

A Treatise Concerning Meditation

by Thomas Watson

Meditation is a duty that lies upon every Christian, and it is a means to grow in the likeness of God and to be holy as he is holy.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Topics: "Spiritual Meditation", "Christian Reflection"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the importance of meditating on various spiritual topics, such as the law of the Lord, the duty of prayer, the nature of meditation, the subjects of meditation, and the consequences of not meditating. He emphasizes the need for Christians to reflect on their spiritual state, the certainty of death, the reality of heaven, the eternity of both punishment and life, and the significance of personal experiences as a way to deepen one's faith and gratitude towards God.

Transcript

A Christian on the Mount

A Treatise Concerning Meditation

By Thomas Watson

"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 in my previous discourse, I will now bring you into the Withdrawing Room of Meditation. "In his law does he meditate day and night."

I. The opening of the Words, and the Proposition asserted.

Grace breeds delight in God, and delight breeds meditation. Meditation is a duty wherein consists the essentials of religion, and which nourishes the very life-blood of it. That the Psalmist may show how much the godly man is habituated to this blessed work of meditation, he subjoins, "In his law does 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--but that we should every day set some time apart for prayer. We read in the Old law it was called the continual sacrifice, Numb. 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 godly Christian is a meditating Christian, Psalm 119:15. "I will meditate in your precepts." 1 Tim. 4:15, "Meditate upon these things." Meditation is the chewing upon the truths we have heard. The beasts in the old law which did not chew the cud, were unclean; the professor who does 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 to flourish.

II. Showing the NATURE of Meditation.

If it be inquired what meditation is, I answer--Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections. This description has three branches.

1. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself. A Christian, when he goes to meditate, must lock up himself from the world. The world spoils meditation; Christ went by himself into the mountainside to pray, Matt. 14:23, so, go into a solitary place 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 has gotten into the eye--it hinders the sight. Just so, when worldly thoughts, as motes, are gotten 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 donkey at the bottom of the hill," Gen. 22:5, so, when a Christian is going up the hill of meditation, he should leave all secular cares at the bottom of the hill, that he may be alone, and take a turn in heaven. If the wings of the bird are full of slime, she cannot fly. Meditation is the wing of the soul; when a Christian is beslimed with earth, he cannot fly to God upon this wing. 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 yourself, "I am going now to meditate, O all you vain thoughts stay behind, come not near!" When you are going up the mount of meditation, take heed that the world does not follow you, and throw you down from the top of this pinnacle. This is the first thing, the soul's retiring of itself--lock and bolt the door against the world.

2. The second thing in meditation, is, a serious and solemn thinking upon God. The Hebrew word to meditate, signifies 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 then run away; but there must be in meditation a fixing the heart upon the object, a steeping the thoughts. Carnal professors have their thoughts roving up and down, and will not fix on God; like the bird that hops from one branch to another, and stays in no one place. David was a man fit to meditate, "O God, my heart is fixed,"

Psalms 108:1.

In meditation there must be a staying of the thoughts upon the object; a man who rides quickly through a town or village--he minds nothing. But an artist who is looking on a curious piece, views the whole portraiture of it, he observes the symmetry and proportion, he minds every shadow and color. A carnal, flitting professor, is like the traveler, his thoughts ride hastily--he minds nothing of God. A wise Christian is like the artist, he views with seriousness, and ponders the things of religion, Luke 2:19. "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

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

III. Proving Meditation to be a DUTY.

Meditation is a duty lying upon 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 has bid us believe, has bid us meditate, Josh. 1:8. "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth--but you shall meditate therein day and night." These words, though spoken to the person of Joshua, yet they concern everyone; 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, you shall meditate in this book of the law, takes in all Christians. As God's Word does direct, 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 one 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 does the heart wrangle and quarrel with this duty; it is like doing of penance. Now truly, there needs no other reason to prove a duty to be good, than the reluctancy of a carnal heart. To instance in the duty of "Let a man deny himself," Mat. 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 does 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 has against it, shows it to be good; and this is reason enough to enforce meditation.

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. Whatever we read or hear, the memory does register; therefore, God does 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. Meditation has 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 manna 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," Psalm 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 on it, will but create matter of sorrow another day. What comfort can it be to a man when he comes to die, to think 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 ruminated, will only serve to increase our condemnation.

V. Showing how Meditation differs from STUDY.

The student's life looks like meditation--but does 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 mind on work, meditation sets the heart 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 searches for the vein of gold; the other digs out the gold.

