

CHAPTER XXVII.

Directions for the Poor.

THERE is no condition of life so low or poor, but may be sanctified, and fruitful, and comfortable to us, if our own misunderstanding, or sin and negligence, do not pollute it or imbitter it to us: if we do the duty of our condition faithfully, we shall have no cause to murmur at it. Therefore I shall here direct the poor in the special duties of their condition; and if they will but conscionably perform them, it will prove a greater kindness to them, than if I could deliver them from their poverty, and give them as much riches as they desire. Though I doubt this would be more pleasing to the most, and they would give me more thanks for money, than for teaching them how to want it.

Direct. 1. 'Understand first the use and estimate of all earthly things: that they were never made to be your portion and felicity, but your provision and helps in the way to heaven*.' And therefore they are neither to be estimated nor desired simply for themselves, (for so there is nothing good but God,) but only as they are means to the greatest good. Therefore neither poverty nor riches are simply to be rejoiced in for themselves, as any part of our happiness; but that condition is to be desired and rejoiced in, which affordeth us the greatest helps for heaven, and that condition only is to be lamented and disliked, which hindereth us most from heaven, and from our duty.

Direct. II. 'See therefore that you really take all these things, as matters in themselves indifferent, and of small concernment to you; and as not worthy of much love, or care, or sorrow, further than they conduce to greater things.' We are like runners in a race, and heaven or hell will be our end; and therefore woe to us, if by looking aside, or turning back, or stopping, or trifling about these matters, or burdening ourselves with worldly trash, we should lose the race, and lose our souls. O sirs, what greater matters than

* Prov. xxviii. 6. James ii. 5.

poverty or riches have we to mind! Can those souls that must shortly be in heaven or hell, have time to bestow any serious thoughts upon these impertinencies? Shall we so much as “look at the temporal things which are seen, instead of the things eternal that are unseen^b?” Or shall we whine under those light afflictions, which may be so improved, as to “work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory^c?” Our present “life is not in the abundance of the things which we possess^d ;” much less is our eternal life.

Direct. III. ‘Therefore take heed that you judge not of God’s love, or of your happiness or misery by your riches or poverty, prosperity or adversity, as knowing that they come alike to all^e,’ and love or hatred is not to be discerned by them; except only God’s common love, as they are common mercies to the body. If a surgeon is not to be taken for a hater of you, because he letteth you blood, nor a physician because he purgeth his patient, nor a father because he correcteth his child; much less is God to be judged an enemy to you, or unmerciful, because his wisdom and not your folly disposeth of you, and proportioneth your estates. A carnal mind will judge of its own happiness and the love of God by carnal things, because it savoureth not spiritual mercies: but grace giveth a Christian another judgment, relish and desire: as nature setteth a man above the food and pleasures of a beast.

Direct. IV. ‘Stedfastly believe that God is every way fitter than you to dispose of your estate and you^f.’ He is infinitely wise, and knoweth what is best and fittest for you: he knoweth beforehand what good or hurt any state of plenty or want will do you: he knoweth all your corruptions, and what condition will most conduce to strengthen them or destroy them, and which will be your greatest temptations and snares, and which will prove your safest state; much better than any physician or parent knoweth how to diet his patient or his child. And his love and kindness are much greater to you, than your’s are to yourself; and therefore he will not be wanting in willingness to do you good: and his authority over you is absolute, and therefore

^b 2 Cor. iv. 18.

^c Ver. 17.

^d Luke xii. 15.

^e Eccles. ii. 14. ix. 2, 3.

^f Psal. x. 15. 1 Sam. ii. 7.

his disposal of you must be unquestionable. "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good^a." "The will of God should be the rest and satisfaction of your wills^b."

Direct. v. 'Stedfastly believe that, ordinarily, riches are far more dangerous to the soul than poverty, and a greater hindrance to men's salvation.' Believe experience; how few of the rich and rulers of the earth are holy, heavenly, self-denying, mortified men? Believe your Saviour, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God^c." So that you see the difficulty is so great of saving such as are rich, that to men it is a thing impossible, but to God's omnipotency only it is possible. So 1 Cor. i. 26. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Believe this, and it will prevent many dangerous mistakes.

