

must be first looked to; but your words and bodies must next be looked to: and if you regard not these, it is hardly credible that you regard your hearts. 1. Your words and gestures are the due expression of your hearts: and the heart will desire to express itself as it is. Many would express their hearts to be better than they are; and therefore good expressions are oft to be suspected. But few would express their hearts as worse than they are; and therefore bad appearances do seldom lie. 2. Your words and actions are needful to the due honouring of God. As evil words and actions do dishonour him, and the unseemly, disorderly performance of his service, is very injurious to such holy things; so your meet and comely words and gestures are the external beauty of the worship which you perform: and God should be served with the best. 3. Your words and gestures reflect much on your own hearts. As acts tend to the increase of the habits; so the external expressions tend to increase the internal affections, whether they be good or evil. 4. Your words and gestures must be regarded for the good of others, who see not your hearts, but by these expressions. And where many have communion in worshipping God, such acts of communion are of great regard.

---

## CHAPTER II.

*Directions about the Manner of Worship, to avoid all Corruptions, and false, unacceptable Worshipping of God.*

THE lamentable contentions that have arisen about the manner of God's worship, and the cruelty, and blood, and divisions, and uncharitable revilings which have thence followed, and also the necessary regard that every Christian must have to worship God according to his will, do make it needful that I give you some Directions in this case.

*Direct.* 1. 'Be sure that you seriously and faithfully practise that inward worship of God, in which the life of religion doth consist: as to love him above all, to fear him, believe him, trust him, delight in him, be zealous for him; and that

your hearts be sanctified unto God, and set upon heaven and holiness:’ for this will be an unspeakable help to set you right in most controversies about the worshipping of God\*. Nothing hath so much filled the church with contentions, and divisions, and cruelties about God’s worship, as the agitating of these controversies by unholy, unexperienced persons: when men that hate a holy life, and holy persons, and the holiness of God himself, must be they that dispute what manner of worship must be offered to God by themselves and others; and when the controversies about God’s service are fallen into the hands of those that hate all serious serving of him, you may easily know what work they will make of it. As if sick men were to determine or dispute what meat and drink themselves and all other men must live upon, and none must eat but by their prescripts, most healthful men would think it hard to live in such a country. As men are within, so will they incline to worship God without. Outward worship is but the expression of inward worship: he that hath a heart replenished with the love and fear of God, will be apt to express it by such manner of worship, as doth most lively and seriously express the love and fear of God. If the heart be a stranger or an enemy to God, no marvel if such worship him accordingly. O could we but help all contenders about worship to the inward light, and life, and love, and experience of holy, serious Christians, they would find enough in themselves, and their experiences, to decide abundance of controversies of this kind: (though still there will be some, that require also other helps to decide them). It is very observable in all times of the church, how in controversies about God’s worship, the generality of the godly, serious people, and the generality of the ungodly and ludicrous worshippers, are ordinarily of differing judgments! and what a stroke the temper of the soul hath in the determination of such cases!

*Direct.* 11. ‘Be serious and diligent also in all those parts of the outward worship of God that all sober Christians are agreed in.’ For if you be negligent and false in so much as you confess, your judgment about the controverted part is not much to be regarded. God is not so likely to

\* Read on this subject a small book which I have written, called “Catholic Unity.”

direct profane ones and false-hearted hypocrites, and bless them with a sound judgment in holy things, (where their lives shew that their practical judgments are corrupt,) as the sincere that obey him in that which he revealeth to them. We are all agreed that God's Word must be your daily meditation and delight<sup>b</sup>; and that you should "speak of it lying down and rising up, at home and abroad<sup>c</sup>;" and that we must be constant, fervent, and importunate in prayer, both in public and private<sup>d</sup>. Do you perform this much faithfully or not? If you do, you may the more confidently expect that God should further reveal his will to you, and resolve your doubts, and guide you in the way that is pleasing to him. But if you omit the duty that all are agreed on, and be unfaithful and negligent in what you know, how unmeet are you to dispute about the controverted circumstances of duty! To what purpose is it, that you meddle in such controversies? Do you do it wilfully to condemn yourselves before God, and shame yourselves before men, by declaring the hypocrisy which aggravateth your ungodliness? What a loathsome and pitiful thing is it, to hear a man bitterly reproach those who differ from him in some circumstances of worship, when he himself never seriously worshippeth God at all! When he meditateth not on the Word of God, and instead of delighting in it, maketh light of it, as if it little concerned him; and is acquainted with no other prayer than a little customary lip service! Is such an ungodly neglecter of all the serious worship of God, a fit person to fill the world with quarrels about the manner of his worship?

