

therford's Letters, &c.;—my Treatise of Self-denial;—the Believer's Last Work;—the Last Enemy Death;—and the Fourth Part of my Saints' Rest. I will add no more, lest they seem too many.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Directions for the Right Teaching of Children and Servants, so ~~as~~ may be most likely to have Success.

I **H**ERE suppose them utterly untaught that you have to do with; and therefore shall direct you what to do, from the very first beginning of your teaching, and their learning. And I beseech you study this Chapter more than many of the rest; for it is an unspeakable loss that befalls the church, and the souls of men, for want of skill, and will, and diligence, in parents and masters in this matter.

Direct. 1. 'Cause your younger children to learn the words, though they be not yet capable of understanding the matter.' And do not think as some do, that this is but to make them hypocrites, and to teach them to take God's name in vain: for it is neither vanity nor hypocrisy to help them first to understand the words and signs, in order to their early understanding of the matter and signification. Otherwise no man might teach them any language, nor teach them to read any words that be good, because they must first understand the words before the meaning. If a child learn to read in a Bible, it is not taking God's name or Word in vain, though he understand it not: for it is in order to his learning to understand it; and it is not vain which is to so good a use: if you leave them untaught till they come to be twenty years of age, they must then learn the words before they can understand the matter. Do not therefore leave them the children of darkness, for fear of making them hypocrites. It will be an excellent way to redeem their time, to teach them first that which they are capable of learning: a child of five or six years old can learn the words of a catechism or Scripture, before they are capable of understanding them. And then when they come to years of understanding, that part of their work is done,

and they have nothing to do but to study the meaning and use of those words which they have learned already. Whereas if you leave them utterly untaught till then, they must then be wasting a long time to learn the same words which they might have learned before; and the loss of so much time is no small loss or sin.

Direct. II. 'The most natural way of teaching children the meaning of God's Word, and the matters of their salvation, is by familiar talk with them suited to their capacities: begin this betimes with them while they are on their mother's laps, and use it frequently. For they are quickly capable of some understanding about greater matters as well as about less; and knowledge must come in by slow degrees: stay not till their minds are possessed with vanity and toys.

Direct. III. 'By all means let your children learn to read, though you be never so poor, whatever shift you make.' And if you have servants that cannot read, let them learn yet, (at spare hours,) if they be of any capacity and willingness. For it is a very great mercy to be able to read the Holy Scripture, and any good books themselves, and a very great misery to know nothing but what they hear from others. They may read almost at any time, when they cannot hear.

Direct. IV. 'Let your children when they are little ones read much the history of the Scriptures.' For though this, of itself, is not sufficient to breed in them any saving knowledge, yet it enticeth them to delight in reading the Bible, and then they will be often at it when they love it; so that all these benefits will follow. 1. It will make them love the book (though it be but with a common love). 2. It will make them spend their time in it, when else they would rather be at play. 3. It will acquaint them with Scripture history, which will afterwards be very useful to them. 4. It will lead them up by degrees to the knowledge of the doctrine, which is all along interwoven with the history.

Direct. V. 'Take heed that you turn not all your family instructions into a customary, formal course, by bare readings and repeating sermons from day to day, without familiar personal application.' For it is ordinarily seen that they will grow as sleepy, and senseless, and customary, under

such a dull and distant course of duty, (though the matter be good,) almost as if you had said nothing to them. Your business therefore must be to get within them, and awaken their consciences to know that the matter doth most nearly concern them, and to force them to make application of it to themselves.

Direct. vi. 'Let none affect a formal, preaching way to their families, except they be preachers themselves, or men that are able for the ministry: but rather spend the time in reading to them the most powerful books, and speaking to them more familiarly about the state and matters of their souls.' Not that I think it unlawful for a man to preach to his family, in the same method that a minister doth to his people; for no doubt but he may teach them in the profitablest manner he can. And that which is the best method for a set speech in the pulpit, is usually the best method in a family. But my reasons against this preaching-way ordinarily, are these:—1. Because it is very few masters of families that are able for it, (even among them that think they are;) and then they ignorantly abuse the Scripture, so as tends much to God's dishonour. 2. Because there is scarce any of them all, but may read at the same time, such lively, profitable books to their families, as handle those things which they have most need to hear of, in a far more edifying manner than they themselves are able, (except they be so poor that they can get no such books.) 3. Because the familiar way is most edifying: and to talk seriously with children and servants about the great concernments of their souls, doth commonly more move them than sermons or set speeches. Yet because there is a season for both, you may sometimes read some powerful book to them, and sometimes talk familiarly to them. 4. Because it often comes from pride, when men put their speech into a preaching method to shew their parts, and as often nourisheth pride.

