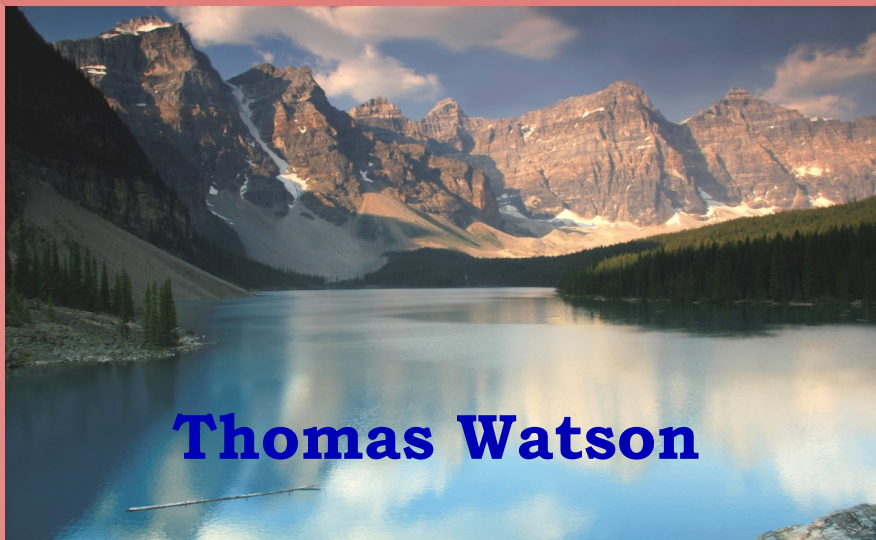


# **A Christian on the Mount — A Treatise Concerning Meditation**



**Part  
Two**



**Thomas Watson**

# **A Christian on the Mount — Part Two**

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## **A Treatise Concerning Meditation**

*“His delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night” Psalm 1:2.*

Having led you through the chamber of delight, I will now bring you into the withdrawing room of meditation. “In his law doth he meditate day and night.”

### **Chapter I — The Opening of the Words, and the Proposition Asserted**

Grace produces delight in God, and delight produces meditation. A duty wherein consists the essentials of religion, and which nourishes the very life-blood of it; and that the psalmist may show how much the godly man is habituated and inured to this blessed work of meditation, he subjoins, “In his law doth he meditate day and night.” Not but that there may be sometimes intermission: God allows time for our calling, he grants some relaxation; but when it is said, the godly man meditates day and night, the meaning is, frequently, he is much conversant in the duty. It is a command of God to pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. 5:17. The meaning is, not that we should be always praying, as the Euchites held, but that we should every day set some time apart for prayer; so Drusius and others interpret it. We read in the old law of the continual sacrifice, Num. 28:24. not that the people of Israel did nothing else but sacrifice, but because they had their stated hours; every morning and evening they offered, therefore it was called the continual sacrifice, thus the godly man is said to meditate day and night, that is, he is often at this work, he is no stranger to meditation.

**Doctrine.** The proposition that results out of the text is this, that a good Christian is a meditating Christian. “I will meditate in thy precepts,” Psa. 119:15. “Meditate upon these things,” 1

Tim. 4:15. Meditation is the chewing upon the truths we have heard: the beasts in the old law that did not chew the cud, were unclean; the Christian that doth not by meditation chew the cud, is to be accounted unclean. Meditation is like the watering of the seed, it makes the fruits of grace flourish.

For the illustration of the point, there are several things to be discussed.

Chapter II. I shall show you what meditation is.

Chapter III. That meditation is a duty.

Chapter IV. The difference between meditation and memory.

Chapter V. The difference between meditation and study.

Chapter VI. The subject of meditation.

Chapter VII. The necessity of meditation (in booklet part three)

## **Chapter II — Showing the Nature of Meditation**

If it be inquired what meditation is, I answer, meditation is the soul's retiring by 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 retiring by itself; a Christian, when he goes to meditate, must lock up himself from the world. The world spoils meditation; "Christ went apart into the mount to pray," Matt. 14:23. so, go apart when you are to meditate; "Isaac went out to meditate in the field," Gen. 24:63, he sequestered and retired himself that he might take a walk with God by meditation. Zaccheus 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," Luke 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 retiredness 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 is got into the eye, it hinders the sight; when worldly thoughts, as motes, are got 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 lime, she cannot fly: meditation is the wing of the soul; when a Christian is belimed with earth, he cannot fly to God upon this wing. St. Bernard 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, the soul’s retiring by itself; lock and bolt the door against the world.

2. The next thing in meditation, is, a serious and solemn thinking upon God. The Hebrew word to meditate, signifies with intenseness to recollect and gather together the thoughts. Meditation is not a cursory work, to have a few transient thoughts of religion; like the dogs of Nilus that lap and away; but there must be in meditation a fixing the heart upon the object, a steeping [filling of] the thoughts. Carnal Christians are like quicksilver which cannot be made to fix; their thoughts are roving up and down, and will not fix; 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 post through a town or village, minds nothing; but an artist or limner that is looking on a curious piece, views the whole draught and portraiture of it, he observes the symmetry and proportion, he minds every shadow and colour. A carnal, flitting Christian is like the traveller, his thoughts ride post, 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.” Luke 2:19.

3. The next thing in meditation, is, the raising of the heart to holy affections. A Christian enters into meditation, as a man enters into the bath [hospital], that he may be healed. Meditation heals the soul of its deadness and earthliness; but more of this afterwards.

### **Chapter III — Proving Meditation to be a Duty**

Meditation is the duty of every Christian, and there is no disputing our duty. Meditation is a duty, 1. Imposed. 2. Opposed.

1. Meditation is a duty imposed; it is not arbitrary. The same God who hath bid us believe, hath bid us meditate; “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night,” Josh. 1:8. These words, though spoken to the person of Joshua, yet they concern every one; as the promise made to Joshua concerned all believers, Josh. 1:5. compared with Heb. 13:5, so this precept made to the person of Joshua, thou shalt meditate in this book of the law, takes in all Christians.

It is the part of a hypocrite to enlarge the promise, and to straiten the precept; thou shalt meditate in this book of the law; the word thou is indefinite, and reaches every Christian; as God’s word directs, so his will must enforce obedience.

2. Meditation is a duty opposed. We may conclude it is a good duty, because it is against the stream of corrupt nature; as was said, “You may know that religion is right which Nero persecutes;” so you may know that is a good duty which the heart opposes. We shall find naturally a strange averseness from meditation. We are swift to hear, but slow to meditate. To think of the world, if it were all day long, is delightful; but as for holy meditation, how doth the heart wrangle and quarrel with this duty; it is doing of penance; now truly, there needs no other reason to prove a duty to be good, than the reluctance of a carnal heart. To instance in the duty of self-denial; “Let a man deny himself.” Matt. 16:24. Self-denial is as necessary as heaven, but what disputes are raised in the heart against it! What! to deny my reason, and become a fool that I may be wise; nay, not only to deny my reason, but my righteousness! What! to cast it

overboard, and swim to heaven upon the plank of Christ's merits! This is such a duty that the heart doth naturally oppose, and enter its dissent against. This is an argument to prove the duty of self-denial good; just so it is with this duty of meditation; the secret antipathy the heart hath against it, shows it to be good; and this is reason enough to enforce meditation.

### **Chapter IV — Showing how Meditation differs from Memory**

The memory, a glorious faculty, which Aristotle calls the soul's scribe, sits and pens all things that are done. Whatsoever we read or hear, the memory registers; therefore, God doth all his works of wonder that they may be had in remembrance. There seems to be some analogy and resemblance between meditation and memory. But I conceive there is a double difference.