Direct. vi. 'Hence you may perceive, that though no man must pray absolutely either for riches or poverty, yet of the two it is more rational ordinarily to pray against riches than for them, and to be rather troubled when God maketh us rich, than when he maketh us poor.' (I mean it, in respect to ourselves, as either of them seemeth to conduce to our own good or hurt: though to do good to others, riches are more desirable.) This cannot be denied by any man that believeth Christ: for no wise man will long for the hindrance of his salvation, or pray to God to make it as hard a thing for him to be saved, as for a camel to go through a needle's eye; when salvation is a matter of such unspeakable moment, and our strength is so small, and the difficulties so many and great already.

Object. 'But Christ doth not deny but the difficulties to the poor may be as great.' *Answer.* To some particular persons upon other accounts it may be so; but it is clear in the text, that Christ speaketh comparatively of such difficulties as the rich had more than the poor.

Object. 'But then how are we obliged to be thankful to

^a 1 Sam. iii. 18.

^b Acts xxi. 14.

^c Luke xviii. 24, 25. 27.

God for giving us riches, or blessing our labours^k? *Answer.*
 1. You must be thankful for them, because in their own nature they are good, and it is by accident, through your own corruption, that they become so dangerous. 2. Because you may do good with them to others, if you have hearts to use them well. 3. Because God in giving them to you rather than to others, doth signify (if you are his children) that they are fitter for you than for others: In Bedlam and among foolish children, it is a kindness to keep fire, and swords, and knives out of their way: but yet they are useful to people that have the use of reason. But our folly in spiritual matters is so great, that we have little cause to be too eager for that which we are inclined so dangerously to abuse, and which proves the bane of most that have it.

Direct. vii. 'See that your poverty be not the fruit of your idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, pride, or any other flesh-pleasing sin^l.' For if you bring it thus upon yourselves, you can never look that it should be sanctified to your good, till sound repentance have turned you from the sin: nor are you objects worthy of much pity from man (except as you are miserable sinners). He that rather chooseth to have his ease and pleasure, though with want, than to have plenty, and to want his ease and pleasure, it is pity that he should have any better than he chooseth.

1. Slothfulness and idleness are sins that naturally tend to want, and God hath caused them to be punished with poverty; as you may see Prov. xii. 24. 27. xviii. 9. xxi. 25. xxiv. 34. xxvi. 14, 15. vi. 11. xx. 13. Yea, he commandeth that if any (that is able) "will not work, neither should he eat^m." In the sweat of their face must they eat their bread: and "six days must they labour and do all that they have to doⁿ." To maintain your idleness is a sin in others. If you will please your flesh with ease, it must be displeased with want; and you must suffer what you choose.

2. Gluttony and drunkenness are such beastly devourers of mercy, and abusers of mankind, that shame and poverty are their punishment and cure. "Be not among wine-bib-

^k Saith Aristippus to Dionysius, Quando sapientia egebam, adii Socratem; nunc pecuniarum egens, ad te veni. Diog. Laert. lib. ii. sect. 78. p. 125.

^l 1 Cor. vii. 35.

^m 2 Thess. iii. 10.

ⁿ Gen. iii. 19.

bers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags^o." It is not lawful for any man to feed the greedy appetites of such: if they choose a short excess before a longer competency, let them have their choice.

3. Pride also is a most consuming, wasteful sin: it sacrificeth God's mercies to the devil, in serving him by them, in his firstborn sin. Proud persons must lay it out in pomp and gaudiness, to set forth themselves to the eyes of others; in buildings, and entertainments, and fine clothes, and curiosities: and poverty is also both the proper punishment and cure of this sin: and it is cruelty for any to save them from it, and resist God, that by abasing them takes the way to do them good^p.

4. Falsehood also and deceit, and unjust getting tend to poverty; for God doth often, even in this present life, thus enter into judgment with the unjust. Ill-gotten wealth is like fire in the thatch, and bringeth oftentimes a secret curse and destruction upon all the rest. The same may be said of unmercifulness to the poor; which is oft cursed with poverty, when the liberal are blest with plenty^q.