Direct. vii. 'Let the manner of your teaching them be very often interlocutory, or by way of questions.' Though when you have so many or such persons present, as that such familiarity is not seasonable, then reading, repeating, or set speeches may do best; but at other times, when the number or quality of the company hindereth not, you will

find that questions and familiar discourse are best. For, 1. It keepeth them awake and attentive, when they know they must make some answer to your questions; which set speeches, with the dull and sluggish, will hardly do. 2. And it mightily helpeth them in the application; so that they much more easily take it home, and perceive themselves concerned in it.

Direct. viii. ' Yet prudently take heed that you speak nothing to any in the presence of others, that tends to open their ignorance or sin, or the secrets of their hearts, or that any way tendeth to shame them' (except in the necessary reproof of the obstinate). If it be their common ignorance that will be opened by questioning them, you may do it before your servants or children themselves, that are familiar with each other, but not when any strangers are present. But if it be about the secret state of their souls that you examine them, you must do it singly, when the person is alone. Lest shaming and troubling make them hate instruction, and deprive them of all the benefit of it.

Direct. ix. ' When you come to teach them the doctrine of religion begin with the baptismal covenant, as the sum of all that is essential to Christianity: and here teach them briefly all the substance of this at once.' For though such general knowledge will be obscure, and not distinct and satisfactory, yet it is necessary at first; because they must see truths set together: for they will understand nothing truly, if they understand it but independently by broken parts. Therefore open to them the sum of the covenant or Christian religion all at once, though you say but little at first of the several parts. Help them to understand what it is to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And here you must open it to them in this order. You must help them to know who are the covenanters, God and Man: and first the nature of man is to be opened, because he is first known, and God in him who is his image. Familiarly tell them, " That man is not like a beast that hath no reason, nor freewill, nor any knowledge of another world, nor any other life to live but this: but he hath an understanding to know God, and a will to choose good and refuse evil, and an immortal soul that must live for ever: and that all inferior creatures were made for his

service, as he was made for the service of his Creator. Tell them that neither man, nor any thing that we see, could make itself; but God is the Maker, Preserver, and Disposer of all the world. That this God is infinite in power, and wisdom, and goodness, and is the Owner, and Ruler, and Benefactor, Felicity, and End of man. That man was made to be wholly devoted and resigned to God as his Owner, and to be wholly ruled by him as his Governor, and to be wholly given up to his love and praise as his Father, his Felicity, and End. That the tempter having drawn man from this blessed state of life, in Adam's fall the world fell under the wrath of God, and had been lost for ever, but that God of his mercy provided us a Redeemer, even the eternal Son of God; who being one with the Father, was pleased to take the nature of man, and so is both God and man in one person; who being born of a virgin, lived among men, and fulfilled the law of God, and overcame the tempter and the world, and died as a sacrifice for our sins, to reconcile us unto God. That all men being born with corrupted natures, and living in sin till Christ recover them, there is now no hope of salvation but by him. That he hath paid our debt, and made satisfaction for our sins, and risen from the dead, and conquered death and satan, and is ascended and glorified in heaven; and that he is the King, and Teacher, and High-priest of the church. That he hath made a new covenant of grace and pardon, and offered it in his Scriptures, and by his ministers to the world; and that those that are sincere and faithful in this covenant shall be saved, and those that are not shall remedilessly be damned, because they reject this Christ and grace, which is the last and only remedy. And here open to them the nature of this covenant: that God doth offer to be our reconciled God, and Father, and Felicity, and Christ to be our Saviour, to forgive our sins, and reconcile us to God, and renew us by his Spirit, and the Holy Spirit to be our Sanctifier, to illuminate, and regenerate, and confirm us; and that all that is required on our part, is such an unfeigned consent, as will appear in the performance in our serious endeavours. Even that we wholly give up ourselves to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, to be justified, taught, and governed by Christ, and by him to be brought again to the Father, to love him as our God