1. The meditation of a thing hath more sweetness in it than the bare remembrance. The memory is the chest or cupboard to lock up a truth, meditation is the palate to feed on it; the memory is like the ark in which the mamma was laid up, meditation is like Israel's eating of manna. When David began to meditate on God, it was "sweet to him as marrow," Psa. 63:5, 6. There is as much difference between a truth remembered, and a truth meditated on, as between a cordial in a glass, and a cordial drunk down.

2. The remembrance of a truth without the serious meditation of it will but create matter of sorrow another day. What comfort can it be to a man when he comes to die, to think that he remembered many excellent notions about Christ, but never had the grace so to meditate on them, as to be transformed into them? A sermon remembered, but not meditated on, will only serve to increase our condemnation.

### **Chapter V — Showing how Meditation differs from Study**

The student's life looks like meditation, but doth vary from it. Meditation and study differ three ways.

1. They differ in their nature. Study is a work of the brain, meditation of the heart; study sets the invention on work, meditation sets the affection on work.

2. They differ in their design. The design of study is notion, the design of meditation is piety: the design of study is the finding out of a truth; the design of meditation is the spiritual improvement of a truth; the one searcheth for the vein of gold, the other digs out the gold.

3. They differ in the issue and result. Study leaves a man never a whit the better; it is like a winter sun that hath little warmth and influence: meditation leaves one in a more holy frame; it melts the heart when it is frozen, and makes it drop into tears of love.

## **Chapter VI — Showing the Subject of Meditation**

The next particular to be discussed is the subject matter of meditation; what a Christian should meditate upon. I am now entered on a large field, but I shall only glance at things; I shall but do as the disciples, pluck some ears of corn as I pass along,

Some may say, Alas, I am so barren I know not what to meditate upon. To help Christians therefore in this blessed work, I shall show you some choice select matter for meditation. There are fifteen things in the law of God which we should principally meditate upon.

First, meditate on God's attributes. The attributes of God are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth to us; and there are six special attributes which we should fix our meditations upon.

I. Meditate upon God's Omniscience. His eye is continually upon us; he hath a window open into the conscience; our thoughts are unveiled before him. He can tell the words we speak "in our bed chamber," 2 Kings 6:12. He is described with seven eyes, to show his Omniscience, Rev. 5: 6. "Thou numberest my steps," Job 14:16. The Hebrew word signifies to take an exact account. God is said to number our steps, when he makes a curious and critical observation of our actions. God sets down

every passage of our lives, and keeps as it were a day book of all we do, and enters it down into the book. Meditate much on this Omniscience.

The meditation of God's Omniscience would have these effects.

1. It would be as a curb to check and restrain us from sin. Will the thief steal when the judge looks on?

2. The meditation of God's omniscience would be a good means to make the heart sincere. God hath set a window at every man's breast: "doth not he see all my ways?" Job 31:4. If I harbour proud, malicious thoughts, if I look at my own interest more than Christ's, if I dissemble in my repentance, the God of heaven takes notice. The meditation of this omniscience would make a Christian sincere, both in his actions and aims. One cannot be a hypocrite, but he must be a fool.

II. Meditate on the holiness of God. Holiness is the embroidered robe God wears; it is the glory of the Godhead, "Glorious in holiness," Exod. 15:11. it is the most orient pearl of the crown of heaven. God is the exemplar and pattern of holiness. It is primarily and originally in God as light in the sun; you may as well separate weight from lead, or heat from fire, as holiness from the divine nature. God's holiness is that whereby his heart riseth against any sin, as being most diametrically opposite to his essence: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," Hab. 1:13. Meditate much on this attribute.

The meditation of God's holiness would have this effect; it would be a means to transform us into the similitude and likeness of God. God never loves us till we are like him. While, by meditation, we are looking upon the beams of holiness, which are gloriously transparent in God, we shall grow like him, and be holy as he is holy. Holiness is a beautiful thing, Psa. 110:3. It puts a kind of angelical brightness upon us; it is the only coin that will pass current in heaven. By frequent meditation on this attribute, we are changed into God's image.

III. Meditate on the wisdom of God. He is called "the only



wise God,” 1 Tim. 1:17. His wisdom shines forth in the works of providence; he sits at the helm, guiding all things regularly and harmoniously; he brings light out of darkness; he can strike a straight stroke with a crooked stick; he can make use of the injustice of men to do that which is just; he is infinitely wise; he breaks us by afflictions, and upon these broken pieces of the ship, brings us safe to shore. Meditate on the wisdom of God.

The meditation of God’s wisdom would sweetly calm our hearts. 1. When we see things go cross in public, the wise God holds the reins of government in his hand; and let who will rule, God overrules; he knows how to turn all to good; his work will be beautiful in its season. 2. When things go ill with us in our private concerns, the meditation of God’s wisdom would rock our hearts quiet. The wise God hath set me in this condition, and whether health or sickness, wisdom will order it for the best. God will make a medicine of poison; all things shall be useful to me; either the Lord will expel some sin, or exercise some grace. The meditation of this would silence murmuring.

IV. Meditate on the power of God. This power is visible in the creation. “He hangs the earth upon nothing,” Job 26:7. What cannot that God do who can create; nothing can stand before a creating power; he needs no pre-existent matter to work upon; he needs no instruments to work with, he can work without tools; he it is before whom the angels veil their faces, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns. He it is that “removes the earth out of her place,” Job 9:6. An earthquake makes the earth tremble upon her pillars; but God can shake it out of its place. God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axletree of the creation. He can suspend natural agents, stop the lion’s mouth, cause the sun to stand still, make the fire not burn. Xerxes, the Persian monarch, threw fetters into the sea, as if he would have chained up the unruly waters; but when God commands, “the winds and sea obey him,” Matt. 8:27. If he speak the word, an army of stars appears, Judg. 5:20. If he stamp with his foot, a host of angels are presently in battle array; if he lift up an ensign, and doth but

hiss, his very enemies shall be up in arms to revenge his quarrel, Isa. 5:26. Who would provoke this God! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31. as a lion he tears in pieces the adversaries. Psalms. 50:22. O meditate on this power of God!

The meditation of God's power would be a great stay to faith. A Christian's faith may anchor safely upon the rock of God's power. It was Samson's riddle, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness," Judg. 14:14. While we are meditating on the power of God, out of this strong comes forth sweetness. Is the church of God low! he can "create Jerusalem a praise," Isa. 65:18. Is thy corruption strong? God can break the head of this leviathan. Is the heart hard, is there a stone there? God can dissolve it. "The Almighty makes my heart soft," Job 23:16. faith triumphs in the power of God: out of this strong comes forth sweetness. Abraham meditating on God's power, did not stagger through unbelief, Rom. 4:20. He knew God could perform his promise, even contrary to the usual course of nature.

V. Meditate upon the mercy of God. Mercy is an innate disposition in God to do good, as the sun hath an innate property to shine: "Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee," Psalms. 86:5. God's mercy is so sweet, that it makes all his other attributes sweet. Holiness without mercy, and justice without mercy, were dreadful. Though the children of God are under some clouds of affliction, yet the sun of mercy is never quite out of sight. God's justice reaches to the clouds; his mercy reaches above the clouds. How slow is God to anger! He was longer in destroying Jericho, than in making the world: he made the world in six days; but he was seven days in demolishing the walls of Jericho. How many warning pieces did God shoot against Jerusalem, before he shot off his destroying piece ! Justice goes a foot pace, Gen. 18:21. mercy hath wings, Psalms. 57:1. the sword of justice often lies a long time in the scabbard, and rusts, till sin draws it out and whets it against a nation. God's justice is like the widow's oil,

which ran a while, and ceased, 2 Kings 4:6. God's mercy is like Aaron's oil, which rested not on his head, but ran down to the skirts of his garment, Psa. 133:2. So the golden oil of God's mercy doth not rest upon the head of a good parent, but is poured on his children, and so runs down, "to the third and fourth generation," even the borders of a religious seed. Often meditate upon the mercy of God.

