

and never sell it for a mess of pottage: "For ye are come unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." And thus now I have done with the fourth argument, and with this text.

Think on these things, and the Lord bless them to you.

SERMON VII.

THE SWEETNESS AND PROFITABLENESS OF DIVINE MEDITATION.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet."—Psalm civ. 34.

THE psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving, wherein the psalmist doth call upon and provoke himself to praise the Lord, upon the account of his greatness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty," verse 1.

Which greatness of God is illustrated by the work of creation and preservation.

By the work of creation, from the 2nd verse unto the 25th.

By the work of preservation, from the 25th unto the 33rd.

Having called upon himself thus to praise the Lord, he resolves to do it: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being."

And, saith he, "My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord."

"My meditation of him shall be sweet."

Take the words as they lie in themselves. and you have this doctrine presently:

That it is a sweet thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God. Meditation work is sweet work. A gracious soul doth find sweetness in meditating on God. David was a gracious man, and he found sweetness in this work of meditation on God. It is the property then of a gracious soul, to find sweetness in meditating on God.

For the opening and prosecuting of which argument:

First, We will inquire what this meditation is; what is the true nature and notion of meditation.

Secondly, How and in what respects a man may be said to meditate on God.

Thirdly, How it may appear, that it is a sweet thing to meditate on God and the things of God.

Fourthly, I shall answer unto some objections.

Fifthly, And then show how the work of meditation is to be carried on with sweetness; which is my design in the choice of these words.

First, As for what the work of meditation is, what is the true notion of it; it is several ways expressed in Scripture.

Sometimes it is called, a remembering of God. In Psalm lxiii., "When I remember thee upon my bed," which is explained by that which follows, "And meditate on thee in the night watches."

Sometimes it is called, a thinking on God. So in Psalm xlviii. 9, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God."

And sometimes it is called a musing on God. And so in Psalm cxliii., "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands." Thus it is severally expressed in Scripture.

Great authors do describe it several ways.

It is a vehement application of the soul unto a thing, for the investigation and experimental knowledge thereof. So Gerson and others.

It is a studious action of the mind, whereby a man labours to find out some hidden truth. So Austin.

It is the exercise of a man's soul, whereby calling to remembrance what he doth know already, he doth further think on it, and debate on it within himself, for his own profit and benefit. So Mr. Greenham.

But plainly and briefly thus:

It is the vehement or intense application of the soul unto some thing, whereby a man's mind doth ponder, dwell and fix upon it, for his own profit and benefit.

There must be the application of the soul to some thing; and therefore sometimes it is expressed by laying of a thing to heart: "The righteous are taken away, and no man lays it to heart;" no man considers on it. "If ye will not lay these things to heart," &c. Mal. ii. 2.

And as there must be an application, so there must be a vehement and intense application of the soul unto a thing,

for every consideration does not make meditation : consideration heightened makes meditation.

Meditation is the work of the whole soul. The mind acts, and the memory acts, and the affections act. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart:" it is an intense and a vehement application of the soul unto truth.

But there must be also a fixation of the soul upon the thing. It is not every slight and transient thought that makes meditation : "My meditation shall be of thee all the day," Psalm cxix. It is *Actio cunctabunda*, saith Alvares. A man may think on God every day, and meditate on God no day. There must be a fixation of the soul upon some truth ; a dwelling and fixing of the soul upon some thing.

But then this must be in reference to one's own profit and benefit. Though I do think, and think much of sin, if I do not think thereof to leave it, it is not meditation. Though I think on the life and the death of Christ, if it be not to conform unto him, these thoughts will not amount to meditation. Though I think on the love and goodness of God, yet if it be not to get my heart inflamed with love thereby, it will not amount to meditation.

Plainly, then, meditation, for the true nature and the notion of it, is a vehement, an intense application of the soul unto a thing, whereby a man's mind doth dwell and insist and abide upon it for his profit and benefit. That is the first.

Secondly. But, then, how and in what respects may a man be said to meditate on God ?

Why look when a man doth meditate on the name, nature, titles and attributes of God, then he is said to meditate on God.

