

THE ART OF DIVINE MEDITATION
OR,
A DISCOURSE OF THE
Nature, Necessity, and Excellency thereof.
With Motives to, and Rules for the better performance
of that most Important Christian Duty.

IN SEVERAL SERMONS On Genesis 24:63:

*“And Isaac went out to meditate in the fields at the
even-tide.”*

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To the Christian Readers.

IF the Heathen Moralist Plutarch could say, Meditation is as it were the recovery of decaying knowledge; because as forgetfulness seems to be the egress of knowledge, Meditation doth restore a new memory instead of that which passeth away; and so preserve knowledge, that it is in effect the same, in that, notwithstanding mutations, it leaves something new, and like it self, resembling that which is Divine: How may a Christian, endowed with the true knowledge of God, say with the Psalmist in the revival of it, Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet. When he is alone, and hath no other companions to refresh himself with, then he may (as Bishop Hall, who penned a part of his Meditations under the solitary Hills of Ardena) from a renewed mind, send forth his active thoughts, those immediate rays of that Candle of the Lord within him, to contemplate upon his Maker, Saviour, and Sanctifier, and reflect upon himself, who is to survive the visible Creation, and so raise himself into an Heaven upon earth, relish such sweetness as the carnal mind and sensual heart, immersed in dreggy matter, and be-dulled therewith, is never so happy as to attain. The Author of this little Treatise, whose great and pious soul was notably heavenliz'd by the frequent exercise of holy Meditation, the very same who penned The Godly mans Ark, which hath been often printed for the support of drooping Christians, amongst other excellent discourses upon various subjects in the exercise of his Ministry with great success, did from his

own experience recommend this of Meditation, whether ejaculatory and occasional, or solemn and deliberate. I am not ignorant, that many other eminent Divines, persons of great worth and honour, have already notably displayed the excellency and usefulness of this way of thinking; yet perhaps this grave and famous Preacher in his day, hath in a more easy method, and plain way, by his familiar expressions and resemblances, suited to vulgar capacities, here helped the real Christian, who would most delight in the Duty, to put Meditation in practice, than any who hath gone before him. No doubt, had this excellent person himself published this discourse here presented to your view, you would have had it every way more accurate, by the lopping off some superfluities, and amending of phrases, &c. more proper for a Writer, than these of a Preacher to a popular Auditory; yet such as it is, considering the Author in the Pulpit, you'll find when you have read it through, it doth fully as much resemble Mr. Calamy in his preaching at Aldermanbury, to your minds, as the Engraver on the frontispiece hath represented his face to your eyes. I dare say any of you who were his Auditors, will be abundantly satisfied, though this piece be posthumous, yet it is genuine. And seeing there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety nine just persons which need no repentance, Luke 15. 7. If these practical Sermons, taken by the swift pen of a ready writer, have such an influence upon any, as to bring them to the frequent and beneficial practice of Meditation, which the Preacher of them held necessary: None who prefer

things before words, and esteem real knowledge above elegancy of speech, as the general good of mankind, beyond that of any particular Country, can justly think the Author wronged; but rather that with Dr. Preston, Mr. Fenner, Mr. Hooker, &c. (some of whose Works popularly delivered with plainness suited to the capacities of their hearers, and taken but rudely from their mouths, did more benefit Readers of meaner abilities, than those which whiles alive, they themselves published with greater exactness) He is renowned, when he hath by this more diffusive good-work been any way instrumental to have God and the things of heaven (where he now resides) more delightfully thought upon. As judicious Calvin in his Epistle to the King of Swetheland prefixed to his Commentary on the Minor Prophets, said he would not be so morose a Censor of manners, as to obstruct the publishing of that Commentary delivered in an extemporal kind of speaking, when designed only for his own private Oratory, not otherwise to have come abroad; only as 'twas penned from his mouth by Budaeus, Crispin, and Ionvil, because he said, he had long before learned not to serve the theater of the World: else, he doth afterwards tell the Reader, that if in his other works which he had written deliberately and succinctly with much more pains, he had met with envious malignants, who did carp at and quarrel them, he might well endeavour to suppress that work, taken by the aforesaid writers after him, as it was freely uttered to his own hearers for present use; yet when others assured him, that it would be a loss (yea, injurious) to the Church, if

not printed as it was taken, rather than not at all; He thereupon having not time nor strength to transcribe or amend it, readily permitted it to go to the Press. And the Reformed Church hath since rejoiced in the benefit of having it as it was published; yea, and to this day Divines who have made great use of it since in their Commentaries, as well as others, to find the true meaning of the Holy Writ, have heartily blessed God for it. Yet as Bishop Wilkins hath observed in his Epistle to the Real Character, Foreigners in Short-Writing come far behind us here in England (though it hath been now seventy years invented) where they admire the skill of our Writers, and whither the Divines of other Nations frequently come and learn our Language, chiefly to understand our Practical Sermons, many of which have been only preserved in this way, You have this ('tis to be hoped very useful) piece, taken well from the mouth of

Mr. Edmund Calamy.

The Analysis or Method of the Contents of the whole Book.

- Page.
- THE Introduction.
- Text divided.
- 1. The Person spoken of, Isaac.
- 2. What is related of him, He went out to meditate.
- 3. The place he chose, In the field.
- 4. The time, At the eventide.
- Explicat: There is a Twofold Meditation
- 1. Sinful, and wicked; that was not Isaacs.
- 2. Holy and godly. This Isaac practiced.
- Observation. The Meditation of Holy and Heavenly things, is a work that God requires at the hands of all people.
 - Viz. of
 - 1. Young Gentlemen
 - 2. Kings, Nobles, and great Persons
 - 3. Soldiers, Generals, and Captains.
 - 4. Learned Men.

▪ 5. Women.

- There be two sorts of Meditation of heavenly things.
- 1. Sudden, short, occasional.
- 2. Solemn, set, deliberate.
- 1. Of Occasional Meditation, three Things, viz. the Excellency, Examples, and Practice.
- 1. The Excellency of occasional, extemporary, sudden, and ejaculatory Meditation from Scripture and humane Testimony
- 2. The Examples from Scripture and humane Testimony
- 3. Motives to persuade to the Practice of it, viz.
- 1. It may be performed at all times.
- 2. Practiced in all places and companies
- 3 It is easy to spiritualized ones.
- 4. It is the excellency of a Christian to spiritualize natural things herein exceeding
 - a Bruit.
 - All wicked men.
- 5. It is the greatest affront we can give to God, not to make a spiritual use of his creatures.
- 6. It is a Soul-destroying sin not to observe the Works of God, and make a good use of them.

- II. Of Solemn Meditation, the Nature and Necessity.
- 1. The Nature of solemn Meditation in two particulars.
- 1. It is a dwelling and abiding upon things that are Holy, being typified two ways.
- By the Beast
 - That did chew the cud.
 - That had eyes within and without.
- 2. It is an act of the heart, as well as the head.
- It must enter into the door of the understanding, heart, and conversation.
- 2. The Necessity of it evinced from the
- Mischiefs of neglecting this Duty.
- Advantage of practicing this Duty.
- 1. The mischiefs and inconveniencies of neglecting this duty. It is the cause of sin and punishment.
- 1. The want of practicing this Duty causes sin; As particularly,
- 1. It is the reason of hard-heartedness.
- 2. Unprofitableness of hearing Sermons
- 3. Not relishing of sweetest promises.
- 4. No impression from threatenings.

- 5. No bettering by mercies.
- 6. No amending by afflictions.
- 7. No heart softening by Providences.
- 8. Reason of distrustfulness of Gods Providence.
- 9. Censoriousness of others, not of our selves.
- 10. Offering the sacrifices of fools in worship.
- 2. The want of practicing this duty causes punishment
- 2. The advantages and benefits by a conscientious practice of this duty, in begetting and increasing of grace, and arming against temptations.
- 1. It is a mighty help to the begetting and working of grace in 9 particulars.
 - 1. To work repentance and reformation of life.
 - 2. A love to God.
 - 3. A fear of God.
 - 4. A love to Jesus Christ.
 - 5. Faith and trust in God.
 - 1. In his Providence in all outward straits.
 - 2. Promises in all spiritual troubles.

- 6. A contempt of the world and worldly things.
- 7. Thankfulness for mercies and blessings.
- 8. A Preference of Gods house to our own.
- 9. A Keeping of all Gods Commandments.
- 2. It is helpful to preserve and increase grace.
- 3. It is helpful to arm and defend against all the temptations of the Devil.
- The Application of this Doctrine concerning this necessary duty of Meditation may be for
 - 1. The Reproof of those Christians that are utterly unaccustomed to, and unacquainted with this duty: and these are of four sorts, viz.
 - 1. The ignorant Christian that knows not how to set about the work.
 - 2. Forgetful Christian, that remembers not God
 - 3. Rash-headed Christian, that acts without consideration, where are four evils, viz.

- 1. Such is a spiritual fool in offering sacrifices to God.
 - 2 Often speaks that, he'll wish he had not.
 - 3. Quickly runs into error and by-paths.
- 4 Will never persevere and hold out to the end.
- 4. A slight-headed Christian, that cannot dwell long upon any thing, which argues a slight Christian.
- Q. Are then all who have slight heads, Hypocrites?
- A. There is a double slightness of head, viz.
- 1. That which is a natural disease, when a child of God, of a weak head, cannot think long of any thing at all.
- 2. That which is sinful, when a man can be serious, and dwell long upon the things of the world, not on the things of heaven: this is reproved.
- 2. The Reproof of those who meditate upon things that are evil and wicked.
 - 1. Such as design and do evil.

- 2. Such as delight in the evil they have done.
- 3. An Exhortation to all to accustom themselves to the duty of meditation, viz. To 1. Ministers. 2. Nobles. 3. Soldiers. 4. Young Gentlemen. 5. Merchants. 6. Women. In speaking to this Exhortation six particulars proposed, viz. 1. Place. 2. Time. 3. Properties. 4. Companions. 5. Materials. 6. Helps.
- 1. Concerning the Place, to choose one convenient, which is freest from distractions.
- 2. Time, which proves seasonable in due circumstances. Here four Rules are suggested.
 - 1. It behooves all not hindered, to endeavour the setting apart of some time every day, morning, afternoon, or night.
 - 2. To set a sufficient proportion of time a-part every day.
 - 3. The Sabbath-day especially all should busy themselves in this duty.
 - 4. A Sacrament-day more especially.

- Here 12 Things suggested as instances of Sacramental Meditation, viz.
 - 1. The great and wonderful love of God the Father in the giving of Christ.
 - 2. Love of Christ in giving himself.
 - 3. Heinousness of sin.
 - 4. Excellency of the Sacramental feast,
 - 5. Our own unworthiness
 - 6. Our spiritual wants and necessities.
 - 7. The cursed condition of an unworthy receiver.
 - 8. The happy condition of those that come worthily.
 - 9. The Sacramental Elements of Bread and Wine.
 - 10. The Sacramental Actions.
 - 11. Sacramental Promises.
 - 12. What retribution to make to Christ
- 3. Properties, ingredients, and qualities of Meditation, viz.

- 1. Divine Meditation must be often.
Because
 - 1. We shall know more of the best things.
 - 2. Have more near and intimate acquaintance with them.
 - 3. Heavenly Duties will become more easy to us.
- 2. It must be solemn and serious, not only formal
- 3. Not only notional and speculative, but practical and reflective. It must be in the understanding, heart, and affections, yea and the conversation.
- 4. It must be particular and applicative.
- 5. It must be calm and quiet.
- 6. It must be persevering,
- There be four Arguments to persevere:
Viz.
 - From the
 - 1. Necessity
 - 2. Excellency
 - of it.
 - 3. Mischiefs by not practicing of it,

- 4. Easiness attainable by persevering in it,
- 4. Companions of Meditation, which are two,
 - 1. Praying must be joined with Meditation,
 - 2. Reading will do well to accompany in weak Christians with two Cautions, viz.
 - 1. Not to read much lest it hinder
 - 2. Not to read at the Sacrament,
- 5. Materials of Meditation
- The four last things, Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell.
- 1. Death: 1. The certainty. 2. Uncertainty. 3. The fitness for it. 4. How to be above the hurt of it. 5. To live in expectation of it. 6. To be free from the fear of it.
- 2. Judgment: 1. The terribleness of it. 2. Solemnity of the great Assizes. 3. Account to be given to God. 4. Separation at that day. 5. Happiness of the Godly. 6. Miserableness of the wicked.

- 3. Heaven: 1. The joys of it. 2. Beatifical Vision. 3. Perfection. 4. Perpetuity. 5. Fitness for. 6. What to do to get to Heaven.
- 4. Hell: where, of the punishment of, 1. Loss. 2. Sense,
- 2. God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and thy self,
 - 1. Of God, where of his, 1. Attributes, 2. Works. 3. What Relation towards him,
 - 2. Christ, where of his, 1. Divine, 2. Humane nature, 3. Offices; and then of his, 1. Life, 2. Death; where 1. what he suffered, 2. for whom, 3. who he was, 4. what love he suffered with, 5. what interest you have in it, 6. his Resurrection, 7. Ascension, 8. Intercession at Gods right hand.
 - 3. Holy Ghost: 1. nature, 2. office, 3. motion, 4. graces. 3
 - 4. Our selves in the state of, 1. Innocence, 2. Apostasy, 3. Regeneration, 4. Glory.
 - Further of our, 1. Sins, 2. Duties, 3. Evidences, 4. Comforts, 5. frailty of body, 6. immortality,

- 3. Dependence upon God.
- 4. Advantages God hath us at, he may throw into Hell at pleasure, therefore we should study and think on, 1. our Relations, 2. Calling, 3. Company, 4. our hearts. Hereof, 1. Thoughts, 2. Affections, 3. Words, 4. Actions,
- 5. Sinfulness of sin,
- 6. Vanity of the Creature
- 7. Excellency of the Gospel
- 8. Commandments, Threatenings, Promises, Ordinances of the Gospel; as, 1. Prayers, 2. reading the Word, 3. hearing the Word, 4. the Sacrament,
- 9. Errors of the times, Judgments of God, great changes of the Nation, several passages of Providence, the mercies of God,
- 6 Rules and Directions, and those of three sorts: respecting person, subject, manner.
- 1. For the right qualifying of the person that is to meditate, viz.
 - 1. Convince thy soul of the necessity of it,

- 2. Of the benefits and advantages of it; as,
 - 1. The begetting Repentance.
 - 2. The Love of God.
 - 3. Fear of God.
 - 4. Love of Christ.
- 3. The mischiefs of not-meditating
- 4. Get a sufficient furniture of saving knowledge
- 5. Labour to get a serious spirit,
- to which purpose a fourfold frame of spirit is to be avoided; as namely, 50
 - 1. A slight frame of spirit.
 - 2. A trifling frame of spirit.
 - 3. A watery frame of spirit.
 - 4. An inconsiderate frame of spirit.
- 6. Labour for the love of heaven, and heavenly things,

- 7. Labour to get an interest in Heaven, and heavenly things,
- 8. An heart disengaged from the world,
- 9. Be not discouraged though you have difficulty in the beginning,
- 10. Do all these things by power derived from Jesus Christ,
- 2. Rules for the right ordering the subjects or materials,
 - 1. At the beginning pick out easy subjects, as of Heaven; 1. the happiness of it in general; 2. in particular.
 - 2. Use variety, as heads of several materials were suggested,
 - 3. Pick out such subjects more especially as dispose to godly sorrow and holiness, 63
 - 4. Such as are most seasonable to thy condition, and suitable to thy relation. As suppose thou art, 64
 - 1. Troubled in mind, and exceedingly dejected, think of the willingness of Christ to receive poor ones, 65

- 2. Troubled in conscience, think of the promises not only to grace, but of grace, to give grace, 67
 - 3. In outward want, consider the wonderful providences of God,
 - 4. Sick, like to thy own life, or some dear Relative, think on a seasonable subject, as Death, &c. 68
 - 5. To receive the Sacrament, consider the nature, thy need of it, &c. 69
- 3. Rules for the manner of ordering Meditations on the aforementioned, or like subjects. viz. 70
- 1. To begin and enter upon the practice of Meditation; and here be six Directions,
 - 1. Be sure to pick a fit place to meditate in,
 - 2. A fit and seasonable time, according to our circumstances,

- 3. Be sure to have a fit subject prepared, not to seek at the time, 7
 - 4. Then set your self as in Gods presence, under his eye,
 - 5. Begin with some short ejaculatory, not long prayer
 - 6. Keep your hearts with all keeping, 73
- 2. To proceed better in this work, here we must know, there be two faculties of the soul, the understanding and will, or heart and affections, 75
- 1. Rules to help the understanding more logically and plainly, 76
 - 1. Logically, as Topics, or Common-place-heads, viz. 1. Description, 2. Distribution, 3. Causes, 4. Effects, 5. Properties, 6. Opposites, 7. Comparisons, 8. Titles, 9. Testimonies,
 - An instance in considering sin as the subject,
 - 1. Consider description as a transgression of Gods Law, 78

- 2. Distribution, as sin by imputation, propagation, and action,
- 3. Cause of sin, God not the cause, but Satan and self, 79
- 4. Effects and cursed fruits, temporal, carnal, and eternal,
- 5. Properties and Adjuncts in general and particular, 8
- 6. Opposites, grace and holiness
- 7. Comparisons, as bruises, leprosy, &c.
- 8. Titles given to sin in Scripture, as robbing God, &c. 83
- 9. Testimonies in Scripture against sin, wrath of God, &c.
- 2. Plainly, where particularly consider, 84
 - 1. What the Scripture says of the subject you would meditate upon,

- 2. What Sermons you have heard upon that subject, 85
- 3. Take a Book that treats on the subject you would meditate upon. 86
- 4. Be sure to join Application with your Contemplation, 87
- 5. Consider the means how to obtain what you meditate upon, 88
- 2. Rules to help the will, heart, and affections, and to raise them, 89
 - 1, Labour to get a relish and savour of the things you meditate on, to have the heart affected.
 - 2. Complain before God for the want of this relish.
 - 3. Wish you had a supply of the taste you want, 90
 - 4. Confess your inability as of your self to do this.
 - 5. Petition to God for help.
 - 6. Confidently believe God will help you.

- 3. Rules to conclude all, after entrance and progress, 97
 - 1. Lift up your heart to God with thankfulness, and bless his Name,
 - 2. Resolve to live as one who hath been thinking on the things of God, 99
 - 3. Recommend your self, body, soul, relatives, &c. to God
- A Persuasion to the practice of these things, concluding in four particulars
 - 1. Mourn before God that you have lived so long in the School of Christ, and have not practiced this duty of solemn Meditation
 - 2. That you have misplaced your Meditation,
 - 3. Study the necessity, excellency, usefulness, and profitableness of Meditation, as the marrow of all other duties
 - 4. Defer not to practice according to the directions given in expectation of Gods blessing,

Epigraph: GENESIS 24:63, And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is not unknown unto you, I suppose, that there are two things required by God of all those that would receive the benefit of the Sacrament: the one is preparation before they come; and the other is meditation when they are come. I have made many and many a Sermon of Preparation, but I have made very few of Meditation. Now the Sacrament is a meditating Ordinance, as I may so express my self; it is an Ordinance for Meditation: and the great work that we have to do at the Sacrament, is to meditate upon Christ crucified; and therefore I shall crave leave to make you a few Sermons concerning this rare and excellent Doctrine of Meditation; and for this purpose I have chosen this Text: Wherein we have four Particulars.

1. We have the person that is here spoken of, and that is Isaac, the godly child of godly Abraham.
2. What is here related of this person, he went out to meditate.
3. The place that he chose for his meditation, and that was in the field, he went out into the field to meditate.
4. The time that he chose to meditate in, and that was the evening, and Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.

The great question for the meaning of this Text will be, what the subject of Isaac's Meditation was? what did Isaac go out to meditate upon? now for this you must know there is a double meditation; there is a meditation that is sinful and wicked; and there is a meditation that is holy and godly.

1. There is a meditation that is sinful and wicked, and that is when we meditate upon things that are wicked; of this you shall read, Psalm 36. 4. He deviseth mischief upon his bed. And Psalm 7. 14. Behold he travelleth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief. There are wicked meditations as well as wicked conversations; and a man may go to Hell for plotting wicked things, as well as for practicing wicked things. And therefore it is said, Prov. 12. 2. A man of wicked devices will God 3 condemn. Not only a man of wicked practices, but a man of wicked devices will he condemn. There is a contemplative wickedness as well as an actual wickedness; and a man may go to Hell for contemplative wickedness. As for example, there is a contemplative murder, when a man doth delight in the thoughts of murdering his brother; when the thought of revenge is pleasing. And there is a contemplative adultery, when a man doth plot how to commit adultery, and delight in the thought of adultery. Now Isaac's meditation certainly was not of things that are wicked, he did not go out into the field to meditate upon vile and wicked things.

2. There is a meditation that is holy and godly, and that is when we meditate upon things that are holy and

heavenly; and of this nature was the meditation of Isaac, he went out into the field to meditate on the works of God, and of the blessings and mercies of God; to meditate upon the Heavenly Canaan, and upon his sins; and this appears, because the Hebrew word that is here used for meditation, that is here translated meditation, doth also signify to pray; and therefore it is in your margent, And Isaac went out to pray at eventide. It was a Religious work that Isaac went out about; and you must know that Prayer and Meditation are very well joined 4 together; Meditation is a preparation to Prayer, and Prayer is a fit close for Meditation; and Isaac went out to meditate, to pray and to meditate, and to meditate and pray. This Meditation was a holy and heavenly act of Isaac. So then the Observation I shall gather is this:

Observation. That the meditation of holy and heavenly things is a work that God requires at the hands of all people. That God that requires you to pray, requires you to meditate as well as pray; there are few Christians believe this Doctrine, That God that requires you to hear Sermons, requires you to meditate on the Sermons you hear.

1. God requires this of you that are young Gentlemen, and therefore here you read of Isaac, that he went out to meditate. Now though it be true that Isaac at this time was forty years old, yet in those days to be of forty years was to be but a young man, for Isaac lived an hundred and fourscore years; and therefore this is a

notable pattern for young Gentlemen, to employ their time in godly and holy meditation.

2. This is a duty that God requires of Kings, of Nobles, and of great persons; and therefore David, though he was a King, and had a great deal of work and business, yet he says of himself, Psalm 119. 15. I will meditate 5 in thy precepts. v. 23. Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. v. 48. I will meditate in thy statutes.

3. This is a duty that God requires at the hands of Soldiers, and Generals, and Captains, Joshua 1. 8. there God speaks unto Joshua, This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

4. It is a duty that God requires of all Learned men, and of all that are Scholars, 1 Tim. 4. 15. Give attendance to reading and exhortations, and meditate upon these things: give thy self wholly unto them.

5. This is a duty that God requires of Women; and therefore it is said of Mary, Luke 2. 19. She kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart. v. 51. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. That is, she meditated upon them. In a word, it is a duty that God requires of all that look for Blessedness, Psalm 1. 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor

sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night.

Now you must know there are two sorts of Divine meditation, there is a sudden, short, occasional meditation of Heavenly things; and there is a solemn, set, deliberate meditation. I shall crave leave to speak something concerning the first sort of meditation, which I call sudden and ejaculatory, extemporary and occasional meditation; and I shall show you three things concerning this.

1. I will show you what this ejaculatory and extemporary meditation of Divine things is, and the excellency of it.

2. I will give you some examples of it.

3. I will give you some motives to persuade you to the practice of it.

1. I will discover to you what I mean by that I call occasional and extemporary, sudden and ejaculatory meditation. Occasional meditation is this, when a man takes an occasion by what he sees, or by what he hears, or by what he tastes of; when he takes an occasion by any thing that is sensitive, to raise up his thoughts to Heavenly meditation. Or take it thus, Occasional meditation is when a man makes use of the Creature, as a footstool to raise him up to God, as a ladder to Heaven; when a man upon the sudden makes use of what he sees with his eyes, or hears with his ears, as a ladder to climb to Heaven withal. You have a pattern of

this, Psalm 8. 3, 4. When 7 I considered thy heavens, the work of thy singers, the Moon, and the Stars, which thou hast ordained, (mark what is his meditation of this) what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? Lord, what is man that thou shouldst make the Heaven, the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars for his sake? You must know, that all the whole Creation is a picture of God; it is Gods Looking-glass, wherein you may behold the God of Heaven and Earth; there is no Creature but it hath the Image of God upon it; there is not the least spice of grace but you that are spiritual may read God in it. —It is the saying of a Heathen, Every herb that you have in your Garden doth represent the Divinity, or nature of God. There are two books that God hath given us Christians to know him by, the book of the Scripture, and the book of the Creature; now though the book of the Scripture be the better book of the two, and the book of the Scripture will teach us more of God than the book of the Creature; for the book of the Creature cannot teach us God in Christ, cannot teach us the mystery of Redemption, nor the mystery of the Trinity; yet the book of the Creature is a rare book, wherein a man may learn excellent things concerning Heaven and heavenly things, excellent instructions. 8 I remember a story of a godly man, Antony, that was driven into the Wilderness for Religion sake, and having no book at all in the Wilderness, he was asked, How he could spend his time? says he, I have one book, and that is the book of the Creation; and as long as I have this book I want no other book; Speaking how much he could behold God

in that book. And it is a good saying of Tertullian, The same God is the God of nature that is the God of grace. And it is the duty of a Christian to receive instruction, and spiritual benefit from natural things as well as from gracious and spiritual things, because there is the same God of nature as of grace. The Creatures of God are a Divine Book in which we may read the power of God, the goodness of God, the love of God, the mercy and wisdom of God,—Rom. 1. 20. That that may be known of God may be read in the Creature. Now the Creatures are but Spectacles by which we are enabled to read these things concerning God. I have read a story of a Painter, Hermogenes, he was a rare man for that Art, and coming into a Painters shop, he sees a line drawn so curiously, that he cries out, Surely Apelles hath been here; none but Apelles could draw such a curious line. And as the story saith, he went out of the shop, and never left till he had found out 9 this Apelles, that so he might come to the acquaintance of that man that had so much skill. The application of this is most excellent, when you look upon this Creature of God, and that Creature of God, you must needs confess that none but a God could make such a glorious world; *digitus Dei est hic*, here is the finger of God; and the consideration of this, if you have any thing of God in you, will make you to seek out after this God, and to love this God, and honour this God.

2. I will give you some examples of this occasional, sudden, extemporary meditation of Divine things: First, I will give you Scripture examples, Prov. 6. 6. there the

wise man sends the sluggard to the Pismire, Go to the Ant thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer. Here you see what a rare meditation a man may have from the little Pismire, and how the sluggard is sent to behold the Pismire, to be ashamed of his sluggishness; let the sight of that put thee in mind of thy laziness. Jeremiah 8. 7. there God sends the unthankful Israelite to the Stork, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow: The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. Here you have a sudden and occasional meditation from the Creatures of God, the Turtle, the Crane, the Swallow, observe the time of their coming; the Stork at such a time of the year goes out of the land, and at such a time of the year comes into the land; but my people (there is the meditation) know not the judgments of the Lord. And thus Christ sends the distrustful Christian to the fowls of the air, and to the lillies of the field, Matthew 6. 26. Behold the fowls of the air for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feedeth them, (here is an occasional meditation) are you not better than many sparrows? And why take you thought for raiment? consider the lillies of the field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. You have another example, John 4. where Christ discoursing with the Woman of Samaria, and entreating some water from the Woman, takes an

occasion from the water of the Well to discourse of the water of life. And John 6. from the loaves Christ fed the people withal, he takes an occasion to discourse of the bread of life, You follow me for the loaves, saith Christ; but labour not for the meat that perisheth, but labour for the meat that endureth forever. I am the bread of life that came down from heaven. Christ takes occasion from the natural bread to meditate on the bread of life, the bread of heaven. To give you some other examples, I read in St. Austin, that he had a water-course near his lodging, a great flowing down of waters; and observing how sometimes the water went down silently, sometimes made a great noise; from the consideration of the different streaming of the water, he made a rare discourse of the Order of Providence, the manner how God governs the World in order. There was a Minister, Mr. Deering in Queen Elizabeth's days, a man of famous memory, in whose Life it is reported, that just when he was a dying, the Sun shone upon him; and he takes occasion from that most excellently to discourse of that Sun of Righteousness, of the glory of heaven, of the happiness he was going to.