The meditation of mercy would be a powerful loadstone [magnet] to draw sinners to God by repentance, Rom. 2:4. It would be as a cork to the net to keep the heart from sinking in despair. Behold a city of refuge to fly to; "God is the Father of mercies," 2 Cor. 1:3. mercy doth as naturally issue from him, as the child from the parent. God "delights in mercy," Micah 7:18. Mercy finds out the worst sinner; mercy comes not only with salvation in its hand, but with healing under its wings. The meditation of God's mercy would melt a sinner into tears. A prisoner reading a pardon sent him from the king, fell a weeping, and burst out into these words: "A pardon hath done that which death could not do; it hath made my heart relent."

VI. Meditate upon the truth of God. Mercy makes the promise, and truth performs it: "I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail," Psa. 89:33. God can as well deny himself as his word. He is "abundant in truth," Exod. 34:6. What is that? If God hath made a promise of mercy to his people, he will be so far from coming short of his word, that he will be better than his word. God often doth more than he hath said, never less; he often shoots beyond the mark of the promise he hath set, never short of it. He is abundant in truth. God may sometimes delay a promise, he will not deny it. The promise may lie a long time as seed hid under ground; but it is all the while ripening. The promise of Israel's deliverance lay four hundred and thirty years hid under ground; but when the time was come, the promise did not go a day beyond its reckoning, Exod. 12:41. "The strength of Israel will not lie," 1 Sam. 15:29. Meditate on the truth of God.

The meditation of God's truth would, 1. Be a pillar of support

for faith. The world hangs upon God's power, and faith hangs upon his truth. 2. The meditation of God's truth would make us ambitious to imitate him. We should be true in our words, true in our dealings. Pythagoras being asked, "What did make men like God?" answered, "When they speak truth."

Second. Meditate upon the promises of God. The promises are flowers growing in the paradise of scripture; meditation, like the bee, sucks out the sweetness of them. The promises are of no use or comfort to us, till they are meditated upon. For as the roses hanging in the garden may give a fragrant perfume, yet their sweet water is distilled only by the fire; so the promises are sweet in reading over, but the water of these roses, the spirit and quintessence of the promises, are distilled into the soul only by meditation. The incense, when it is pounded and beaten, smells sweetest. Meditating on a promise, like the beating of the incense, makes it most odoriferous and pleasant. The promises may be compared to a golden mine, which then only enricheth when the gold is dug out: by holy meditation we dig out that spiritual gold which lies hid in the mine of the promise, and so we come to be enriched. Cardan saith, there is no precious stone but hath some hidden virtue in it. They are called precious promises, 2 Pet. 1:4. When they are applied by meditation, then their virtue appears, and they become precious indeed. There are three sorts of promises, which we should chiefly meditate upon.

I. Promises of remission: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isaiah 43:25. Whereas the poor sinner may say, Alas! I am deep in arrears with God; I fear I have not filled his bottle with my tears, but I have filled his book with my debts. Well, but meditate on his promise, "I am he that blotteth out," &c. The word there in the original to blot out, is a metaphor alluding to a merchant, who, when his debtor hath paid him, blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance. So saith God, I will blot out your sin, I will cross the debt-book. Ah, but may the poor soul say, it may be a great while first [before then]; I may be a long

time under the convulsions of conscience; I may even pine away, and “my life draw nigh to the grave,” Psa. 88:9. No, in the Hebrew it is, “I am blotting out thy transgressions.” I have taken my pen, and am crossing out thy score. Oh, but may the sinner say, there is no reason God should do this for me. Well, but acts of grace do not go by reason: I will blot out thy sins “for my name’s sake.” Oh, but saith the sinner, Will not the Lord call my sins again to remembrance? No, he promiseth an act of oblivion; I will not upbraid thee with thy sins, or sue thee with a bond that is cancelled, “I will remember thy sins no more.” Here is a sweet promise to meditate upon; it is a hive full of the honey of the gospel.

II. Meditate upon promises of sanctification. The earth is not so apt to be overgrown with weeds and thorns, as the heart is to be overgrown with lusts: now, God hath made many promises of healing, Hos. 14:4. and purging, Jer. 33:8. promises of sending his Spirit, Isa. 44:3. which, for its sanctifying nature, is compared sometimes to water which cleanseth the vessel; sometimes to wind, which is the fan to winnow and purify the air; sometimes to fire, which doth refine the metals. Meditate often on that promise, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow,” Isa. 1:18. Scarlet is so deep a dye, that all the art of man cannot take it out; but behold here a promise, God will lay the soul a whitening; he will make of a scarlet sinner a milk white saint. By virtue of this refining and consecrating work, a Christian is made partaker of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. he hath a fitness to have communion with God for ever. Meditate much on this promise.

III. Meditate upon promises of remuneration: “The haven of rest,” Heb. 4:9. “The beatifical sight of God,” Matt. 5:8. The glorious mansions, John 14:2. Meditation on these promises will keep us from fainting under our sins and sorrows.

Third. Meditate upon the love of Christ. Christ is full of love, as he is of merit. What was it but love, that he should save us,

and not the angels? Among the rarities of the loadstone, this is not the least, that leaving the gold and pearl, it should draw iron to it, which is a baser kind of metal; thus that Christ should leave the angels, those more noble spirits, the gold and pearl, and draw mankind to him, how doth this proclaim his love! Love was the wing on which he fled to take our nature on him. 1. How transcendent is Christ's love to the saints! The apostle calls it a love "that passeth knowledge," Eph. 3:19. It is such a love as God the Father bears to Christ; the same for quality, though not equality: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you," John 15:9. A believer's heart is the garden where Christ hath planted this sweet flower of his love. It is the channel through which the golden stream of his affection runs. 2. How distinguishing is Christ's love! "Not many wise, not many noble are called," 1 Cor. 1:26. In the old law, God passed by the lion and the eagle, and took the dove for sacrifice: that God should pass by so many of birth and parts, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon thee, oh the depth of divine love! 3. How invincible is the love of Christ! "It is strong as death," Cant. 8:6. Death might take away his life, not his love; and as death could not wholly quench that divine flame of love, so neither could sin. The church had her infirmities, her sleepy fits, Cant. 5:2, but though blacked and sullied, yet still a dove. Christ could see the faith, and overlook the failing. He who drew Alexander while there was a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar: Christ puts the finger of mercy upon the scars of the saints; he will not throw away his pearls for every speck of dirt. And, what makes this love of Christ the more stupendous, there was nothing in us to excite or draw forth his love. He did not love us because we were worthy; but, by loving us, he made us worthy. 4. How immutable is Christ's love! "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end," John 13:1. The saints are like letters of gold engraven upon Christ's heart, which cannot be razed out. Meditate much upon the love of Christ.

The serious meditation of the love of Christ,

I. Would make us love him again. “Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?” Prov. 6:28. Who can tread, by meditation, upon these hot coals of Christ’s love, and his heart not burn in love to him!

II. The meditation of Christ’s love would cause our eyes to flow with tears for our gospel unkindnesses. Oh that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour! Had we none to abuse but our friend? had we nothing to kick against but love? did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, but must we needs make him suffer more? do we give him more gall and vinegar to drink? Oh, if anything can dissolve the heart into mourning, it is ingratitude and unkindness offered to Christ! When Peter thought of Christ’s love to him, Christ could deny Peter nothing; yet that he should deny Christ, this made his eyes water: “Peter went out and wept bitterly,” Matt. 26:75.