Direct. VIII. 'Be acquainted with the special temptations of the poor, that you may be furnished to resist them.' Every condition hath its own temptations, which persons in that condition must specially be fortified and watch against; and this is much of the wisdom and safety of a Christian.

Tempt. 1. One temptation of poverty will be to draw you to think more highly of riches and honours than you ought; to make you think that the rich are much happier than they are. For the world is like all other deceivers; it is most esteemed where it is least known. They that never tried a life of wealth, and plenty, and prosperity, are apt to admire it, and think it braver and better than it is. And so you may be drawn as much to overlove the world by want, as other men by plenty. Against this remember, that it is folly to admire that which you never tried and knew; and mark whether all men do not vilify it, that have tried it to the last: dying men call it no better than vanity and deceit.

^o Prov. xxiii. 20, 21. ^p Prov. xi. 2. xxix. 23. xvi. 18.
^q Prov. xi. 24, 25. Isa. xxxii. 8. Psal. lxxiii. 21, 22, 25, 26, 34, 35.

And it is rebellious pride in you so far to contradict the wisdom of God, as to think most highly of that condition, which he hath judged worst for you; and to fall in love with that which he denieth you.

Tempt. II. The poor will also be tempted to overmuch care about their wants and worldly matters^r; they will think that necessity requireth it in them, and will excuse them. So much care is your duty, as is needful to the right doing of your work. Take care how to discharge your own duties; but be not too careful about the event, which belongs to God. If you will care what you should be and do, God will care sufficiently what you shall have^s. And so be it you faithfully do your business, your other care will add nothing to the success, nor make you any richer, but only vex and disquiet your minds. It is the poor as well as the rich, that God hath commanded to be careful for nothing, and to cast all their care on him.

Tempt. III. Poverty also will tempt you to repining, impatience and discontent, and to fall out with others; which because it is one of the chief temptations, I will speak to by itself anon.

Tempt. IV. 'Also you will be tempted to be coveting after more; satan maketh poverty a snare to draw many needy creatures, to greater covetousness than many of the rich are guilty of; none thirst more eagerly after more; and yet their poverty blindeth them, so that they cannot see that they are covetous, or else excuse it as a justifiable thing. They think that they desire no more but necessaries, and that it is not covetousness, if they desire not superfluities. But do you not covet more than God allotteth you? And are you not discontent with his allowance? And doth not he know best what is necessary for you, and what superfluous? What then is covetousness, if this be not?

Tempt. V. Also you will be tempted to envy the rich, and to censure them in matters where you are incompetent judges. It is usual with the poor to speak of the rich with envy and censoriousness; they call them covetous, merely because they are rich, especially if they give them nothing; when they know not what ways of necessary expence they have, nor how many others they are liberal to,

^r Luke x. 41.

^s Matt. vi. 1 Pet. v. 7. Phil. iv. 6.

that they are unacquainted with. Till you see their accounts you are unfit to censure them.

Tempt. vi. The poor also will be tempted to use unlawful means to supply their wants^t. How many by the temptation of necessity have been tempted to comply with sinners, and wound their consciences, and lie and flatter for favour or preferment, or to cheat, or steal, or overreach! A dear price! to buy the food that perisheth, with the loss or hazard of everlasting life; and lose their souls to provide for their flesh!

Tempt. vii. Also you will be tempted to neglect your souls, and omit your spiritual duties, and as Martha to be troubled about many things, while the one thing needful is forgotten; and you will think that necessity will excuse all this; yea, some think to be saved, because they are poor, and say, God will not punish them in this life and another too. But alas, you are more inexcusable than the rich, if you are ungodly and mindless of the life to come. For he that will love a life of poverty and misery better than heaven, deserveth indeed to go without it much more than he that preferreth a life of plenty and prosperity before it. God hath taught you by his providence to know, that you must either be happy in heaven, or no where;—if you would be worldlings, and part with heaven for your part on earth, how poor a bargain are you like to make? To love rags, and toil, and want, and sorrow, better than eternal joy and happiness, is the most unreasonable kind of ungodliness in the world. It is true, that you are not called to spend so many hours of the week-days, in reading and meditation, as some that have greater leisure are; but you have reason to seek heaven, and set your hearts upon it, as much as they; and you must think of it when you are about your labour, and take those opportunities for your spiritual duties, which are allowed you. Poverty will excuse ungodliness in none! Nothing is so necessary as the service of God and your salvation; and therefore no necessity can excuse you from it^u. Read the case of Mary and Martha: one would think that your hearts should be wholly set upon heaven, who have nothing else but it to trust to. The poor have fewer hindrances than the rich, in the way to life eternal! And God