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

VI. Showing the SUBJECTS of Meditation.

The next particular to be discussed, is the subject-matter of meditation; what a Christian should meditate upon. I am now gotten into 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 Word of God, which we should principally meditate upon.

Section 1. 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.

Meditate upon God's OMNISCIENCE. His eye is continually upon us; he has a window open into the conscience; our thoughts are unveiled before him. He can tell the words we speak "in our bedchamber," 2 Kings 2:12. He is described with seven eyes, to show his omniscience. "You number 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 precise and critical observation of our actions; God sets down every step 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.

Meditation on God's omniscience would have these effects.

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

2. Meditation on God's omniscience would be a good means to make the heart sincere. God has set a window in every man's breast, "does not he see all my ways?" Job 31:4. If I harbor proud, malicious thoughts, if I look at my own interest more than Christ's, if I juggle in my repentance--the God of heaven takes notice! Meditation on his omniscience, would make a Christian sincere, both in his actions and aims. Only a fool would dare to be a hypocrite before God!

Meditate on the HOLINESS of God. Holiness is the embroidered robe God wears: it is the glory of the Godhead, Exod. 15:11. "Glorious in holiness!" Holiness 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 rises against any sin, as being most diametrically opposite to his essence, Hab. 1:13. "You are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Meditate much on this attribute.

Meditation on 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 until we are like him. There is a story of a deformed man, who set lovely pictures before his wife, that seeing them she might have lovely children, and so she had. Be that as it may, 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, Psalm 110. It puts a kind of angelical brightness upon us; it is the only coin which will pass current in heaven; by the frequent meditation on this attribute, we are changed into God's image.

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 by 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 safely to shore; meditate on the wisdom of God.

Meditation on God's wisdom would sweetly calm our hearts.

1. When we see things go badly in the public. The all-wise God holds the reins of government in his hand; and whoever the earthly ruler--God over-rules; he knows how to turn all to good; his work will be beautiful in its season.

2. When things go badly with us in particular, the meditation on God's wisdom would rock our hearts quiet. The wise God has set me in this condition, and whether health or sickness, his wisdom will order it for the best. God will make a golden cordial from poison, all things shall be beneficial and medicinal to me; either the Lord will expel some sin, or exercise some grace. Meditation on this would silence murmuring.

4. Meditate on the POWER of God. His 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 who "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 axle 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 speaks the word, an army of stars appear, Judg. 5:20. If he stamps with his foot, a multitude of angels are presently in

battalia; if he lifts up an ensign, and does but hiss, his very enemies shall be up in arms to revenge his quarrel, Isaiah 5:56. 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 his adversaries," Psalm 50:22. Oh meditate on this power of God.

Meditation on 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;" Judges 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 praises in Jerusalem," Isaiah 65:28. Is your corruption strong? God can break the head of this leviathan. Is your heart as hard as a stone? God can dissolve it. "The Almighty makes my heart soft." 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, Romans 4:20. He knew God could make a dead womb fruitful, and dry breasts give suck.

5. Meditate upon the MERCY of God. Mercy is an innate disposition in God to do good; as the sun has an innate property to shine, Psalm 86:5. "You Lord are good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon you. God's mercy is so sweet, that it makes all his other attributes sweet. Holiness without mercy, and justice without mercy, would be dreadful. Geographers write that the city of Syracuse in Sicily is curiously situated, that the sun is never out of sight; 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 arrows did God shoot against Jerusalem, before he shot off his destroying arrow? Justice goes by foot, Gen. 18:21. Mercy has wings. The sword of justice often lies a long time in the scabbard, and rusts, until sin draws it out and sharpens it against a nation. God's justice is like the widow's oil, which ran a while, and ceased, 1 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, Psalm 133:2. So the golden oil of God's mercy does not rest upon the head of a godly parent--but is often poured on his children, and so runs down, "To the third and fourth generation," even the borders of a pious seed. Often meditate upon the mercy of God.

Meditation on mercy would be a powerful loadstone to draw sinners to God by repentance. 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 does as naturally issue from him, as the child from the parent. God "delights in mercy," Micah 7:18. Chrysostom says, it is delightful to the mother to have her breasts drawn; and how delightful is it to God to have the breasts of mercy drawn! Mercy finds out the worst sinner; mercy comes not only with salvation in its hand--but with healing under its wings.

Meditation on God's mercy would melt a sinner into tears: One reading a pardon sent to him from the king, fell a weeping, and burst out into these words, "A pardon has done that which death could not do, it has made my heart relent."

