

CHAPTER VI.

Directions for the Government of the Thoughts.

I HAVE shewed you, in my "Treatise of Walking with God," how much man's thoughts are regarded by God, and should be regarded by himself; and what agents and instruments they are of very much good or evil: this therefore I shall suppose and not repeat; but only Direct you in the governing of them. The work having three parts, they must have several Directions. 1. For the avoiding of evil thoughts. 2. For the exercise of good thoughts. 3. For the improvement of good thoughts, that they may be effectual.

Tit. 1. Directions against Evil and Idle Thoughts.

Direct. 1. 'Know which are evil thoughts, and retain such an odious character of them continually on your minds, as may provoke you still to meet them with abhorrence.' Evil thoughts are such as these: 1. All thoughts against the being, or attributes, or relations, or honour, or works of God: atheistical and blasphemous, idolatrous and unbelieving thoughts: all thoughts that tend to disobedience or opposition to the will or Word of God: and all that savour of unthankfulness, or want of love to God: or of discontent or distrust, or want of the fear of God, or that tend to any of these: also sinful, selfish, covetous, proud studies: to make a mere trade of the ministry for gain: to be able to overtalk others: searching into unrevealed, forbidden things: inordinate curiosity, and hasty conceitedness of your own opinions about God's decrees, or obscure prophecies, prodigies, providence, mentioned before about pride of our understandings.

All thoughts against any particular word, or truth, or precept of God, or against any particular duty; against any part of the worship and ordinances of God; that tend to irreverent neglects of the name, or holy day of God: all impious thoughts against public duty, or family duty, or secret duty; and all that would hinder or mar any one duty: all

thoughts of dishonour, contempt, neglect, or disobedience to the authority of higher powers set over us by God, either magistrates, pastors, parents, masters, or any other superiors. All thoughts of pride, self-exalting ambition, self-seeking covetousness: voluptuous, sensual thoughts, proceeding from or tending to the corrupt, inordinate pleasures of the flesh: thoughts which are unjust, and tend to the hurt and wrong of others: envious, malicious, reproachful, injurious, contemptuous, watchful, revengful thoughts: lustful, wanton, filthy thoughts: drunken, gluttonous, fleshly thoughts: inordinate, careful, fearful, anxious, vexatious, discomposing thoughts: presumptuous, and secure, despairing, and dejecting thoughts: slothful, delaying, negligent, and discouraging thoughts: uncharitable, cruel, false, censorious, unmerciful thoughts; and idle, unprofitable thoughts. Hate all these as the devil's spawn.

Direct. 11. 'Be not insensible what a great deal of duty or sin are in the thoughts, and of how dangerous a signification and consequence a course of evil thoughts is to your souls.' They shew what a man is, as much as his words or actions do: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he^m." A good man or evil is denominated by the good or evil treasure of the heart, though known to men but by the fruits. O the vile and numerous sins that are committed in men's thoughts! O the precious time that is lost, in idle, and other sinful thoughts! O the good that is hindered hereby both in heart and life! But of this having spoken in the treatise aforementioned, I proceed.

Direct. 111. 'Above all be sure that you cleanse the fountain, and destroy those sinful inclinations of the heart, from which your evil thoughts proceed.' In vain else will you strive to stop the streams: or if you should stop them, that very heart itself will be loathsome in the eyes of God. Are your thoughts all upon the world, either coveting, or caring, or grieving for what you want, or pleasing yourselves with what you have or hope for? Get down your deceived estimation of the world: cast it under your feet, and out of your heart; and count all, with Paul, but as loss and dung, for the excellent knowledge of God in Christ: for till the world be dead in you, your worldly thoughts will not be

^m Prov. xiii. 7.

dead; but all will stand still when once this poise is taken off: crucify it, and this breath and pulse will cease. So if your thoughts do run upon matter of preferment, or honour, disgrace, or contempt, or if you are pleased with your own pre-eminence or applause; mortify your pride, and beg of God a humble, self-denying, contrite heart. For till pride be dead, you will never be quiet for it; but it will stir up swarms of self-exalting and yet self-vexing thoughts, which make you hateful in the eyes of God. So if your thoughts be running out upon your back and belly, what you shall eat or drink, or how to please your appetite or sense; mortify the flesh, and subdue its desires, and master your appetite, and bring them into full obedience unto reason; and get a habit of temperance; or else your thoughts will be still upon your guts and throats: for they will obey the ruling power; and a violent passion and desire doth so powerfully move them, that it is hard for the reason and will to rule them. So if your thoughts are wanton and filthy, you must cleanse that unclean and lustful heart, and get Christ to cast out the unclean spirit, and become chaste within, before you will keep out your unchaste cogitations. So if you have confusion and vanity in your thoughts, you must get a well furnished and well composed mind and heart, before you will well cure the malady of your thoughts.

Direct. iv. 'Keep at a sufficient distance from those tempting objects, which are the fuel and incentives of your evil thoughts.' Can you expect that the drunkard should rule his thoughts, whilst he is in the alehouse or tavern, and seeth the drink? Or that the glutton should rule his thoughts, while the pleasing dish is in his sight? Or that the lustful person should keep chaste his thoughts, in the presence of his enamouring toy? Or that the wrathful person rule his thoughts, among contentious, passionate words? Or that the proud person rule his thoughts, in the midst of honour or applause? Away with this fuel: fly from this infectious air if you would be safe.

Direct. v. 'At least make a covenant with your senses, and keep them in obedience, if you will have obedient thoughts.' For all know by experience how potently the senses move the thoughts. Job saith, "I made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I think upon a maid." Mark

how the covenant with his eyes is made the means to rule his thoughts. Pray with David, "Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity^a." Keep a guard upon your eyes, and ears, and taste, and touch, if you will keep a guard upon your thoughts. Let not that come into these outer parts, which you desire should go no further. Open not the door to them, if you would not let them in.

Direct. vi. 'Remember how near kin the thought is to the deed; and what a tendency it hath to it.' Let Christ himself tell you, "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart^o." A malicious thought and a malicious deed are from the same spring, and have the same nature: only the deed is the riper serpent, and can sting another; when the thought is the younger serpent, that hath only the venomous nature in itself. A lustful thought is from the same defiled puddle, as actual filthiness: and the thought is but the passage to the action: it is but the same sin in its minority, tending to maturity.

Direct. vii. 'Keep out, or quickly cast out all inordinate passions:' for passions do violently press the thoughts, and forcibly carry them away. If anger, or grief, or fear, or any carnal love, or joy, or pleasure be admitted, they will command your thoughts to run out upon their several objects. And when you rebuke your thoughts, and call them in, they will not hear you, till you get them out of the crowd and noise of passion. As in the heat of civil wars no government is well exercised in a kingdom; and as violent storms disable the mariners to govern the ship, and save it and themselves; so passions are too stormy a region for the thoughts to be well governed in. Till your souls be reduced to a calm condition, your thoughts will be tumultuating, and hurried that way that the tempests drive them. Till these wars be ended, your thoughts will be licentious, and partakers in the rebellion.

Direct. viii. 'Keep your souls in a constant and careful obedience unto God.' Observe his law: be continually sensible that you are under his government, and awed by his

^a Psal. cxix. 37.

^o Matt. vii. 22. 28.

authority. Man judgeth not your thoughts : if you are subject to man only, your thoughts must be ungoverned : but the heart is the first object of God's government, and that which he principally regardeth. His laws extend to all your thoughts : and therefore if you know what obedience to God is, you must know what the obedience of your thoughts to him is : for he that obeyeth God as God, will obey him in one thing as well as another, and will obey him as the governor and judge of thoughts. The powerful, searching word of Christ is a "discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and as a two-edged sword is sharp and quick," and will "pierce" and "cut" as deep as the very "soul and spirit P." "It casteth down every imagination and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ^q." Therefore David saith to God, "Search me O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting^r." And you find God's laws and reproofs extending to the thoughts : "Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity^s." The fool's heart-atheism is rebuked, Ps. xiv. 1. He reproveth a rebellious people, for "walking in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts^t." See how Christ openeth the heart, Matt. xv. 9. He chargeth them to "beware that there be not a thought in their wicked hearts^u" against the mercy which they must shew to the poor. He detecteth the "inward thought" of the worldling, that "their houses shall continue for ever^v." He saith, "The thought of foolishness is sin^w." The old world was condemned because the "imagination of their hearts were only evil continually^x." And when God calleth a sinner to conversion, he saith, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him^y." You see then if you are subject to God, your thoughts must be obedient.

Direct. 1x. 'Remember God's continual presence ; that all your thoughts are in his sight.' He seeth every filthy

^p Heb. iv. 12. 13.

^q Isa. lix. 7.

^r Psal. xlix. 11.

^s Isa. lv. 6, 7.

^t 2 Cor. x. 5.

^u Isa. lix. 2.

^v Psal. xxiv. 9.

^w Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

^x Deut. xv. 9.

^y Gen. vi. 5.

thought, and every covetous, and proud, and ambitious thought, and every uncharitable, malicious thought. If you be not atheists, the remembrance of this will somewhat check and control your thoughts, that God beholdeth them. "He understandeth" your "thoughts afar off^b." "Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it^c." "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts^d?" saith Christ.

Direct. x. 'Bethink you seriously what a government you would keep upon your thoughts, if they were but written on your foreheads, or seen by all that see you, yea, or but open to some person whom you reverence.' O how ashamed would you then be, that men should see your filthy thoughts, your malicious thoughts, your covetous and deceiving thoughts! And is not the eye of God ten thousand times more to be revered and regarded? And is not man your god, if you are awed more by man than by God? and if the eye of man can do more to restrain you?

Direct. xi. 'Keep tender your consciences, that they may not be regardless or insensible of the smallest sin.' A tender conscience feareth evil or idle thoughts; and will smart in the penitent review of thoughts: but a seared conscience feeleth nothing, except some grievous, crying sins. A tender conscience obeyeth that precept, "If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth^e."

Direct. xii. 'Cast out vain and sinful thoughts in the beginning, before they settle themselves and make a dwelling of thy heart.' They are more easily and safely resisted in the entrance. Thy heart will give them rooting and grow familiar with them, if they make any stay. Besides, it shews the greater sin, because there is the less resistance, and the more consent. If the will were against them, it would not let them alone so long. Yea, and their continuance tendeth to your ruin: it is like the continuance of poison in your bowels, or fire in your thatch, or a spy in an army: as long as they stay they are working toward your greater mischief. If these flies stay long they will blow and multiply: they will make their nests, and breed their young, and you will quickly have a swarm of sins.

^b Psal. cxxxix. 2.^c Prov. xxiv. 12.^d Matt. ix. 4.^e Prov. xxii. 32.

Direct. XIII. 'Take heed lest any practical error corrupt your understandings: or lest you be engaged in any ill design: for these will command your thoughts into a course of sinful attendance and service to their ends.' He that erreth and thinks his sin is his virtue or his duty, will indulge the thoughts of it without control; yea, he will drive on his mind to such cogitations; and steal from the authority and Word of God, the motives and incentives of his sin. As false prophets speak against God in the name of God, and against his Word as by the pretended authority of his Word; so an erring mind will fetch its arguments from God and from the Scripture, for those sinful thoughts which are against God and Scripture. And if evil thoughts will so hardly be kept out when we plead the authority of God and his Word against them, and do the best we can to hinder them; how will they prevail when you plead the authority of God and the sacred Scriptures for them, and take it to be your duty to kindle and promote them? For instance; all the sinful thoughts by which the Roman clergy are contriving the support of their kingdom of darkness in the world, and the continuance of their tyranny in the church, are but the products of their error, which tells them that all this should be done, as pleasing to God, and profitable to the church. All the bloody thoughts of persecutors, against the church and holy ways of Christ, have been cherished by this erroneous thought. "The time cometh that whoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service; and these things they will do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me^f." All Paul's bloody contrivances and practices against the church did come from this. "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth: which thing I also did^g." All the scornful and reproachful thoughts and speeches of many of the ungodly against a holy life, are hence: "They think it strange that you run not with them to excess of riot, speaking evil of you^h." The vain babbling of hypocrites, who cheat their souls with idle lip-labour, instead of the spiritual service from the heart, and the sacrifice of fools, who offer God some outward thing, while they deny him their hearts and holy obedience, do proceed from this, that

^f John xvi. 23.^g Acts xxvi. 9.^h 1 Pet. iv. 4.

“They think to be heard for their much babbling¹,” “and they consider not that they do evil².” All the self-flattery and presumption of the ungodly, and consequently, all their ungodly lives, are much from their erroneous thoughts: “He that thinketh he is something when he is nothing, deceiveth himself³.” O come into the light, and forsake your darkness! for sinful thoughts are like hobgoblins and hags, that fly from the light; and like worms and serpents, that creep into holes, and crawl and gender in the dark.

Direct. xiv. ‘Remember what an opening of thoughts there will be, when you come into the light, either here by conviction, or at the furthest at the day of judgment.’ Then you will be ashamed to see what filth and vanity you entertained; and with what dross and rubbish you stuffed your minds. When the light comes in, what abundance of things will you see to your astonishment, in the dungeon of your hearts, which now you take no notice of! Remember, that all your hidden thoughts must one day be brought into the open light. Say not that this is a thing impossible, because they are so numerous: for God who seeth them all at once, and causeth his sun to illuminate so many millions at once, can make you see them all at once, and yet distinctly, and see the shame and filthiness of every one of them.

Direct. xv. ‘When you find that some thoughts of sin and vanity are following you still, for all that you can do, you must not therefore plunge your souls into so much soliciteness, fear, and trouble, as may discourage and distract your mind; but wait on God in the complacential and obediential way of cure.’ It is the tempter’s method to keep sinners utterly careless of their thoughts, and senseless of any sin that is in them, as long as he can; and when that hope faileth him, he will labour to make a humbled, obedient soul so sensible of the sin of his thoughts, and so careful about them, as to confound him, and cast him into melancholy, discouragement, and despair; and then he will have no command of his thoughts at all; but they will be as much ungoverned another way, and feed continually upon terror. The end of this temptation is to distract you and confound you. The pretence of the tempter will be contrary to his end: for while he driveth you with terrors to think of

¹ Matt. vi. 7.² Eccl. v. 1.³ Gal. vi. 3.

nothing else but what you have been or are thinking on, and to make your own thoughts the only or principal matter of your thoughts, he will confound you, and make you indisposed to all good, and unable to govern your thoughts at all. But if you principally study the excellencies of God and godliness, and take the course which tends to make religion pleasant to you, and withal keep up an awful obedience to God, this complacential obedience will best prevail.

Direct. xvi. 'Therefore deliver up your hearts to Christ in love and duty, and consecrate your thoughts entirely to his service, and keep them still exercised on him, or in his work: and this will most effectually cure them of vanity and sin^m.' If you have a friend that you love entirely, you will not feed swine in the room that must entertain him: you will not leave it nasty and unclean: you will not leave it common to every dirty, unsuitable companion, to intrude at pleasure and disturb your friend. So love and pleasure will be readily and composedly careful, to keep clean the heart, and shut out vain and filthy thoughts, and say, 'This room is for a better guest; nothing shall come here which my Lord abhorreth: is he willing so wonderfully to condescend, as to take up so mean a habitation, and shall I straiten him, or offend him, by letting in his noisome enemies? Will he dwell in my heart, and shall I suffer thoughts of pride, or lust, or malice, to dwell with him, or to enter in? Are these fit companions for the Spirit of Grace? Do I delight to grieve him? I know as soon as ever they come in, he will either resist them till he drive them out again, or he will go out himself. And shall I drive away so dear a friend, for the love of a filthy, pernicious enemy? Or do I delight in war? Would I have a continual combat in my heart? Shall I put the Spirit of Christ to fight for his habitation, against such an ignominious foe? Indeed there is no true cure for sinful, vain, unprofitable thoughts, but by the contrary: by calling up the thoughts unto their proper work, and finding them more profitable employment: and this is by consecrating the heart and them entirely to the love and service of him, that hath by the wonders of his love, and by

^m Sicut ignis in aqua durare non potest, ita neque turpis cogitatio in Dei amante: quoniam omnis qui Dei amator est, etiam laboris amans est: cæterum labor voluntarius, naturaliter voluptati inimicus existit. Marcus Erem.

the strange design of his purchase and merits, so well deserved them. Let Christ come in, and deliver him the key, and pray him to keep thy heart as his own, and he will cast out buyers and sellers from his temple, and will not suffer his house of prayer to be a den of thieves. But if you receive Christ with reserves, and keep up designs for the world and flesh, marvel not if Christ will be no partners with them, but leave all to those guests, which you would not leave for him.

Tit. 2. Directions to furnish the Mind with Good Thoughts^a.

To have the mind well furnished with matter for holy and profitable thoughts, is necessary to all that have the use of reason, though not to all alike. But I shall here present you only with such materials as are necessary to a holy life, and to be used in our daily walk with God ; and not meddle with such as are proper to pastors, magistrates, or other special callings, though I may give some general Directions also for students in the end of this.

Direct. 1. ' Understand well your own interest and great concernments, and be well resolved what you live for, and what is your true felicity and end : and then this will command your thoughts to serve it.' The end is it that the means are all chosen for, and used for. A man's estimation directeth his intention and designs : and his intention and designs command his thoughts. These will certainly have the first and chiefest, the most serious, and practical, and effectual thoughts ; though some by-thoughts may run out another way : as the miller will be sure to keep so much water as is necessary to grind his grist, though he may let that run by, which he thinks he hath no need of : as you gather in all your corn and fruit for yourselves at harvest, though perhaps you will leave some scatterings which you do not value much, for any that will to gather : so whatever a man taketh for his ultimate end and true felicity, will have the store and stream of his cogitations, though he may scatter some few upon other things, when he thinks he may do it, without any detriment to his main design. As a traveller's face is ordinarily towards his journey's end, though so

^a See the Directions for Prayer, Hearing, Reading, and the Sacrament. Part 2.

far as he thinks it doth not stop him, he may look behind him, or on each side: so our main end will in the main carry on our thoughts. And therefore unholy souls, that know not practically any higher end than the prosperity and pleasure of the flesh, and the plenty and honour of the world, cannot possibly exercise any holy government over their thoughts; but their minds and consciences are defiled, and their thoughts made carnal as is their end. Nor is there any possibility of curing their vicious, wicked thoughts, and of ordering them acceptably to God, but by curing their worldly, carnal minds, and causing them to change their designs and ends. And this must be by understanding what is their interest. Know well but what it is that is most necessary for you, and best for you, and it will change your hearts, and save your souls. Know this, and your thoughts will never want matter to be employed on: nor will they be suffered to wander much abroad. Therefore it is that the expectation of death, and the thought of coming presently to judgment, do use more effectually to supply the mind with the wisest and most useful thoughts, than the most learned book or ordinary means can. That which tells a man best, what he hath to do, doth best tell him what he hath to think on. But the approach of death, and the appearance of eternity, doth best tell a dull and fleshly sinner, what he hath to do: this tells, and tells him roundly, that he must presently search his heart and life, and judge himself as one that is going to the final judgment; and that it is high time for him to look out for the remedy of his sin and misery, &c.: and therefore it will command his thoughts this way. Ask any lawyer, physician, or tradesman, what commands his thoughts; and you will find that his interest, and his ends, and work command them. Know what it is to have an immortal soul, that must live in joy or woe for ever, and what it is to be always so near to the irreversible, determining sentence, and what it is to have this short uncertain time and no more, to make our preparation in, and then it is easy to foretel which way your thoughts will go. A man that knoweth his house is on fire, will be thinking how to quench it: a man that knoweth he is entering into a mortal sickness, will be thinking how to cure it. There is

no better way to have your thoughts both furnished and acted aright, than to know your interest, and right end.