On the nature of God. So in the lxxiiird Psalm : "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

And look when a man doth meditate on Christ the Son of God, then he is said for to meditate on God, for Christ is God ; and therefore saith the apostle, "Consider the High Priest of your profession, looking unto Jesus."

And look when a man doth meditate on the word of God, the law and statutes of God, then he is said to meditate on God. Psalm i., "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate."

And look when a man doth meditate on the works and concernments of God, then, in scripture phrase, he is said to meditate on God. And so in the lxxviiith Psalm: "I will remember the works of the Lord; I will remember thy wonders, and I will meditate also of all thy works." So that, briefly, then a man is said to meditate on God, not only when he doth meditate on the nature of God, but when he doth meditate on the Son of God, meditate on the word of God, meditate on the works and concernments of God. And that is the second.

Thirdly. But how may it appear that it is a sweet thing to meditate on God; that meditation work is sweet work, and that it is a sweet thing to a gracious soul to meditate on God?

Something first in the general and then more particularly in reference to a gracious soul. In general,

It is a sweet thing to meditate on God. Will you instance in the nature, name and attributes of God?

Is it not a sweet thing to enjoy God? Enjoyment of God is the life of our lives. And how do we enjoy God? God doth come down to us, and we do ascend and go up to him. Sometimes God doth come down into our souls; sometimes there is an ascent of the soul unto God. And what is the ladder whereby we ascend unto God, and take our turns in heaven with God, but believing meditation?

The more perfect any thing is, the more sweet it is to lay out one's thought thereon. Now God is all perfection, there is nothing not perfect in God. If you have a nosegay made up of flowers, and but one weed, the sweetness of the nosegay is spoiled; there are perfections in God, and no weeds among them. If there be a musical instrument, and one string out of order, all jars; there is no string out of order among God's perfections; perfections and nothing not perfect in God. You account it a sweet thing to see your lands and your estates lie together, a sweet thing to see all your children together; do but look and meditate on God, and you see all your wealth lie together.

And if the names, titles, attributes of God be your relief in all conditions; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God, in this respect. Why now; "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous fly thereunto and

are safe." A sweet thing it is therefore to meditate on God in this respect.

Will you instance in the meditating on Christ the Son of God? You know what is said by the spouse in the Canticles: "I sat under his shadow:" sat down, how? It is meditation sets the soul down under the shadow of Christ. And then his fruit, whether justification be the fruit, or sanctification, or consolation; then his fruit was sweet unto my taste.

And if Jesus Christ be our standing relief against all temptations, and desertions; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate and think much on him. Now he is our brazen serpent, our standing relief against all our temptations, and our desertions.

But will you instance in meditating on the word of God? It is a sweet thing to behold the light; and the word is a light, and a lanthorn unto our feet. Is it not a sweet thing to taste honey? David saith, "The word of the Lord was as honey and the honey comb." And the more it is meditated on, the more fully tasted.

And if the consideration, and the meditation of the word of God be our great relief against all the scorns and reproaches, and oppositions of the world, then certainly it is a sweet thing to meditate on the word of God. Now do but look into Ps. cxix., and you shall find David speaking thus; "Remove from me reproach and contempt; princes did sit and speak against me." What relief had he? "But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Here is his relief, princes, great men; they sate and spake against me, and they reproached me, and they opposed me, but here was my relief, I did meditate in thy word.

But will you instance in the works of the Lord? There are three sorts of God's works.

There is the work of creation.

And the work of providence.

And the work of redemption.

As for the work of creation: if it be a sweet thing to behold and to consider the workmanship of the finger of human wisdom: what a pleasure and sweetness is it to behold the workmanship of the finger of infinite wisdom?

And as for the works of providence: if the meditation and

the consideration of the providence of God be our great help against the pain of unbelieving thoughts; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God in this respect. Friends, ye that know God, have experienced how painful unbelieving thoughts are; great is the pain of unbelieving thoughts. Well, but what help against this pain? The consideration of the providence of God: saith our Saviour in Matt. x. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered, fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." What then, "take no thought," here lies your relief. The consideration, and the meditation of the special providence of God, is your help against painful unbelief.