I have likewise read, that Mr. Eske, and Dr. Hall (who in his Book of Meditation doth quote this example) were hearing a Consort of Music, and this holy Minister Mr. Eske being a very godly man, all on a sudden was so strangely transported with the thoughts of the joys of Heaven, that he said with a great deal of passion, What music, Sirs, shall there be in heaven! O the spiritual joy and melody that there we shall have!

There is a story of two Cardinals in the Council of Constance, that riding abroad for their Recreation, they saw a poor Countryman weeping, and when they came to him, they asked him, Why he wept? saith he, Do you see this Toad here that lies before me, God might have made me a Toad; I am weeping because I never was sufficiently thankful that God did not make me a Toad; (you see this poor Country-man takes an occasion from the sight of the Toad to raise up his heart in thankfulness to God) and these two Cardinals when they heard him say so, they made use of the speech of St. Austin, The poor and labouring men get to heaven, and we Scholars go down to hell with all our learning. They were ashamed to see what a good use the Country-man made of the sight of the Toad.

There is another story of a godly old man, that beholding a harlot how curiously she trimmed her self to please her wicked lover, he falls weeping, and being asked, Why he wept? saith he, I weep to see this lewd woman what care she takes to dress her self to please her lover, and that I should never take so much care to dress my soul to please my God.

I have read of Ignatius the Martyr, that when he heard the Clock strike, he would have this meditation, Now there is one hour more that I must answer for. I have read of Fulgentius that rare Scholar, that when he came to Heathenish Rome, and saw the Emperor ride in Triumph, he brake out into this Exclamation, If there be so much glory in Rome here upon earth, O what will be the glory of Heaven!

I might be infinite in these stories; only I will give you one more, and that is of a Heathen-man, Galen, famous for his skill in Physick; when he was viewing the composure of mans body, and beholding the curious workmanship of it, the story saith he fell to sing a Hymn to his Creator, None but a God could make such a body; there must needs be a God that hath wrought so curiously the members of mans body.

3. Give me leave to give you some Motives to persuade you to the practice of this. It is in vain to hear my Discourses, unless you endeavour to put them in practice. Now I will give you these Motives.

1. This way of meditation may be done at all times, this will not hinder your calling; you that are poor men, and have not time for solemn meditation on the week-day, that are labouring men, and cannot spare an hour for solemn and deliberate meditation, you may make use of this sudden, ejaculatory, occasional meditation, even when you are at your day-work; you may make use of your day-work, of the things that you are working about, to stir up your hearts to Heavenly things; for there is nothing in the world but a good Christian may make a Heavenly use of; and therefore there is no body can say that he hath no leisure for this way of meditation.

2. This is a way of meditation, that a man may practice in all places, and in all companies. A godly man once said unto me, I thank God I can be in heaven when I am in the midst of the crowd in Cheapside; in the midst of the noise I can have a heavenly meditation. There is no

place, no company, can hinder thee from this occasional, sudden, ejaculatory meditation.

3. There is nothing more easy than this ejaculatory meditation to you that are spiritual; deliberate and solemn meditation is very hard and difficult; but this way of meditation is very easy; and the reason is this, because there is no Creature of God but is a teacher of some good thing; thou canst not behold a Spider but thou mayest make some good use of it; the Scripture doth make many rare uses of a Spider; a wicked man may be looked upon in a Spider, as in a glass; and the hope of a wicked man is compared to a Spiders web; as a Spider puts his trust in his web, and spends a great deal of pains in weaving his web, and when it is woven, it is easily pulled down, there is no stability in it; so a wicked man puts his trust in his hope of Heaven, which is as vain as a Spiders web. And the Scripture tells you how by all the money a wicked man gets by unlawful means, he doth but weave a Spiders web. That is a rare use the Prophet Isaiah makes of the Spiders, which is one of the meanest of all the Creatures of God; a Spider and a Toad, and a Viper, even the venomous Creatures, a man may make rare use of, Isa. 59. 5, 6. They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the Spiders web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works. That man is a very bad Scholar that can spell nothing out of ten hundred thousand books, for every Creature is as it were a book to teach us some good

thing; Now that man is but a very ill Scholar that can make use of none of these books.

4. Herein lies the excellency of a Christian, that he is able to spiritualize natural things: Herein lies the wickedness of a wicked man, a wicked man doth naturalize spiritual things. But herein lies the godliness of a godly man; a godly man doth spiritualize natural things; a wicked man carnalizes even spiritual things; when he is at the Ordinances, at the very Sacrament, if he be not truly godly he doth carnalize and naturalize even that spiritual Ordinance of the Sacrament; but a godly Christian is like a Heavenly Alchemist, that can draw Heaven out of a Spider as it were, draw something of God out of a Toad, Heavenly instructions out of a Toad, out of a Viper, out of any Creature of God, much more out of the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars. You wonder at the Chemist, when he can extract all the four Elements out of a mixt body; much more excellent is that Christian which can extract heaven out of every Creature of God, that can heavenize and spiritualize the Creatures of God. And let me tell you a little to amplify this motive;

1. Herein a true Christian exceeds the bruit beasts; the bruit beasts can enjoy the Creature, but he cannot reflect upon the Creature; he enjoys the good things of God, but he cannot behold God in these things, he cannot improve them for God; but now a true Christian makes all these things to be glasses to see God in, pictures to behold God in; the Goodness of God, and

the Wisdom of God; and he endeavours to receive spiritual instruction by them.

2. Herein a child of God exceeds all wicked men; there is no wicked man can use the Creatures spiritually, it is above his sphere; a wicked man makes the Creatures a wall of separation between God and him, not a glass to see God; there is no wicked man useth the Creatures of God as a looking-glass to behold God in, or as a footstool to raise him up to God, or a ladder to climb to God by, this is proper only to a godly man.

5. Consider this, It is the greatest affront you can offer to God, not to take spiritual notice of his creatures; not to make a spiritual use of his Creatures. God hath put mankind upon the stage of this world, and God hath made all the Creatures for mans use, and God hath made man to be the tongue to praise him for all his Creatures; and if man doth not praise him, God loseth the praise of all the whole Creation. God made all the Creatures for man, and man to praise him for all the Creatures; which if man neglect, God loseth the glory of the whole Creation; for how doth the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars praise God! The Prophet David calls upon the Ice, and the Snow, and the Rain, and all the Creatures of God, to praise God: How do they praise God? How doth the fire and the water praise God? When we praise God for these things, then they praise God when we use them for God, and draw Heavenly things, spiritual instruction out of them; and when we do not do this, we offer the greatest affront

that can be offered to God in that kind, and we deprive God of the glory of the whole Creation.

6. It is a soul-destroying sin not to observe the works of God, and to make a good use of them. Psalm 28. 5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. These are the six motives. Now in a word to put an end to this Discourse, let me beseech and entreat you, that you would put this duty in practice; let me tell you, Sirs, that though occasional, ejaculatory meditation be but as a Parenthesis (as one very well saith) in your worldly businesses; yet this Parenthesis is more worth than all your worldly business; yea, it signifies more than all your worldly business. As for example, (I will conclude my Discourse by giving you a little help): When I rise in a morning; what an excellent thing were it for a man to meditate of the great morning of the Resurrection, and that it shall be as easy for men to rise out of the grave at the great Resurrection, as it hath been for me this morning to arise out of my bed. And when the Sun begins to arise, and we behold the Sun shining, what a rare meditation is it to consider there will a day come wherein the Sun of Righteousness shall come in the clouds, and all his holy Angels with him, and all the Saints at that day shall shine as so many Suns in the firmament. O what a glorious day will that be, when there shall be as many Suns as there are Saints! there shall be as many Suns as there are Stars now in a bright shining night in the Heaven. And when thou art going

abroad, it would be very comely, spiritual and useful to remember, that thou hast two companions always going with thee, that is God and the Devil, (pardon me that I join them together) thou hast thy judge and thy accuser to go with thee; wheresoever thou walkest in the day time, one Devil or other is always waiting upon thee, and God is always present with thee, who will call thee to an account for all that thou dost; and the Devil scores up all that thou dost, for to accuse thee afterward. And when thou walkest abroad and see a debauched wicked man, it is an excellent thing to have a meditation, and to say, Blessed be God that hath made me to differ from this man; if it had not been for the grace of God, I had been as wicked as this man. And when thou meet with a godly man, a man eminent for godliness, Oh put up a prayer to God that he would make thee as godly; and mourn that thou art not as godly as he. When thou meet with a learned man, or a wise man, or a beautiful creature, it is a very excellent meditation to consider, if there be so much beauty, so much wisdom in the creature, O what is there in God, who is the ocean of beauty! if there be so much comeliness, so much excellency here below, Oh what is there above! It is a rare thing to use the creatures reflexively; it is Idolatry to use the creature terminately; but the admirable, the superlative excellency of a Christian is to use the Creature reflexively; to reflect from the Creature to the Creator. So likewise when thou art in thy Shop, and weighing thy Commodities, would it not be an excellent meditation, to think there will a time come, when God will weigh thee in a balance, and weigh thy actions, and

weigh all that thou dost! And meditate on that Text, Prov. 11. 1. A false balance is an abomination to the Lord. And so likewise when you walk in the fields, and behold the grass that grows, and behold the flowers of the field, doth it not become you to meditate, that all flesh is grass, and all the glory of the world is but the goodliness of the grass; and all earthly things are but like the beauty of a flower? My little Child that I love so much, is but like this flower, it is beautiful, but it is but fading. And when thou see a wicked man grow great by wicked ways, would it not be a very comfortable thing to remember that Text, Fret not thy self because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall be soon cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb. And you that are Merchants, when you are upon the Exchange, a short sudden ejaculation would not be hurtful, but helpful to you. As for example, to remember that as you are Merchant-adventurers for earthly things, so you are all Merchant-adventurers for heaven, and your souls are in the midst of the Sea of this world; this world is like a Sea, and your soul is here like a ship at Sea, and is in danger to be split upon the rocks, in danger of pirates, and in danger of being lost. Your Ships have not half so many dangers as your Souls have; the temptations of the Devil, the allurements of the world, the corruptions of your own hearts. Now to consider, as in the Exchange, what is become of such and such a Ship, so to ask thy soul in what case is thy soul now, that is on the Sea of this world; and then to go to the Ensuring-office, (you know

you have your Ensuring-offices, wherein you ensure your Ships at Sea) to get your souls ensured by reconciliation with God; and by true faith, manifested by holiness and righteousness, to get your souls assured, that they may come safe to the haven of Happiness.

In a clear bright frosty Winter-night, when thou go out and beholdest the bespangled heaven, multitude of bright Stars, what a rare thing were it to meditate, This glorious bespangled Firmament is but the stable as it were, but the out-houses of that Heaven where I am to go; it is but the outward Court, but the Wash-house, as I may say; and if the Stable and Out-houses be so glorious, Oh what is the inward palace! above the spangled Heavens is my Fathers house, where I hope to live forever with God, and there my Christ is now interceding for me, and by the power of his Spirit shall I be brought one day to that house; Oh when will that time come! when will my soul mount thorough these Heavens into the heaven of Heavens! Now is not this comely for a Christian? will not this heavenize you, and spiritualize you? And then when you go to bed at night, to remember, I have one day more to answer for; to remember there will a last night come, after which there will be no day but the Resurrection of all. Remember thy last night, thy concluding night, the end of thy life.

But I have been over-long in this, a great deal more than I thought; but I do it because here I shall put an end to this discourse of occasional meditation.

There is a second sort of Meditation, and that is that that I call set, solemn and deliberate; when a man sets apart an hour a day it may be, sets a part some time, and goes into a private Closet, or a private Walk, and there doth solemnly and deliberately meditate of the things of Heaven.

Now concerning this meditation, I shall handle by Gods assistance these two Particulars:

1. I will show you the nature of it.

2. I will show you the necessity of it.

1. The nature of this duty, what this meditation is, that I would press you to: I will describe it in two Particulars.

1. This holy meditation is a dwelling and abiding upon things that are holy; it is not only a knowing of God, and a knowing of Christ, but it is a dwelling upon the things we know; as the Bee that dwells and abides upon the flower, to suck out all the sweetness that is in the flower; so to meditate upon God and Christ, and the Sacrament, it is to dwell upon God, and the Sacrament, to suck out all the sweetness we can in the things we meditate upon. As we read of Anna, Luke 2. 37. She continued in the Temple praying and fasting day and night. To meditate, is to continue and fix our selves and our hearts upon the things we know; this meditation in Scripture is called a holy musing, Psalm 39. 3. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing; to meditate is to muse, or else it is to commune with our own hearts, Psalm 4. Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. It is a

communing, a consulting with our own hearts; or if you will, it is a bethinking our selves: so it is expressed, 1 King. 8. 47. If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captive, and repent: The Hebrew word is, if they shall bring back to their hearts, if they shall reflect upon themselves; for meditation is a reflecting act of the soul, whereby the soul is carried back to it self, and considers all the things that it knows. Meditation is an inward act of the soul, a spiritual act, whereby the soul doth recoil upon it self, and looks back upon it self, and considers all the things that concern its everlasting happiness; and if I be not mistaken, it is rarely typified under the Law two manner of ways.

1. By those beasts that did chew the cud; you shall read Leviticus 11. of the clean beasts, and the unclean beasts; now the clean beasts were such as did chew the cud, of those they were to eat: now the unclean beasts were those that did not chew the cud: a meditating Christian is one that chews the cud, that chews on the Truths of Jesus Christ, that doth not only hear good things, but when he hath heard them, chews them over, ruminates upon them, that so they may be fitter for digestion and concoction, and spiritual improvement; an unclean Christian is one that doth not chew the cud, that doth not ruminate, and ponder, and bethink himself of the things of Heaven.

2. Another type of this rare grace of Meditation, is that of the Beasts, Ezek. 1. that Ezekiel saw, that had eyes within and without, verse 18. their wings were full of

eyes round about them. And so likewise the Beasts Rev 4. 6. Round about the Throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind: A notable and a rare type of Meditation; for meditation is nothing else but a looking thoroughly into the things of God; a looking before and behind, as I may so speak; a meditating Christian is a man full of eyes, that doth not only know God, but sees much of God. There is another metaphor to express it, Psalm 119 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies: The word in the Hebrew is taken from Chapmen, that when they buy a commodity, they turn it over, and over, and over again; they look all about it into every part of it. Meditation is a thorough contemplation, and a thorough consideration of the things of God; a meditating Christian is full of eyes, full of heavenly understanding.

2. It is an act of the heart as well as of the head; it is not only a speculative knowledge of things Divine, but a practical knowledge; it is not only an act of the intellect and understanding, but of the will and affections; it is an affective grace as well as an intellective grace; and therefore it is said of the Blessed Virgin Mary, She pondered all these sayings in her heart; she did not only think of them with her head, but she pondered on them with her heart; and you shall read, Deut. 4. 39. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart. A true meditation is when a man doth so meditate of Christ as to get his heart inflamed with the love of Christ; so meditate of the Truths of God, as to be transformed into them; and so meditate of sin as to get his heart to hate

sin; when it is such a musing of God, as kindles a fire in the whole soul, as David doth express it, Psalm 39. 3. While I was musing, the fire burnt: When a man doth so contemplate on God, that his heart is all on fire with the love of God; when a man doth so think on the Sacrament, that his heart is all on a fire with a holy thirsting after the Sacrament. When the heart is affected with the meditation of the head; and therefore David saith, Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet; this is the true meditation, when we do so meditate of God, as to taste a sweetness in God; when meditation doth not rest in the intellectual part, but flows into the will and affection, that the heart is all inflamed with the things we meditate on. There are many great Scholars that meditate much of God, and Christ, and Heaven, and yet they are never the holier for their meditation; and the reason is, because they meditate on these things merely to find out curious notions of God, and Christ, and Heaven, but they do not meditate on these things to get their hearts affected, to get Heavenly and Divine hearts; and therefore you shall see many Scholars as undevout, and as unholy as other people, though they know more, and meditate more. And I have found it by experience, that there are many poor lay-people, that get more good by meditation than great Scholars; for the great Scholar his meditation many times vanisheth into empty speculations, and into notions and opinions; but the honest godly man his meditation is all for practice; he meditates of sin to hate it, of the Sacrament to hunger after it, of God to love him, of Christ to be inflamed with a desire after him.

And therefore he gets the more good many times by meditation. The Butterfly will dwell upon the flower as well as the Bee, but the Butterfly only sucks the flower that she may paint her wings with it; she is not useful to make honey, she doth not suck honey from the flower; so there are many Scholars, many men that meditate much of the things of God to paint their wings, that is, to get more knowledge of God and Heaven, and more curious expressions of Heaven, but it is the honest Christian, the plain-hearted Christian, that meditates of God like the Bee, to suck out the sweetness of God; that meditates on Christ so as to get his heart burning in love to Christ; this is the rare grace of meditation. Meditation must enter into three doors, or else it will never do you any good.

1. It must get into the door of the understanding, and there it is seated, there is the proper place of meditation; but if it rest there, thou art never the better for it.
2. It must get into the door of thy heart, and of thy affections; and thou must never leave meditating till it get into that door likewise.
3. The door of thy conversation; for thy meditation must not rest in the affections; but it must likewise have influence into thy conversation, to make thy conversation more holy; thou must so meditate of God as to walk as God walks; and so to meditate of Christ as to prize him, and live in obedience to him. A nurse that hath a nurse-child, will cut the meat, and will many times chew the meat for the child, but she will not eat the meat, but give it to the child; for if she should chew

the meat and eat it up her self, the child might starve for all her chewing of it, and preparing of it; so it is with the grace of meditation. Meditation, while it is in the understanding, chews upon the things of God, and of Christ, and of Heaven, but when the understanding hath chewed these things, it must not devour all these things it self, but it must convey the meat it hath chewed (as the meat is conveyed from the stomach into the liver, and then into the heart, and then into all the other parts of the body) into the heart, and into the will, and into the affections, and into the conversation.

This is the first, the admirable nature of this grace.

2. I come to show you the necessity of it; and I do this the rather, that I might provoke you all to the practice of it; for I am very confident there are few people that do practice this duty of meditation; there are few that know how to practice it; but there are very few that make conscience to practice it; even you that make conscience to praying twice a day in your family, seldom make conscience once a day of meditation, nay once a week. And therefore that I might awaken my self and you, give me leave to show you the great necessity of practicing the duty of meditation; and I will show it two manner of ways.

1. By considering the mischief that flows from the want of practicing this duty.

2. By showing you the advantage and spiritual benefit that you will gain by practicing this duty. 30

1. I shall show you the woeful inconveniences, and the intolerable mischiefs that come from the want of practicing this duty of meditation. I will bring them to two heads.

1. I will show you, that the want of practicing this duty is the cause of all sin.

2. It is the cause of all punishment.

1. I will show you, that the want of practicing this duty is the cause of all sin: and I will instance in particulars.

1. The reason why people harden their hearts in sin, and do not repent of their sins, but go on obstinately, is for want of meditation. Jeremiah 8. 6. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? They did not repent, because they did not reflect upon what they did; they did not bethink themselves, so the phrase is, If any man bethink himself and repent, 1 King. 8. 47. they did not say, I am undone by what I have done; I have lost God and Heaven by what I have done; and if I do not repent, I am an undone creature forever. No man repented of his wickedness, because no man considered what he had done; for did you consider the evil that is in sin, did you dwell and abide upon it, did you commune with your own hearts, and seriously consider what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, you durst not willingly sin against God; but the reason why men go on rashly, heedlessly, obstinately in sin, is for want of the meditation of the evil of sin.

2. The reason why all the Sermons we hear do us no more good, is for want of Divine meditation; for it is with Sermons as it is with meat, it is not the having of meat upon your table will feed you, but you must eat it; and not only eat it, but concoct it, and digest it, or else your meat will do you no good: So it is with Sermons, it is not the hearing Sermons will do you good, but it is the concocting them, digesting them by meditation; the pondering in your hearts what you hear, must do you good. And one Sermon well digested, well meditated upon, is better than twenty Sermons without meditation. As for example, a little meat well digested will nourish a man more than a great deal of meat if it breed raw humours, if it doth not digest; it is the digesting of meat nourishes a man: Now meditation is that that will digest all the Sermons you hear. There are some men sick of a disease, that whatsoever they eat comes up presently, the meat never doth them any good; so it is the custom of many of you, you hear a Sermon, you go away, and never think of it afterward; this is just like meat that you vomit up. There is a disease that some men have, that all the meat they eat goes thorough them, it never abides with them; now this meat never nourishes: so it is with the Sermons you hear, I am sure on the week-day, and I am afraid the Sermons you hear on the Sabbath-day go thorough you, you hear them, and hear them, and that is all you do; but you never seek by meditation to root them in your hearts; and that is the reason why you are so lean in grace, though you are so full fed with Sermons; it is with Sermons as it is with a Plaster, if a man hath a wound in his body, and lay a

plaster to the wound, this plaster will never heal him, unless it abide upon the wound; if a man takes it away as soon as ever it is laid on, it will never do him any good; so it is with Sermons: if when you have heard a Sermon, you never ponder and meditate on it, it is just like a plaster put on, and then pulled off again; and I am confident the great reason why we have so many lean hunger-starved Christians, that are lean in knowledge, and lean in grace, though they hear Sermon upon Sermon, (it may be on the Sabbath-day they will hear four or five Sermons) is because they concoct and digest nothing; they never ponder and meditate upon what they hear; and this is that that our Saviour Christ speaks of: by the seed that was sown by the high-way-side, is 33 meant a man, that hears the word, and never thinks of it after he hath heard it, but suffereth the Devil to steal it out of his heart; as the husbandman that sows the seed in the high-way, you know he never plows it, he never looks that that should come to any thing. There are many of you, the Sermons you hear are like the seed sown in the high-way, you never cover it by meditation, you never think of it, when you have heard it; and that is the reason you get no more good by what you hear.

3. The reason why the promises of God do no more affect your hearts, when the Saints of God taste no more sweetness in the promises, is because you do not ponder and meditate upon them. It is with the Promises of the Gospel as it is with a cordial, if a man doth not chew his cordial but swallow it down whole, he will

never taste any great sweetness, in it; the way to taste the sweetness is to chew it; so the Promises of God are full of Heavenly comfort, but you will never enjoy this comfort unless you chew them by meditation. As it is with spices, unless they be bruised, they never smell sweet; and as it is with a Pomander, unless you do rub it, you will never smell the sweetness of it; no more will you ever taste the Heavenly comfort that is in the Promises of the Gospel, unless you rub them, unless 34 you bruise, unless you chew them by meditation. And the reason why the Saints of God walk so uncomfortably all their lives long, is because they do not chew these Promises.

4. The reason why the threatenings of God make no more impression upon our hearts, is for want of meditation. There are terrible threatenings against sin in the word, but alas there are few people affected with these threatenings. The threatenings of God in Scripture are like the rattling of hail upon the tiles, they make a great noise, but they make no impression; and what is the reason? it is for want of meditation; we do not lay them to heart, we do not consider that these threatnings belong to us, as long as we continue in our sins. Oh did a wicked man meditate solemnly upon the threatnings of God, it would make his heart ache, especially when the spirit of bondage goes along with them.

5. The reason why the mercies of God do no more good upon us, is for want of meditation. There are many mercies that all of us have received from God, many personal mercies, and many family-mercies, and all

these mercies are so many motives to service. Now what is the reason the Saints of God bury the mercies of God in forgetfulness, and are no more thankful for mercies? the reason is for want of meditation, 35 Isa. 1. 2, 3. Hear, oh heavens, and give ear, oh earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me; the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider: That is the reason why they are so unthankful. It is with the mercies of God as it is with the fire, if a man walks by the fire and doth not sit at it, it will never heat him much; if he be a cold, he must abide at the fire, or else he will never be hot; so it is not a slight thought of the mercies of God that will affect your hearts, but it must be a dwelling upon them by meditation, that will warm your hearts. Now because we do not meditate upon these mercies, we do not solemnly consider the mercies of God, therefore it is they do no more good upon our hearts, Psalm 106. there is a Psalm spent on purpose to set out the unthankfulness of the people of Israel, verse 3. We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly; our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red-sea. What is the reason they were so unthankful? it was because they did not meditate on the mercies of God.

36 6. The reason why afflictions do work no more upon us, and why we are never the better for the afflicting

hand of God, is for want of meditation: It is a rare Text, Eccles. 7. 14. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider. Times of affliction are times of meditation; and what must we consider of in the day of adversity? we must consider who it is that afflicts us, and why we are afflicted, and how we shall do to have our afflictions sanctified; we must consider the meaning of Gods rod, and how we may be taught by these afflictions spiritual things. Now because we do not meditate upon God, and upon his afflicting hand when we are afflicted, because we have slight heads under our afflictions, therefore it is we get no more good by our afflictions. I have observed many of us (the Lord pardon it unto us) as soon as ever we are recovered from our afflictions, we forget God presently, we never consider the mercies of God in recovering us, and then we return to our old vomit again, for want of meditation.

7. The reason why the Providences of God take no more impression upon our hearts, is for want of this grace of meditation: The Providences of God are very mysterious, and God in the Government of the World doth walk in the Clouds. And truly I am very confident, that which God doth especially require of his children 37 in these days, is to meditate upon his Providences, as well as upon his Ordinances; there are many rare lessons to be learned from the consideration of the Providences of God, the Providence of God toward England, and toward Scotland, and toward the Ministry; God is now depriving you of Minister upon Minister,

many Ministers the Lord hath taken from you; God is, as I may so speak, disburdening the Nation of this great burden of the Ministry, which is a burden to a great many; God takes his Ministers up to Heaven. Now what is the reason that the Providences of God of late years do no more good, though they have been wonderful toward England, Scotland, and Ireland, towards all sorts of people? The reason why we are never the better by them, is because we do not study the meaning of all these Providences, Isa. 57. 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. This is the reason why we get no more good by the death of the godly, and by the Providences of God, because we do not lay them to heart; we do not muse and study upon them.

8. What is the reason that the Saints of God are so distrustful of Gods Providences? when they are ready presently to sink, and to say 38 they are undone? It is for want of meditation; and therefore Christ, Luke 12. saith, Take no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall put on; consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls? Consider the lillies how they grow, they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Did you consider the lillies, and the ravens, did you study the love of God to you, you would not distrust him under any sad Providences. The reason why the Saints

of God are so full of unbelief, when they are in a low condition, is for want of meditation; they do not consider the ravens, and the lillies, they do not study the Promises that God hath made to his children in their lowest condition.

9. The reason why the professors of Religion are so censorious of other men, and so little censorious of themselves, why they judge every man, and examine every man but themselves, (which is the condition of these days) it is for want of meditation. Matthew 7. Judge not that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thy own eye? 39 If men did reflect more upon themselves, they would censure themselves more, and others less. And the reason why people are so rash in censuring, is for want of self-reflection.