Direct. II. 'Know God aright, and behold him by the eye of an effectual faith, and you shall never want matter for holy thoughts.' His greatness and continual presence with you may command your thoughts, and awe them, and keep them from masterless vagaries. His wisdom will find them continual employment, upon the various, excellent, and delectable subjects, of his natural and supernatural revelation; but no where so much as upon himself. In God thou mayst find matter for thy cogitations and affections, most high and excellent, delighting the mind with a continual suavity, affording still fresh delights, though thou meditate on him a thousand years, or to all eternity. Thou mayst better say, that the ocean hath not water enough for thee to swim in, or that the earth hath not room enough for thee to tread upon, than that there is not matter enough in God, for thy longest meditations, and most delighting, satisfying thoughts. The blessed angels and saints in heaven, will find enough in God alone to employ their minds to all eternity. O horrid darkness and atheism that yet remaineth on our hearts! that we should want matter for our thoughts, to keep them from feeding upon air and filth! or want matter for our delight, to keep our minds from begging it at the creature's door, or hungering for the husks that feed the swine! when we have the infinite God, omnipotent, omniscient, most good and bountiful, our life, and hope, and happiness to think on with delight.

Direct. III. 'If you have but an eye of faith, to see the things of the unseen world, as revealed in the sacred Word, you cannot want matter to employ your thoughts.' Scripture is the glass in which you may see the other world. There you may see the Ancient of Days, the Eternal Majesty shining in his glory, for the felicitating of holy, glorified spirits. There you may see the human nature advanced above angels, and enjoying the highest glory next to the uncreated Majesty; and Christ reigning as the king of all the world, and all the angels of God obeying, honouring, and worshipping him. You may see him sending his angels on his gracious messages, to the lowest members of his body, the little ones of his flock on earth: you may see him inter-

ceding for all his saints, and procuring their peace and entertainment with the Father; and preparing for their reception when they pass into those mansions, and welcoming them one by one as they pass hence. There you may see the glorious, celestial society attending, admiring, extolling, worshipping, the Great Creator, the Gracious Redeemer, and the Eternal Spirit, with incessant, glorious, and harmonious praise: you may see them burning in the delicious flames of holy love, drawn out by the vision of the face of God, and by the streams of love which he continually poureth out upon them: you may see the magnetic attraction of the uncreated love, and felicitating closure of the attracted love of holy spirits, thus united unto God by Christ, and feasting everlastingly upon him: you may see the ravishments of joy, and the unspeakable pleasures, which all these blessed spirits have in this transporting sight, and love, and praise. You may see the ecstasies of joy which possess the souls of those that are newly passed from the body, and escaped the sins and miseries of this world, and find there such sudden ravishing entertainment, unspeakable beyond their former expectations, conceivings, or belief. You may see there with what wonder, what pity, what loathing and detestation, those holy, glorified souls look down upon earth, on the negligence, contempt, sensuality, and profaneness of the dreaming and distracted world! You may see there what you shall be for ever, if you be the holy ones of Christ, and where you must dwell, and what you must do, and what you shall enjoy. All this you may so know by sound believing, as to be carried to it as sincerely as if your eyes had seen it°. And yet can your thoughts be idle, or carnal, or worldly and sinful for want of work? Are your meditations dry and barren for want of matter to employ them? Doth the fire of love or other holy affections go out for want of fuel to feed it? Are not heaven and eternity spacious enough for your minds to expatiate in? Is not such a world as that sufficient for you to study, with fresh and delectable variety of discoveries from day to day? or that which is more delightful than variety? Would you have more matter, or higher and more excellent matter, or sweeter and more pleasant matter, or matter which doth more nearly concern yourselves? Get

• Heb. xi. 1. 2 Cor. v. 7.

that faith which all that shall be saved, live by, which makes things absent as operative (in some measure) as if they were present, and that which will be, as if it now were, and that which is unseen, as if it were now open to your eyes; and then your thoughts will want neither matter to work upon, nor altogether an actuating excitation.

If this were not enough, I might tell you what faith can see also in hell, which is not unworthy of your serious thoughts^p! What work is there! what direful complaints and lamentations! what self-tormentings, and what sense of God's displeasure, and for what? But I will wholly pass this by, that you may see, there is delightful work enough for your thoughts, and that I set you no unpleasant task.

Direct. iv. 'Get but the love of God well kindled in your heart, and it will find employment, even the most high and sweet employment, for your thoughts.' Yourselves shall be the judges, whether your love doth not for the most part rule your thoughts, assigning them their work, and directing them when, and how long to think on it. See but how a lustful lover is carried after a beloved, silly piece of flesh! Their thoughts will so easily and so constantly run after it, that they need no spur! Mark in what a stream it carrieth them! how it feedeth and quickeneth their invention, and elevateth an ordinary fancy into a poetical and passionate strain! What abundance of matter can a lover find, in the narrow compass of a dirty corpse, for his thoughts to work on night and day! And will not the love of God then much more fill and feast your thoughts? How easily can the love of money find matter for the thoughts of the worldling from one year to another? It is easy to think of any thing which you love. O what a happy spring of meditation, is a rooted, predominant love of God! Love him strongly, and you cannot forget him. You will then see him in every thing that meets you; and hear him in every one that speaketh to you: if you miss him, or have offended him, you will think on him with grief: if you taste of his love, you will think of him with delight: if you have but hope, you will think of him with desire, and your minds will be taken up in seeking him, and in understanding and using the means by which you may come to enjoy him. Love is ingenious, and full, and quick, and active, and resolute: it

^p See my tract, on Heb. xi. 1. called "The Life of Faith."

is valiant, and patient, and exceeding industrious, and delighteth to encounter difficulties, and to appear in labours, and to shew itself in advantageous sufferings; and therefore it maketh the mind in which it reigneth, exceeding busy; and findeth the thoughts a world of work. If God be not in all the thoughts of the ungodly, it is because he is not in his heart^a. He may be "nigh their mouths," but he is "far from their reins^b." Do those men believe themselves, or would they be believed by any one that is wise, who say they love God above all, and yet neither think of him, nor love to think of him; but are unwearied in thinking of their wealth, and honours, and the pleasures of their flesh? "Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you^c."

Direct. v. 'Soundly understand the wonderful mystery of man's redemption, and know Jesus Christ, and you need not want employment for your thoughts.' For "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge^d." "He is the power of God, and the wisdom of God^e." If the study of Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, and their numerous followers and commentators, can find work for the thoughts of men that would know the works of God, or would be accounted good philosophers, even for many years together, or a great part of their lives, what work then may a Christian find for his thoughts in Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption^f." "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell^g." And therefore in him there is fulness of matter for our meditations. As Paul "determined to know nothing" (or make ostentation of no other knowledge) "but Christ crucified^h:" so if your thoughts had nothing to work upon many years together, but Christ crucified, they need not stand still a moment for want of most suitable and delightful matter. The mystery of the incarnation alone, may find you work to search and admire many ages! But if thence you proceed to that world of wonderful matter which you may find in his doctrine, miracles, example, sufferings, temptations, victories, resurrection, ascension; and in his kingly, prophetic, and priestly offices; and in all the be-

^a Psal. x. 4.^b Jer. xii. 2.^c Psal. l. 22.^d Col. ii. 3.^e 1 Cor. i. 24.^f 1 Cor. i. 30.^g Col. i. 19.^h 1 Cor. ii. 2.

needs which he hath purchased for his flock, O what full and pleasant work is here for the daily thoughts of a believer! The soul may dwell here with continual delight, till it say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Therefore daily "bow your knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God^b."

Direct. vi. 'Search the holy Scriptures, and acquaint yourselves well with the oracles of God, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, and you will find abundant matter for your thoughts.' If you cannot find work enough for your minds, among all those heights and depths, those excellencies and difficulties, it is because you never understood them, or never set your hearts to search them. What mysterious doctrines! how sublime and heavenly, are there for you to meditate on as long as you live. What a perfect law: a system of precepts most spiritual and pure! What terrible threatenings against offenders, are there to be matter of your meditations. What wonderful histories of love and mercy! What holy examples! What a treasury of precious promises, on which lieth our hope of life eternal! What full and free expressions of grace! What a joyful act of pardon and oblivion to penitent, believing sinners! In a word, the character of our inheritance, and the law which we must be governed and judged by, are there before us for our daily meditation! David, that had much less of it than we, saith, "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day!" And God said to Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayst ob-

^a Gal. ii. 20.^b Ephes. iii. 14—20.^c Psal. cxix. 97.

serve to do according to all that is written therein^d. And Moses commanded the Israelites, that "these words should be in their hearts, and that they teach them diligently to their children, and talk of them when they sat in their houses, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up, and to write them on the posts of their houses, and on their gates," &c. that they might be sure to remember them^e.

Direct. VII. 'Know thyself well as thou art the work of God, and in thyself thou wilt find abundant matter for thy meditations.' There thou hast the natural image of God to meditate on and admire; even the noble faculties of thy understanding and free will, and executive power. And thou hast his moral or spiritual image to meditate on, if thou be not unregenerate: even thy holy wisdom, will and power, or thy holy light, and love, and power with promptitude for holy practice; and all in the unity of holy life. And there thou hast his relative image to meditate on; even thy being 1. The lord or owner. 2. The ruler. 3. The benefactor to the inferior creatures, and their end^f. O the world of mysteries which thou carriest continually about thee in that little room. What abundance of wonders are in thy body; which is fearfully and wonderfully made! And the greater wonders in thy soul. Thou art thyself the clearest glass that God is to be seen in under heaven: as thou art a man and a saint! And therefore the worthiest matter for thy own meditations (except that holy Word, which is thy rule, and the holy church which is but a coalition of many such). What a shame is it, that almost all men do live and die such strangers to themselves, as to be utterly unacquainted with the innumerable excellencies and mysteries, which God hath laid up in them; and yet to let their thoughts run out upon vanities and toys, and complain of their barrenness, and want of matter, to feed their better meditations.

Direct. VIII. 'Be not a stranger to the many sins, and wants, and weaknesses of thy soul, and thou never needest to be empty of matter for thy meditations.' And though these thoughts be not the sweetest, yet thy own folly hath

^d Josh. i. 8.

^e Deut. vi. 7.

^f See my book of the Mischiefs of Self-ignorance.

made them necessary. If thou be dangerously sick, or but painfully sore, thou canst scarce forget it : if poverty afflict thee with pinching wants, thy thoughts are taken up with cares and trouble day and night. If another wrong thee, thou canst easily think on it. And hast thou so often wronged thy God and Saviour, and so unkindly vilified his mercy, and so unthankfully set light by saving grace, and so presumptuously and securely ventured on his wrath, and yet dost thou find a scarcity of matter for thy meditations ? Hast thou all the sins of thy youth and ignorance to think on, and all the sins of thy rashness and sensuality, and of thy negligence and sloth, and of thy worldliness and selfishness, ambition and pride, thy passions and thy omissions ; and all thy sinful thoughts and words, and yet art thou scanted of matter for thy thoughts ? Dost thou carry about thee such a body of death ? so much selfishness, pride, worldliness, and carnality ; so much ignorance, unbelief, averseness to God, and backwardness to all that is spiritual and holy ; so much passion, and readiness to sin ; and yet dost thou not find enough to think on ? Look over the sins of all thy life : see them in all their aggravations : as they have been committed against knowledge, or means and helps, against mercies, and judgments and thy own vows or promises ; in prosperity and under affliction itself ; in secret and with others ; in thy general and particular calling, and in all thy relations ; in every place, and time, and condition that thou hast lived in ; thy sins against God directly, and thy injuries or neglects of man : sins against holy duties, and sins in holy duties : in prayer, hearing, reading, sacraments, meditation, conference, reproofs, and receiving of reproofs from others : thy negligent preparations for death and judgment ; the strangeness of thy soul to God and heaven^f.—Is not here work enough for thy meditations ? certainly if thou think so, it is because thy heart never felt the bitterness of sin, nor was ever yet acquainted with true repentance, but the time is yet to come, that light must shew thee what sin is, and what thou art, and what thou hast done, and how full thy heart is of the serpent's brood,

^f Thus evil may be made the object and occasion of good : it is good to meditate on evil to hate it, and avoid it. Keep acquaintance with conscience, and read over its books, and it will furnish your thoughts with humbling matter.

and that thy sin must find thee out! Dost thou not know that thy sins are as the sands of the shore, or as the hairs upon thy head for number? and that every sin hath deadly poison in it, and malignant enmity to God and holiness; and yet are they not enough, to keep thy thoughts from being idle? Judge by their language whether it be so with penitents? "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin: for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me^a." "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me^b." "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies^c." True repentance is thus described: "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your own iniquities, and for your abominations^d." Yea, God's forgiving and forgetting your sins, must not make you forget them. "I will establish to thee an everlasting covenant; then shalt thou remember thy ways and be ashamed. And I will establish my covenant with thee; that thou mayst be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God of hosts^e."

Direct. ix. 'Be not a stranger to the methods, and subtleties and diligence of satan, in his temptations to undo thy soul, and thou wilt find matter enough to keep thy thoughts from idleness.' He is thinking how to deceive thee and destroy thee; and doth it not concern thee to think how to defeat him and escape and save thyself? If the hare run not as fast as the dog, he is like to die for it. O that thy eyes were but opened to see the snares that are laid for thee in thy nature, in thy temperance and passions, in thy interests, thy relations, thy friends and acquaintance, and ordinary company; in thy businesses, and possessions, thy house, and goods, and lands, and cattle, and tenants, and servants, and all that thou tradest with, or hast to do with: in thine apparel and recreations; in thy meat and

^a Psal. li. 2, 3.^b Psal. xl. 12.^c Psal. cxix. 57.^d Ezek. xxxvi. 31.^e Ezek. xvi. 60-63.

drink, and sleep, and ease, in prosperity and adversity; in men's good thoughts, or bad thoughts of thee; in their praise and dispraise; in their benefits and their wrongs; their favour and their falling out; in their pleasing or displeasing thee: in thy thinking and in thy speaking, and in every thing thou hast to do with! Didst thou but see all these temptations, and also see to what they tend, and whether they would bring thee, thou wouldst find matter to cure the idleness or impertinences of thy thoughts.

Direct. x. 'The world and every creature in it, which thou daily seest, and which revealeth to thee the great Creator, might be enough to keep thy thoughts from idleness.' If sun, and moon, and stars; if heaven and earth, and all therein, be not enough to employ thy thoughts, let thy idleness have some excuse. I know thou wilt say, that it is upon some of these things that thou dost employ them: yea; but dost thou not first destroy, and mortify, and make nonsense of that on which thou meditatest? Dost thou not first separate it from God, who is the life, and glory, and end, and meaning of every creature? Thou killest it, and turnest out the soul, and thinkest only of the corpse: or on the creature made another thing as food for thy sensual desires! As the kite thinketh on the birds and chickens, to devour them to satisfy her greedy appetite; thus you can think of all God's works, so far as they accommodate your flesh. But the world is God's book, which he set man at first to read; and every creature is a letter or syllable, or word, or sentence, more or less, declaring the name and will of God. There you may behold his wonderful almightiness, his unsearchable wisdom, his unmeasurable goodness, mercy and compassions; and his singular regard of the sons of men! Though the ungodly, proud and carnal wits do but play with, and study the shape, and comeliness, and order of the letters, syllables and words, without understanding the sense and end; yet those that with holy and illuminated minds come thither to behold the footsteps of the great, and wise, and bountiful Creator, may find not only matter to employ, but to profit and delight their thoughts; they may be wrapt up by the things that are seen, into the sacred admirations, reverence, love and praise, of the glorious Maker of all who is unseen;

and thus to the sanctified all things will be sanctified ; and the study of common things will be to them divine and holy.

Direct. xi. 'Be not a stranger to, or neglectful disregarder of, the wonders of providence in God's administrations in the world, and thou wilt find store of matter for thy thoughts.' The dreadfulness of judgments, the delightfulness of mercies, the mysteriousness of all, will be matter of daily search and admiration to thee. Think of the strange preservation of the church ; of a people hated by all the world ! how such a flock of lambs is kept in safety, among so many ravenous wolves. Think of God's sharp afflictions of his offending people ; of his severe consuming judgments exercised sometimes upon the wicked, when he means to set up here and there a monument of his justice, for the warning of presumptuous sinners. Go see how the wicked are deceived by befooling pleasures, and how the prosperity of fools destroyeth them ; how they flourish to-day as a green bay-tree, or as the flower of the field ; and then go into their sanctuary and see their end, how to-morrow they are cut down and withered, and the place of their abode doth know them no more. Go see how God delighteth to abase the proud, and to "scatter them in the imagination of their hearts ; to put down the mighty from their seats, and to exalt them of low degree ; to fill the hungry with good things ; and to send the rich empty away^m." "How great are his signs : and how mighty are his wonders ? His kingdom is an everlasting kingdomⁿ." "He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will^o." "For wisdom and might are his ; and he changeth the times and the seasons : he removeth kings, and setteth up kings : he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things : he knoweth what is in darkness, and the light dwelleth with him^p." "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth ; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand^q." Mark how the upright are afflicted daily, and how the feet of violence trample on them ; and yet how they rejoice, and

^m Luke i. 51—53.

ⁿ Dan. iv. 3.

^o Verse 32.

^p Dan. ii. 20—22.

^q Psal. ix. 16.

adhere to that God who doth afflict them, and pity and pray for their miserable persecutors and oppressors; and how "all things do work together for their good*." "Wonderful are all the works of God, sought out of them that have pleasure therein*." The histories of former ages, and the observation of the present, may shew thee a world of matter for thy thoughts.

