

natural meltings, the effects of an ingenuous temper, but these differ in kind and nature from godly sorrow.

*Rule 2.* Godly sorrows are real, sincere, and undissembled; they ‘shall mourn, as for an only son.’

Parents need not any natural helps to draw tears on such accounts; O! their very hearts are pierced, they could even die with them; sighs, groans, and tears, are not hanged out as false signs of what is not to be found in their hearts.

*Rule 3.* Evangelical sorrow is very deep; so much the mourning for an only son, a first-born, must import. These waters, how still soever they be, run deep, very deep, in the bottom channel of the soul. See Acts ii. 37. *They were cut to the heart.*

*Rule 4.* Faith is the instrument employed in breaking the heart; ‘they shall look, and mourn.’ This is the burning-glass that contracts the beams, and fires the affections.

*Rule 5.* Lastly, The wrong sin hath done to God, and the sufferings it hath brought Christ under, are the piercing and heart-wounding considerations: ‘They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and mourn.’ The piercing of Christ by our sin, is that which must pierce thy soul with sorrow.



## THE TENTH

# MEDITATION,

UPON JOHN vi. 55.

*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

**I**N the context our Lord Jesus Christ makes a most spiritual and excellent discourse to the Jews, about the nature and necessity of faith in him; taking the occasion thereof from the bread, which a little before he had so miraculously multiplied and fed them with; raising up their minds to more sublime and spiritual things, and letting them know that bread, how sweet soever it was, was but a shadow of himself, infinitely more sweet and necessary.

These words are a proposition, in which are these three things observable:

*First,* The subject; my flesh and my blood.

*Secondly,* The predicate; it is meat and drink.

*Thirdly,* The manner of predication; it is meat indeed, and drink indeed.

*First*, The subject ; my flesh and blood, i. e. my humanity : this is meat and drink, true spiritual food. If it be demanded, why he had not said, I am meat and drink indeed ; but rather chuses to say, my flesh and blood is so ? The reason is evident, saith learned Camero ; because if you take away flesh and blood from Christ, he cannot be food or life to us : for, in order to his being so, he must satisfy God for us, and obtain the remission of our sins ; but without shedding of blood there is no remission. Now, forasmuch as by the offering up of his body, and shedding of his blood, he hath obtained pardon and life for us ; therefore his flesh and his blood, is called our meat and our drink, that by which our souls live. Which brings us to the second thing :

*Secondly*, The predicate ; it is meat and drink : i. e. It is to our souls of the same use and necessity, that meat and drink are to our natural life, which cannot be sustained, or continued without them.

The life of our souls as necessarily depends upon the flesh and blood of Christ, as our natural life doth upon meat and drink. Yet beware of a mistake here : the flesh and blood, or the humanity of Christ, is not the fountain of our spiritual life, but the channel rather through which it flows to us from his divinity. By reason of his incarnation and death, righteousness and life came to us.

*Thirdly*, The manner of predication is very emphatical ; it is ‘ meat indeed, and drink indeed.’ Which notes two things :

*First, Reality*, in opposition to all legal shadows and types.

*Secondly, Transcendent excellency*, far surpassing all other food, even manna itself, which, for its excellency, is stiled *angels food*. ‘ My flesh is meat indeed,’ i. e. true, substantial, and real food to souls, and choice, excellent, and incomparable food. Hence observe,

*Doct. That what meat and drink is to our bodies, that, and much more than that, the flesh and blood of Christ is to believing souls.*

Two things require explication on this point. *First*, Wherein the resemblance, or agreement lies, betwixt the flesh and blood of Christ, and meat and drink ? *Secondly*, Wherein the former transcends and excels the latter ?

1. *Query*. Wherein lies the resemblance and agreement between the flesh and blood of Christ, and material meat and drink ?

*Sol.* The agreement is manifest in the following particulars.