And as for the work of redemption, there all the attributes of God do meet: there is wisdom, there is power, there is mercy, there is righteousness, there is faithfulness: and if it be a sweet thing to behold the beams of the sun, what a sweet thing is it to behold all the beams of God's glorious attributes, meeting in one work; which work the very angels desire to look into, where the glory of God is: certainly, it is a sweet thing then to meditate on God, in regard of his works; these things more generally.

But now more particularly, as to our case.

How may it appear, that it is a sweet thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God: it will appear to you by divers arguments.

It is a sweet thing for a good and gracious man to meditate on God and the things of God, because it is natural to him. Natural works are pleasant works. It is a tedious and an irksome thing to row against the stream of nature; but natural works are pleasing works. Now as it is a natural thing for a worldly man to think and meditate on the world, and the things thereof; so it is natural to a gracious man, to think and meditate on God and the things of God. I pray, what is the reason, that wicked men take so much delight in thinking and meditating and musing on their sins and sinful ways, but because sin is natural unto them. Why, a good man being made partaker of the divine nature, it is natural to him to think on God, and the ways and things of God; and therefore pleasant, therefore sweet.

But as it is natural to a gracious man to think on God, and the things of God, so it is suitable to him. As it is a

natural work, so it is a suitable work: suitable things are pleasant; the more suitable any thing is unto us, the more it pleaseth us, all pleasures and delights arise from the conjunction of suitables. If you have never so great an estate, if it be not suited to your heart, you have no delight in it. If you have never so small an estate, if it be suitable to your heart, you are delighted and pleased in it. Now, what in all the world, so suitable to a gracious soul as God? Is the object of man's understanding truth? God is truth. Is the object of his will good? God is good. Is the object of his affections love? God is love. Is the soul of a man immortal, immaterial? God is so, an immortal, and an immaterial being. Is the soul of a man eternal, a *parte post*? God is so, God is eternal and unchangeable. Are our desires infinite? God is infinite. What is there that the soul of man can want, but it is answered in God? A suitable good he is surely, therefore it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God, and the things of God.

But especially, as it is a suitable thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God, so it is profitable. Gain is sweet. Now it is a very gainful thing, and very profitable for to meditate on God, and the things of God: meditation work is gainful work.

For meditation is a great help to knowledge: the more you think and meditate on what you read and hear, the more you know; and though you read never so much and hear never so much, if you do not meditate on what you read or hear, it will amount to little, you will be never the wiser: if a man doth meditate, he proves the wiser. Mark what David saith, Ps. cxix., "I am wiser than mine enemies," verse 98. "I am wiser than my teachers, I am wiser than the ancients," verse 99. "Through thy commandments thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies." It may be so, they might be fools. But saith he, "I have more understanding than all my teachers." verse 99. Aye, but this teacher may be some young man, newly come to the university. I have more understanding than all my teachers. Aye, but, saith he, "I understand more than the ancients." Pray how? "For thy testimonies are my meditation. Through thy commandments, thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all

my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation," *Meditatio sapientiæ parens*, meditation is the parent of wisdom. If you read over a book, and there be many notions and good things in the book, yet if the notions be not made your own, if you be not master of the notions you read, you are never the better. If I read, and read, and find such and such notions in a book, if I be not master of those notions, I am little the better for my reading. It is meditation that makes you the master of the notions that you read, or that you hear, otherwise, it is but the book's notion still. By meditation after a sermon, a man may look further into a truth, than the preacher ever intended. Meditation is a great help to knowledge : that is the first.

As meditation is a great help to knowledge, so it is a great friend to memory. *Meditatio firmat memoriam*. Meditation strengthens memory ; it fastens the things that we hear or read in the memory. Many complain they have bad memories. Oh, their memories are very bad, they cannot remember ; what is the reason that we remember no more what we read and what we hear, but because we meditate no more upon what we have heard or read ? Meditation is a great help to memory.

As meditation is a great help to memory, so it is a heart warming work, a friend to warmth of heart. If a thing be cold, you chafe it, if a man's body be cold, you chafe it and rub it ; and by chafing and rubbing of a cold part, you put life and warmth into it ; meditation chafes the soul, and rubs the soul with a truth. And what is the reason that our hearts are no warmer by what we read, or hear, or observe, but because we meditate no more on it. Meditation is a heart warming work.