and End, and to live to him, and with him for ever. But whereas the temptations of the devil, and the allurements of this deceitful world, and the desires of the flesh, are the great enemies and hindrances in our way, we must also consent to renounce all these, and let them go, and deny ourselves, and take up with God alone, and what he seeth meet to give us, and to take him in heaven for all our portion. And he that consenteth unfeignedly to this covenant, is a member of Christ, a justified, reconciled child of God, and an heir of heaven, and so continuing, shall be saved; and he that doth not shall be damned. This is the covenant, that in baptism we solemnly entered into with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Father and Felicity, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier." This in some such brief explication, you must familiarly open to them again and again.

Direct. x. 'When you have opened the baptismal covenant to them, and the essentials of Christianity, cause them to learn the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments.' And tell them the uses of them; that man having three powers of soul, his understanding, his will, and his obediencial or executive power, all these must be sanctified, and therefore there must be a rule for each; and that accordingly the creed is the summary rule to tell us what our understandings must believe; and the Lord's prayer is the summary rule to direct us what our wills must desire and our tongues must ask; and the ten commandments are the summary rules of our practice: and that the Holy Scripture, in general, is the more large and perfect rule of all; and that all that will be taken for true Christians, must have a general, implicit belief of all the Holy Scriptures, and a particular, explicit belief, desire, and sincere practice, according to the creeds, Lord's prayer, and ten commandments.

Direct. xi. 'Next teach them a short catechism (by memory), which openeth these a little more fully, and then a larger catechism.' The shorter and larger catechisms of the Assembly are very well fitted to this use. I have published a very brief one myself, which in eight articles or answers containeth all the essential points of belief, and in one answer, the covenant-consent, and in four articles or answers more, containeth all the substantial parts of Christian duty:

The answers are some of them long for children^a; but if I knew of any other that had so much in so few words, I would not offer this to you, because I am conscious of its imperfections. But there are very few catechisms that differ in the substance; whichever they learn, let them as they go have your help to understand it, and let them keep it in memory to the last.

Direct. XII. 'Next open to them more distinctly the particular part of the covenant and catechism.' And here I think this method most profitable for a family; 1. Read over to them the best expositions that you can get on the creed, the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, which are not too large to confound them, nor too brief, so as to be hardly understood. For a summary, "Mr. Brinsley's True Watch" is good; but thus to read to them, such as "Mr. Perkins on the Creed," and "Dr. King on the Lord's Prayer," and "Dodd on the Commandments," are fit; so that you may read one article, one petition, and one commandment at a time; and read these over to them divers times. 2. Besides this in your familiar discourse with them, open to them plainly one head or article of religion at a time, and another the next time, and so on till you come to the end. And here (1.) Open in one discourse the nature of man and the creation. (2.) In another (or before it) the nature and attributes of God. (3.) In another the fall of man, and especially the corruption of our nature, as it consisteth in an inordinate inclination to earthly and fleshly things, and a backwardness, or averseness, or enmity to God and holiness, and the life to come; and the nature of sin; and the impossibility of being saved till this sin be pardoned, and these natures renewed, and restored to the love of God and holiness, from this love of the world and fleshly pleasures. (4.) In the next discourse, open to them the doctrine of redemption in general, and the incarnation, and natures, and person of Christ, particularly. (5.) In the next, open the life of Christ, his fulfilling the law, and his overcoming the tempter, his humble life, and contempt of the world, and the end of all, and how he is exemplary and imitable unto us. (6.) In the next, open the whole humiliation and suffering of Christ, and the pretences of his persecutors, and the ends

^a It is in my Universal Concord, and by itself.

