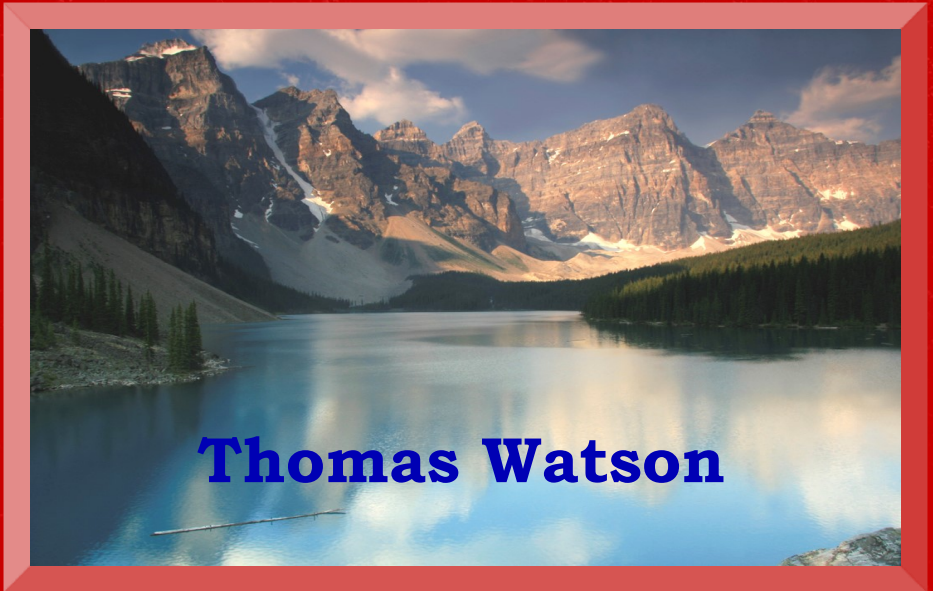


A Christian on the Mount — The Saint's Spiritual Delight



**Part
One**



Thomas Watson

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The Saint's Spiritual Delight

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD” Psalm 1:2.

Chapter I — *Shewing that Negative Goodness is but a broken Title to Heaven*

As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs by an Hebraism, it being the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled, the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains in it the very pith and quintessence of Christianity. What Jerome saith of St. Paul's epistles, the same may I say of this Psalm; it is short as to the composure, but full of length and strength as to the matter. This Psalm carries blessedness in the frontispiece; it begins where we all hope to end: it may well be called a Christian's Guide, for it discovers the quicksands where the wicked sink down in perdition, verse 1. and the firm ground on which the saints tread to glory, verse 2. The text is an epitome and breviary of religion, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Every word hath its emphasis; I begin with the first word “*But.*” This “*But*” is full of spiritual wine, we will broach and taste a little, then proceed.

“But.” This is a term of opposition. The godly man is described,

I. By way of negation, in three particulars. (1). “He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly;” he is none of the council; he neither gives bad counsel, nor takes it. (2). “He standeth not in the way of sinners.” He will not stand among those who “shall not be able to stand in the judgment,” verse 5. (3). “He sitteth not in the seat of the scornful.” Let it be a chair of state, he will not sit in it, he knows it will prove very uneasy at last.

The word sitting implies, 1. A habit in sin,—“Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother,” Psa. 50:20. 2. Sitting implies familiarity with sinners—“I have not sat with vain persons,” Psa.

26:4. that is, I do not haunt their company. The godly man shakes off all intimacy with the wicked. He may traffic with them, not associate; he may be civil to them, as neighbours, but not twist into a cord of friendship: diamonds and stones may lie together, but they will not solder and cement.

II. The godly man is described by way of position, or rather opposition: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord.” From this word “*But*” observe, that negative goodness is not sufficient to entitle us to heaven. To be no scorner, is good, but it is not enough. There are some in the world whose religion runs all upon negatives; they are not drunkards, they are not swearers, and for this they bless themselves. See how that pharisee vapours, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers,” &c. Luke 18:11. Alas, the not being scandalous will no more make a good Christian than a cipher will make a sum. The godly man goes further, “he sits not in the seat of the scorner; but his delight is in the law of the Lord.” We are bid, not only to “cease from evil, but to do good,” Psa. 34:14. It will be a poor plea at last, Lord, I kept myself from being spotted with gross sin; I did no hurt. But what good is there in thee? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard, that he doth no hurt there, he doth not break the trees, or destroy the hedges; if he doth not work in the vineyard, he loseth his pay; it is not enough for us to say at the last day, we have done no hurt, we have lived in no gross sin; but what good have we done in the vineyard? where is the grace we have gotten? If we cannot show this, we shall lose our pay, and miss of salvation.