III. The meditation of Christ’s love would make us love our enemies. Jesus Christ showed love to his enemies. We read of “the fire licking up the water,” 1 Kings 18:38. It is usual for water to quench the fire, but for fire to dry up and consume the water, which was not capable of burning, this was miraculous! Such a miracle did Christ show; his love did burn where there was no fit matter to work upon; nothing but sin and enmity; he loved his enemies; the fire of his love did consume and lick up the water of their sins. He prayed for his enemies, “Father forgive them.” He shed tears for those who shed his blood. Those who gave him gall and vinegar to drink, to them he gave his blood to drink. The meditation of this love would melt our hearts in love to our enemies. Austin saith, Christ made a pulpit of the cross, and the great lesson he taught Christians was, to love their enemies.

IV. The meditation of Christ’s love would be a means to support us, in case of his absence. Sometimes he is pleased to withdraw himself, Cant. 5:6. yet, when we consider how entire and immutable his love is, John 13:1. it will make us wait with

patience till he sweetly manifests himself to us. He is love, 1 John 4:16. and he cannot forsake his people over long. He may take his leave, not his last farewell, Micah 7:19. The sun may be gone awhile from us, but in due time it returns. The meditation of Christ's love, may make us wait for the return of this Sun of righteousness. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come," Heb. 10:37. He is truth, therefore he shall come; he is love, therefore he will come.

#### Fourth. Meditate upon sin.

I. Meditate on the guilt of sin. We are in Adam as in a common head, or root; and he sinning, we become guilty; "in whom all have sinned," Rom. 5:12. by his treason our blood is tainted, and this guilt bringeth shame with it, Rom. 6:21.

II. Meditate upon the defiling nature of sin: not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed; but the poison of his nature is disseminated to us. Our virgin nature is defiled, the heart is spotted, 1 Kings 8:38. how then can the actions be pure? If the water be foul in the well, it cannot be clean in the bucket. "We are all as an unclean thing," Isa. 64:6. We are like a patient under the physician's hand, who hath no sound part in him, his head bruised, his liver swelled, his lungs perished, his blood inflamed, his feet gangrened. Thus it is with us before grace comes: in the mind darkness; in the memory slipperiness; in the heart hardness; in the will stubbornness; "from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head, there is no soundness; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores," Isa. 1:6. A sinner befiltied with sin, is no better than a devil in man's shape. Also what is sadly to be laid to heart, is the adherency of this sin. Sin is naturalized to us; the apostle calls it an encompassing sin, Heb. 12:1. a sin that will not easily be cast off. A man may as well shake off the skin of his body, as the sin of his soul; it sticks fast as the ivy to the wall. There is no shaking off this viper till death. O often meditate on this contagion of sin. How strong is that poison, a drop whereof is able to poison a whole sea! how venomous and



malignant was that apple, a taste whereof poisoned all mankind! Meditate seriously on this. The meditation of sin would make the plumes of pride fall; if our knowledge makes us proud, we have sin enough to make us humble. The best saint alive who is taken out of the grave of sin, yet hath the smell of the grave-clothes still upon him.

III. Meditate upon the curse of sin. “Cursed be every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law,” Gal. 3:10. This curse is like a blast upon fruit, which keeps it from thriving; sin is not only a defiling, but a damning thing. It is not only a spot in the face, but a stab at the heart. Sin betrays us into the devil’s hands, who, like Draco, writes all his laws in blood. Sin binds us over to the wrath of God, and then what are all our earthly enjoyments but like Damaris’s banquets, with a sword hanging over the head? Sin brings forth the “roll written with curses” against the sinner, Zech. 5. and it is a “flying roll,” verse 2. it comes swiftly, if mercy doth not stop it. “Ye are cursed with a curse,” Mal. 3:9. Thus it is till the entail of this curse be cut off by Christ. O meditate upon this curse due to sin.

The meditation of this curse would make us afraid, 1. Of retaining sin. When Micah had stolen his mother’s money, and heard her curse him, he durst not keep it any longer, but restores it, Judg. xvii. 2. He was afraid of his mother’s curse; what then is God’s curse! 2. The meditation of this curse would make us afraid of entertaining sin. We would not willingly entertain one in our house, who had the plague. Sin brings a curse along with it, which is the plague of God that cleaves to a sinner. Sin is like the water of jealousy, which made “the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot,” Num. 5:22. The meditation of this would make us fly from sin. While we sit under the shadow of this bramble, fire will come out of the bramble eternally to devour us, Judg. ix. 15.

Fifth. Meditate upon the vanity of the creature. When you have sifted out the finest flour that the creature doth afford, you will find something either to dissatisfy, or nauseate. The best wine hath its froth, the sweetest rose its prickles, and the purest

comforts their dregs; the creature cannot be said to be full, unless of vanity; as a bladder may be filled with wind. "In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits," Job. 20:22. They who think to find happiness here, are sure to be deceived. Meditate on this vanity. The world is like a looking-glass which represents that face which is not really in it.

I. The meditation of this vanity would be like the digging about the roots of a tree, to loosen it from the earth; it would much loosen our hearts from the world, and be an excellent preservative against a surfeit. Let a Christian think thus with himself, Why am I so serious about vanity? if the whole earth were changed into a globe of gold, it could not fill my heart.

II. The meditation of the creature's vanity would make us look after more solid comforts; the favour of God, the blood of Christ, the influences of the Spirit. When I see the life which I fetch from the cistern is vain, I will go the more to the spring head: in Christ there is an inexhaustible treasury. When a man finds the bough begin to break, he lets go the bough, and catches hold on the main tree; so when we find the creature to be but a rotten bough, then by faith we shall catch hold on Christ the tree of life, Rev. 2:7. The creature is but a reed; God is the rock of ages.

Sixth. Meditate upon the excellency of grace. Grace is, 1. Precious in itself, 2 Pet. 1:1. precious faith. Grace is precious in its original; it comes from above, James 3:17. and in its nature; it is the seed of God, 1 John 3:9. Grace is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is the very signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost. Grace doth not lose its colour: it is such a commodity, that the longer we keep it, the better it is, it changeth into glory. 2. As grace is precious in itself, so it makes us precious to God, as a rich diamond adorns them that wear it: "Since thou wert precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable," Isa. 43:4. The saints who are invested with grace are God's jewels, Mal. 3:17. though sullied with reproach, though besmeared with blood, yet jewels; all the world besides is

but lumber. These are the jewels, and heaven is the golden cabinet where they shall be locked up safe. A gracious man is the glory of the age he lives in, like Melancthon, who was called the phoenix of Germany. So illustrious in God's eye is a soul bespangled with grace, that he doth not think the world worthy of him: "Of whom the world was not worthy," Heb. 11:38. Therefore God calls his people home so fast because they are too good to live in the world: "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," Prov. 12:26.

Grace is the best blessing; it hath a transcendency above all things else; there are two things sparkle much in our eyes; but grace infinitely outshines both; 1. Gold. The sun doth not shine so bright in our eyes as gold; it is the mirror of beauty; "money answers all things," Eccl. 10:19, but grace weighs heavier than gold. Gold draws the heart from God; grace draws the heart to God. Gold doth but enrich the mortal part; grace the angelical. Gold perisheth, 1 Pet. 1:7. grace perseveres. The rose, the fuller it blooms, the sooner it sheds; an emblem of all things besides grace. 2. Gifts. These are nature's pride. Gifts and parts, like Rachel, are fair to look upon, but grace excels. I had rather be holy than eloquent. A heart full of grace is better than a head full of notions. Gifts commend no man to God. It is not the paring of the apple we esteem, though of a vermilion colour, but the fruit. We judge not the better of a horse for his trappings and ornaments, unless he have good mettle. What are the most glorious parts, if there be not the metal of grace in the heart? Gifts may be bestowed upon one for the good of others; but grace is bestowed for a man's own eternal advantage. God may send away reprobates with gifts, as Abraham did the sons of the concubines, Gen. 25:6, but he entails the inheritance only upon grace. Oh often meditate upon the excellency of grace!

