
OF MEDITATION | by Henry Scudder¹

When you are alone, then also is a fit season for you to be employed in holy meditation. For according to a person's meditation such is he. The liberal man devises liberal things; the covetous man the contrary, Isa. xxxii. 8. The godly man studies how to please God, the wicked man how to please himself. In meditation, the mind or reason of the soul fixes itself upon something conceived or thought upon for the better understanding thereof, and for the better application of it to itself for use.

The distinct acts and parts of meditation.

In meditating aright, the mind of man exercises two kinds of acts; the one direct upon the thing meditated; the other reflex upon himself, the person meditating. The first is an act of the contemplative part of the understanding; the second is an act of conscience. The end of the first is to enlighten the mind with knowledge: the end of the second is to fill the heart with goodness. The first serves, I speak of moral actions, to find out the rule whereby you may know more clearly what is truth, what is falsehood, what is good, what is bad; whom you should obey, and what manner of person you should be, and what you should do, and the like. The second serves to direct you how to make a right and profitable application to yourself, and to your actions, of the rule.

In this latter are these two acts: First, an examination, whether you and your actions be according to the rule, or whether you come short, or are swerved from it, giving judgment of you, according as it finds you.

The second is a persuasive and commanding act, charging the soul in every faculty, understanding, will, affections, yea, the whole man, to reform and conform themselves to the rule, that is, to the will of God, if you find yourself not to think and act according to it: which is done by confessing the fault to God with remorse, praying for forgiveness, returning to God by faith and repentance, and reforming the heart and life through new obedience. This must be the resolution of the soul. And all this a man must charge upon himself peremptorily, commanding himself with sincere desire and fixed endeavour to conform to it.

When you meditate, join all these three acts, else you will never bring your meditation to a profitable issue. For if you only muse and study to find out what is true, what is false, what is good, what is bad, you may gain much knowledge of the head, but little goodness to your heart. If you only apply to yourself that whereon you have mused, and no more; you may, by finding yourself to be a transgressor, lay guilt upon your conscience, and terror upon your heart, without fruit or comfort; but if to these two, you lay a charge upon yourself to follow God's counsel concerning

¹ From, *The Christian's Daily Walk, in Holy Security and Peace*. London, 1627; reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1984, pp. 102-104. Henry Scudder, d. 1659, English pastor and member of the Westminster Assembly. Scudder was well known for his "singular and exemplary piety, his remarkable prudence, and his excellent ministerial labours." *The Christian's Daily Walk* is printed with commendations by both the master English theologian Dr. John Owen as well as the noted writer in pastoral theology, Richard Baxter.

what you should believe and do, when you have offended him; if you also form an upright design, through God's grace, to be such a one as you ought to be, and to live such a life hereafter as you ought to live; then unto science you add conscience, and to knowledge, you join practice, and will find the comfortable and happy effects thereof. Observe David's meditations, and you will find they came to this issue. His thoughts of God and of his ways, made him turn his feet unto God's testimonies, Ps. cxix. 59. The meditation of God's benefits made him resolve to take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, and to pay his vows, Psa. cxvi. 12—14. When he considered what God had done for him, and thence inferred what he should be to God again, he saith to his soul, My soul, and all that is in me, praise his holy name, Psa. ciii. 1—3. When in his meditation he found that it was his fault to have his soul disquieted in him through distrust, he charges it to wait on God, Psa. xlii. 5—11, and raises up himself unto a holy confidence. I will meditate on thy precepts, saith he. What, is that all? No, but he proceeds to this last act of meditation, and saith, I will have respect unto thy ways, Psa. cxix. 15, 16, 106.