13). Christ said, “Upon me, be thy curse,” [so] that poor sinners may inherit the blessing.

3. Meditate on your evidences for heaven. What have you to shew for heaven if you should die this night? (1) *Was your heart ever thoroughly convinced of sin?* Did you ever see yourself lost without Christ? Conviction is the first step to conversion (Joh 7:16). (2) *Hath God ever made you willing to take Christ upon His own terms?* “He shall be a priest upon his throne” (Zec 6:13). Are you as willing that Christ should be upon the throne of your heart to rule as a priest at the altar to intercede? Are you willing to renounce those sins to which the bias of your heart doth naturally incline?...Are you willing to take Christ for better for worse, to take Him with His cross and to avouch⁶ Christ in the worst of times? (3) *Have you the indwelling presence of the Spirit?* If you have, what hath God’s Spirit done in you? Hath it made you of another spirit—meek, merciful, humble? Is it a transforming Spirit? Hath it left the impress of its own holiness upon you? These are good evidences for heaven. By these, as by a spiritual touchstone, you may know whether you have grace or no...

4. Meditate upon the uncertainty of all sublunary comforts. Creature delights have their flux and reflux.⁷ How oft doth the sun of worldly pomp and grandeur go down at noon...We say everything is mutable, but who meditates upon it?...What has become of the glory of Athens, the pomp of Troy? “The world passeth away” (1Jo 2:17). It slides away as a ship in full sail...There’s no trusting to anything: health may be turned to sickness, friends may die, riches may take wings...The serious meditation of this would (1) *Keep us from being so deceived by the world.* We are ready to set up our rest here: “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever” (Psa 49:11). We are apt to think that our mountain stands strong. We dream of an earthly eternity. Alas, did we meditate how casual and uncertain these things are, we should not be so often deluded. Have not we seen great disappointments; and where we have thought to suck honey,

⁶ **avouch** – guarantee to be true.

⁷ **flux and reflux** – flowing in and out of the tide.

there we have drunk wormwood? (2) *The meditation of the uncertainty of all things under the sun would much moderate our affections to them.* Why should we so eagerly pursue an uncertainty? Many take care to get a great estate, [but] it is uncertain whether they shall keep it. The fire may break in where the thief cannot...They lay up for a child—that child may die; or if he lives, he may prove a burden...(3) *The meditation of this uncertainty would make us look after a certainty, that is, the getting of grace...* Grace is a flower of eternity. Death doth not destroy grace but transplants it and makes it grow in a better soil. He that hath true holiness can no more lose it than the angels can, which are fixed stars in glory.

5. Meditate of God's severity against sin. Every arrow in God's quiver is shot against it. Sin burned Sodom [and] drowned the old world. Sin kindles hell. If it is so terrible when a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience, what is it then when God stirs up all His wrath? (Psa 78:38). The meditation of this would frighten us out of our sins. There cannot be so much sweetness in sin as there is sting. How dreadful is God's anger! "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" (Psa 90:11). All fire, compared with the fire of God's wrath, is painted and imaginary!...

6. Meditate on eternal life, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1Jo 2:25). Life is sweet, and this word *eternal* makes it sweeter. This lies in the immediate vision and fruition of God. (1) *This is a spiritual life.* It is opposite to that animal life⁸ that we live now. Here we hunger and thirst; but there we shall "hunger no more" (Rev 7:16). There is the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will not only satisfy hunger, but prevent it. That blessed life to come doth not consist in sensual delights—meat, drink, and music—nor in the comfort of relations. But the soul will be wholly swallowed up in God and acquiesce⁹ in Him with infinite complacency. As when the sun appears, the stars vanish, so, when God shall appear in His glory and fill the soul, then all earthly, [sensuous] delights shall vanish. (2) *It is a glorious life.* The bodies of the saints shall be enameled with glory: they shall be made like Christ's glorious body (Phi 3:21). And if the cabinet be of such curious needlework, how rich shall the jewel be that is put into it! How bespangled¹⁰ with glory shall the soul be! Every saint shall wear his white robe and have his throne to sit upon. Then God will put some of His own glory upon the saints. Glo-

⁸ **animal life** – carnal, fleshly life as opposed to moral, spiritual life.