Direct. XII. 'Understand all the lineaments, and beauty of God's image upon a holy soul, the excellency and use of every grace, and the harmony of all; and thou wilt have store of profitable matter for thy thoughts.' Know the nature of every grace, and the place and order of it, and the office, use, and exercise of it; and the means and motives, the opposites, dangers and preservatives of it: know it as God's image, and see and love thy Maker and Redeemer and Regenerator in it: know how God loveth it, and how useful it is to our serving and honouring him in the world; and how deformed and vile a thing the soul is, that is without it: know well what faith is; what wisdom and prudence are; what repentance and humility, and mortification are; what hope, and fear, and desire, and obedience, and meekness, and temperance, and sobriety, and chastity, and contentation, and justice, and self-denial are; especially know the nature and force of love to God, and to his servants, and to neighbours, and to enemies; know what a holy resignation and devotedness to God are: and what are watchfulness, diligence, zeal, fortitude, and perseverance, patience, submission, and peace; know what the worth, and use, the helps and hindrances of all these are, and then your thoughts will not be idle.

Direct. XIII. 'If thou be not a stranger to the Spirit of Grace, or a neglecter of his daily motions, and persuasions, and operations on thy heart, the attendance and improvement of them will keep thy thoughts from rusty idleness and a vagrant course.' It is not a small matter to be daily entertaining so noble a guest, and daily observing the offers and motions of so great a benefactor; and daily receiving the gifts of so bountiful a Lord, and daily accepting his necessary helps; and daily obeying the saving precepts of so great and beneficent a God. If you know how insuf-

* Rom. viii. 28.

* Psal. cxi. 2.

ficient you are without him, to will or to do, to perform or to think, or purpose any good, and that all your sufficiency is of him. If you knew that it is the great skill and diligence requisite in all that will sail successfully to the desired land of rest, to know the winds of the Spirit's helps, and to set all your sails to the right improvement of them, and to bestir you while such gales continue, you would find greater work than wandering for your thoughts.

Direct. xiv. 'Be not ignorant or neglective of that frame and course of holy duty to God and man, in which all your lives should be employed, and you cannot want matter to employ your thoughts upon.' Your pulse, and breath, and natural motions, will hold on whether you think of them or not; but so will not moral, holy motion, for that must be rational and voluntary. You have all the powers of soul and body, to exercise either upon God or for God. You must know him, fear him, love him, obey him, trust him, worship him, pray to him, praise him, give thanks to him, bewail your sins, and hear his Word, and reverently use his name and day. And is not the understanding and learning how to do all this, and the seasonable, serious practice of it all, sufficient to keep the thoughts from idleness? O what a deal of work doth a serious Christian find for his thoughts, about some one of these! About praying aright, or hearing, or receiving the sacrament of Christ's body and blood aright! But besides all these, what a deal of duty have you to perform, to magistrates, pastors, parents, masters, and other superiors; to subjects, people, children, servants, and other inferiors; to every neighbour, for his soul, his body, his estate, and name; and to do to all as you would be done by. And besides all this, how much have you to do directly for yourselves; for your souls, and bodies, and families, and estates! Against your ignorance, infidelity, pride, selfishness, sensuality, worldliness, passion, sloth, intemperance, cowardise, lust, uncharitableness, &c. Is not here matter for your thoughts?

Direct. xv. 'Overlook not that life full of particular mercies, which God hath bestowed on yourselves, and you will find pleasant and profitable matter for your thoughts.' To spare me the labour of repeating them, look back to Chap. iii. *Direct. 14.* Think of that mercy which brought

you into the world, and chose your parents, your place, and your condition; which brought you up, and bore with you patiently in all your sins, and closely warned you of every danger: which seasonably afflicted you, and seasonably delivered you, and heard your prayers in many a distress; which hath yet kept the worst of you from death and hell; and hath regenerated, justified, adopted, and sanctified those that he hath fitted for eternal life. How many sins he hath forgiven! How many he hath in part subdued! How many and suitable helps he hath vouchsafed you! From how many enemies he hath saved you! How oft he hath delighted you by his Word and grace! What comforts you have had in his servants and ordinances, in your relations and callings! His mercies are innumerable, and yet do your meditations want matter to supply them? If I should but recite the words of David in many thankful psalms, you would think mercy found his thoughts employment.

Direct. xvi. 'Foresee that exact and righteous judgment, which shortly you have to undergo; and it will do much to find you employment for your thoughts.' A man that must give an account to God of all that he hath done, both good and evil, and knoweth not how soon, for ought he knows before to-morrow, methinks should find him something better than vanity to think on! Is it nothing to be ready for so great a day? To have your justification ready?, your accounts made up? your consciences cleansed and quieted on good grounds? To know what answer to make for yourselves against the accuser? To be clear and sure that you are indeed regenerate, and have a part in Christ, and are washed in his blood, and reconciled to God, and shall not prove hypocrites and self-deceivers in that trying day! when it is a sentence that must finally decide the question, whether we shall be saved or damned: and must determine us to heaven or hell for ever: and you have so short and uncertain a time for your preparation: will not this administer matter to your thoughts? If you were going to a judgment for your lives, or all your estates, you would think it sufficient to provide you matter for your thoughts by the way! How much more this final, dreadful judgment!

Direct. xvii. 'If all this will not serve the turn, it is

strange if God call not home your thoughts, by sharp afflictions : and methinks the improvement of them, and the removal of them should find some employment for your thoughts.' It is time then to "search and try your ways, and turn again unto the Lord¹." To find out the Achan that troubleth your peace, and know the voice of the rod, and what God is angry at, and what it is that he calleth you to mind ! To know what root it is that beareth these bitter fruits : and how they may be sanctified to make you conformable to Christ, and "partakers of his holiness²." Besides the exercise of holy patience and submission, there is a great deal of work to be done in sufferings ; to exercise faith, to honour God, and the good cause of our suffering, and to humble ourselves for the evil cause, and to get the benefit. And if you will not meditate of the duty, you shall meditate of the pain, whether you will or not ; and say as Lam. iii. 17—20. "I forgot prosperity : and I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord : remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall : my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me." Put not God to remember you by this spur, and help your meditations by so sharp a means ! "Therefore did he consume their days in vanity, and their years in trouble : when he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God : and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer³."

Direct. xviii. 'Be diligent in your callings, and spend no time in idleness, and perform your labours with holy minds, to the glory of God, and in obedience to his commands, and then your thoughts will have the less leisure and liberty for vanity or idleness.' Employments of the body will employ the thoughts : they that have much to do have much to think on ; for they must do it prudently, and skillfully, and carefully, that they may do it successfully ; and therefore must think how to do it. And the urgency and necessity of business will almost necessitate the thoughts, and so carry them on and find them work, (though some employments more than others.) And let none think that these thoughts are bad or vain because they are about worldly

¹ Lam. iii. 4.² Heb. xii. 10.³ Psal. lxxviii. 33—35.

things ; for if our labours themselves be not bad or vain, then neither are those thoughts which are needful to the well-doing of our work. Nor let any worldlyling please himself with this, and say, ' My thoughts are taken up about my calling : ' for his calling itself is perverted by him, and made a carnal work to carnal ends, when it should be sanctified. That the thoughts about your labours may be good, 1. Your labours themselves must be good, performed in obedience to God, and for the good of others, and to his glory. 2. Your labours and thoughts must keep their bounds, and the higher things must be still preferred, and sought, and thought on in the first place. And your labours must so far employ your thoughts as is needful to the well-doing of them : but better things must be thought on, in such labours as leave a vacancy to the thoughts. But diligence in your calling is a very great help to keep out sinful thoughts, and to furnish us with thoughts which in their place are good.

Direct. XIX. ' You have all God's spiritual helps and holy ordinances to feed your meditations, and to quicken them, which should be used when your minds grow dull or barren.' When your minds are empty, and you cannot pump up plentiful matter for holy thoughts, the reading of a seasonable book, or conference with a full experienced Christian, will furnish you with matter : so will the hearing of a profitable sermon : and sometimes prayer will do more than meditation. And weak-headed persons, of small knowledge and shallow memories, must fetch the matter of their meditations thus more frequently from reading and conference than others need to do : as they can hold but little at a time, so they must go the oftener : as he that goeth to the water with a spoon or a dish, must go oftener than they that go with a more capacious vessel. Others can carry a store-house of meditation still about them ; but persons of very small knowledge and memory, must have their meditations fed by others, as infants by the spoon. Therefore a little and often is the best way, both for their reading or hearing, and for their holy thoughts. How great a mercy is it, that weak Christians have such store of helps : that when their heads are empty, they have books and friends that are not empty, from whence they may fetch help as they want it :

and that their hearts are not empty of the love of God, which inclineth them to do more, than their parts enable them to do.

Direct. xx. 'If all these do not sufficiently furnish your meditations, look through the world, and see what a multitude of miserable souls do call for your compassion and daily prayers for their relief.' Think on the many nations that lie in the darkness of idolatry and infidelity! It is not past the sixth part of the world that are Christians of any sort. The other five parts are heathens, and Mahometans, and some few Jews. And of this sixth part, it is but a small part that are reformed from popery, and such corruptions as the Eastern and Southern Christians also are too much defiled with. And in the reformed churches, how common are profaneness and worldliness, and how few are acquainted with the power of godliness! What abundance of ignorant and ungodly persons are there, who hate the power and practice of that religion, which they profess themselves they hope to be saved by, (as if they hoped to be saved for hating, persecuting, and disobeying it). And among those that seem more serious and obedient, how many are hypocrites? And how many are possessed with pride and self-conceitedness, which break forth into unruliness, contentions, and uncharitableness, factions, and divisions in the church! How many Christians are ignorant, passionate, weak, unprofitable, and too many scandalous! And how few are judicious, prudent, heavenly, charitable, peaceable, humble, meek, laborious, and fruitful, who set themselves wholly to be good and to do good! And of these few, how few are there that are not exercised under heavy afflictions from God, or cruel persecutions from ungodly men! What tyranny is exercised by the Turk without, and the Pope within, upon the sincerest followers of Christ! Set all this together, and tell me, whether thy compassionate thoughts or thy prayers do need to go out for want of fuel or matter to feed upon from day to day?

Tit. 3. Directions how to make good Thoughts effectual: or, General Directions for Meditation.

Here some Directions are preparatory, and some about the work itself.

Direct. 1. 'Be sure that reason maintain its authority in the command and government of your thoughts; and that they be not left masterless to fancy, and passion, and objects, to carry them which way they please.' Diseased, melancholy, and crazed persons have almost no power over their own thoughts. They cannot command them to what they would have them exercised about, nor call them off from any thing that they run out upon; but they are like an unruly horse, that hath a weak rider, or hath cast the rider: or like a masterless dog, that will not go or come at your command. Whereas our thoughts should be at the direction of our reason, and the command of the will, to go and come off as soon as they are bid. As you see a student can rule his thoughts all day; he can appoint them what they shall meditate on, and in what order, and how long: so can a lawyer, a physician, and all sorts of men about the matters of their arts and callings. And so it should be with a Christian about the matters of his soul. All rules of direction are to little purpose with them, whose reason hath lost its power in governing their thoughts. If I tell a man that is deeply melancholy, 'Thus and thus you must order your thoughts,' he will tell me that he cannot; his thoughts are not in his power. If you would give never so much he is not able to forbear thinking of that which is his disturbance, nor to command his thoughts to that which you direct him, nor to think, but as he doth, even as his disease and trouble moveth him. And what good will precepts do to such? Grace, and doctrine, and exhortation work by reason and the commanding will. If a holy person could manage his practical, heart-raising meditations, but as orderly, and constantly, and easily as a carnal, covetous preacher can manage his thoughts in studying the same things, for carnal ends, (to make a gain of them or to win applause) how happily would our work go on! And is it not sad to think that carnal ends should do so much more than spiritual, about the same things?

Direct. 11. 'Carefully avoid the disease of melancholy: for that dethroneth reason, and disableth it to rule the thoughts.' Distraction wholly disableth; but melancholy disableth only in part, according to the measure of its prevalency: and therefore leaveth some room for advice.

Direct. III. 'Take heed of sloth and negligence of the will, whereby the directions of reason will be unexecuted, for want of resolution and command; and so every temptation will carry away the thoughts.' A lazy coachman will let the horses go which way they list, because he will not strive with them; and will break his neck to save his labour. If, when you feel unclean or worldly thoughts invade your minds, you will not give your wills the alarm, and rise up against them, and resolutely command them out; you will be like a lazy person that lieth in bed while he seeth thieves robbing his house, and will let all go rather than he will rise and make resistance, (a sign that he hath no great riches to lose, or else he would stir for it). And if you see your duty, on what your thoughts should be employed, and will not resolutely call them up, and command them to their work, you will be like a sluggard that will let all his servants lie in bed, as well as he, because he will not speak to call them. You see by daily experience, that a man's thoughts are much in the power of his will, and made to obey it. If money and honour, or the delight of knowing, can cause a wicked preacher to command his own thoughts on good things, as aforesaid; you may command yours to the same things, if you will but as resolutely exercise your authority over them.

Direct. IV. 'Use not your thoughts to take their liberty and be ungoverned: for use will make them headstrong and not regard the voice of reason; and it will make reason careless and remiss.' Use and custom have great power on our minds: where we use to go, our path is plain; but where there is no use, there is no way. Where the water useth to run there is a channel. It is hard ruling those that are used to be unruly. If use will do so much with the tongue, (as we find in some that use to curse, and swear, and speak vainly, and in others that use to speak soberly and religiously; in some that by use can speak well in conference, preaching or praying many hours together, when others that use it not can do almost nothing that way;) why may it not much prevail with the thoughts?

Direct. V. 'Take heed lest the senses and appetite grow too strong, and master reason; for if they do, they will at once dispossess it of the government of the thoughts, and will brutishly usurp the power themselves.' As, when a

rebellious army deposeth a king, they do not only cast off the yoke of subjection themselves, but dissolve the government as to all other subjects, and usually usurp it themselves, and make themselves governors. If once you be servants to your fleshly appetites and sense, your thoughts will have other work to do, and another way to go, when you call them to holy and necessary things: especially when the enticing objects are at hand. You may as well expect a clod to ascend like fire, or a swine to delight in temperance, as a glutton, or drunkard, or fornicator to delight in holy contemplation. Reason and flesh cannot both be the governors.

Direct. VI. 'Keep under passions, that they depose not reason from the government of your thoughts.' I told you before how they cause evil thoughts: and as much will they hinder good. Four passions are especial enemies to meditation: 1. Anger. 2. Perplexing grief. 3. Disturbing fear. 4. But above all, excess of pleasure in any worldly, fleshly thing. Who can think that the mind is fit for holy contemplation, when it flames with wrath, or is distracted with grief and care, or trembleth with fear, or is drunk with pleasure? Grief and fear are the most harmless of the four; yet all hinder reason from governing the thoughts.

Direct. VII. 'Evil habits are another great hindrance of reason's command over our thoughts: labour therefore diligently for the cure of this disease.' Though habits do not necessitate, they strongly incline: and when every good thought must go against a strong and constant inclination, it will weary reason to drive on the soul, and you can expect but small success.

Direct. VIII. 'Urgent and oppressing business doth almost necessitate the thoughts: therefore avoid as much as you can such urgencies, when you would be free for meditation.' Let your thoughts have as little diverting matter as may be, at those times when you would have them entire and free for God.

Direct. IX. 'Crowds and ill company are no friends to meditation: choose therefore the quietness of solitude when you would do much in this.' As it is ill studying in a crowd, and unseasonable before a multitude to be at secret prayer (except some short ejaculations); so is it as unmeet

a season for holy meditation. The mind that is fixedly employed with God, or about things spiritual, had need of all possible freedom and peace, to retire into itself, and abstract itself from alien things, and seriously intend its greater work.

Direct. x. 'Above all, take heed of sinful interests and designs; for these are the garrison of satan, and must be battered down before any holy cogitations can take place.' He that is set upon a design of rising, or of growing rich, hath something else to do than to entertain those sober thoughts of things eternal, which are destructive of his carnal design.

Direct. xi. 'The impediments of reason's authority being thus removed, distinguish between your occasional and your stated, ordinary course of thoughts. And as your hands have their ordinary stated course of labour, and every day hath its employment which you fore-expect, so let your thoughts know where is their proper channel, and their every day's work: and let holy prudence appoint out proportionable time and service for them.' What a life will that man live, that hath no known course of labour, but only such as accidentally he is called to? His work must needs be uncertain, various, unprofitable, and uncomfortable, and next to none. And he that hath not a stated course of employment for his thoughts, will have them do him little service. Consider first how much of the day is usually to be spent in common business: and then consider, whether it be such as taketh up your thoughts as well as your hands, or such as leaveth your thoughts at liberty: as a lawyer, a physician, a merchant, and most tradesmen, must employ their thoughts to the well-doing of their work: and these must be the more desirous of a seasonable, vacant hour for meditation, because their thoughts must be otherwise employed all the rest of the day. But a weaver, a tailor, and some other tradesmen, and day-labourers, may do their work well, and yet have their thoughts free for better things a great part of the day: these must contrive an ordinary way of employment for their thoughts, when their work doth not require them: and they need no other time for meditation. The rest must entertain some short, occasional meditations, intermixed with their business; but they cannot then have time for more solemn meditation (which differeth from the

other, as a set prayer from a short ejaculation ; or a sermon from an occasional short discourse). They that have more time for their thoughts, must beforehand prudently consider, how much time it is best to spend in meditation, for the increase of knowledge, and how much for the exercise of holy affections, and on what subject, and in what order ; and so to know their ordinary work.

Direct. xii. ' Lay yourselves under the urgency of necessity, and the power of those motives which should most effectually engage your thoughts.' In the foresaid instance, what is it that makes a wicked preacher that he can study divine things orderly from year to year, but that he is still under the power of his carnal motives, profit and honour, and some delight? And if you will put yourselves habitually and statedly also under the sense and power of your far greater motives, as always perceiving how much it doth concern you, for yourselves, and others, and the honour of God ; this would be a constant poise and spring, which being duly wound up, would keep the wheels in equal motion.

Direct. xiii. ' Thus you must make the service of your master, and the saving of yourselves and others, your business in the world, which you follow daily as your ordinary calling, and then it will carry on your thoughts.' Whereas he that serveth God but on the by, with some occasional service, will think on him or his work but on the by, with some occasional thoughts. A close and diligent course of holy living, is the best help to a constant, profitable course of holy thinking.

