far they should be followed. And although one cannot have certain demonstrations of everything one must also, as we have said, take sides and adopt the views which are most common and moderate concerning practical matters. For one could do nothing worse than remain permanently undecided.

The ninth: although bodily pleasures are very inferior to those of the mind, one should not however reject them completely when they do not conflict with reason, but should be content not to look too eagerly for them. Nor should one try to have no passions; one should try simply to subject them to reason.

The tenth is: that one should fear more the loss of one’s reason when it occurs through one’s own fault than the loss of one’s life, for we cannot be happy without the use of reason. And natural philosophy alone without the teaching of faith gives hope to our soul for a happier state after death than the one it currently enjoys. It does not make it fear anything worse than being attached to a body which takes away nearly all its freedom.

The eleventh is: just as our satisfaction can be disturbed only by remorse and regret, in order to do ourselves justice and protect ourselves from that, we should act in such a way that we can always truthfully report about ourselves that we omitted nothing which was within our power in order to try to find out what was best and most reasonable, and that we did not lack the determination to implement it.

The twelfth and final one is: to reflect often on these rules and maxims. Apart from knowledge of the truth, habit is also required in order to be always well disposed to judge well. For insofar as we cannot be continuously attentive to the same thing, no matter how clear and distinct the reasons which once convinced us of some truth, we can easily be diverted subsequently unless by a long and frequent meditation we have so impressed it on our mind that it is turned into a habit.

**Final Chapter**

**General Remedies for the Impetuosity of the Passions and the Adversities of Fortune**

It is not my intention to explain here all the ways with which philosophy provides us to oppose each passion in particular, because Mr Descartes has already done so and because my plan in this treatise was only to explain the faculties of the soul a
little more than he had done. That is why I shall content myself here with introducing only some general considerations which can serve as a rule to curb all their impetuosity.

The first is: we should refrain from making any judgment about anything that we encounter as long as we are agitated by passions. For all their motions and all the inclinations which flow from them come only from the confused knowledge of the senses and we have already established above as a rule that we should abstain from judging whenever we do not see things clearly enough. But because this consideration applies only when the soul is not required to decide quickly to act and when it has the leisure to apply itself to thoughts which are capable of diverting its imagination from thinking about the object of its passions; when it happens, on the contrary, that the situation requires us to make a decision, one should apply oneself as much as possible to reflecting and following the reasons which would convince us to do the opposite of what our passion dictates, for we should be alerted once that all that tends only to deceive us. And although it is difficult to inhibit the flow of spirits which tend to go into the muscles which can be used to execute the motions of our passions, we shall however succeed on condition that we apply ourselves to detach from our mind the thoughts which usually accompany those motions and if we take as much trouble and effort to divert the flow of spirits as we sometimes use in training horses or dogs. For all the training of animals consists in this alone that, by our efforts, that is, by the blows we give them, by patting them and threatening them, we cause certain movements of the muscles to be linked with species on the gland other than those with which they are naturally linked. In this way the old routes which the animal spirits had formed among the fibres of the brain lapse and new ones are formed.

But the most useful consideration of all is to busy oneself, when one is not disturbed by passions, to think about the goods and evils which can fall to our lot during the course of our lives, to weigh up their precise value to form solid judgments about them subsequently, and to make firm resolutions to flee from some and seek others despite the thoughts or new reasons which the passions may suggest to us. For it is by means of these judgments which are certain and premeditated that we should regulate all the actions of our life and combat the influence of our passions, and not by opposing one passion to another. It is also by this greater or less resolution that one judges the strength or weakness of souls — among which there is none so weak that, if it were well trained and became accustomed to making these reflections, it could not eventually acquire an absolute power over all its passions.

Moreover, although desire is a particular passion, it is however involved in almost all the others and hence one could count the considerations which serve to moderate it among the general remedies for the passions. Besides, desires usually cause most damage when they are unregulated and for that reason have most need

250 Cf. Passions, Parts II and III.