The musing on the beauty of grace would,

1. Make us fall in love with it. He that meditates on the worth of a diamond, grows in love with it. Damascen calls the graces of the spirit the very characters and impressions of the divine nature. Grace is that flower of delight, which, like the vine in the

parable, “cheers the heart of God and man,” Judg. 9:13.

2. The meditation of the excellency of grace would make us earnest in the pursuit after it. We dig for gold in the mine, we labour for it in the furnace: did we meditate on the worth of grace, we would dig in the mine of ordinances for it; what labour and wrestling in prayer! we should put on a modest boldness, and not take a denial. “What wilt thou give me,” saith Abraham, “seeing I go childless?” Gen. 15:54. So would the soul say, Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go graceless; who will give me to drink of the “water of the well of life!”

3. The meditation of the excellency of grace would make us endeavour to be instrumental to convey grace to others. Is grace so transcendently precious, and have I a child who wants grace? O that I might be a means to convey this treasure into his soul! I have read of a rich Florentine, who being about to die, called all his sons together, and used these words to them, “It much rejoiceth me, now upon my death-bed, that I shall leave you all wealthy;” but a parent’s ambition should be rather to convey sanctity, that he may say, O my children, it rejoiceth me that I shall leave you gracious; it comforts me that, before I die, I shall see Jesus Christ live in you.

Seventh. Meditate upon thy spiritual estate. Enter into a serious meditation on the state of your souls; while you are meditating on other things, do not forget yourselves: the great work lies at home. It was Solomon’s advice, “know the state of thy flock,” Prov. 27:23. much more know the state of thy soul: for want of this meditation, men are like travellers, skilled in other countries, but ignorant of their own: so they know other things, but know not how it goes with their souls, whether they are in a good or bad state. There are few who, by holy meditation, enter within themselves. There are two reasons why so few meditate upon the state of their souls.

I. Self-guiltiness. Men are loth to look into their hearts by meditation, lest they should find that which would trouble them. The cup is in their sack. Most are herein like tradesmen, who

being ready to sink in their estates, are loth to look into their books of account, lest they should find their estate low; but hadst thou not better enter into thy heart by meditation, than God should in a sad manner enter into judgment with thee?

II. Presumption. Men hope all is well; men will not take their land upon trust, but will have it surveyed; yet they will take their spiritual estate upon trust, without any surveying. They are confident their case is good, Prov. 14:16. It is a thing not to be disputed of, and this confidence is but conceit. The foolish virgins, though they had no oil in their lamps, yet how confident were they! "They came knocking;" it was a peremptory knock, they doubted not of admittance: so many are not sure of their salvation, but secure; they presume all is well, never seriously meditating whether they have oil or not. O Christian, meditate about thy soul: see how the case stands between God and thee. Do as merchants: cast up thy estate, that thou mayest see what thou art worth; see if thou art rich towards God, Luke 12:21. Meditate about three things. 1. About thy debts: see if thy debts be paid or not; that is, thy sins pardoned: see if there be no arrears, no sin in thy soul unrepented of 2. Meditate about thy will: see if thy will be made yet. Hast thou resigned up all the interest in thyself? Hast thou given up thy love to God? Hast thou given up thy will? This is to make thy will: meditate about the will; make thy spiritual will in the time of health. If thou puttest off the making of thy will till death, it may be invalid; perhaps God will not accept of thy soul then. 3. Meditate about thy evidences. These evidences are the graces of the Spirit; see whether thou hast any evidences. What desires hast thou after Christ? what faith? see whether there be no flaw in thy evidences; are thy desires true? dost thou as well desire heavenly principles, as heavenly privileges? O meditate seriously upon your evidences!

To sift our hearts thus by meditation, is very necessary. If we find our estate is not sound, the mistake is discovered, and the danger prevented: if it be sound, we shall have the comfort of it.

What gladness was it to Hezekiah, when he could say, “Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight,” Isa. 38:3. So, what unspeakable comfort will it be, when a Christian, upon a serious meditation and review of his spiritual condition, can say, I have something to show for heaven; “I know I am passed from death to life,” 1 John 3:14. and, as a holy man once said, “I am Christ’s, and the devil hath nothing to do with me.”

Eighth. Meditate upon the small number of them that shall be saved. “But few are chosen,” Matt, 20:16. among the millions in Rome, there are but few senators; and among the swarms of people in the world, there are but few believers. We read of four sorts of ground in the parable, and but one good ground, Matt. 13. How few in the world know Christ! how few believe in him! Who hath believed our report? Isa. 53:1. How few strike sail to Christ’s sceptre! Luke 19:14. The heathen idolaters and Mahometans possess almost all Asia and Africa; in many parts of the world the devil is worshipped; Satan takes up most climates and hearts. How many formalists are there in the world! “having a form of godliness,” 2 Tim. 3:5. like wool that receives a slight tincture, not a deep dye, whose religion is a paint, which a storm of persecution will wash off, not an engraving. These look like Christ’s doves, but are the serpent’s brood. They hate God’s image, like the panther, that hates the picture of a man.

O often meditate on the small number of them that shall be saved. The meditation of this, would, 1. Keep us from marching along with the multitude. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude,” Exod. 23:2. The multitude usually goes wrong: most men walk “after the course of the world,” Eph. 2:2. that is, the lusts of their hearts, and the fashions of the times. They march after the prince of the air. The meditation of this would make us turn out of the common road.

2. Meditation on the fewness of them that shall be saved, would make us walk tremblingly. Few find the way; and when

they have found it, few walk in the way. The thoughts of this would work holy fear, Heb. 4:1. not a despairing fear, but a jealous and cautious fear. This fear the eminent saints of God have had. Austin saith of himself, he knocked at heaven's gate with a trembling hand. This fear is joined with hope. "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy," Psa. 147:11. A child of God fears, because the gate is strait; but hopes, because the gate is open.

3. Meditation on the small number of them that shall be saved, would be a whetstone [sharpening stone] to industry. It would put us upon working out our salvation; if there are so few that shall be crowned, it would make us the swifter in the race. This meditation would be an alarm to sleepy Christians.

Ninth. Meditate upon final apostasy. Think what a sad thing it is to begin in religion to build, and not be able to finish, Luke 14:30. Joash was good while his uncle Jehoiada lived; but after he died, Joash grew wicked, and all his religion was buried in his uncle's grave. We live in the fall of the leaf; how many are fallen to damnable heresies! 2 Pet. 2:1. Meditate seriously on that scripture, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance," Heb. 6:4, 5, 6. A man may be enlightened, and that from a double lamp—the word and Spirit; but these beams, though they are irradiating, yet are not penetrating. It is possible he may have a taste of the heavenly gift; he may taste but not concoct; as one saith, a cook may taste the meat he dresseth, but not be nourished by it. This taste may not only illuminate, but refresh; it may carry some sweetness in it, there may be a kind of delight in spiritual things: thus far a man may go and yet fall away finally. Now this will be very sad, it being such a God-affronting, and Christ-reproaching sin; "Know therefore it is an evil and bitter thing that thou hast forsaken the Lord," Jer. 2:19. Meditate upon final relapses.

Meditation upon apostasy would make us earnest in prayer to God. 1. For soundness of heart, "Make my heart sound in thy statutes," Psa. 119:80. Lord, let me not be an alchemy [a made up] Christian; work a thorough work of grace upon me; though I am not washed perfectly, let me be washed thoroughly, Psa. 51:2. That which begins in hypocrisy, ends in apostasy. 2. Meditation upon the final falling away of hypocrites would make us earnest in prayer for perseverance. "Hold up my goings in thy paths that my footsteps slip not," Psa. 17:5. Lord, hold me up that I may hold out. Thou hast set the crown at the end of the race, let me run the race, that I may wear the crown; it was Beza's prayer, and let it be ours, Lord perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.