6. Meditate upon the TRUTH of God. Mercy makes the promise, and Truth performs it, Psalm 89:33, "I will not allow my faithfulness to fail." God can as well deny himself as his word. He is "abundant in truth," Exod. 34:6. That is--if God has 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 does more than he has said, never less; he

often shoots beyond the mark of the promise he has 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 hidden under ground--but it is all the while a ripening. The promise of Israel's deliverance lay four hundred and thirty years 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. Meditation on 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. Meditation on 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 makes men like God?" answered, "When they speak truth."

Section 2. Meditate upon the PROMISES of God.

The promises of God 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, until they are meditated upon. Roses hanging in the garden may give a fragrant redolence, yet their sweet water is distilled only by the fire. Just so, the promises are sweet in reading over--but the water of these roses, the spirits 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 more fragrant and pleasant. The promises may be compared to a gold mine, which only enriches when the gold is dug out. By holy meditation, we dig out that spiritual gold which lies hidden in the midst of the promise, and so we come to be enriched!

Cardan says that every precious gem-stone has 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 meditate upon.

1. Promises of REMISSION. "I, even I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins," Isaiah 43:25. Whereas the poor sinner may say, "Alas, I am deep in debt 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 who blots out," etc. The word there in the original to blot out, is a metaphor alluding to a merchant, who when his debtor has paid him, he blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance. So says God, "I will blot out your sin, I will cross out the debt-book!" In the Hebrew it is, "I am blotting out your transgressions." "I have taken my pen, and am crossing out your debt!" Oh, but may the sinner say, "There is no reason God should do thus for me." Well, but acts of grace do not go by reason, "I will blot out your sins--for my name's sake." Oh, but says the sinner, "Will not the Lord call my sins again to remembrance?" No, he promises to send them into oblivion; "I will not upbraid you with your sins--I will remember your sins no more." Here is a sweet promise to meditate upon; it is a hive full of the honey of the gospel.

2. 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 has made many promises of healing, Hos. 14:4, and purging, Jer. 33:8. Promises of sending his Spirit, Isaiah 44:3, which, for its sanctifying nature, is compared sometimes to water which cleanses the vessel; sometimes to wind, which is the fan to winnow and purify the air; sometimes to fire, which refines the metals. Meditate often on that promise, Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins be as scarlet--they shall be as white as snow!" Scarlet is so deep a dye, that all the art

of man cannot take it out; but behold here a promise--God will whiten the soul; he will make a scarlet sinner--into a snow white saint! By virtue of this refining and consecrating work, a Christian is made partaker of the divine nature; he has a suitability and fitness to have communion with God forever. Meditate much on this promise.

3. 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 be as choice cordials to keep us from fainting under our sins and sorrows.

Section 3. 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 fallen 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. Just so, that Christ should leave the angels, those more noble spirits, the gold and pearl--and draw mankind to him--how does this proclaim his love? Love was the wing on which he flew into the virgin's womb!

1. How TRANSCENDENT is Christ's love to the saints! The apostle calls it a love "which passes knowledge," Eph. 3:19. It is such a love as God the Father bears to Christ; the same for quality, though not equality, John 15:9. "As the Father has loved me--so have I loved you." A believer's heart is the garden where Christ has planted this sweet flower of his love. It is the channel through which the golden stream of his affection runs.

2. How SOVEREIGN is Christ's love! "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth." 1 Corinthians 1:26 In the old law God passed by the noble lion and the eagle--and took the dove for sacrifice. That God should pass by so many of noble birth and abilities, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon me--O the depth of divine grace!

3. How INVINCIBLE is the love of Christ! "It is strong as death," Cant. 8:6. Death might take away Christ's life--but not his love! Neither can our sin wholly quench that divine flame of love; the church had her infirmities, her sleepy fits, Cant. 5:2, but though blacked and sullied, yet she is still a dove; Christ could see the faith, and wink at the failing. He who painted Alexander, drew him with his finger over the scar on his face. Just so, Christ puts the finger of mercy upon the scars of the saints! He will not throw away his pearls for every speck of dirt! That which makes this love of Christ the more stupendous, is that 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 engraved upon Christ's heart, which cannot be erased out. Meditate much upon the love of Christ.

1. Serious meditation on the love of Christ, would make us love him in return. "Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" Proverbs 6:28. Who can tread by meditation upon these hot coals of Christ's love, and his heart not burn in love to him?