As it is a heart warming work, so it is that which will keep your hearts and souls from sinful thoughts. When the vessel is full you can put in no more. If the vessel be full of puddle water, you cannot put in wine ; if the vessel be full of wine you cannot put in puddle water. If the heart be full of sinful thoughts, here is no room for holy and heavenly thoughts ; if the heart be filled with holy and heavenly thoughts by meditation, there is no room for evil and sinful thoughts. And what is the reason that men's hearts are so full of sinful and evil thoughts, but because their

hearts are no more full of God; they think no more, they meditate no more of God. Thereby, I say, you will be kept from sinful thoughts.

As it will keep you from sinful thoughts, so it will fit and tune your hearts for every duty. For prayer, for thanksgiving, for holy conference and communication of good things to others.

For prayer, it is *Orationis Mater*, &c.

As it is the sister of reading, so it is the mother of prayer. Though a man's heart be much indisposed to prayer, yet, if he can but fall into a meditation of God, and the things of God, his heart will soon come off to prayer. Meditation lies so near unto prayer, that in the Hebrew, the word that signifies to pray, signifies to meditate. And therefore you shall observe, that whereas in some books it is said that "Isaac went out to pray," in other books it is said that "Isaac went out to meditate." Meditation is a friend to prayer.

And it is a friend to thanksgiving; and therefore saith the Psalmist here in the text, "I will sing praise unto my God, my meditation of him shall be sweet;" they go together.

And it is a great help unto holy conference, which I am afraid is too much wanting among us. Private meditation on God and the things of God, is a great help unto holy conference. Psa. xlv. 1: "My heart is inditing a good matter." What then? "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." When? When the heart hath been at work in meditation, Psa. lxxvii. 12: "I will meditate also on all thy works." What then? "and talk of thy doings." See how conference comes in: "I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of all thy doings." So that thus then, meditation will fit and prepare you, and tune your hearts to prayer, thanksgiving, holy conference, and other duties.

As meditation is a great friend to prayer and to other duties, so it is a help unto growth in grace, and the knowledge of Christ.

A help to grow: the more we meditate on what we read and hear, the more we grow. And what is the reason that men grow no more after all that they have heard and read, but because they meditate no more. The best scholar reads

and meditates, and meditates and reads. And the best christian reads and meditates, and hears and meditates. The growing christian doth. Suppose now you have a load of dung or marl to lay upon the ground, you lay it upon the ground to make it fat and fruitful; but if it be laid upon the ground and not spread, will it make the grass or the corn grow? No, it will hinder the growth of the grass; the spreading of it makes the grass grow. So now, come and lay down a load of truth upon a poor soul, and let it lie unspread, it rather hinders his growth; but the hand of meditation spreads it. And, I say, What is the reason that men grow no more, but because it may be sermons, or truths, like loads, are laid down upon the soul, but no spreading by the hand of meditation.

As meditation work is a great friend to growth in grace, so thereby also your hearts shall be kept savoury and spiritual in the midst of all your outward and worldly employments. Oh, saith one, that my heart were but more savoury and spiritual in all my outward employments, and in my calling. Why meditation carries a still up and down in the soul, whereby it doth extract and distil the virtue and the juice of all the leaves of Providence, that it meets with in the calling. You see how it is with a cow, or with a sheep, though the grass that the cow or the sheep eats be green; yet by concoction and digesting of it, it turns white, and turns into milk; so now, though that which you read, that which you meet withal in your callings be but ordinarily as the common grass, yet if you can digest it, it will be milk unto you. And how are these things digested but by meditation?

Friends, thereby you steal out of your calling to get unto God.

Thereby your hearts are perfumed as you walk along in your calling and in your place.

This is that that will keep your hearts savoury and spiritual in all your outward and worldly employments.

Thereby also you shall fill up all the chinks and crevices of your lives and spend your spare times for God. There is no man but hath his spare times, more or less; some more, some less, but all have their spare times. That, look as it is with a book, all books have their margins, some books

have a greater margin, some a lesser and a narrower margin, but all books have their margins; so all men have their margins, their spare times; some have a greater margin, and more time to spare than others, some have a lesser and a narrower margin, and less spare time than others. But all men have their margins and their spare times. Some men know not what to do with their spare time, therefore they call in for dice, and call in for cards, and call in for vanity. Some when they are out of employment, they dare not be alone. Have but the skill of meditation to meditate on God and the things of God, and you will never be afraid to be alone; your margins will be all filled up, all the chinks and crevices of your lives shall be all filled up with God. Therefore, oh, what a profitable thing is this work of meditation.