⁹ **acquiesce** – remain in quiet submission.

¹⁰ **bespangled** – adorned with glittering objects.

ry shall not only be revealed *to* them, but *in* them (Rom 8:18). And this life of glory shall be crowned with eternity; what angel can express it! O let us often meditate on this. (1) *The meditation of eternal life would make us labor for a spiritual life.* The child must be born before it is crowned. We must be born of the Spirit before we are crowned with glory (Joh 3:3-8). (2) *The meditation of eternal life would comfort us in regard of the shortness of natural life.* Our life we live now flies away as a shadow: it is called a *flower* (Psa 103:15), a *vapor* (Jam 4:14). Job sets forth fragile life very elegantly in three of the elements—*land, water, air* (Job 9:25-26). Go to the land, and there man's life is like a swift post. Go to the water, there man's life is like a ship under sail. Look to the air, and there man's life is like a flying eagle. We are hastening to the grave. When our years do increase, our life doth decrease. Death creeps upon us by degrees. When our sight grows dim, there death creeps in at the eye. When our hearing is bad, there death creeps in at the ear. When our legs tremble under us, there is death pulling down the main pillars of the house; but eternal life comforts us against the shortness of natural life. That life to come is subject to no infirmities; it knows no period. We shall be as the angels of God, capable of no mutation or change. Thus, you have seen six noble subjects for your thoughts to expatiate¹¹ upon.

But where is the meditating Christian? Here I might lament the lack of holy meditation. Most people live in a hurry; they are so distracted with the cares of the world that they can find no time to meditate or scarce ask their souls how they do. We are not like the saints in former ages. David did meditate in God's precepts (Psa 119:15). Isaac walked in the evening to meditate (Gen 24:63). He did take a turn with God...But it is too much out of date among our modern Christians.

Those beasts under the Law that did not chew the cud were unclean. Such as do not chew the cud by holy meditation are to be reckoned among the unclean. But I shall rather turn my lamentation into a persuasion...Pythagoras¹² sequestered himself from all society and lived in a cave for a whole year that he might meditate upon philosophy. How then should we retire and lock up ourselves at least once a day that we may meditate upon glory!

1. Meditation makes the Word preached to profit. It works it upon the consciences. As the bee sucks the flower, so by meditation we suck out the sweetness of a truth. It is not the receiving of meat into the

¹¹ **expatiate** – think upon at great length.

¹² **Pythagoras** (c. 580-500 BC) – Greek philosopher and mathematician.

mouth, but the digesting of it [that] makes it nutritious. So, it is not receiving the most excellent truths in the ear that nourisheth our souls but digesting them by meditation. Wine poured in a sieve runs out, [and] many truths are lost because ministers pour their wine into sieves, [that is] into leaking memories or feathery minds. Meditation is like a soaking rain that goes to the root of a tree and makes it bring forth fruit.

2. Holy meditation quickens the affections. “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psa 119:97). The reason our affections are so cold to heavenly things is because we do not warm them at the fire of holy meditation. As the musing on amorous objects makes the fire of lust burn, [and] the musing on injuries makes the fire of revenge burn, so meditating on the transcendent beauties of Christ would make our love to Christ flame forth.

3. Meditation hath a transforming power in it. The hearing of the Word may affect us, but the meditating of it doth transform us. Meditation stamps the impression of divine truths upon our hearts. By meditating of God’s holiness, we grow holy. As Jacob’s cattle by looking on the rods, conceived like the rods, so while by meditation we look upon God’s purity, we are changed into His likeness and are made partakers of His divine nature.

4. Meditation produceth reformation. “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies” (Psa 119:59). Did but people meditate on the damnableness of sin; did they but think when they meddle with it, there is a rope at the end of it that will hang them eternally in hell, they would break off a course of sinning and become new creatures. Let all this persuade [us] to holy meditation. I dare be bold to say, if men would spend but one quarter of an hour every day in contemplating heavenly objects, it would leave a mighty impression upon them, and through the blessing of God, might prove the beginning of a happy conversion.