*Direct.* III. 'Differ not in God's worship from the common sense of the most faithful, godly Christians, without great suspicion of your own understandings, and a most diligent trial of the case.' For if in such practical cases the common sense of the faithful be against you, it is to be suspected that the teaching of God's Spirit is against you: for the Spirit of God doth principally teach his servants in the matters of worship and obedience.

There are several errors that I am here warning you to avoid: 1. The error of them that rather incline to the judg-

<sup>b</sup> Psal. i. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Deut. vi. 6—8.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Thes. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1. James v. 16.

ment of the ungodly multitude, who never knew what it was to worship God in spirit and truth. Consider the great disadvantages of these men to judge aright in such a case. (1.) They must judge then without that teaching of the Spirit, by which things spiritual are to be discerned\*. He that is blind in sin must judge of the mysteries of godliness. (2.) They must judge quite contrary to their natures and inclinations, or against the diseased habits of their wills. And if you call a drunkard to judge of the evil of drunkenness, or a whoremonger to judge of the evil of fornication, or a covetous, or a proud, or a passionate man to judge of their several sins, how partial will they be? And so will an ungodly man be in judging of the duties of godliness. You set him to judge of that which he hateth. (3.) You set him to judge of that which he is unacquainted with. It is like he never thoroughly studied it: but it is certain he never seriously tried it, nor hath the experience of those, that have long made it a great part of the business of their lives. And would you not sooner take a man's judgment in physic, that hath made it the study and practice of his life, than a sick man's that speaketh against that which he never studied or practised, merely because his own stomach is against it? Or will you not sooner take the judgment of an ancient pilot about navigation, than of one that never was at sea? The difference is as great in this present case.

2. And I speak this also to warn you of another error, that you prefer not the judgment of a sect or party, or some few godly people, against the common sense of the generality of the faithful: for the Spirit of God is more likely to have forsaken a small part of godly people, than the generality, in such particular opinions, which even good men may be forsaken in: or if it be in greater things, it is more unreasonable and more uncharitable for me to suspect that most that seem godly are hypocrites and forsaken of God, than that a party, or some few are so.

*Direct.* iv. 'Yet do not absolutely give up yourselves to the judgment of any in the worshipping of God, but only use the advice of men in a due subordination to the will of God, and the teaching of Jesus Christ.' Otherwise you will set man in the place of God, and will reject Christ in his

\* 1 Cor. ii. 13, 15

prophetical office, as much as using co-ordinate mediators, is a rejecting him in his priestly office. None must be called master, but in subordination to Christ, because he is our master <sup>f</sup>.

*Direct. v.* ‘Condemn not all that in others, which you dare not do yourselves; and practise not all that yourselves, which you dare not condemn in others <sup>g</sup>.’ For you are more capable of judging in your own cases, and bound to do it with more exactness and diligent inquiry, than in the case of others. Oft-times a rational doubt may necessitate you to suspend your practice, as your belief or judgment is suspended; when yet it will not allow you to condemn another whose judgment and practice hath no such suspension. Only you may doubt whether he be in the right, as you doubt as to yourself. And yet you may not therefore venture to do all that you dare not condemn in him; for then you must wilfully commit all the sins in the world, which your weakness shall make a doubt or controversy of.

*Direct. vi.* ‘Offer God no worship that is clearly contrary to his nature and perfections, but such as is suited to him as he is revealed to you in his Word.’ Thus Christ teacheth us, to worship God as he is: and thus God often calleth for holy worship, because he is holy. 1. “God is a Spirit: therefore they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth: (which Christ opposeth to mere external ceremony or shadows;) for the Father seeketh such to worship him <sup>h</sup>.” 2. God is incomprehensible, and infinitely distant from us: therefore worship him with admiration, and make not either visible or mental images of him, nor debase him by undue resemblance of him to any of his creatures <sup>i</sup>. 3. God is omnipresent, and therefore you may every where lift up holy hands to him. And you must always worship him as in his sight. 4. God is omniscient, and knoweth your hearts, and therefore let your hearts be employed and watched in his worship. 5. God is most wise, and therefore not to be worshipped ludicrously with toys, as children are

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxiii. 8—10.