^t Prov. xxx. 8, 9. John vi. 27.

^u Luke x. 41, 42.

will save no man because he is poor; but condemn poor and rich that are ungodly.

Tempt. VIII. Another great temptation of the poor, is to neglect the holy education of their children; so that in most places, there are none so ignorant, and rude, and heathenish, and unwilling to learn, as the poorest people and their children; they never teach them to read, nor teach them any thing for the saving of their souls; and they think that their poverty will be an excuse for all. When reason telleth them, that none should be more careful to help their children to heaven, than they that can give them nothing upon earth.

Direct. IX. 'Be acquainted with the special duties of the poor; and carefully perform them.' They are these,

1. Let your sufferings teach you to contemn the world; it will be a happy poverty if it do but help to wean your affections from all things below; that you set as little by the world as it deserveth.

2. Be eminently heavenly minded; the less you have or hope for in this life, the more fervently seek a better^x. You are at least as capable of the heavenly treasures as the greatest princes; God purposely straiteneth your condition in the world, that he may force up your hearts unto himself, and teach you to seek first for that which indeed is worth your seeking^y.

3. Learn to live upon God alone; study his goodness, and faithfulness, and all-sufficiency; when you have not a place nor a friend in the world, that you can comfortably betake yourselves to for relief, retire unto God, and trust him, and dwell the more with him^z. If your poverty have but this effect, it will be better to you than all the riches in the world.

4. Be laborious and diligent in your callings; both precept and necessity call you unto this; and if you cheerfully serve him in the labour of your hands, with a heavenly and obedient mind, it will be as acceptable to him, as if you had spent all that time in more spiritual exercises; for he had rather have obedience than sacrifices; and all things are

^x Phil. iii. 18, 20, 21. 2 Cor. v. 7, 8.

^y Matt. vi. 33. 19—21.

^z Gal. ii. 20. Psal. lxxiii. 25—28. 2 Cor. i. 10.

pure and sanctified to the pure; if you cheerfully serve God in the meanest work, it is the more acceptable to him, by how much the more subjection and submission there is in your obedience^a.

5. Be humble and submissive unto all. A poor man proud is doubly hateful: and if poverty cure your pride, and help you to be truly humble, it will be no small mercy to you^b.

6. You are specially obliged to mortify the flesh, and keep your senses and appetites in subjection; because you have greater helps for it than the rich: you have not so many baits of lust, and wantonness, and gluttony, and voluptuousness as they.

7. Your corporal wants must make you more sensibly remember your spiritual wants; and teach you to value spiritual blessings; think with yourselves, if a hungry, cold and naked body, be so great a calamity, how much greater is a guilty, graceless soul! a dead or a diseased heart? If bodily food and necessaries are so desirable, O how desirable is Christ, and his Spirit, and the love of God and life eternal?

8. You must above all men be careful redeemers of your time; especially of the Lord's day; your labours take up so much of your time, that you must be the more careful to catch every opportunity for your souls! Rise earlier to get half an hour for holy duty; and meditate on holy things in your labours, and spend the Lord's day in special diligence, and be glad of such seasons; and let scarcity preserve your appetites. ... *But what about human justice in all this?*

9. Be willing to die; seeing the world giveth you so cold entertainment, be the more content to let it go, when God shall call you; for what is here to detain your hearts?

10. Above all men, you should be most fearless of sufferings from men, and therefore true to God and conscience: for you have no great matter of honour, or riches, or pleasure to lose: as you fear not a thief, when you have nothing for him to rob you of.