Thereby you shall be also able to draw good out of evil, there is the philosopher's stone. What a great ado hath there been in the world about the philosopher's stone, to get that. Why? Because of the profit of it; thereby lead is turned into gold, and other metals turned into gold. But here is the philosopher's stone indeed; meditation will turn all into gold; turn evils into good, bring good out of evil, grace out of sin. There is a deal of dirt lies at your door, and there is no flowers grow out of it; but bring the same dirt into your garden, and then flowers grow out of it. So now, if sin lie at your door, there are no flowers grow thereon; but bring your sin, your dirt into your garden of meditation, and you shall have flowers grow out of your dirt.

Thereby you shall converse with God and enjoy God. The happiness of our life lies in our enjoyment of God, and in our converse with God. There is a converse with God in this life, a *πολιτευμα* our conversation is in heaven, our trade is in heaven. And how do we come to trade in heaven? Why, we go up to God in meditation, and there we take our walks with the Almighty; thus we trade with God, thus we converse with God. Surely therefore, this work of meditation is sweet, for it is profitable, as you have heard in these particulars.

Again, As the work of meditation is very profitable, natural, suitable, so it is very contentful, and satisfying to a gracious soul. What person in love is not satisfied in thinking and meditating on the person loved? What gracious, loving

child is not satisfied in thinking on its father that is absent in another country? See what David saith in the lxiird Psalm: "My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness." When? "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." I shall not only be contented, but my soul shall be satisfied. How? In a way of meditation. It is meditation work that is soul-satisfying work.

And as it is a soul-satisfying work, so this work of meditation to a gracious soul is a most delightful work. What greater delight than to think on that God in whom he doth most delight? Is it delightful to a wicked man to sit and muse and meditate on his sinful ways; and will it not be delightful to a gracious soul to sit, and think, and muse, and meditate on the Lord? Certainly, it is a work that is most delightful to a gracious soul.

But how can it be so delightful; it is a hard work, meditation work is hard work, and therefore how can it be so delightful to a gracious soul?

Yes, very well, for though it be hard in regard of its practice, yet it may be sweet and delightful in regard of its profit. Is it not a hard work to the husbandman to plough, to sow, to reap; and yet delightful in regard of its profit? Is it not a hard work for a man to be digging in the mines, digging up of silver; and yet delightful in regard of the profit? Is it not a hard work for a man to make such ventures at sea, through all storms: and yet it is delightful in regard of its profit? the profit of the voyage makes it delightful. Why, you have heard now the profitableness of the work of meditation. It is an help to knowledge, thereby your knowledge is raised. Thereby your memory is strengthened. Thereby your hearts are warmed. Thereby you will be freed from sinful thoughts. Thereby your hearts will be tuned to every duty. Thereby you will grow in grace. Thereby you will fill up all the chinks and crevices of your lives, and know how to spend your spare time, and improve that for God. Thereby you will draw good out of evil. And thereby you will converse with God, have communion with God, and enjoy God. And I pray, is not here profit enough to sweeten the voyage of your thoughts in meditation.

But, hard work you say, and therefore how can it be delightful?

Friends, the harder the work is, the sweeter it is, being overcome: it is a sweet thing to overcome. It is a hard thing to fight, but it is a sweet thing to overcome. The harder the nut is to crack, the sweeter the meat when it is cracked; the harder the scripture is that is to be opened, the sweeter is the kernel, the truth when it is opened. When God opened the rock, the waters that flowed out were as sweet as honey. Now meditation makes a conquest of the work.

Though it be a hard thing to meditate on God and the things of God, yet notwithstanding do but consider why the work is hard, and you will say that the difficulty of the work is no impeachment to the suavity, or the sweetness thereof. There are two things that make meditation hard.

The one is, because men are not used thereunto, men are not exercised therein:

And another is, because they do not love God enough.