Direct. xiv. ' The chief point of skill and holy wisdom, for this and other religious duties, is, to take that course which tends to make religion pleasant, and to draw your souls to delight in God, and to take heed of that which would make all grievous to you.' It will be easy and sweet to think of that which you take pleasure in. But if satan can make all irksome and unpleasant to you, your thoughts will avoid it, as you do a carrion when you stop your nose and haste away. Psal. civ. 34., saith the Psalmist, " My meditation of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord."

Directions about the work itself.

Direct. I. 'As you must never be unfurnished of holy store, so you must prudently make choice of your particular subject.' As the choice of a fit text is half a good sermon; so the choice of the fittest matter for you, is much of a good meditation. Which requireth some good acquaintance both with the truth, and with yourselves.

Direct. II. 'To this end you must know in their several degrees, what subjects are in themselves most excellent to be meditated on.' As the first and highest is the most blessed God himself, and the glorious person of our Redeemer, and the New Jerusalem or heaven of glory, where he is revealed to his saints. And then, the blessed society which there enjoyeth him, and the holy vision, love, and joy, by which he is enjoyed. And next is the wonderful work of man's redemption, and the covenant of grace, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost, and all the graces that make up God's image on the soul. And then is the state and privileges of the church, which is the body of Christ, for whom all this is done and prepared. And next is the work of the Gospel, by which this church is gathered, edified, and saved. And then, the matter of our own salvation, and our state of grace, and way to life. And then, the salvation of others. And then, the common, public good, in temporal respects. And then, our personal, bodily welfare. And next, the bodily welfare of our neighbours. And lastly, those things that do but remotely tend to these. This is the order of desirableness and worth, which will tell you what should have estimative precedence in your thoughts and prayers.

Direct. III. 'You must also know what subject is then most seasonable for your thoughts, and refuse even an unseasonable good.' For good may be used by unseasonableness to do hurt. It may be thrust in by the tempter, on purpose to divert you from some greater good, or to mar some other duty in hand: so he will oft put in some good meditation to turn you from a better, or in the midst of sermon or prayer: or if he see you out of temper to perform a duty of meditation, or that you have no leisure, without neglect-

ing your more proper work, he will then drive you on, that by the issue he may discourage and hurt you, and make the duty unprofitable and grievous to you, and make you more averse to it afterwards. Untimely duty may be no duty, but a sin, which is covered with the material good. As the Pharisees' sabbath-rest was, when mercy called them to violate it.

Direct. iv. 'Examine well, and determine of the end and use of your meditations, before you set upon them, and then labour to fit them to that special end.' The end is first in the intention, and from the love of it the means are chosen and used. If it be knowledge that you are to increase, it is evidence of truth, with the matter to be known, in a convincing, scientific way, that you must meditate on. If it be divine belief that is to be increased or exercised, it is divine revelations, both matter, and evidence of credibility which you have to meditate on. If you would excite the fear of God, you have his greatness, and terribleness, his justice, and threatenings to meditate on. If you would excite the love of God, you have his goodness, mercy, Christ, and promises to meditate on. If you would prepare for death and judgment, you have your hearts to try, your lives to repent of, your graces to discover, and revive, and exercise, and your soul's diseases to feel, and the remedies to apply: so whenever you mean to make any thing of a set meditation, determine first of the end, and by it of the means.

Direct. v. 'Clear up the truth of things to your minds as you can, before you take much pains to work them on your affections, lest you find after that you did but misinform yourselves, and bestow all your labour in vain, to make deluding images on your minds, and bring your affections to bow before them.' As many have done by espousing errors, who have laid out their zeal upon them many years together, and made them the reason of hatred, and contention, and bitter censurings of opposing brethren; and have made parties, and divisions, and disturbances in the church for them, and after so many years zealous sinning, have found them to be but like Michal's image, a man of straw instead of David; and that they made all this filthy pudder but in a dream.

Direct. VI. 'Next labour to perceive the weight of every thing you think on, be it good or evil : and to that end be sure, that God and eternity be taken in, in every meditation, and all things judged of as they stand related to God, and to your eternal state; which only can give you the true estimate and sense of good and evil : there will still the life and soul, and power be wanting in your most excellent meditations, further than God is in them, and they are divine.' When you meditate on any Scripture-truth, think of it as a beam from the Eternal Light; indited by the Holy Ghost, to lead men by obedience to felicity. Behold it with reverence as a letter or message sent from heaven; and as a thing of grand importance to your souls. When you meditate of any grace, think on it as a part of the image of God, implanted and actuated by the Holy Ghost, to advance the soul into communion with God, and prepare it for him. When you meditate on any duty, remember who commandeth it, and whom you are chiefly to respect in your obedience; and what will be the end of obeying or disobeying. When you meditate on any sin, remember that it is the defacing or privation of God's image, and the rebel that riseth up against him in all his attributes, to depose him from the government of the soul and of the world; and foresee the end to which it tendeth. Take in God, if you would feel life and power in all that you meditate on.

Direct. VII. 'Let your ordinary meditations be on the great and necessary things; and think less frequently on the less necessary matters.' Meditation is but a means to a further end: it is to work some good upon the soul: use therefore those subjects which are most powerful and fit to work it. Great truths will do great works upon the heart. They are usually the surest and most past controversy and doubt: there is more weight, and substance, and power in one article of the creed, or one petition of the Lord's Prayer, or one commandment of the decalogue, to benefit the soul, than in abundance of the controverted opinions which men have troubled themselves and others with in all ages. As one purse of gold, will buy more than a great quantity of farthings. Meditating on great and weighty truths, makes great and weighty Christians. And meditating inordinately on light and controverted opinions, makes light, opinion-

ative, contentious professors. Little things may have their time and place, but it must be but little time and the last place; except when God maketh any little thing to be the matter of our lawful calling and employment (as all the common matters of the world are little). And then they may have a larger proportion of our time, though still they must have the lowest place in our estimation and in our hearts.

Direct. viii. 'Whenever you are called to meditate on any smaller truth or thing, see that you take it not as separated from the greater, but still behold it as connexed to them, and planted and growing in them, and receiving their life and beauty from them; so that you may still preserve the life and interest of the greatest matters in your hearts, and may not mortify the least, and turn it into a deceit or idol.' We are to climb upwards, and not to descend downwards: and therefore we begin at the body of the tree, and so pass up to the few and greatest boughs; and thence to the smaller numerous branches, which as they are hard to be discerned, numbered and remembered, so are they not all strong enough to bear us; but are fitted rather to be looked on, than trodden and rested on. But if you take them not as growing from the greater boughs, but cut them off, they lose their life, and beauty, and fruitfulness. If all the controversies in the church had been managed, with due honour and preservation of holiness, charity, unity, peace, and greater truths; and if all the circumstantialia in religion had been ordered with a salvo, and due regard, and just subserviency to the power and spirituality of holy worship, the Christian world would have had more life, and strength, and fruitfulness, and less imagery, unholy, ludicrous compliment, and hypocrisy.

Direct. ix. 'Let the end and order of your meditations be first for the settling of your judgments, and next for the resolving and settling of your wills, and thirdly for the reforming and bettering of your lives; and but in the fourth place, after all these, for the raising of your holy passions or lively feeling; which must have but its proper room and place.' But indeed where some of these are done already, they may be supposed, and we may proceed to that which is yet to do. As if you know what is sin and duty but to

do it not, your meditation must be, not to make you know what you knew not, but first to consider well of what you know, and set the powerful truth before you; and then labour hereby to bring your wills to a fixed resolution of obedience. But if it be a truth whose principal use is on the will and affections (as to draw up the heart to the love of God, by the meditating on his attractive excellencies), then the most pains must there be taken. Of which see Chap. iii. Direct. 11.

Direct. x. 'Turn your cogitations often into soliloquies; methodically and earnestly preaching to your own hearts, as you would do on that subject to others if it were to save their souls.' As this will keep you in order, from rambling and running out, and will also find you continual matter, (for method is a wonderful help both to invention, memory and delight) so it will bring things soonest to your affections: and earnest pleading of convincing reasons with our own hearts, is a powerful way to make the fire burn, and to kindle desire, fear, love, hatred, repentings, shame, sorrow, joy, resolution, or any good effect. Convictions, upbraidings, expostulations, reprehensions, and self-persuasions may be very powerful: when a dull way of bare thinking is but like a dull way of preaching, without any lively application, which little stirs the hearers. Learn purposely of the liveliest books you read, and of the best and liveliest preachers you hear, to preach to your hearts, and use it orderly, and you will find it a most powerful way of meditating.

Direct. xi. 'Turn your meditations often into ejaculatory prayers and addresses unto God: for that will keep you reverent, serious and awake, and make all the more powerful, because the more divine.' When you meditate on sin, turn sometimes to God, by penitent lamentation, and say, 'Lord, what a wretch and rebel was I to entertain such an enemy of thine in my heart? and for nothing to offend thee and violate thy laws! O pardon, O cleanse me, O strengthen me! Conquer and cast out this odious enemy of thee and me.' So when you are seeking to excite or exercise any grace, send up a fervent request to God to shew his love and power upon thy dead and sluggish heart,

'Of this see the fourth part of my 'Saints' Rest' more fully.

and to be the principal agent in a work which is so much his own. Prayer is a most holy duty, in which the soul hath so nearly to do with God, that if there be any holy seriousness in the heart, it will be thus excited: a dull and wandering mind will bear some reverence to God; and therefore interests him in all.

Direct. XII. 'Let every meditation be undertaken in a humble sense of thy own insufficiency, with a believing dependence on thy Head and Saviour, to guide and quicken thee by his Holy Spirit, and to cover the infirmities of thy holiest thoughts.' Whatever good is written upon our hearts, must be "written by the Spirit of the living God:" and this "trust we must have through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God." How heavily will all go on, or rather how certainly shall we labour in vain, and cast off all, if Christ cast us off, and leave us to ourselves! Think not that your life and strength are radically in yourselves: go to him by renewed acts of faith, by whom you must be quickened.

Direct. XIII. 'Let not your holy thoughts be so seldom, as to keep you strange to the matter of your meditations, nor so short as to be gone before you have made any thing of it.' Now and then a cursory thought, will not acquaint the soul with God, nor bring it to a habit and temperament of holiness. Whereas that which you think on frequently and seriously, as your business and delight, will become the nutriment and nature of your souls: as the air which we daily breathe in, and the food which we daily live upon, do our bodies. And you will find that as use will breed skill and strength, so it will cause such acquaintance and familiarity, as will very much tend to the fruit and comfort of the work. Whereas they that only cast now and then a look at God and holiness, do lose so quickly the little which they get, that it makes no great alteration on them.

Direct. XIV. 'Yet do not overdo in point of violence or length; but carry on the work sincerely according to the abilities of your minds and bodies; lest going beyond your strength, you craze your brains, and discompose your minds, and disable yourselves, to do any thing at all.' Though

* 2 Cor. iii. 3—5.

we cannot estimatively love God too much, yet is it possible to think of him with too much passion, or too long at once: because it may be more than the spirits and brain can bear: and if once they be overstrained, if they break not, like a lute-string screwed too high, they will be like a leg that is out of joint, that can pain you but not bear you. While the soul rideth on so lame or dull a horse, as the body is, it must not go the pace which it desireth, but which the body can bear; or else it may quickly be dismounted, or like one that rideth on a tired horse. It is not the horse that goeth at first with chafing heat, and violence, which will travel best: but you must put on in the pace that you are able to hold out. You little know how lamentable and distressed a case you will be in, or how great an advantage the tempter hath, if once he do but tire you by overdoing!

Direct. xv. 'Choose not unnecessarily or ordinarily the bitterest or most unpleasant subjects for your meditation, lest you make it grow a burden to you; but dwell most on the sweet delightful thoughts of the infinite love of God revealed by Christ, and the eternal glory purchased by him, and the wonderful helps and mercies in the way.' As it is the Gospel which Christ's ministers must preach to others, so it is the Gospel which in your meditations, you must preach most to yourselves. It is love and pleasure which you must principally endeavour to excite: and you must do it by contemplating amiableness and felicity, the objects of love and pleasure. For the thoughts of terror, and wrath, and misery, are unfit to stir up these: though to the unconverted, dull, secure, presumptuous, or sensual sinner, such thoughts are very necessary to awake him, and prepare him for the thoughts of love and peace. It is the principal part of this art, to keep off loathing and averseness, and to keep up readiness and delight.

Direct. xvi. 'When you are in company, let out the fruit of your secret meditations, in holy, edifying discourse.' Gather not for yourselves only, but that you may communicate to others. The "good scribe instructed to the kingdom of God," must "bring forth out of his treasure things new and old." That is good which doth good. God is communicative; and the best men are likest

to him: nay, a fluent discourse sometimes is a great instructor to ourselves, and bringeth those things into our minds with clearness, which long meditation would not have done. For one thing leadeth in another; and in a warm discourse the spirits are excited, and the understanding and memory are engaged to a close attention: so that just in the speaking, we have oftentimes such a sudden appearance of some truth, which before we took no notice of, that we find it is no small addition to our knowledge, which comes in this way. As some find that vocal prayer doth more excite them, and keep the mind from wandering, than mere mental prayer doth: so free discourse is but a vocal meditation. And what man's thoughts are not more guilty of disorder, vagaries and interruptions, than his discourse is?

Direct. xvii. 'Obey all that God revealeth to you in your meditations, and turn them all into faithful practice; and make not thinking the end of thinking.' Else you will but do as the ungodly, and the disobedient in their prayers, who offer to God the "sacrifice of fools, and consider not that they do evil^a." Away with the sin, and do the duty, on which you think.

Direct. xviii. 'Think not that the same measure of contemplation and striving with your own affections, is necessary to all; but that an obediential, active life may be as acceptable to God, when he calleth men to it; as a more contemplative life. This leadeth me necessarily to give you some directions about the difference of these ways.

Tit. 4. The Difference between a Contemplative Life, and an Obedient, Active Life, with Directions concerning them.

This task will be best performed by answering those questions which here need a solution.

Quest. i. 'What is a contemplative life? and what is an active, obediential life?'

Ans. Every active Christian is bound to somewhat of contemplation: and all contemplative persons are bound to obedience to God, and to so much of action as may answer their abilities and opportunities. But yet some are much more called to the one, and some to the other: and we de-

^a Eccles. v. 1, 2.

nominate from that which is most eminent and the chief. We call that a contemplative life, when a man's state and calling alloweth and requireth him, to make the exercises of his mind on things sublime and holy, and the affecting of his heart with them, to be his principal business, which taketh up the most of his time. And we call that an active, obediential life, when a man's state and calling requireth him to spend the chief part of his time, in some external labour or vocation, tending to the good of ourselves and others. As artificers, tradesmen, husbandmen, labourers, physicians, lawyers, pastors and preachers of the Gospel, soldiers and magistrates, all live in active life, which should be a life of obedience to God. Though among these, some have much more time for contemplation than others. And some few there are that are exempt from both these, and are called to live a passive and obediential life: that is, such a life in which their obedient bearing of the cross, and patient suffering, and submission to the chastising or trying will of God, is the most eminent and principal service they can do him, above contemplation or action.

Quest. II. 'Must every man do his best to cast off all worldly and external labours, and to retire himself to a contemplative life as the most excellent?'

Ans. No: no man should do so without a special necessity or call: for there are general precepts on all that are able, that we live to the benefit of others, and prefer the common good, and as we have opportunity do good to all men, and love our neighbours as ourselves, and do as we would be done by (which will put us upon much action), and that we labour before we eat. And for a man unnecessarily to cast off all the service of his life, in which he may be profitable to others, is a burying or hiding his master's talents, and a neglect of charity, and a sinning greatly against the law of love. As we have bodies, so must they have their work, as well as our souls.

Quest. III. 'Is a life of contemplation then lawful to any man? and to whom?'

Ans. It is lawful, and a duty, and a great mercy to some, to live almost wholly, yea, altogether in contemplation and prayer, and such holy exercises. And that in these cases following: 1. In case that age hath disabled a

man to be serviceable to others by an active life: and when a man hath already spent his days and strength in doing all the good he can; and being now disabled, hath special reason to improve the rest of his (decrepid) age, in more than ordinary preparations for his death, and in holy communion with God. 2. So also when we are disabled by sickness. 3. And when imprisonment restraineth us from an active life, or profiting others. 4. And when persecution forceth Christians to retire into solitudes and deserts, to reserve themselves for better times and places; or when prudence telleth them, that their prayers in solitude may do more good, than at that time their martyrdom were like to do. 5. When a student is preparing himself for the ministry, or other active life, to which a contemplative life is the way. 6. When poverty, or wars, or the rage of enemies disableth a man from all public converse, and driveth him into solitude by unavoidable necessity. 7. When the number of those that are fit for action, is so sufficient, and the parts of the person so insufficient, and so the need and use of them in an active life so small, that all things considered, holy, impartial prudence telleth him, that the good which he could do to others by an active life, is not like to countervail the losses which he should himself receive, and the good which his very example of a holy and heavenly life might do, and his occasional counsels, and precepts, and resolutions, to those that come to him for advice, being drawn by the estimation of his holy life; in this case, it is lawful to give up ones self to a contemplative life: for that which maketh most to his own good and to others, is past doubt lawful and a duty. "Anna departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day^b." Whether the meaning be, that she strictly kept the hours of prayer in the temple, and the fasting twice a week, or frequently, or whether she took up her habitation in the houses of some of the officers of the temple, devoting herself to the service of the temple; it is plain that either way she did something besides praying and fasting: even as the widows under the Gospel who were also to "continue in prayer and supplication

^b Luke ii. 36, 37. See Dr. Hammond on the place, and on 1 Tim. v. and on Tit. ii.

night and day," and yet were employed in the service of the church, in overseeing the younger, and teaching them to be sober^b, &c., which is an active life. But however Anna's practice be expounded, if this much that I have granted, would please the monastics, we would not differ with them.

Quest. iv. 'How far are those in an active life, to use contemplation?'

Ans. With very great difference. 1. According to the difference of their callings in the world, and the offices in which they are ordinarily to serve God. 2. And according to the difference of their abilities and fitness for contemplation or for action. 3. According to the difference of their particular opportunities. 4. According to the difference of the necessities of others which may require their help. 5. And of their own necessities of action or contemplation. Which I shall more particularly determine in certain rules.

1. Every Christian must use so much contemplation, as is necessary to the loving of God above all, and to the worshipping of him in spirit and in truth, and to a heavenly mind and conversation, and to a due preparation for death and judgment, and to the referring all his common works to the glory and pleasing of God, that "Holiness to the Lord" may be written upon all, and all that he hath may be sanctified, or devoted with himself to God.