11. Be specially careful to fit your children also for hea-

^a Ephes. iv. 28. Prov. xxi. 25. 1 Sam. xv. 22. 2 Thess. iii. 8. 10.

^b Prov. xviii. 23.

ven: provide them a portion which is better than a kingdom; for you can provide but little for them in the world.

12. Be exemplary in patience and contentedness with your state: for that grace should be the strongest in us, which is most exercised; and poverty calleth you to the frequent exercise of this.

Direct. x. 'Be specially furnished with those reasons which should keep you in a cheerful contentedness with your state; and may suppress every thought of anxiety and discontent.' As 1. Consider as aforesaid, that that is the best condition for you which helpeth you best to heaven; and God best knoweth what will do you good, or hurt. 2. That it is rebellion to grudge at the will of God; which must dispose of us, and should be our rest. 3. Look over the life of Christ, who chose a life of poverty for your sakes; and had not a place to lay his head. He was not one of the rich and voluptuous in the world; and are you grieved to be conformed to him^c. 4. Look to all his apostles, and most holy servants and martyrs. Were not they as great sufferers as you? 5. Consider that the rich will shortly be all as poor as you. Naked they came into the world, and naked they must go out; and a little time makes little difference. 6. It is no more comfort to die rich than poor; but usually much less: because the more pleasant the world is to them, the more it grieveth them to leave it. 7. All men cry out, that the world is vanity at last. How little is it valued by a dying man? And how sadly will it cast him off! 8. The time is very short and uncertain, in which you must enjoy it: we have but a few days more to walk about, and we are gone. Alas, of how small concernment is it, whether a man be rich or poor, that is ready to step into another world? 9. The love of this world drawing the heart from God, is the common cause of men's damnation: and is not the world more likely to be over-loved, when it entertaineth you with prosperity, than when it useth you like an enemy? Are you displeased, that God thus helpeth to save you from the most damning sin? And that he maketh not your way to heaven more dangerous? 10. You little know the troubles of the rich. He that hath much, hath much to do with it, and much to care for; and many persons to deal with,

^c Phil. iii. 7—9.

and more vexations than you imagine. 11. It is but the flesh that suffereth; and it furthereth your mortification of it. 12. You pray but for your daily bread, and therefore should be contented with it. 13. Is not God, and Christ, and heaven, enough for you? Should that man be discontent that must live in heaven? 14. Is it not your lust, rather than your well-informed reason that repineth? I do but name all these reasons for brevity: you may enlarge them in your meditations.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Directions for the Rich.

I HAVE said so much of this already, Part i, about covetousness or worldliness, and about good works, and in my book of "Self-denial," and that of "Crucifying the World;" that my reason commandeth me brevity in this place*.

Direct. I. 'Remember that riches are no part of your felicity; or, that if you have no better, you are undone men.' Dare you say, that they are fit to make you happy? Dare you say, that you will take them for your part? and be content to be turned off when they forsake you? They reconcile not God; they save not from his wrath; they heal not a wounded conscience; they may please your flesh, and adorn your funeral, but they neither delay, nor sanctify, nor sweeten death, nor make you either better or happier than the poor. Riches are nothing but plentiful provision for tempting, corruptible flesh. When the flesh is in the dust, it is rich no more. All that abounded in wealth, since Adam's days, till now, are levelled with the lowest in the dust.

Direct. II. 'Yea, remember that riches are not the smallest temptation and danger to your souls.' Do they delight and please you? By that way they may destroy you. If they be but loved above God, and make earth seem better for you than heaven, they have undone you. And if God

* See more in my 'Life of Faith.'

recover you not, it had been better for you to have been worms or brutes, than such deceived, miserable souls. It is not for nothing, that Christ giveth you so many terrible warnings about riches, and so describeth the folly, the danger, and the misery of the worldly rich^b. And telleth you how hardly the rich are saved. Fire burneth most, when it hath most fuel; and riches are the fuel of worldly love, and fleshly lust^c.