From *The Christian Soldier, or Heaven Taken by Storm*,
in the public domain.



The man who says that he has nothing to think about can surely have no brains, and that professing Christian who says he has nothing to muse upon must be a laughingstock for devils. A Christian man without a subject for contemplation!

Impossible! Only give us the time and the opportunity, and there are a
thousand topics that at once present themselves for
our consideration.—*Charles Spurgeon*

A MEDITATION ON LOVE TO CHRIST

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

IF all those that love Christ are to receive a crown of life at His hands, what more natural improvement¹ follows from it than to exhort and persuade all [towards] love to Christ?...But we shall offer some other motives to persuade all to this duty:

First, the first and greatest motive is the loveliness of Christ. As all the loveliness that is to be seen in heaven and earth is only the reflection of the rays of His lovely glory, so there is scarce anything that is glorious, sweet, beautiful, and amiable,² but what is used to set the beauty of Christ. What is more glorious to look upon among bodies that we behold than the sun, that bright orb that enlightens heaven and earth with its rays? Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness, and He is a sun to whom our sun in the heavens is as darkness. He is called the bright and the morning star; so, for His innocence, His sweet condescension, love, and mercy, He is called a Lamb, although He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

He is called the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. Sharon, being a delightful and pleasant land, bore the sweetest roses and the lily of the valley, excelling all other lilies for beauty, sweetness, and excellent salutary virtue.³ He is represented thus to flowers because they are pleasant to behold, beautiful to the eye, and pleasing to the smell. He is compared to a rose and lily because they are the chief of flowers for beauty and sweetness. He is compared to the rose of Sharon and lily of the valley because they are the chief and most excellent of all roses and lilies.

What kind of rose and lily is the Son of God, the blessed Jesus? How wonderful and astonishing that God the Son should compare Himself to a rose and lily! What kind of rose and lily is here—how sweet, how beautiful, how fragrant! Here is too great a beauty, too divine a loveliness and heavenly fragrancy to belong to any creature. Certainly, this lovely rose and lily has divine perfections. Here is all

¹ **improvement** – making good use of anything for spiritual or moral edification.

² **amiable** – worthy to be loved.

³ **salutary virtue** – beneficial qualities.

the loveliness in the universe contained in this rose. Yes, here are the beauties and glories of Jehovah Himself in this lily: this flower is certainly no creature, but the Creator. Here, O believers, O lovers of Christ, is a rose for you to be ravished with the fragrancy of it, for your eyes to be delighted with the infinite beauty of, for you to be delighted to all eternity in the enjoyment of. This rose and lily is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, which is so amiable and fragrant that it is the eternal and infinite delight of the Father Himself.

This infinitely beautiful rose, this spotless and fragrant lily, was once despised with the loathsome spittle of wicked men, was torn and rent by their rage, and it was for you, O believers, the vials of God's wrath against your sins were poured out upon it.

Here is a sweet bundle of myrrh for you to lie in your bosom forever. He is as the apple tree among the trees of the wood: you may sit down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit will be sweet to your taste.

Second, consider for motive the excellent effects of love to Christ. It makes the soul to be of an excellent disposition: it is of a transforming nature. It brings on the soul some of the loveliness of the person beloved, exceedingly to soften and sweeten the mind and to make it meek, humble and charitable, and full of brotherly love. Love to Christ, if it be ardent⁴ and lively, transforms the soul very much into love, destroys envy and malice of every kind, and softens and sweetens every action.

It makes the soul in love with religion and holiness and sweetens obedience and mortification.⁵ Earthly and temporal love makes men glad of an opportunity to labor and spend themselves for the person beloved; they love to deny themselves for them; it takes away the force of pain and turns it into pleasure. So much more doth heavenly love, or love to Christ, make all that they do for Christ pleasant and easy. Although they spend and are spent for Him, it extracts honey from repentance and mortification.

Of such an excellent nature and tendency is love to Christ: it makes as great a difference in the soul as there is upon the face of the earth in the dead of winter when there is nothing but clouds, cold storms, rain, hail, and snow, and in the spring or summer when all

⁴ **ardent** – glowing with passion, animated by keen desire.