Do not content yourselves with the negative part of religion; many build their hopes for heaven upon this cracked foundation, they are given to no vice, none can charge them with any foul miscarriages, and these are their letters of credence to show; to such persons I say three things.

1. You may not be outwardly bad, and yet not inwardly good. You may be as far from grace as from vice; though none can say your eye is black, yet your soul may be dyed black. Though your hands be not working iniquity, your heads may be plotting it.

Though you do not hang out your bush [a plan formerly adopted to invite customers], yet you may secretly vend your commodity; a tree may be full of vermin, yet the fair leaves may cover them that they are not seen; so the fair leaves of civility may hide you from the eye of man, but God sees the vermin of pride, unbelief, covetousness in your heart: “Ye are they,” saith Christ, “that justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts,” Luke 16:15. A man may not be morally evil, yet not spiritually good. He may be free from gross enormity, yet full of secret enmity against God; like the snake, which though it be of a fine colour, yet hath its sting.

2. If you are only negatively good, God makes no reckoning of you; you are as so many ciphers in God’s arithmetic, and he writes down no ciphers in the book of life. Take a piece of brass, though it be not such bad metal as lead or iron, yet not being so good as silver, there is little reckoning made of it, it will not pass for current coin; though thou art not profane, yet not being of the right metal, wanting the stamp of holiness upon thee, thou wilt never pass current, God slights thee, thou art but a brass Christian.

3. A man may go to hell for not doing good, as well as for doing evil; he that bears not good fruit is as fuel for hell, as well as he that bears bad; “Every tree which beareth not good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire,” Matt. 3:10. One may as well die with not eating food, as with poison; a ground may be spoiled for want of good seed as well as with having tares sown in it; they that were not active in works of charity, were sadly sentenced: “Depart from me ye cursed, &c. for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat,” Matt. 25:41, 42. It is not said ye took away my meat from me, but, “ye gave me no meat.” Why were the foolish virgins shut out? They had done no hurt, they had not broken their lamps; but they “took no oil with their lamps,” Matt. 25:3. Their wanting oil was the indictment; therefore let not any man build his hope for heaven upon negatives. This is building upon the sand; the sand is bad to build on; it will not cement; but suppose a man should finish a house upon it, what is the issue? the flood comes, namely, persecution, and the force of this flood will drive

away the sand and make the house fall; and the wind blows; the breath of the Lord, as a mighty wind, will blow such a sandy building into hell. Be afraid, then, to rest in the negative part of religion; launch forth further, be eminently holy. So I come to the next words, but “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

Chapter II — *What is meant by the Law of God, what is meant by Delight in the Law, and the Proposition resulting*

The words give us a twofold description of a godly man.

First, he delights in God’s law.

Secondly, he meditates in God’s law.

I begin with the first, “His delight is in the law of the Lord.” The great God hath grafted the affection of delight in every creature; it hath by the instinct of nature something to delight itself in. Now the true saint, not by intuition, but divine inspiration, makes the law of God his delight. This is the badge of a Christian, “His delight is in the law of the Lord.” A man may work in his trade, and not delight in it, either because of the difficulty of the work, or the smallness of his wages; but a godly man serves God with delight; it is his meat and drink to do his will.

For the explication of the words, it will be inquired,

1. What is meant by “the law of the Lord.” This word, “Law,” may be taken either more strictly or more largely. (1). More strictly;—for the decalogue or ten commandments. (2). More largely;—for the whole written word of God;—for those truths which are deduced from the word, and centre in it;—for the whole business of religion which is the counterpart of God’s law, and agrees with it as the transcript with the original. The word is a setting forth, and religion is a showing forth of God’s law. I shall take this word in its full latitude and extent.

2. What is meant by delight in God’s law. The Hebrew and Septuagint both render it, his will is in the law of the Lord; and that which is voluntary is delightful; a gracious heart serves God

from a principle of ingenuousness; he makes God's law not only his task, but his recreation; upon this scripture-stock I shall graft this proposition.

Doctrine. That a child of God, though he cannot serve the Lord perfectly, yet he serves him willingly; his will is in the law of the Lord; he is not a pressed soldier, but a volunteer; by the beating of this pulse we may judge whether there be spiritual life in us, or no. David professes that God's law was his delight, *Psa. 119:77*. He had his crown to delight in, he had his music to cheer him, but the love he had to God's law did drown all other delights; as the joy of harvest and vintage exceeds the joy of gleaning. "I delight in the law of God," saith St. Paul, "in the inner man," *Rom. 7:22*. The Greek word is, I take pleasure; the law of God is my recreation, and it was a heart delight, it was in the inner man; a wicked man may have joy in the face, *2 Cor. 5:12*. like honey-dew, that wets the loaf; but the wine of God's Spirit cheers the heart; Paul delighted in the law, in the inner man.

