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Nothing is so valuable and important to man as Meditation. We all know that a life of bustle and constant engagements in the world is a life of danger. Tossed as it were on the Ocean, and driven about by the conflicting elements, we live in a state of agitation and confusion; we are delivered over from toil to toil, or from dissipation to dissipation, without power to stand still, to examine and consider. Now, this danger is diminished by frequent Meditation. — It sets the World and its views at a distance from us. It gives us time to reflect where we are, and what we are. The still eventide of reflexion drives out of our minds the cares and concerns of the day: the calm solitude of the field chases away from our thoughts the tumults and projects of the crowded haunts of men.

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Our passions too have then time to cool, and to view things in their proper colours. The rage of ambition will subside, when reflection shews us the emptiness of earthly honours. The fire of lust will burn with less violence, when reason has time to tell us, that remorse and shame are its inseparable companions. The stings of animosity and revenge will operate less forcibly, when we will give ourselves leave to remember, that friends and foes will soon lie down together in the dust. The arrows of affliction will give us less pain, when meditation informs us that they are but for a moment, and cannot follow us to that better country, where all tears are wiped away from all faces.

It is another advantage of meditation, that it teaches us that best of all knowledge, which

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therefore the ancients suppose came down from heaven, I mean the knowledge of ourselves. In the language of the Psalmist, to „commune with our own Hearts,„ to pry into its secret springs and motives of action, to examine its favourite tendencies and propensities, may be no pleasing task, but certainly is a very necessary and profitable one. It will teach us, where the first assault of temptation is likely to be made, and therefore, where we ought most to be on our guard. It will shew us the variety of our own imperfections, and therefore teach us to be humble and forgiving to others. It will point out to us the uncertainty of every earthly advantage, and therefore will incline us to extend that charity to the distressed, of which we ourselves may one day stand in need.

And lastly, it will teach us the just value of our life itself, which alone carries with it more instructive lessons of morality, than all the eloquence of ancient sages and learned Philosophers.

But the greatest advantage of meditation is, that it will bring us acquainted with God. „ Acquaint „ now thyself with him, and be at peace „. is the language of holy writ; and certain it is, that till we are acquainted with him, there can be no true peace. It is therefore an inestimable advantage of meditation, that it is the means of bringing about this acquaintance. — It gives us the opportunity of considering his glorious being and perfections; which will imprint an awful reverence of his majesty on our minds. — It acquaints us

with his all-seeing care and universal presence; which will confirm our reliance on his providence; – It teaches us, that he is the Father of the Friendless and distressed; which will embolden us to approach his Throne, pour out our griefs before him, and make known our wants. – It informs us that nothing happens in heaven or in earth without his direction or permission, and therefore will instruct us to look up with comfort to him, on all occasions; as knowing that both we and ours are safe under the shadow of his wings, as long as we endeavour to deserve his favour and protection. And can there be a greater consolation than this, to a frail and helpless being like man; – to know that he is always under the care of an Almighty Governor,

who sees all his wants, and whose perfections are hourly employed for his welfare and support. Surely, therefore, it is every man's interest, as well as his duty, to make himself acquainted with this glorious being, and to meditate day and night on all his wonderous works; that when all the vain friendships of the world shall fail, and the world itself be dissolved, he may have an "anchor of the Soul, sure and stedfast"

To reap these or any other advantages from religious Meditation, we must take care

1st That this Meditation must not be superficial or irregular.

For it is the duty of a Christian to meditate and consider at all times: every night should account

to God and his conscience for the follies of the Day; since none of us can tell, whether we may live to do it tomorrow.

2dly, This consideration or meditation must be universal. It must extend to all our Sins and follies, to all parts of our duty to God and man, and to all the branches of our holy Religion.

3dly, As our meditations on the one hand, ought not to be cold and languid, so they ought to be carefully guarded against visionary flights and enthusiastic fervours on the other. Meditation under the Government of a sober mind, is one of the noblest employments of Human Nature. But if it be suffered to run out into all the extravagancies of a heated Imagination and fills their minds with

notions of particular Illuminations of the Divine Spirit, and leads them to despise human ordinances as unprofitable & unnecessary, or from a discharge of the common duties of Life. – it then becomes dangerous and ridiculous, and rather deserves our contempt, than our admiration.

Windsor the 1st Octbr 1806.

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