Every thing is hard at the first: writing is hard at the first, painting hard at the first, and the getting languages hard at the first. A trade is hard at the first. So certainly the work of meditation will be hard at the first. There is nothing not hard to those that are unwilling. There is nothing hard to those that love, love makes all things easy. Is it an hard thing for a lover to think or meditate on the person loved? Is it a hard thing for a child at a distance from his father to think or meditate on his father, and his father's love and kindness, is this hard? Indeed to a rebellious child it is hard, to a child that is run away from his father it is hard; but for a loving and an obedient child, it is not hard. And what is the reason that the work of meditation is so hard to many of us, but because in truth we are not used thereunto, or because we are rebellious children, and do not love the Lord as we ought to do.

But you will say, may not a wicked man meditate on God, and find sweetness in the work?

I answer, that it is possible that a wicked man may separate and sequester himself unto this work of reading, studying, and thinking on the word and law of God. 1 Sam. xxi. 7. "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord, and his name was Doeg." He was there separated, cloistered for the studying of the law, and yet a Doeg, a great persecutor. And who doth not

see it? Friars and monks separate and cloister up themselves at this very day, and spend much time in that which they call meditation.

Yea, possible it is, that a wicked man may not only think and meditate on the law of God, but he may find some sweetness therein; for if wicked men do delight in their approach unto God, as in Isaiah lviii. why may they not delight also and find a sweetness in their meditation concerning God?

But though a wicked man may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness in the work of meditation, yet with this difference. There is great deal of difference between the sweetness that a wicked man finds in the work of meditation, and the sweetness that a good man finds in the work of meditation. For though a wicked man may meditate, and find some sweetness in the work, yet notwithstanding the sweetness doth arise from the satisfaction of his natural conscience, than from the con-naturalness and suitableness that is between his heart and the work. Possibly a Doeg, a wicked man may be convinced that he ought to read the Scriptures, and to meditate therein, and having done so his conscience is satisfied, and he finds sweetness therein. But this sweetness doth rather arise from the satisfying of his natural conscience, than from any con-naturalness and suitableness that there is between his heart and the work.

It is one thing for a man to find a sweetness in this work of meditation in reference to his own employment, calling or livelihood; another thing for to find a sweetness in it in reference unto God, to his own practice, and holiness of life and conversation. Suppose I be a preacher: it is my duty to study the Scriptures: and studying of the Scripture I meditate, and when things come off well, I have a sweetness therein; yet all this may be in reference to my calling, to my employment, and to my livelihood. But now a gracious man he meditates on God and the things of God in reference to God, to his holiness and practice. Mark what David saith, Psalm cxix., "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes." "Lord, (saith he,) I love thy commandments:" and upon that account I meditate in thy commandments: and I do not only meditate, but "my hands

also will I lift up unto thy commandments." For practice, I will not only lay my eye to reading, I will not only lay my head to studying, but my *hands* also will I lift up unto thy commandments; to take hold on them, and to practise them. So that thus a gracious soul, as he meditates on God and the things of God, he finds a sweetness; so it is in reference unto God, and to his own practice and holiness in conversation.

But though a wicked man may meditate on God and the things of God, and find a sweetness in so doing; yet he doth also find as great, if not a greater sweetness in other things, and in meditating and musing upon his sins, and in the world, Job xx. 12., "Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth," as a sweet pellet; here is his great delight. Though he may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness there, his great delight is here, in his sin; and he finds rather, more delight and pleasure in musing on his sin and sinful course, and meditating on the world and the things thereof, than he finds in meditating on God and the things of God. But now a gracious man delights in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate: why, but doth he not also stand in the counsel of the ungodly? No, "he walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate." He standeth not in the way of sinners: possibly he may meet with sinners, and wicked men occasionally; but he doth not walk with them ordinarily, he doth not stand with them, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate.