⁵ **mortification** – putting sin to death; see FGB 201, *Mortification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

things look green and pleasant. Before, the soul hated everything that is truly excellent and loved all that is abominable; but now the soul is transformed, is lovely itself, and it is in love with everything else that is truly so. And it not only makes duty easy and repentance and mortification pleasant, but it sweetens troubles and crosses themselves because the Christian knows that they are ordered to him by the person whom He dearly loves and Who dearly loves him. How easily can we bear things that come from those we love! These are the excellent effects, and this is the usefulness of love to Christ.

Third, consider the pleasantness of a life of love to Christ. A life of love, if it be from rational principles, is the most pleasant life in the world. Hatred, malice, and revenge are the greatest disturbers of the pleasures of the mind and fill it with uneasiness; but in the soul where rational love reigns, there is always pleasure and delight, for love is the principle of all sorrow.

But especially must a life of love to Christ be very pleasant, above all other kinds of living. Because as Christ is of all things most excellent, so is the love of Him a more excellent kind of love than any other; and the more excellent and refined the love is, the greater and purer is the pleasure of it.

There is no love so reasonable as love to Christ. Some love those things that are not truly lovely—love from false grounds. Yes, some love those things that are above all things hateful. Now, from such a love as this can arise no true pleasure, inasmuch as it is without a reason or foundation and at last will end in bitterness. But the love of Christ is the love of that which is truly above all things excellent and lovely, and therefore the pleasures that result from it must be solid, real, substantial, and never-fading.

If any godly man's life is unpleasant to him, it must be only because his love to Christ is but small and not vigorous and active enough, because it lies dormant and is not frequently put into exercise. For it [is] utterly impossible but that those [who] live in the lively exercise of love to Him should have those sweet meditations, as to make his life far from unpleasant.

Those that have a vehement⁶ love to any person can with pleasure spend their time in thinking of that person and of his perfections and actions. So, with what great delight may [those] that love Christ with an active love spend their thoughts upon His glories. With what

⁶ **vehement** – intense.

pleasure may they meditate upon those infinite perfections that He is possessed of and which make Him lovely in their eyes! How must it please them to find out continually new beauties and glories that they saw not before; for the excellencies of Christ are infinite, and we may make new discoveries to all eternity and yet not have discovered all. How doth it fill the soul with a kind of rapture when it has discovered something more of excellence in Him Who is the object of his highest love!

If men have a dear love to any of their fellow creatures, they desire to see them yet more excellent; they delight to see them attain to new perfections. But now those that are the dear lovers of Christ have the pleasure of thinking that He has all possible excellence already. There is no room for desiring that He should be yet more excellent because there is no excellence or beauty, nor any degree of excellence that they can possibly think of, but what He possesses already. They have no new beauties to *desire* for Christ, but only new beauties to *discover* in Him. Now, what a pleasure must it raise in those that love Christ to think that He is so perfectly amiable. This is a peculiar delight that is raised from no other love but love to Christ.

With what pleasure may he think of the perfections of His divine nature: of His immense greatness, of His eternity, power, and wisdom, etc. With what delight may he think [that] Him [Whom] he loves with his whole heart and soul is God as well as man, is so great that all the nations of the world are to Him as the drop of the bucket and small dust of the balance; so powerful that He weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance and takes up the isles as a very little thing; so wise that He charges His angels with folly; so holy that the heavens are unclean in His sight. With what pleasure may he think that the object of his highest love has made the world by His power and wisdom, that the sun, moon, and stars are the work of His fingers, and He rules all.

How sweet will the thoughts of the perfections of His human nature raise when he thinks of His innocence, condescension, humility, meekness, patience, and charity, the sight of which made the woman so to cry out: “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps⁷ which thou hast sucked” (Luk 11:27).

With what joy may the lovers of Christ think and meditate of what He has done for them. When men dearly love any person, with what joy do they catch at kindnesses and expressions of love from them!

⁷ paps – breasts.