<sup>g</sup> See Rom. xiv. xv. 1 Cor. viii. 13.

<sup>h</sup> John iv. 23, 24.

<sup>i</sup> The second commandment. Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. i. saith, that Possidonius believed that Epicurus thought there was no God, but put a scorn upon him by describing him like a man, idle, careless, &c. which he would not have done if he had thought there was a God.

pleased with to quiet them, but with wise and rational worship. 6. God is most great, and therefore to be worshipped with the greatest reverence and seriousness; and not presumptuously, with a careless mind, or wandering thoughts, or rude expressions. 7. God is most good and gracious, and therefore not to be worshipped with backwardness, unwillingness, and weariness, but with great delight. 3. God is most merciful in Christ, and therefore not to be worshipped despairingly, but in joyful hope. 9. God is true and faithful, and therefore to be worshipped believingly and confidently, and not in distrust and unbelief. 10. God is most holy, and therefore to be worshipped by holy persons, in a holy manner, and not by unholy hearts or lips, nor in a common manner, as if we had to do but with a man. 11. He is the Maker of your souls and bodies, and therefore to be worshipped both with soul and body. 12. He is your Redeemer and Saviour, and therefore to be worshipped by you as sinners in the humble sense of your sin and misery, and as redeemed ones in the thankful sense of his mercy, and all in order to your further cleansing, healing, and recovery. 13. He is your Regenerator and Sanctifier, and therefore to be worshipped not in the confidence of your natural sufficiency, but by the light, and love, and life of the Holy Ghost. 14. He is your absolute Lord, and the owner of you and all you have, and therefore to be worshipped with the absolute resignation of yourself and all, and honoured with your substance, and not hypocritically, with exceptions and reserves. 15. He is your sovereign King, and therefore to be worshipped according to his laws, with an obedient kind of worship, and not after the traditions of men, nor the will or wisdom of the flesh. 16. He is your heavenly Father, and therefore all these holy dispositions, should be summed up into the strongest love, and you should run to him with the greatest readiness, and rest in him with the greatest joy, and thirst after the full fruition of him with the greatest of your desires, and press towards him for himself with the most fervent and importunate suits. All these the very being and perfections of God will teach you in his worship: and therefore if any controverted worship be certainly contrary to any of these, it is certainly unwarranted and unacceptable unto God.

*Direct.* viii. 'Pretend not to worship God by that which

is destructive, or contrary to the ends of worship.' For the aptitude of it as a means to its proper end, is essential to it. Now the ends of worship are, 1. The honouring of God. 2. The edifying of ourselves in holiness, and delighting our souls in the contemplation and praises of his perfections. 3. The communicating this knowledge, holiness, and delight to others, and the increase of his actual kingdom in the world. (1.) Avoid then all that pretended worship which dishonoureth God, (not in the opinion of carnal men, that judge of him by their own misguided imaginations, but according to the discovery of himself to us in his works and Word.) Many travellers that have conversed with the more sober heathen and Mahometan nations, tell us, that it is not the least hindrance of their conversion, and cause of their contempt of Christianity, to see the Christians that live about them, to worship God so ignorantly, irrationally, and childishly as many of them do<sup>k</sup>. (2.) Affect most that manner of worship (*cæteris paribus*) which tendeth most to your own right information, and holy resolutions and affections, and to bring up your souls into nearer communion and delight in God: and not that which tendeth to deceive, or flatter, or divert you from him, nor to be in your ears as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, or as one that is playing you a lesson of music; and tendeth not to make you better. (3.) Affect not that manner of worship which is an enemy to knowledge, and tendeth to keep up ignorance in the world: such as is a great part of the Popish worship, especially their reading the Scriptures to the people in an unknown tongue, and celebrating their public prayers, and praises, and sacraments in an unknown tongue, and their seldom preaching, and then teaching the people to take up with a multitude of toyish ceremonies, instead of knowledge, and rational worship. Certainly that which is an enemy to knowledge, is an enemy to all holiness and true obedience and to the ends of worship, and therefore is no acceptable worshipping of God. (4.) Affect not that pretended wor-