10. The reason why professors of Religion do offer the sacrifices of fools to God, when they come to worship him; why they pray headily and rashly, why they rush upon Ordinances without preparation, is for want of meditation, Eccles. 5. 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifices of fools, for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. Why do people rush upon Sacraments without preparation, rush

upon Sermons, rush upon Prayer, rush upon holy Duties? why, they do not consider what they do.

11. What is the reason that people prepare no more for death? Because they do not consider the shortness of life. They do not meditate of the vanity of this life, of the certainty and uncertainty of death; and therefore it is said, Deut. 32. 29. Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! Because men do not consider their latter end, therefore it is that they are so unprepared for their latter end.

12. And lastly, What is the reason that we come so unworthily to the Sacrament? and when we are there, we gaze up and down, and carry our selves so unseemly at that Ordinance? what is the reason that we lose all the fruit of that Ordinance, but merely for want of preparation before we come, and meditation when we are come? now preparation cannot be without meditation; preparation includes meditation in it.

2. The want of the practice of this duty is the cause of all punishment: Isa. 12. 11. The whole land is laid desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. Oh this is the cause of the sword that hath drunk so much blood in this Nation, no man lays to heart the Judgments of the Lord, therefore the land is become desolate. Psalm 28. 5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand, he shall destroy them, and not build them up; because they do not meditate of Gods works, therefore they Lord will destroy them. Nay, let me add that that is above all this, for God to give a man

over to a slight spirit, an unmeditating spirit, to a rashness and slightness of spirit, is one of the greatest Judgments in the world. A man of a slight head can never have a good heart; a slight hearted Christian can never be a good Christian; he that thinks slightly of God, will speak slightly of God; and he that speaks slightly of God, will worship God slightly; and he that slights God, God will slight him; now there cannot be a more cursed frame of spirit, than to be given over to an inconsiderate frame of spirit; an inconsiderate Christian is an inconsiderable Christian. Isa. 42. 24, 25. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he, against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Here is the curse of curses, not so much to be burnt, as not to know it; not so much to have the wrath of God upon us, as not to lay it to heart; it is a sign of the greatest fury of God, for a man to be given over to slightness of spirit; when he is under the judgments of God not to regard and lay them to heart.

And thus I have been somewhat long in setting out unto you the mischiefs that flow from the want of the practice of the grace of Meditation; and I do this to provoke you all to be humbled before God for the not practicing this duty, (for I am confident your consciences will tell you that you do not practice it) and

to convince you of the necessity of the practicing of this duty, which is quite dead and buried in the world. That I may be Gods instrument to stir you up to a conscientious practice of this duty of Heavenly meditation,

2. I shall show you the necessity of it from the benefits and advantages that will come unto Christians by the conscientious practice of this duty; and this I will show in three Particulars.

1. It is a mighty help to the working and procuring of all grace.

2. It is a mighty help to preserve and increase grace.

3. It is a mighty help to arm us against the Devil and all his temptations.

1. Meditation when it is sanctified, is a mighty help to the begetting of all grace; this I will show in divers Particulars.

1. It is a mighty help to work in us repentance and reformation of life; and therefore David saith, Psalm 119. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I thought on my ways; that is, I considered the evil of my ways, and what a bitter thing it is to sin against God, what a dishonour I have brought upon God by my evil ways, and what a scandal I have brought upon Religion. Ezek. 36. 31. Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and 43 shall loath your selves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your

abominations. A conscientious meditation of the evil of sin, is a Divine hammer to break your hearts for sin, and from sin; for did you consider the Majesty of God that is offended by the least sin; did you consider the infinite wrath of God against sin; did you consider the affronts that are offered to God by sin; that every sin is a dethroning of God, a robbing of God, a striking through the name of God; did you consider the pollution that is in sin, that sin makes you like the Devil; did you further consider the mischief that sin brings upon us; sin deprives you of the Beatifical vision; sin shuts you out of heaven; sin binds you over to everlasting burnings.

Again, did you consider the patience of God, and the goodness of God towards you yet, notwithstanding all your sins, and what an unkind thing it is to sin against so good a God; and did you further consider what Christ hath done to purchase pardon for your sins, and how Christ hath shed his blood for such wicked wretches as you are; did you sanctifiedly meditate upon these things, it would mightily provoke you to repent of your sins, and to turn unto God. And therefore you shall read concerning Peter, after he had denied Christ, Mark 14. 72. The cock crew, and 44 Peter called to mind the word Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice; and when he thought thereon he wept. The meaning of the Greek word is, When he weighed the speech of Christ, when he thought what an unkind thing it was to deny his dear Lord and Master, this made him weep; if he had not meditated of the evil

that he had committed, he had never wept. And what made the Prodigal child return home to his father? you shall see the reason, Luke 15. 17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger! When he came to consider with himself, the misery that he had brought upon himself, and that there were many servants in his fathers house that had bread enough, I will arise (saith he) and go to my father, and I will say, Father, I have sinned against heaven, (all this was but his meditation, he did but thus think in his heart to do this) and he arose and came to his Father.

2. Divine meditation is a mighty help to beget in us a love to God; for as it is with a picture, that hath a curtain drawn over it, though the picture be never so beautiful, you cannot see the beauty of it till the curtain be drawn aside; to an unconsiderating, an unmeditating Christian, God is as a picture with a curtain drawn over it, he cannot see the beauty of God, but meditation draws the curtain, and lets us in to behold all the beauty that is in God; and he that beholds the beauty of God, cannot but love God. As it is said of Socrates, he was so good a man that all that knew him loved him; and if any man did not love him, it was because they did not know him; much more may I say of God, All that meditate in, and study God, cannot but love him. And the reason why you do not love him, is because you do not study and meditate on God: as it is said, 1 John 4. 8. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love: he that knoweth God, loveth God. What is the reason the Saints

in heaven love God so perfectly? because they always behold his face, they see him, they think on him. And did you meditate upon the excellency of God, that God is altogether lovely, that all Excellencies are after an infinite manner concentered in God, that there is nothing lovely in the Creature but it is to be found infinitely in the Creator: Did you further consider all the good things that God hath done for you; all the blessings and mercies that you have received from God; did you not only think, but did you dwell upon these thoughts, did you sit at this fire, it would kindle a mighty flame of Divine love in your souls; therefore David saith, Psalm 39. 3. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned. Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet. Did you meditate much of God, you would taste a sweetness in God, that would be as a Loadstone to draw your hearts to the love of God.

3. Divine meditation is a mighty help to work in us a fear of God, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; now did you study the Majesty of God, that God hath all men, all the Devils in a chain, and that God only can do us hurt; and that no man can do us hurt but God must give him leave. Did you study the Omnipotency of God, you would fear God, and fear him only: as it is Isa. 51. 12, 13. I, even I am he that comforteth you: who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid

the foundations of the earth! As if he should say, If thou didst remember and think on the Lord thy God, who made the Heavens and the Earth, and hath all things in his hand, Thou wouldest not fear a man that shall die, &c. Jer. 10. 6, 7. first the Prophet breaks out into an admiration of God, Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord: thou art great, and thy name is great in might: who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? for to thee doth it appertain: 47 forasmuch as among all the wise men of the Nations, and in all their Kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. The meditation of God stirs up the Prophet to fear God, Jeremiah 5. 22. Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will you not tremble at my presence, which hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass, though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail: though they roar, yet cannot they pass over it. Did we meditate much upon the power of God, we would fear him, and stand in awe of him.

4. This Divine meditation is a mighty help to beget in us a love to Jesus Christ; for Jesus Christ is a fountain sealed, a spring shut up, a garden enclosed. Now you know no man is the better for a book sealed up, or a treasure locked up; to a careless Christian Christ is a fountain sealed, a treasure locked up; but meditation is the key that unlocks the treasury of all the Excellencies of Christ, and opens the book to let us read all the Excellencies that are in Christ. Meditation doth as it were open the fountain; and did we study what Christ is, that he is the choicest of ten thousand, altogether

excellent, the brightness of his Fathers glory, and the express image of his Person; and did we study the love of Christ to poor sinners, the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the love of God 48 toward us; did we study how Christ became poor to make us rich, how he became a curse to free us from the curse; how he was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God thorough him; did we bury our selves in this meditation; did you take half an hour in a day to meditate on the Excellency of Christ, did you when you walk in the fields meditate on the love of Christ, I am confident it would beget in you a love to Christ.

5. Divine meditation is a mighty help to enable us to believe and trust in God. To trust,

1. In his Providence in all outward straits.

2. In his Promises in all spiritual troubles.

1. It will help you to trust in his Providence when you are in any straits: when all creature-helps fail, and you are ready to sink, then meditation will raise your faith, and help you to trust in Gods Providence for outward provision, Matthew 6. 25, &c. I say unto you (saith Christ) take no thought for your life what you shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on; be not solicitous for your outward provision. But how doth Christ argue? what way should we take, that we may not distrust God? saith he, Meditate upon the fowls of the air; behold the fowls of the air for they sow not. v. 28. Why take you thought for raiment, consider the lillies of the field how they

grow, they toil not, neither do 49 they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The meditation of the lillies and the fowls of the air is a means to help us to trust in the Lord in the day of our straits.

2. It will enable you to rely upon the promises for the good of your souls. Did you when you read the promises of the Bible, chew them, how sweet would they be; the reason why the Promises are not sweet to you, is because you read them, but you do not chew them by meditating upon them; if you did meditate upon them, they would be sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb, especially if you did join application with meditation. Abraham was the Father of the Faithful, and he was strong in faith; and what made him strong in faith? because he considered not his own body now dead, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb, but he considered the promise of God, Rom. 4. 19. And the reason why the Saints of God are so void of comfort, and hang down their heads, and walk so disconsolately, is because they consider the deadness of their own souls; they consider their imperfections, but they do not meditate upon the promises, the freeness and the riches of them, Matthew 16. 8. Which when Jesus perceived, he said to them, Oh ye of little faith, why reason ye among your selves, because you have brought no bread? Here Christ 50 reproves them for want of faith; but how came they to want faith? Do you not understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? and do ye

not remember the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? As if Christ should have said, If you had meditated on my former miracles, you would never have doubted this miracle; but because you do not remember what I have formerly done, therefore it is that you are so full of unbelief. Now the way to fill your souls with comfort is to meditate upon the Promises of God.

6. Divine meditation is a mighty help to beget in us a contempt of the world, and all worldly things; for the world is like unto gilded copper, it is an easy matter for a man to mistake gilded copper for true gold, unless he considers what he takes; for if a man take gold without consideration, he may quickly be cozened; there is a glittering excellency in the world, the wealth and riches of it are glorious things to a carnal eye, but meditation of the world will wash away all the paint that is upon the world; the studying the vanity of the world, the nothingness of all earthly things, the unsatisfiability of them, and the perishing nature of them, this will take away the glittering excellency that seems to be in the world; and certainly you would never be so covetous, and so worldly, and dote so much upon the world, did you meditate upon the vanity of it, as you should do; this is the course Solomon takes: the book of Ecclesiastes is called, The Book of the Preacher; and the subject of it is to wean us from the love of the world. But what course doth Solomon take? Eccles. 1. 3. I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things done under heaven. His course

was to consider all the Creatures that were under the Heaven; I have seen, saith he, all the works that are done under the Sun, and behold all is but vanity and vexation of spirit. After he had meditated upon the world, he goes over the riches and the pleasures of the world, and when he had reckoned them all, he concludes in Chap. 2. 11. Then I looked on all the works my hand had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit. I gathered me silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of Kings, and of the Provinces; I got me men-singers, and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts; so I was great, and increased more than all before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me, and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. And when he had looked upon all these glorious excellencies, what was his Conclusion? Behold, saith he, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the Sun. Did we meditate much on the vanity of the world, we would not idolize it so much.

7. Divine Meditation is a mighty help to beget in us the grace of thankfulness for the mercies and blessings we receive from God. Certainly it is a great duty that lies upon us to be thankful for Gods mercies; now there is no way to stir you up to thankfulness so much as meditation upon the mercies of God; for he that forgets the mercies of God, cannot be thankful for them; and therefore mark the course that David takes, Psalm 8. 3. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers,

the Moon, the Stars, which thou hast ordained; then he cries out, What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man that thou visitest him! for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels. When he considered what God had done for man, then he admires the love of God to man, and breaks out into thankfulness. Certainly a Christian forgetful of Gods mercies can never be thankful for them; and the way to beget thankfulness is to meditate on what God hath done for us.

8. Divine Meditation is a mighty help to beget in you a preferring of Gods house before your own house. It is the great sin of this age wherein 53 we live, that every man studies to build his own house, and no man cares for the house of the Lord: We may truly say as Jeremiah saith, This is Zion whom no man regards; every man seeks his own interest, and no man almost cares what becomes of Religion. There is a strange kind of lukewarmness that is upon the spirits of all men in this age, that so men may grow great themselves, they care not what becomes of the House of God: Now Divine Meditation would make you prefer the building of Gods House before the building of your own house. And for this purpose let me beseech you to read Hag. 1. 4. Is it time for you, Oh ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lye waste? It was the sin of the people of Israel, that they neglected the building of Gods House, and every man strove to grow rich in his own particular: Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways, (here the Prophet calls them

to consideration) ye have sown much, but bring in little; ye eat, but you have not enough; ye drink but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm. And he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. What was the matter? because they did not build Gods House, therefore God did not build their house: v. 7. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways: ye looked for much, but lo it came to little: and 54 when you brought it home, I did blow upon it; why saith the Lord of Hosts, because of my house that is waste, and ye run every man into his own house, therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. God will never settle England, God will never settle your houses, till you make conscience to build Gods House, and till you have more zeal for the House of God than for your own houses; though you may dream of peace and plenty, yet certainly the Lord will never build your houses, until you build Gods House. And therefore he saith further, Hag. 2. 17. I smote you with blasting and with mildew, and with hail in all the labours of your hands, yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lords Temple was laid; consider it, from this day will I bless you. And certainly the world is much mistaken; the way to build your own house, is to join together to settle Religion; God will never prosper you, till Gods House be settled. And did you meditate on these two Chapters, the first and second Chapter of Haggai, it would by Gods grace beget in you a mighty

zeal toward the settling of the House of God, and to prefer that before the settling of your own house.

55 9. Divine Meditation will beget in us a keeping of all the commandments of God. There is no Commandment of God but Divine Meditation when it is sanctified, (I do not say otherwise) will work in us, and enable us to keep: Deut. 4. 39, 40. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath there is none else; thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments. And David saith, Psalm 119. 55. I have remembered thy name, Oh Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law.

2. Divine Meditation is not only a means to beget grace, but it is a mighty help to preserve and increase grace. As the wood preserves the fire; as the oil preserves the flame; as the water preserves the fish, so doth meditation preserve your graces. It preserves every grace, and it increases every grace; for Meditation is a Divine pair of bellows to blow up the sparks of grace; when there is but a little fire, meditation will kindle this fire more, and increase it; when you find your love of God grows cold, meditate upon the love of God, and this will kindle the love of God in your hearts; and when you find the fear of God to diminish in you, meditate upon the power of God, that thy breath is in his hand, that he hath thee in his hand; this will increase 56 the fear of God; and so when the love of the world increases upon you, meditate upon the vanity and

nothingness of it, and this will decrease the love of the world.

3. Divine Meditation, as it is a means to beget grace, and to increase grace, so it is a mighty means to arm and defend us against all the temptations of the Devil, and against all his fiery darts. It is armour of proof against the Devil and all his temptations. What made Moses refuse the pleasure, treasures and honours of Egypt? for Moses when he was of age, a young man, and fit to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt, he chose rather to suffer affliction than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter: What made him do all this? Because he had respect to the recompense of reward, and he beheld him that was invisible; he meditated upon the reward he should have in Heaven; he knew the pleasures of Heaven were better than the pleasures of Pharaoh's Court; and he knew the treasures he should have in Heaven were better than the treasures he should have in Egypt; and therefore he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: He knew he could not enjoy both, and he had an eye to the recompense of reward, he saw him that was invisible; and 57 this made him do all this; he could never have done this without this Divine grace of Meditation. And what made Joseph refuse to lye with his Mistress, when he might have been preferred by lying with her, and had secrecy and security? why he meditated, How can I do this and sin against God? He thought of God, and he would not do it; it was

meditation that made him refuse it. What made the Saints of old receive joyfully the spoiling of their goods? Heb. 10. 34. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Because they knew, that is, they considered that they had in Heaven an enduring substance, an eternal reward, they should have better riches there; they considered that, and that made them lose their outward estates; they looked for a better estate in Heaven. Bishop Hooper, when he was going to Martyrdom, over night he discoursed and reasoned with himself; saith he, When I think of the fire, I begin to be afraid, for I fear that fire will burn: but when I think of the fire of hell, the fear of eternal fire makes me willing to endure a temporary fire. Saith he again, When I think of the loss of life, I begin to be afraid; I know life is precious; and when I meditate upon these outward enjoyments, outward preferments, I seem unwilling to be burnt; but when I meditate of 58 the joys of Heaven, and the preferments that I shall have there, this makes me willing to go through fire, to go through Martyrdom to Heaven. It was meditation of Heaven, and the joys of Heaven that made the Martyrs come so willingly to the stake, and embrace it as a bride doth her bridegroom.

And thus I have showed you the great necessity of this grace of Meditation: It remains now that I should come to the Application of this Doctrine.

If this duty of Divine Meditation be so necessary a duty, as you have heard; then it reproves those

Christians that are utterly unaccustomed, and unacquainted with this duty; that receive mercies from God, but are never the better for the mercies they do receive, for want of meditation, That do not say in their hearts, let us fear that God that doth give us the former and the latter rain, as it is, Jeremiah 5. 23. it reproveth those that are guilty of many sins, but do not repent for want of consideration, because they do not say in their hearts what have I done? it reproveth those that meet with many losses and crosses in the world, but are never the better, for their afflictions, because they do not consider what is the meaning of Gods rod, and how they may get their afflictions sanctified; that read the blessed Promises of the Gospel, but taste not the sweetness 59 of them for want of meditation, for want of chewing them; in a word, that hear many Sermons, but are never the better for the Sermons they hear, and all for want of this Divine Meditation.

The mercies of God, and the promises of God, and the afflictions of God, and the Sermons we hear, are like unto a Sovereign plaster, which though it be never so good, if it be taken off the wound as soon as ever it is laid on, it will never cure the wound, it is the abiding of the Plaster upon the wound that cures it: So it is the dwelling upon the mercies we receive, the chewing upon the Promises, the meditating upon the Sermons we hear, will do us good. That man that hears a Sermon and forgets it as soon as he hath heard it, will get no good by it; it is with Sermons and mercies as it is with meat, a man may eat his meat and be never the more

nourished if he do not digest it, if he vomit it up as soon as he hath eaten it, or if his meat presently go through him, it will do him no good; it is the digesting, the concocting of meat that nourishes a man; so there are thousands of people that hear Sermon upon Sermon, and yet are never the more holy by what they hear, for want of digesting the Sermons they hear by Divine Meditation: Now this want of meditation is a sin, that I persuade my self most Christians are guilty of, I 60 cannot exclude my self; there are few Christians that are convinced of the necessity of this duty of Divine Meditation, few that practice this duty; the great God hath exercised this Nation with variety of Providences for these many years; we have been these eleven or twelve years in the fire of affliction; we have met with unexpected changes and alterations, but where is the man that lays to heart the Providences of God? where is the man that studies what God is doing with this Nation? and how to get the Providences of God sanctified? We may say of most of the Nation, as it is in Jeremiah 12. 11. The whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. There is no man considers what is the meaning of Gods Providences, the variety and strangeness, and wonderfulness of them. We are like unto those, Isa. 42. 24, 25. Who gave Israel to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law, therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, but he

laid it not to heart. We have been burning, and burning, and consuming, but no man lays it to heart; this is the great sin of this Nation, the Lord humble us. There are four sorts of Christians that are here to be reprov'd for the want of the grace of Divine Meditation.

1. The ignorant Christian, that knows not how to set about the work of Meditation for want of matter to meditate upon; for meditation supposes knowledge, meditation is a dwelling upon that we know; and therefore the ignorant Christian cannot be a meditating Christian; he that is ignorant of God, cannot meditate of God; he that is ignorant of Christ crucified, cannot meditate of Christ crucified; and this is one reason why so many Saints of God are so barren in Sacramental meditation, because they know so little of Christ crucified; the ignorance of God and Christ is not only a sin, but it is the root of all sin. It is said, 1 Sam. 2. 12. of the two Sons of old Eli, They were sons of Belial, and they knew not the Lord. All sin is wrapped up in ignorance, as a child in swaddling clouts; as Toads and Serpents grow in dirty and dark Cellars, so doth all sin grow where ignorance dwells. And therefore Chrysostom saith, That ignorance is a deep hell. And one saith very well, An ignorant Christian is the Devils shop, wherein he forges all manner of wickedness.

2. There is the forgetful Christian: for meditation is a meditating of what we know concerning God and Heaven, and the day of judgment; it is a bringing of the things we know, unto our selves; and therefore a forgetful Christian cannot be a meditating Christian; he

that forgets the Mercies of God, can never meditate on the Mercies of God: This sin of forgetfulness of God, is a sin that the Children of Israel were very guilty of, Psalm 106. 7. The Prophet complains of them; our Fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the Sea, even at the red Sea, v. 13. they soon forgot his works, v. 31. They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; therefore he said, that he would destroy them. The forgetfulness of God, and the mercies of God, is made the root of all sin, as well as the ignorance of God. Judge. 3. 7. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, therefore they did evil in the sight of the Lord. And therefore God lays a charge upon the children of Israel, that when they came into the land of Canaan, and should have the fullness of all outward blessings, Deut. 8. 11. Beware (saith he) that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein: v. 14. Then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God. You that forget the mercies of God, God will forget to be merciful unto you; and you that do not remember what good things God hath done for you, God will take order that you shall have no good things to remember. The good Thief on the Cross when he was dying, his great request to Christ was, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. It is the great desire of all Saints that God

would remember them in mercy; but certainly you that forget the mercies of God, God will forget to be merciful unto you.

3. I am to reprove the rash-headed Christian, that rushes upon Duties, and upon Ordinances, and public Offices, without consideration; that comes rashly to the Sacrament, and kneels down rashly to his private and public devotion; that doth not consider before-hand when he comes to worship the Lord our God; this I call the rash-headed Christian, we have many such among us.

And there are four things worthy your observing, that may be said of a rash-headed Christian.

He is a spiritual fool, and all the Sacraments he receives, and the prayers he makes, they are the sacrifices of fools, as you have it excellently set down, Eccles. 5. 1, 2. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready ⁶⁴ to hear than to give the sacrifices of fools, for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few. Out of which two verses I gather these two things.

1. That it is the duty of all Christians in all their addresses to God to consider who this God is to whom they draw near; to consider their own vileness, and Gods excellency; to consider that God is in heaven and they are upon earth.

2. That whosoever doth rush upon Ordinances without consideration, he doth offer up the sacrifice of fools, because he doth not consider that he doth evil; when you come rashly to public duties here upon the Sabbath-day, and you come rashly to the Sacrament, and when you are hasty to utter words to God, you come as so many spiritual fools.

2. A rash-headed Christian will many times speak that which he will wish he had not spoken; and he will do that which he shall have cause to repent of. We have many examples of the Saints of God, that have paid dearly for their rash-speaking, and their rash-practicing; for this rashness is a sin that the Saints of God are very much subject to; we read of Peter, 65 that he fell three times into this sin. Matthew 16. 22. there Christ told Peter, That he must be crucified, and Peter began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. Peter spake very rashly; now Christ said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me. And Luke 9. when Christ was transfigured, then Peter began to utter a rash speech; saith Peter to Christ, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; not knowing what he said: It was a rash speech; and especially, Luke 22. when Christ told him that one of you shall betray me; saith he very rashly, Master, though all betray thee, yet will not I betray thee. But he spake rashly, not knowing the deceitfulness of his own heart. We read of the two brethren, James and John, that they spake very rashly

unto Christ, Luke 9. 54. When his two disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? but he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. We read of Moses, that he spake unadvisedly with his lips, and God was angry with him, Numbers 20. Shall we bring water for you out of the rock? he spake unadvisedly, and the Lord was angry with him. Jephtha made a rash vow, 66 Whatsoever I see, I will offer in sacrifice. He had cause to repent of that Vow. And that which I say of words, I may say of deeds, the Saints of God have done many things in their haste, that they have cause to repent of; David rashly gave away the land of innocent Mephibosheth to his servant, 2 Sam. 16. 4. Ziba came with a false accusation against his Master, and David rashly without examining the cause, said, Thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth: which was a very sinful and an unjust rash action of David; he gave away all the estate of the Master to a cunning servant. And when he came marching against Nabal, he spake rashly, and was acting rashly; As the Lord lives, saith he, I will not leave one alive of the house of Nabal: and he came with his army thinking to destroy all, if Abigail had not prevented him.

3. A rash-headed Christian will quickly run into error, and into by-paths. As a man that runs hastily is very prone to stumble, so those Christians that rush upon the profession of Religion, and rush upon public Offices

and Ordinances, they are like to miscarry in them, and they are apt to run into error: for a rash-headed Christian is led more by passion than judgment; he is led more by affection than by reason. He is like a horse without bridle, like a house without walls, a city without gates; a city without walls and doors is easily robbed: so a rash-headed Christian is easily cozened of the truths of Christ.

4. A rash-headed Christian will never persevere and hold out to the end; he that takes a profession of Religion upon him rashly, and doth not consider beforehand what it will cost him, when this man meeteth with more difficulty than he is aware of, he will apostatize and fall away. And therefore it is the speech of our Saviour, Luke 14. 28. Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost whether he hath sufficient to finish it? What King going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first and counteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand. Let it not be offensive to tell you, and let not your hearts rise against it, There are many of this City took up the Presbyterian Persuasion, but they never considered what they took, they took it as an opinion cried up, but as soon as ever they found opposition they fell from it, because they never considered what it was when they took it. Few men consider seriously what Religion is, and what it is to be a real Saint, and a real professor of Religion; and therefore as soon as ever

persecution and trouble arise, they fall away for want of meditation and consideration.

68 4. I am to reprove especially your slight-headed Christians, that cannot dwell long upon any thing that is good, that rove and wander from one thing to another; this frame of spirit, if I be not mistaken, is quite opposite to Religion. Do not think me censorious, for I must profess, I have been long of this opinion, That a slight-headed Christian cannot be a good Christian. Religion is a serious and solemn matter, it is a business of eternity; and I read of Religious persons in Scripture, that they are commended for their seriousness. It is said of the Virgin Mary, Luke 2. 19. All that heard it wondered at the things that were told them, but she kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. A Religious Christian is a thoughtful pondering Christian, Luke 1. 66. All they that heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! A true Saint of God is a considering, thoughtful, serious Christian; therefore a slight-headed Christian is but a slight Christian; for he that thinks slightly of God, will serve him slightly, and speak slightly of him; a slight head produces a slight heart, and a slight life; if the thought of God and Christ make but slight impression upon thy soul, thy expressions of God and Christ will be more slight; he that thinks slightly of God, God will slight him; a slight-headed Christian is 69 but a vain Christian, and all his Religion is but vanity, but like a slight garment, or a slight house that any wind blows down. The Lord give you to think of this. Most

Christians in the world are slight-headed Christians, that think slightly of sin, of God, of Christ, of the day of Judgment. I, but you will say unto me: Are all men that have slight heads, hypocrites?