Tenth. Meditate upon death. We say we must all die, but who is he that meditates seriously upon it? Meditate, 1. On the certainty of death; "it is appointed for all once to die," Heb. 9:27. There is a statute out [issued]. 2. Meditate upon the proximity of death, it is near to us.—We are almost setting our feet upon the dark entry of death. The poets painted time with wings; it not only rides post, but flies, and carries us upon its wings. The race is short between the cradle and the grave: the sentence of death is already passed; "to dust thou shalt return," Gen. 3:19. so that our life is but a short reprieve from death which is granted to a condemned man; "Mine age is as nothing," Psa. 39:5. may, if it were possible to take something out of nothing, our life is less than nothing, reckoned with eternity. 3. Meditate upon the uncertainty of the time. We have no lease, but may be turned out the next hour; there are so many casualties, that it is a wonder if life be not cut off by untimely death. How soon may God seal us a lease of ejection! Our grave may be digged before night. To-day we may lie upon a pillow of down, to-morrow we may be laid upon a pillow of dust. To-day the sermon bell goes, to-morrow our passing bell may go. 4. Think seriously, that to die is to be but once done, and after death there is nothing to be done.



If thou diest in thine impenitency there is no repenting in the grave. If thou leavest thy work at death half done, there is no finishing it in the grave; "There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest," Eccl. 9:10. If a garrison surrender at the first summons, there is mercy; but if it stay till the red flag be hung out, and the garrison is stormed, there is no mercy then. Now it is a day of grace, and God holds forth the white flag of mercy to the penitent; if we stay till God hold forth the red flag, and storm us by death! then there is no mercy. There is nothing to be done for our souls after death. O meditate on death! It is reported of Zeleucus, that the first piece of household stuff he brought to Babylon, was a tombstone: think often of your tombstone.

The meditation on death would work these admirable effects.

1. Meditation upon death would pull down the plumes of pride. Thou art but dust animated; shall dust and ashes be proud! Thou hast a grassy body, Isa. 40:6. and shall shortly be mowed down; "I have said ye are gods," Psa. 82:6. but lest they should grow proud, he adds a corrective, "ye shall die like men," verse 7. Ye are dying gods.

2. Meditation upon death would be a means to give a death's wound to sin. There is no stronger antidote against sin, saith Austin, than frequent meditation upon death; am I now sinning, and to-morrow may be dying; what if death should take me doing the devil's work, would it not send me to him to receive double pay? carry the thoughts of death as a table-book always about thee, and when sin tempts, pull out this table-book, and read in it, and you shall see sin will vanish. We should look upon sin in two glasses, the glass of Christ's blood, and the glass of death.

3. Meditation upon death would be a bridle for intemperance; shall I pamper that body which must lie down in the house of rottenness? Our Saviour at a feast breaks forth into mention of his burial, Matt. 26:12. Feeding upon the thoughts of death would be an excellent preservative against a surfeit.

4. Meditation upon death would make us use time better, and crowd up much work in a little room. Many meet in taverns to drive away time; the apostle bids us redeem it; “Redeeming the time.” Eph. 5:16. Our life should be like jewels; though little in bulk, yet great in worth. Some die young, yet with gray hairs upon them; we must be like grass of the field, useful; not like grass of the house-top, which withers before it be grown up, Psa. 129:6. To live and not be serviceable, is not life but time.

5. Meditation upon death would make us lay in provision against such a time. It would spur us on in the pursuit after holiness. Death is the great plunderer, it will shortly plunder us of all our outward comforts; our feathers of beauty and honour must be laid in the dust, but death cannot plunder us of our graces. The commonwealth of Venice, in their armoury have this inscription, “Happy is he that in time of peace thinks of war.” He that often meditates on death, will make preparation against its coming.

Eleventh. Meditate on the day of judgment. “God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world.” Acts 17:31. Meditate, 1. Upon the solemnity of this trial. The trumpet shall sound to summon all the world before the judge, 1 Thess. 4:16. and Jesus Christ shall “come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels,” Matt. 16:27. 2. Meditate upon the universality of this trial; “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,” 2 Cor. 5:10. Kings and nobles, all must come to the bar, there is no exemption. I have read of a wicked king, who on his death-bed fell a weeping; his brother asked him why he wept! “To think,” saith he, “that I, who have judged others, am now going to be judged myself.” 3. Meditate on the impartiality of the trial; Christ will do justice; “He will judge the world in righteousness,” Acts 17:31. There are no bribes taken in this court; no relations take place here. The Thebans pictured their judges blind, and without hands; blind, that they might not respect persons; without hands, that they might take no bribes. Christ’s sceptre is a “sceptre of righteousness,” Heb. 1:8. it is not

nearness of blood avails; nor will he be bribed with a tear. 4. Meditate upon the exactness of the trial; it will be very critical; "He will thoroughly purge his floor," Matt. 3:12. not a grace, or a sin, but Christ's fan will discover it; he will judge the heart as well as the fact. 5. Meditate upon the issue and consequence of this trial. There will be a discrimination made. He will separate the good from the bad, Matt. 25:32. The wheat and chaff may both grow together, but they shall not lie together.

Meditate often upon this court of judicature, from whence is no appeal. Feathers swim upon the water, but gold sinks in it; light feathery Christians float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment, but serious spirits sink deep into the meditation of it. Most men put far away from them the evil day, Amos 6:3. They report of the Italians, that in a great thunder-storm they used to ring their bells, and shoot off their cannons, that the sound of their bells and the roaring of their cannons might drown the noise of the thunder; so the devil delights men with the music of the world, that the noise of this should drown the noise of the day of judgment, and make them forget the sound of the last trump. Most men are guilty, therefore they do not love to hear of the assizes. When Paul preached of judgment, Felix trembled, Acts 24:25. he had a bad conscience: Josephus tells us of Felix, that he was a wicked man: the woman that lived with him (Drusilla by name) he had enticed away from her husband, and when he heard of judgment, he fell a trembling. O, I beseech you, meditate upon this last and solemn day! While others are thinking how they may get riches, let us bethink ourselves how we may abide the day of Christ's coming.

Meditation on the day of judgment, 1. Would make us scan all our actions; Christ will come with his fan and his sieve: will this action of mine abide the test at that great day?

2. Meditation on the last day would make us labour to approve our hearts to God, the great judge and umpire of the world. It is no matter what men think of us, but what is our Judge's opinion of us? to him we must stand or fall. The meditation of the day of judgment would make us endeavour to be like Moses, who was

fair to God, as the original hath it, Acts 7:20. The galaxy, or milky way, as the astronomers call it, is a bright circle in the heavens containing many stars, but they are so small that they have no name, nor are they taken cognizance of by the astronomers. Give me leave to apply it; possibly others may take no notice of us; we are so small as to have no name in the world, yet if we are true stars, and can approve our hearts to God, we shall hold up our heads with boldness, when we come to stand before our Judge.

3. Meditation on the day of judgment would make us labour after an interest in Christ. There is no standing before Christ, but by being in Christ. If Christ be thine, then all is well; no matter what is charged, if all be discharged, Rom. 8:33, 34. There is no way in the world to stand in the day of judgment, but [except] by making [Christ] a party [to your case]; make Christ thy friend, and then thy Judge will be thy advocate, 1 John 2:1.