and uses of his suffering, death, and burial. (7.) In the next, open his resurrection, the proofs, and the uses of it. (8.) In the next, open his ascension, glory, and intercession for us, and the uses of all. (9.) In the next, open his kingly, and prophetic offices in general, and his making the covenant of grace with man, and the nature of that covenant, and its effects. (10.) In the next, open the works or office of the Holy Ghost in general, as given by Christ to be his agent in men on earth, and his great witness to the world; and particularly open the extraordinary gift of the Spirit to the prophets and apostles, to plant the churches, and indite, and seal the Holy Scriptures; and shew them the authority and use of the Holy Scriptures. (11.) In the next, open to them the ordinary works of the Holy Ghost, as the illuminator, renewer, and sanctifier of souls, and in what order he doth all this, by the ministry of the Word. (12.) In the next, open to them the office, and use, and duty of the ordinary ministry, and their duty toward them, especially as hearers, and the nature and use of public worship, and the nature and communion of saints and churches. (13.) In the next, open to them the nature and use of baptism, and the Lord's supper. (14.) In the next, open to them the shortness of life, and the state of souls at death, and after death, and the day of judgment, and the justification of the righteous, and the condemnation of the wicked at that day. (15.) In the next, open to them the joys of heaven, and the miseries of the damned. (16.) In the next, open to them the vanity of all the pleasure, and profits, and honour of this world, and the method of temptations, and how to overcome them, (17.) In the next, open to them the reason and use of suffering for Christ, and of self-denial, and how to prepare for sickness and death. And after this, go over also the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments.

Direct. XIII. 'After all your instructions make them briefly give you an account in their own words of what they understand and remember of all; or else the next time to give an account of the former.' And encourage them for all that is well done in their endeavours.

Direct. XIV. 'Labour in all to keep up a wakened, serious attention, and still to print upon their hearts the greatest things.' And to that end, for the matter of your teach-

ing and discourse, let nothing be so much in your mouths, as 1. The nature and relations of God. 2. A crucified and a glorified Christ, with all his grace and privileges. 3. The operations of the Spirit on the soul. 4. The madness of sinners, and the vanity of the world. 5. And endless glory and joy of saints, and misery of the ungodly after death. Let these five points be frequently urged, and be the life of all the rest of your discourse. And then for the manner of your speaking to them, let it be always with such a mixture of familiarity and seriousness that may carry along their serious attentions, whether they will or no. Speak to them as if they or you were dying, and as if you saw God, and heaven, and hell.

Direct. xv. 'Take each of them sometimes by themselves, and there describe to them the work of renovation, and ask them, whether ever such a work was wrought upon them.' Shew them the true marks of grace, and help them to try themselves: urge them to tell you truly, whether their love to God or the creature, to heaven or earth, to holiness or flesh-pleasing be more: and what it is that hath their hearts, and care, and chief endeavour; and if you find them regenerate, help to strengthen them. If you find them too much dejected, help to comfort them; and if you find them unregenerate, help to convince them, and then to humble them, and then to shew them the remedy in Christ, and then shew them their duty that they may have part in Christ, and drive all home to the end that you desire to see: but do all this with love, and gentleness, and privacy.

Direct. xvi. 'Some pertinent questions which by the answer will engage them to teach themselves, or to judge themselves, will be sometimes of very great use.' As such as these; "Do you not know that you must shortly die? Do you not believe that immediately your souls must enter upon an endless life of joy or misery? Will worldly wealth and honours, or fleshly pleasures, be pleasant to you then? Had you then rather be a saint, or an ungodly sinner? Had you not then rather be one of the holiest that the world despised and abused, than one of the greatest and richest of the wicked? When time is past, and you must give account of it, had you not then rather it had been spent in holiness, and obedience, and diligent preparation for the life to come,

than in pride, and pleasure, and pampering the flesh? How could you make shift to forget your endless life so long? Or to sleep quietly in an unregenerate state? What if you had died before conversion, what think you had become of you, and where had you now been? Do you think that any of those in hell are glad that they were ungodly? Or have now any pleasure in their former merriments and sin? What think you they would do, if it were all to do again? Do you think, if an angel or saint from heaven should come to decide the controversy between the godly and the wicked, that he would speak against a holy and heavenly life, or plead for a loose and fleshly life? Or which side think you he would take? Did not God know what he did when he made the Scriptures? Is he, or an ungodly scorners to be more regarded? Do you think every man in the world, will not wish at last that he had been a saint, whatever it had cost him?" Such kind of questions urge the conscience, and much convince.

Direct. xvii. 'Cause them to learn some one most plain and pertinent text, for every great and necessary duty, and against every great and dangerous sin; and often to repeat them to you.' As Luke xiii. 3. 5. "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." John iii. 5. "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. So Matt. xviii. 3. Rom. viii. 9. Heb. xii. 14. John iii. 16. Luke xviii. 1. &c. So against lying, swearing, taking God's name in vain, flesh-pleasing, gluttony, pride, and the rest.