With what pleasure will they think it over again! So, with what inexpressible joy may those that love Christ think of His bowing the heavens and coming down in the form of a servant: of His lying in a manger, of His suffering the reproach of men, of His agony and bloody sweat, of His dying on the cross for their sakes. How pleasing must it be to read over the history of all those wonderful [things] that their well-beloved has done for them while on earth, as it is recorded in the Scriptures, and to think that Christ has done all this for them: that He was born for their sake and lived for their sake, sweat blood for their sake and died for their sake. This must needs beget an uncommon delight.

With what pleasure may the Christian's soul think on Christ in His exalted state. We love to see those whom we truly love highly honored and exalted; so those that ardently love Christ may sweetly spend their time in meditating on Christ triumphing over His enemies, of His glorious ascending⁸ to heaven, of His being made head over all things to the church, of His being crowned with a crown of great glory, of His coming to judge⁹ the world at the conflagration.¹⁰

The love of Christ is far more pleasant than any other love upon these following accounts:

1. Christ is far more amiable than any other object in the world.
2. No other love is of so pure, heavenly, and divine a nature as the love of Christ is; and, therefore, no other love can raise such a divine and heavenly and exalted pleasure.
3. All that love Christ are certain that they are loved again. Herein is the pleasure of love: to be loved again. If love be not mutual, it is a torment and not a pleasure; but he that knows he loves Christ, knows Christ loves him with a [love] far higher and dearer.
4. Nothing can deprive those that love Christ either of present communion *with* or future enjoyment *of* the person loved. Now, it is not so in other kinds of love, but they are full of perplexities for fear of being deprived of enjoyment. There are a thousand accidents that may spoil all, and death certainly will separate them; but Christ will be enjoyed to all eternity, and all the world cannot hinder it! Christ will receive them into His closest embrace, and in His arms shall they rest forevermore in spite of all the world.

⁸ See FGB 243, *Ascension*.

⁹ See FGB 210, *Day of Judgment*.

¹⁰ **conflagration** – burning up of heaven, earth, and the elements in the fervent heat of judgment (2Pe 3:10-12).

5. The union between Christ and those that love Him is closer, and the communion more intimate than between any other lovers. The believers have the pleasure to think that He Whom they love has also loved them so well as to receive [them] so near to Himself as to make [them] His bone and His flesh. The believer is joined to Christ and is become one with Him. How must this be to those who love Him in truth! Love naturally desires a close and inseparable union and intimate communion, but there is no such near or intimate conversation between any other lovers, as between Christ and the Christian.

6. There is no other love so advantageous as love to Christ, and therefore none so pleasant. Love is sweet when the ones loving each other enjoy one another in prosperous circumstances. Now, Christ is already crowned with glory, and He will crown those that love Him with glory too, so that they shall each other eternally [be] in the greatest glory. So that upon these reasons and many others that might be mentioned, the love of Christ is far the most delightful love in the world.

And in short, to sum up the whole, the love of Christ tends to fill the soul with an inexpressible sweetness. It sweetens every thought and makes every meditation pleasant. It brings a divine calm upon the mind and spreads a heavenly fragrance like Mary's box of ointment. It bedews¹¹ the soul with the dew of heaven, begets a bright sunshine, and diffuses the beginnings of glory and happiness in embryo. All the world smiles upon such a soul as loves Christ: the sun, moon and stars, fields, and trees do seem to salute Him. Such a mind is like a little heaven upon earth.

From, "Fragment: Application on Love to Christ," in *Jonathan Edwards Sermons*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven, CT: The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 1722-1723), James 1:12.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758): American Congregational preacher and theologian; born in East Windsor, Connecticut Colony, USA.



When, by faith we behold the glory of Christ as we meditate on His divine-human person, we should not see Him merely as glorious in Himself.

We must, rather, make every effort to let that glory so fill our hearts with love, admiration, adoration, and praise to Him that our souls will be transformed into His image.—*John Owen*

¹¹ **bedews** – covers with drops of dew.

SWEET MEDITATIONS ON CHRIST

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

My meditation of him shall be sweet.—Psalm 104:34

CHRISTIAN! Thou needest no greater inducement¹ to excite thee than the subject here proposed: “My meditation of him shall be sweet.” To whom does that word *Him* refer? I suppose it may refer to all the three persons of the glorious Trinity:² “My meditation upon Jehovah shall be sweet.”