4. Meditation on the day of judgment would make Christians less censorious; they would not reprobate others so fast; who art thou that judgest another? dost thou take Christ's sceptre into thy hand? darest thou sit in judgment upon thy brother? perhaps when the critical day comes, he may be found gold, and thou chaff. It is true, we may judge men's way, but not their persons, Rom. 14:10. but why dost thou judge thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

5. Meditation on the day of judgment would yield much comfort to a Christian, and that in two cases.

(1). In case of weakness of grace; a poor Christian when he sees his grace so defective, is ready to be discouraged, but at the day of judgment if Christ find but a drachm of sincerity, it shall be accepted; if thine be true gold, though it may be light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current. If thou hast no sin of allowance, thou shalt have grains of allowance. I may allude to that passage in Amos 9:9. "Yet shall not the least grain fall to the earth." He that hath but a grain of grace, not the least grain shall fall to hell.

(2). In case of censures and slanders. The saints go here

through strange reports, 2 Cor. 6:8. There is no walking in the world now a days, let us tread never so warily, without catching some specks of dirt. John Baptist's head in a charger is a common dish in this age, it is ordinary to bring in a saint beheaded of his good name; but at the day of judgment, Christ will unload his people of all their calumnies and reproaches; he will at that day wash his spouse so white, that she shall not only be guiltless but spotless, her black spots of reproach shall be taken away, "he will present his church glorious, not having spot or wrinkle," Eph. 5:27.

Twelfth. Meditate upon hell.

I. Meditate upon the pain of loss; "and the door was shut," Matt. 25:10. To have Christ's face veiled over, and a perpetual eclipse and midnight in the soul; to be cast out of God's presence, in whose presence is fullness of joy, this doth aggravate and embitter the condition of the damned; it is like mingling gall with wormwood.

II. Meditate upon the pain of sense; the Photinians hold there is no hell, but they speak in a dream; "The wicked shall be turned into hell," Psal. 9:17. And here meditate on two things,

1. The place of hell. 2. The company.

1. Meditate on the place of hell. It is called "a place of torment," Luke 16:28. There are two things especially in hell to torment.

(1). Fire, Rev. 20:15. It is called a lake of burning fire. Austin, Peter Lombard, Gregory the Great, say, this fire of hell is a material fire, though they say it is infinitely hotter than any culinary fire; that is but painted fire to this. I wish none of us may know what kind of fire it is; but I rather think the fire of hell is partly material, and partly spiritual; the material fire is to work upon the body, the spiritual to torture the soul. This is the wrath of God, which is both fire and bellows; "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Psal. 90:11. But it may be objected, If there be any material fire in hell, it will consume the bodies

there. I answer, It shall burn without consuming, as Moses' bush did, Exod. 3:2. The power of God silenceth all disputes. If God, by his infinite power, could make the fire of the three children not to consume, cannot he make the fire of hell burn and not consume? Austin tells of a strange salt in Sicily, which, if it be put in the fire, swims: that God who can make salt, contrary to its nature, swim in the fire, can make the bodies of the damned not consume in the fire.

(2.) The worm, Mark 19:44. "Where the worm never dies." Homer, in his Odyssey, feigns, that Titius's liver was gnawed by two vultures in hell. This never-dying worm which Christ speaks of, is the gnawing of a guilty conscience. Melancthon calls it a hellish fury; they that will not hear conscience preaching, shall feel conscience gnawing; and so great is the extremity of these two, the fire which burns, and the worm which bites, that there will follow "gnashing of teeth," Matt. 8:12, the damned will gnash their teeth for horror and anguish. That must needs be sad cheer, as Latimer saith, where weeping is served in for the first course, and gnashing of teeth for the second; to endure this will be intolerable, to avoid it will be impossible.

2. Meditate on the company in hell, the devil and his angels, Matt. 25:41. Job complains he was a companion to owls, chapter 30:29. What will it be to be a companion to devils! Consider, 1. Their ghastly deformity; they make hell look blacker. 2. Their deadly antipathy; they are fired with rage against mankind; first they become tempters, then tormentors.

Meditate much on hell. Let us go into hell by contemplation, that we may not go into hell by condemnation. How restless is the condition of the damned! The ancients feign of Endymion, that he got leave of Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for such a license! in their pains is neither intermission nor mitigation.

Serious meditation on hell, would make us,

1. Fear sin as hell. Sin is hell's fuel. Sin, like Samson's foxes, Judg. 15:5. carries devouring fire in the tail of it.

2. Meditation on hell would cause rejoicing in a child of God.

The saint's fear of hell is like the two Marys' fear, "They departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy," Matt. 28:8. A believer may fear to think of the place of torment, but rejoice to think he shall not come into this place. When a man stands upon a high rock, he trembles to look down into the sea, yet he rejoiceth that he is not there struggling with the waves. A child of God, when he thinks of hell, rejoiceth with trembling. A prison is not made for the king's sons to be put in. A great naturalist observes, that nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood. Whether it be so or not, sure I am, the salt brinish tears of repentance, and the blood of Christ, will quench the fire of hell to a believer. Christ himself hath felt the pains of hell for you. The Lamb of God being roasted in the fire of God's wrath, by this burnt-offering the Lord is now appeased towards his people. Oh how may the godly rejoice! "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ," Rom. 8:1. When the Son of God was in the furnace, Dan. 3:25. the fire did the three children no hurt; so Christ being for a time in the fiery furnace of God's wrath, that fire can do a believer no hurt. The saints have the garment of Christ's righteousness upon them, and the fire of hell can never singe this garment.

Thirteenth. Meditate upon heaven. From the mount of meditation, as from mount Nebo, we may take a view and prospect of the land of promise. Christ hath taken possession of heaven in the name of all believers; "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," Heb. 6:20. Heaven must needs be a glorious city, which hath God both for its builder and inhabitant. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of all blessedness. There the saints shall have their wish. Austin wished that he might have seen three things before he died, Rome in its glory, Paul in the pulpit, and Christ in the flesh. But the saints shall see a better sight; they shall see, not Rome, but heaven in its glory; they shall see Paul, not in the pulpit, but on the throne, and shall sit with him; they shall see Christ's flesh, not veiled over with infirmities and disgraces, but in its spiritual embroidery; not a crucified, but

a glorified body. They shall “behold the King in his beauty,” Isa. 33:17. What a glorious place will this be! In heaven “God will be all in all,” 1 Cor. 15:28. Beauty to the eye, music to the ears, joy to the heart; and this he will be to the poorest saint, as well as the richest. O Christian, who art now at thy hard labour, perhaps following the plough, thou shalt sit on the throne of glory, Rev. 3:21. Quintus Curtius writes of one who was digging in his garden, and on a sudden was made king, and a purple garment, richly embroidered with gold, put upon him: so shall it be done to the poorest believer; he shall be taken from his labouring work, and set at the right hand of God, having the crown of righteousness upon his head.

Meditate often on this Jerusalem above.

Meditation on heaven would,

1. Excite and quicken obedience. It would put spurs to our sluggish hearts, and make us “abound in the work of God, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord,” 1 Cor. 15:58. The weight of glory would not hinder us in our race, but cause us to run the faster: this weight would add wings to duty.

2. Meditation on heaven would make us strive after heart purity; because only the “pure in heart shall see God,” Matt 5:8. It is only a clear eye that can look upon a bright transparent object.

3. Meditation on heaven would be a pillar of support under our sufferings; heaven will make amends for all. One hour’s abode in heaven will make us forget all our sorrows. The sun dries up the water; one beam of God’s glorious face will dry up all our tears.

Fourteenth. Meditate on eternity. Some of the ancients have compared eternity to an intellectual sphere, whose centre is every where, and circumference nowhere. Eternity to the godly is a day which hath no sun-setting, and to the wicked a night which hath no sun-rising. Eternity is a gulf which may swallow up all our thoughts. Meditate on that scripture, Matt. 25:46. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into



life eternal.”