2. Meditation on Christ's love, would set our eyes abroad with tears for our gospel unkindnesses. O that we should sin against so sweet a Savior! had we none to abuse--but our best friend? Had we nothing to

kick against--but affections of 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? O, if anything can dissolve the heart into mourning, it is the unkindness offered to Christ. When Peter thought of Christ's love to him--Christ could deny Peter nothing, yet he could deny Christ, this made his eyes to water; "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

3. Meditation on 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 burned where there was no fit matter to work upon--nothing but sin and enmity. He loved his enemies; the fire of his love consumed and licked up the water of their sins! He prayed for his enemies, "Father forgive them;" he shed his tears--for those who shed his blood! Those who gave him gall and vinegar to drink--to them he gave his sin-forgiving blood to drink. Meditation on his love--should melt our hearts in love to our enemies. Augustine says, "Christ made a pulpit of the cross, and the great lesson he taught Christians was, to love their enemies."

4. Meditation on 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, it will make us wait with patience until he sweetly manifests himself to us. He is love, and he cannot forsake his people very long, Micah 7:19. The sun may be gone a while from our climate--but it returns in the spring. Meditation on Christ's love may make us wait for the return of this Sun of Righteousness; Heb. 10:37, "For yet a little while and he who shall come will come." He is truth, therefore he shall come; he is love, therefore he will come.

Section 4. Meditate upon SIN.

1. Meditate on the GUILT of sin. We are in Adam as in a common head, or root--and he sinning, we become guilty, Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." By his treason--our blood is tainted. This guilt brings shame with it, as its twin! Romans 6:21.

2. Meditate upon the FILTH 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! If the heart is spotted--how then can the actions be pure? If the water in the well is foul--it cannot be clean in the bucket! Isaiah 64:6, "We are all as an unclean thing." We are like a patient under the physician's care--who has no sound part in him, his head is bruised, his liver is swelled, his lungs are gasping, his blood is infected, his feet are gangrened. Thus is it with us before saving grace comes! In the mind there is darkness! In the memory there is slipperiness! In the heart there is hardness! In the will there is stubbornness! "You are sick from head to foot--covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds--without any ointments or bandages!" Isaiah 1:6. A sinner befilitied with sin, is no better than a devil in man's shape!

And which is sadly to be laid to heart--is the adherency of this sin. Sin is natural to us. The apostle calls it, "the sin that so easily ensnares us!" Heb. 12:1. Sin is not easily cast off. A man may as well shake off the skin of his body--as the sin of his soul! There is no shaking off this viper until death!

Oh, 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 of which poisoned all mankind! Meditate sadly on this. Meditation on sin would make the plumes of pride fall off! If our knowledge makes

us proud--that is sin enough to make us humble. The best saint alive who is taken out of the grave of sin--yet has the smell of the grave-clothes still upon him!

3. Meditate upon the CURSE of sin. Gal. 3:10. "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." This curse is like a deadly canker upon fruit, which keeps it from thriving. Sin is not only a defiling thing--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 writes all his laws in blood. Sin binds us over to the wrath of God! What then, are all our earthly enjoyments--with the sword of divine vengeance hanging over our head! Sin brings forth the "scroll written with curses" against a sinner, Zech. 5:5, and it is a "flying scroll"--it comes swiftly--if mercy does not stop it. "You are cursed with a curse!" Mat. 3:9. Thus it is until the head of this curse is cut off by Christ. Oh meditate upon this curse due to sin.

1. Meditation on this curse would make us afraid of retaining sin. When Micah had stolen his mother's money, and heard her curse him, he dared not keep it any longer, but restored it, Judg. 17:2. He was afraid of his mother's curse; what then is God's curse!

2. Meditation on this curse would make us afraid of entertaining sin. We would not willingly entertain one in our house who had a deadly plague! Sin brings along with it, the plague of God's curse, which cleaves to a sinner. Meditation on this, would make us fly from sin! While we sit under the shadow of this bramble of sin--fire will come out of the bramble eternally to devour us! Judg. 9:15.

Section 5. Meditate upon the Vanity of the CREATURE.

When you have sifted out the finest flour that the creature can give, you will find something either to dissatisfy or nauseate. The best wine has its froth, the sweetest rose has its prickles, and the purest comforts have their dregs. The creature cannot be said to be full--unless we say that it is full of vanity; as a sail may be filled with wind. Job 20:22, "At the height of his success distress will come to him; the full weight of misery will crush him." Those who think to find happiness here on earth, are like Apollo who embraced a tree, instead of the lovely Daphne. Meditate on this vanity of the creature. The world is like a broken looking glass--which shows a false beauty.