Chapter III — *Whence the Saint's Spiritual Delight springeth*

The saint's delight in the law of God proceeds, 1. From soundness of judgment. The mind apprehends a beauty in God's law; now the judgment draws the affections, like so many orbs, after it; "the law of God is perfect," *Psa. 19:7*. it needs not be eked out with traditions. The Hebrew word for perfect, seems to allude to a perfect, entire body, that wants none of the members or lineaments; God's law must needs be perfect, for it is able to make us wise to salvation, *2 Tim. 3:15*. The Septuagint renders it, the law of the Lord is pure, like beauty that hath no stain, or wine that is clarified and refined. The soul that looks into this law, seeing so much lustre and perfection, cannot but delight in it; the middle lamp of the sanctuary being lighted from the fire of the altar, gave light to all the other lamps: so the judgment being lighted from the word, it sets on fire the lamps of the affections.

2. This holy delight arises from the predominance of grace. When grace comes with authority and majesty upon the heart, it

fills it with delight. Naturally we have no delight in God; “Therefore they say unto God depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,” Job 21:14. nay, there is not only a dislike, but an antipathy. Sinners are called haters of God, Rom. 1:30. but when grace comes into the heart, oh what a change is there! Grace preponderates, it files off the rebellion of the will, it makes a man of another spirit, Num. 14:24. It turns the lion-like fierceness into a dove-like sweetness, it changes hatred into delight; grace puts a new bias into the will, it works a willingness and cheerfulness in God’s service. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” Psa. 110:3.

3. This holy delight in religion is from the sweetness of the end. Well may we with cheerfulness let down the net of our endeavour when we have so excellent a draught. Heaven at the end of duty causes delight in the way of duty.

Chapter IV — *Shewing a characteristic Difference between a child of God and a Hypocrite*

A discriminating difference is shown between a child of God and a hypocrite, the one serves God from a principle of delight, the other doth not. “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver,” Psa. 119:72. With what delight doth a covetous man tell over his thousands! but God’s law was better to David than thousands; a child of God looks upon the service of God, not only as his duty, but his privilege. A gracious heart loves every thing that hath the stamp of God upon it. The word is his delight—“Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart,” Jer. 15:16. The Sabbath is his delight—“If thou turn away thy foot from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight,” Isa. 58:13. Prayer is his delight—“I will make them joyful in my house of prayer,” Isa. 56:7. Hearing is his delight—“Who are these that fly as doves to their windows?” Isa. 60:8. The gracious soul flies as a dove to an ordinance, upon the wings of delight. The sacrament is his delight. On this day the Lord makes “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full

of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,” Isa. 25:6. A sacrament day is a soul-festival day; here Christ takes the soul into his banqueting-house, and “displays the banner of love over it,” Cant. 2:4. Here are heavenly delicacies set before us. Christ gives us his body and blood. This is angels’ food, this is the heavenly nectar, here is a cup perfumed with the divine nature; here is wine spiced with the love of God. The Jews at their feasts poured ointment upon their guests; here Christ pours the oil of gladness into the heart. This is the king’s bath where we wash and are cleansed of our leprosy: the withered soul, after the receiving this blessed eucharist, hath been like a watered garden, Isa. 58:11. or like Egyptian fields, after the overflowing of the Nile, fruitful and flourishing; and do you wonder that a child of God delights in holy things? he must needs be a volunteer in religion.

But it is not thus with a hypocrite; he may be forced to do that which is good, but not to will that which is good; he doth not serve God with delight. “Will he delight himself in the Almighty?” Job 27:10. That he hath none of this complacency and delight, appears thus, because he serves God grudgingly; he brings his sacrifice with a wicked mind, Prov. 21:27. Such a one was Cain: it was long before he brought his offering, Gen. 4:3. it was not the first-fruits; and when he did bring it, it was grudgingly; it was not a free-will offering, Deut. 16:10. It is probable it was the custom of his father’s family to sacrifice; and perhaps conscience might check him for forbearing so long; at last the offering is brought, but how? as a task rather than a duty; as a mulct [compulsory payment] or fine rather than a sacrifice. Cain brought his offering, but not himself. What Seneca saith of a gift, I may say of a sacrifice—it is not gold and silver makes a gift, but a willing mind; if this be wanting, the gold is only parted with, not given: so, it is not prayer and hearing makes a sacrifice, but it is a willing mind. Cain’s was not an offering, but a tax; not worship, but penance.

