

And thus much of the second point.

There are some general observations arising from both parts of my text considered together, viz. the thankful acknowledgment of his faith, and the sorrowful sense of his unbelief. It shall suffice, for a conclusion to this meditation, only to note them; and they are these;

*First*, That the deepest sense of sin must not exclude an humble and thankful acknowledgment of the grace of God in his people. It is the fault of most, to hide their sins; and the fault of some to hide their graces.

*Secondly*, Acceptance of our persons and duties, is a pure act of grace: There is no duty performed in a perfect act of faith; all is mixed with unbelief in some degree, the honey and the comb are mixed together, Cant. ii. 8. No duty as it comes from us is pure.

*Thirdly*, Justly may we suspect that faith for a false faith, which boasts of its own strength, but never mourns in the sense of unbelief. Where there are no conflicts with sin, there can be no sound evidence of sincerity.

*Fourthly*, Believers must not wonder to find strange vicissitudes and alterations in the state of their souls: Sometimes a clear, and sometimes a cloudy day: Sometimes they have their songs in the night, and sometimes their bitter lamentations. If you ask, why is it thus? the answer is, there are within you contrary principles struggling in your souls; and it is no wonder at all to find peace and trouble, hope and fear, light and darkness taking their turns, and sharing your time betwixt them.



## THE EIGHTH

# MEDITATION,

UPON PSALM xl. 8.

*I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.*

**C**ASTING my eye upon this precious text, I find it perplexed and darkened with variety, yea, contrariety of expositions. The Jews and Socinians generally refer all to David, denying Christ to be the person here spoken of. Others refer the whole Psalm to Christ; but the best expositors refer it partly to David, and partly to Christ. That this paragraph in which my text lies, refers to Christ, is plain from the apostle's allegation of it in Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. In this

and the two former verses there lie three great points of truth, which you may take up in this order.

*First,* The insufficiency and rejection of all legal sacrifices, as things of no virtue in themselves to satisfy God, or save men, ver. 6. *These thou wouldest not*; i. e. thou never didst appoint them to be the means of salvation, farther than they signified and pointed at me, and now must vanish when I come in a body of flesh; according to that, Col. ii. 17.

*Secondly,* The introduction of a complete and sufficient means of redemption, ver. 7. *Lo, I come.*

*Thirdly,* The suitableness and agreeableness of this work of redemption to the heart and will of Jesus Christ, ver. 8. 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, *in the midst of my bowels.*

In the words we are to note two things, viz. *1st,* The rise and spring of man's redemption. *2dly,* The acceptableness and suitableness of it to the heart of Christ.

*1st,* The rise and first spring of man's redemption, the will and pleasure of God. So it pleased the Lord to appoint and order it, that a remnant of poor lost sinners should be saved.

The execution and accomplishment of this good pleasure of God, was that part which by agreement and consent was committed to the Son, and is here called a law, or command laid upon him; and, answerably, the death of Christ is represented as an act of obedience, Phil. ii. 8. and respected God's command for it; John x. 18. 'This commandment have I received from my Father;' referring to the covenant of redemption which was betwixt them from everlasting: And this was the rise and first spring of our redemption by Christ.

*2dly,* You have here the gratefulness and suitableness of this work to the heart of Christ, *I delight to do it; it is in my heart: Lo, I come.*

The Hebrew words note not simple consent or willingness, but the highest pleasure and complacency that can be; a work which ravishes his soul with the delights of it, *I delight to do thy will*; and that other expression, *Thy law is within my heart*, or bowels, hath as deep a sense and signification as the former; it notes the greatest care, sollicitude, and intention of mind, in keeping the most precious treasure that was committed to him! for so the phrase is used in Prov. iv. 21. and so did our Redeemer esteem and reckon this work, which was by the Father demanded and committed to him. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That the will of God to redeem sinners by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, was most grateful and pleasing to the very heart of Christ.*

It is said, Prov. viii. 31. When he was solacing himself in the sweetest enjoyment of his Father, whilst he lay in that blessed bosom of delights, yet the very prospect of this work gave him pleasure, *Then were his delights with the sons of men.* And when he was come into the world, and had endured many abuses and injuries, and was

even now come to the most difficult part of the work; yet, *how am I straitened*, or pained, (saith he) *till it be accomplished*, Luke xii. 50.

Two things call our thoughts to stay upon them in this point.

*First*, The decency of it, why it ought to be so.

*Secondly*, The reasons of it, whence it came to be so.

*First*, Why it ought to be a pleasant and grateful thing to Christ to take a body of flesh, and lay it down by death again for the redemption of sinners.

1. It became Christ to go about this work with cheerfulness and delight, that thereby he might give his death the nature and formality of a sacrifice.

In all sacrifices you shall find that God had still a regard, a special respect to the will of the offerer. See Exod. xxxv. 5, 21. and Lev. i. 3. the voluntariness and cheerfulness with which it is given, is of great regard with God.

2. It ought to be so, in regard of the unity of Christ's will, with the Father's. The work of our redemption is called *the pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. liii. 10. and what was the Father's pleasure, could not be displeasing to him who is one with the Father. It is impossible their wills can clash, whose nature is one.