1. Meditation on worldly 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 the love of earthly things. Let a Christian think thus with himself, "Why am I so serious about such a worthless vanity? if the whole earth were changed into a globe of gold, it could not fill my heart!"

2. Meditation on the creature's vanity would make us look after more solid comforts--the favor of God, the blood of Christ, the influences of the Spirit. When I see that the life which I fetch from the cistern is vain--I will go the more to the ocean! In Christ there is an inexhaustible treasury! When a man finds the bough begin to break, he lets go of the bough, and catches hold on the trunk of the tree. Just 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 shaking reed, God is the immoveable rock of ages!

Section 6. Meditate on the Excellency of GRACE.

1. Grace is precious in itself. 2. Pet. 1:1, precious faith.

1. Grace is precious, in its original, it comes from above, James 3:17.

2. Grace is precious, in its nature; it is the seed of God, 1 John 3:9. Grace is the spiritual embroidery of the soul; it is the very signature and engraving of the Holy Spirit. Grace does not lose its color: it is such a commodity, that the longer we keep it, the better it is--it changes into glory!

2. As grace is precious in itself, so it makes us precious to God; as a rich diamond adorns the one who wears it. Isaiah 43:4, 'Since you were precious in my sight.' 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 chaff. 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. So illustrious in God's eye is a soul bespangled with grace, that he does not think the world worthy of him, Heb. 11:38, "Of whom the world was not worthy." Therefore God calls his people home so fast, because they are too good to live in the world, Proverbs 2:26, "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor."

Grace is the best blessing; it has a transcendancy above all other things. There are two things which sparkle much in our eyes--but grace infinitely outshines both.

1. GOLD. The sun does not shine so much 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 does but enrich the mortal part, grace the angelic part. Gold perishes, 1 Pet. 1:7, grace perseveres. The rose, the fuller it is blown, the sooner it sheds--is an emblem of all things, besides grace.

2. GIFTS. These are nature's pride. Gifts and abilities, like Rachel, are fair to look upon--but grace excels. I had rather be holy than eloquent. An heart full of grace, is better than an head full of notions. Gifts commend no man to God. It is not the skin of the apple we esteem, though of a vermilion color--but the fruit. We judge not the better of a horse for his trappings and ornaments, unless he has good mettle. What are the most glorious abilities, if there is not the metal of grace in the heart? Gifts may be bestowed upon one for the good of others, as the nurse's breasts are given her for the child--but grace is bestowed for a man's own eternal advantage. God may send away reprobates with gifts, as Abraham gave the sons of the concubines some gifts, Gen. 25:6--but he entails the inheritance only upon grace. O, often meditate upon the excellency of grace!

1. The musing on the beauty of grace would make us fall in LOVE with it. He who 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, Judg. 9:13, "cheers the heart of God and man."

2. Meditation on the excellency of grace would make us earnest in the PURSUIT after it. We dig for gold in the mine, we sweat for it in the furnace. Did we meditate on the worth of grace, we would dig in the mine of ordinances for it. What sweating and wrestling in prayer would we have! We would put on a modest boldness, and not take a denial. "What will you give me (says Abraham) seeing I go childless?" Gen. 15:2. So would the soul say, "Lord, what will you give me, seeing I go graceless? Who will give me to drink of the water of the well of life?"

3. Meditation on the excellency of grace would make us endeavor to be instrumental to CONVEY grace to others. Is grace so transcendently precious, and have I a child who lacks grace? Oh 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 rejoices 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 rejoices me that I shall leave you gracious; it comforts me that before I die, I shall see Jesus Christ live in you."

Section 7. Meditate upon your SPIRITUAL STATE.

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 your flock," Proverbs 27:23, much more know the state of your soul; for lack of this meditation, men are like travelers, 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 state or bad; there are few who by holy meditation, enter within themselves. There are two reasons why so few meditate upon the state of their souls.

1. Self-guiltiness. Men are reluctant 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 reluctant; to look into their account books, lest they should find their estate low; but had you not better enter into your heart by meditation, than God should in a sad manner enter into judgment with you?

2. 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; Proverbs 14:16. They presume that it is a thing not to be disputed on, 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"--they doubted not of admittance. Just so, many do not possess salvation--but remain secure; they presume all is well, never seriously meditating whether they have oil or not. O Christian, meditate about your soul! See how the case stands between God and you; do as merchants, cast up your estate, that you may see what you are worth. See if you are rich towards God, Luke 12:21. Meditate about three things:

1. About your debts, see if your debts are paid or not, that is, your sins pardoned; see if there be no arrears, no sin in your soul unrepented of.