I. Meditate upon eternal punishment. The bitter cup out of which the damned drink, shall never pass away from them. The sinner and the furnace shall never be parted. God’s vial of wrath will be always dropping upon a wicked man. When you have reckoned up so many myriads and millions of years, nay, ages, as have passed the bounds of all arithmetic, eternity is not yet begun. This word ever breaks the heart: if the tree fall hell-ward, so it lies to all eternity. Now is the time of God’s long-suffering, 2 Pet. 3:9. after death will be the time of the sinner’s suffering long, when he shall “suffer the vengeance of eternal fire,” Jude 7.

II. Meditate upon life eternal. The soul that is once landed on the heavenly shore, is past all storms. The glorified soul shall be for ever bathing itself in the rivers of pleasure, Psa. 16:11. This is that which makes heaven to be heaven, “We shall be ever with the Lord,” 1 Thess. 4:17. Austin saith, “Lord, I am content to suffer any pains and torments in this world, if I might see thy face one day;” but alas! were it only for a day, then to be ejected [from] heaven, it would rather be an aggravation of misery; but this word, ever with the Lord, is very accumulative, and makes up the garland of glory; a state of eternity is a state of security.

Meditation on eternity would, 1. Make us very serious in what we do. Zeuxes being asked, why he was so long about a picture, answered, I paint for eternity. The thoughts of an irreversible condition after this life, would make us pray and hear as for eternity.

2. Meditation on eternity, would make us overlook present things, as flitting and fading. What is the world to him that hath eternity in his eye? it is but the smallest part of a point, which, as the mathematicians say, is just nothing. He that thinks of eternity will despise “the pleasures of sin for a season.”

3. Meditation on eternity would be a means to keep us from envying the prosperity of the wicked. Here they ruffle it in their silks, but what is this to eternity? As long as there is such a thing

as eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with all his enemies.

Fifteenth. Meditate upon your experiences. The last subject of meditation is your experiences. Look over your receipts.

I. Hath not God provided liberally for you, and vouchsafed you those mercies which he hath denied to others, who are better than you? Here is an experience, “The God who hath fed me all my days,” Gen. 48:15. Thou never feedest, but mercy carves for thee; thou never goest to bed, but mercy draws the curtain, and sets a guard of angels about thee. Whatever thou hast is out of the exchequer of free grace. Here is an experience to meditate upon.

II. Hath not God prevented many dangers, hath he not kept watch and ward about you? 1. What temporal dangers hath God screened off! thy neighbour’s house on fire, and it hath not kindled in thy dwelling. Another infected, thou art free; behold the golden feathers of protection covering thee. 2. What spiritual dangers hath God prevented! when others have been poisoned with error, thou hast been preserved. God hath sounded a retreat to thee; thou hast heard “a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk in it,” Isa. 30:21. When thou hast enlisted thyself, and taken pay on the devil’s side, that God should “pluck thee as a brand out of the fire,” that he should turn thy heart, and now thou espoucest Christ’s quarrel against sin. Behold preventing grace! Here is an experience to meditate upon.

III. Hath not God spared you a long time? whence is it that others are struck dead in the act of sin, as Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:5, 10. and you are preserved as a monument of patience? Here is an experience. God hath done more for you than for the angels; he never waited for their repentance, but he hath waited for you year after year, Isa. 30:18. Therefore “will the Lord wait that he may be gracious.” He hath not only knocked at your heart in the ministry of the word, but he hath waited at the door. How long hath his Spirit striven with you! like an importunate suitor, that hath many denials, yet will not give over the suit. Methinks I

see justice with a sword in its hand ready to strike, and mercy steps in for the sinner, “Lord, have patience with him a while longer.” Methinks I hear the angels say to God, as the king of Israel once said to the prophet Elisha, “Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?” 2 Kings 6:21. So methinks I hear the angels say, Shall we take off the head of such a drunkard, swearer, blasphemer? and mercy seems to answer as the vinedresser, “Let him alone this year,” Luke 13:8. See if he will repent. Is not here an experience worth meditating upon? Mercy turns justice into a rainbow; the rainbow is a bow indeed, but hath no arrow in it; that justice hath been like the rainbow without an arrow, that it hath not shot thee to death. Here is a receipt of patience to read over and meditate upon.

IV. Hath not God often come in with assisting grace? When he hath bid thee mortify such a lust, and thou hast said as Jehoshaphat, “I have no might against this great army,” 2 Chron. 20:12. then God hath come in with auxiliary forces; “his grace hath been sufficient.” When God hath bid thee pray for such a mercy, and thou hast found thyself very unfit; thy heart was at first dead and flat, all on a sudden thou art carried above thine own strength; thy tears drop, thy love flames; God hath come in with assisting grace. If the heart burn in prayer, God hath struck fire. The Spirit hath been tuning thy soul, and now thou makest sweet melody in prayer. Here is an experience to meditate upon.

V. Hath not God vanquished Satan for you? When the devil hath tempted to infidelity, to self murder, when he would make you believe either that your graces were but a fiction, or God’s promise but a counterfeit bond; now that you have not been foiled by the tempter, it is God who hath kept the garrison of your heart, else his fiery darts would have entered. Here is an experience to meditate upon.

VI. Have you not had many signal deliverances? When you have been even at the gates of death, God hath miraculously restored you, and renewed your strength as the eagle; may not

you write that writing which Hezekiah did? “The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness,” Isa. 38:9. You thought the sun of your life was quite setting; but God made this sun return back many degrees. Here is an experience for meditation to feed upon. When you have been imprisoned, your foot taken in the snare, and the Lord hath broken the snare, nay, hath made those to break it who were the instruments of laying it: behold an experience; O let us often revolve in mind our experiences! If a man had medicinal receipts by him, he would be often looking over them. You that have rare receipts of mercy by you, be often, by meditation, looking over your receipts.

Meditation on our experiences would,

1. Raise us to thankfulness. Considering that God hath set a hedge of providence about us, he hath strewed our way with roses, this would make us take the harp and viol, and praise the Lord, and not only praise, but record, 1 Chron. 16:4. The meditating Christian keeps a register or chronicle of God’s mercies, that the memory of them doth not decay. God would have the manna kept in the ark many hundred years, that the remembrance of that miracle might be preserved; a meditating soul takes care that the spiritual manna of an experience be kept safe.

2. Meditation on our experiences would engage our hearts to God in obedience. Mercy would be a needle to sew us to him. We would cry out as Bernard, “I have, Lord, two mites, a soul and a body, and I give them both to thee.”

3. Meditation on our experiences would serve to convince us that God is no hard master; we might bring in our experiences as a sufficient confutation of that slander. When we have been falling, hath not God taken us by the hand? “When I said my foot slippeth, thy goodness, O Lord, held me up.” Psa. 94:18. How often hath God held our head and heart when we have been fainting! and is he a hard master? Is there any master besides God who will wait upon his servants? Christians, summon in

your experiences. What vails [perquisites and presents given to servants] have you had Psa. 19:11. what inward serenity and peace, which neither the world can give, nor death take away! A Christian's own experiences may plead for God against such as desire rather to censure his ways, than to try them, and to cavil at them, than to walk in them.

4. Meditation on our experiences would make us communicative to others. We should be willing to tell our children and acquaintance "what God hath done for our souls," Psa. 44:1. At such a time we were brought low, and God raised us; at such a time in desertion, and God brought a promise to remembrance which dropt in comfort. Meditation on God's gracious dealing with us would make us transmit and propagate our experience to others, that the mercies of God shown to us may bear a plentiful crop of praise, when we are dead and gone.

The second of four booklets.

*“His delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he doth meditate day and night” Psalm 1:2.*



*“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” Isaiah 40:31.*