<sup>k</sup> But with the barbarous it is otherwise, saith Acosta the Jesuit, p. 249. lib. i. *Proderit quam plurimum ritus et signa et omnem externum cultum diligenter curare. His quippe et delectantur et detinentur homines animales (N. B.) donec paulatim aboleatur memoria et gustus præteritorum.* So Gr. Nyssen, saith in vita Gr. Neocæs. that they turned the Pagan's festivals into festivals for the martyrs, to please them the better. Which Beda and many others relate of the practice of those times.

ship which is of itself destructive of true holiness : such as is the preaching of false doctrine, not according to godliness, and the opposition and reproaching of a holy life and worship, in the misapplication of true doctrine ; and then teaching poor souls to satisfy themselves with their mass, and mass ceremonies, and an image of worship, instead of serious holiness, which is opposed ; “ He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him<sup>l</sup>.” And if this be done as a worship of God, you may hence judge how acceptable it will be : “ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter<sup>m</sup>.” To make people believe that holiness is but hypocrisy, or a needless thing, or that the image of holiness is holiness itself, or that there is no great difference between the godly and ungodly, doth all tend to men’s perdition, and to damn men by deceiving them, and to root out holiness from the earth<sup>n</sup>. “ If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth<sup>o</sup>.” (5.) Affect not a dead and heartless way of worship, which tendeth not to convince and waken the ungodly, nor to make men serious as those that have to do with God.

*Direct.* VIII. ‘ Let the manner of your worshipping God, be suited to the matter that you have in hand.’ Remember that you are speaking to or of the eternal God ; that you are employed about the everlasting salvation of your own or others’ souls ; that all is high and holy that you have to do : see then that the manner be answerable hereunto.

*Direct.* IX. ‘ Offer God nothing as a part of worship which is a lie ; much less so gross a lie as to be disproved by the common senses and reason of all the world.’ God needeth not our lie unto his glory : what worship then do Papists offer him in their mass, who take it for an article of their faith, that there is no bread or wine left after the consecration, it being all transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ ? And when the certainty of all men’s senses is renounced, then all the certainty of faith, and all

<sup>l</sup> Prov. xxiv. 24.<sup>m</sup> Isa. v. 20.<sup>n</sup> See Ezek. xxii. 26. xlv. 23. Jer. xv. 19. <sup>o</sup> Mal. iii. 18. Psal. i. xv.



religion is renounced ; for all presuppose the certainty of sense.

*Direct. x.* 'Worship not God in a manner that is contrary to the true nature, and order, and operations of a rational soul.' I mean not to the corrupted nature of man, but to nature as rational in itself considered. As 1. Let not your mere will and inclination overrule your understandings ; and say not as blind lovers do, I love this, but I know not why ; or as children that eat unwholesome meat, because they love it<sup>p</sup>. 2. Let not passion overtop your reason : worship God with such a zeal as is according to knowledge. 3. Let not your tongues lead your hearts, much less overgo them : words may indeed reflect upon the heart, and warm it more ; but that is but the secondary use : the first is to be the expressions of the heart : you must not speak without or against your hearts (that is, falsely) that by so speaking you may better your hearts (and make the words true, that at first were not true) : unless it be when your words are but reading recitations or narratives, and not spoken of yourselves. The heart was made to lead the tongue, and the tongue to express it, and not to lead it. Therefore speak not to God either the words of a parrot, which you do not understand, or the words of a liar or hypocrite, which express not the meaning, or desires, or feeling of your hearts : but first understand and feel what you should speak, and then speak that which you understand and feel.

*Quest.* 'How then can a prayer be lawful that is read or heard from a book ?'

*Answ.* There is in reading the eye, and in hearing the ear that is first to affect the heart, and then the tongue is to perform its office. And though it be sudden, yet the passage to the heart is first, and the passage from the heart is last : and the soul is quick, and can quickly thus both receive, and be affected and express itself. And the case is the same in this, whether it be from a book, or from the words of another without book : for the soul must do the same, as quickly, in joining with another that speaketh before us, without a book as with it.