2. Meditate about your will; see if your will is made yet. Have you resigned up all the interest in yourself? Have you given up your love to God? Have you given up your will? This is to make your will. Meditate about your will; make your spiritual will in the time of health; if you put off the making of your will until death, it may be invalid; perhaps God will not accept of your soul then.

3. Meditate about your evidences. These evidences are the graces of the Spirit; see whether you have any evidences. What desires have you after Christ? what faith? see whether there are any flaws in your evidences; are your desires true? do you 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 can be prevented. If our spiritual estate is 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 you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight," Isaiah 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 have passed from death to

life," I John 3:14, and as a holy man once said, "I am Christ's, and the devil has nothing to do with me."

Section 8. Meditate upon the small number of those who shall be saved.

The eighth subject of meditation is, the small number that shall be saved; "but few are chosen," Mat. 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. One said, all the names of the good emperors might be engraved in a little ring. There are not many names in the book of life. We read of four kinds of ground in the parable, and but one good ground, Matt. 13. How few in the world know Christ. How few that believe in him? Who has believed our report? Isaiah 53:1. How few bow to Christ's scepter. The heathen idolaters and Mahometans possess almost all Asia, Africa, America; in many parts of the world the devil is worshiped, as among the Parthians and Pilapians; Satan takes up most climates--and hearts. How many formalists are in the world? 2 Tim. 3:5, "having a form of godliness." Formalists are like wool which receives a slight tincture, not a deep dye, whose religion is a paint--not an engraving, (which a storm of persecution will wash off). 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 those who shall be saved.

1. Meditation on this, would keep us from marching along with the multitude. "You shall not follow a multitude," Exod. 23:2. The multitude usually goes wrong: most men walk "after the course of this 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. Meditation on this would make us turn out of the common road.

2. Meditation on the fewness of those who 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 reverential fear, the eminent saints of God have had. Augustine says of himself, he knocked at heaven's gate with a trembling hand. This fear is joined with hope, Psalm 147:1. "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy." A child of God fears, because the gate is strait; but hopes, because the gate is open.

3. Meditation on the fewness of those who shall be saved, would be a whetstone to holy 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.

Section 9. Meditate upon Final APOSTASY.

Think what a sad thing it is to begin in religion to build, and not be able to finish. Joash was good while his uncle Jehoiada lived--but after he died, Joash grew wicked--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, Heb. 6:4-6. "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance." A man may be enlightened, and that from a double lamp--the Word and Spirit; but these beams, though they are irradiating, yet not penetrating. It is possible he may have a taste of the heavenly gift; he may taste 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 you have forsaken the Lord," Jer. 2:19. Meditate upon final relapses.

1. Meditation on this would make us earnest in prayer to God--for soundness of heart, "Make my heart sound in your statutes," Psalm 119:80. Lord, let me not be an almost Christian. Work a thorough work of grace upon me: though I am not washed perfectly, let me be washed thoroughly, Psalm 51:2. That which begins in hypocrisy, ends in apostasy!

2. Meditation on hypocrites final falling away, would make us earnest in prayer for perseverance. "Hold up my goings in your paths that my footsteps slip not," Psalm 17:5. "Lord, hold me up that I may hold out. You have 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--let it be ours, "Lord perfect what you have begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven."

Section 10. Meditate upon DEATH.

We say we must all die--but how rare it is--that anyone meditates seriously upon death?

1. Meditate on the certainty of death; it is appointed for all, once to die, Heb. 9:27. Death is an inviolable reality.

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 flies--and carries us upon its wings. The race is short between the cradle and the grave! The sentence of death is already passed, Gen. 3:19. "To dust you shall return;" so that our life is but a short reprieve from death which is granted to a condemned man. "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath." Psalm 39:5. Nay, our life is less than nothing, reckoned with eternity.

3. Meditate upon the uncertainty of 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 dug before night. Today we may lie upon a pillow of down, tomorrow we may be laid upon a pillow of dust. Today the sermon-bell tolls, to morrow our death bell may toll.