But to say no more. Take a wicked man, and though he may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness therein, he doth not do this ordinarily, meditate ordinarily, and continually, "God is not in all his thoughts." God may be in some of his thoughts, but God is not in all his thoughts. But this meditation of God and the things of God is the ordinary work of a good man, he delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night. Meditation on God and the things of God is his ordinary work; so that thus now you see the difference, and

thus you see the doctrine cleared. It is a sweet thing to a gracious soul to meditate on God and the things of God; meditation work is sweet work to a gracious soul. Sweet, for it is natural; sweet, for it is suitable; sweet, for it is profitable; sweet, for it is satisfying; sweet, for it is delightful. And if these things be so,

What shall we say of those that never spent any time yet alone in meditating on God and the things of God? Never spent a day, never spent half a day, never spent an hour in private meditating on God and the things of God. Shall we say these are godly? Why, in the time of the Old Testament the beasts were unclean that did not chew the cud; in the New Testament it is made the property of the highway ground, that the seed falls upon it, and it is not covered over with meditation and consideration.

What, is it the property of a gracious soul to meditate on God, and doth he find so much sweetness in meditating on God and the things of God; and have I lived twenty years, have I lived thirty years, have I lived forty years, and never spent an hour yet in private in meditation on God and the things of God, how can I think I am godly?

If this doctrine be true, that a gracious, holy man finds a sweetness in meditating on God, and meditation work is sweet work to a gracious soul, then, friends, why should you not all labour to be found here, in this work of meditation? I fear we are strangers hereunto; many come and hear sermons, and write sermons one time after another, and afterwards they stand up upon dusty shelves, and are never meditated on. But is this true, that a gracious man finds so much sweetness in the work of meditation, and that it is so profitable a work; why should we not all labour to be found herein?

You will say then unto me, Meditation is a sweet work we confess, and very profitable; but what should I do that I may be able to carry on this work of meditation with sweetness? I have found it hard sometimes, and after I have begun it I threw it off. Sometimes I have thought that the work of meditation is incumbent only upon preachers, but I see it is sweet, and profitable, and good for every one. What shall I do then that I may be able to carry on this work of meditation with sweetness?

That I shall speak to more largely. Only for the present give me leave to say something to it by way of premises; I will only speak to four cases and so conclude this exercise.

Would you meditate on God and the things of God with sweetness? In case that you would meditate on the nature and attributes of God, be sure that you divide your thoughts, for variety is most refreshing. All the attributes of God are worthy of our thoughts; do not therefore stand poring on one excellency, or upon one attribute; but when you are most fearful, put your thoughts upon that in God which is most cheerful; when you are most cheerful, put your thoughts upon that in God which is most dreadful; evermore divide your thoughts if you be to meditate on God, and the name, and nature, and attributes of God.

And be sure of this, That you meditate, not in a way of reason only, when you come to meditate on God, but in a way of faith. For who can give the reason of the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity? How can men know and understand this: That the second person should be begotten of the Father from all eternity, and yet be co-equal with the Father? Here reason halts. Saith one truly: Dispute not with God, lest you be confounded; dispute nor with Satan, lest you be overcome. And I say, If you would not fail and miscarry in your work of meditation, be sure that when you are to meditate on God, the nature, the names, the attributes of God, that then your meditation be carried on in a way of faith, and not of reason only.

And then be sure of this, that you never think of God out of Christ. "I thought upon God and was troubled," saith the psalmist. Why? He did not think of Christ too. "I thought upon God and was troubled." Aye, but think upon God in Christ and you will not be troubled. Never think of God but in Christ. It is an horrible thing, saith Luther, to think of God out of Christ. This is the first thing, in case that you would meditate on God, the nature, the names, and attributes of God; divide your thoughts, meditate in a way of faith, and not in a way of reason; and never think of God out of Christ.

In case that you would meditate on Christ the Son of God, be sure of this, that you think on Christ, and meditate on Christ as your great example as well as your gift, and your

gift as well as your example. There is both in Christ: when your hearts are most brisk, think on Christ as your example; and when your hearts are most low, think on Christ as your gift. But if that you would meditate on Christ, carry on both; think on Christ as well for your example as for your gift, and for your gift as well as for your example.

And never think on Christ out of the gospel; for as you may not think on God out of Christ, so you may not meditate on Christ out of the gospel: Christ is a living gospel and the gospel a dead Christ.

And in all your meditations on Christ, be sure that you observe what that title of Christ is that is most suitable to your condition, and then meditate thereupon.

But in case you would meditate on the word of God, know that there are four parts of the word. There is the commandment, the promise, the threatening, the example. These four divide the whole word of God: precept, promise, threatening, example.