3. This was necessary to magnify and commend the love of Jesus Christ to us, for whom he gave himself. That he came into the world to die for us, is a mercy of the first magnitude, but that he came in love to our souls, and underwent all his sufferings with such willingness for our sakes, this heightens it above all apprehension. O, this is the most taking, the most ravishing, the most astonishing consideration of all: 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,' Rev. i. 5. Here love is in its highest exaltation.

4. It was necessary to be so, for the regulating of all our obedience to God according to this pattern, that seeing and setting this great example of obedience before us, we might never grudge nor grumble at any duty or suffering that God should call us to: 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; how, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,' saith the apostle, when he would press the Corinthians to their duty, 2 Cor. viii. 9. And when he would effectually urge the Philippians to their duty, this is the argument, 'Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. So that it became and behoved Christ thus to undertake this great service.

*Secondly*, Next let us consider and examine whence it came to be so pleasant and acceptable to Jesus Christ, to come into the world and die for poor sinners.

And we shall find although the sufferings of Christ were exceeding sharp, and the cup of God's wrath unspeakably bitter, yet that which made it pleasant and desirable to Jesus Christ was the prospect he had of the sweet results and issues of his sufferings, Isa. liii. 10, 11.

‘He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied,’ (i. e.) he shall have great content and pleasure from the issues and fruits of his sufferings, as Psal. cxxviii. 2. ‘Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands,’ (i. e.) the fruit of thy labours. So here, ‘He shall see the travail of his soul,’ (i. e.) the fruit and effects of his travail; and to see this shall be to him the reward and recompence of all his sufferings. Now, among the sweet results of the sufferings of Christ there are especially these three, which he foresaw with singular content and delectation.

*First*, That in his sufferings there would be made a glorious display and manifestation of the divine attributes; yea, such a glorious display of them, as was never made before to angels or to men, nor ever shall be any more in this world. For though,

1. The wisdom of God had made itself visible to men in the creation of the world, yet there it shone but in a faint and languishing beam, compared with this. Here divine wisdom put itself as it were into a visible form, and represented itself to the life. See 1 Cor. i. 24. and Eph. iii. 10. Behold, in the death of Christ, the wisdom of God in its highest exaltation and glory: O the manifold wisdom of God! O the depth of his unsearchable wisdom! which I touched in some particulars before.

Behold here the wisdom of God, raising more glory to himself by occasion of the breach of the law, than could ever have risen to him from the most punctual observation of its commands, or the most rigorous execution of its threatenings; from the occasion of the fall, which was our undoing, raising us to a far better estate, and with a much better security to enjoy it, than that from which we fell. Yea, behold and wonder, God by the death of Christ recovering his elect from all the danger and mischief of sin, and yet making the way and manner of their recovery the fairest glass to represent the horror and evil of sin to them, that ever was shewn them in this world. Oh, the triumph of divine wisdom.

2. Though the love of God had appeared before in our creation, protection, and provision, yet nothing to what it doth in our redemption by the death of Christ. Lo, here is the love of God in its strength and glory, 1 John iv. 10. ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.’ *Herein is love*, i. e. Here is the highest expression of God’s love to the creature; not only that ever was, but that ever can be made; for in love only God acted to the uttermost; whatever his power hath done, it can do more; but for his love, it can go no higher, he hath no greater thing to give than his Christ. It is true, in giving us a being, and that in the noblest rank and order of creatures on earth, herein was love. In feeding us all our life long by his assiduous tender providence, herein is love. In protecting us under his wings from innumerable dangers and mischiefs, herein is love: much love; and yet set all this by his redeeming love in Christ,

and it seems nothing. When we have said all, ‘herein is the love of God, that he sent his Son,’ &c. This was free love to undeserving, to ill-deserving sinners: preventing love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us. Just as an image in the glass, saith Facinus, that is imprinted there by the face looking into it; the image does not look back upon the face, except the face look forward upon the image; and in that the image doth seem to see the face, it is nothing else but that the face does see the image. O the inexpressible glory of the love of God in Christ!

3. Though God had given several sad marks of his justice before, both upon the angels that fell, clapping upon them the chains of darkness; in the overthrow of Sodom and the neighbouring cities, turning them to ashes, as you may read in Jude, ver. 6, 7. yet never was the exactness and severity of justice so manifested before, nor ever shall be any more, as it was at the death of Christ. Christ did not only satisfy it fully, but he also honoured it highly, making that attribute which was once a bar, now to be a bottom of our peace, Rom. iii. 25. Never did such a person as Christ stand at the bar of justice before: the blood of God was poured out to appease and satisfy it. When Christ suffered, he did both give and take satisfaction; he gave it to the justice of God in dying; he took it, in seeing justice so honoured in his death.