*Direct. xi.* 'Understand well how far Christ hath given

<sup>p</sup> Read Plutarch of Superstition.

a law and a rule for worship to his church in the holy Scriptures, and so far see that you take it as a perfect rule, and swerve not from it by adding or diminishing.' This is a matter of great importance by reason of the danger of erring on either side. 1. If you think that the Scripture containeth not any law or rule of worship at all, or not so much as indeed it doth, you will deny a principal part of the office of Christ, as the king and teacher of the church, and will accuse his laws of insufficiency, and be tempted to worship him with a human kind of worship, and to think yourselves at liberty to worship him according to your own imaginations, or change his worship according to the fashion of the age or the country where you are. And on the other side, if you think that the Scripture is a law and rule of worship, more particular than Christ intended it, you will involve yourselves and others in endless scruples and controversies, and find fault with that which is lawful and a duty, because you find it not particularly in the Scriptures: and therefore it is exceeding needful to understand how far it is intended to be herein our law and rule, and how far not: to handle this fully would be a digression, but I shall briefly answer it.

1. No doubt but Christ is the only universal head and law-giver to his church; and that legislation is the first and principal part of government; and therefore if he had made no laws for his church, he were not the full governor of it. And therefore he that arrogateth this power to himself to be law-giver to the church universal (as such) doth usurp the kingly office of Christ, and committeth treason against his government; (unless he can prove that Christ hath delegated to him this chief part of his government, which none can do;) there being no universal law-giver to the church but Christ (whether pope or council), no law that is made by any mere man can be universally obligatory. Therefore seeing the making of all universal laws doth belong only to Christ, we may be sure that he hath perfectly done it; and hath left nothing out of his laws that was fit to be there, nor nothing at liberty that was fit to be determined and commanded. Therefore whatsoever is of equal use or consideration to the universal church, as it is to any one part of it, and to all times as it is to any time of the church,

should not be made a law by man to any part of the church, if Christ have not made it a law to the whole: because else they accuse him of being defective in his laws, and because all his subjects are equally dependant on him as their King and Judge. And no man must step into his throne pretending to amend his work which he hath done amiss, or to make up any wants, which the chief law-giver should have made up.

2. These laws of Christ for the government of his church, are fully contained in the Holy Scriptures: for so much as is in nature, is there also more plainly expressed than nature hath expressed it. All is not Christ's law that is any way expressed in Scripture; but all Christ's laws are expressed in the Scriptures: not written by himself, but by his Spirit in his apostles, whom he appointed and sent to teach all nations to observe whatever he commanded them: who being thus commissioned and enabled fully by the Spirit to perform it, are to be supposed to have perfectly executed their commission; and to have taught whatsoever Christ commanded them, and no more as from Christ: and therefore as they taught that present age by voice, who could hear them, so they taught all ages after to the end of the world by writing, because their voice was not by them to be heard.

3. So far then as the Scripture is a law and rule, it is a perfect rule: but how far it is a law or rule, its own contents and expressions must determine. As (1.) It is certain that all the internal worship of God (by love, fear, trust, desire, &c.) is perfectly commanded in the Scriptures. (2.) The doctrine of Christ which his ministers must read and preach is perfectly contained in the Scriptures. (3.) The grand and constantly necessary points of order in preaching, are there also expressed: as that the opening of men's eyes, and the converting of them from the power of satan to God be first endeavoured, and then their confirmation and further edification, &c. (4.) Also that we humble ourselves before God in the confession of our sins. (5.) And that we pray to God in the name of Christ for mercy for ourselves and others. (6.) That we give God thanks for his mercies to the church, ourselves and others. (7.) That we praise God in his excellencies manifested in his Word and works

of creation and providence. (8.) That we do this by singing psalms with holy joyfulness of heart. (9.) The matter and order of the ordinary prayers and praises of Christians is expressed in the Scripture, (as which parts are to have precedency in our estimation and desire, and ordinarily in our expressions.) (10.) Christ himself hath determined that by baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, men be solemnly entered into his covenant, and church, and state of Christianity. (11.) And he hath himself appointed that his churches hold communion with him and among themselves, in the eucharistical administration of the sacrament of his body and blood, represented in the breaking, delivering, receiving and eating the consecrated bread, and in the pouring out, delivering, receiving and drinking the consecrated wine. (12.) And as for the mutable, subservient circumstances and external expressions, and actions, and orders, which were not fit to be, in particular, the matter of an universal law, but are fit in one place, or at one time, and not another, for these he hath left both in nature and Scripture such general laws, by which upon emergent occasions they may be determined; and by particular providences he fitteth things, and persons, and times, and places, so as that we may discern their agreeableness to the descriptions in his general laws: as that all things be done decently, in order and to edification, and in charity, unity, and peace. And he hath forbidden generally doing any thing indecently, disorderly, to the hurt or destruction of our brethren, even the weak, or to the division of the church. (13.) And many things he hath particularly forbidden in worship: as making to ourselves any graven image, &c. and worshipping angels, &c.