*First*, Meat and drink is necessary to support natural life ; we cannot live without it. Upon this account, bread is called the staff and stay ; i. e. the support of the natural spirits, which do as much lean and depend upon it, as a feeble man doth upon his staff ; Isa. iii. 1. But yet how necessary soever it be, the flesh and blood of Christ is more indispensibly necessary for the life of our souls ; John vi. 53. ‘ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.’ Our souls have more absolute need of peace and

pardon by Christ, than our bodies have of meat and drink. Better our bodies were starved and famished, than our souls damned and lost for ever.

*Secondly*, Meat and drink are ever most sweet and desirable, to those that are hungry and thirsty. It is hunger and thirst, that gives value and estimation to meat and drink; Prov. xxvii. 7. 'To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet;' and so it is in our esteem of Christ; John vii. 37. 'If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. When God, by illumination and conviction, makes men deeply sensible of their miserable, lost, and perishing condition; then ten thousand worlds for Christ. All is but dung and dross, in comparison of the excellency of Christ Jesus.

*Thirdly*, Meat and drink must undergo an alteration, and lose its own form, before it actually nourishes the body. The corn is ground to pieces in the mill, before it be made bread to nourish us. And Christ must be ground betwixt the upper and nether millstone of the wrath of God, and malice of men, to be made bread for our souls. The prophet saith, Isa. lii. 14. *His visage is marred more than any man's*. He did not look like himself, the beauty and glory of heaven; but the reproach of men, and despised of the people. Oh what an alteration did his incarnation and sufferings make upon him! Phil. ii. 6, 7. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!*

*Fourthly*, Natural food must be received into our bodies, and have a natural union with them; and Christ must be received into our souls, and have a spiritual union with them by faith; or else we can have no nourishment, or benefit by him. An empty profession, a mere talkative religion, nourishes the inner man, just as much as the sight of meat, and our commending of it, doth our outward man. It is Christ's dwelling in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17. our receiving of him, John i. 12. our eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, John vi. 53. i. e. The effectual application of Christ to our souls by faith, that makes us partakers of his benefits.

*Fifthly*, Meat and drink must be taken every day, or else natural life will languish; and spiritual life will never be comfortably maintained in us, without daily communion with Jesus Christ. If a gracious soul neglect, or be interrupted in its course of duties, and stated times of prayer; it will be quickly discernible by the Christian himself, in the deadness of his own heart; and by others also, in the barrenness of his discourses. And in these things stands the analogy, and agreement of the flesh and blood of Christ, with meat and drink.

2. *Query*. The next thing is to open the transcendent excellency of *Christ's flesh and blood*, above all other food in the world. And this appears in four particulars.

*First*, This flesh and blood was assumed into the nearest union with the second person in the blessed Trinity, and so is not only dignified above all other created beings, but becomes the first receptacle of all

grace, intended to be communicated through it to the children of men; John i. 14.

*Secondly*, This flesh and blood of Christ was offered up to God, as the great sacrifice for our sins, and purchase of our peace; Col. i. 20. Eph. v. 2. and so it is of inestimable price and value to believers. The human nature of Christ was the sacrifice, the divine nature was the altar on which it was offered up, and by which it was dignified and sanctified, and made an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God, Eph. v. 2.

*Thirdly*, This flesh and blood of Christ, is the great *medium* of conveyance of all blessings and mercies to the souls and bodies of believers. It lies as a vast pipe at the fountain-head of blessings, receiving and conveying them from God to men; Col. i. 14, 19.

So then, it being united to the second person, and so become the flesh and blood of God; it being the sacrifice offered up to God for atonement and remission of sins, and the medium of conveying all grace and mercy from God to the fountain, to the souls and bodies of believers: how sweet a relish must it have upon the palate of faith? Here faith may taste the sweetness of a pardon; a full, free, and final pardon of sin; than which nothing in this world can be sweeter to a sin-burning conscience.

Here it tastes the incomparable sweetness of peace with God, *a peace which passeth understanding*: The breach sin made, is by this sacrifice made up for ever; Col. i. 20.