Direct. xviii. 'Drive all your convictions to a resolution of endeavour and amendment, and make them sometimes promise you to do that which you convinced them of; and sometimes before witnesses. But let it be done with these necessary cautions. 1. That you urge not a promise in any doubtful point, or such as you have not first convinced them of. 2. That you urge not a promise in things beyond their present strength: as you must not bid them promise you to believe, or to love God, or to be tender-hearted, or heavenly-minded; but to do those duties which tend to these, as to hear the Word, or read, or pray, or meditate, or keep good company, or avoid temptations, &c. 3. That you be not too often upon this, (or upon one and

the same strain in the other methods) lest they take them but for words of course, and custom teach them to contemn them. But seasonably and prudently done their promises will lay a great engagement on them.

Direct. xix. 'Teach them how to pray, by forms or without, as is most suitable to their case, and parts: and either yourself, or some that may inform you, should hear them pray sometimes, that you may know their spirit, and how they profit.'

Direct. xx. 'Put such books into their hands as are meetest for them, and engage them to read them when they are alone; and ask them what they understand or remember of them.' And hold them not without necessity so hard to work, as to allow them no time for reading by themselves: but drive them on to work the harder, that they may have some time when their work is done.

Direct. xxi. 'Cause them to teach one another when they are together.' Let their talk be profitable. Let those that read best, be reading sometimes to the rest, and instructing them, and furthering their edification. Their familiarity might make them very useful to one another.

Direct. xxii. 'Tire them not out with too much at once; but give it them as they can receive it.' Narrow-mouthed bottles, must not be filled as wider vessels.

Direct. xxiii. 'Labour to make all sweet and pleasant to them: and to that end sometimes mix the reading of some profitable history: as the "Book of Martyrs," and "Clarke's Martyrology," and his "Lives."

Direct. xxiv. 'Lastly, entice them with kindnesses and rewards.' Be kind to your children when they do well, and be as liberal to your servants as your condition will allow you. For this maketh your persons acceptable first, and then your instructions will be much more acceptable. Nature teacheth them to love those that love them, and do them good, and to hearken willingly to those they love. A small gift now and then, might signify much to the further benefit of their souls.

Direct. xxv. If any shall say, that here is so much ado in all these Directions, as that few can follow them; I entreat them to consult with Christ that died for them, whether souls be not precious, and worth all this ado? And to

consider how small a labour all this is, in comparison of the everlasting end; and to remember, that all is gain and pleasure, and a delight to those that have holy hearts; and to remember, that the effects to the church and kingdom, of such holy government of families, would quite over-compensate all the pains.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Tit. 1. Directions for Prayer in General.

HE that handleth this duty of prayer as it deserveth^a, must make it the second part in the body of divinity, and allow it a larger and more exact tractate than I here intend: for I have before told you, that as we have three natural faculties, an understanding, will, and executive power, so these are qualified in the godly, with faith, love, and obedience; and have three particular rules: the creed, to shew us what we must believe, and in what order: the Lord's prayer, to shew us what, and in what order, we must desire and love: and the decalogue, to tell us what, and in what order we must do; (though yet these are so near kin to one another, that the same actions in several respects belong to each of the rules). As the commandments must be believed and loved, as well as obeyed, and the matter of the Lord's prayer must be believed to be good and necessary, as well as loved and desired; and belief, and love, and desire, are commanded, and are part of our obedience; yet for all this, they are not formally the same, but divers. And as we say, that the heart or will is the man, as being the commanding faculty; so morally the will, the love or desire is the Christian; and therefore the rule of desire or prayer, is a principal part of true religion: the internal part of this duty, I partly touched before Part i. chap. 3. And the church part I told you, why I passed by Part ii. it being not left by the government where we live, to private ministers' discussion (save

^a The Stoics say, *Orabit sapiens ac vota faciet bona a diis postulans.* Laert. in Zenone. So that when Seneca saith, *Cur Deos precibus fatigatis, &c.* he only intendeth to reprove the slothful, that think to have all done by prayer alone, while they are idle and neglect the means.