Chapter V — *Two Cases of Conscience Resolved*

But here are two cases to be put.

Case 1. Whether a regenerate person may not serve God with weariness?

Answer 1. Yes; but this delight in God is not wholly extinct. This lassitude and weariness in a child of God may arise from the in-being of corruption, Rom. 7:24. It is not from the grace that is in him, but the sin; as Peter's sinking on the water was not from his faith but his fear; yet I say still a regenerate person's will is for God, Rom. 7:15. Paul found sometimes an indisposition to good, Rom. 7:23. yet at the same time he professes a complacency in God, "I delight in the law of God, in the inner man," verse 22. One may delight in music, or any recreation, yet through weariness of body be for the present dull and indisposed; a Christian may love God's law, though sometimes the clog of the flesh weighing him down, he finds his former vigour and agility remitted.

Answer 2. This faintness and weariness in a regenerate person is not habitual; it is not his constant temper. When the water ebbs a while it is low water, but there is soon a spring-tide again; it is sometimes low water in a Christian's soul, he finds an indisposition and irksomeness to that which is good; but within a while there is a spring-tide of affection, and the soul is carried full sail in holy duties. It is with a Christian as with a man who is distempered; when he is sick he does not take that delight in his food as formerly; nay, sometimes the very sight of it offends, but when he is well he takes his meat again with delight and appetite; so, when the soul is distempered through sadness and melancholy, it finds not such delight in the word and prayer as formerly; but when it returns to its healthful temper again, now it hath the same delight and cheerfulness in God's service as before.

Answer 3. This weariness in a regenerate person is involuntary; he is troubled at it; he doth not hug his disease, but mourns under it. He is weary of his weariness. When he finds a heaviness in duty, he goes heavily under that heaviness; he prays, weeps, wrestles, uses all means to regain that alacrity in God's service which he was wont to have. David, when his chariot wheels were pulled off, and he did drive on heavily in religion, how oft did he

pray for quickening grace! Psa. 119:25, 37, 40, 88. When the saints have found their hearts fainting, their affections flagging, and a strange kind of lethargy seizing on them, they never leave till they have recovered themselves, and are arrived at such freedom and delight in God as they were once sensible of.

Case 2. Whether a hypocrite may not serve God with delight? I answer, he may; Herod heard John the Baptist gladly, Mark 6:20. and those who fasted for strife and debate, “did delight to know God’s ways,” Isa. 58:2. A hypocrite may, out of some flashy hopes of heaven, show a delight in goodness; but yet it is not such a delight as is found in the regenerate, for his delight is carnal. A man may be carnal while he is doing spiritual things. It is not the holiness and strictness in religion that the hypocrite delights in, but something else; he delights in prayer, but it is rather the showing of gifts he looks at, than the exercise of grace. He delights in hearing, but it is not the spirituality of the word he delights in; not the savour of knowledge, 2 Cor. 2:14. but the lustre. When he goes to the word preached, it is that he may rather feast his fancy than improve his heart; as if a man should go to an apothecary’s shop for a pill, only to see the gilding of it, not for the operative virtue. The hypocrite goes to the word to see what gilding is in a sermon, and what may delight the intellect. Hypocrites come to the word as one comes into a garden to pluck some fine flower to smell, not as a child comes to the breast for nutriment; this is rather curiosity than piety. Such were those; “thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument,” Ezek. 33:32. The prophet being eloquent, and having a pleasing delivery, they were much taken with it, and it was as sweet to them as a fit [refrain] of music; but it was not the spirituality of the matter they so well liked, as the melody of the voice. It was a sharp yet seasonable reproof of Chrysostom to his auditory, “This is that which is like to undo your souls, you hear your ministers as so many minstrels, to please the ear, not to pierce the conscience.” You see a hypocrite’s delight in religion is carnal; it is not the being “nourished up in the words of faith,” 1 Tim. 4:6. which he minds;

but the eloquence of speech, the rareness of notion, the quickness of fancy, the smoothness of style: he strives only to pluck from the tree of knowledge. Alas, poor man, thou mayest have the starlight of knowledge, and yet it may be night in thy soul.

Chapter VI — *Trial of a Christian's Delight in God*

Let this put us upon a holy scrutiny and trial, whether we have this delight in religion? It is life or death as we answer this.

Question. How may this spiritual delight be known?