A. I will give you a distinction, that I may not be misunderstood. There is a double slightness of head, there is a slightness of head that is a natural disease, when a man through the weakness of his head cannot dwell long upon any thing, when he cannot think of worldly business long, his head will not bear it; now thou mayest be a true child of God and have a weak head, that is not able to think long of any thing at all. And there is a slightness of head that is a sinful slightness, and that is, when a man can be serious upon the things of the world, can dwell upon worldly businesses, but cannot dwell long upon the things of heaven, cannot be serious about the things of his soul, but as soon as ever he comes to prayer, he is slight; as soon as ever he comes to the Sacrament, or any holy duty, then he hath slight thoughts of God, and of Heaven, such an one was Gallio, Acts 18. when he saw it was a matter of Religion, he cared for none of these things; saith he, if it were a matter of civil right, I would regard it; but seeing it is matter of religion, look ye to it. And Pilate was a slight-headed man, John 18. 38. Pilate saith unto him, what is truth? that was a good question; and when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews; he never looked for an answer: he had a slight thought came into his mind that was good, but he went away, and never came and desired Christ to give

him answer. I beseech you to consider of it, a slight-headed Christian can never be a good Christian. If the things of God do not make impression upon your hearts, you will never be serious about the things of eternity. These are the four sorts of Christians that are to be reprov'd for want of meditation.

But I have another use of reproof. If those are to be reprov'd that neglect this Divine duty of meditation, much more are those to be reprov'd that meditate upon things that are wicked, instead of meditating upon the things of Heaven. Here are two sorts I would speak a little to, either those that meditate to do evil, or those that meditate upon the evil they have done.

1. It reproves those that meditate to do evil: you shall read of them, Psalm 36. 4. They devise mischief upon their bed. Jer. 18. 18. Then said they, come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah. There are some men that plot how to do evil, which is a double sin; it is one sin to do evil, it is a greater sin to plot to do evil; a man may go to hell for his sinful plottings, and sinful contrivances, though they never come to light. Isa. 29. 5. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say who seeth us, and who knoweth us? The Lord will send us to hell for all our sinful contrivances, and vain projects, though they prove abortive.

2. There are some that meditate upon the evil they have done; as an old Adulterer will with delight tell stories of his youthful wantonness, and an old wicked man will delight to tell tales of the sins that he hath formerly

committed; this is to act over your sins again in Gods account; this is to lick up the old vomit; this is to sin anew. I would to God you would consider of it; a man may go to hell for contemplative wickedness, for spiritual wickedness, for heart-adultery, and heart-murder, as well as for actual wickedness; a man may go to hell for thinking evil, as well as for speaking evil, and doing evil; for God is a Spirit, and he looks into the frame of your spirits; and he will send you to hell for the inward lust of sin, as well as for the act of sin; and that man that repeats over the sins of his youth with delight, this man acts them over again in Gods account. But I will not spend more time in the use of reprehension.

But I come to that which I especially aim at, an use of Exhortation, to beseech you all that you would subscribe to the obedience of this Text, that you would conform your selves to this Text, that you would accustom your selves to his most necessary and excellent, and long neglected duty of Divine meditation. Let me with all earnestness commend unto you the conscientious practice of this duty of Divine Meditation, because it is an universal remedy against all sin; it is a help to all goodness, it is a preservative of all godliness, it is armour of proof against all the Devils temptations, and the want of it is the cause of all iniquity, as you have heard. Let me commend this to all sorts of Christians, If it be necessary for you to reform your lives, it is necessary for you to meditate; for what saith David? I considered my ways, and turned my feet

unto thy testimonies. What made Peter when he had denied Christ, repent and weep bitterly for what he had done? the Text saith, when he meditated upon what he had done, he went out and wept bitterly; it was the meditation of his sin made him do so. What is the reason that men repent no more of their sins? because they do not meditate of the bitterness of them, Jeremiah 8. 6. No man repenteth, because no man saith what have I done? If it be necessary for you to love God, to trust in God, to contemn the world, it is necessary 73 for you to practice this duty of meditation; what is the reason all the Sermons you hear do you no more good? it is for want of meditation, we do not meditate upon what we hear. Let me commend this duty of meditation,

1. Unto all Ministers. There are four things, saith Luther, make a Minister, reading, praying, temptation and meditation. It is not reading makes a Scholar without prayer, nor reading and prayer without temptation; how can he comfort others, that was never tempted himself? and then meditation; and therefore Paul persuades Timothy to be much in meditation, 1 Tim. 4. 15.

2. Let me commend this to great persons, to Lords, and Earls, and Kings; David professes of himself, Psalm 119. 148. Mine eyes prevent the night-watchings, that I might meditate on thy word. v. 15. I will meditate on thy precepts. v. 23. Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

3. Let me commend this to you that are Captains and Soldiers, and men that belong unto the C& Joshua the

great Captain-General of the people of Israel, is commanded by God to meditate in the Law of God day and night, Joshua 1. 8.

4. Let me commend this to young Gentlemen, from the example of Isaac in the Text, 74 that went out as his custom was, to meditate of God, and the things of God. Isaac was heir to Abraham, who was a very rich man; he was very rich in cattle, and very rich in silver and gold, and Isaac was the heir of all he had; and at eventide he went out and walked in the fields, and meditated upon the things of God, meditated upon the works of God, the things of Heaven.

5. Let me commend this to you that are Merchants, to you that are Tradesmen, that you would spare some time for meditation.

6. Let me commend this to all Women, according to the example of Hanna, and the Virgin Mary, she kept all these things and pondered them in her heart, Luke 2. 19, 51. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Oh let me commend this to young maids when they are at their work, that they would have some heavenly ejaculations, and meditation of the works of God.

I remember I have read of Solon, who was a great Law-giver; saith he, There are many good Laws made, but there wants one Law to teach people how to practice all the other Laws, such a Law were worth making. So give me leave to tell you, there are many excellent Sermons preached in this Nation, in this City, never

better preaching I dare say in London; but there is one Sermon yet to preach, and that 75 is to teach you to practice all the other Sermons. Now if I be not mistaken, this Sermon will help you to practice all the Sermons you ever heard; for meditation is nothing else but a concocting of the mercies of God, a digesting of the Promises and the Sermons we hear; it is a Sermon to teach you to digest all the Sermons that ever you have heard. Some men have a great appetite, but have no digestion; I do not complain of you that are greedy to hear Sermons; but let me tell you, if you have not a good digestion, your Sermons will do no good; that which a man is eating half an hour, requires six or seven hours to digest. I have heard of many men that eat too much, but I never heard of any that digested too much; you that eat much and do not digest it, that which you eat will turn to bad nourishment; therefore let me commend this duty to you as one of the choicest duties of a Christian.

Now because of the excellency of this Subject, I shall desire to speak to six Particulars about this Doctrine of Meditation.

1. The place where we are to meditate.
2. The time when we are to meditate.
3. The ingredients and properties of Divine Meditation.
4. The companions of it.
5. The materials of it.

76 6. Some helps to help us to the better practice of this duty.

1. Concerning the place where we are to exercise this duty of Divine Meditation; it is said of Isaac in my Text, that he went out into the fields to meditate. I do not think that this example is obligatory, that a man is always bound to go into the fields to meditate: I read of David, Psalm 63. that he meditated upon God when he was in his bed: v. 16. When I remembered thee upon my bed, and meditated on thee in the night-watches. But this example doth hold out thus much to us, that private and solitary places are the fittest places for meditation; and as Christ saith, Matthew 6. 6. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, (speaking of private prayer) and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father that is in secret, and thy Father which seest in secret shall reward thee openly. So do I say, When you would meditate solemnly of Christ, or of Heaven, or of your sins, or of the Promises, you must enter into your closets, or go into your gardens, or walk into the fields; you must retire your selves into some private place. It is worth marking how the Evangelist takes notice of this practice in Jesus Christ, Matthew 14. 23. He sent the multitude away, and went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come he was there alone. Mark 1. 35. And in the morning ⁷⁷ rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. Mark 6. 46. He departed into a mountain to pray, Luke 6. 12. He went into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in

prayer to God. The Scripture makes mention of a garden to which Christ did usually resort to pray, and this garden Christ did often go unto, that when Judas purposed to betray him, he knew where to find him: John 18. 1. When Jesus had spoken those words, he went where there was a garden, and Judas which betrayed him knew the place, for Jesus often times resorted thither with his disciples. And what did Christ go to the garden for? he went there to pray: Luke 22. There was the place where he shed drops of blood, Matthew 26. There he went to pray, and there he went to meditate; a garden famous for what Christ did there. Now all this doth signify thus much unto us, that in the practice of this Divine duty of Meditation, we must retire our selves, whether into a private garden, or into our closets, or whether into private walks, into the fields. For if a Scholar cannot study in a crowd, he must retire to some private study, some private place; much more when you would converse with God in the Mount, when you would meditate of those glorious things of the other world, you must shut out the society of men, that you may the more enjoy the society of 78 God. It is a rare saying of Bernard, That the bridegroom will not come to the meditating bride (speaking of Christ who is our bridegroom) but when she is alone. And therefore it is said, Song of Solomon 7. 11. Come my beloved let us go forth into the fields, &c. v. 12. there will I give thee my love. God loves to visit his people when they are alone, meditating of the things of Heaven.

But now I must acquaint you with two sorts of company, there are outward company, and there are inward company; now when you meditate you must not only retire your selves from outward company, but from inward company. It is an easy matter to shut the doors of your closets, and to be there alone, but it is a hard matter to shut out company from within, from your hearts as well as from your closets. There are many men when they are alone in a garden, or in the fields meditating, they are pestered with company within, with worldly thoughts, with voluptuous thoughts, with vain imaginations.

St. Jerome complains of himself, and he doth bewail it; saith he, When I have been in the Wilderness alone, with wild beasts, and have had no company but wild beasts, my thoughts have been at Rome, among the Ladies at Rome, among the dances of Rome. And I have heard many Christians complain (and it is one of the 79 greatest complaints we have) that when they retire themselves to meditate of the Promises, or of Christ's Passion, or of the Joys of Heaven, they are then pestered and exceedingly troubled with worldly business, with worldly thoughts; sometimes we are in our Counting-houses, sometimes we are at our pleasures, at our sports. It is an easy matter to thrust worldly company out of our closets, but a hard matter to thrust worldly thoughts out of our hearts; and therefore when you meditate you must do as Abraham did, Genesis 22. 5. And Abraham said to his young men, abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will

go yonder and worship. So you must say to your vain thoughts and worldly business, tarry here below, I will go up to the mount and meditate; you must not only say to your worldly company, but to your vain thoughts and imaginations, tarry here below. The Rabbis say, though there were thousands of Sacrifices offered in the Temple in a year, yet there was never any fly seen in the Temple, which was certainly a Miracle. Happy is that Christian that can do Temple-work, without being pestered with these spiritual flies, with vain and roving thoughts. Oh how happy were it if we could come to the house of God, and that there might be no flies there, no vain imaginations to disturb us in our worship. I read 80 Exod. 8. of a plague of flies, and that plague of flies was one of the greatest plagues that Pharaoh had; for when he was to eat his meat, the flies got into his mouth; when he was to drink his drink, the flies filled his cup, so that he could neither eat nor drink; and these swarms of flies corrupted the land; v. 24. it is called a grievous swarm of flies. Now these swarms of flies may be compared to our roving wandering thoughts when we are about the service of God; these flies corrupt the best box of Ointment, they spoil our prayers and our meditation. But you shall read, in Goshen there was no plague of flies; Oh happy you that are not plagued with these swarms of flies, when you are in the service of God.

Q. I but you will say unto me, How shall I keep my self from these plagues of flies? how shall I keep my self

that I may shut out inward company when I go to the mount to meditate?

Answer. For that, you must do as Abraham did, Genesis 15. 11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcass, Abraham drove them away; so must you: when this company doth thrust upon you and crowd in, when your vain thoughts crowd in, you must stir up all your spiritual strength to drive them away; you must do as the high Priest did, 2 Chron. 26. 20. when Uzziah the King would have offered sacrifice, the Lord smote him with a leprosy, and the high Priest took him and thrust him out of the Temple though he was a King; so must you, when these roving thoughts come upon you when you are in the Temple, or the mount of meditation, you must thrust them out; that is, you must use all your spiritual strength to thrust them out, and you must pray unto God as Moses prayed, Exod. 8. that God would take away this plague of flies; and do as Pharaoh did, he sent for Moses, Oh pray, pray unto God for me, that this swarm of flies may depart out of the land: Speak to thy godly Ministers, thy godly friends to pray for thee, and do thou pray for thy self, that the Lord would deliver thee from these noisome imaginations, and fancies, and roving thoughts that do disturb you in the Worship of God, and in the practice of this duty of Divine Meditation. So much for the place where we are to meditate.

The second thing to speak to, is the time when we are to meditate; it is said in the Text, And Isaac went out to meditate in the eventide; it seems Isaac found the

Evening to be the fittest time for Meditation. Dr. Hall in his excellent Tract of Meditation, tells us out of his own experience, that he found the evening-time to be the fittest time for Meditation. And there is a learned Minister in that excellent Book of the Saints Everlasting Rest, doth likewise from his own experience commend the eventide for the best and most suitable time for Meditation; and he saith from the Sun setting to the twilight, and sometimes in the night, when it is warm and clear. I will not lay clogs upon any mans conscience; that which is seasonable for one, is unseasonable for another; some men's tempers are fittest to meditate in the morning, and some men's tempers are fittest to meditate in the evening.

Now there are four Propositions, four rules of Direction concerning the time when I would have you to meditate.

1. It is the duty of all those that are not hindered by necessary business, if it be possible to set apart some time every day for meditation, whether it be morning, afternoon, or night: For Meditation is the life and soul of all Christianity; it is that which makes you improve all the Truths of Christian Religion, (you are but the Skeletons of Christians without Meditation) it is as necessary as your daily bread; and as you feed your bodies every day, so you ought to feed your souls every day with meditating on your sins, or your Evidences for Heaven, or the everlasting burnings of Hell, or of the day of Judgment, the great account you are to give at that day, or of the joys of Heaven, or of the Promises,

&c. We are every day assaulted with the Devil, therefore we should every day put on the armour of Divine Meditation, to consider how to resist the wiles of the Devil; we are every day subject to death, we are every day subject to sin, therefore we should every day consider how to prepare our selves for death, and every day consider how to resist sin. Meditation is nothing else but a conversing with God, the souls colloquy with God; and it is fit we should every day walk with God. Divine Meditation is nothing else but the souls transmigration into heaven; the souls ascending up into Heaven; now it is fit every day that we should have our conversation in Heaven. David when he describes the blessed man, Psalm 1. 2. saith he, His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his law will he meditate day and night. And he saith of himself, though he was a King, and had many worldly businesses, the affairs of his Kingdom to hinder him, yet he saith, Psalm 119. 97. Oh how do I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. v. 148. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate on thy word. There is the morning-time for Meditation, I prevent the dawning of the morning that I might meditate in thy word. v. 15. I will delight my self in thy statutes, and I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto all thy ways. And Joshua, that great General of the Army, though he was a man surely of great employments, yet God 84 doth lay an injunction upon him, Joshua 1. 7, 8. The book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day & night.

2. I will go higher yet, it is our duty to set a sufficient proportion of time apart every day: Oh it is a hard matter to get our hearts in tune for this duty; as it is with a Musician, he hath a great deal of time to string, and to tune his Instrument before he can play; the best Christian is like an Instrument unstrung, and untuned, he had need take a great deal of time to get his heart in tune for Divine Meditation; the best Christian is like wet wood, which will not burn, you know, without a great deal of blowing; he had need to take a great deal of time to kindle a holy zeal in his heart to God, to blow up the sparks of grace that are in him. If a man would fill a Chest that is full of dirt, full of Gold, he must take time to empty the Chest before he can fill it. By nature we are all full of the world, full of the dirt of the world, full of vanity, full of carnal creature-pleasure; now it is our duty first to take pains to empty the Chest before we can fill it full of Heaven, full of God and Christ. Now I propound this to you that have a great deal of spare time, especially you that spend whole afternoons in idle visiting, and vain recreations, Oh that I could persuade you to give God a visit every day, and to meditate of God and of Christ, and your selves, and the recreations 85 of the other world; let me persuade you that count it your happiness to live vainly, that you have not so much work to do as other men have, to set some time apart; to go up into the mount of God, to meditate of the things of the other world. And that I might provoke you, let me tell you thus much, it is the greatest curse under heaven for God to give a man over to live an idle life, to trifle away his days in vanity; and so it is

reckoned, Psalm 78. 33. Therefore their days did he consume in vanity. Therefore it is spoken as a curse; hearken to this you that idle away your time, there cannot be a greater curse of God upon you, than to suffer you to idle away your time; herein you idle away your salvation: this direction belongs to you that are rich men, rich Merchants, that have whole Exchanges full of business in your heads, to beseech you that you would contract your worldly affairs into a narrower compass, that you may have time for the practice of this rare duty of Meditation, which is the very life and soul of all duty. And the reason why you are so lean and poor in grace, is for want of the practice of this duty; be not always like Martha, troubled with this and that business, but remember Maries choice, who chose the better part in attending upon Christ's Ministry. I would have all rich men every day think of that Text, Luke 12. 20. Thou fool, this 86 night shall thy soul be taken from thee; and what then will become of all thy possessions? I confess God doth not require this at the hand of the daily labourer, or at the hands of servants that are not masters of their own time, and those that are very poor and are not able to set time apart for Meditation. But you may remember I gave you a distinction between Ejaculatory Meditation, and solemn Meditation; a poor man when he is at his work, may have a short Ejaculatory Meditation, though he hath not time for this set and solemn meditation; when he is at his work he may meditate upon the Promises, and of Heaven, and of Hell, and of Death, and Judgment, and the vanity of the world. I have heard of a godly man was wont to say, I

thank God I can be in heaven in the midst of the crowd of Cheapside, I can meditate on the Rest I shall have in the other world.

3. The third Direction is this, The Sabbath-day especially is a day wherein all sorts of people are to busy themselves in this excellent work of Divine Meditation; this is a day wherein the labourer ceases from his work, the Plowman's yoke is taken off, and the labourer, and the serving man have their rest; therefore it concerns all of us to spend some time every Sabbath-day in Meditation, to meditate of the work of Creation, or Redemption; 87 for the Lords-day is so called, because Christ rose on that day, and Christ set apart that day in memory of his Resurrection, in memory of his Redemption; therefore this is thy work, Oh Christian, not only to come to the public Ordinances, not only to pray in thy family, but to set some time apart for Divine Meditation; and the Lord forgive us this sin that we have omitted this duty so long; Oh that I could be Gods instrument, that there might be a resurrection of it, that you would make conscience of it every Sabbath-day; as you make conscience of attending upon public and private duties, so you would put this as one of your Sabbath-day duties, for it is the very Quintessence, the life and soul of all duty; the Sabbath-day is a type of the eternal Sabbath which we shall keep forever in Heaven; and shall not I think of my eternal Sabbath upon the Sabbath? shall not I be much in Heaven when I am keeping a rest upon earth, that represents my eternal rest in Heaven? let us upon our day of rest meditate

much upon our eternal rest. Oh let us upon our Sabbath-day meditate upon the everlasting Sabbath which we shall keep with God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, forever in Heaven.

4. And last Direction is this, That Sacrament-days are especially to be meditating-days, to 88 be set apart for this great work of Divine Meditation; it is the great end why Christ hath appointed the Sacrament, to show forth the Lords-death till he come; and saith Christ, Do this in remembrance of me. There are two things make us worthy receivers of the Sacrament, Preparation before we come, and Meditation when we are come; and though thy Preparation be never so serious, yet if thou dost not act aright in thy Meditation, as well as thou hast done in thy Preparation, thou mayest lose the benefit of the Sacrament. Now if any should ask me, What are those things, you would have us to meditate of, when we are come unto the Sacrament? or when we are at the Sacrament?

There are twelve Meditations which ought to take up our Sacramental-time, which I call twelve commonplace-heads: I do not say we can meditate upon all of them at one Sacrament; but my design is to give you matter sufficient, that you may sometimes meditate of one, sometimes of another. I will but name them.

1. You must meditate of the great and wonderful love of God the Father in giving Christ, not only to die for us upon the Cross, but in giving him to be our food at the Sacrament; there was nothing moved God to give Christ but pure love, and great love: For God so loved 89 the

world, that he gave his only begotten Son. So! how? so infinitely, so inexpressibly; the love of God in bestowing Christ is so great, that the Angels desire to look into it. And you that are not affected with this love, I fear you have little share in it. That is enough to take up one Sacrament.

2. You are to meditate at the Sacrament not only of the love of the Father in giving of his Son, but of the love of Christ in giving himself. Ephes. 5. 2. Who loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. As God gave Christ, so Christ gave himself; as God gave himself as man, the Godhead infused this will into the Manhood, that Christ willingly laid down his life: John 10. 17, 18. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up; this commandment have I received of my Father. Now the love of Christ in giving himself to be a curse for us, is a love that passeth knowledge, yet it is a love that we must study to know. It is a riddle, but such a riddle as the Apostle himself doth in so many express words declare unto us, Ephes. 3. 19. That we may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, 90 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Great is the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; great is the love of Christ in dying for us, and being made sin for us, and being made a curse for us.

3. We must meditate of the heinousness of sin; when we were all fallen in Adam, we were engulfed into such a bottomless abyss of misery, that none but the blood of a God could deliver us; for there was an infinite breach by sin between God and us; and this breach could never be made up but by the blood of God. That is a rare meditation at the Sacrament, to meditate of the heinousness of sin; when you see the bread broken, it was sin that caused Christ's body to be broken; and when you see the wine poured out, it was sin caused Christ's blood to be poured out; it was sin that caused Christ to suffer so much.

4. You must meditate of the excellency of this Sacramental feast; for the Sacrament is a commemorative Sacrifice, it is a commemoration of that blessed Sacrifice that was offered on the Cross for our sins; and it is an oblation or sealing up all the benefits of our Redemption; and it is an exhibition of Jesus Christ, it is a deed of gift of Christ; God goes about giving of Christ to thee and me, and all that labour to come worthily. Oh! there cannot be a greater feast, wherein Christ is the gift that is bestowed; Christ is the banquet, Christ and all his benefits.

5. You must meditate of your own unworthiness; O Lord I am not worthy to pick up the crumbs that fall from thy Table; I am not worthy to eat my daily bread, much less worthy to eat the Sacramental bread. Oh the thought of this will make you say with Mephibosheth, What am I, a dead dog, that my Lord and King should invite me to his table! What am I, dust and ashes, sinful

wretch, that the Lord Jesus should invite me to such an Heavenly banquet!

6. You must meditate of your spiritual wants and necessities; what grace dost thou want that thou mayest get supplied? what sin doth bear most sway in thee, that thou mayest get it more mortified? Now the more sensible you are of your spiritual wants, the more will your appetite be quickened to this blessed feast.

7. You must meditate of the cursed condition of an unworthy receiver; an unworthy receiver is a Christ-murderer, a soul-murderer, a body-murderer; he is guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; he eats and drinks down his own damnation, he is guilty of bringing diseases; For this cause (that is for unworthy coming to the Sacrament) many are sick, and many weak, and many die.

8. I would have you meditate of the happy condition of those that come worthily to the Sacrament; though you do not bring a legal worthiness, yet if you have a Gospel-worthiness, God will accept of you; and the bread that we break shall be the Communion of the Body of Christ; and the cup of blessing which we bless, shall be the Communion of the Blood of Christ to you; the communion of all the blessings of Heaven to thy soul. It shall be the bread of the Lord to you, and the bread of life, and the cup of Salvation unto you.

9. I would have you meditate sometimes of the Sacramental Elements; when you see the bread, I would have you meditate of the analogy and proportion

between bread and the body of Christ; you know that bread is the staff of life, so is Christ the staff of a Christian; bread is not for dead folks but for living folks; bread doth not beget life, but increases and strengthens life; so the Sacrament is not for those that are dead in sin; the Sacrament doth not beget Grace, but nourish and increase Grace. And then I would have you consider the analogy between Wine and the Blood of Christ; As Wine refreshes the spirit, and cheers the heart, so the Blood of Christ cheers the soul of every worthy receiver.

10. I would have you meditate of the Sacramental actions; for all the actions of the Minister at the Sacrament are mystical, they all represent Christ; Christ is to be read by a spiritual eye in every thing that is done by the Minister; the breaking of the bread represents Christ's body being broken upon the Cross for our sins; and the pouring out the Wine, represents how Christ's Blood was poured out for us; and the giving of the Wine represents how Christ is offered and tendered unto us; the taking of the bread and wine represents how thou by faith takes Christ for thy everlasting comfort. Every thing in the Sacrament is the object of Meditation; and it is a rare thing for a Christian to make the Sacramental Elements to be his Bible; when he is at the Sacrament, and when he finds his heart dull, to look at the Elements, the breaking of bread, and pouring out of wine, which are all spiritual helps to raise up thy heart unto Christ.

11. You must meditate of the Sacramental Promises; Christ Jesus hath promised, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me; that is the Sacramental Promise, This is my blood which is shed for you, do this in remembrance of me. Christ hath promised that whensoever we do take this bread, and drink this cup worthily, he 94 will convey himself to us. Now we must feed upon this promise, and come to the Sacrament in the strength of this promise; and he hath promised that the cup of blessing, shall be the cup of the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread that is broken shall be the communion of the body of Christ: Now we must meditate upon these Promises, and act faith upon them.

12. When all this is done, I mean when thou hast received the Sacrament, then thou must meditate what retribution to make unto Christ for this; you must say as David doth, Psalm 116. 7. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me! Thou must say to thy soul, Oh how ought I to love that Christ that hath loved me, and became a curse for me! how ought I to be willing to die for that Christ that hath shed his blood for me! Oh what singular thing shall I do for that Christ that hath become man, that hath left the Throne of Heaven, and hath taken my nature, and hath given himself for me upon the Cross, unto me at the Sacrament! what great thing shall I return unto this God! Oh that I were made up all of thankfulness! Oh that I could do something worthy of this God! This must be your Meditation, and you must study to find

out some rare piece of service to do for this Christ, that hath done and 95 suffered so much for you; and you must never leave meditating till you have found out some singular thing. As for example, such an enemy hath done me wrong, I will requite him in loving him the more; I will do him the more offices of love; that is to walk worthy of Christ, who loved me when I was an enemy; and then there is such a deed of charity, such a poor Christian his family is undone; I will do this service for Christ, I will give him some proportionable gift, some worthy gift, that his soul may bless God for me. Again, Christ Jesus this day hath given me himself; he hath given me his body and blood; I will go and be willing to die for him; I will say with Thomas, Come let us die for him; I will be willing to suffer reproach for him, if he shall call me. These are the Meditations wherein you are to spend your time when you are at the Sacrament.

Now let me say but thus much, What rare Christians would we be if from month to month we did thus spend our Sacramental hours! surely great would be the benefit and the fruit of it.

Thus I have done with the time when we are to meditate.

3. I am to speak of the properties and qualities of Divine Meditation; in all holy duties it is not so much the doing of the duty 96 that God looks after, as the right manner of doing the duty: It is not the hearing the Word will please God, unless we hear the word of God aright; therefore Christ saith, take heed how you hear; it

is not prayer that will prevail with God, unless we pray after a right manner, unless we pray in faith, with fervency and humility; so it is not the meditation of God and Christ, and the Promises, will do us any good, unless we meditate after the right manner, that God would have us to meditate.