2. The calling of a minister of the Gospel, is so perfectly mixed of contemplation and action, (though action dominate it, as being the end and chief,) yet he must be excellent in both. If they be not excellent in contemplation, they will not be meet to stand so much nearer to God than the people do; and to sanctify him when they draw near him, and glorify him before all the people: nor will they be fit for the opening of the heavenly mysteries, and working that on the people's hearts which never was on their own. And if they be not excellent in an active life, they will betray the people's souls, and never go through that painful diligence, and preaching in season and out of season, publicly, and from house to house, day and night with tears, which Paul commandeth them, Acts xx. and Epist. Tim.

3. The work of a magistrate, a lawyer, a physician, and such like, is principally in doing good in their several callings, which must not be neglected for contemplation. Yet

^b 1 Tim. v. 5. Tit. ii. 4.

so, that all these, and all others, must allow God's service and holy thoughts, their due place in the beginning, and middle, and end of all their actions. As magistrates must read and meditate day and night in the Word of God^c. So the Eunuch, Cornelius^d, &c.

4. Some persons in the same calling, whose callings are not so urgent on them, by any necessities of themselves or others, and who may have more vacant time, must gladly take it for the good of their souls, in the use of contemplation and other holy duties. And others that are under greater necessities, urgencies, obligations, or cannot be spared from the service of others, (as physicians, lawyers, &c.) must be less in contemplation, and prefer the greatest good.

5. Public necessities or service, may with some be so great as to dispense with all secret duty, both of prayer and contemplation, (except short, mental ejaculations,) for some days together. So in wars it oft falls out that necessity forbiddeth all set, or solemn, holy service for many days together, (even on the Lord's day.) So a physician may sometimes be so tied to close attendance on his patients, as will not allow him time for a set prayer. So sometimes a preacher may be so taken up in preaching, and exhorting, and resolving people's weighty doubts, that they shall scarce have time for secret duties, for some days together : (though such happy impediments are rare.) In these cases to do the lesser is a sin, when the greater is neglected.

6. Servants, who are not masters of their time, must be faithful in employing it to their master's service, and take none for holy duty from that part, which they should work in ; but rather from their rest so far as they are able ; intermixing meditations with their labours when they can : but redeeming such time as is allowed them the more diligently, because their opportunities are so rare and short.

7. The Lord's day, (excepting works of necessity) and such other vacancies as hinder not other work, (as when they travel on the way, or work, or wake in the night, &c.) are every man's own time, which he is not to alienate to another's service, but to reserve and use for the service of God, and for his soul, in holy duties.

^c Josh. i. 8. 19.

^d Acts viii. and i.

8. Some persons cannot bear much contemplation, especially melancholy and weak-headed people. And such must serve God so much the more in other duties which they are able for; and must not tire out and distract themselves, with striving to do that which they are not able to undergo. But others feel no inconvenience by it at all, as I can speak by my own experience: my weakness and decay of spirits inclining me most to a dulness of mind, I find that the most exciting, serious studies and contemplations, in the greatest solitude, are so far from hurting me, by any abatement of health, or hilarity, or serenity of mind, that they seem rather a help to all. Those that can thus bear long solitude and contemplation, ought to be the more exercised in it, except when greater duties must take place. But to melancholy persons it is to be avoided as a hurt.

9. To the same persons, sometimes their own necessities require contemplation most, and sometimes action; and so that which is at one time a duty, may at another time be none.

10. A mere sinful backwardness is not to be indulged. A diseased disability (such as comes from melancholy, weak-headedness, or decay of memory) must be endured, and not too much accused; when Christ excused worse in his disciples, saying, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." But a sinful backwardness in cases of absolute necessity, is not at all to be endured, but striven against with all your power, whatever it cost you: as to bring yourself to so much serious consideration, as is necessary to your repentance and unfeigned faith, and godly conversation, this must be done, whatever follow; though the devil persuade you that it will make you melancholy or mad: for without it, you are far worse than mad.

11. The most desirable life, to those that have their choice, is that which joineth together contemplation and action; so as there shall be convenient leisure for the most high and serious contemplation, and this improved to fit us for the most great and profitable action. And such is the life of a faithful minister of Christ: and therefore no sort of men on earth are more obliged to thankfulness than they.

12. Servants, and poor men, and diseased men, and others, that are called off from much contemplation, and

employed in a life of obedient action, yea, or suffering, by the providence of God, and not by their own sinful choice, must understand, that their labour and patience is the way of their acceptable attendance upon God, in the expense of most part of their time. And though it is madness in those that hope God will accept of their labours instead of true faith, and repentance, and a godly life; (for these must go together, and hinder not each other;) yet, instead of such further contemplations as are not necessary to the being of a godly life, a true Christian may believe that his obedient labours and sufferings shall be accepted. If you set one servant to cast up an account, and another to sweep your chimney or channels, you will not accept the former, and reject the latter, for the difference of their works: but you will rather think that he hath most merited your acceptance, who yielded without grudging to the basest service. And doubtless it is an aggravation of acceptable obedience, when we readily and willingly serve God in the lowest, meanest work. He is too fine to serve him, who saith, 'I will serve thee in the magistracy or ministry, but not at plough or cart, or any such drudgery*.' And if thou be but in God's way, he can make thy very obedience a state of greater holiness and greater safety, than if thou hadst spent all that time in the study of holy things, as you see many ungodly ministers do all their lifetime, and are never the better for it. It is not the quality of the work, but God's blessing, that makes it do you good. Nor is he most beloved of God, who hath rolled over the greatest number of good thoughts in his mind, or of good words in his mouth, no, nor he that hath stirred up the strongest passions hereabouts; but he that loveth God and heaven best, and hateth sin most, and whose will is most confirmed for holiness of life. He that goeth about his labour in obedience to God, may have as much comfort as another that is meditating or praying. But neither labour nor prayer are matter of comfort to an ungodly, carnal heart.

Yea, if decay of memory or natural ability take you off

* Petrarch, speaking of his intimacy and esteem with kings and princes, addeth, *Multos tamen eorum quos valde amabam effugi: tantus mihi fuit insitus amor libertatis; ut cujus vel nomen ipsum libertati, vel illi esse contrarium videretur, omni studio declinarem. In vita sua.*

both action and contemplation, you may have as much acceptance and solid comfort, in a patient bearing of the cross, and an obedient, cheerful submission to the holy will of God.

Tit. 5. Directions to the Melancholy about their Thoughts.

It is so easy and ordinary a thing for some weak-headed persons, to cast themselves into melancholy, by overstraining either their thoughts and affections, and the case of such is so exceeding lamentable, that I think it requisite to give such some particular Directions by themselves^f. And the rather because I see some persons that are unacquainted with the nature of this, and other diseases, exceedingly abuse the name of God, and bring the profession of religion into scorn, by imputing all the effects and speeches of such melancholy persons to some great and notable operations of the Spirit of God, and thence draw observations of the methods and workings of God upon the soul, and of the nature of the legal workings of the spirit of bondage. (As some other such have divulged the prophecies, the possessions and dispossessing of hysterical women, as I have read especially in the writings of the Friars.) I do not call those melancholy, who are rationally sorrowful for sin, and sensible of their misery, and solicitous about their recovery and salvation, though it be with as great seriousness as the faculties can bear; as long as they have sound reason, and the imagination, fantasy, or thinking faculty is not crazed or diseased: but by melancholy I mean this diseased craziness, hart, or error of the imagination, and consequently of the understanding, which is known by these following signs, (which yet are not all in every melancholy person^g.)

1. They are commonly exceeding fearful, causelessly or beyond what there is cause for: every thing which they hear or see is ready to increase their fears, especially if fear was the first cause, as ordinarily it is. 2. Their fantasy

^f Read more after, Part 3. against Despair.)

^g Stoici dicunt sapientem nunquam sanitate mentis excidere. Incidere tamen aliquando in imaginationes absurdas propter atræ bilis redundantiam, sive ob delirationem non quidem deviatione rationis, verum ex imbecillitate naturæ. Diog. Laert. in Zenone.

most erreth in aggravating their sin, or dangers, or unhappiness : every ordinary infirmity they are ready to speak of with amazement, as a heinous sin : and every possible danger they take for probable, and every probable one for certain ; and every little danger for a great one, and every calamity for an utter undoing. 3. They are still addicted to excess of sadness, some weeping they know not why, and some thinking it ought to be so : and if they should smile or speak merrily, their hearts smite them for it as if they had done amiss. 4. They place most of their religion in sorrowing and austerities to the flesh. 5. They are continual self-accusers, turning all into matter of accusation against themselves, which they hear, or read, or see, or think of : quarrelling with themselves for every thing they do, as a contentious person doth with others. 6. They are still apprehending themselves forsaken of God, and are prone to despair : they are just like a man in a wilderness, forsaken of all his friends and comforts, forlorn and desolate ; their continual thought is, ' I am undone, undone, undone ! ' 7. They are still thinking that the day of grace is past, and that it is now too late to repent or to find mercy. If you tell them of the tenor of the Gospel, and offers of free pardon to every penitent believer, they cry out still, ' Too late, too late, my day is past ! ' not considering that every soul that truly repenteth in this life, is certainly forgiven. 8. They are oft tempted to gather despairing thoughts from the doctrine of predestination, and to think that if God have reprobated them, or have not elected them, all that they can do, or that all the world can do, cannot save them ; and next they strongly conceit that they are not elected, and so that they are past help or hope : not knowing that God electeth not any man separately or simply to be saved, but conjunctly to believe, repent, and to be saved ; and so to the end and means together ; and that all that will repent and choose Christ and a holy life, are elected to salvation, because they are elected to the means and condition of salvation, which if they persevere they shall enjoy. To repent is the best way to prove that I am elected to repent. 9. They never read or hear of any miserable instance, but they are thinking that this is their case. If they hear of Cain, or Pharaoh given up to hardness of heart, or do but read that some are vessels of

wrath, fitted to destruction, or that they have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, hearts and understand not, they think, 'This is all spoken of me;' or 'This is just my case.' If they hear of any terrible example of God's judgments on any, they think it will be so with them. If any die suddenly, or a house be burned, or any be distracted, or die in despair, they think it will be so with them. The reading of Spira's case, causeth or increaseth melancholy in many; the ignorant author having described a plain melancholy, contracted by the trouble of sinning against conscience, as if it were a damnable despair of a sound understanding. 10. And yet they think that never any one was as they are. I have had abundance in a few weeks with me, almost just in the same case, and yet every one say that never any one was as they.

11. They are utterly unable to rejoice in any thing; they cannot apprehend, believe, or think of any thing that is comfortable to them. They read all the threatenings of the Word with quick sense and application, but the promises they read over and over, without taking notice of them, as if they had not read them; or else say, 'They do not belong to me: the greater the mercy of God is, and the riches of grace, the more miserable am I that have no part in them.' They are like a man in continual pain or sickness, that cannot rejoice, because the feeling of his pain forbiddeth him. They look on husband, wife, friends, children, house, goods and all without any comfort; as one would do that is going to be executed for some crime. 12. Their consciences are quick in telling them of sin, and putting them upon any dejection as a duty; but they are dead to all duties that tend to consolation; as to thanksgiving for mercies, praises of God, meditating on his love, and grace, and Christ, and promises: put them never so hard on these, and they feel not their duty, nor make any conscience of it, but think it is a duty for others, but unsuitable to them. 13. They always say that they cannot believe, and therefore think they cannot be saved: because that commonly they mistake the nature of faith, and take it to be a believing that they themselves are forgiven and in favour with God, and shall be saved: and because they cannot believe this (which their disease will not suffer them to believe,) therefore they think that they are no believers: whereas saving faith is nothing but

such a belief that the Gospel is true, and Christ is the Saviour to be trusted with our souls, as causeth our wills to consent that he be ours and that we be his, and so to subscribe the covenant of grace. Yet while they thus consent, and would give a world to be sure that Christ were theirs, and to be perfectly holy, yet they think they believe not, because they believe not that he will forgive or save them. 14. They are still displeased and discontented with themselves: just as a peevish, froward person is apt to be with others: see one that is hard to be pleased, and is finding fault with every thing that he sees or hears, and offended at every one that comes in his way, and suspicious of every body that he sees whispering; and just so is a melancholy person against himself; suspecting, displeased, and finding fault with all. 15. They are much addicted to solitariness, and weary of company for the most part. 16. They are given up to fixed musings, and long, poring thoughts to little purpose: so that deep musings and thinkings are their chief employments, and much of their disease. 17. They are much averse to the labours of their callings, and given to idleness; either to lie in bed, or sit thinking unprofitably by themselves. 18. Their thoughts are most upon themselves, like the millstones that grind on themselves, when they have no grist: so one thought begets another: their thoughts are taken up about their thoughts: when they have been thinking irregularly, they think again what they have been thinking on: they meditate not much on God, (unless on his wrath) nor heaven, nor Christ, nor the state of the church, nor any thing without them (ordinarily); but all their thoughts are contracted and turned inwards on themselves: self-troubling is the sum of their thoughts and lives. 19. Their thoughts are all perplexed like ravelled yarn or silk; or like a man in a maze, or wilderness, or that hath lost himself and his way in the night: he is poring and groping about, and can make little of any thing, but is bewildered, and moidered, and entangled the more; full of doubts and difficulties, out of which he cannot find the way. 20. He is endless in his scruples: afraid lest he sin in every word he speaketh, and in every thought, and every look, and every meal he eateth, and all the clothes he weareth: and if he think to amend them, he is still scrupling his supposed

amendments: he dare neither travel, nor stay at home, neither speak, nor be silent; but he is scrupling all: as if he were wholly composed of self-perplexing scruples. 21. Hence it comes to pass that he is greatly addicted to superstition; to make many laws to himself that God never made him; and to ensnare himself with needless vows, and resolutions, and hurtful austerities; touch not, taste not, handle not; and to place his religion much in such outward, self-imposed tasks; to spend so many hours in this or that act of devotion; to wear such clothes, and forbear other that are finer; to forbear all diet that pleaseth the appetite, with much of the like. A great deal of the perfection of Popish devotion proceeded from melancholy, though their government come from pride and covetousness. 22. They have lost the power of governing their thoughts by reason: so that if you convince them that they should cast out their self-perplexing, unprofitable thoughts, and turn their thoughts to other subjects, or be vacant; they are not able to obey you: they seem to be under a necessity or constraint: they cannot cast out their troublesome thoughts: they cannot turn away their minds: they cannot think of love and mercy: they can think of nothing but what they do think of, any more than a man in the toothach can forbear to think of his pain. 23. They usually grow hence to a disability to any private prayer or meditation: their thoughts are presently cast all into a confusion, when they should pray or meditate: they scatter abroad a hundred ways; and they cannot keep them upon anything: for this is the very point of their disease; a distempered, confused fantasy, with a weak reason which cannot govern it. Sometimes terror driveth them from prayer: they dare not hope, and therefore dare not pray: and usually they dare not receive the Lord's supper; here they are most fearful of all: and if they do receive it, they are cast down with terrors, fearing that they have taken their own damnation, by receiving unworthily. 24. Hence they grow to a great averseness to all holy duty: fear and despair make them go to prayer, hearing, reading, as a bear to the stake: and then they think they are haters of God and godliness, imputing the effects of their disease to their souls; when yet at the same time, those of them that are godly, would rather be

freed from all their sins, and be perfectly holy; than have all the riches or honour in the world. 25. They are usually so taken up with busy and earnest thoughts (which being all perplexed, do but strive with themselves, and contradict one another,) that they feel it just as if something were speaking within them, and all their own violent thoughts were the pleadings and impulse of some other: and therefore they are wont to impute all their fantasies, either to some extraordinary actings of the devil, or to some extraordinary motions of the Spirit of God: and they are used to express themselves in such words as these, 'It was set upon my heart, or it was said to me, that I must do thus and thus: and then it was said, I must not do this or that: and I was told I must do so or so.' And they think that their own imagination is something talking in them, and saying to them all that they are thinking. 26. When melancholy groweth strong, they are almost always troubled with hideous, blasphemous temptations, against God, or Christ, or the Scripture, and against the immortality of the soul; which cometh partly from their own fears, which make them think most (against their will) of that which they are most afraid of thinking: as the spirits and blood will have recourse to the part that is hurt. The very pain of their fears doth draw their thoughts to what they fear. As he that is over-desirous to sleep, and afraid lest he shall not sleep, is sure to wake, because his fears and desires keep him waking: so do the fears and desires of the melancholy cross themselves. And withal, the malice of the devil plainly here interposeth, and taketh advantage of this disease, to tempt and trouble them, and to shew his hatred to God, and Christ, and Scripture, and to them. For as he can much easier tempt a choleric person to anger, than another, and a phlegmatic, fleshly person to sloth, and a sanguine or hot-tempered person to lust, and wantonness; so also a melancholy person to thoughts of blasphemy, infidelity, and despair. And oftentimes they feel a vehement urgency, as if something within them urged them to speak such or such a blasphemous or foolish word; and they can have no rest unless they yield in this and other such cases, to what they are urged to. And some are ready to yield in a temptation to be quiet: and when they have done, they are tempted utterly to despair

because they have committed so great a sin : and when the devil hath got this advantage of them, he is still setting it before them. 27. Hereupon they are further tempted to think they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost ; not understanding what that sin is, but fearing it is theirs, because it is a fearful sin : at least they think they shall not be forgiven ; not considering that a temptation is one thing, and a sin another : and that no man hath less cause to fear being condemned for his sin, than he that is least willing of it, and most hateth it. And no man can be less willing of any sin, than these poor souls are of the hideous, blasphemous thoughts which they complain of. 28. Hereupon some of them grow to think that they are possessed of devils : and if it do but enter into their fantasy how possessed persons used to act, the very strength of imagination will make them do so too : so that I have known those that would swear, and curse, and blaspheme, and imitate an inward, alien voice, thinking themselves that it was the devil in them that did all this. But these that go so far are but few. 29. Some of them that are near distraction, verily think that they hear voices, and see lights and apparitions, that the curtains are opened on them, that something meets them, and saith this or that to them, when all is but the error of a crazed brain, and sick imagination. 30. Many of them are weary of their lives, through the constant, trying perplexities of their minds ; and yet afraid of dying : some of them resolutely famish themselves : some are strongly tempted to murder themselves, and they are haunted with the temptation so restlessly, that they can go no whither but they feel as if somewhat within them, put them on, and said, ‘ Do it, do it : ’ so that many poor creatures yield, and make away with themselves. 31. Many of them are restlessly vexed with fears of want, and poverty, and misery to their families ; and of imprisonment or banishment ; and lest somebody will kill them ; and every one that they see whisper, they think is plotting to take away their lives. 32. Some of them lay a law upon themselves that they will not speak, and so live long in resolute silence. 33. All of them are intractable, and stiff in their own conceits, and hardly persuaded out of them, be they never so irrational. 34. Few of them are the better for any reason, conviction, or counsel that is given

them : if it seem to satisfy, and quiet, and rejoice them at the present, to-morrow they are as bad again : it being the nature of their disease, to think as they do think ; and their thoughts are not cured while the disease is uncured. 35. Yet in all this distemper, few of them will believe that they are melancholy ; but abhor to hear men tell them so, and say it is but the rational sense of their unhappiness, and the forsakings and heavy wrath of God. And therefore they are hardly persuaded to take any physic or use any means for the cure of their bodies, saying that they are well, and being confident that it is only their souls that are distressed.