Answer 1. He that delights in God's law is often thinking of it; what a man delights in, his thoughts are still running upon; he that delights in money, his mind is taken up with it; therefore the covetous man is said to mind earthly things, Phil. 3:19. thus if there be a delight in the things of God, the mind will be still musing upon them. Oh what a rare treasure is the word of God! it is the field where the pearl of [great] price is hid; how precious are the promises! they are the conduit that holds the water of life; they are like those two olive branches, "which through the two golden pipes did empty the golden oil out of themselves," Zech. 4:12. These seal up pardon, adoption, glory: "O Lord, by these things men live," Isa. 38:16. Where there is a delight in the law of God, the mind is wholly busied about it.

Answer 2. If we delight in religion, there is nothing can keep us from it, but we shall be conversant in word, prayer, sacraments. He that loves gold will trade for it. The merchant will compass sea and land to make money his proselyte. Men will not be kept from their fairs. If there be a delight in holy things we shall not be detained from an ordinance, for there we are trafficking for salvation. If a man were hungry he would not stay from the market for the aching of his finger. The ordinances are a gospel market, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, will not for every slight occasion stay away. "I was glad when they said, come let us go up to the house of the Lord," Psa. 122:1. Thou who art glad when the devil helps thee with an excuse to absent thyself from the house of the Lord, art far from this holy delight.

Answer 3. Those who delight in religion are often speaking of it; “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,” Mal. 3:16. Where there is grace infused, it will be diffused. “The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious,” Eccl. 10:12. David, delighting in God’s testimonies, “would speak of them before kings,” Psa. 119:46. The spouse delighting in her beloved, could not conceal her love, but breaks forth into most pathetic, and no less elegant expressions: “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, his head is as the most fine gold,” &c. The disciples whose hearts were upon Christ, made him the whole subject of their discourse as they were going to Emmaus, Luke 24:19. The primitive Christians, who were fired with love to God, did speak so much of heaven, and the kingdom prepared, that the emperor suspected they meant to take his kingdom from him. Words are the looking-glass of the mind, they show what is in the heart. Where there is spiritual delight, like new wine, it will have vent; grace is poured into thy lips, Psa. 45:2. a man that is of the earth speaketh of the earth, John 3:31. He can hardly speak three words, but two of them are about earth. His mouth, like the fish in the gospel, is full of gold, Matt. 17:27. So where there is a delight in God, “our tongues will be as the pen of a ready writer,” Psa. 45:1. This is a scripture touchstone to try men’s hearts by. Alas, it shows how little they delight in God, because they are possessed with a dumb devil; they speak not the language of Canaan.

Answer 4. He that delights in God, will give him the best in every service. Him whom we love best, shall have of the best. The spouse delighting in Christ, will give him of her pleasant fruits, Cant. 7:13. and if she hath a cup of spiced wine, and full of the juice of the pomegranate, he must drink of it, Cant. 8:2. He that delights in God gives him the strength of his affections, the cream of his duties, Matt. 22:37. if he hath any thing better than other, God shall have it. Hypocrites care not what they put God off with; they offer that to the Lord which costs them nothing, 2 Sam. 24:24. a prayer that costs them no wrestling, no pouring out of the soul, 1 Sam. 1:15. they put no cost in their services. Cain brought

of the fruit of the ground, Gen. 4:3. It is observable, the Holy Ghost doth not mention any thing that might commend, or set off Cain's sacrifice. When he comes to speak of Abel's, he sets an emphasis upon it, "Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," verse 4. but when he speaks of Cain, he only saith, "he brought of the fruit of the ground." Some sorry thing, perhaps, pulled out of a ditch. God who is best, will be served with the best, Domitian would not have his statue carved in wood or iron but in gold. God will have the best of our best things, golden services. He who delights in God, gives him the fat of the offering, Lev. 3:3. the purest of his love, the hottest of his zeal; and when he hath done all, he grieves he can do no more, he blushes to see such an infinite disproportion between Deity and duty.

Answer 5. He that delights in God, doth not much delight in any thing else. The world appears in an eclipse. Paul delighted in the law of God, in the inner man, and how was he crucified to the world! Gal. 6:14. It is not absolutely unlawful to delight in the things of the world, "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee," Deut. 26:11. None may better take the comfort of these things than believers, for they have the best right to them, they hold all *in capite* [by an authority that cannot be questioned—a tenure held immediately from the king]; and they have the dew of a blessing distilled. "Take two talents, said Naaman to Gehazi," 2 Kings 5:23. so saith God to a believer, take two talents, take thy outward comforts, and take my love with them; but the children of God, though they are thankful for outward mercies, which is the yearly rent they sit at, yet they are not much taken with these things; they use them only as a convenience for their passage; they know they need them as a staff to walk with, but when they shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven, and rest themselves, they shall have no use of this Jacob's staff. Believers do not much pass for these things which are still passing, 1 John 2:17. Their delight is chiefly in God and his law; and is it thus? have we this low opinion of all undermoon comforts? is the price fallen? The astronomer saith, if it were

possible for a man to be lifted up as high as the moon, the earth would seem to him but as a little point. If we could be lifted to heaven in our affections, all earthly delights would seem as nothing. When the woman of Samaria had met with Christ, down goes the pitcher, John 4:28. she leaves that behind. He who delights in God, as having tasted the sweetness in him, doth not much mind the pitcher, he leaves the world behind.