Now I shall acquaint you with six properties of Divine Meditation, for the right manner of performing it.

1. Divine Meditation must be often and frequent, Deut. 6. 7. there God commands, Thou shalt teach the words of the Law diligently unto thy children, thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Josh. 1. 8. The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. Though he was a great Commander, and had affairs of great concernment, yet God commands him to meditate day and night in the Law of God. And David tells us of a godly man, Psalm 1. 2. That he will delight himself in the law of God, and in his law will he meditate day and night. 97 Psalm 119. 97, 98, 99. David professes of himself, though he was a King, and had many diversions, yet saith he, Oh how do I love thy law! it is my meditation day and night. Thou through thy commandments hath made me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me, or, it is ever with me, speaking of the Commandments of God; he had them always in his thoughts: I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. Psalm 139. 8. When I awake, I am

still with thee. What is the meaning of that? that is by the meditation of God; in the morning as soon as ever he awaked he begun the day with Meditation, with some sweet pious thought of God. It is the duty of a Christian, as you have heard, if it be possible, if his worldly occasions do not necessarily hinder him, (there may, you know, be necessary avocations) to spend some time every day in Divine Meditation. You that are Ladies, men of great Estates, and have time, are to set some solemn time, some solemn part of the day for Meditation; but all of us are to have Ejaculatory Meditation, though it be in our worldly business.

There are three Reasons to persuade you to frequent Meditation.

1. Because the oftener you meditate of God, and Christ, and Heaven, the more you will know of God, and Christ, and Heaven; and the more you will love God, and Christ; and the more earnestly you will seek after the things of Heaven; for you must know, the things of Heaven are like a beautiful Picture, the more you view them, the more will you admire them, and seek after them to enjoy them. I have read a story of Necrasophus, who was an excellent Painter, that viewing wistly a Picture, there came a Country-man by, and seeing him view that Picture so wistly, he asked him, Why do you look upon that Picture so much? saith the Painter to him, If you had my eyes, you would never ask me this Question; if you knew the excellency of this Picture, you would never ask me why I look so much upon it. The things of Heaven, the things of God, the Promises

of God, are most glorious and excellent things; and the more you look into them, the more you will look into them; and the oftener you view these Pictures, the more you will admire them, and the more you will view them. God, and Christ, and Heaven, are like unto a bottomless Mine of treasure, the more you dig in this Mine, the more riches you will find in it; they are like unto a sweet cordial, the more you chew them, the more sweetness you will find in them. They are like an excellent garden in the Spring-time, the oftener a man goes into the garden, still he finds a new flower, and another flower, and another flower; so the things of God, and Christ, and the Promises, and Heaven, the more you walk in this garden, the more flowers you will gather; you will have still new flowers to pick. And the reason why the Saints of God love God no more, and prize Christ no more, and seek no more after Heaven, is because they do not meditate more of God, and Christ, and Heaven; the want of frequent meditation of them, is the reason why we love them, and esteem them so little, and seek so little after them.

The second Reason why we should frequently meditate upon things Divine, is because the oftener we meditate of God and Christ, the more near and intimate acquaintance we shall have with them; as you know Neighbours, the oftener they visit one another, the more acquainted they come one with another; and the seldomer they visit one another, the more estranged they are one to another. Visitation breeds acquaintance; so the seldomer you think of God and Christ, the more

you are estranged from them, and the less acquaintance you have with them; and the oftener you meditate of God, the more intimate society you will have with him; as I have told you, Divine Meditation is nothing else but a dwelling upon the things of God, a conversing with God and Christ, and the Promises, and it will be matter of rare comfort to a child of God, when he lies upon his death-bed, and is going out of the world, to consider, I am now going to a God that I am acquainted withal, that I am not a stranger to: I am going to heaven, where I have been often in my meditation. It is reported of Dr. Preston, when he was dying, he used these words, Blessed be God though I change my place, yet I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while I lived, and now I go to rest with God. A man that is often in meditation, is often in Heaven, often walking with God and Christ, and the Promises; and when he dies, he goes to enjoy the Promises, and to be and to live forever with this Christ. It is a sad and a disconsolate thing for a man when he comes to die, to think of God as a stranger, to think of Heaven as a place where he hath never been, he hath hardly had a thought of it all his life. I verily persuade my self, it is one reason that the Saints of God are so unwilling to die, because they have no more acquaintance with God in this life, they think of him as a stranger; the more you are acquainted with God while you live, the more willing you will be to die to go to him; for death to a child of God is nothing else but a resting with God, with whom he walked while he lived; to rest in the

bosom of God, in whose bosom he hath often been by holy meditation when he was alive.

3. You must be often and frequent in the duty of Divine Meditation, by often using it to make it more easy; there is great complaint of the difficulty of this duty; it hath been often said to me, Sir, there is no duty in the world so hard as Divine Meditation: and it is true, it is a hard matter to keep the heart close in Meditation of Divine things; and therefore you must accustom your selves to this duty, and use will make perfectness, usus promptos facit; by often doing it, at last through grace it will become easy. When a young youth is bound Prentice to a Manual Trade, at first it seems very hard to learn his Trade, but by long custom at last he is very expert in it. A man that is to go up a hill every morning, at first he pants and breathes, and cannot get up the hill, within a little while he can get up with ease; so this duty of Divine Meditation, though it be exceeding difficult, because it is exceeding spiritual, yet by often and frequent practicing of it, through the assistance of Gods Spirit, it will become at last very easy; whereas the seldomness of the practice of this duty makes it difficult, and intermission of any thing makes it very hard. A man that learns the Greek or Hebrew Tongues, or learn to speak French, if he intermit the speaking eleven or twelve years, he will quickly forget to speak it; so long omission of this duty is the reason why it is so difficult; would you but resolve to practice it for one twelve month, you would find it at the twelve months end an easy duty, through the help of God.

The second property is this, Divine Meditation must be solemn and serious; though we must accustom our selves to this duty, yet we must take heed of customariness and formality in the duty; formality in good duty, is the dead fly that spoils the box of precious ointment; God hates a formal Christian, he hates a formal prayer, a formal hearer of the word; formality in Gods service is like the plague of locusts, of which you read, Exod. 10. that did eat up all the green things in the land; formality in good duties eats up all the beauty and all the comfort and benefit of a good duty; there is nothing God hates more than formality in his service; therefore you must take heed above all things of being formal in the practice of this duty of Meditation; it must be solemn and serious, and you must be very intent about it; slight thoughts of God will make but a slight impression upon the affections; and he that thinks slightly of God, will serve him slightly, and love him slightly; he that thinks slightly of sin, will slight sin; he that thinks slightly of God, God will slight him. And the reason why we serve God with so little affection, and so little devotion and reverence, is because we meditate slightly of God; for slight thoughts of God work but a slight heart, and a slight conversation. I will give you an instance or two of this slight way of Meditation, John 6. you shall read of certain men, that when Christ was preaching had a very good ejaculation, v. 34. Lord, (say they) evermore give us of this bread; it was a sweet Meditation, but it was but a short, a slight and formal one; for at the end of the Chapter these men forsook Christ; it was not a solemn and serious Meditation, John

18. 38. you read of Pilate, Pilate saith unto him, what is truth? here is a good question that arose from some inward thought that he had; and when he had said this, he went out again, he never thought of it more, he never tarried to hear an answer; but now our care must be to be very solemn and serious in this work of Divine Meditation; let me give you an example of Alexander the Great; a Heathen man was offering Sacrifice to his God, the Priest that held the Censor, the Chafing-dish, wherein the Incense was, there was a spark of fire fell upon his hand, and he was so intent and unwilling to hinder the Sacrifice, that he suffered his hand rather to be burnt, than he would intermit the Sacrifice; this shows how devout and intent this Priest was, even in the service of the Heathenish God; and Chrysostom tells a story of a Lady that being to make a precious ointment, she calls in all her handmaids to help her; so saith he, when we converse with God in any holy duty, we must call in all our handmaids, all our affections, when we are making any holy ointment; the meaning is this, when you are conversing with God by meditation, or conversing with Christ, or the Promises, you must call in all your affections to assist you, you must be very solemn and serious, and intent upon this work. And yet I must give you one caution here, you must take heed you be not over-intent; though you must be serious, you must not be over-serious. I have heard a story of a godly Minister, Mr. Welsh, that was one day meditating of eternity, and he was so serious in the thoughts of Eternity, that he fell into a trance, into a swoond, that they could hardly ever recover life in him

again, he was so swallowed up in that Meditation, he was too serious; we must be serious, but not over-serious; we must do as good travellers do, that will be careful not to over-ride their horses, lest they tire; they will ride moderately, that so they may hold out to their journeys end; so must we be serious, but we must be moderate, not over-serious; we must remember we have a body of flesh, that is not able to bear over-much seriousness, in these weighty Meditations of Eternity, and God, and Christ, and Heaven.

3. Divine Meditation must not only be notional and speculative, but practical and affectionate; therefore consideration and meditation are not only acts of the head, but acts of the heart, Deut. 4. 39. Know therefore this day and consider it in thy heart. There are three doors, as I may so speak, that Meditation must get into, or else it is of no use.

1. It must get into the understanding, that must ponder the things of Heaven; but it must not tarry there: But,

2. It must get into the door of the heart and affections to stir them up; for the understanding must be as a Divine pair of Bellows to kindle a Divine fire in the heart and affections, and to inflame and raise them up, as David saith, Psalm 39. While I was musing the fire burned; we must so muse upon God and Christ, that our affections may as it were burn within us, as the Disciples hearts burnt within them, while Christ was speaking.

3. It must get into the door of the conversation; that is, we must so meditate of Christ as to live according to

the life of Christ; and so to meditate of God as to obey the Commands of God. And unless your Meditation get into these three doors, it is of no use; the understanding to the heart and affections is like the nurse to the child; you know the office of the nurse is to prepare meat for the child, to chew and cut it, that the child may eat it; so the work of the understanding is to prepare Divine Truths for the heart and affections, that the heart may close with them, and eat and digest them; but if the nurse should eat the meat she chews, and give nothing to the child, the child may starve for all the nurse; so though the understanding doth chew never such glorious Truths, if it doth not convey them to the heart and affections, it is of no use; there is many a man spends his time in Meditation, as a Butterfly feeds upon the flower, sucks the flower, not to be fruitful and useful, but merely to paint her wings; so he studies and ponders of Divine things merely to paint his wings, to get curious language of God and Christ, and curious notions of sin, and the promises, but because he doth not convey them into his heart and affections, he is never the holier, never the better for his Meditation; but true Meditation is this, when we so meditate of Christ as to find virtue coming out of Christ to cure the bloody issue of our sins; to meditate of him so as to be transformed into him; when we so meditate of God, as to love God, and desire after God, and rejoice in God, and live according to the Commands of God; when we so meditate of sin as to hate and abhor it, and turn from it; so meditate of the promises as to close with them, when by frequent musing of God there is a holy fire of

Divine love kindled towards God; as it is in Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet. When we so meditate on God, as it gets into our affections to sweeten the thoughts of God unto our souls, then the meditation of God is sweet; this is the reason why many times an honest plain-hearted Christian finds more benefit by the practice of this Divine Meditation than a great Scholar; for a great Scholar will meditate to find out some glorious expressions, some curious notions. As a man that reads a book merely for the fine language, and a man that hears a Sermon merely to feast his ears, because of the eloquence of the Sermon, and goes home never the holier, never the better; but now the honest plain-hearted Christian meditates of the things of Heaven, that he may be made the more heavenly; he meditates of God that he may love and fear him more; he meditates of Christ, that he may prize him more; he meditates of sin, that he may hate it more; and of the Promises that he may love them more; though he cannot find out these curious notions that a Scholar doth, yet his heart is more affected many times than the heart of a greater Scholar, if he be not godly. Divine Meditation is of no use unless it be practical and affectionate.

4. Property is this, Divine Meditation must be particular and applicative; for generals will not work at all; the Philosopher saith, that fire in general doth not burn; it is this fire that burns; a sword in general doth not cut, it is this sword cuts; so confused meditation of heaven, God and Christ, will do you little good; but if ever you

would get good by the practice of meditation, you must come down to particulars; and you must so meditate of Christ, as to apply Christ to thy soul; and so meditate of Heaven, as to apply Heaven to thy soul; this is mine, this is my portion, Christ is my portion, he is Jehovah my righteousness. *Nam quid est Deus, si non est meus?* What am I the better for Heaven, or for Christ, if they be not mine? what comfort can I have to meditate of Christ, if I have no interest in him, if I cannot apply him? what comfort can I have to meditate of Heaven, if I have no right to Heaven; I meditate of a place that doth not belong to me. Therefore the greatest part of Meditation is Application; you must apply the things you meditate of, to your own particular, and that man that in his meditation of Christ can say with Thomas, *My God and my Lord*, is of all men the happiest; blessed is that man that can say, *my God and my Lord*.

There are four things that work mightily upon the heart, Necessity and Excellency, Propriety and Perpetuity; the heart is much taken with things that are excellent, especially when they are necessary; especially if I have a propriety in them, and this propriety be perpetual; and thrice happy is that man that can say all these four concerning God and Christ; that when he meditates of the excellency of God, and Christ, and Heaven, and the necessity of enjoying them; when he can add a propriety, all these are mine, *God is my God, Christ is my righteousness, and Heaven is my inheritance, and my inheritance forever*. Oh this man is in Heaven already, that can make this application upon Scripture-

grounds. And therefore be sure in the practice of this duty, your meditation be applicative; though a medicine be never so sovereign, it doth you no good unless you apply it; the water in the fountain will never do you good, unless it be brought to you by a cistern, conveyed to you some way or other; so the meditation of God, Christ and Heaven, will little avail, unless you make application; and this is especially to be used at the Sacrament; the work you are to do at the Sacrament is meditation, and in all Sacramental meditation you must be sure to join application; when you meditate of the breaking of the bread, of the body of Christ that was broken for you, you must apply it, it was broken for me; and when you see the wine poured out, you must meditate of the blood of Christ, that was poured out upon the Cross, you must make application by faith, that is the great act of faith, This blood was poured out for me, this body was broken for me, and now God offers Christ, God gives Christ to me, there is the sweetness in the Sacrament.

The fifth Property, Divine Meditation must be calm and quiet; there are many well affected Christians that in the practice of this duty, will force themselves too much; this is proper to young beginners, that when they meditate of their sins, will force themselves into tears; and when they meditate of Christ will force themselves into joy; it is ordinary when young Christians meditate, because they cannot find their affections wrought upon, they will use violence to their affections, and force out tears or joy, according to the nature of the thing they

meditate upon; just like the man, Act. 3. 7, 8. the lame man that was cured; as soon as ever Peter took him by the hand and lift him up, immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength, and he leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with him into the Temple; the poor man never walked in all his life, he was lame from his mothers womb; as soon as ever he found his legs, he fell a leaping presently; he did not leap afterwards, but walked ordinarily as other men; but he was so overjoyed, that he forced himself to a kind of leaping; so there are many Christians that when they first set upon this duty, because they find their hearts very dead and dull, therefore they will offer violence to their affections, and force themselves to tears or joy. But you must not do this, the best way is to wait in the practice of meditation for the coming down of God; to wait for the consolation of Israel, as it is said of Simeon, Luke 2. 25. There was one Simeon a man in Jerusalem, who was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. So must we in the use of this blessed duty wait upon God for Divine comfort; and while we are waiting, God will come in, Isa. 30. 18. Blessed are all they that wait upon the Lord. ver. ult. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles. You must continue waiting, and be assured the Lord whom you seek will come in, and you shall find your hearts melted if you go on in a calm, quiet, waiting posture. As Bernard, who was a man much accustomed to this duty of meditation, when he went to meditate and pray, he found his heart at first very dull; at last the visitations of the Almighty

came upon him, and he felt his heart warm, he had the appearances of the Lord to his soul, that he cried out *rara hora, brevis mora*, it comes but seldom (but sometimes it comes, blessed be God), it tarries too short a while; Oh that it would continue; wait upon God in the practice of Divine Meditation, and you shall find the elapses of the Holy Ghost, the Visitations of God coming upon your souls, and filling you full of Heavenly comfort.

6. And lastly, This Divine Meditation must be persevering; you must persevere in this duty, though you cannot at first find the benefit and comfort that you expect. There are many Christians that have set upon this work of Meditation, and finding it too hard and difficult, and meeting with so much opposition in their hearts, wandering thoughts, and abundance of spiritual distempers, they have been discouraged, and laid it aside, which certainly they ought not to have done. I have read of the Leopard, when it looks after his prey, when it looks after his prey, when it hath a beast in view, that it would prey upon the manner of its hunting, is to take three or four great skips, and if it cannot take the beast in three or four skips, then it leaves it, it is so furious and hasty. So there is many a poor Christian skips into the duty of Meditation, as it were, by taking three or four leaps, and sees he cannot compass it, he cannot find the benefit and comfort he would, and therefore he lays it aside; this is a great fault: you must wait upon God, as I said in the former, you must continue and persevere, and go on in this duty: And I

have four arguments to persuade you to persevere in this duty.

1. From the necessity of this duty; it is a duty absolutely necessary, as I have told you; it is the life of all other duties; prayer will do you no good unless it be joined with meditation, *Oratio sine meditatione est arida*, saith Bernard, Prayer without Meditation is dry, and luke warm, and cold; and the reason why our prayers are like so many dead carcasses of prayers, is because we do not join meditation with prayer: sermons do us no good without meditation. Meditation is the life of all Religion, and that which puts life into all other duties. It is of great necessity, and therefore you must not be weary of well-doing, you must persevere, for there is no grace crowned without perseverance.

2. Consider the excellency of this duty, it is the souls transmigration to Heaven, the souls transfiguration, the souls going up to Heaven to converse with God and Christ, and the things of eternity; it is a rare duty, as necessary as your daily bread; and certainly God conveys much of himself in the practice of this duty. As Jesus Christ when he was in the Mount, was transfigured, and his face shined like the Sun. So certainly you that are much in the mount of meditation, you that often go up to meditate of God and Christ, and Heaven, and sin, your faces will shine, you will be taller than other Christians in grace by the head.

3. Study the mischiefs that come by the want of practicing this duty; it is not eating meat that nourishes you, but the digesting of it; meat may be set before a

man, and he may eat a great deal, but if he doth not digest it, he will never be nourished. Meditation is a digesting of all the things of God; it is not the hearing a Sermon doth you good, but the meditating on what you hear; if a man hath a plaster and lays it to his sore, and take it off as soon as he hath laid it on, it will do no good at all; so when you hear a Sermon, if you forget it as soon as ever you have heard it, if you do not chew, meditate and ponder upon what you hear, you will never get any good. As the beast that chewed not the cud was an unclean beast, so the unmeditating Christian is an unclean Christian. The reason why we have so many lean cows, pardon my expression, that devour the fat, and are never the fatter; I mean so many lean Christians that devour hundreds of Sermons, that will hear three or four a day, and are never the better, never the fatter; what is the reason of this, because it comes in at one ear, and goes out at the other, one Sermon jostles out another; but they never meditate, ponder and consider what they hear, that is the reason why you are so lean in grace. You know there are many hours required to digest a little meat eaten in a little while; so a man should be many hours digesting a Sermon that he hears in one hour. God and Christ are like a picture that hath a curtain drawn over it; now a man will never judge of the picture till the curtain be withdrawn; Meditation is nothing else but the taking aside the curtain, and viewing of God. To an unmeditating Christian God is like the Sun in a cloud; to an careless Christian Christ is like a jewel in a leathern purse; now meditation opens the purse, and takes out the jewel, and

looks upon it; Meditation draws aside the curtain, and views God, and beholds the glorious things of God.

4. Consider, that by persevering in this duty it will at last grow easy; it is I confess a very up-hill duty, a very spiritual Heavenly duty; but as a man that every day goes up a hill, though at first it be very difficult, he blows and pants as if his soul would go out of him, but by persevering in it he can go up the hill without pain or weariness; so though it be an up-hill, a hard duty, yet if you that have time, as many of you have, would but set about this work and persevere in it, and labour that your Meditation be applicative and affectionate; let me assure you, you would quickly conquer the difficulty by the help of God; let a man be to kindle a fire, if the wood be wet he must blow, and continue blowing, and at last he will conquer it; if he fling away the bellows he will never make the fire burn: but he must continue blowing till he hath extracted the moisture, and conquered the wood; so when you go to meditate of God, and Christ, of the Promises, of Heaven, of your sins, though you find your hearts dead and dull, and full of vain roving thoughts, and you are mightily out of tune, and much discouraged, you must go on blowing still, you must blow, and blow, and blow, and at last the fire will kindle, the great God of Heaven and earth will come in and help you.

Thus I have done with the third particular, the properties of Divine Meditation.

4. I must speak to the companions of Meditation. There are two companions you must always join with it, or at

least ordinarily. I am sure that one you must always join, one is reading, the other is praying.

1. You must join prayer with your meditation; and therefore here in my Text the same word that signifies to meditate in the Hebrew, signifies to pray: And Isaac went out to meditate; the word in the Hebrew is, He went out to pray or to meditate; and therefore in the Margent it is put; And Isaac went out to pray. And in the old Translation it is, And Isaac went out to pray; and in the new Translation it is, He went out to meditate. The same Hebrew word that signifies to meditate, signifies to pray, to teach us, that we must always join meditation and prayer together. As for example, when you meditate of your sins, you must put up a prayer to God, that you may so meditate of your sins as to get your hearts humbled for them; and when you meditate of Heaven, you must join prayer with your meditation, and lift up a prayer that the Lord would help you so to meditate of Heaven, as to make you fit for Heaven, when I say prayer, I do not mean a set formal prayer, but a short prayer; when you go up the hill of Meditation, you must not set your selves at prayer, but only join short prayer, beseeching God that he would bless it unto you: Luke 9. 29. when Christ went up to prayer, while he was praying, his countenance was changed, he was transfigured; and Cornelius while he was a praying, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him; he had glorious appearances while he was praying, Act. 10. when we go up to the hill to meditate and to pray, to pray and meditate, we

shall be sure to meet with apparitions from God, with glorious transfigurations; it is a rare saying of Bernard, Meditation without prayer is infertile, barren and lukewarm; prayer without meditation is arid, dry. And as one saith very well, writing of Meditation, The reason why the prayers of many of the Saints of God are but carcasses of prayer, is because they do not join meditation and prayer. And the reason why their meditation is no more powerful, is because they do not join prayer with their meditation; for meditation without prayer is altogether useless and unprofitable; you must not meditate in your own strength.

2. You must join reading with your meditation; understand me aright, I propound this to weak Christians that want a stock of knowledge; there are some Christians that are a Walking-library, they are Books themselves, they need not a Book to help them to meditate. But you that are weak Christians, my advice is this, that you would join reading with your meditation. As for example, would you meditate of Christ? go and take the Bible, and read the History of his Passion; and when thou readest any thing remarkable, lay thy book aside, and meditate seriously of that passage. As for example, when thou comest to read of Christ sweating drops of blood; that Christ in a cold Winter night upon the cold ground for thy sake should shed drops of blood: lay thy book aside, and meditate of these drops of blood; Oh the wrath of God that he then suffered! and so when thou comest to read what Christ suffered upon the Cross, when he cried out,

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! lay aside thy Book, and meditate of the love of Christ, that was forsaken for thy sake, in regard of outward comfort, I mean not in regard of union; He was forsaken that thou mayest not be forsaken. So likewise, wouldest thou meditate on the Promises? if thou be a weak Christian, take a Book that treats of the Promises, and when thou readest any Promise that is suitable to thee, lay the Book aside and meditate of that Promise till thy heart be affected with it, and labour that it may take impression upon thy soul. Saith Bernard, Long reading without meditation, never made a good Scholar, it is always barren. And Meditation without reading leads many a weak Christian over to error. And therefore when you set a time apart for Meditation, join prayer and reading with your meditation.

Now here I must give you two Cautions.

1. You must not read much, lest it hinder you meditation; as you must not be large in prayer, that it may not hinder your meditation, so you must not be large in reading when you go to meditate; for prayer and reading are in order to meditation.
2. When you are at the Sacrament, you must lay aside all reading; you must meditate at the Sacrament without reading; the reason is, because Christ at the Sacrament preaches to the eye. And our Sacramental Elements are our Sacramental Bible; every action of the Minister is mystical and spiritual; the breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine is spiritual; Christ Jesus is represented in all that is done at the Sacrament. And

therefore when you begin to be drawn dry, as I may so speak, and you know not what to meditate on, you must instead of reading, look upon the Elements, it is a sanctified way to quicken you to holiness; and you must look upon them with a spiritual eye, with an understanding eye, as knowing what those Elements signify, and the sight of the Elements will suggest matter of meditation. This I speak because I see many weak Christians, and I believe they do it upon honest Principles, not being able to hold out in meditation, to keep themselves from wandering thoughts, read in the Bible; this in it self is not sinful; but this is not suitable nor proper; for certainly the proper way of meditation at the Sacrament is to be raised up in the Sacramental Elements, the Sacramental actions, the Sacramental promises; and therefore thou must make the whole Sacramental frame and carriage to be thy Bible at the Sacrament, and learn to be raised up by that to Heavenly Meditation.

The fifth Particular in order, is the Materials of Meditation; and here I am to show you what are those Divine Truths that we are to meditate upon; this is a subject of large comprehension; for the truth is, there is no divine object, but it doth deserve our serious meditation. Give me leave to make you a Common-place-book of Divine Meditation; I will lay down some heads of Divinity, that a Christian ought to spend his life in, meditating upon, sometimes upon one of them, sometimes upon another of them: as for example, he that would avoid all sin, and thrive in all godliness,

must meditate frequently and seriously of Death, of Judgment, of Heaven and Hell; these are called quatuor Novissima, the four last things.

1. You must meditate of death; now I will not show you how you should go about to meditate of death, but I will give you some heads to help you.

1. You must meditate of the certainty of death; there is nothing so certain as that thou must die.

2. You must meditate of the uncertainty of death; there is nothing so uncertain as the time when we must die; death comes certainly, and death comes uncertainly, death comes suddenly; there is no Almanac can tell you when your death shall come; your Almanacs will tell you when the next Eclipse of the Sun and Moon will be, but they will not tell you when the eclipse of your lives shall be. And death comes irresistibly, it comes like pain upon a woman in travel, it comes like an armed Giant, that will not be resisted when it comes.

3. You must meditate concerning your fitness for death; whether thou hast got thy graces, thy evidences ready for death; whether thou art a wise Virgin, or a foolish Virgin? whether thou hast got oil into thy lamp, or no?

4. You must meditate concerning death, how you may so live as to be above the hurt of death, that death might be an out-let to all misery, and an in-let to all happiness.

5. You must meditate how to live in continual expectation of, and continual preparation for death.

6. You must especially meditate how to be free from the slavish fear of death; there are many of Gods children that live all their lives long under the bondage of the fear of death; and it is the excellency of a Christian to meditate how to be above the hurt and fear of death, and for that purpose you must look upon death with Scripture-spectacles, you must look upon death as the going from the prison of this life, to the palace of Heaven, as disarmed by Christ, as perfumed by Christ, as a Serpent without a sting, as a passage to eternal life.

Thus you see how you must meditate of Death.

2. You must meditate of the day of Judgment.

1. You must meditate of the terribleness of the day of Judgment; it is called the terror of the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 11. It is called by the ancient Fathers, the great and terrible day of Judgment; In which Jesus Christ will come in flaming fire to render vengeance upon all those that know him not.