If you have to deal with a commandment, or precept, remember this, that there is no precept or commandment but is backed and surrounded with several promises; promises of assistance and promises of reward.

In case you have to deal with a promise, know this, God is as punctual in performing as he is gracious in promising.

In case you have to deal with a threatening, then remember this, that God threatens that he may not fulfil, but he promises that he may fulfil: as God promises that he may fulfil, so he threatens that he may not fulfil.

And in case you have to deal with an example, remember this, that there is no example but hath a promise or a threatening in the bowels or bosom of it.

But if you would meditate on God in reference to his word, then look upon all the word of God as your Father's letter and your own evidence. If a child be beyond sea, and a letter come from the father, the child reads it; he reads it again and again, and thinks on it: another, that is a stranger to the letter, though he see it, he does not read it so often over, nor meditate so often on it, but the son doth. Why? It is my father's letter, saith he, and so I will read it, and meditate on it, and think on it. So some men do not look upon the Scriptures as their Father's letters sent from heaven

to them ; but those that are good, they look upon all the chapters there as their Father's letters : and I will read it over for it is my Father's letter, and I will think on it much for it is my Father's letter. Thus, then, look upon the word as your Father's letter.

And look upon the Scripture also as your own evidence. A man hath an evidence for land, and it may be the parchment is a dusty thing, yet he takes a great deal of pains in reading it over and thinking on it. Why, saith one that stands by, why will you spend so much time in reading of a dusty parchment ? But, O friend, saith he, friend, it is my evidence for my inheritance. So now, when men come to the word, and do not look upon it as their evidence for their land, they have no list to meditate on it ; but when a man comes to the word, and can look upon it as his evidence for a great inheritance, then he loves to meditate on it. Remember, therefore, these two things, that all that is in the word is either commandment or promise, threatening or example. And look upon the word as your Father's letters and as your own evidence. And then,

In case that you would meditate on the works of God, be sure of this, that you look upon all the works of God as enamelled and embroidered with so many attributes of God ; for the more you see the attributes of God shining forth upon his works, the more sweetness you will take in the meditating thereof. But if you do not see the attributes of God shining forth upon his works, you will take no sweetness in meditating thereon.

Then be sure that you do not take things apart and separate from another, but take all together ; they are set one over against the other. If you part the works of God, you will find no beauty nor sweetness in the consideration of them ; but put all together, the design and end of the work, and the wholeness of the work gives a beauty to it. Take heed, therefore, that you do not separate between piece and piece, but carry all together, and the end thereof.

If you would meditate on God in reference to his works, be sure of this, that you never go to read God's work but by God's candle. The work of God is a great book, but the work of God cannot be read but by God's word ; God hath a candle of his own to read his work by. When you go to

read his work, be sure you carry his candle along with you, and so shall you be sure to read it the better. I have done.

Be sure you look upon every work of God as coming out of the hand of your Father, that you may say, Oh, this is my Father's work, and this is my Father's work. London is destroyed, but this is my Father's work. You have heard of that honest, good man of Chelmsford, when it thundered and lightened, insomuch as all the town were afraid that doomsday was come; how he got upon a stall in the street, and said, This is my Father's voice. And so when you look upon any work of the Lord, look upon it as your Father's work, and then you will take a sweetness and contentment in the meditation thereof.

And thus I have given you some taste. But how this work of meditation is to be carried on with sweetness I reserve for the next exercise; only for the present you have heard what a profitable thing it is to meditate on the things of God. What now remains but to get up and be thinking and meditating on God and the things of God.

SERMON VIII.

THE WORK AND WAY OF MEDITATION.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet." PSALM CIV. 34.

HAVING shewed how sweet and profitable the work of meditation is, to meditate on God and the things of God; we came the last day to this question or objection:

But if the work of meditation be so sweet and profitable, what shall we do that this work of meditation may be carried on with sweetness and profit?

I am a stranger to this work of meditation: I have often read the Scriptures and not meditated on them; I have often heard the word and not meditated thereon; I have sometimes begun to meditate, but finding it a hard work I have left it off again. And sometimes I have thought that this work is incumbent only upon students and preachers. But if it be our duty to meditate on God, and the things of God, what