This is the miserable case of these poor people, greatly to be pitied, and not to be despised by any. I have spoken nothing but what I have often seen and known. And let none despise such, for men of all sorts do fall into this misery ; learned and unlearned, high and low, good and bad, yea, some that have lived in greatest jollity and sensuality, when God hath made them feel their folly.

The causes of it are, 1. Most commonly some worldly loss, or cross, or grief, or care, which made too deep an impression on them. 2. Sometimes excess of fear upon any common occasion of danger. 3. Sometimes over hard and unintermitted studies, or thoughts which screw up and rack the fantasy too much. 4. Sometimes too deep fears, or too constant, and serious, and passionate thoughts and cares about the danger of the soul. 5. The great preparatives to it, (which are indeed the principal cause) are a weak head, and reason, joined with strong passion : which are most often found in women, and those to whom it is natural. 6. And in some it is brought in by some heinous sin, the sight of which they cannot bear, when conscience is but once awakened.

When this disease is gone very far, Directions to the persons themselves are vain, because they have not reason and free-will to practise them ; but it is their friends about them that must have the Directions. But because with the most of them, and at first there is some power of reason left, I give Directions for the use of such.

Direct. 1. ' See that no error in religion be the cause of your distress : especially understand well the covenant of grace, and the riches of mercy manifested in Christ.' Among

others, it will be useful to you to understand these following truths.

1. That our thoughts of the infinite goodness of God, should bear proportion with our thoughts concerning his infinite power and wisdom.

2. That the mercy of God hath provided for all mankind so sufficient a Saviour, that no sinner shall perish for want of a sufficient satisfaction made for his sins by Christ, nor is it made the condition of any man's salvation or pardon, that he satisfy for his own sins.

3. That Christ hath in his Gospel Covenant (which is an act of oblivion) made over himself with pardon and salvation, to all that will penitently and believingly accept the offer. And that none perish that hear the Gospel, but the final, obstinate refusers of Christ and life.

4. That he that so far believeth the truth of the Gospel, as to consent to the covenant of grace, even that God the Father be his Lord and reconciled Father, and Christ his Saviour, and the Holy Ghost his Sanctifier, hath true, saving faith, and right to the blessing of the covenant.

5. That the day of grace is so far commensurate or equal to our lifetime, that whosoever truly repenteth and consenteth to the covenant of grace, before his death, is certainly pardoned, and in a state of life; and that it is every man's duty so to do, that pardon may be theirs.

6. That satan's temptations are none of our sins, but only our yielding to them.

7. That the effects of natural sickness or disease, are not (in themselves) sins.

8. That those are the smallest sins (formally) and least like to condemn us, which we are most unwilling of, and are least in love or liking of.

9. That no sin shall condemn us which we hate more than love, and which we had rather leave and be delivered from, than keep; for this is true repentance.

10. That he is truly sanctified who had rather be perfect in holiness of heart and life, in loving God, and living by faith, than to have the greatest pleasures, riches, or honours of the world; taking in the means also by which both are attained.

11. That he who hath this grace and desire may know

that he is elect; and the making of our calling sure by our consenting to the holy covenant, is the making of our election sure.

12. That the same thing which is a great duty to others, may be no duty to one, who by bodily distemper (as fevers, phrenzies, melancholy,) is unable to perform it.

Direct. 11. 'Take heed of worldly cares, and sorrows, and discontents. Set not so much by earthly things, as to enable them to disquiet you; but learn to cast your cares on God.' You can have less peace in an affliction which cometh by such a carnal, sinful means. It is much more safe to be distracted with cares for heaven than for earth.

Direct. 111. 'Meditation is no duty at all for a melancholy person, except some few that are able to bear a diverting meditation, which must be of something farthest from the matter which troubleth them. Or except it be short meditations like ejaculatory prayers.' A set and serious meditation will but confound you, and disturb you, and disable you to other duties. If a man have a broken leg, he must not go on it till it is knit, lest all the body fare the worse. It is your thinking faculty, or your imagination which is the broken, pained part: and therefore you must not use it about the things that trouble you. Perhaps you will say, That this is to be profane, and forget God and your soul, and let the tempter have his will. But, I answer, No; it is but to forbear that which you cannot do at present, that by doing other things which you can do, you may come again to do this which you now cannot do: it is but to forbear attempting that, which will but make you less able to do all other duties. And at the present, you may conduct the affairs of your soul by holy reason. I persuade you not from repenting or believing, but from set, and long, and deep meditations, which will but hurt you.

Direct. 1v. 'Be not too long in any secret duty which you find you are not able to bear.' Prayer itself, when you are unable, must be performed but as you can: short confessions and requests to God, must serve instead of longer secret prayers, when you are unable to do more. If sickness may excuse a man for being short, where nature will not hold out, the case is the same here, in the sickness of

the brain and spirits. God hath appointed no means to do you hurt.

Direct. v. 'Where you find yourselves unable for a secret duty, struggle not too hard with yourselves, but go that pace that you are able to go quietly.' For as every striving doth not enable you, but vex you, and make duty wearisome to you, and disable you more, by increasing your disease: like an ox that draweth unquietly, and a horse that chafeth himself, that quickly tireth. Preserve your willingness to duty, and avoid that which makes it grievous to you. As to a sick stomach, it is not eating much, but digesting well that tends to health; and little must be eaten when much cannot be digested: so it is here in case of your meditations and secret prayers.

Direct. vi. 'Be most in those duties which you are best able to bear; which, with most, is prayer, with others hearing, and good discourse.' As a sick man whose stomach is against other meats, must eat of that which he can eat of. And God hath provided variety of means, that one may do the work, when the other are wanting. Do not misunderstand me: in cases of absolute necessity, I say again, you must strive to do it whatever come of it. If you are backward to believe, to repent, to love God and your neighbour, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to pray at all; here you must strive, and not excuse it by any backwardness; for it is that which must needs be done, or you are lost. But a man that cannot read may be saved without his reading; and a man in prison or sickness may be saved without hearing the Word, and without the church communion of saints: and so a man disabled by melancholy, may be saved by shorter thoughts and ejaculations, without set and long meditations and secret prayers; and other duties which he is able for will supply the want of these. Even as nature hath provided two eyes, and two ears, and two nostrils, and two reins, and lungs, that when one is stopped or faulty, the other may supply its wants for a time: so is it here.

Direct. vii. 'Avoid all unnecessary solitariness, and be as much as possible in honest, cheerful company.' You have need of others, and are not sufficient for yourselves: and God will use and honour others, as his hands, to deliver us his blessings. Solitariness is to those that are fit for it,

an excellent season for meditation and converse with God and with our hearts : but to you, it is the season of temptation and danger. If satan tempted Christ himself, when he had him fasting and solitary in a wilderness ; much more will he take this as his opportunity against you. Solitude is the season of musings and thoughtfulness, which are the things which you must fly from, if you will not be deprived of all.

Direct. VIII. ' When blasphemous or disturbing thoughts look in, or fruitless musings, presently meet them, and use that authority of reason which is left you, to cast them and command them out.' If you have not lost it, reason and the will have a command over the thoughts as well as over the tongue, or hands, or feet. And as you would be ashamed to run up and down, or fight with your hands, and say, ' I cannot help it ;' or to let your tongue run all day, and say, ' I cannot stop it :' so should you be ashamed to let your thoughts run at random, or on hurtful things, and say, ' I cannot help it.' Do you do the best you can to help it? Cannot you bid them be gone? Cannot you turn your thoughts to something else? Or cannot you rouse up yourself, and shake them off? Some by casting a little cold water in their own faces, or bidding another do it, can rouse themselves from melancholy musings as from sleep. Or cannot you get out of the room, and set yourself about some business which will divert you? You might do more than you do, if you were but willing, and know how much it is your duty.

Direct. IX. ' When you do think of any holy things, let it be of the best things ; of God, and grace, and Christ, and heaven ; or of your brethren, or the church : and carry all your meditations outward ; but be sure you pore not on yourselves, and spend not your thoughts upon your thoughts.' As we have need to call the thoughts of careless sinners inwards, and turn them from the creature and sin, upon themselves ; so we have need to call the thoughts of self-perplexing, melancholy persons outwards ; for it is their disease to be still grinding upon themselves. Remember that it is a far higher, nobler, and sweeter work to think of God, and Christ, and heaven, than of such worms as we ourselves are. When we go up to God, we go to love, and light, and liber-

ty : but when we look down into ourselves, we look into a dungeen, a prison, a wilderness, a place of darkness, horror, filthiness, misery, and confusion. Therefore (though such thoughts be needful, so far as without them our repentance and due watchfulness cannot be maintained,) yet they are grievous, ignoble, yea, and barren, in comparison of our thoughts of God. When you are poring on your hearts, to search whether the love of God be there or no, it were wiser to be thinking of the infinite amiableness of God ; and that will cause it, whether it were there before or not. So instead of poring on your hearts, to know whether they are set on heaven, lift up your thoughts to heaven, and think of its glory, and that will raise them thither, and give you, and shew you that which you were searching for. Bestow that time in planting holy desires in the garden of your hearts, which you bestow in roasting and puzzling yourselves in searching whether it be there already. We are such dark, confused things, that the sight of ourselves is enough to raise a loathing and a horror in our minds, and make them melancholy : but in God and glory, there is nothing to discourage our thoughts, but all to delight them, if satan do not misrepresent him to us.

Direct. x. ' Overlook not the miracle of love which God hath shewed us in the wonderful incarnation, office, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of our Redeemer : but steep your thoughts most in these wonders of mercy, proposed by God to be the chief matter of your thoughts.' You should in reason lay out many thoughts of Christ and grace, for one that you lay out on your sin and misery. God requireth you to see your sin and misery, but so much as tendeth to magnify the remedy, and cause you to accept it. Never think of sin and hell alone ; but as the way to the thoughts of Christ and grace. This is the duty even of the worst. Are your sins ever before you ? Why is not pardoning grace in Christ before you ? Is hell open before you ? Why is not the Redeemer also before you ? Do you say, Because that sin and hell are yours, but Christ, and holiness, and heaven, are none of yours ? I answer you, It is then because you will have it so : if you would not have it so, it is not so. God hath set life first before you, and not only death. He hath put Christ, and holiness, and heaven in

his end of the balance : and the devil puts the pleasure of sin for a season in the other end. That which you choose unfeignedly is yours ; for God hath given you your choice. Nothing is truer than that God hath so far made over Christ and life to all that hear the Gospel, that nothing but their final obstinate refusal can condemn them : Christ and life are brought to the will and choice of all, though all have not wills to accept and choose him. And if you would not have Christ, and life, and holiness, what would you rather have ? And why complain you ?

Direct. XI. ' Think and speak as much of the mercy which you have received, as of the sin you have committed ; and of the mercy which is offered you, as of what you want.' You dare not say that the mercy you have received, is no more worthy to be remembered and mentioned, than all your sins ? Shall God do so much for you, and shall it be overlooked, extenuated, and made nothing of ? As if his mercies had been a bare bone, or a barren wilderness, which would yield no sustenance to your thoughts. Be not guilty of so great unthankfulness. Thoughts of love and mercy, would breed love and sweetness in the soul : while thoughts of sin and wrath only breed averseness, terror, bitterness, perplexity, and drive away the heart from God.

Direct. XII. ' Tie yourselves daily to spend as great a part of your time in your prayers, in the confessing of mercy received, as in confessing sin committed ; and in the praises of God, as in the lamenting of your own miseries.' You dare not deny but this is your duty, if you understand your duty : thanksgiving and praise are greater duties, than confessing sin and misery. Resolve then that they shall have the largest share of time. If you will but do this much, (which you can do if you will,) it will in time take off the bitterness of your spirits ; and the very frequent mention of sweeter things, will sweeten your minds, and change their temperature and habit, as change of diet changeth the temperature of the body. I beseech you resolve, and try this course. If you cannot mention mercy so thankfully as you would, nor mention God's excellencies so holily and praise-fully as you would, yet do what you can, and mention them as you are able. You may command your time (what shall have the greatest share in prayer,) though not your

affections : you will find the benefit very great, if you will do but this.

Direct. XIII. ‘ Overvalue not the passionate part of duty, but know that judgment, will, and practice, a high esteem of God and holiness, a resolved choice, and a sincere endeavour, are the life of grace and duty, when feeling passions are but lower, uncertain things.’ You know not what you do, when you lay so much on the passionate part : nor when you strive so much for deep and transporting apprehensions : these are not the great things, nor essentials of holiness. Too much of this feeling may distract you. God knoweth how much you are able to bear. Passionate feelings depend much upon nature. Some persons are more sensible than others : a little thing goeth deep with some : the wisest and weightiest persons are usually least passionate ; and the weakest hardly moderate their passions. God is not an object of sense, and therefore more fit for the understanding and will, than the passions to work upon. That is the holiest soul which is most inclined to God, and resolved for him, and conformed to his will, and not that which is affected with the deepest griefs, and fears, and joys, and other such transporting passions : though it were best, if even holy passions could be raised at the will’s command, in that measure which fitteth us best for duty. But I have known many complain for want of deeper feeling, who if their feeling (as they called their passion) had been more, it might have distracted them. I had rather be that Christian that loathes himself for sin, resolveth against it, and forsaketh it, though he cannot weep for it ; than one of those that can weep to-day, and sin again to-morrow, and whose sinful passions are quickly stirred, as well as their better passions.

Direct. XIV. ‘ Make not too great a matter of your own thoughts ; and take not too much notice of them : but if satan cast in molesting thoughts, if you cannot cast them out, set light by them, and take less notice of them.’ Making a great matter of every thought that is cast into your mind, will keep those thoughts in your mind the longer. For that which we are most sensible of, we most think on ; and that which we least regard, we least remember. If you would never be rid of them, the way is to be still noting them, and making too great a matter of them. These troublesome

thoughts are like troublesome scolds, that if you regard them, and answer them, will never have done with you : but if you let them talk, and take no notice of them, nor make any answer to them, they will be weary and give over. The devil's design is to vex and disquiet you : and if he see you will not be vexed and disquieted, he will give over attempting it. I know you will say, ' Should I be so ungodly as to make light of such sinful thoughts ? ' I answer, make not so light of them as to be indifferent what thoughts are in your mind, nor so as to take the smallest sin to be none : but make so light of them as not to take them for greater nor more dangerous sins than they are : and so light of them as not to take distinct, particular notice of them ; nor to disquiet yourselves about them : for if you do, you will have no room in your thoughts for Christ and heaven, and that which should take up your thoughts ; but the devil will rejoice to see how he employeth you in thinking over your own thoughts, or rather his temptations ; and that he can employ you all the day in hearkening to all that he will say to you, and in thinking of his motions instead of thinking on the works of God. There are none of God's servants without irregularities and sins of thoughts, which they must daily ask forgiveness of, and rejoice to think that they have a sufficient Saviour and remedy, and that sin shall but occasion the magnifying of grace : but if they should excessively observe and be troubled at every unwarrantable thought, it would be a snare to take them off almost all their greater duties. Would you like it in your servant, if he should stop in observing and troubling himself about every ordinary imperfection in his work, instead of going on to do it ?

Direct. xv. ' Remember that it is no sin to be tempted, but only to yield to the temptation ; and that Christ himself was carried about and tempted blasphemously by the devil, even to fall down and worship him ; and yet he made these temptations but an advantage to the glory of his victory.' Take not the devil's sin to be yours. Are your temptations more horrid and odious than Christ's were ? What if the devil had carried you to the pinnacle of the temple as he did Christ ? Would you not have thought that God had forsaken you, and given you up to the power of satan ?

But you will say, that you yield to the temptation, and so did not Christ. I answer, It cannot be expected that sinful man should bear a temptation as innocently as Christ did? Satan found nothing in Christ to comply with him; but in us he findeth a sinful nature! Wax will receive an impression when marble will not. But it is not every sinful taint that is a consent to the sin to which we are tempted.

Direct. xvi. 'Consider how far you are from loving, delighting in, or being loath to leave these sinful thoughts; and that no sin condemneth, but that which is so loved and delighted in, as that you had rather keep than leave it.' Would you not fain be delivered from all these horrid thoughts and sins? Could you not be willing to live in disgrace, or want, or banishment, so you might but be free from sin? If so, why doubt you of the pardon of it? Can you have any surer sign of repentance, or that your sin is not a reigning, unpardoned sin, than that it is not loved and desired by you? The less will, the less sin, and the more will, the more sin. The covetous man loveth his money, and the fornicator loveth his lust, and the proud man loveth his honour, and the drunkard loveth his cups, and the glutton loveth to satisfy his appetite; and so love these that they will not leave them. But do you love your disturbing, confused, or blasphemous thoughts? Are you not so weary of them, as to be even weary of your lives because of them? would you not be glad and thankful never to be troubled with them more? And yet do you doubt of pardon?

Direct. xvii. 'Charge not your souls any deeper than there is cause with the effects of your disease.' Indeed remotely a man that in distraction thinks or speaks amiss, may be said to be faulty, so far as his sin did cause his disease; but directly and of itself, the involuntary effects of sickness are no sin. Melancholy is a mere disease in the spirits and imagination, though you feel no sickness: and it is as natural for a melancholy person to be hurried and molested with doubts, and fears, and despairing thoughts, and blasphemous temptations, as it is for a man to talk idly in a fever when his understanding faileth; or to think of and desire drink, when his fever kindleth vehement thirst. And how much would you have a man in a fever accuse himself for such a thirst, or such thoughts, desire, or talk? If you

had those hideous thoughts in your dreams, which you have when you are awake, would you think them unpardoned sins, or rather unavoidable infirmities? why your distemper makes them to be to you but almost as dreams.