2. You must meditate of the great assizes that will be kept at that day, in which all the men, and women, and children, that ever have lived since Adam's time to the end of the world, shall all appear before the Tribunal-seat of Jesus Christ.

3. You must meditate of the great account you are to give to God at that day, the strict, the exact, the particular account; it is a day in which we must answer for all our idle words, for all our idle thoughts, in which all our secret sins shall be made manifest.

4. You must meditate of the great separation that shall be made at that day, when the goats shall be placed on the left hand, and the sheep on the right hand, there will be a perfect separation. In this life goats and sheep are mingled together, but at that day there will not be one sheep on the left, nor one goat on the right hand.

5. You must meditate of the happy condition of a child of God at that great and terrible day of Judgment; it shall be a day of his Coronation, in which he shall be crowned with glory and immortality; it shall be a day of salvation to him.

6. You must meditate of the cursed condition of an ungodly man at the day of Judgment; it shall be a day of perdition and everlasting destruction to him.

3. You must meditate of Heaven.

1. You must meditate of the joys of Heaven; that are so great, that eye never saw, nor ear heard, nor ever can it enter into the heart of man to conceive the greatness of them.

2. You must meditate sometimes of the Beatifical Vision, of the blessed sight of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the happiness that that soul shall enjoy that is admitted to that blessed sight; for because God is infinitely perfect, and all perfection is in God, whosoever is admitted to the sight of God, beholds and enjoys all things in God.

3. You must meditate of the perfection of the happiness of Heaven.

4. You must meditate of the perpetuity of the happiness of Heaven; there you shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures at the right hand of God forevermore.

5. You must meditate of your fitness for heaven, whether you are made meet and fit to partake of that glorious inheritance: you must meditate whether God hath sent Heaven down into thee; for no man shall ever go up to Heaven, but Heaven must first come down to him; you must meditate whether that Christ that hath prepared Heaven for thee, hath prepared thee for Heaven.

6. You must meditate what you must do, that you may be meet to go to Heaven, how you may lead your lives so that you may be sure at last to obtain Heavens eternity.

4. You must meditate of Hell; as Bernard saith, you must go often down into hell by your meditation while you live, and you shall be sure not to go down to hell when you die. *Descendamus vivenles, & non descendemus morientes*, as Chrysostom saith excellently; if the not thinking of Hell would free you from Hell, I would never have you think of hell; but whether you think of it or no, Hell-fire burns, and your not thinking of it will bring you thither. And the reason why so many go to Hell when they die, is because they do not think of Hell while they live.

1. You must study the punishment of loss; what a cursed thing it is to be excluded from the presence of God for ever and ever; that is one great part of hell to

be shut out of Heaven, to be shut out from the Beatifical Vision, from the glorious presence of God and Christ, and the Saints of God.

2. You must study poenam census, the punishment of sense; for the damned are not only shut out of Heaven, but they endure endless, easless torments; you must meditate of the hell-worm, and the hell-fire; the Scripture speaks of a hell-fire, and a hell-worm, and of the eternity of the hell-fire, and the eternity of the hell-worm, Matthew 9. 44, 46. Where the worm never dieth, and the fire never goeth out. What is meant by this worm? nothing else but the gnawing of an awakened conscience. Oh think of this hell-worm, and this hell-fire, that you may never come to be so miserable as to be made partakers of it. These are the first four things.

In the next place to give you some more; he that would thrive in all godliness, and avoid all sin, must meditate often of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost, and of himself.

1. He must meditate of God, and that is a rare subject of meditation. David saith, Psalm 104. 34. My meditation of God shall be sweet.

1. Sometimes you must meditate of the Attributes of God, of his Eternity, a God from everlasting to everlasting. You must meditate of his unchangeableness, a God in whom there is no shadow of turning. You must meditate of his Omnipresence, a God that fills Heaven and earth with his presence. Of his Essence; you must meditate of his Omnipotence; a

God that is able to do all things, nothing is impossible with God. You must meditate of his Omniscience; a God that knows all things, to whom all things are naked. You must meditate of his Simplicity, and the perfection of his nature; of his all-sufficiency, and his self-sufficiency; here is a sea of matter. What rare Christians should we be, if we did often, and often meditate on these things, instead of meditating on vanities and follies?

2. You must meditate of the works of God; of the work of Creation, of the glorious fabric of Heaven and Earth, and you must meditate of the work of Redemption, that glorious work of God in sending Jesus Christ into the world; this meditation is that which swallows up the Angels and Saints in Heaven. You must meditate of the wonderful love of God in giving Christ to become a curse for us. You must meditate of the incomparable goodness of God in giving the Son of his love, his natural Son, to die for his adopted Sons.

3. You must meditate in what relation you stand towards God, whether you stand in a Covenant-relation to God or no? whether you stand reconciled to God or no? whether God be your reconciled Father in Christ, or no?

2. You must meditate upon Christ.

1. You must meditate of the Divine Nature of Christ, he is God from everlasting, he is coequal, coessential, coeternal with his Father.

2. You must meditate of the humane nature of Christ, of God manifested in the flesh, of God made man, the union of two Natures into one Person.

3. You must meditate of the Offices of Christ, of the Kingly office, the Priestly office, the Prophetical office of Christ; but more especially you must meditate of the Life, the Death, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Intercession of Christ.

1. You must meditate of the Life of Christ, and examine, whether thy life be answerable to his life? if thou dost not live as Christ lived, thou shalt have no benefit in Christ's Death and Passion: thou must meditate of Christ's life, to follow the example of his life.

2. You must meditate of his Death, that is a rare meditation to prepare you for the Sacrament.

1. You must meditate what Christ suffered, what he suffered when he was in the Garden, when he sweat drops of blood, and prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Oh the bloody agony that Christ was then in! And then you must meditate what Christ suffered when he was upon the Cross, when he cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? When there was darkness for three hours together upon the face of the earth; when there was darkness without, and darkness within too; when there was a withdrawing the light of Gods countenance from Christ. You must meditate what Christ suffered in Pilates Hall, when he was whipt, scourged, buffeted. Oh what love to Christ

would this kindle in your hearts, if you had serious meditation of these things.

2. You must meditate for whom Christ suffered all these things; for us when we were his enemies, us wretched damned creatures; not the blessed Angels, but us, us sinful men.

3. You must meditate who he was that suffered all this, even Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God.

4. You must consider with what love he suffered all this, infinite love, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of the love of God in suffering all this for us.

5. You must consider what interest you have in Christ crucified? whether Christ was crucified effectually for thee, or no?

3. You must study the Resurrection of Christ.

4. You must study the Ascension of Christ.

5. You must study the Intercession of Christ; the sitting of Christ at the right hand of God the Father, where he lives forever to make Intercession for you.

3. You must meditate of the Holy Ghost; and there are rare things to fill up your thoughts.

1. You must meditate of the Divine nature of the Holy Ghost, that the Holy Ghost is the third person in the Trinity, that the Holy Ghost is God blessed forever.

2. You must meditate of the Office of the Holy Ghost; it is the office of the third Person in the Trinity to bring us

into the possession of all the Father hath decreed, and the Son hath purchased; to make us partakers of the decree of the Father, and the purchase of the Son.

3. You must study the Divine motions of the holy Spirit; and we must meditate how often we have quenched the Spirit of Christ, how often we have resisted these motions, how often we have embraced these motions.

4. You must meditate of the grace of the Spirit, (this will open a door to a great deal of excellent matter) you must meditate of the grace of faith, the grace of repentance, the grace of love to God, and Christ, and thy neighbour; the grace of fear of God, and the grace of humility; that is, you must meditate whether your faith be a right faith, or no; whether it be the faith of a Simon Magus, or the faith of a Simon Peter; whether it be an Historical faith only, or a justifying faith; and whether your repentance be a true repentance or no; and whether your love to Christ be a true love, or a counterfeit love.

4. You must meditate of your selves.

1. You must meditate of the fourfold state of man; man may be considered in a fourfold state:

1. Either in the state of innocency, as he was before the fall, a spotless picture of God; that is a rare meditation: study the happiness of man before he fell, when he was made after Gods own image.

2. The state of man when fallen, when corrupted: study the cursed condition of man in his natural condition.

3. The estate of man when restored by Christ, when regenerated, when renewed, when made a picture of God.

4. The estate of man in Heaven.

1. What thou wert in Adam.

2. What thou art when fallen.

3. What thou art in Christ.

4. What thou shalt be in Heaven.

You must meditate of your sins, of your good duties, of your evidences, and of your comforts.

1. You must meditate of your sins, that is a large field to walk in; you must meditate of the sins you have committed against God, of your sins of omission, of your sins of commission; your sins against the Law, your sins against the Gospel, your Sermon-sins, your Sacrament-sins, your spiritual sins, your fleshly sins. You must meditate of sin to be humbled for it, that is a rare meditation to fit you for the Sacrament. And oh that we had hearts seriously to meditate of our sins.

2. You must meditate of your good duties, that is how many good duties we omit, how many good duties we sinfully perform; whether we perform duties so as to please God in the performance of them.

3. You must meditate of your Evidences for Heaven, whether they are right or no; whether you have gotten Tribunal-proof assurance for Heaven; whether thy Evidences for Heaven are death-enduring; whether they will hold out at the day of Judgment.

4. You must meditate of your comforts; whether those comforts that you have, be the consolations of the Spirit, or the delusions of the Devil. There are many men will tell you that they have comforts, but their comforts are Diabolical delusions, not Divine consolations.

You must meditate of the frailty of your body, the immortality of your soul, the dependence you have upon God, and the advantage God hath you at.

1. The frailty of your body; the body of man is made of dust, and will quickly crumble to dust; it is an earthly Tabernacle that is easily dissolved. What a rare thing will it be to take the Scripture, and study all the comparisons to which the life of man is compared? to set out the shortness of it, it is compared to grass, to hay, to stubble, to dry stubble, to a dry leaf, to a swift post, to a vapour, to a hands-breadth; meditate of the frailty of thy vile body, that will quickly go down to the house of rottenness.

2. Meditate of the immortality of thy soul, thy precious soul, which is a picture of God, made by God, and made for God. There is no man but hath a heavenly vapour within him, which can never be blown out; there is no man but he hath that within him that he cannot kill

himself; there is no man but he hath that within him that must live forever as blessed as an Angel, or as cursed as a Devil. Meditate upon the dependence you have upon God. Oh this will keep thee humble, and make thee comply with Gods will; you depend upon God for thy being, thy well-being, thy eternal being; you depend upon God every minute, you live by Gods upholding thee; study the dependence thou hast upon God for thy soul, thy body, thy wife, thy children, thy all.

4. Meditate of the advantage God hath thee at. God hath all the world between his hands, as the Prophet saith; and he can easily crush us, as we do a moth; as we are creatures he can annihilate us if he please; and as we are sinners he can throw us into hell if he please. Study the relations in which God hath placed thee; study thy calling, thy company, thy heart.

1. Study thy relations in which God hath placed thee; there is none of us all but we are under many relations; art thou a Minister, art thou a Magistrate, art thou a Father, art thou a Master? study the duties of every relation; study how to honour God in every relation; study to keep a good conscience in every relation.

2. Study thy calling; how to honour God in thy calling, how to keep a good conscience in thy calling; how to keep thy self unspotted from the sins of thy calling, for there is no calling but hath some sin or other attending it. Oh meditate, that thy Shop do not destroy thy soul; meditate to keep a good conscience in thy Shop; that thou dost not lose in thy own house what you gain in Gods house.

3. Study thy company, what company to keep, that is a great matter; for I know a man by his company more than any thing whatsoever; I mean by the company he useth to keep. Study to keep a good conscience in all company, study to keep thy self from the sins of thy company.

4. Study thy heart: meditate often upon your own heart, the deceitfulness of thy heart; the heart is deceitful above all things, it is the greatest cheater in the world; and there are thousands whose hearts do cozen them into Hell; thy heart will tell thee you love God when thou dost not love him at all; that thou art upright, when thou art an hypocrite.

Study thy Thoughts, thy Affections, thy Words, and thy Actions.

1. Meditate of thy Thoughts, the vanity of thy thoughts, the vileness of thy thoughts, the Hell, shall I say, that is in thy thoughts; if all the thoughts that we think were written upon our foreheads, how would we be ashamed that the world should see us. Oh meditate of thy covetous thoughts, of thy lustful thoughts, thy vile and vain thoughts, to be humbled for them.

2. Meditate of thy Affections: God doth especially look to our affections; he hates any service that is not mixed with affection. There are several Affections; meditate of thy love, whether you love God or the world most. Meditate where thy love is, whether you serve God out of love; whether the world doth not lye nearer thy heart than Christ; Meditate of thy desire, whether thou hast

larger desires after the creature than after God; Meditate of thy joy, whether thou dost not delight more in vanity than in Christ Jesus; And meditate of thy sorrow, whether thou dost not mourn more for outward losses than for thy sins? Meditate of thy anger, whether thy anger be rightly placed; And meditate of thy trust and hopes, whether thou dost, trust in God at all times.

3. You must meditate of your Words; Oh what a world of sin is in our tongues! and if we would meditate of the sins of our tongues, Oh what a black catalogue would there be! the tongue is a world of iniquity, set on fire of hell, saith the Apostle James.

4. Meditate of thy Actions, whether thy actions be agreeable to the will of God or no, how you behave yourself towards God, and towards thy neighbour.

Meditate of the sinfulness of sin, the vanity of the world, the length of eternity, and the excellency of the Gospel.

1. Meditate of the sinfulness of sin; sin is the greatest evil in the world, it is a greater evil than banishment, than death, than Hell it self; meditate upon the intrinsic and extrinsic evil of sin.

2. Meditate of the vanity of the creature: all earthly things are vain, they are vanity of vanity, and vexation of spirit; they are all unsatisfying and unprofitable; what will all the world do you good when you are sick, when you are ready to die.

3. Meditate of the length of eternity; Oh eternity! eternity! that we studied thee more! that we thought more of thee! Study the difference between time and eternity; for Time is nothing else but an intersection between two Eternities; before there was time, there was eternity; and when time shall be no more, there shall be eternity. Time in comparison of Eternity is no more than a Thatch-house in comparison of all the houses in the world; than a drop of water in comparison of the Ocean.

4. Study the excellency of the Gospel; Oh meditate of the glorious Gospel of Christ, and what a privilege it is to enjoy the Gospel; and meditate whether thy life be answerable to the Gospel; whether thou that hast lived so long under the Gospel, hast lived a life conformable to the Gospel.

Study the Commandments of God, the threatnings of God, the Promises of God, and the Ordinances of God.

1. Study the Commandments of God; whether thou keepest them, or no; to be humbled for not keeping them, to labour to keep them better.

2. Study the Threatnings of God, and stand in awe of them, and fear them.

3. Study the Promises of God, the glorious, the precious Promises, the freeness of the Promises, the fullness of the Promises, the infallibleness of the Promises; there is no condition a child of God can be in, but there is some promise or other to comfort him; the universality of the tender of the Promises, thy interest in the Promises,

whether the Promises of the Gospel belong to thee, or no

4. Study the Ordinances of God, that is, study how to come prepared to Ordinances, how to manage Ordinances so, that Gods name may be honoured by them. And there are four Ordinances that you must meditate of.

1. You must meditate of the Ordinance of Prayer; you must study the excellency of Prayer, the efficacy of Prayer; you must study to get the gift of Prayer, to get the grace of Prayer. Study how to pray in the Holy Ghost; how to pray with faith, with fervency, with repentance.

2. You must meditate of the Ordinance of reading the Word; that is an Ordinance of God, and you must study to read the Word with reverence and godly fear, to read the Word as Gods Word, to read the Word in a different way than you read any other Book whatsoever.

3. You must meditate of the Ordinance of hearing the Word; study the right art of hearing the Word; so to hear the Word as to be transformed into what you hear; to be trained up to Heaven by what you hear; so to hear the Word as Gods Word, with an universal resignation of thy will to what thou hearest.

4. The Ordinance of the Sacrament of the Lords-Supper; Oh meditate much of this Ordinance.

I have told you several Heads of Meditation for the Sacrament.

Study the errors of the times, the Judgments of God upon the Nation, the changes God hath made in this Nation, and the mercies of God.

1. Study the errors of the times, labour to get preservatives against them; it is a lamentation, and it shall be for a lamentation; there is a great Apostasy from the Truths of Christ among many Professors of Religion; you shall hardly go into a family but you shall find some or other be-lepered with error. Here is thy work, O Christian, to study the errors of the times, what to do, to get antidotes and preservatives against Anabaptism, against Socinianism, against Anti-sabbatarianism, against Anti-scripturism, against those that deny the Divinity of Christ, and the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; to get Spiritual armour, to be able to resist all the errors of these times. It is a great shame, and oh that you would be humbled for it, that one erroneous person can speak more for the defence of his error than twenty Orthodox Christians are able to speak for the Truth, for want of studying antidotes and preservatives against the errors of the times.

2. Study the Judgments of God that have been for these many years upon England, Scotland, and Ireland; the hand of God is gone out against these three Nations, and the Lord hath laid us desolate, and the sword hath drunk a great deal of blood, and no man lays it to heart. Now let us meditate of Gods great Judgments upon this land, that we may know the meaning of Gods rod, and we may know how to get all these Judgments sanctified unto us.

3. Meditate of the great changes that God hath made in this Nation; we have been tossed from one condition to another, from one way of Government to another. Study all the changes and alterations that God hath made by his permitting-Providence: Oh what a shame is it that we should meditate no more of Gods ways and dealings, to know the meaning of God in all these alterations and changes, and what the language of God is; and what use we should make of them, and how we should keep a good conscience, and keep close to our Principles, and how we should honour God under all our changes.

4. You must meditate of the several passages of Gods Providence towards us; there is no man or woman here but hath had rare experience of Gods Providence, either in the place of thy dwelling, that God should pitch thy dwelling under such a Minister; or in the manner of thy Marriage, or the Providence of God at such a time, under such a sickness; it is our duty to take special notice of the Providence of God, in raising thee up a friend, in helping thee at such a time. For want of Meditation we lose all the benefit of the passages of Gods Providence, and God loseth all his glory.

5. You must meditate of the mercies of God, of National mercies, Family mercies, Personal mercies, mercies to thy soul, mercies to thy body, preventing mercies, following mercies; what a Catalogue would here be, if you would keep a daily account of the mercies of God!

The sixth thing is to lay down Rules and Directions for the better practicing of this most excellent and necessary duty of Divine Meditation; and indeed this is the chief of all: there is no Christian but he will confess it is a very difficult duty to dwell upon the thoughts of Heaven, and Heavenly things. Divine Meditation is an up-hill duty; and the reason why it is so difficult; is because it is so excellent. *Difficilia quae pulchra*, the more excellent any duty is, the more difficult it is. And another reason why it is so difficult, is because it is so contrary to corrupt nature; now the more contrary any duty is to corrupt nature, the more excellent it is. The difficulty of the duty should not so much discourage us, as the excellency of the duty should quicken us. Now that I may help you against the difficulty of this duty, I shall lay down three sorts of rules.

1. Rules for the right qualifying of the person that is to meditate.

2. Rules for the right ordering the Subjects upon which he is to meditate.

3. Rules for the right meditation upon these Subjects.

- I. I shall lay down Rules and Directions for the right qualifying and ordering the person that is to practice this Divine duty of Meditation; and for that purpose I shall give you in these Rules.

1. Convince thy soul of the absolute necessity of Divine Meditation; I have showed it is a duty expressly commanded by God, a duty required of all sorts of persons, of Kings, of Generals of Armies, of young

Gentlemen, of Women, of Ministers; David, Joshua, young Isaac in my Text practiced this duty; and many Women, and many holy men. Let me add, that this very duty is the life and soul of all Christianity; you are but carcasses of Christians if you be not acquainted with it; it is as impossible to live without a soul, as it is to be a good Christian without Divine Meditation. As it is impossible for a man to be nourished by meat if he want digestion and concoction; so it is impossible for a man to be nourished in grace, if he neglect the duty of Divine Meditation; for Divine Meditation is the spiritual concoction and digestion of all holy things, and all holy duties. As a man without concoction, I mean without a faculty of digestion and concoction, so is a Christian without the practice of Divine Meditation.

2. Convince your souls (and the Lord convince you) of the great benefits and advantages that are obtained by a conscientious practice of Divine Meditation; as I have showed, Divine Meditation is a mighty help to the begetting grace, and increasing grace.

1. It is a mighty help to the begetting repentance; as David saith, Psalm 119. 59. I considered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. It was the consideration of the evil of his ways, that made David turn his feet to Gods Testimonies. And it is said of Peter, Mark 14. 72. When he thought thereon, he wept; what made Peter repent? the meditation of the unkindness of the sin he committed against Christ. And what made the Prodigal child come home to his father? Luke 15. 17. When he came to himself he considered,

and said, how many hired servants of my fathers, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger? It was consideration that made the Prodigal child come home to his father; he considered how much bread there was in his fathers house, and he ready to starve.

2. Divine Meditation is a mighty help to the love of God; for to an inconsiderate Christian God is as a picture with a curtain drawn over it, but consideration takes away the curtain, unveils God to a man, and shows him all the beauty and excellency that is in God; and it is like a fiery furnace to kindle a Divine fire of love in the soul of every Christian.

3. It is a mighty help to beget in us the fear of God; Oh did you meditate much of the power of God, and the goodness of God, and the forgivenesses that are in God, Oh you would fear God for his goodness, and for his greatness; the reason why we love God no more, is because we think of God no more, study God no more.

4. It would be a mighty help to the love of Christ; for Christ Jesus to an unmeditating Christian is like a book that is sealed, like a treasure that is locked up; but Meditation opens this book, unlocks this treasure; and that man that solemnly meditates of the excellency and love of Christ, cannot but love Christ.

5. It is a mighty help to the contempt of the world; for the world is like gilded Copper, there is a glittering excellency in it, but meditation of the vanity of the world will wash off all the gilt, the whorish paint, the glittering excellency that is in the world; a man that

looks upon the world a far off, sees nothing in it but excellency; but when you come to meditate of the vanity of the world, and all worldly things, meditation will make you contemn the world, and all worldly things.

3. Consider the unconceivable and inexpressible mischiefs that come upon a Christian for want of Divine Meditation. What is the reason why men go on in their sins without repentance? it is for want of Meditation. Jeremiah 8. 6. No man repenteth, because no man saith what have I done? What is the reason the Word of God takes no more impression upon your hearts, and there is no more good done by Preaching? it is because you do not meditate upon what you hear; as a plaster that is put to a wound, if it be plucked off as soon as it is put on, it will never do you good; so if a Sermon be forgotten as soon as it is heard, it will never profit you. And what is the reason that the mercies of God do no more good, that men are no more thankful for mercies, and no more fruitful under mercies? because they do not consider their mercies? come from God, Hos. 2. 8. She did not know (that is, she did not consider) that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold which they prepared for Baal. They would not have prepared their silver and gold for Baal, had they considered that God gave it, but they would have served God with it; that is the reason why you are so proud of your mercies, and sin against God with your mercies, because you do not meditate that the Lord hath given you all the mercies you have;

and what is the reason men get no more good by afflictions? because they do not consider why God afflicts them; what is the meaning of Gods rod, and how they might get their afflictions sanctified: the want of the practice of Divine Meditation is the cause of all punishment, as well as of all sin, Jeremiah 12. 11. All the whole land is made desolate, because no man lays it to heart.

4. If you would be rightly qualified for Divine Meditation, labour to get a sufficient furniture of spiritual knowledge; for the reason why this duty is so difficult, and why men cannot continue long at it, is for want of sufficient matter to meditate upon. For as I showed you, Meditation is a dwelling, a musing, an abiding upon the things we know of God, or Christ, or the Promises; it is an unlocking of the treasure of knowledge concerning God, and Christ, and Heaven; and he that hath not a good stock of knowledge of Christ, or the Promises, can never continue long to meditate upon Christ, or the Promises; if ever you would be a good Practitioner of this duty of Divine Meditation, you must labour to be instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, as the Phrase is, Matthew 13. 42. Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man which is a householder, that brings out of his treasure things old and new. You must be acquainted with things both new and old, and instructed in the things of the Kingdom of God, and you must be men in understanding, 1 Cor. 14. 20. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be

ye children, but in understanding be men. A babe in understanding cannot be long in meditation; but you must be babes in malice, but in understanding men of ripe age. You had need have a great deal of knowledge that would be Practitioners to purpose of this excellent duty of Divine Meditation, you must grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. If ever you would be a good Practitioner in the School of Divine Meditation, you must labour to get a serious spirit; for a slight-headed Christian, can never be a good meditating Christian; a slight-headed and a slight-hearted Christian, that cannot dwell upon things, but rove from one thing to another, cannot be a good Christian; pardon my words, I speak them upon much deliberation: for Religion is a serious matter, it is a business of eternity, and therefore it requires a serious Christian; and if ever you would practice this duty that I am preaching of, if ever you would go up to the mount of Meditation to converse with God there, you must labour to be of a serious spirit, as those were, Luke 1. 66. And all they that heard him, laid it up in their hearts; they did not slight what they heard, but laid it up in their hearts, Luke 2. 19. But Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2. 51. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. A good Christian is a pondering, a serious Christian.

There is a fourfold frame of spirit that cannot stand with true Christianity, nor with the practice of this duty that I am preaching of, and the Lord help you against them.

1. A slight frame of spirit; that man that thinks slightly of God, will love him but slightly, and serve him but slightly; slight thoughts of God will make but slight impressions upon the heart, and slight impressions upon the life. Slight thoughts of God will have but slight affections to God; for if my apprehensions be slight, my affections and my actions will be slight; for my affections and actions follow my apprehension. Therefore a slight frame of spirit is a very sad frame of spirit.

2. As there is a slight, so there is a trifling frame of spirit; when a man thinks of the things of Heaven as trifles; when a man trifles away a Sacrament, trifles away a Sermon, trifles away a Prayer, as thousands of you do. Oh it is a sad thing for a man to be serious in trifles, and to trifle in serious things! I cannot tell which is the worst, though I think rather the second is the worst. That is a sad thing when a man looks upon Sabbaths, and Sacraments, and Ministers, and Ministry, and all the holy things of God as trifles; such an one was Gallio, when he saw it was a matter of Religion, he cared for none of these things, he looked upon them as trifles. A trifling frame of spirit cannot consist with true Christianity.

3. There is a watery frame of spirit; there are some men, tell them of their sins, and they will yield to you, and confess their sins, and promise amendment; and there are many, while they are at a Sermon, the Sermon takes impression upon them, but they are of a watery spirit, nothing will abide upon them. As a man that flings a

stone into the water, it will make one circle, and another circle, and another circle, a great many circles, but there is no abiding of them, they are quickly gone; so there are some men, their hearts will melt at a Sermon, or a Sacrament, but they are of a watery spirit, nothing will abide upon them. Take a stone and fling it at a feather-bed, the stone will make a great dint in it, but this dint will not abide; though the feather-bed yield to the stone, yet there is no remaining of the impression; so, many a man is of a yielding spirit, that nothing will fix.