Here it tastes the inexpressible sweetness of acceptation with God, and an interest in his favour; a mercy, which a poor convinced soul would give ten thousand worlds for, were it to be purchased. Yea, here it relisheth all the sweet promises in the covenant of grace, as confirmed and ratified by this sacrifice; Heb. ix. 5. So that well might he say, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;' the most excellent New Testament food for believers.

### I. *Use, of Information.*

*First*, See here the love of a Saviour, that heavenly *pelican*, who feeds us with his own flesh and blood. You read, Lam. iv. 10. of pitiful women, who eat the flesh of their own children; but where have you read of men or women, that gave their own flesh and blood for meat and drink to their children? Think on this, you that are so loth to cross and deny your flesh for Christ: He suffered his flesh to be rent, and his blood set abroad for you: What love like the love of Christ!

*Secondly*, Learn hence a ground of content, in the lowest and poorest condition allotted to any believer in this world. It may be some of you live low in the world; you have hard fare, and are abridged of many of those sweet comforts in the creature, which the enemies of God abound in: But still remember you have no cause to envy

their dainties, and be dissatisfied with your own lot and portion; when not many nobles, or mighty in the world, feed as your souls do feed. O what a feast have you! What dainties do your souls taste by faith; whilst others do but feed upon ashes and husks? What is the flesh of lambs and calves out of the stall, to the flesh of Christ? Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. What is wine in bowls, and the chief ointment, to the blood of Christ, and the anointings of his Spirit? O to be satisfied with your outward lot, however God hath cast it, whilst he hath dealt so bountifully with your souls.

*Thirdly*, Learn hence the necessity of faith, in order to the livelihood and subsistence of our souls. What is a feast to him that cannot taste it? And what is Christ to him that cannot believe? That cannot, by faith, eat his flesh, and drink his blood?

It is not the preparation made for souls in Christ, but the application of him by faith, that gives us the sweetness and benefit of him. Faith is the soul's mouth, or palate: The unbeliever tastes no sweetness in Christ; he can relish more sweetness in money, meat, drink, carnal mirth, or any sensual enjoyment than in Christ.

*Fourthly*, How excellent are gospel ordinances? What sweetness is there to be found in them by true believers? For there Christ is prepared, and, as it were, served in for them to feed upon. It is your minister's work, to prepare for you all the week long, and to furnish for you *a feast of fat things*. Lo here is a table spread and furnished this day, with the costliest dainties that heaven affords! O prize these mercies: sit not here with flat, or wanton appetites, lest God call to your enemies, and bid them take away.

## II. Use of exhortation.

Is the flesh and blood of Christ meat and drink indeed? Then let me exhort you, brethren.

*First*, To come to this table with sharp and hungry appetites. Have you ever *tasted*, *That the Lord is gracious*? And do you not hunger and thirst, to *taste* it again? Surely, "Where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered;" Matth. xxiv. 28. There is a twofold appetite; a dainty, and an hungry appetite. Beware of a nice and dainty appetite, that can relish nothing in the most solid and spiritual duties, except the dish be garnished with flowers of rhetoric, or the matter served in with art and elegance. This hath been the great sin of the professors of this generation. O Christians! no more of that I pray you. Were you really an hungered and athirst for Christ, you would come to his ordinances, as famishing men to a feast.

*Secondly*, To feed heartily upon Christ, in every ordinance, and in every sacrament especially. O that your souls might hear, and answer that invitation this day! Cant. v. 1. 'Eat, O friends: drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'

For motives, I will only hint these three following.

*First*, Christ is the matter of the feast. God hath prepared him

for your souls. Is any thing in heaven or earth so sweet, as Christ sacrificed is? Do not the angels and saints in heaven feast upon him? Surely one drop of Christ's blood hath more sweetness and excellency in it, than the whole ocean of all creature-comforts.