*Secondly*, Another delightful prospect Christ had of the fruit of his sufferings, was the recovery and salvation of all the elect by his death; and though his sufferings were exceeding bitter, yet such fruit of them as this was exceeding sweet: upon this account he assumed his name Jesus, Mat. i. 21. yea, and his human nature also, Gal. iv. 4, 5. Souls are of great value in his eyes: one soul is of more worth in his account than all the world, Mark viii. 36. What a pleasure then must it be to him, to save so many souls from the everlasting wrath of the great and terrible God! Add to this,

*Thirdly*, The glory which would redound to him from his redeeming ones to all eternity; for it will be the everlasting pleasant employment of the saints in heaven, to be ascribing glory, praise, and honour, to the Redeemer: “To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,” Rev. i. 5, 6. The improvement of all this will be in a word or two.

*Use 1. for conviction.*

This truth then, in the first place, may convince, shame, and humble the very best of Christians, who find so little delight in the most easy, sweet, and spiritual duties of obedience, when Christ undertook and went through the most difficult task for them with such cheerfulness and readiness. “Lo, I come, thy law is in my heart, I delight to do thy will;” and yet the work he so applied himself to, was a work

full of difficulty, attended with reproach and shame, as well as anguish and pain.

Did Christ find pleasure in abasement and torment, in suffering and dying for me, and can I find no pleasure in praying, hearing, meditating, and enjoying the sweet duties of communion with him? Did he come so cheerfully to die for me, and do I go so dead-heartedly to prayers and sacraments, to enjoy fellowship with him? Was it a pleasure to him to shed his blood, and is it none to me to apply it, and reap the benefits of it? Oh, Lord, what an heart have I? How unsuitable is this frame of heart to the nature of God, whose essential excellencies make him the supreme delight, the sweet repose, solace, and rest of souls! Psalm xvi. 11.

How unsuitable to the principles of regeneration and holiness, purposely planted in the soul, to make spiritual performances a pleasure to it!

How unsuitable to the future expected state of glory, which brings the sanctified soul to a sweet complacential rest and satisfaction in God! In a word, how unsuitable is this temper of spirit to the heart of Jesus Christ! O, methinks I hear Christ thus expostulating with me this day:

Is this thy zeal and delight in the duties of obedience? Is it rather the awe of conscience than the pleasure of communion that brings thee to this duty? Doth thy hard heart need so many arguments to persuade it, even to the sweetest, easiest, and most pleasant duties in religion? Well, I did not love thee at that rate; my heart readily echoed to the Father's call, to die for thee, to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling for thee. "I come, I come, I delight to do thy will, thy law is in the midst of my bowels."

## 2. *Use, of exhortation.*

If it be so, how great a motive have the people of God before them, to make them apply themselves with all cheerfulness and readiness of mind to all the duties of active and passive obedience! O, let there be no more grumblings, lazy excuses, shiftings of duty, or dead-hearted and listless performances of them, after such an example as this. Be ready to do the will of God; yea, be ye also ready to suffer it. Let the same mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus. The more pleasure and delight you find in doing or suffering the will of God, the more of Christ's spirit is in you, and the more of his image is upon you. Are not all holy duties expressed in scripture by the saints walking with God? Gen. xvii. 1. And is not this an angelical life? Can it be a burden to the ear to hear sweet ravishing strains of melody; or to the eye, to behold variety of pleasant and lively colours; or to the palate, to relish the delicious sweetness of meats and drinks?

Oh, reader, were thy heart more spiritual, more deeply sanctified, and heavenly, it would be no more pain to thee to pray, hear, or meditate on the things of God, than it is to a bird to carry and use his

own wings; or to a man, to eat the most pleasant food when he is an hungry; "I have rejoiced (saith David,) in the way of thy commandments, as much as in all riches," Psal. cxix. 14.

And as to sufferings for Christ, they should not be grievous to Christians, that know how Christ came from the bosom of the Father to die for them. What have we to leave or lose, in comparison with him? What are our sufferings to Christ's? Alas, there is no compare; there was more bitterness in one drop of his sufferings, than in a sea of ours.

To conclude, Your delight and readiness in the paths of obedience, is the very measure of your sanctification.



## THE NINTH

# MEDITATION,

UPON ZECH. xii. part of ver. 10.

*And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*

**T**HIS promise is confessed to have a special respect to the Jews conversion to Christ: It was in part accomplished in the apostles days, Acts ii. 37. yet that was but a specimen or handsel, of what shall be, when the body of that nation shall be called.

But yet it cannot be denied, that all Christians find the same piercing sorrows, and wounding sense of sin, when God awakens them by convictions, and brings them to see the evil of sin, and the grace of Christ, that is here expressed concerning them at their conversion.

The words present us with three very remarkable particulars in evangelical repentance; viz.

*First,* The spring and principle of it.

*Secondly,* The effects and fruits of it.

*Thirdly,* The depth and measure of it.

*First,* The spring and principle of repentance, expressed in these words, *They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced.* This looking upon Christ, is an act of faith; for so it is described in scripture, John vi. 40. Isa. xlv. 22. and it respects Christ crucified, as its proper object: Yea, and that by them, not only as their progenitors involved them in that guilt, by entailing it on them, but as their own sins were