

Chapter 15. MEDITATION.

"Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law, he meditates day and night." – Psalm 1:1-2 (Josh.1:8; Psa.119:15,23,48,78,97,99,148; 1Tim.5:15).

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD." – Psalm 19:14.

The true aim of education, study, or reading, is to be found, not in what it brings to us, but in what it brings out of us, by the awakening of our inward power into active exercise. This is as true of the study of the Bible, as of any other study. God's Word only works its true blessing when the truth it brings to us has stirred the inner life, and reproduced itself in resolve, trust, love, or adoration. When the heart has received the Word through the mind and has had its spiritual powers aroused to practise it, the Word is no longer void, but it has done what God sent it to do. It has become part of our life and strengthened us for new purpose and effort.

It is in meditation that the heart holds and appropriates the Word. Just as in reflection the understanding grasps all the meaning and relevance of a truth, so in meditation the heart assimilates the Word and makes it a part of its own life. We need continual reminding that the heart is both the will and the affections (emotions). The meditation of the heart implies desire, acceptance, surrender, love. Out of the heart springs forth the issues of life; what the heart truly believes, it receives with love and joy; and allows to master and rule the life. The intellect gathers and prepares the food on which we are to feed. In meditation the heart takes it in and feeds on it.

The art of meditation needs to be cultivated. Just as a man needs to be trained to concentrate his mental powers so as to think clearly and accurately, a Christian must carefully consider the Word and meditate, until the holy habit has been formed of yielding up the whole heart to every word of God.

The question is sometimes asked, how can the power of meditation be cultivated? The first thing is **to present ourselves before God**. It is His Word. The Word has no power or blessing apart from Him. The Word is meant to bring us into His presence and fellowship. Practise His presence, and receive the Word as from Himself, in the

assurance that He will make it work effectually in the heart. In Psalm 119, we find the Word seven times, but each time as part of a prayer addressed to God. *"I will meditate on Your precepts."* *"Your servant meditates on Your statutes."* *"O how I love Your law, it is my meditation all day."* Meditation is the heart turning towards God with His own Word, seeking to take it up into the affection and will, into its very life.

Another element of true meditation is **quiet restfulness**. In our study of Scripture, in our endeavour to grasp an argument, or to master a difficulty, our intellect must often strain in utmost efforts. The habit the soul requires in meditation is different. Here we turn to God with some truth we have found, or some mystery on which we are waiting for divine teaching. We hide the Word in the depth of the heart, and believe that, by the Holy Spirit, its meaning and power will be revealed in our inner life. *"You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."* In the description of Mary, the mother of Jesus, we read: *"Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."* In her keeping all these sayings in her heart, we have the image of a soul that has begun to know Christ and is on the sure path to know Him better.

It is hardly necessary to mention that in meditation **personal application** takes a prominent place. This is not always the case with our intellectual Bible study. There our object is to know and understand. In meditation the main object is to appropriate and experience. A readiness to believe every promise implicitly, to obey every command unhesitatingly, to *"stand perfect and complete in all the will of God,"* is the only true spirit of Bible study. It is in quiet meditation that this faith is exercised, that this allegiance is rendered, that the full surrender to all God's will is made, and the assurance received of grace to perform our vows.

And then meditation must lead to **prayer**. It provides material for prayer. It must lead on to prayer, to definitely ask and receive what is seen in the Word or accepted from the Word. Its value is that it is the preparation for prayer, deliberate and whole-hearted supplication for what the heart has felt that the Word has revealed as needful or possible. That means the **rest of faith**, that looks upward in the assurance that the Word will open up and prove its power in the soul that meekly and patiently surrenders to it.

The reward of resting for a time from intellectual effort, and cultivating the habit of holy meditation, will be that in the course of time the two will be brought into harmony, and all our study will be animated by the spirit of quiet waiting on God, and a yielding of the heart and life to the Word.

Our fellowship with God is meant for the whole day. The blessing of securing a habit of true meditation in the morning watch, will be that we shall be brought closer to the blessedness of the man in Psalm 1, *"Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."*

Let all the ministers and leaders of God's people remember that they need this more than others, if they are to train them to it, and to keep their own communication unbroken with the only source of strength and blessing. God says, *"I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law...that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night...then you will have good success. Be strong and of good courage;" (Jos.1:5-9).*

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer." (Psa.19:14). Let nothing less than this be your aim – that your meditation may be acceptable in His sight – part of the spiritual sacrifice you offer. Let nothing less be your prayer and expectation, that your meditation may be true worship, the living surrender of the heart to God's Word, in His presence.

Prayer: Father, the desire of my heart is to learn and cultivate the art of meditating on your Word. Teach me. I offer myself and my time with You as a spiritual sacrifice. May my meditation be pleasing in Your sight. I surrender my heart to Your Word. I desire to be in Your presence. Amen.