Direct. III. 'Understand what it is to love and trust in worldly prosperity and wealth.' Many here deceive themselves to their destruction. They persuade themselves, that they desire and use their riches but for necessity; but that they do not love them, nor trust in them, because they can say that heaven is better, and wealth will leave us to a grave! But do you not love that ease, that greatness, that domination, that fulness, that satisfaction of your appetite, eye, and fancy, which you cannot have without your wealth? It is fleshly lust, and will, and pleasure, which carnal worldlings love for itself; and then they love their wealth for these. And to trust in riches, is not to trust that they will never leave you; for every fool doth know the contrary. But it is to rest, and quiet, and comfort your minds in them, as that which most pleaseth you, and maketh you well, or to be as you would be. Like him in Luke xii. 18, 19. that said, "Soul take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast enough laid up for many years." This is to love and trust in riches.

Direct. IV. 'Above all the deceits and dangers of this world, take heed of a secret, hypocritical hope of reconciling the world to heaven, so as to make you a felicity of both; and dreaming of a compounded portion, or of serving God and mammon.' The true state of the hypocrite's heart and hope is, 'To love his worldly prosperity best, and desire to keep it as long as he can, for the enjoyment of his fleshly pleasures; and when he must leave this world against his will, he hopeth then to have heaven as his reserve; because he thinketh it better than hell, and his tongue can say, It is better than earth, though his will and affections say the contrary.' If this be your case, the Lord have mercy

^b Luke xii. 17—20. xvi. 19—21, &c. xviii. 21—23, &c.

^c 1 John ii. 15, 16. Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

upon you, and give you a more believing, spiritual mind, or else you are lost, and you and your treasure will perish together.

Direct. v. 'Accordingly take heed, lest when you seem to resign yourselves, and all that you have to God, there should be a secret purpose at the heart, that you will never be undone in the world for Christ, nor for the hopes of a better world.' A knowing hypocrite is not ignorant, that the terms of Christ, proposed in the Gospel, are no lower than forsaking all; and that in baptism, and our covenant with Christ, all must be designed and devoted to him, and the cross taken up instead of all, or else we are no Christians, as being not in covenant with Christ. But the hypocrite's hope is, that though Christ put him upon these promises, he will never put him to the trial for performance, nor ever call him to forsake all indeed: and therefore, if ever he be put to it, he will not perform the promise which he hath made. He is like a patient that promiseth to be wholly ruled by his physician, as hoping that he will put him upon nothing which he cannot bear. But when the bitter potion or the vomit cometh, he saith, 'I cannot take it, I had hoped you would have given me gentler physic.'

Direct. vi. 'And accordingly take heed lest while you pretend to live to God, and to use all that you have as his stewards for his service, you should deceitfully put him off with the leavings of your lusts, and give him only so much as your flesh can spare.' It is not likely that the damned gentleman, Luke xvi. was never used to give any thing to the poor; else what did beggars use his doors for? When Christ promiseth to reward men for a cup of cold water, the meaning is, when they would give better if they had it. There are few rich men of all that go to hell, that were so void of human compassion, or of the sense of their own reputation, as to give nothing at all to the poor: but God will have all, though not all for the poor, yet all employed as he commandeth; and will not be put off with your tithes or scraps. His stewards confess that they have nothing of their own.

Direct. vii. 'Let the use of your riches in prosperity shew, that you do not dissemble when you promise to forsake all for Christ in trial, rather than forsake him.' You may know whether you are true or false in your covenant

with Christ, and what you would do in a day of trial, by what you do in your daily course of life. How can that man leave all at once for Christ, that cannot daily serve him with his riches, nor leave that little which God requireth, in the discharge of his duty in pious and charitable works? What is it to leave all for God, but to leave all rather than to sin against God? And will he do that, who daily sinneth against God by omission of good works, because he cannot leave some part? Study as faithful stewards, to serve God to the utmost, with what you have now, and then you may expect that his grace should enable you to leave all in trial, and not prove withering hypocrites and apostates.