Answer 6. True delight is constant. Hypocrites have their pangs of desire, and flashes of joy, which are soon over. The Jews rejoiced in John's light for a season, John 5:35. Unsound hearts may delight in the law of the Lord for a season; but they will quickly change their note, "What a weariness is it to serve the Lord!" The Chrysolyte, which is of a golden colour, in the morning is very bright to look on, but towards noon it grows dull, and hath lost its splendour; such are the glistening shews of hypocrites. True delight, like the fire of the altar, never goes out; affliction cannot extirpate it. "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet thy commandments are my delights." Psa. 119:143.

Chapter VII — *A Suasive to this holy Delight in Religion*

Let me persuade Christians to labour for this holy delight. Think upon the text, "Let your delight be in the law of the Lord;" and that I may the better enforce the exhortation, I shall lay before you several weighty considerations.

I. There is that in the law of God which may cause delight; as will appear in two things. There is in it, 1. Truth. 2. Goodness.

1. Truth; the law of God is a series of truth, "Thy word is true from the beginning," Psa. 119:160. The two testaments are the two lips by which the God of truth hath spoken to us. Here is a firm basis for faith.

2. Goodness; "Thou gavest them true laws, good statutes," Neh. 9:13. Here is truth and goodness, the one adequate to the understanding, the other to the will. Now this goodness and excellency of the law of God shines forth in nine particulars.

1. This blessed law of God is a letter sent to us from heaven,

indited by the Holy Ghost, and sealed with the blood of Christ. See some passages in the letter; “As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee,” Isa. 62:5. and “I will betroth thee unto me for ever in righteousness and in loving-kindness, and in mercies,” Hosea 2:19. Is it not delightful reading over this letter?

2. The law of God is a light “that shines in a dark place,” 2 Pet. 1:19. It is our pole-star to guide us to heaven; it was David’s candle and lantern to walk with, Psa. 119:105. Now light is sweet, Eccl. 11:7. it is sad to want this light; those heathens who have not the knowledge of God’s law, must needs stumble to hell in the dark. Jerome brings in Tully with his oratory, and Aristotle with his syllogisms, crying out in hell: they that leave the light of the word, following the light within them, as some speak, prefer the shining of the glow worm before the sun.

3. The law of God is a spiritual glass to dress our souls by. David often looked at himself in this glass, and got much wisdom; “Through thy precepts I get understanding,” Psa. 119:104. This glass both shows us our spots, and takes them away; it may be compared to the laver which was made of the women’s looking-glasses, Exod. 38:8. it was both a glass and a laver; a glass to look in, and a laver to wash in; so the law of God is a glass to show us our faces, and a laver to wash away our spots.

4. This law of God contains in it our evidences for heaven. Would we know whether we are heirs of the promise, whether our names are written in heaven, we must find it in this law book; “He hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification,” 2 Thess. 2:13. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” 1 John 3:14. And is it not comfortable reading over our evidences?

5. The law of God is a place of ammunition, out of which we must fetch our spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. It may be compared to the “Tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers; all shields of mighty men,” Cant. 4:4. It is called the “sword of the Spirit,” Eph. 6:17. It is observable when the devil tempted our Saviour, he ran to

scripture for armour, “it is written;” three times Christ wounded the serpent with this sword, Matt. 4:4, &c. Is it not good having our armour about us when the enemy is in the field?

6. The law of God is our spiritual medicine-book, or book of receipts. Basil compares the word of God to an apothecary’s shop which hath its *panpharmacon* [a book containing an account of remedies for all diseases]; when there is any disease growing in the soul, here is a recipe to take. If we find ourselves dead in duty, here is a recipe, “Thy word hath quickened me,” Psa. 119:50. If our hearts be hard, here is a recipe, “Is not my word as fire?” Jer. 23:29. This is able to melt the rock into tenderness. If we grow proud, here is a recipe, “God resisteth the proud,” 1 Pet. 5:5. If there be any fresh guilt contracted, here we have a sovereign medicine to take, “Sanctify them through thy truth,” John 17:17. The law of God is like a medicinal garden, where we may walk and gather any herb to expel the poison of sin.