And, verily, if you sit down to *meditate upon God the Father* and muse upon His sovereign, immutable, unchangeable love toward His elect people; if you think of God the Father as the great author and originator of the plan of salvation;³ if you think of Him as the mighty being Who, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb 6:18), hath given us strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus; if you look to Him as the giver of His only begotten Son and Who, for the sake of that Son, His best gift, will with Him also freely give us all things; if you consider Him as having ratified the covenant and pledged Himself ultimately to complete all His stipulations⁴ in the ingathering of every chosen, ransomed soul, you will perceive that there is enough to engross⁵ your meditation forever, even were your attention limited to the manifestation of the Father’s love.

Or, if you choose to do so, you may *meditate upon God the Holy Spirit*. Consider His marvelous operations on your own heart: how He quickened it when you were dead in trespasses and sins; how He brought you nigh to Jesus when you were a lost sheep, wandering far from the fold; how He called you with such a mighty efficacy that you could not resist His voice; how He drew you with the bands of love that would not let you go. If you think how often He has helped you in the hour of peril; how frequently He has comforted you with His promises in times of distress and trouble; and if you remember that,

¹ **inducement** – reason that leads one to a course of action; motivating cause.

² See FGB 231, *The Triune God*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ See FGBs 236, *God’s Eternal Purpose*, 237, *God’s Decrees*, and 238, *God’s Love*.

⁴ **stipulations** – conditions or promises in a contract or agreement; in this case, God’s eternal purpose to save His elect.

⁵ **engross** – absorb all the attention of.

like holy oil, He will always supply your lamp and until life's latest hour He will always replenish you with His influences, proving Himself still your teacher and your guide until you get up yonder, where you shall see your Savior face to face in the blessed presence of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost—in such great truth you may well find a vast and, indeed, an infinite subject for your meditation.

But...I prefer rather to confine this word *Him* to *the person of our adorable Savior*. “My meditation of him shall be sweet.” Ah! If it be possible that the meditation upon one person of the Trinity can excel the meditation upon another, it is meditation upon Jesus Christ...

Thou precious Jesus! What can be a sweeter theme for me to think of than Thine exalted being; to conceive of Thee as the Son of God Who...fashioned this round world? To think of Thee as the God Who holds this mighty orb upon Thy shoulders, Thou Who art the King of glory, before Whom angels bow in lowliest homage. And yet to consider Thee as likewise bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh...to conceive of Thee as the Son of Mary, born of a virgin, made flesh like ordinary men, clothed in garments of humanity like mortals of our feeble race; to picture Thee in all Thy suffering life, to trace Thee in all Thy passion, to view Thee in the agony of Gethsemane, enduring the bloody sweat, the sore amazement; and then to follow Thee to the pavement, Gabbatha,⁶ and thence up the steep side of Calvary, bearing the cross, braving the shame; when Thy soul was made an offering for my sins, when Thou didst die the reconciling death amidst horrors still to all but God unknown. Verily, *here* is a meditation for my soul that must be “sweet” forever. I might, like the psalmist, say, “My heart is inditing⁷ a good matter”—the marginal reading is, “it boileth or bubbleth up”—“I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer” (Psa 45:1)...

Ah! Take Jesus for the theme of your meditation, sit down and consider Him, think of His relation to your own soul, and you will never get to the end of that one subject.

Think of His eternal relationship to you: recollect that the saints were from all condemnation free, in union with the Lamb, before the world was made. Think of your everlasting union with the person of Jehovah-Jesus before this planet was sent rolling through space and recollect how your guilty soul was accounted spotless and clean even

⁶ **Gabbatha** – Aramaic name for a paved area outside the residence of Pontius Pilate and the setting for the public trial of Jesus.