Direct. VIII. 'Be not rich to yourselves, or to your fleshly wills and lusts: but remember that the rich are bound to be spiritual, and to mortify the flesh, as well as the poor.' Let lust fare never the better for all the fulness of your estates. Fast, and humble your souls never the less; please an inordinate appetite never the more in meat and drink; live never the more in unprofitable idleness. The rich must labour as constantly as the poor, though not in the same kind of work. The rich must live soberly, temperately, and heavenly, and must as much mortify all fleshly desires as the poor. You have the same law and master, and have no more liberty to indulge your lusts; but if you live after the flesh, you shall die as well as any other. O the partiality of carnal minds! They can see the fault of a poor man, that goeth sometimes to an alehouse, who perhaps drinketh water (or that which is next it) all the week; when they never blame themselves, who scarce miss a meal without wine, and strong drink, and eating that which their appetite desireth. They think it a crime in a poor man, to spend but one day in many, in such idleness, as they themselves spend most of their lives in. Gentlemen think that their riches allow them to live without any profitable labour, and to gratify their flesh, and fare deliciously every day: as if it were their privilege to be sensual, and to be damned^d.

Direct. IX. 'Nay, remember that you are called to far greater self-denial, and fear, and watchfulness against sensuality, and wealthy vices than the poor are.' Mortification is as necessary to your salvation, as to theirs, but much

^d Rom. viii. 1. 5—9. 13.

more difficult. If you live after the flesh, you shall die as well as they. And how much stronger are your temptations! Is not he more easily drawn to gluttony or excess in quality or quantity, who hath daily a table of plenty, and enticing delicious food before him, than he that never seeth such a temptation once in half a year? Is it not harder for him to deny his appetite who hath the baits of pleasant meats and drinks daily set upon his table, than for him that is seldom in sight of them, and perhaps in no possibility of procuring them; and therefore hath nothing to solicit his appetite or thoughts? Doubtless the rich, if ever they will be saved, must watch more constantly, and set a more resolute guard upon the flesh, and live more in fear of sensuality than the poor, as they live in greater temptations and dangers.

Direct. x. ' Know therefore particularly what are the temptations of prosperity, that you may make a particular, prosperous resistance.' And they are especially these,

1. Pride. The foolish heart of man is apt to swell upon the accession of so poor a matter as wealth; and men think they are got above their neighbours, and more honour and obeisance is their due, if they be but richer.

2. Fulness of bread. If they do not eat till they are sick, they think the constant and costly pleasing of their appetite in meats and drinks, is lawful.

3. Idleness. They think he is not bound to labour, that can live without it, and hath enough.

4. Time-wasting sports and recreations. They think their hours may be devoted to the flesh, when all their lives are devoted to it: they think their wealth alloweth them to play, and court, and compliment away that precious time, which no men have no more need to redeem; they tell God that he hath given them more time than they have need of; and God will shortly cut it off, and tell them that they shall have no more.

5. Lust and wantonness, fulness and idleness, cherish both the cogitations and inclinations unto filthiness: they that live in gluttony and drunkenness, are like to live in chambering and wantonness.

6. Curiosity, and wasting their lives in a multitude of little, ceremonious, unprofitable things, to the exclusion of

the great businesses of life. Well may we say, that men's lusts are their jailors, and their fetters, when we see to what a wretched kind of life, a multitude of the rich (especially ladies and gentlewomen) do condemn themselves. I should pity one in bridewell, that were but tied so to spend their time; when they have poor, ignorant, proud, worldly, peevish, hypocritical, ungodly souls to be healed, and a life of great and weighty business to do for eternity, they have so many little things all day to do, that leave them little time to converse with God, or with their consciences, or to do any thing that is really worth the living for: they have so many fine clothes and ornaments to get, and use; and so many rooms to beautify and adorn, and so many servants to talk with, that attend them, and so many dishes and sauces to bespeak, and so many flowers to plant, and dress, and walks, and places of pleasure to mind; and so many visitors to entertain with whole hours of unprofitable talk; and so many great persons accordingly to visit; and so many laws of ceremony and compliments to observe; and so many games to play (perhaps) and so many hours to sleep, that the day, the year, their lives are gone, before they could have while to know what they lived for. And if God had but damned them to spend their days in picking straws or filling a bottomless vessel, or to spend their days as they choose themselves to spend them, it would have tempted us to think him unmerciful to his creatures.