4. A rash inconsiderate frame of spirit cannot stand with true Christianity; when a man rushes upon good duties, and upon Offices, Church-offices, and State-offices, without any deliberation, Meditation, or preparation; when a man prays rashly, comes to the Sacrament rashly, headily, hand over head, as we say; this man is a spiritual fool, and all his holy duties are the sacrifices of fools, Eccles. 5. 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifices of fools, for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. A rash spirited man that prays headily, and comes to holy duties headily and inconsiderately, this man catches many a fall: as a man that runs hastily will quickly stumble; so a man that is spiritually rash, will run into many spiritual evils. As a man that is rash in his calling will quickly out-run himself, so he that is rash in holy duties will quickly run into a thousand mischiefs; as Peter was so rash when he said to Christ, Though all men forsake

thee, yet will not I. He was over rash, but it cost him dear. So it was a rash act of David, when he went to kill Nabal, and if Abigail had not hindered him, he had murdered him. And when he gave the land to Mephibosheth's servant, it was a rash act.

Consider, I beseech you, these four Particulars; these frames of spirit will never make you good Christians, never fit you for the practice of this rare duty of Divine Meditation; but you must pray unto God that he would give you a solemn and serious spirit, if ever you would be rightly qualified to go up to the mount of Divine Meditation.

The sixth Rule is this, Labour for the love of Heaven, and Heavenly things; the reason why people find it so difficult to meditate upon Heavenly things, is for want of love to them; for if you did love Christ, I need not persuade you to meditate of God; I need not persuade a covetous man to meditate of his money; a man that loves the world, you need not persuade him to meditate of the world; or a man that is voluptuous, to meditate upon his pleasures, his love to his pleasures will force him to think of them; a man that is ambitious, you need not persuade him to think of honour and preferment, but the love that he hath to preferment, will force him to think of it. So, did you love God, Christ, Heavenly things, you would be much in the meditation of them. And the reason why you meditate no more of them, is because you love them no more, Psalm 119. 97. Oh how do I love thy law! what then? it is my meditation all the day. What made David meditate all the day upon

the Law of God? because he loved it, Psalm 1. 7. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night. A man that is deep in love with a woman, you need not bid him think of that woman. Where the love is, there the soul is. Oh, did you delight in the things of Heaven, I need not lay down rules to persuade you to the practice of it; the very love would be a loadstone; love is a loadstone of Meditation; and he that loves good things will think of them: *Cogitatione crebra, cogitatione longa, cogitatione profunda*; that is, very often, very long, and very deep; a man that is deep in love, is deep in meditation of the party he loves.

The seventh Rule, Labour to get an interest in Heavenly things; labour by Scripture-evidences to make out thy interest in Heavenly things; what comfort can that man have of meditating of Heaven, that doth not know he hath a right to Heaven? what comfort can that man have of meditating of Christ, that doth not know that Christ is his? what comfort can that man have in meditation of God, that looks upon God as his enemy. It is interest that will facilitate Divine Meditation; a man that hath an interest in an inheritance, will often think of it; if he hath a thousand pound a year that is his own, he is often thinking how to improve it, and enjoy it; but if he hath no title or right to it, alas he will not think of it, what doth he care for it: It is your interest in the things of Heaven, that will raise your meditation of them; and as long as you have no assurance of a title to Heaven, you will never heartily meditate of it; you may know it by

rote and by form, but you will never heartily meditate of it, till you know it to be your inheritance; and you will never heartily meditate of the Promises, till you know you have a title to them, that they are Promises made to you.

The eighth Rule is this, Labour to get a heart disengaged and disentangled from the world; a man that is dead and buried in the world, it is in vain to persuade him to go up the mount of Meditation; a bird that is in a Lime-twig, it is in vain to bid that bird fly, alas poor bird she is entangled in the Lime-twig; a man that is entangled in the lime-twigs of the world, it is in vain to bid this man mount up in Meditation. The love of the world is like the plague of flies that Pharaoh had in Egypt, he could not eat a bit of meat, but the flies got into his meat, and got into his drink; so a man that is up to the ears in the world, cannot pray, cannot hear a Sermon, and cannot receive the Sacrament, but this plague of flies comes there; the thoughts of the world is at the Sacrament with him, in Prayer with him, on the Sabbath-day with him. The love of the world (pray pardon me in this expression) is just like a familiar spirit; for indeed I cannot speak too much against it; a Witch, that hath a familiar spirit, it will go along with her wheresoever she goes; when she hath once entertained it, she can never be rid of it, but the Devil will haunt her; so the love of the world is an invisible Devil, and will haunt you wheresoever you go; if you go to the Sacrament, there the Devil will haunt you; if you go to the mount of Meditation, the Devil and the

world will be there; if you go to pray, there the Devil will be. And you that are in these lime-twigs, it is in vain to preach to you the Doctrine of Divine Meditation; and therefore let me speak to you as God did to Moses, Put the shoes off thy feet, for the place whereon thou stands is holy ground: So do I say, if ever you would be qualified for this duty of Divine Meditation, put the shoes off your feet. You must labour to be mortified to the world, and worldly things; you must labour to get a Heavenly frame of spirit; it is in vain to persuade a worldly man to meditate of Heavenly things, I do but beat the air; for such as the heart is, such will the man be; if the heart be lustful, the man will meditate of lustful things, and act lustful things; if the heart be worldly, the man will be worldly; such as thy heart is, such is thy thoughts, such are thy affections, such are thy actions; and till thy heart be Heavenly, thou canst never be a fit practitioner of this duty; and therefore labour for a Heavenly heart.

The ninth Rule is this, Be not discouraged though you find a difficulty in the beginning, of practicing this duty, but accustom thy self to it: Custom will make perfectness; *usus promptus facit*; Custom will make it an easy thing; as an Apprentice that is newly bound to his Master, finds his Trade very hard at first, but afterwards by custom, when he hath been a year or two at it, then it is very easy; so at the first you will find it very hard to meditate of Christ, to abide and dwell long at it; but let me assure you, accustom your selves to it, and you will find it very easy through Gods mercy.

Have you not known many a man and woman that hath been by the Physician prescribed to walk up a hill every day, at the first he finds it very hard, he is not able to do it, but within a month or two it begins to be easy, and they that before could not go up the hill without resting almost twenty times, now they can go up without resting at all. Oh the hill of Meditation is hard for us to climb, that are so full of the world, so full of vanity and folly; but if you did accustom your selves to climb up this hill, by often doing of it, you would find it very easy.

The tenth and last Rule is this, Do all these things by power derived from Jesus Christ; I do not think that it is in your power to do these things, but I know there is power in Christ, and Christ will give you power, as the Apostle saith, Phil. 4. 13. I am able to do all things through Christ, that strengtheneth me. Go to Christ for a Heavenly heart, for a serious spirit, to kindle in thee a love to Heavenly things, to show thee thy interest in Heavenly things; for if thou didst know thy interest in them, thou wouldest often think of them; or if thou didst love them, thou wouldest often think of them; or if thou hadst a Heavenly heart, thou wouldest often think of them. Oh therefore go to Christ, and whatsoever you ask in the name of Christ, it shall be given unto you.

2. I am to set down Rules for the right ordering the materials, the subjects that we are to meditate upon. And here I shall give you in these four Rules.

I. Be sure that in the beginning, till you come to be acquainted with this duty, you pick out easy subjects to

meditate upon; there are some subjects that are very abstruse, and sublime, and difficult; it is a hard matter for a weak Christian to spend an hour in the meditation of the ineffable and great mystery of the Trinity, or in the meditation of the Hypostatical Union of the two Natures of Christ in one Person, or in the meditation of the Mystical Union between Christ and a Christian. And therefore my advice is, that in the beginning of the practice of this rare duty, you would pick out easy subjects to meditate upon. As for example, I should think that it were an easy thing to spend an hour in meditating upon the Attributes of God, to meditate of Gods Omnipotence, and Gods Omniscience, and Gods Omnipresence, and the All-sufficiency of God, the Everlastingness of God, the Eternity of God, the Perfections that are in God, and so to meditate upon the works of God, the work of Creation, to meditate what God made the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth day; to meditate on the goodness and mercy of God in creating the great fabric of Heaven and Earth; and to meditate of the work of Redemption, to meditate of Jesus Christ, of the Divine and humane nature of Christ. I should conceive it were an easy thing, especially to you that love Christ, to spend a great deal of time in meditation of the love of God in sending Christ to become man, and of the love of Christ, the mystery of love, the miracle of love in God becoming man, and to meditate of the life of Christ, and the death of Christ; what Christ suffered in the Garden when he sweat drops of blood; and what he suffered upon the Cross, when he cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me. Of the love of Christ that died for us, and of the persons for whom Christ died; for us when we were sinners: and of the patience and humility of Christ whilst he was dying for us; and to meditate of the Resurrection of Christ, the Ascension of Christ, and the Offices of Christ, the Kingly, Priestly, and Prophetical Office; and to meditate of our interest in Christ, and how we should do to walk worthy of Christ. I conceive there are few that truly fear God, that are so little furnished with spiritual knowledge, but are able to spend an hour in meditating upon these things. I might add another meditation, and that is the meditation of Heaven; who is there that hath any thing of Heaven in him, that cannot spend an hour in meditating?

1. Of the happiness of Heaven in general. It is a place where we shall have such joys that eye never saw, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; it is a place where we shall be crowned with three Crowns, a Crown of Life, a Crown of Glory, a Crown of Righteousness. It is an inheritance that hath three Properties, which any understanding Christian may spend many years in thinking of, An inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never fadeth away.

2. To meditate of the happiness of Heaven in particular; as for example, who is there of such a low form of grace, that cannot spend time to meditate of the Beatifical Vision! what a happiness it will be in Heaven to see God face to face! for God is an universal Good, all good is in God; God is all happiness, and therefore he that is admitted to see God, sees all happiness in

God. And then to meditate of the sight of Christ; what a rare thing will it be for a poor soul to live forever in Heaven with Jesus Christ, and to behold his face! to be with the Lord Christ! And then to meditate of the company that we shall have in Heaven, to be present with Angels and Archangels, with all the Patriarchs, and with all the holy men of God that ever have been. And then to meditate of the place it self; Heaven is the Paradise of God, it is the Throne of God, it is the first building, the highest building, the largest building, the best building, of the Creation of God. And then to meditate of the perpetuity of those joys: who cannot spend a little time in meditating of the eternity of the joys of Heaven, not only the perfection but the perpetuity of them! and then to meditate of thy interest in these joys, whether you are a person qualified to go to Heaven; and then to meditate how thou mayest do to get to be qualified to go to that holy place, in which no unclean person shall ever enter. That is the first Rule.

2. I would have you use variety in your Meditation. I would not have you always dwell upon one subject; the strongest stomach will loath to eat always of one dish; and therefore I gave you in several particulars to meditate upon; I gave you a large field to walk in; and I did this the rather, that so you might have matter enough, you might not be drawn dry for want of subjects; that you might sometimes pick one flower, and then another flower, and then another flower; Variety will much delight a Christian. And truly I would fain have this duty not be a burden to any, but a

delight to all. Sometimes I would have you meditate of the vanity of the world, and sometimes of death, of the certainty and uncertainty of death; and how to be fit for death. Sometimes I would have you meditate of the day of Judgment, sometimes of Hell, sometimes of Heaven, sometimes of the sinfulness of sin, sometimes of the love of Christ. So I would have you walk in the garden of Divine Meditation, from flower to flower, that you may take the more delight and content in. it.

The third Rule is this, Be sure to pick out such subjects to meditate upon especially, which do most of all work compunction in the heart, that do most of all stir up holiness, and provoke you to godliness and piety. Of this kind is the meditation of the Incarnation of Christ, the Meditation of the Life and Death, and Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. It is a meditation, if the Lord bless it, that will mightily provoke you to holiness, and to piety, and to thankfulness; so the meditation of death is a sin-mortifying meditation; and so the meditation of Heaven, and the day of Judgment, these are soul-sanctifying meditations. So likewise the meditation of the vanity of the world, and the sinfulness of sin; I would have you pick out soul-awakening, and soul-sanctifying subjects to meditate upon; there are some men, and not a few of those, that spend many hours in meditating when the Jews shall be converted, and in finding out the time when the great slaughter and massacre of the two Witnesses spoken of in Rev. 11. shall happen; and in studying out the meaning of the Prophecy of Daniel, and the Revelations; to know

whether there shall be a Personal Reign of Christ a thousand years upon earth, and when that shall happen. Now you shall observe that these men are very barren in devotion, that ravel out all their thoughts and meditations in finding out the secrets of God, such things as God hath kept secret unto himself; these men are very barren and dry in practical Divinity. I have read a story of a man that studied the Critical Questions of School-divinity so long, that he forgot to say his prayers, he could not pray. And you shall find, that those that empty all their strength and ability in studying speculations and notions, are very barren in matters of practice; and therefore my counsel is, that you would especially pick out subjects that will help you to be weaned from the world, to walk humbly with God, that will kindle a holy fire of love in your souls to Christ, and will make you more like unto Christ, and more conformable to his death and resurrection. It is true, a great understanding, and an acute wit, will make a learned man, but it is the holy life that makes a good man.

4. Pick and choose out such subjects especially to meditate upon, that are most seasonable to thy condition, most suitable to thy relation, and to that estate in which God hath set you; for these will most affect the heart. As for example, to give you three or four instances.

1. Suppose thou art a man troubled in mind, exceedingly dejected; thou art ready to despair, because thou art a great sinner, and thou thinkest God will not

be merciful unto thee; and thou art afraid lest Christ hath forsaken thee: Now I would have thee pick out such a subject to meditate upon, that will suit thy condition. I would have thee go and meditate of the willingness of Christ to receive poor sinners; not only the ability, but the willingness of Christ to pardon all that come unto to him; Jesus Christ is not only able, but he is willing to pardon a penitent sinner, one that comes to him for life; he is more willing to pardon us, than we can be to ask pardon. If you are willing to leave your sins, Christ is more willing to receive thee, than thou canst be to be received; Jesus Christ would never have took such a journey from heaven to earth, if he had not been very willing to save poor sinners. He is so willing to save you if you come to him, as that he came unsent for; the Patient did not send for the Physician, but the Physician came of his own accord from Heaven; The Son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost, Matthew 18. 11. therefore he must needs be-willing. For a Physician to take such a journey, and to come of his own accord; and when he came here, and saw he could not cure his Patient but by his own death, the Physician dies to cure the Patient; the Physician makes a bath, a medicine of his own blood to cure his Patient; this did Christ: and therefore he was very willing to receive you; if he had not been willing to save sinners, he could never have provided such Gospel-Ordinances. And then again, he must needs be willing, for he hath sworn if any man come unto him, he will receive him: If any man come to me, I will in no wise cast him out. He hath engaged himself with promise; and Christ must

be a liar, (I speak it with a great deal of reverence) if you should come to him and he refuse you; and when he was here upon earth, he complains of nothing but that men would not come unto him: You will not come unto me that you might have life. He never complained of the greatness, or the naughtiness of their diseases; he cured the diseases of all that came unto him; but all his complaining was, that they would not come unto him. Now did you go into your Closets, and meditate upon these things, and pray unto God to bless the meditation of these things, would not this cure your troubled Consciences?

2. And again, you that are troubled in conscience, meditate of the Promises of God; and not only those Promises that are made, to those that have grace, but meditate of the Promises that God hath made, to give grace. Study the Promises God hath made not only to give pardon to them that repent, but the Promises God hath made to give repentance to those that ask it. God hath not only promised to give pardon to those that believe and repent, but God hath promised to give repentance, Act. 5. 31. and God hath promised to give faith, Phil. 1. 29. God hath not only promised pardon to a broken heart, but he hath promised to give a broken heart, Ezek. 36. 26. Now do you go into your Closets and meditate of these things; they would be very refreshing to you. And then again,

3. Suppose thou art in outward want, the Lord hath blasted thy estate, thou hast lost all thy estate, and art like Job upon the dunghill, thou art driven it may be to

beg thy bread; thou art now a poor man not worth an half-penny; thou wert a rich man, the Lord hath blown upon all thou hast; this is a sad condition! now I would have such an one spend a great deal of time in meditating of the wonderful Providences of God towards his poor children; consider how God feeds the fowls of the air, and the ravens, how God provides for the lillies. I would have him read Matthew 6. from the 24th verse to the end of that Chapter; Consider (saith Christ) the lillies and the fowls of the air, how God provides for them; and therefore be not distracted in thy heart, take no thought what thou shalt eat, and what thou shalt drink, &c. but study the Providence of God. And then meditate of the Promises that God hath made unto his children, to give them whatsoever shall be necessary for them. I would have such people as are low in estate, read the Bible, and pick out all the Promises that God hath made to those that want, that fear his name; God hath promised the young Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. And I will never leave you nor forsake you. Gather up all the Promises God hath made to believers when they are poor, and have lost all.

4. Art thou sick, like to lose thy husband, or thy own life? then pick out seasonable meditations, seasonable subjects; go and meditate of death, meditate how Christ hath taken away the sting of death. Meditate how death is a gate to let us into everlasting life; how death is an

out-let to all misery, and an inlet to all happiness; that death is the best friend that thou hast, next to Jesus Christ.

5. Suppose thou art to receive the Sacrament, what must thou do a little before thou receivest it? I would have you every Month before you come to the Sacrament, spend one hour or two in meditating of the Sacrament, of the nature of it, the necessity of coming; meditate whether you are a worthy receiver; and what thou must do that thou mayest be a worthy receiver; meditate of thy sins, thy graces, thy spiritual wants. Let me commend this to you every Sacrament, and never forget it; meditate to find out thy sins, to be humbled for them; meditate to know whether thou hast any grace in truth, and to get it increased; and meditate of thy spiritual wants what they are, to get them supplied. What a rare deal of matter is here contained in these three particulars, to find out thy sins by the glass of the Law? by taking the Law of God, and examining thy life, and the Law together, that would cost thee many an hour; and then to get thy heart humbled for these sins, and to confess them, and to have grace to forsake them. And then to examine thy Graces, whether thou hast truth of grace; whether thy grace be merely counterfeit, and a shadow of grace; and if thou hast truth of grace, how to get it increased by the Sacrament; and then to meditate what you lack, and what thou wouldest have from Christ, and to get that supplied.

The third thing is, to set down Rules and Directions for the right ordering of our meditation upon these subjects.

And here I will lay you down Rules to direct you how to meditate, rules to help you how to begin, and then how to go on, and proceed to hold out an hour in meditation, for the better progress in it; and then rules how you shall finish and conclude this excellent duty of Meditation.

1. Rules to teach you how to begin and enter upon this excellent work of Meditation; and here I will lay down six rules for your first entrance.

1. Be sure that you pick out a fit place to meditate in; you know Isaac went out into the field to meditate; and I have showed you, that this example doth not oblige us always to go into the field, but it obliges us to retire to some secret place, whether it be thy Closer, or the fields.

2. When you enter upon this work, be sure to get a fit time, pick out a seasonable time; Isaac picks out the evening, and thou mayest pick out the morning if it pleases you, (thou art not obliged punctually to this example) or thou mayest pick out the afternoon; but thou must be sure to pick out that time that is the fittest time; you that are great persons have time enough; you to whom the Lord hath given wealth; I showed the poor man how he should husband his time. We have all time enough on the Lords-day to busy our selves with the work of Meditation, it is a Sabbath-days work, as you have heard.

3. You must be sure of a fit subject, you must not have your subject to seek, when you begin to meditate; meditate of a soul-awakening, a soul-refreshing subject.

4. When you have your place and your time, and your subject, (these three are proper to the beginning of this work) then I would advise you to set your selves as in Gods presence; though no eye sees you, yet consider the great God sees you, and especially when you are meditating of Divine things; for you must know, that meditation of Divine things is a conversing with God. When you meditate of Heaven, you converse with Heaven, and the glory of Heaven, it is the souls transmigration to Heaven, it is the souls transfiguration; and therefore I would have you set your selves as in Gods presence; and this will overawe you, and make you serious; the consideration of the presence of God, will prepare you for every holy duty; & so consequently for this holy duty; it is a rare preservative against all sin; as Joseph said to his Mistress, How can I do this evil and sin against my God? though no body saw him, yet he knew God saw him, Genesis 39. 10. And it is a rare encouragement to all godliness, Psalm 119. 168. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies, (why so?) for all my ways be before thee. Therefore whensoever you go into your Orchards, or Gardens, or your Closets, to set apart an hour in Divine Meditation, I would have you do as David did, Psalm 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me.

5. I would have you always begin with prayer; now I do not mean to begin with a solemn set long prayer, but I

would have you begin with a short ejaculation; I would have you pray unto God to enlighten your understandings, to quicken your devotion, to warm your affections, and so to bless that hour unto you, that by the meditation of holy things you may be made more holy, you may have your lusts more mortified, and your graces more increased, you may be the more mortified to the world, and the vanity of it, and lifted up to Heaven, and the things of Heaven. And therefore in the Hebrew the same word that signifies to meditate, signifies to pray, and as it is said in my Text, Isaac went out to meditate, you shall find it in the Margent, Isaac went out to pray. Meditation must always be joined with Prayer. Isaac went out to pray and meditate, to meditate and pray; saith Bernard, Meditation without prayer, is barren and unfruitful. Therefore I would have you begin with a short prayer.

6. I would have you keep your hearts with all keeping, Prov. 4. 23. have a care in the entrance of thy heart, pray unto God to keep out inward company. You know I told you of a twofold company, of an outward company, and inward company; pray unto God not only to keep out outward company, but inward company; that is, to keep out vain, and worldly, and distracting thoughts. A man may easily drive out outward company, he may easily be alone; but it is a hard matter to drive away inward company, thy vain worldly and distracting thoughts. I would have you say to the world when you go up to meditate of Heaven, or of Grace, or of God, as Christ said to his Disciples, Matthew 26. 36.

Sit you here while I go yonder and pray. So I would have you say to the world and all worldly thoughts, Tarry you here while I go into my Closet to meditate of the things of God, and Heaven, to meet with God in Heavenly things. And I would have you say as Abraham did to his servants, Genesis 22. 5. He said unto the young men, abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship. Tarry you here below while I go up to the Mount of God. Now I know this is a hard matter, I am not ignorant of it, to drive away this plague of flies that pester our best duties; and therefore we must do as the Priest did to King Uzziah, he would needs offer Incense, and the Priest hindered him, and the Lord plagued Uzziah, and the leprosy appeared in his forehead, and the Priest came and thrust him out of the Temple. So I would have you do when you go to your Closets to meditate, your vain thoughts will crowd into the Temple of your hearts; I would have you do as these Priest did, thrust out these vain thoughts out of the temple of your hearts, or rather pray unto God to do it; for alas, it is above our power to get free from distracting thoughts in this duty; pray unto the Lord, who is the heart-maker, that he would be the heart-preparer; for when you go to meditate, God looks especially at your hearts, and if your hearts be full fraught with lustful, vain, worldly, carnal, covetous thoughts, he scorns all your service. Now do not mistake me, I mean if you willingly yield to this; if you strive against it, God will accept of it; let it be thy work, (that is my rule) to keep thy heart with all keeping, when you begin this work. And labour to get thy heart

disengaged and disentangled from worldly things. So much for the beginning, and of the six Rules to direct you in the entrance upon this work.

2. I will lay down Rules for the better proceeding in this work; for this you must know, there are two faculties of the soul that must always be set on work in the practice of Divine Meditation; the one is the Understanding, the other is the heart and affections; for Divine Meditation is not only an act of the head, but of the heart; and true Meditation must not only be intellectual and notional, but practical and affectionate. The work of the Understanding is to blow up and increase, to kindle and inflame the love of God and Christ in the heart; the Understanding, to the heart and affections must be as the nurse to the child, as the nurse cuts the meat and, many times chews it, and prepares it for the child to eat, so doth the Understanding by Divine Truths, it prepares them for the affections; and the heart to close with them, to eat them, and digest them, and to turn them into a holy conversation. These are the two faculties we must set on work; and you never meditate aright, unless the affection be raised as well as the understanding; and therefore both heart and head are the parts that must be exercised in the practice of the duty of Divine Meditation. Now the work of the head or understanding is serious consideration of the Truths we come to meditate upon; the work of the heart is increase of devotion and holiness by these Meditations. Now I will speak to both, I will give you Rules to help the

intellectual part, your contemplation of Divine things, and Rules to help the affectionate part.

1. I will give you Rules for the helping the understanding, to chew and prepare the things you meditate upon, for the heart and affections. Now here I must tell you I shall be somewhat difficult and hard to be understood, this is the knottiest and most difficult part of Meditation; and therefore learned men that write of this subject, that labour to teach the art of Divine Meditation, do give in nine common-place-heads, as so many several ways of the enlarging the understanding in the consideration of the Truths that they meditate upon.

1. They would have you describe the thing you meditate upon.

2. They would have you divide and distribute the thing you meditate upon.

3. They would have you consider the causes of the thing you meditate upon.

4. The fruits and effects.

5. The adjuncts, qualities and properties.

6. The opposites and the contraries to it.

7. The comparisons to which it is compared.

8. The titles that are given to the thing of which you meditate.

9. All the Scripture-testimonies that may be brought concerning the thing you are to meditate upon.

Now there are nine common-place-heads, and these I fear are very difficult; but that I might help you a little, I will give you an example, I will go over these Logical heads: only I will preface thus much, That it is not the intent of these learned men that we should be over-curious in prosecuting all these Logical heads, for the end of Meditation is not to practice Logic, but to kindle devotion; and there are many subjects that will not admit of all these nine. When I meditate of God, I cannot show any cause of God, and I cannot make any comparison to compare God to; but the meaning of those learned men is this, that we should not rack and torture our understandings to pursue all these heads of reasons, but we should pick out so many of them as are most suitable to the subjects we are meditating upon. As for example, Suppose I would go into my Closet, and meditate of the sinfulness of sin, then I would go over all these nine heads; and by going over them, you will understand the use of them. I would meditate of the sinfulness of sin, that so I might get my heart to hate it more, that so I might study to be more mortified to it, to mourn for it. Now for this purpose, that I might enlarge my intellectual part of consideration,

1. I will begin with the description of sin, and I will say thus to my soul, when I am alone: Oh my soul! why shouldest not thou hate and abhor sin? is not sin the breach of the holy law of God? and doth it not therefore deserve eternal damnation? is not sin a walking

contrary unto God? and certainly that man that walks contrary to God, walks contrary to Heaven, and contrary to his own happiness. Is not sin most opposite to the greatest good, and therefore must needs be the greatest evil? and why then should not sin have the greatest sorrow? why should not I hate sin above all things, if it be the greatest evil?

2. I would proceed to the distribution of sin; and thus I would say to my soul: Oh my soul! how art thou belepered with sin! how art thou all over bespread with iniquity! thou art guilty of the first sin that ever was committed in the world, of Adam's eating the forbidden fruit; that sin was justly thine by imputation: For in him (saith the Apostle) we all sinned, Rom. 5. 12. And thou wilt never be free from the guilt of the imputation of Adam's sin, till thou be by faith made partaker of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Thou art guilty, Oh my soul, not only of Adam's sin by imputation, but of Original sin by propagation; thou wert conceived in sin, and thou art born in iniquity; thou hast a nature which you carry about with thee, which makes thee prone to all sin, and indisposed to all good; thou hast a nature that defiles all thy holy duties, and thou art guilty of many actual transgressions, of heart-sins, of lip-sins, of life-sins, of sins of omission; how many good duties have I omitted! of sins of commission, how many evil actions have I committed! and thou art guilty of sins against the Law, and sins against the Gospel; (then would I reckon up some sins) and then thou art guilty of fleshly, and outward, and visible sins; and thou art

especially, Oh my soul, guilty of inward, spiritual and invisible sins, of heart-adultery, though not outward adultery; of heart-murder, of heart-idolatry, of pride, vain-glory, hypocrisy, self-seeking. There is the second head, the division of sin.