*Secondly*, Do not your graces need it? Have you not a languishing love, a staggering faith, dull and sluggish desires? Look into your hearts, and see what need there is of *strengthening the things that are in you, which are ready to die*. O feed upon Christ, that your graces may be revived and strengthened.

*Thirdly*, Do you know how many days you are to go in the strength of this meal? How long it may be, ere you sit again at the Lord's table? Surely, even these, as well as your inferior temporal comforts, stand upon terms of greatest uncertainty. Ah Christians! consider well the times you live in, the enemy that stands ready to take away the cloth, and remove your spiritual food from you. It is said of Peter Martyr, that being in Oxford when queen Mary came in, and hearing the first mass-bell ring; he was struck to the heart, and said, *Hæc una notula omnem meam doctrinam evertit*: This one tinkling bell overthrows all the labours of my ministry at once.

God grant that we may hear none of that music in England any more: but it is like to be, according to your estimation and improvement of Christ's precious ordinances.

*Thirdly*, *Commend the experienced sweetness of Christ to others*. Do not conceal his loveliness and excellency. Thus the fair and enamoured spouse charges, or adjures others; Cant. v. 9. Be not content to feast upon Christ alone, whilst other souls are starving, and perhaps the souls of your dear natural relations. Say to them, as David, Psal. xxxiv. 8. 'O taste and see how good the Lord is.'

*Fourthly*, and *lastly*, *See that your appetite to Christ be right, and truly spiritual*. Such an hunger and thirst, upon which blessedness is entailed by promise. And you may conclude it so, when,

*First*, It is a sharp and strong appetite, Psal. xlii. 1. Let your thoughts run upon Christ night and day; even continually.

*Secondly*, When it is an universal appetite, after every thing in Christ; his holiness, as well as his righteousness; his commands, as well as his promises; for *he is altogether lovely*, Cant. v. 16.

*Thirdly*, When it is a continued appetite. I mean not, that the pulse of your desires should keep an even stroke at all times, but that there be real and sincere workings of heart after him always; Psal. cxix. 20.

*Fourthly*, When it is an industrious appetite, awakening the soul to the use of all means, and practice of all duties, in order to satisfaction; Psal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after.'

*Fifthly*, and *lastly*, It is then a right, when it is an insatiable appetite, never to be allayed with any thing beside Christ; Psal. lxxiii.

25. no, nor with Christ himself, till thou comest to the full enjoyment of him in heaven. The believer knows, how sweet soever his communion with Christ is in this world, yet that communion he shall have with Christ in heaven, will far excel it: there it will be more intimate and immediate, 1 Cor. xii. 12. more full and perfect, even to satisfaction, Psal. xvii. 15. more constant and continued, not suffering such interruptions as it doth here, Rev. xxi. 25. more pure and unmixed; here our corruptions work with our graces, Rom. vii. 21. but there grace shall work alone: in a word, more durable and perpetual; we shall *be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 7. Long therefore to *drink that new wine in the Father's kingdom*. 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come. Even so, come Lord Jesus; come quickly.'



THE ELEVENTH  
MEDITATION,

UPON CANT. viii. 6.

*Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*

**T**HIS book is a sacred allegory: the sense thereof is deep and spiritual. Our unacquaintedness with such schemes and figures of speech, together with the want of spiritual light and experience, makes it difficult to be understood; but the allegory being once unfolded by reason of its affinity with the fancy, truth is more easily and affectingly transmitted, both to the mind and heart.

St. Augustin assigns this reason, why we are so much delighted with metaphors and allegories; because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our reason hath contracted an intimacy and familiarity: and therefore God, to accommodate his truth to our capacity, doth, as it were, embody it in earthly expressions; according to that of the ancient Cabbalists, *Lumen supremum nunquam descendit sine idumento*; heavenly truth never descendeth to us without its veil and covering.

The words before us, are the request of the spouse to Jesus Christ; and consists of two parts, viz.

1. Her suit; which is earnest.
2. Her argument; which is weighty.