7. Tyranny and oppression: when men are above others, how commonly do they think that their wills must be fulfilled by all men, and none must cross them, and they live as if all others below them were as their beasts, that are made for them, to serve and please them.

Direct. XI. 'Let your fruitfulness to God, and the public good, be proportionable to your possessions.' Do as much more good in the world than the poor, as you are better furnished for it than they. Let your servants have more time for the learning of God's Word, and let your families be the more religiously instructed and governed. To whom God giveth much, from them he doth expect much.

Direct. XII. 'Do not only take occasions of doing good, when they are thrust upon you; but study how to do all the

good you can, as those "that are zealous of good works." Zeal of good works will make you, 1. Plot and contrive for them. 2. Consult, and ask advice for them. 3. It will make you glad when you meet with a hopeful opportunity. 4. It will make you do it largely, and not sparingly, and by the halves. 5. It will make you do it speedily, without unwilling backwardness and delay. 6. It will make you do it constantly to your lives' end. 7. It will make you pinch your own flesh, and suffer somewhat yourselves to do good to others. 8. It will make you labour in it as your trade, and not only consent that others do good at your charge. 9. It will make you glad, when good is done, and not to grudge at what it cost you. 10. In a word, it will make your neighbours to be to you as yourselves, and the pleasing of God to be above yourselves, and therefore to be as glad to do good, as to receive it.

Direct. XIII. 'Do good both to men's souls and bodies; but always let bodily benefits be conferred in order to those of the soul, and in due subordination, and not for the body alone. And observe the many other rules of good works, more largely laid down, Part i. Chap 3. *Direct.* 10.

Direct. XIV. 'Ask yourselves often, How you shall wish at death and judgment, your estates had been laid out; and accordingly now use them.' Why should not a man of reason do that which he knoweth beforehand he shall vehemently wish that he had done?

Direct. XV. 'As your care must be in a special manner for your children and families; so take heed of the common error of worldlings, who think their children must have so much, as that God and their own souls have very little.' When selfish men can keep their wealth no longer to themselves, they leave it to their children, who are as their surviving selves. And all is cast into this gulf, except some inconsiderable parcels.

Direct. XVI. 'Keep daily account of your use and improvement of your master's talents.' Not that you should too much remember your own good works, but remember to do them; and therefore ask yourselves, What good have I done with all that I have, this day or week?

Direct. XVII. 'Look not for long life; for then you will think that a long journey needeth great provisions; but die

daily, and live as those that are going to give up their account:’ and then conscience will force you to ask, whether you have been faithful stewards, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to make you friends of the mammon that others use to unrighteousness, and to lay up a good foundation for the time to come, and to be glad that God hath given you that, the improvement of which may further the good of others, and your salvation. Living and dying, let it be your care and business to do good.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Directions for the Aged (and Weak).

HAVING before opened the duties of children to God, and to their parents, I shall give no other particular Directions to the young, but shall next open the special duties of the aged.

Direct. 1. ‘The old and weak have a louder call from God, than others, to be accurate in examining the state of their souls, and making their calling and election sure*.’ Whether they are yet regenerate and sanctified or not, is a most important question for every man to get resolved; but especially for them that are nearest to their end. Ask counsel, therefore, of some able, faithful minister or friend, and set yourselves diligently to try your title to eternal life, and to cast up your accounts, and see how all things stand between God and you: and if you should find yourselves in an unrenewed state, as you love your souls, delay no longer, but presently be humbled for your so long and sottish neglect, of so necessary and great a work. Go, open your case to some able minister, and lament your sin, and fly to Christ, and set your hearts on God, as your felicity, and change your company and course, and rest not any longer in so dangerous and miserable a case: the more full Directions

* In Augustine’s speech to the people of Hippo, for Eradius’s succession, he saith, ‘In infantia speratur pueritia, et in pueritia speratur adolescentia, in adolescentia speratur juvenus, in juvenute speratur gravitas, et in gravitate speratur senectus: utrum contingat incertum est; est tamen quod speretur. Senectus autem aliam ætatem quam speret, non habet.’ Vid. Papir. Massor. in vita Cælesti. fol. 58.