3. I would come to the third head, and consider the original and cause of sin; and I would say thus: Oh my soul! surely God is not the author of all these sins that I am guilty of; it is the greatest blasphemy in the world to charge God with our sins; God cannot be the author of that of which he is the punisher. Judas did not betray Christ, because it was determined he should do it, but it was out of covetousness; and the brethren of Judah did not fell Joseph because it was decreed they should do it, but out of envy. Oh! it is my wicked heart that is the root of all my sin; it is not the Devil that is the original of my sin, for the Devil cannot force me to sin; the Devil persuades me to sin, tempts me to sin, but he cannot compel me to sin; sin came into the world by Adam's disobedience, Rom. 5. 12. By one man sin came into the world. And my wicked heart is the root of all my sin: Oh my soul! why shouldst not thou abhor thy self because of thy sin.

4. I would have you consider the cursed fruits and effects of sin; and I would say thus: Oh my soul! be thou humbled for thy sins; Oh lye in the dust because of thy sin; for it is sin that is the cause of all evil, both Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal; sin brings spiritual, temporal, and eternal curses; it was sin put devilishness into the Angels, and made the Angels in Heaven to

become Devils in Hell; it was sin that brought the flood upon the old world; it was sin that turned Heaven into Hell, and made God rain down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah; it is sin that kindles the fire in Hell; the fire of Hell would go out were it not for sin; sin is worse than Hell, because it is the cause of Hell; and I would meditate thus: Surely sin is more opposite to God than Hell, for God is the author of Hell, God made Hell for sinners, but God is not the author of sin; and therefore, Oh my soul, do thou hate sin more than affliction, nay more than Hell it self.

5. I would proceed to consider the adjuncts and properties of sin in general, and of my sin in particular; and I would thus meditate upon this common-place head: Oh that the Lord would work in my heart a further abhorrency of all sin! Oh that sin might be more loathed; for sin is of a defiling nature, of a destructive nature; sin is of a defiling nature, it defiles my person, it defiles my Sacraments, my Prayers, the Sermons I hear; it makes me like a dog, like a swine, nay it makes me like a Devil; I have chosen twelve, and one of you is a Devil. Sin makes you nasty and loathsome in Gods sight; sin defiles your civil actions, The plowing of a wicked man is sin; sin defiles the land in which you live, Ezek. 14. The land is defiled by your idolatry; sin defiles the whole Creation. Oh my soul! wilt thou make a sport of that which defiles the whole Creation? And then I would say, sin is of a destructive nature, it destroys the body, it destroys the soul forevermore. And then I would consider the properties of my sin in

particular; I would say thus: Oh my soul! how great is thy guilt! I have sinned not only against God, but against light; my sins have bloody aggravations, I have sinned against the heart-blood-mercy of Jesus Christ. I have sinned against many Sacrament-vows that I have made; I have sinned against knowledge, against conscience.

6. I would consider the opposites to the thing I meditate on; what is opposite to sin? why Grace; Then I would meditate of the excellency of Grace; and I would say, Oh my soul! how beautiful is that soul that is endued with Grace! sin makes me like a Devil, sin stamps the Devils image upon my soul, but Grace makes me Gods picture; Grace is the portraiture of the Holy Ghost; Grace ennobles the soul, it legitimates the soul, it elevates the soul. Oh the beauty of a soul enriched with grace! Oh the Heavenly excellency of a gracious soul! Now by how much Grace is more excellent, by so much is sin more odious, for sin destroys Grace.

7. I would consider the comparisons to which sin is compared; and I would say thus, Oh my soul! wilt thou not abhor sin? sin is compared to bruises, sores, putrefaction, a leprosy, a plague, the excrements of a man. And it is called in Scripture an abominable thing; it is compared to the filth under a mans nails, and to the putrefactions of sores; and the dung, the excrements of man; and wilt thou love that which is loathsome to God? shall sin be so abominable in the sight of God, and shall it not be so in my sight?

8. I would consider the titles that are given to sin; and I would say thus, Sin is called a robbing of God, Mal. 3. shall I rob God of his glory by my sin? Oh! God forbid. Sin is called an injury to God; shall I injure my Saviour by my sins? It is called a striking thorough the name of God, so the Hebrew word signifies, which we translate to swear; it is a Deicidium, the killing, the murdering of God; and Oh my soul! wilt thou do as much as in thee lies to murder thy Saviour, to crucify Christ afresh by thy sins?

9. I would consider all that the Scripture saith concerning sin; I would consider the wrath of God against sin, I would consider all the Threatnings of God against sin; and especially I would study what Christ suffered to free us from sin, and I would behold the odiousness of sin upon Christ's Cross; sin made Christ sweat drops of blood, and shall it not make me shed tears? Sin made Christ cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and shall it not make me cry out, Oh miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin? And then I would consider what hope there is of pardon through Christ, and what promises there are made of pardon.

Thus I have cut out a pattern, and gone over these nine heads; and you will say here is work for many hours to that Christian that is of a mean capacity, that is able in some measure to go over these; here you see what a rich furniture you have by going over these Logical helps; and as I have done concerning sin, so may you do concerning the Sacrament; and when you meditate

of Heaven, you may go over these heads, and consider the description of Heaven, and the distribution of it, and the causes, and the effects, and the opposites, and the comparisons, and this will furnish you with intellectual matter. Now because these Logical heads are somewhat difficult, I will give you some plainer rules, for helping ordinary Christians, those that are babes in the school of Grace, and are not able to enlarge their thoughts upon any subject; I will give you briefly five easy Rules to help you to enlarge your thoughts upon what subjects you choose to meditate on.

1. You must consider what the Scripture saith of the subject you would spend an hour in meditation about; as for example, would you meditate of the Promises? do you want matter to furnish you? take the Bible, and consider what the Scripture saith concerning the preciousness of the Promises, the freeness, the riches, the infallibleness of the Promises, the universality of the tender of the Promises, the variety of the Promises; consider what the Scripture saith of Promises to Grace, and promises of Grace; consider all the many rare and admirable Promises that are in the Word of God, and pick out some choice of them to meditate on. So likewise would you meditate of the Sacrament? take your Bible and consider what you have read concerning the Sacrament, the nature of it, and the excellency of it, the excellency of the Feast, and the end why God hath appointed the Sacrament, and the way and means by which you may come to be prepared, and made fit to be worthy, receivers; and consider the danger of coming

unworthily, and the happiness of coming worthily. But if this be too hard, I will give you an easy help.

2. Consider what Sermons you have heard of that subject you would meditate upon, and labour to recollect the heads of any Sermon you have heard, and make use of them to help you to enlarge your thoughts in meditation. As for example, I have made many Sermons of late upon the Promises, any of those Sermons would furnish you with matter enough for Meditation upon the Promises; I have made many Sermons upon the week-day to set out the happiness of Heaven; and many Sermons I have preached lately of the Divine Attributes of God, which is a rare subject to meditate upon. If you would meditate of the Attributes of God, you must labour to recollect what you have heard of this subject, and that would furnish you with matter. So would you meditate of Heaven, or of any thing that you find too hard to enlarge your selves about? take the help of Sermons that you have heard; or if that be too hard for you, let me propound a third.

The third way that is easier than both these: Take a book that treats of the subject you would meditate upon; there is no Divine Subject but there is some book or other that doth treat of it; there are many books that treat of the four last things, which are four rare materials of Meditation, the Quatuor Novissima, Death and Hell, and the day of Judgment and Heaven; and there are many books that treat of the preciousness of the Promises, the sinfulness of sin, the excellency of Christ, and the Sacrament. Now if you find that you are

barren in Meditation, and do not know how to spend an hour in meditating upon any of these Subjects, take one of these books before thee. Now I do not mean you should read these books, but only pick out some choice things, and then muse and meditate what these books will suggest unto you.

4. Let me add another Rule, Be sure always in your meditation, to join application; be sure to join examination, and application, and contemplation, and consideration; this is a rule of great concernment to the weakest of Christians. As for example, would you meditate of sin, of the sinfulness of sin? be sure to draw down your meditation to application, make application to thy own soul, and consider whether thy sins are pardoned; not only consider the grievousness of sin in general, for general contemplation of things, though never so excellent, will not work upon the soul; I hardly ever heard of a man that was converted by Generals; it is the particular application that works upon the heart and affections; Nathan, as long as he told David of his sin in a Parabolical way, David was not wrought upon; he was fain at last to tell him, Thou art the man; then David confesses his sin; you shall seldom hear a general Sermon do good, it is the particular application that works upon peoples hearts. And therefore in all your exercise of Divine Meditation, be sure to draw down things to particulars: As for example, wouldst thou meditate of Heaven? apply it to thy soul, and ask thy soul, Am I fit and meet to go to that place? have I a Heavenly disposition? have I Heavenly qualifications?

am I one of those whose names are written in Heaven? is that my inheritance? is that my house? This will exceedingly affect you, it will make your Meditation to be very useful, and very powerful; and so when you meditate of death, still draw down to examination, Am I fit for death? will death be an happy hour to me? am I one of those that shall enjoy God after death?

The fifth Rule is this, Be sure always in your meditation to consider the means how to obtain what you meditate upon, if it be good; and the means to shun it, if it be evil. The means to get what you meditate upon, if it be good: if you meditate of Heaven, then consider the means how to enjoy that blessed inheritance; and if you meditate of the Promises, consider how you shall do that by which you may be heirs of all these Promises; and on the contrary, if you meditate of evil things, what means there are to be used to shun these evil things; if you would meditate of sin, what must I do to avoid sin, that I may be unpolluted and undefiled, that I may get my sins pardoned, and my soul purged; and when you meditate of Hell, what shall I do to escape those everlasting burnings? these are the five helps to weak Christians.

6. You to whom the Lord hath given understanding, I would have you fly to those nine common-place-heads: if you be able study the cause of the thing you meditate upon, the effects and the properties, and the distribution and description, &c. and this I am sure will furnish you with rare matter, with abundance of materials of meditation; that man that is pleased to put these things

in practice, will find his heart will never want matter to meditate upon.

So much for the Intellectual part of Meditation, which is the knotty and difficult part.

2. Now I come to that which is the easiest part of Meditation, I mean easy to understand, but not easy to practice; I come to that which is the best part of Meditation, the very life and soul of Meditation, and that is to help you to get your affections warmed and heated by the things you meditate upon; for the work of the understanding is nothing else but to be as a Divine pair of bellows, to kindle and inflame the heart and affections; the work of the understanding is to chew and prepare matter, to help the affections. Now then I am to give you some directions and helps for the affectionate part, to get your affections warmed and heated, so as to stir up piety and devotion in your souls: Now for the working upon your affections, learned men that write upon this subject, propound six common-places, as so many ways to raise the affections, and to get them so excited as to increase grace and holiness in the soul.

1. You must labour to get a relish and a savour of the things you meditate upon.

2. You must complain before God for the want of that relish.

3. You must wish you had a supply of what you want of this relish and taste of the things you meditate on.

4. You must confess your inability, as of your selves to do this.

5. You must petition to God for help.

6. You must confidently believe God will help you.

Here are six helps for the affectionate part of Meditation; now that you may know the use of these helps, I shall crave leave to go over them all by way of instance; I have given you an instance concerning the sinfulness of sin, I went over nine common-place heads, and showed you how you should enlarge in every particular about the sinfulness of sin; now I will proceed further in this instance, and show you how you should make use of these Particulars, to get your affections raised and warmed, and stirred up to more holiness. After that I have traversed all the heads of reason, and have considered the description, the distribution, cause and effects of sin, now I come to the work of the affections. And here,

1. I will labour to get my heart affected with the bitterness of sin, I will labour to taste the bitterness of it, and to get my heart in a mourning frame; and I will thus say to my self, Oh my soul, is sin so odious to God, that no sacrifice but the sacrifice of the blood of God can appease Gods wrath? and shall it not be odious to me? was sin so displeasing unto God, and so defiling to the soul, that no bath but a bath of Christ's blood can wash away the stain of it? and shall I make a mock of that sin that cost the blood of Christ? was sin a burden to Christ? and shall it not be a burden to me? Thus I

would reason with my self, Did sin make Christ shed drops of blood, and shall it not make me shed a few tears? Did Christ cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, for our sins, I mean for our sins he took upon him? and shall I make a sport of sin? shall I make a mock of sin? Doth David complain, That his sins was a burden too heavy for him to bear. And doth Paul cry out, Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin? And shall not sin be bitter to me? shall not I mourn that I have sinned against so gracious a God, so merciful a Redeemer, so holy a Sanctifier?

2. I would proceed to the second, and begin to complain of the hardness of my heart, and of my unaffectedness with the sins I am guilty of; and I would thus say to my soul, Oh my soul! how is it that thou canst mourn for any outward loss, if thou lovest but a child, though it may be thou hast half a score? if thou lovest but one of them, thou canst mourn immoderately; if thou lovest thy wife, thy husband, any part of thy estate, thou canst mourn too much; but thou hast not one tear for thy sins? how is it, Oh my soul, that thou shouldest be thus hard-hearted, and unaffected with thy sins? Is not sin Deicidium? is not sin a murdering of God in as much as in us lies; is not sin animacidium, that which slays the soul? is not sin a dethroning of God, a robbing of God, an injuring of God? how is it then that I am no more affected with my sin? how is it that after so many Sermons, so many Sacraments, so many years being in the School of Christ, after so many mercies received

from God, so many afflictions the Lord hath inflicted upon me, yet my heart should be so hard, and so flinty, and so stony? I can easily hate my enemy too soon, which I should not do, but Sin that is my greatest enemy I cannot hate that, which I should hate most of all! I must love my outward enemy, but God bids me hate my Sin; God doth not bid me love the Devil, or the works of the Devil; I can hate that which I should love, but I cannot hate that which I should hate, I cannot hate my Sin.

3. I would proceed to stir up my affections to a passionate wish; and I would say to my soul thus, Oh that my heart were more soft; Oh that I could mourn with a godly mourning, not with a legal mourning, but with a mourning that is out of love to God. Oh that I could mourn with repentance unto life, with a Gospel-sorrow for all my sins of omission, commission, my Sacrament-sins, my family-sins, my Closet-sins, the sins of my youth, the sins of my riper age, for all my unkindness against my God: Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I could mourn day and night for my sins, and the sins of the times, and the sins of the place wherein I live: Oh that rivers of tears would run down my eyes, because I have sinned against my God! Thus would I wish, and passionately express my self, that so I might get my heart raised up: Oh that the Lord would pour down the spirit of mourning upon me.

4. I would make an humble confession of my own inability, to mourn; and I would say thus, O Lord! thou

knowest it is not in man to direct his own ways, it is not in man to guide his own steps; I know, Oh Lord, that I am not able of my self to think a good thought; it is easier for me to cleave a rock in pieces, than to cleave my rocky heart by my own strength; there must be an Almighty power to get my heart to be soft; for my heart, Oh Lord, is harder than the nether millstone, and I cannot soften it; I would mourn that I cannot mourn, that I have not power; I can do nothing without power derived from Jesus Christ.

5. I would go to supplication after confession, and I would petition to God for strength; and I would say, Oh Lord! thou that hast promised to take away my heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh; hast thou not promised to work all my works in me, and for me? hast thou not promised to subdue my iniquities? Micah 7. 19. hast thou not promised that Sin shall not have dominion over me? this is the promise, Rom. 6. now Lord, thou hast promised these things, I beseech thee perform these Promises; thou God of Truth, make good thy word, take away my heart of stone, and give me to mourn for my great abominations; and work this work in me and for me; and subdue my iniquities, and let not Sin have dominion over me; rather give me over to the dominion of men: though I would not be a slave to men, yet I had rather be a slave to all the men in the world, yea a slave to the Turk, than a slave to the Devil; rather be a Galley-slave than a Devils-slave; of all slavery, Lord, deliver me from soul-slavery. And thus I would supplicate and petition; and when I have done all this,

6. I would encourage my self by faith in a confident hope and trust in God, that the Lord will hear my prayer, and give me strength against my corruptions, and supply me with help in all my necessities; and I would say thus, Oh Lord, thou hast promised that whatsoever I ask in the name of Christ, shall be granted unto me; blessed God! I ask this day in the name of Christ pardon of Sin, and power against Sin, and a broken heart for Sin, and from Sin; I ask repentance unto Salvation; thou hast promised to give it, I believe thou wilt give it; I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. And then I would say to my soul, why art thou disquieted, Oh my soul? why art thou cast down? why art thou troubled? still trust in God, depend upon God, he is my help, he is my joy, in him will I put my trust.

Thus I have gone over these Six Heads, I have given you one instance. Now I would have you know, whatsoever I have said of Sin, I can go over of any Subject whatsoever; suppose I would meditate of Heaven, after I have meditated of the joys and excellencies of Heaven, and all those particulars in the Intellectual part; then, to work upon my affections, I would labour to get my heart affected with the joys of Heaven, and then I would complain that I am no more affected with those joys, and with the Beatifical Vision, and the rare company that I shall there enjoys; and then I would passionately wish, Oh that my heart were more heavenly; Oh that I could taste more of those everlasting joys, that the Lord would come down and heavenlize me, and then I would confess my inability of

my self, and I would supplicate for help, and I would confidently believe that the Lord will send down heaven into my heart, and the joys of it, before I come thither.

That which I say of the sinfulness of sin, you may make use of in all other Subjects that you meditate upon. So much for the Rules and Directions, for the better helping you to proceed and go on in the duty of Meditation.

3. Now there remains only some Rules for the conclusion of all. When thou hast begun and entered upon this duty, and made a progress in it, when thou comest to make a conclusion, shut up thy Meditation of Divine things with thankfulness, with resolution, and with recommendation of thy soul to God.

1. I say, conclude with thankfulness; lift up thy heart to God, and bless his name that hath enlarged thy soul, and enabled thee to spend an hour in meditation of holy things; especially if you find your hearts affected with what you meditate upon, if you have gotten from the intellectual part into the affectionate; if you have gotten your souls raised up. As for example, if you have been meditating of Heaven, and you find a Heavenly frame wrought in you, you find a desire to be with the Lord, and you find some assurance that your name is written there, and some manifestations of God to your souls, Oh then close up all with an Hallelujah, Blessed be the Lord for the assistance of this hour. So likewise, have you been meditating of Sin, and find at the conclusion, that thy heart is somewhat soft, and doth begin to

mourn for thy Sin, and thou art troubled that thou hast offended thy God; and the Lord hath wrought in thee some confidence, some spiritual assurance that thy Sins shall be mortified, and that the Lord will keep thee that thy sin shall not have dominion over thee? then conclude with a Hallelujah, lift up thy heart, and bless the Lord for his assistance. I might likewise add, when thou hast been meditating on the Promises, or of Death, whatsoever the Subject thou art meditating upon is, if the Lord hath wrought thee to have a heart above the fear of death, by meditating of death, and thou hast learned to be willing and ready to die; Oh bless the Lord for his assistance.

2. I would have you close with a resolution of heart, to spend thy life as becomes one that hath been meditating of holy and heavenly things. As for example, I have been meditating of the Promises, I will shut up my Meditation with resolution, by the grace of God, to live more upon the Promises than ever I have done; I have lived too much upon the Creature, but now I will live more upon God, and his Promises; I will close up with a resolution, by the power of my God, to study my interest in the Promises more, and suck out the sweetness of them more; and to be more acquainted with the freeness, and the fullness, and riches, and preciousness of them. And so would you meditate of Heaven? I would conclude with a resolution, that I would labour to live more heavenly, and walk as becomes one that looks to live with Christ for ever in Heaven. You must know these spiritual resolutions are

spiritualia vincula obedientiae, they are spiritual bonds to tie the soul fast to God. As the beast was tied to the horns of the Altar in the old Law, that was to be sacrificed; so these blessed vows and resolutions are heavenly cords to tie the soul faster to God; and that is the reason every why Sacrament we renew our vows and resolutions; as God renews his engagements to us, so do we renew our engagements to God every Sacrament. Now I would have you close up your Meditation by binding your souls faster to God, in a holy resolution; Divine resolution is the spiritual hedge of the soul (saith one) to keep the soul from breaking out into ungodly courses.

3. Shut up all with a short commendation of thy self, thy body, thy soul, thy wife, thy children, (if thou hast any) thy estate, all that thou hast, recommend them unto thy God; shut up all with a sweet resignation of thy self, and all thy affairs, and all thy ways; As David saith, Commit your ways unto the Lord; commit your selves and your affairs, all that you are, all that you have, into the hands of the Lord, as a faithful Creator, and a merciful Redeemer. I would have you close up all with a committing, and a submitting; committing thy ways unto God, submitting unto God in all his ways; purposing to live to his glory, and to walk worthy of that heavenly calling to which thou art called. And thus I have put an end to this subject of Divine Meditation. Now what remains but to persuade you to the practice of these things? That which a learned man who hath written a Tract called, The art of Divine Meditation,

closes his book with, let me close this with: saith he, Oh that my words were as so many gourds to quicken up the dead, and dull, and drowsy hearts of Christians, to a conscientious practice of this excellent duty of Divine Meditation! It is a strange speech that he useth! saith he, I will give any man leave to curse me upon his death-bed, if he doth not then acknowledge, that those hours that he hath spent in Divine Meditation, have been the best hours that he hath spent in all his life; if he doth not then confess he is sorrowful that he spent no more hours in so blessed a work.

Sure I am, when you lye upon your death-bed, this will be your comfort: Lord, I have been often in Heaven in Meditation, and now I am going to that place that I am acquainted withal: Oh my God! I have been often with thee in the Mount, I have been often meditating of thee: Oh my blessed Saviour! thou art no stranger to me; I have been often meditating of Christ. Oh what comfort will this be to you when you lye upon your death-beds! I will not say, curse me if you do not find this true; but I will say, this is as sure as the Word of God is true, you will find it so.

There are four things I will conclude this Discourse withal. 1. I would humbly beseech you, that you would mourn before God that you have lived so many years in the School of Christ, and have been no more acquainted with this duty of Divine Meditation: I believe there are very many that have been long standers in Christ's School, that never yet practiced this duty of Divine Meditation, that never were half an hour together in the

Mount of God solemnly and seriously. Now I beseech you, mourn before the Lord, that we have been no more acquainted with this blessed and heavenly duty.

2. Let us mourn before the Lord that we have misplaced our meditation; for the heart of man is restless, it is like the weight of a Clock, that will never leave going down as long as it is wound up; the heart of man will always be meditating of something or other; like mill-stones, if they once grind, they will grind one another; the heart of man will always be grinding, always musing, always meditating on something or other: Now mourn before God heartily, and go into your Closets and bemoan it, that you have ground chaff to your immortal souls all your lives long; that you have spent your days in meditating what to eat, and what to drink, and what to be clothed withal, and how to grow rich, and how to manage your trading, and your calling, how to thrive in the world, how to get such preferments; you have been meditating all your lives long upon vain things, and have not meditated upon the things of eternity, those things that do most concern you; you have been meditating upon trifles, upon things that will not profit at the hour of death, and forgot to meditate of those things that are of eternal concernment; our Saviour Christ complains of those men, Matthew 6. Take no thought for your lives, what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, nor for your body what you shall put on; as if he should say, why do you spend all your time in taking thought of eating, and drinking, and clothing, and outward things? Which of you (saith he) can by

taking thought add one cubit to your stature? All your musing and meditating of them is vain. Can a Dwarf by thinking he is a Dwarf, make himself taller? it is not all your musing and your meditating of these outward things, I mean your inordinate meditating, will advantage you. I grant Tradesmen must have time to meditate of worldly things; I will not lay heavier burdens than the Scripture doth lay; but when you ravel away all your time in meditating upon earthly things, and never are serious in the Meditation of heavenly things, this I would have you mourn for; you that are old people, and have been many years professors of Religion, Oh mourn that you have wasted your intellectual faculty, that you have wasted that glorious faculty of soul, your understanding, in such vain and trifling things; nay, are there not some that do not only meditate of vain things, but spend many hours in meditating on vile things? that devise mischief upon their beds, and meditate how to cozen their neighbours, how to be revenged upon their neighbour, how to do mischief, how to compass about their wicked designs? are there not some that meditate to do evil, and rejoice in the meditation of evil when they have done it? Many old men meditate with joy of their youthful vanities, and wickedness committed in their youth, they chew over their wicked ways with delight, which we call contemplative wickedness. Oh let us bewail and bemoan it before God, that we have squandered away our immortal souls, by exercising the glorious faculty of the understanding in such poor trifling things, it may be lustful, revengeful, vile, wicked thoughts; either in

doing that which is evil, or in meditating on the evil we have done; instead of mourning for it, rejoicing in it.

3. I would persuade you to study the necessity, the excellency, the usefulness, and profitableness of Divine Meditation; let me tell you for the conclusion, this duty is not only a duty, but the quintessence and marrow of all other duties; there is no duty will take impression upon your souls without the practice of this duty; it is the very life and soul of Christianity, without which a Christian is but the carcass of a Christian. I have showed, that the want of Divine Meditation is the cause of all sin, and all punishment; I have showed you, that the practice of Meditation will help to beget Grace, and increase Grace, and resist the Devil and all his temptations.

4. Let me persuade you all, that you would put this duty in practice; especially you that are rich people, Gentlemen, Merchants, and others; you that have estates, you that are Gentlemen, may spare time from your sports; and you that are rich Merchants and others, may take time from your outward occasions: O let me entreat you that you would take some spare-time every day, to go up to the Mount of God, to meditate of some of those Subjects that I have propounded to you, whether it be Death, or Hell, or Heaven, or Judgment, or Sin, or Christ, or God, or the vanity of the world, whatsoever the Subject is, that is holy and heavenly. I will not lay burdens upon you, I know there may be such occasions that you cannot; but ordinarily that you would as often as you can, make conscience to

accustom your selves to this necessary and long-neglected duty of Divine Meditation.

Let me tell you, you would be tall Christians in grace if you did accustom your selves to this duty; the reason why you are such Dwarfs in Christianity, and so unacquainted with God, and the Promises, and Christ, and Heaven, is for the want of the practice of this duty; this is the reason why you creep upon the ground, and are so poor in Grace, and so lean in Religion. Therefore let me entreat you, especially you whose happiness is that you need not work every day to provide for your families; the Lord hath given you an estate, and you may spare time; Oh let it not be said at the day of Judgment, that you lost Heaven for the want of the practicing this duty of Divine Meditation!

And then you that are poor people, and cannot find time; you that are Servants and Apprentices, that have not time, remember what I said concerning Occasional Meditation, I showed you how you might meditate when you were about your worldly business; there is no lawful calling that a man can be in, but if he hath a heavenly heart he may heavenlize that calling, he may take occasion (as Christ takes occasion to heavenlize his Discourse from outward things) to raise Heavenly Discourse; when thou art at work, thou mayest be by Divine Meditation in Heaven. But let me persuade you all on the Sabbath-day, (though you have not time on the week-day for set, solemn Meditation; yet then you have time for occasional Meditation, for on the Sabbath all your work ceases) that is the day that God hath set a

part for public service, and private Meditation; Meditation on the work of Creation, and the work of Redemption; it is a great work we are to do upon the day of our rest, to meditate of our Eternal Rest in Heaven; therefore let me persuade you to spend some time on the Sabbath-day upon Meditation, but especially on the Sacrament-days. There are Twelve Meditations I propounded to meditate on upon the Sacrament, and I chose this Subject to help you with Sacramental Meditation; it hath pleased God to carry me out further in the handling of it than ever I thought.

The Lord give a Blessing to it.

FINIS