4. Think seriously, that to die is to be but once done, and after death our state is eternally fixed. If you die in your impenitency, there is no repenting in the grave. If you leave your work at death half done, there is no finishing it in the grave, Eccl. 9:10, "There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave where you go." If a garrison surrenders at the first summons, there is mercy. But if it battles until it is stormed and captured, 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 battle with God until he storms us by death--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 house-hold stuff he brought to Babylon, was a tomb-stone; think often of your tomb-stone. Meditation on death would work these admirable effects.

1. Meditation on death would pull down the plumes of pride; you are but animated dust! Shall dust and ashes be proud? Your body will be turned into grass--and shall shortly be mowed down!

2. Meditation on death would be a means to give a death-wound to sin. No stronger antidote against sin, says Augustine, than the frequent meditation on death. Am I now sinning--and tomorrow I 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 book always about you, and when sin tempts, pull out this book, and read in it--and you shall see sin will vanish. We should look upon sin in two looking-glasses--the glass of Christ's blood, and the glass of death.

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

4. Meditation on death would make us use time better, and crowd up much work in a little space. Many meet in taverns to trifle away time; the apostle bids us redeem time. "Redeeming the time." Our lives 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 is grown up. To live and not be serviceable, is not life--but wasting life.

5. Meditation on death 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 honor must be laid in the dust--but death cannot plunder us of our graces. The commonwealth of Venice, in their armory, have this inscription, "happy is he who in time of peace, thinks of war." He who often meditates of death--will make the best preparation for it.

Section 11. Meditate on the Day of JUDGMENT.

Feathers float upon the water--but gold sinks in it. Just so, light feathery professors float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment--but serious spirits sink deep into the meditation on it. Most men put far away from them, the evil day, Amos 3:6. They report of the Italians, that in a great thunder they use to ring the bells--that the sound of their bells may drown the noise of the thunder. Just so, the devil delights men with the music of the world, that the noise should drown the noise of the day of judgment, and make them forget the sound of the last trumpet. Most men are guilty, therefore they do not love to hear of the day of judgment. When Paul preached of judgment, Felix trembled, he had a bad conscience. Josephus tells us of Felix, that he was a wicked man--the woman that lived with him (Drusilla) he enticed away from her husband, and when he heard of judgment, he fell a trembling. Oh 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 fare on the day of judgment.

1. Meditation on the day of judgment would make us to evaluate all our actions; Christ will come with his fan and his sieve. "Will this action of mine, bide the test at that great day.

2. Meditation on the last day would make us labor to approve our hearts to God--the great judge 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 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 astrologers. Give me permission 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.

Section 12. Meditate upon HELL.

1. Meditate upon the pain of loss, Matt. 25:10, "and the door was shut." 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 accentuates and embitters the condition of the damned. It is like mingling gall with wormwood.

2. Meditate upon the pain of sense. Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." And here meditate of 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. The FIRE. Rev. 20:15. It is called a lake of burning fire. Augustine, 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--which is but painted fire compared to hell-fire. I wish none of us may experience what kind of fire it is! 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 knows the power of your anger?" Psalm 90:11.

But it may be objected, if there is 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 silences all disputes. If God by his infinite power could make the fire not to consume the three Hebrew children; cannot he make the fire of hell burn and not consume? Augustine 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 Titus' liver was gnawed by two vultures in hell. This never-dying worm 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 fare (as Latimer says) where weeping is served for the first course, and gnashing of teeth for the second. To endure this hell will be intolerable, to escape it will be impossible!

2. Meditate of the COMPANY in hell--the devil and his demons, 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 and hopeless, is the condition of the damned! The ancients feign of Endymion, that he got permission from Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for such a license! In their pains is neither intermission, nor mitigation.

1. The serious meditation on hell, would make us fear sin as hell. Sin is hell's fuel! Sin like Samson's foxes, carries devouring fire in its tail.

2. Meditation on hell would cause rejoicing in a child of God. The saint's fear of hell is like the two Marys' fear, Matt. 28:8, "They departed from the sepulcher with fear and great joy." A believer may fear to think of the place of torment--but rejoice to think he shall never come into that place. When a man stands upon a high rock, he trembles to look down into the sea, yet he rejoices that he is not there struggling with the waves. A child of God, when he thinks of hell, he rejoices with trembling. A prison is not made for the king's son to be put in. A great naturalist observes that nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; but I am sure of this--the salt brinish tears of repentance, and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell to a believer. Christ himself has 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 those who are in Christ!" Romans 8:1. When the Son of God was in the furnace, Dan. 3:25, the fire did no hurt the three children. Just 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.