Direct. xviii. 'Be sure that you keep yourself constantly employed (as far as your strength will bear) in the diligent labours of a lawful calling; and spend none of your precious time in idleness.' Idleness is the tidetime of the tempter: when you are idle, you invite the devil to come and vex you. Then you can have while to hearken to him, and think on all that he will put into your minds, and then to think over all those thoughts again! When you have nothing else to do, the devil will find you such work. Then you must sit still and muse; and your thoughts must be stirring in the mud of your own distempers, as children lie paddling in the dirt. And idleness is a sin, which God will not favour. He hath commanded you to "labour six days, and in the sweat of your brows to eat your bread; and he that will not labour is unworthy to eat." Remember that time is precious, and doth haste away, and God hath given you none in vain. Therefore, as you are troubled for other sins, make conscience of this sin, and waste not one quarter of an hour's time, in your idle, unprofitable musings. It is just with God to make your sin itself to be your punishment, and your own idle thoughts to chastise you daily, when you will not get up and go about your lawful business. Nor will pretences of prayer, or any devotion excuse your idleness: for it is against the law of God. Above all that I have said to you, let me entreat you therefore to obey this one Direction. I have known despairing, melancholy persons cured by setting themselves resolutely and diligently about their callings, (and changing air and company, and riding abroad.) If you will sit musing in a corner, and sin against God by idleness and loss of time, and increase your own miseries withal, rather than you will rouse up yourself, and ply your business, your calamity is just. Say not, that you have little or nothing to do: for God hath made it the duty of all, be they never so rich, to labour in such employment as is suitable to their place and strength.

Direct. xix. 'Do but mark well how much the devil gets by keeping you in sad, despondent thoughts; and then

you may easily see that it cannot be your duty, nor best for you, which is so gainful and pleasing to the devil.' By keeping you in these self-perplexing doubts and fears, he robs God of the thanks and praise which you owe him for all his mercies. These highest duties you cast aside, as if they did not belong to you. You give not God the honour of his most miraculous mercy, in our redemption; nor do you study or relish, or admire, or magnify the riches of grace in Jesus Christ! you have poor, low thoughts of the infinite love of God, and are unfit to judge of it or perceive it, being like a cholerick stomach which puts a continual bitterness in the mouth, which hinders it from tasting any sweetness in their meat. It hereby unfitteth you for the love of God, and more inclineth you to hate him, or fly from him as an enemy, while the devil representeth him to you as one that hateth you: it loseth your time: it depriveth you of all your willingness to duty, and delight in duty, and maketh all God's service a burden and vexation to you. It is very contrary to the spirit of adoption, and to the whole frame of evangelical worship and obedience. And will you, under pretence of being more humbled, and sorrowful, and sensible, thus gratify satan, and wrong God and yourselves?

Direct. xx. 'Trust not to your own judgment, in your melancholy state, either as to the condition of your souls, or the choice and conduct of your thoughts or ways; but commit yourselves to the judgment and direction of some experienced, faithful guide.' You are no fit judges of your own condition, nor of the way of your duty, in this dark, distempered condition that you are in: either your mind and imagination is well or ill: if it be well, why complain you of all those disturbances, and confusions, and disability to meditate and pray? If it be ill, why will you be so self-conceited as to think yourselves able to judge of yourselves, with such a distempered fantasy of mind. It is one of the worst things in melancholy persons, that commonly they are most wise in their own eyes, and stiff in their own conceits, when their brains are sickest, and their understanding weakest; and that they are confident, and unruly, and unpersuadable, as if they were proud of those pitiful understandings; and thought nobody knows so well as they.

O, say they, you know not my case? Am not I liker to know your case, who have seen so many score in that case, than you are that never knew any in it but yourself? A man that stands by may better know the case of a man that is in a dream, than he can know his own. You say that others feel not what you feel! no more doth the physician feel what a man in a fever, or falling-sickness, or distraction feeleth; and yet by the report of what you say you feel, and by what he seeth, he far better knoweth your disease, the nature and the cure of it, than you that feel it. Therefore as a wise man, when he is sick, will trust himself, under God, to the direction of his physician and the help of his friends about him, and not lie wrangling against their help and counsel, and wilfully refuse it, because they advise him contrary to his feeling; so will you do, if you are wise; trust yourself with some fit director; and despise not his judgment either about your state, or about your duty. You think you are lost and there is no hope: hear what he saith that is now fitter to judge. Set not your weak wit too wilfully against him. Do you think he is so foolish as to mistake? should not humility make you rather think so of yourself? Be advised by him about the matter of your thoughts, the manner and length of your secret duties, and all your scruples that you need advice in. Will you answer me this one question? Do you know any body that is wiser than yourself? and fitter to judge of your condition and advise you? If you say, no; how proud are you of such a crazed wit! If you say, yea; then believe and trust that person, and resolve to follow his direction. And I would ask you, were you once of another judgment concerning yourself? If so, then were you not as sound and able to judge, and liker to be in the right than you are now.

Direct. XXI. My last advice is, 'to look out for the cure of your disease, and commit yourself to the care of your physician, and obey him: and do not as most melancholy persons do, that will not believe that physic will do them good; but that it is only their soul that is afflicted: for it is the spirits, imagination, and passions, that are diseased, and so the soul is like an eye that looketh through a coloured glass, and thinks all things are of the same colour as

the glass is.' I have seen abundance cured by physic: and till the body be cured, the mind will hardly ever be cured, but the clearest reasons will be all in vain.

Tit. 6. Directions for young Students, for the most profitable ordering of their studying Thoughts.

Direct. 1. 'Let it be your first and most serious study to make sure, that you are regenerate, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and justified by faith in Christ, and love God above all, as your reconciled Father, and so have right to the heavenly inheritance.'

For 1. You are nearest to yourselves, and your everlasting happiness is your nearest and your highest interest: what will it profit you to know all the world, and to lose your own souls? To know as much as devils, and be for ever miserable with devils.

2. It is a most doleful employment to be all day at work in satan's chains! To sit studying God and the holy Scriptures, while you are in the power of the devil, and have hearts that are at enmity to the holiness of that God and that Scripture which you are studying. It is a most preposterous and incongruous course of study, if you first study not your own deliverance. And if you knew your case, and saw your chains, your trembling would disturb your studies.

3. Till you are renewed you study in the dark, and without that internal sight and sense, by which the life, and spirit, and kernel of all that you study, must be known. All that the Scripture saith of the darkness of a state of sin, and of the illumination of the Spirit, and of the marvellous light of regenerate souls, and of the natural man's not receiving the things of the Spirit, and of the carnal mind that is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, nor can be; all these and such other passages are not insignificant, but most considerable truths from the Spirit of Truth. You have only that light that will shew you the shell, and the dead letter, but not the soul, and quickening sense, of any practical holy truth. As the eye knoweth meat which we never tasted, or as a mere grammarian, or logician, readeth a law book or physic book, (who gather nothing

out of them that will save a man's estate or life) so will you prosecute all your studies.

4. You are like to have but ill-success in your studies, when the devil is your master, who hateth both you, and the holy things which you are studying. He will blind you, and pervert you, and possess your minds with false conceits, and put diverting, sensual thoughts into you, and will keep your own souls from being ever the better for it all.

5. You will want the true end of all right studies; and set up wrong ends: and therefore whatever be the matter of your studies, you are still out of your way, and know nothing rightly, because you know it not as a means to the true end. (But of this anon.)

Direct. 11. 'When you have first laid this foundation, and have the true principle and end of all right studies, be sure that you intend this end in all, (even the everlasting sight and love of God, and the promoting his glory, and pleasing his holy will :) and that you never meddle with any studies separated from this end, but as a means thereto, and as animated thereby.

If every step in your journey is but loss of time and labour, which is not directed to your journey's end; and if all that you have to mind or do in the world, be only about your end or the means; and all creatures and actions can have no other moral goodness, than to be the means of God your ultimate end; then you may easily see, that whenever you leave out God as the end of any of your studies, you are but sinning, or doting: for in those studies there can be no moral good, though they may tend to your knowledge of natural good and evil. And when you think you grow wise and learned men, and can dispute and talk of many things, which make to your renown, while your "wills consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; you are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, supposing that gain is godliness: from such turn away^h." As there is no knowledge but from God,

^h 1 Tim. vi. 3—6.

so it is not knowledge but dotage if it lead not unto God.

Direct. III. 'See therefore that you choose all your studies according to their tendency to God your end, and use them still under the notion of means, and that you estimate your knowledge by this end, and judge yourselves to know no more indeed, than you know of God and for God: and so let practical divinity be the soul of all your studies.'

Therefore, when life is too short for the studies of all things which we desire to know, make sure of the chief things; and prefer those studies which make most to your end; spend not your time on things unprofitable to this end: and spend not your first and chiefest time on things unnecessary to it: for the near connexion to God the end, is it that ennobleth the matter of your studies. All true knowledge leads to God; but not all alike: the nearest to him is the best¹.

Direct. IV. 'Remember that the chief part of your growth in knowledge, is not in knowing many smaller things, of no necessity; but in a growing downwards in a clearer insight into the foundation of the Christian faith; and in taking better rooting than you had at your first believing: and in growing upward into a greater knowledge of God, and into greater love of him, and heavenly-mindedness, and then in growing up to greater skill, and ability, and readiness to do him service in the world.'

Know as much as you can know, of the works of God, and of the languages and customs of the world: but still remember, that to know God in Christ better, is the growth which you must daily study: and when you know them most, you have still much more need to know better these great things which you know already; than to know more things, which you never knew. The roots of faith may still increase, and the branches and fruits of love may be still greater and sweeter! As long as you live, you may still know better the reasons of your religion (though not better reasons), and you may know better how to use your knowledge. And whatever you know, let it be that you

¹ Nos autem nec subito cœpimus philosophari: nec mediocrem à primo tempore ætatis in eo studio operam curamque consumimus: et, cum minime videbamur, tum maxime philosophabamur. Cic. Nat. D. i. 6.

may be led up to know God more, or love him more, or serve him better.

Direct. v. 'With fear and detestation watch and resolve against all carnal, worldly ends; and see that your hearts be not captivated by your fleshly interest; nor grow to a high esteem of the pleasures, or profits, or honours, of this world, nor to relish any fleshly accommodations, as very pleasant and desirable: but that you take up with God and the hopes of glory as your satisfying portion, and follow Christ as cross-bearers, denying yourselves, and dead to the world, and resolved and prepared to forsake all for his sake.'

These are words that you can easily say yourselves: but these are things that are so hardly learned, that many of the most learned and reverend perish for want of being better acquainted with them: (and I shall never take that man to be wisely learned, that hath not learned to escape damnation.) Christ's cross is to be learned before your alphabet. To impose the cross is quickly learned, but to learn to bear it is the difficulty. To lay the cross on others is to be the followers of Pilate: but to bear it when it is laid on us, is to be the followers of Christ. If you grow corrupted with a love of honour, and riches, and preferment, and come to the study of divinity with a fleshly, worldly mind and end, you will but serve satan while you seem to be seeking after God, and damn your souls among the doctrines and means of salvation, and go to God for materials to chain you faster to the devil, and steal a nail from divinity to fasten your ears unto his door. And you little know how Judas's gain will gripe and torment the awakened conscience! and how the rust will witness against you, and how it will eat your flesh as fire.

Direct. vi. 'Digest all that you know, and turn it into holy habits, and expect that success first on yourselves, which if you were to preach you would expect in others. Remembering that knowing is not the end of knowing; but it is as eating to the body, where health, and strength, and service are the end^k.'

Every truth of God is his candle which he sets up for

^k *Primum contemplativæ sapientiæ rudimentum est, meditari, condiscere, et loquitarî dedicere: Paul. Scalig. Thes. p. 730.*

you to work by: it is as food that is for life and action. You lose all the knowledge which ends in knowing. To fill your head and common-place-book is not all that you have to do. But to fortify, and quicken, and inflame your hearts. Good habits are the best provision for a preacher. The habits of mind are better than the best library. But if the habits of heavenly love, and life in the heart do not concur, the heart and life of a preacher and a scholar are wanting still, for all your knowledge. Study Paul's words, 1 Cor. viii. 1. 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' If he had said that knowledge edifieth others, and charity saveth ourselves, he would have said nothing that is strange. But even as to edification charity hath the precedency.

Direct. vii. 'Yea, see that you excel the unlearned as much in holiness as you do in knowledge: unless you will persuade them that your knowledge is a useless, worthless thing; and unless you would be judged as unprofitable servants.'

Every degree of knowledge is for a further degree of holiness: ten talents must be improved to ten more. They that know and do not, are beaten with many stripes. The devil's scholars look on the godly that are unlearned, with hatred and disdain, and preach to their discouragement and disgrace, and strive to set and keep true godliness in the stocks. But Christ's ministers love holiness wherever they see it, and are ashamed to think that the unlearned should be more holy than they; and strive to go beyond them as much in the use and ends of knowledge, as in knowledge itself: and with Austin lament, that while the unlearned take heaven by violence, the learned are thrust out into hell, as thinking it is their part to know and teach, and other men's to practise.

Direct. viii. 'Cast not away a moment of your precious time, in idleness, or impertinencies; but follow your work diligently, and with all your might.'

I mean not that you should overdo, and overthrow your brains and bodies, nor forbear such sober exercises as is most necessary to your health: for a sick body is an ill companion for a student; and much more a crazed brain. But time-wasters are lovers of pleasure or idleness, more than of knowledge and holiness: and wisdom falleth not

into idle, sluggish, dreaming souls. If you think it not worth your painfullest and closest studies, you must take up with idle ignorance, and go abroad with swelling titles and empty brains, as the deceivers and the scourges of the church.

Direct. ix. 'Keep up a delight in all your studies, and carry them not on in an unwilling weariness: and, if it be not by notable error in matter or method, gratify your delight with such things as you are best pleased with, though they bring some smaller inconvenience: because else your weariness may bring much more.'

I know that a delight in sin and vanity is not to be gratified: and force must be used with a backward mind in case of necessity and weight. But if it be but in the variety of subjects, and the choice of pleasing studies which are profitable, though simply some other might be fitter, something is to be yielded to delight. But especially the heart must be got to a delight in holy things: and then, time will be improved; the memory will be helped; much will be done; and you will persevere; and it will preserve the mind from temptations to needless recreations, and from the deadly plague of youthful lusts, when your daily labour is a greater pleasure to you.

Direct. x. 'Get some judicious man to draw you up the titles of a threefold common-place book: one part for definitions, axioms, and necessary doctrines; another part for what is useful for ornament and oratory; and another for references as a common index to all the books of that science which you read: for memory will not serve for all.'

Ordinarily students have not judgment enough to form their own common-place books till they are old in studies, and have read most of the authors which they would remember: and therefore the young must here have a most judicious helper. And when they have done, injudiciousness will be apt to fill it with less necessary things, and to make an unmeet choice of matter, if they have not care and an instructor.

Direct. xi. 'Highly esteem a just method in divinity, and in all your studies: and labour to get an accurate scheme or skeleton, where at once, you may see every part in its proper place. But remember that if it be not sound,

it will be a snare; and one error in your scheme or method will be apt to introduce abundance more.'

It is a poor and pitiful kind of knowledge, to know many loose parcels, and broken members of truth, without knowing the whole, or the place, and the relation which they have to the rest. To know letters and not syllables, or syllables and not words, or words and not sentences, or sentences and not the scope of the discourse, are all but an unprofitable knowledge. He knoweth no science rightly that hath not anatomized it, and carrieth not a true scheme or method of it in his mind. But among the many that are extant, to commend any one to you which I most esteem, or take to be without error, is more than I dare do.

Direct. XII. 'Still keep the primitive, fundamental verities in your mind, and see every other truth which you learn as springing out of them, and receiving their life and nourishment from them: and still keep in your minds a clear distinction between the truths of several degrees, both of necessity, and certainty, always reducing the less necessary to the more necessary, and the less certain to the more certain, and not contrarily¹.'

If God had made all points of faith, or Scripture revelation of equal necessity, our baptism would not only have mentioned our belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; nor should we have ever seen the ancient creed; nor the ten commandments. And if all points were of equal evidence, and plainness, and certainty to us, we should not have some so much controverted above others: "Some things" in Scripture are "hard to be understood," but not "all things^m." To pretend that any truth is more necessary than it is, doth tend to uncharitableness and contention: and to say that any is less necessary than it is, doth tend to the neglect of it, and to the danger of souls. To pretend any point to be more plain and certain than it is, doth but shew our pride and ignorance. But to set up uncertain and unnecessary points, and make a religion of them, and reduce things certain or necessary to them, this is the method of turbulent heretics.

Direct. XIII. 'Take nothing as universally necessary in religion, which was not so taken in the days of the apostles.

¹ Read well 'Vincentius Lirinensis.'

^m 2 Pet. iii. 16.

and primitive church; and take that for the safest way to heaven which the apostles went who certainly are there: value the apostolical purity, simplicity, charity and unity: and follow not them that by being wise and pious overmuch, corrupt our sacred pattern by their additions, and fill the church with uncharitableness and strife.'

If it were not a thing too evident that dominion and riches go for religion with them, and gain for godliness, and honour and money instead of argument, it would be a most stupendous wonder that so many learned men should be found among Christians in the world, to hinder the peace and unity of the church, as do it vehemently and implacably in the church of Rome; when so easy a thing and so reasonable, would unite almost all the Christian world, as is, the requiring no more as necessary to our union, than what was made necessary in the days of the apostles, and the obtruding nothing as necessary to salvation, which the apostles and primitive church were saved without. This easy, reasonable thing, which no man hath any thing of seeming sense and weight to speak against, would end all the ruining differences among Christians.

Direct. xiv. 'Be desirous to know all that God would have you know, and be willing to be ignorant of all that God would have you ignorant of: and pry not into unrevealed things; and much less make them the matter of any uncharitable strife.'

Abundance of contentious volumes between the Dominicans and Jesuits, and many others, are stuffed with bold inquiries, wranglings, or determinations of unsearchable mysteries, utterly unknown to those that voluminously debate them, and never revealed in the Word or works of God. Keep off with reverence from concealed mysteries; talk not as boldly of the divine influx, and the priority, posteriority, dependence, or reason of God's decrees, as if you were talking of your common affairs. Come with great reverence when you are called of God to search into those high and holy truths which he hath revealed. But pretend not to know that which is not to be known. For you will but discover your ignorance and arrogance, and know never the more, when you have doted about questions never so long.

Direct. xv. ' Avoid both extremes, of them that study no more, but to know what others have written and held before them ; and of them that little regard the discoveries of others : learn all of your teachers and authors that they can teach you ; but make all your own, and see things in their proper evidence ; and improve their discoveries by the utmost of your diligence ; abhorring a proud desire of singularity, or to seem wiser than you are.'