7. The law of God is a divine treasury to enrich us; here are the riches of knowledge, and the riches of assurance to be found, Col. 2:2. In this law of God are scattered many truths, as precious diamonds to adorn the hidden man of the heart. David took the law of God as his heritage, Psa. 119:111. In this blessed mine is hid the true pearl; here we dig till we find heaven.

8. The law of God is our cordial in fainting times; and it is a strong cordial; “That we might have a strong consolation,” Heb. 6:18. Those are strong consolations indeed that can sweeten affliction, that can turn water into wine, that can stand against the fiery trial. “This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me,” Psa. 119:50. The comforts of the world are weak consolations; a man hath comfort in health, but let sickness come, where is his comfort then? he hath comfort in an estate, but let poverty come, where is his comfort then? These are weak consolations, they cannot bear up against trouble; but the comforts of the word are strong consolations, they can sweeten the waters of Marah. Let sickness come, the comforts of the word can allay and support it; “the inhabitant of the land shall not say I am sick,” Isa. 33:24. Let death come, a Christian can outbrave it;

“O death, where is thy sting?” 1 Cor. 15:55. And is it not comfortable to have such a julap [medicine] lying by, as can expel the venom of death?

9. The law of God is manna; a heavenly manna that suits itself to every Christian’s palate. What doth the soul desire? is it quickening? strengthening? he may find all in this manna.

II. Delight in religion crowns all our services. Therefore David counsels his son Solomon, not only to serve God, but to serve him “with a willing mind,” 1 Chron. 28:9. Delight in duty is better than duty itself; as it is worse for a man to delight in sin than to commit it, because there is more of the will in the sin: so delight in duty is to be preferred before duty: “Oh how love I thy law!” Psa. 119:97. It is not how much we *do*, but how much we *love*; hypocrites may obey God’s law, but the saints love his law; this carries away the garland.

III. Delight in spiritual things evidences grace; it is a sign we have received the spirit of adoption. An ingenuous [honest, genuine, artless; not devious or deceitful] child delights to obey his father; he that is born of God is ennobled by grace, and acts from a principle of ingenuousness; grace alters the bias of the heart, and makes it of unwilling, willing. The spirit of grace is called a free spirit, Psa. 51:12. not only because it works freely, but because it makes the heart free and cheerful in obedience; a gracious heart does not act by pure constraint, but by free consent.

IV. Delight in religion will make the business of religion more easy to us. Delight makes every thing easy; there is nothing hard to a willing mind; delight turns religion into recreation; it is like fire to the sacrifice, like oil to the wheels, like wind to the sails, it carries us full sail in duty. He that delights in God’s way, will never complain of the ruggedness of the way; a child who is going to his father’s house, does not complain of a bad way. A Christian is going to heaven in the way of duty; every prayer, every sacrament, he is a step nearer his Father’s house; surely he is so full of joy that he is going home, that he will not complain of a bad way. Get then this holy delight. Beloved, we have not many

miles to go, death will shorten our way, Let delight sweeten it.

V. All the duties in religion are for our good. We shall have the benefit; “If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself,” Prov. 9:12. God hath twisted his glory and our good together. “I gave them my statutes, which if a man do, he shall even live in them,” Ezek. 20:11. There is nothing the Lord requires, but it tends to self-preservation. God bids us read his word, and why? this word is his will and testament wherein he makes over a fair estate to be settled upon us, Col. 1:12. “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life,” 1 John 2:25. He bids us pray, and this duty carries meat in the mouth of it; “This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us,” 1 John 5:14. Ask what you will, he will sign your petitions. If you had a friend who should say, Come to me when you will, I will furnish you with money, would you not delight to visit that friend? God will give to more than half the kingdom, and shall we not delight in prayer? God bids us believe, and there is a honey-comb to be found in this precept, “Believe, and thou shalt be saved.” Salvation is the crown that is set upon the head of faith. Well may the apostle say, “His commandments are not grievous.” O then, if religion be so beneficial, if there be such gold to be dug out of this mine, it may make us delight in the ways of God. What will tempt, if not self-interest?