Section 13. 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 has taken possession of heaven in the name of all believers, Heb. 6:20, "Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf." Heaven must needs be a glorious city, which has God both for its builder and inhabitant. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of all blessedness. There the saints shall have all their holy hearts can desire. Augustine 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," Isaiah 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 are now at your hard labor, perhaps following the plough--you shall sit on the throne of glory! Rev. 3:21. Quintus Curtius writes of one who was digging in his garden, and was suddenly made king, and a purple garment richly embroidered with gold put upon him. Just so shall it be done to the poorest believer--he shall be taken from his laboring work, and set at the right hand of God, having the crown of righteousness upon his head!

Meditate often on the Jerusalem above.

1. Meditation on heaven would excite and quicken OBEDIENCE. It would put spurs to our sluggish hearts, and make us "abound in the work of God, knowing that our labor 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 which can look on 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 in heaven will make us forget all our sorrows! The sun dries up the water; just so--one beam of God's glorious face will dry up all our tears.

Section 14. Meditate on ETERNITY.

Millions of years stand only for ciphers in eternity, and signify nothing. What an amazing word is eternity! Eternity to the godly--is a day which has no sun-setting! Eternity to the wicked--is a night which has no sun-rising! Eternity is a gulf which may swallow up all our thoughts: Meditate on that scripture, "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life." Matthew 25:46.

1. Meditate upon eternal PUNISHMENT. The bitter cup the damned drink of, 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 forever breaks the heart! If the tree falls hell-ward--there it lies to all eternity! Now is the time of God's long-suffering, after death will be the time of the sinner's long-suffering, when he shall "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire!" Jude 7.

2. Meditate upon eternal LIFE. The soul that is once landed at the heavenly shore, is past all storms. The glorified soul shall be forever bathing itself in the rivers of pleasure. "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Psalms 16:11. This is what makes heaven to be heaven--"We shall be forever with the Lord!" 1 Thess. 4:17. Augustine says, "Lord, I am content to suffer any pains and torments in this world--if I might see your face one day. But alas, were it only a day, then to be ejected from heaven--it would rather be an aggravation of misery!" But this word, "forever with the Lord," makes up the garland of glory! A state of eternity, is a state of security.

1. Meditation on eternity, would make us very SERIOUS in what we do. Zeuxes being asked, why he took so long to paint a picture, answered, "I paint for eternity." The thoughts of an irreversible condition after this life, would make us pray and live as for eternity.

2. Meditation on eternity, would make us overlook present WORLDLY things--as flitting and fading. What is this present world, to him who has eternity in his eye? it is but nothing. He who thinks of eternity will despise "the passing pleasures of sin."

3. Meditation on eternity would be a means to keep us from envying the wicked's prosperity. Here the wicked may be "dressed in purple and fine linen, and live in luxury every day." But what is this, compared to eternity? As long as there is such a thing as eternity, God has time enough to reckon with all his enemies!

Section 15. Meditate upon your EXPERIENCES.

The last subject of meditation is your experiences. Look over your receipts:

1. Has not God provided liberally for you, and given you those spiritual mercies, which he has denied to others who are better than you? Here is an experience, Gen: 48:15. "The God who has fed me all my days." You never eat--but mercy carves for you. You never go to bed--but mercy draws the curtain, and sets a guard of angels about you. Whatever you have, is out of the treasury of free grace! Here is an experience to meditate upon.

2. Has not God prevented many dangers--has he not kept watch and ward about you?

1. What temporal dangers has God screened off? Your neighbor's house on fire--but it has not kindled in your dwellings. Another is infected with the plague--but you are healthy. Behold the golden feathers of protection covering you!

2. What spiritual dangers has God prevented? when others have been poisoned with error, you have been preserved. God has sounded a retreat to you; you have heard "a voice behind you saying--This is the way, walk in it!" When you had enlisted yourself, and taken pay on the devil's side--yet God has "plucked you as a brand out of the fire," turned your heart, and now you espouse Christ's quarrel against sin. Behold preventing grace! Here is an experience to meditate upon.

3. Has not God spared you a long time? Why is it, that others are struck dead in the act of sin--as Ananias and Sapphira--and you are preserved as a monument of God's patience?

Here is an experience: God has done more for you than for the fallen angels; he never granted them repentance--but he has waited for you year after year, Isaiah 30:18. Therefore "will the Lord wait that he may be gracious." He has not only knocked at your heart in the ministry of the word--but he has waited at the door. How long has his Spirit striven with you; like an importunate suitor, who after many denials, yet will not

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-watson/a-treatise-concerning-meditation/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net