Most students through slothfulness look no further for knowledge, than into their books ; and their learning lieth but in knowing what others have written, or said, or held before them ; especially where the least differing from the judgment of the party which is uppermost or in reputation, doth tend to hazard a man's honour, or preferments, there men think it dangerous to seem to know more than is commonly known ; and therefore think it needless to study to know it. Men are backward to take much pains to know that which tendeth to their ruin to be known, but doth them no harm while they can but keep themselves ignorant of it : which makes the opposed truth have so few entertainers, or students among the Papists, or any that persecute or reproach it. And others discerning this extreme, do run into the contrary ; and under pretence of the loveliness of truth, and the need of liberty of judging, do think the edifying way is first to pull down all that others have built before them, and little regard the judgment of their predecessors, but think they must take nothing on trust from others, but begin all from the very ground themselves. And usually their pride makes them so little regard the most approved authors, that they have not patience to read them till they thoroughly understand them ; but reject that which is received, before they understand it, merely because it was the received way : and while they say, that nothing must be taken upon trust, they presently take upon trust themselves that very opinion, and with it the other opinions of those novelists that teach them this. And believing what such say in disgrace of others, withal they believe what they hold in opposition to those that they have disgraced. But it is easy to see how sad a case mankind were in, if every man must be a fabricator of all his knowledge himself, and posterity should be never the better for the dis-

coveries of their ancestors; and the greatest labours of the wisest men, and their highest attainments must be no profit to any but themselves. Why do they use a teacher, if they must do all themselves? If they believe not their tutors, and take nothing on trust, it seems they must know every truth before they will learn it: and what difference is there between believing a tutor and an author? And is not that more credible which upon long experience is approved by many nations and ages, than that which is recommended to you but by one or few? These students should have made themselves an alphabet or grammar, and not have taken the common ones on trust. It is easier to add to other men's inventions, than to begin and carry on all ourselves. By their course of study, the world would never grow wiser; but every age and person be still beginning, and none proceed beyond their rudiments.

Direct. xvi. 'Be sure you make choice of meet teachers and companions for your studies and your lives: that they be such as will assist you in the holy practice of what you know, as well as in your knowledge: and shun as a plague the familiarity; 1. Of sensual, idle, brutish persons. 2. And of carnal, ambitious ones, who know no higher end than preferments and applause. 3. And of proud, heretical, contententious wits, whose wisdom and religion are nothing but censuring, reproaching, and vilifying them that are wiser and better than themselves.'

Bad company is the common ruin of youth: their own sensuality is easily stirred up by the temptations of the sensual; and their consciences overborne by the examples of other men's voluptuous lives. It emboldeneth them to sin, to see others sin before them; as cowards themselves are drawn on in an army to run upon the face of death, by seeing others do it, and to avoid the reproach of cowardice: and the noise of mirth and ranting language, are the drums and trumpets of the devils, by which their ears are kept from hearing the cries of wounded, dying men, the lamentations of those that have found the error of that way. And there is in corrupted nature, so strong an inclination to the prosperity and vain-glory of the world, that makes them quickly take the bait, especially when the devil doth offer it them by a fit instrument, which shall not deter them,

as it would do, if he had offered it them himself. It is a pleasant thing to flesh and blood to be rich and great, and generally applauded : and a grievous thing to be poor, and despised, and afflicted^a. The rawness also and unsettledness and youth, who want well furnished understandings and experience, is a great advantage to heretics and deceivers, who still sweep many such away, wherever they come and have but opportunity. Children are “easily tost up and down, and carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning sleight and subtlety of them that lie in wait to deceive.” Deceivers have their methods ; and methods are the common instruments of deceit, which are not easily detected by the inexperienced. On the contrary, the benefit of wise, and staid, and sober, and peaceable, meek, humble, holy, heavenly companions, is exceeding great, especially to youth ! Such will lead them in safe paths, and be still preserving them, and promoting the most necessary parts of knowledge, and quickening them to holy practice, which is the end of all.

Direct. xvii. ‘In all your studies be jealous of both extremes, and distinctly discern which are the extremes, that you run not into one, while you avoid the other. And be especially careful, that you imagine not co-ordinates or subordinates to be opposites ; and throw not away every truth, which you cannot presently place rightly in the frame, and see it fall in agreeably with the rest : for a further insight into true method (attained but by very few,) may reconcile you to that which now offendeth you. What God hath joined together, be sure that you never put asunder ; though yet you cannot find their proper places^b.’

There is scarce any error more common among students, than supposing those truths to be inconsistent, which indeed have a necessary dependence on each other : and a casting truth away as error, because they cannot reconcile it to some other truth. And there is nothing so much causeth this, as want of a true method. He that hath no method

^a Sana consultatio est ex eruditia multarumque, rerum peritia et experientia. Plato in Laert.

^b Quorum opiniones cum tam variæ sint tamque inter se dissidentes : alterum fieri profecto potest, ut earum nulla ; alterum certè non potest, ut plus una vera sit. Cic. Nat. D. i. 5.

considerable, or after much curious labour hath fallen upon a false method, or a method that in any one considerable point is out of joint, will deal thus by many certain truths : as an ignorant person that is to set all the scattered parts of a clock or watch together, if he misplace one, will be unable rightly to place all the rest ; and then, when he finds that they fit not the place which he thinks they must be in, he casteth them away, and thinks they are not the right, and is searching for, or making something else to fit that place. False method rejecteth many a truth.

And (unless it be in loving God, or other acts of the superior faculties, about their ultimate end and highest object) there is scarce any thing in mortality but hath its extremes. And where they are not discerned, they are seldom well avoided. And usually narrow-sighted persons are fearful only of one extreme, and see no danger but on one side ; and therefore are easily carried, by avoiding that, into the contrary.

I think it not unprofitable to instance in several particular cautions, that you imitate not them that put asunder what God hath conjoined, and cast not away truth as oft as you are puzzled in the right placing or methodizing it.

Instance 1. The first and second causes are conjoined in their operations, and therefore must not be put asunder. If the way of influx, concourse, or co-operation be dark and unsearchable to you, do not deny that it is, because you see not how it is. The honour of the first and second cause also are conjunct, according to their several interests in the effects : do not therefore imagine, that all the honour ascribed to the second cause is denied or taken away from the first ; for then you understand not their order : otherwise you would see, that as the second causeth in dependence on the first, and in subordination to it, and hath no power but what is communicated by it, so it hath no honour but what is received from it : and that it is no less honour for the first cause to operate mediately by the second, than immediately by itself : and that there is no less of the power, wisdom, or goodness of God, in an effect produced by means and second causes, than in that which he produceth of himself only, without them : and that it is his goodness to communicate a power of doing good to his

creatures; and the honour of working and causing under him : but he never loseth any thing by communicating, nor hath the less himself by giving to his creatures : for if all that honour that is given to the creature were taken injuriously from God, then God would never have made the world, nor made a saint ; and then the worst creatures would least dishonour God : then he would not shine by the sun, but by himself immediately : and then he would never glorify either saint or angel. But on the contrary it is God's honour to work by adapted means ; and all their honour is truly his. As all the commendation of a clock or watch is given to the workman. And though God do not all so immediately, as to use no means or second causes ; yet is he never the further from the effect, but, ' *immediatione virtutis et suppositi* ' is himself as near, as if he used none.

Instance II. The special providence of God, and his being the first universal cause, are conjunct with the culpability of sinners ; and no man must put these asunder. Those that cannot see just how they are conjoined, may be sure that they are conjoined. It is no dishonour to an engineer that he can make a watch which shall go longer than he is moving it with his finger. Nor is it a dishonour to our Creator, that he can make a creature which can morally determine itself to an action as commanded or forbidden, without the predetermination of his Maker, though not without his universal concurrence necessary to action as action. If Adam could not do this through the natural impossibility of it, then the law was, that he should die the death if he did not overcome God, or do that which was naturally impossible ; and this was the nature of his sin. Few dare say, that God cannot make a free, self-determining agent : and if he can, we shall easily prove that he hath : and the force of their opposition then is vanished.

Instance III. The omniscience of God and his dominion, government and decrees, are conjunct with the liberty and sin of man : yet these by many are put asunder : as if God must either be ignorant or be the author of sin ! As if he made one poor, by decreeing to make another rich ! As if he cannot be a perfect governor, unless he procure all his subjects perfectly to keep his laws ! As if all the fault of those that break the law, were to be laid upon the maker of

the law! As if all God's will 'de debito' were not effective of its proper work, unless man fulfil it in the event! And as if it were possible for any creature to comprehend the way of the Creator's knowledge.

Instance IV. Many would separate nature and grace, which God the author of both conjoined. When grace supposeth nature, and in her garden soweth all her seed, and exciteth and rectifieth all her powers; yet these men talk as if nature had been annihilated, or grace came to annihilate it, and not to cure it. As if the leprosy and disease of nature were nature itself! And as if natural good had been lost as much as moral good! As if man were not man till grace made him a man!

Instance V. Many separate the natural power of a sinner from his moral impotency, and his natural freedom of will from his moral servitude, as if they were inconsistent, when they are conjunct. As if the natural faculty might not consist with an evil disposition: or a natural power with an habitual unwillingness to exercise it aright. And as if a sinner were not still a man. -

Instance VI. Many separate general and special grace and redemption, as inconsistent, when they are conjunct: when the general is the proper way and means of accomplishing the ends of the special grace, and is still supposed. As if God could not give more to some, if he give any thing to all. Or as if he gave nothing to all, if he give more to any. As if he could not deal equally and without difference with all as a legislator, and righteously with all as a judge, unless he deal equally and without difference with all as a benefactor, in the free distribution of his gifts. As if he were obliged to make every worm and beast a man, and every man a king, and every king an angel, and every clod a star, and every star a sun!

Instance VII. Many separate the glory of God and man's salvation, God and man, in assigning the ultimate end of man! As if a moral intention might not take in both! As if it were not 'finis amantis'; and the end of a lover were not union in mutual love! As if love to God may not be for ever the final act, and God himself the final object: and as if, in this magnetic closure, though both may be called the end, yet there might not in the closing parties, be an

infinite disproportion, and only one be 'finis ultimè ultimus.'

Instance VIII. Yea many would separate God from God, while they would separate God from heaven, and say that we must be content to be shut out of heaven for the love of God : when our heaven is the perfect love of God. And so they say in effect, that for the love of God we must be content to be shut out from the love of God.

Instance IX. Thus also the vulgar separate the mercy and the justice of God ! As if God knew not better than man to whom his mercy should extend. And as if God be not merciful, if he will be a righteous governor, and unless he will suffer all the world to spit in his face and blaspheme him, and let his enemies go all unpunished.

Instance X. Thus many separate threatenings and promises, fear and love, a perfect law and a pardoning Gospel. As if he that is a man, and hath both fear and love in his nature, must not make use of both for God and his salvation : and the lawgiver might not fit his laws to work on both. As if hell may not be feared, and heaven loved at once.

Instance XI. Thus hypocrites separate in conceit their seeming holiness and devotion to God from duties of justice and charity to men. As if they could serve God acceptably, and disobey him wilfully ! Or as if they could love him whom they never saw, and not love his image in his works and children, whom they daily see. As if they could hate and persecute Christ in his little ones, or at least neglect him, and yet sincerely love him in himself.

Instance XII. Thus, by many, Scripture and tradition, divine faith and human faith are commonly opposed. Because the Papists have set tradition in a wrong place, many cast it away because it fits not that place : when man's tradition and ministerial revelation, is necessary to make known and bring down God's revelation to us : and a subservient tradition is no disparagement to Scripture, though a supplemental tradition be : and man must be believed as man, though not as God : and he that will not believe man as man, shall scarce know what he hath to believe from God.

Instance XIII. Thus many separate the sufficiency of the law and rule from the usefulness of an officer, minister, and judge. As if the law must be imperfect, or else need

no execution, and no judge for execution. Or as if the judge's execution were a supplement or addition to the law. As if the question, Who shall be the judge? did argue the law of insufficiency : and the promulgation and execution were not supposed.

Instance xiv. Thus also many separate the necessity of a public judge, from the lawfulness and necessity of a private judgment, or discerning in all the rational subjects. As if God and man did govern only brutes : or we could obey a law, and not judge it to be a law, and to be obeyed : and not understand the sense of it, and what it doth command us. As if fools and madmen were the only subjects. As if your learning of Christ as his disciples, and meditating day and night in his law, and searching for wisdom in his Word, were a disobeying him as our king. As if it were a possible thing for subjects to obey, without a private judgment of discretion. Or as if there were any repugnancy between my judging what is the king's law, and his judging whether I am punishable for disobeying it. Or as if judging ourselves, contradicted our being judged of God.

Instance xv. So, many separate between the operation of the Word and Spirit, the minister and Christ. As if the Spirit did not usually work by the Word : and Christ did not preach to us by his ministers and ambassadors. And as if they might despise his messengers, and not be taken for despisers of himself. Or might throw away the dish and keep the milk.

Instance xvi. Thus many separate the special love of saints from the common love of man as man. As if they could not love a saint, unless they may hate an enemy, and despise all others, and deny them the love which is answerable to their natural goodness.

Instance xvii. Thus many separate universal or catholic union and communion from particular. And some understand no communion but the universal, and some none but the particular. Some say we separate from them as to catholic communion, if we hold not local, particular communion with them ; yea if we join not with them in every mode. As if I could be personally in ten thousand congregations at once, or else did separate from them all. Or, as if I separated from all mankind, if I differed from all men

in my visage or complexion. Or, as if I cannot be absent from many thousand churches, and yet honour them as true churches of Christ, and hold catholic communion with them in faith, hope, and love. Yea, though I durst not join with them personally in worship, for fear of some sinful condition which they impose. Or, as if I need not be a member of any ordered worshipping congregation, because I have a catholic faith and love to all the Christians in the world.

Instance xviii. Thus are the outward and inward worship separated by many, who think that all which the body performeth is against the due spirituality; or that the spirituality is but fancy, and contrary to the form or outward part. As if the heart and the knee may not fitly bow together; nor decency of order concur with Spirit and truth.

Instance xix. Thus many separate faith and obedience: Paul's justification by faith, without the works of the law, from James's justification by works, and not by faith only, and Christ's justification by our words^p. And thus they separate free grace and justification from any necessary condition, and from the rewardableness of obedience (which the ancients called merit): but of this at large elsewhere.

Instance xx. And many separate prudence and zeal, meekness and resolution, the wisdom of the serpent and the innocency of the dove: yielding to no sin, and yet yielding in things lawful: maintaining our Christian liberty, and yet becoming all things to all men, if by any means we may save some. These Instances are enough, I will add no more.

Direct. xviii. 'Take heed of falling into factions and parties in religion, (be the party great or small, high or low, in honour or dishonour); and take heed lest you be infected with a factious, censorious, uncharitable, hurting zeal: for these are much contrary to the interest, will, and Spirit of Christ. Therefore among all your readings, deeply sack in the doctrine of charity and peace, and read much, reconciling, moderating authors: such as Dury, Hall, Davenant, Crocius, Bergius, Martinus, Amyrædus, Dallæus, Testardus, Calixtus, Hottonus, Junius, Parseus, and Burroughs their Irenæicons.

The reading of such books extinguisheth the consuming flame of that infernal, envious zeal described James iii., and

^p Matt. vii. 37.

kindleth charity, and meekness, and mellowness, and moderation in the heart; and cureth those bloodshot eyes, which are unable till cured to discern the truth. It helpeth us to knowledge, and to that which is more edifying, and keepeth knowledge from puffing us up. And experience will tell you at long running, that among ancients and moderns, Greeks and Latins, Papists and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists, Remonstrants and Contra-remonstrants, Prelatists, Presbyterians, Independents, &c., commonly the moderators are not only the best and most charitable, but the wisest, most judicious men.

Direct. xix. 'With all your readings still join the reading of the Scriptures, and of the most holy and practical divines; not fantastical, enthusiastic counterfeits, Paracelsian divines; but those that lead you up by the solid doctrine of faith and love to true devotion, and heavenly-mindedness, and conversation.'

This must be your bread and drink; your daily and substantial food: without this you may soon be filled with air, that cannot nourish you, and prove in the end as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. These will breed strength, and peace, and joy, and help you in your communion with God, and hopes of heaven, and so promote the end of all your studies! There is more life and sweetness in these, than in the things that are more remote from God and heaven.

Direct. xx. Lastly, 'Do all as dying men: promise not yourselves long life, lest it tempt you to waste your time on things least necessary, and to loiter it away; or lest you lose the quickening benefit, which the sight of death and eternity would yield you in all your studies.'

The nearer you apprehend yourselves to death and heaven, the greater help you have to be mortified and heavenly. This will make you serious, and keep up right intentions, and keep out wrong ones, and powerfully help you against temptations, that when you have studied to save others, you may not be cast-aways; nor be cheated by the devil with the shell, and leaves, and flowers, while you go without the saving fruit.

I have spoken the more on this subject of governing the thoughts, because it is so great and excellent a part of the work of man; and God doth so much regard the heart; and the Spirit of Christ and satan so much strive for it; and

grace is so much employed about it; and our happiness or misery, joy or sorrow, is greatly promoted by our thoughts. And more I would have said, but that in the third Chapter, and in my "Treatise of the Divine Life," there is much said already. And for a method and Directions for particular meditations, I have given them at large in the fourth Part of the "Saints' Rest," from whence it may easily be taken, and applied to other subjects, as it is there to heaven. It is easy to write and read Directions; but I fear lest slothfulness through the difficulty of practice, will frustrate my Directions to the most. But if any profit by them, my labour is not lost.

CHAPTER VII.

Directions for the Government of the Passions.

THE Passions are to be considered, 1. As in themselves, and the sin of them as respecting God and ourselves only: and so I am to speak of them here. 2. As they are a wrong to others, and a breach of the commandments which require love and duty towards our neighbour: and so I shall speak of them after.

Passions are not sinful in themselves, for God hath given them to us for his service: and there is none of them but may be sanctified and used for him. But they are sinful, 1. When they are misguided and placed on wrong objects. 2. When they darken reason, and delude the mind, and keep out truth, and seduce to error. 3. When they rebel against the government of the will, and trouble it, and hinder it in its choice or prosecution of good, or urge it violently, to follow their brutish inclination. 4. When they are unseasonable. 5. Or immoderate and excessive in degree. 6. Or of too long continuance. 7. And when they tend to evil effects, as to unseemly speeches or actions, or to wrong another.

Passions are holy when they are devoted to God, and exercised upon him or for him. They are good when, 1. They have right objects; 2. And are guided by reason; 3. And