⁷ **inditing** – stirred; overflowing.

before you fell. And after that dire lapse,⁸ before you were restored, justification⁹ was imputed to you in the person of Jesus Christ. Think of your known and manifest relationship to Him since you have been called by His grace. Think how He has become your brother, how His heart has beaten in sympathy with yours, how He has kissed you with the kisses of His mouth, and His love has been to you sweeter than wine. Look back upon some happy, sunny spots in your history, where Jesus has whispered, “I am yours,” and you have said, “My beloved is mine” (Song 6:3). Think of...some pensive¹⁰ moments, when you have had what Paul sets so much store by: fellowship with Christ in His sufferings (Phi 3:10). Think of seasons when the sweat has rolled from your brow, almost as it did from that of Jesus—yet not the sweat of blood (Luk 2:44)—when you have knelt down and felt that you could die with Christ, even as you had risen with Him. And then, when you have exhausted that portion of the subject, think of your relationship to Christ that is to be developed in heaven... Picture to your mind that moment when Jesus Christ shall salute you as “more than a conqueror” and put a golden crown upon your head, more glittering than the stars! And think of that transporting hour when you will take that crown from off your brow; and climbing the steps of Jesus’ throne, you shall put it on His head and crown Him once more Lord of your soul, as well as “Lord of all.” Ah! If you come and tell me you have no subjects for meditation, I will answer, “Surely, you have not tried to meditate, or you would say with the psalmist, ‘My meditation of him shall be sweet.’”

Suppose you have done thinking of your Savior as He is specially related to you; consider Him, next, as He is related to the wide world. Recollect what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Joh 3:17), and, undoubtedly, He will one day save the world, for He Who redeemed it by price and by power will restore it and renew it from the effects of the fall. Oh, think of Jesus in this relationship as “The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Isa 58:12)! He will come again to our earth one day; and when He comes, He will find this world still defaced with the old

⁸ **dire lapse** – extremely serious and dangerous fall (into sin).

⁹ **justification** – Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7), and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2Co 5:21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom 5:19), and received by faith alone (Gal 2:16; Phi 3:9). (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 32) See also FGBs 187, *Justification*, and 181 *Imputed Righteousness*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹⁰ **pensive** – deeply or seriously thoughtful.

curse upon it—the primeval¹¹ curse of Eden. He will find plague, pestilence, and war here still; but when He comes, He will bid men beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks (Isa 2:4); war shall be obliterated from among the sciences; He shall give the Word and there shall be a great company that will publish it; and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9). Jesus Christ shall come!

Christians, be ye ever watching and waiting for the second coming of your Lord Jesus Christ; and whilst ye wait, meditate upon that coming. Think, O my soul, of that august¹² day, when thou shalt see Him with all His glorious train, coming to call the world to judgment, and to avenge Himself upon His enemies! Think of all His triumphs when Satan shall be bound, death shall be crushed, and hell shall be conquered, and when He shall be saluted as the universal Monarch, “who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom 9:5). “My meditation of him shall be sweet.”

I believe that, even when we get to heaven, we shall want no subject for meditation there except Jesus Christ. There will be little else we shall want of heaven besides Jesus Christ. He will be our bread, our food, our beauty, and our glorious dress. The atmosphere of heaven will be Christ; everything in heaven will be Christ-like; yea, Christ is the heaven of His people! To be in Christ and to be with Christ is the essence of heaven.

From a sermon delivered on the Lord’s Day at New Park Street Chapel,
Southwark, on a Thursday evening in the summer of 1858.



There is in the new man that which corresponds to our “five senses” naturally, namely, understanding, conscience, affections. But these have to be trained and developed. It is only by the constant and assiduous exercise of minds upon spiritual things, by the diligent study of the Word, by daily meditation thereon, by the exercise of faith therein, by earnestly supplicating the Spirit for light that we acquire the all-important discernment to distinguish between good and evil, truth and error.—*A. W. Pink*

The more high, holy, and profitable any ordinance of Christ is, the more fearful and sad are the demonstrations of the enmity and hell in our hearts acting against it.—*Nathaniel Ranew*

The end of study is knowledge, but the
end of meditation is holiness.

—*Thomas White*

¹¹ **primeval** – earliest ages of the history of the world; original.

¹² **august** – majestic; awe-inspiring.