

A Meditation.

BY JOHN R. MOTT.

To meditate spiritual things is to go into the middle of them, to live in their light, to get under their power to let them move us. It is necessary for the Christian, in order that he may discover and understand spiritual truth. It is indispensable to the most satisfactory spiritual growth. If our lives are to be truly communicative and helpful to others, we must cultivate constantly the practice of meditation.

Have a favorable place for meditation. Let it be a place where you can hear God's voice; he can hear you anywhere. Many can testify as to the advantages of some solitary place. Do you suppose that Jacob ever forgot Bethel or David Mizar, "the little Hill," or John the Isle of Patmos, or Nathanael the fig-tree.

Have a regular time for meditation. If a man has no regular time for this purpose, the danger is that he will soon have no time. If a man tells me that he does not give himself to spiritual exercise except when he feels inclined to do so, I make up my mind that he does so very seldom, and possibly not at all. We all need to emphasize regularity in the care of the spiritual life. As Bushnell has pointed out, "God is a Being of routine." We must set apart, at whatever sacrifice, regular times for pondering the words and thoughts of God.

Let us devote sufficient time to meditation, as well as regular time. It takes time to believe. We must first take time to hear God before we are able to trust him as fully as we should.

Not only should we have a regular place and time for meditation, but we should also cultivate the habit of giving active attention to religious things at all times and in all places. John Wesley traced out some of his most helpful trains of thought while on his horseback journeys. One prominent Christian worker in this country has received some of his most powerful spiritual messages while pondering the Scriptures on railway trains and street cars.

Use the Bible as the basis and guide in meditation. Without the Bible this process may make one morbid, melancholy, selfish and fanatical, whereas with the Bible it is a most beneficial and fruitful exercise. You will remember that Emerson, in speaking of the words of Montaigne, says that "They are vascular. Cut them and they will bleed."

With how much more truth might not the same be said of the words of the Bible. They are quick and powerful, living and active. They are, indeed, spirit and life. Ponder Christ's claims about himself. Study meditatively the character of Christ. Meditate on the kingdom of Christ.

Above all, think of the example of Jesus Christ. One of the principal and most significant distinctions between his life and ours lies in the amount of time he found it necessary to spend alone with the Father. St. Luke tells us that "he went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives." That is, he went as was his custom, as was his habit, to the secret place to meditate and to pray. If he found it necessary or even desirable, what presumption and folly it is for us to think that we can get along without this practice. My brothers, let us form an undiscussable resolution that whatever else we miss we shall not miss the great advantages that come from giving ourselves earnestly and faithfully to thinking on spiritual things.—The Westminster.

No habit is hurt till it is hated.

Our Young People

December 11. Habits.

Topic.—How to break bad habits and cultivate good ones.—Rom. 8: 1-15.

Some Bible Hints.

How much pleasure would Christ take if He were to pass through your day with you, walking by your side? That will tell you whether you are walking after the flesh or the Spirit (v. 1).

It is a matter not of having to do with the things of the flesh, for that is inevitable, but of "minding" them, fixing our affections upon them—there is where the evil comes in (v. 5).

It is impossible to cut off a bad habit by any knife from without, or force in any good habit by any pressure from without; but the indwelling Christ can do both these things (v. 10).

Live for the world, and you die; put to death (mortify) the world, and you live (v. 13)—that is the substance of Christian morality.

Suggestive Thoughts.

To break a bad habit is not to bend it out of sight, but to break it off and throw it away.

Franklin's plan is a good one—to select some good habit each week, and work upon it, marking his progress in a ledger from day to day.

You may plant and water but God gives the increase, in the cultivation of good habits as well as in all other cultivation.

A Few Illustrations

We speak of "the chain of habit;" but a long chain is no stronger than a short one, while a long habit is much harder to break than a brief one.

Habit is like the hundred armed fabulous monster; two arms grow out for every one cut off, but it dies if its heart is pierced.

The weeds are sure to come where the ground lies idle.

If we could buy our habits ready-made, they would all be good ones; but we must spin the thread, and weave the cloth, and make the garments.

To Think About.

Am I watching my habits, or am I letting them grow at haphazard?

Am I cherishing any habit that hinders my Christian life?

Am I trying in my own strength to get rid of bad habits?

A Cluster of Quotations:

"How shall I a habit break?"

As you did that habit make,

As you gathered you must lose;

As you yielded, now refuse.

—O'Reilly.

The adamant chains of habit are seldom heavy enough to be felt till they are too strong to be broken.—Samuel Johnson.

Our deeds still travel with us from afar, And what we have been makes us what we are. —George Eliot.

Habit is that to which obedience costs no effort.—Aristotle.

Aim at Large Things.

Great numbers. The more members, the more likelihood that some one will be helped and strengthened.

Great zeal. Let no society be satisfied until its members eagerly look forward to the meetings.

Great prayer meetings. A prayer meeting is really great when the members are greatly in earnest.

Great committee work. You can gain this

if each committee sets before it some single aim worth accomplishing, devotes itself to it till it is accomplished, and then goes on to another.

Great devotion. All Christians are "called to be saints." A saint is only some one who loves Christ with all his heart.

Great results. Expect to bring things to pass,—to convert sinners, to train the awkward, to instruct the ignorant, to help your church, to better your town.

And all these great things, though you are very little, because you have a great God.

Suppose.

Suppose that the Christian life, in its daily manifestation, should come to be marked and known by simplicity and happiness. Suppose that the followers of Jesus should really escape from bondage to the evil spirits of avarice and luxury which infect and torment so much of our complicated, tangled, artificial modern life. Suppose that, instead of increasing their wants and their desires, instead of loading themselves down on life's journey with so many bags and parcels and boxes of superfluous luggage and bric-a-brac, that they are forced to sit down by the roadside and gasp for breath, instead of wearing themselves out in the dusty ways of competition and vain show, or embittering their hearts because they cannot succeed in getting into the weary race of wealth and fashion—suppose, instead of all this, they should turn to quiet ways, lowly pleasures, pure and simple joys, plain living and high thinking." Suppose they should truly find and clearly show their happiness in the knowledge that God loves them, and Christ died for them, and heaven is sure, and so set their hearts free to rejoice in life's common mercies, the light of the sun, the blue of the sky, the splendor of the sea, the peace of the everlasting hills, the songs of the birds, the sweetness of the flowers, the wholesome savor of good food, the delight of action and motion, the refreshment of sleep, the charm of music, the blessings of human love and friendship—rejoice in all these without fear or misgiving, because they come from God, and because Christ has sanctified them all by his presence and touch.—Rev. Henry Van Dyke, D.D.

Daily Readings.

M., Dec. 5.	The formative years.	Ecc. 9: 10.
T., Dec. 6.	Training.	Prov. 22: 1-6.
W., Dec. 7.	Sabbath-keeping.	Luke 4: 14-16.
T., Dec. 8.	Unselfishness.	Acts 9: 36-39.
F., Dec. 9.	Decision.	Acts 24: 24-27.
S., Dec. 10.	Piety.	2 Tim. 3: 14-17.

Before and above everything, take time ere you pray to value the glory and presence of God.—Murray.

The one thing above all else that God desires of man is worship, and yet there are very few in this age who really do worship God.—Torrey.

The irreverence of youth grows into the profanity and rebellion of later years.—[Tan Maclaren.]