VI. How did Christ delight in the work of our redemption! “Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God,” Psa. 40:7, 8. It is by expositors agreed that it is spoken mystically of Christ; when he came into the world to sacrifice his life for us, it was a free-will offering. “I have a baptism to be baptized with” Luke 12:50. Christ was to be, as it were, baptized in his own blood, and how did he thirst for that time! “How am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Did Christ so delight in the work of our redemption, and shall not we delight in his service? Did he suffer willingly, and do we pray unwillingly? Did he so cheerfully lay down his life for us, and shall not we give up our lives to him? Certainly if any thing could make Christ repent of shedding his blood, it would be this, to see Christians come off so hardly in

duty, bringing it rather as a penance than a sacrifice.

VII. Delight in God's service makes us resemble the angels in heaven. They serve God with cheerfulness; as soon as God speaks the word, they are ambitious to obey. How are they ravished with delight while they are praising God! In heaven we shall be as the angels; spiritual delight would make us like them here; to serve God by constraint, is to be like the devil; all the devils in hell obey God, but it is against their will, they yield a passive obedience; but service which comes off with delight is angelical. This is what we pray for, that "God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven;" is it not done with delight there?

VIII. This delight in God's law will not cause a surfeit. Carnal objects often cause a loathing and nauseating; we soon grow weary of our delights; hence it is we change from one sense to another; from colours to music, from music to smell, &c. Too much pleasure is a pain; but spiritual objects do not cloy or tire the soul; the more we study in the law of God, still the more delight we find. And in this respect David might say, the words of God's mouth were "sweeter to his taste than honey," Psa. 119:103. because one may soon surfeit upon honey, but he can never surfeit with the word of God. He that hath once, with Jeremiah, "found the word and eaten it" Jer. 15:16. will not be cloyed with it; there is such savouriness in the word, that a Christian cries out, "Lord, evermore give me this bread," John 6:34. There is such sweetness in communion with God, that the soul saith, "O that it might be always thus! O that what I now feel I might ever feel!" He that delights in God, doth not complain he hath too much of God, but rather too little: he opens and spreads the sails of his soul to take in more of those heavenly gales, he longs for that time when he shall be ever delighting himself in the sweet and blessed vision of God.

IX. Without this holy delight we weary ourselves, and we weary God too; "Will ye weary my God also?" Isa. 7:13. Our delighting in God would make him delight in us; but when we begin to say "What a weariness is it" to serve the Lord, Mal. 1:13.

God is as weary as we are; he is even sick of such services. When duties are a burden to us, they are a burden to God, and what should we do with them? when a man is weary of a burden, he will cast it off. Let all this quicken delight in God's service.

Chapter VIII — *Shewing how a Christian may arrive at this Delight in God's Law*

For the attaining this blessed delight in the law of God, three things are requisite.

Direction 1. Set a high estimate upon the word; what the judgment prizes, the affections embrace; he that values gold, will delight in it; we are apt, through a principle of atheism, to entertain slight thoughts of religion, therefore our affections are so slight. David prized God's statutes at a high rate; "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold," Psa. 19:10. and hence grew that enflamed love to them; "I will delight myself in thy statutes." Psa. 119:16.

Direction 2. Pray for a spiritual heart; an earthly heart will not delight in spiritual mysteries; the earth puts out the fire. Earthliness destroys holy delight; get a spiritual palate, that you may relish the sweetness of the word. He that tastes the sweetness of honey, will delight in it. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," 1 Pet. 2:3. It is not enough to hear a sermon, but you must taste a sermon; it is not enough to read a promise, but you must taste a promise; when you have obtained this spiritual palate, then God's word will be to you "the joy and rejoicing of your heart," Jer. 15:16.

Direction 3. If you would delight in the law of God, purge out the delight of sin; sin will poison this spiritual delight. If you would have God's law sweet, let not "wickedness be sweet in your mouth," Job 20:12. When sin is your burden, Christ will be your delight.

Chapter IX — *Holy delight should cause Thankfulness*

What cause have they to be thankful who can find this spiritual delight in God! How did David bless God that he gave the people

hearts to offer so cheerfully to the building of the temple; “Who am I and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?” 1 Chron. 29:14. Their willingness was more than their offering; so should a Christian say, Lord, when there are so many prest soldiers, who am I, that I should offer so willingly? Who am I, that I should have thy free Spirit. and should serve thee rather out of choice than constraint? It is a great blessing to have this promptitude and alacrity in God’s service; delight animates to duty; now we act to purpose in religion. Christians are never drawn so powerfully and sweetly, as when the chain of delight is fastened to their heart. Without this all is lost; our praying and hearing is like water spilt upon the ground: it loses both its beauty and reward. Then bless God, Christian, who hath oiled the wheels of thy soul with delight, and now thou canst “run and not be weary.” For thy comfort, be assured thou shalt not want any thing thy heart can desire, “Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” Psa. 37:4

The first of four booklets.

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD” 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.*