And as to the order and government of the church (for I am willing to dispatch all here together) this much is plainly determined in Scripture: 1. That there be officers or ministers under Christ to be the stated teachers of his people, and to baptize, and administer the sacrament of his body and blood, and be the mouth and guide of the people in public prayers, thanksgiving and praises, and to bind the impenitent and loose the penitent, and to be the directors of the flocks according to the law of God, to life eternal; and their office is described and determined by Christ. 2. It is

required that Christians do ordinarily assemble together for God's public worship; and be guided therein by these their pastors. 3. It is required that besides the unfixed ministers, who employ themselves in converting infidels, and in an itinerant service of the churches, there be also stated, fixed ministers, having a special charge of each particular church; and that they may know their own flocks, and teach them publicly and from house to house, and the people may know their own pastors that are over them in the Lord, and honour them and obey them in all that they teach them from the Word of God for their salvation. 4. The ministers that baptize are to judge of the capacity and fitness of those whom they baptize; whether the adults that are admitted upon their personal profession and covenanting, or infants that are admitted upon their parents' profession and entering them into covenant. 5. The pastors that administer the Lord's supper to their particular flocks, are to discern or judge of the fitness of those persons whom they receive newly into their charge, or whom they admit to communion in that sacrament as members of their flock. 6. Every such pastor is also personally to watch over all the members of his flock as far as he is able; lest false teachers seduce them, or satan get advantage of them, or any corruption or root of bitterness spring up among them and defile them. 7. It is the duty of the several members of the flock, if a brother trespass against them, to tell him his faults between them and him: and if he hear not, to take two or three, and if he hear not them, to tell the church. 8. It is the pastor's duty to admonish the unruly, and call them to repentance, and pray for their conversion. 9. And it is the pastor's duty to declare the obstinately impenitent incapable of communion with the church, and to charge him to forbear it, and the church to avoid him. 10. It is the people's duty to avoid such accordingly, and have no familiarity with them that they may be ashamed; and with such, no, not to eat. 11. It is the pastor's duty to absolve the penitent, declaring the remission of their sin, and re-admitting to the communion of the saints. 12. It is the people's duty to re-admit the absolved to their communion with joy, and to take them as brethren in the Lord. 13. Though every pastor hath a general power to exercise his

office in any part of the church, where he shall be truly called to it; yet every pastor hath a special obligation (and consequently a special power) to do it over the flock, of which he hath received the special charge and oversight.

14. The Lord's day is separated by God's appointment for the churches' ordinary holy communion in God's worship under the conduct of these their guides. 15. And it is requisite that the several particular churches do maintain as much agreement among themselves, as their capacity will allow them; and keep due synods and correspondences to that end. Thus much of God's worship, and church order and government at least is of divine institution, and determined by Scripture, and not left to the will or liberty of man. Thus far the form of government (at least) is of divine right.

But on the contrary, 1. About doctrine and worship; the Scripture is no law in any of these following cases, but hath left them undetermined. (1.) There are many natural truths, which the Scripture meddleth not with: as physics, metaphysics, logic, &c. (2.) Scripture telleth not a minister what particular text or subject he shall preach on this day or that. (3.) Nor what method his text or subject shall be opened and handled in. (4.) Nor what day of the week besides the Lord's day he shall preach, nor what hour on the Lord's day he shall begin. (5.) Nor in what particular place the church shall meet. (6.) Nor what particular sins we shall most confess: nor what personal mercies we shall at this present time, first ask: nor for what we shall now most copiously give thanks: for special occasions must determine all these. (7.) Nor what particular chapter we shall now read: nor what particular psalm we shall now sing. (8.) Nor what particular translation of the Scripture or version of the psalms we shall now use. Nor into what sections to distribute the Scripture, as we do by chapters and verses. Nor whether the Bible shall be printed or written, or in what characters, or how bound. (9.) Nor just by what sign I shall express my consent to the truths or duties which I am called to express consent to (besides the sacraments and ordinary words). (10.) Nor whether I shall use written notes to help my memory in preaching, or preach without. (11.) Nor whether I shall use a writing or

book in prayer or pray without. (12.) Nor whether I shall use the same words in preaching and prayer, or various new expressions. (13.) Nor what utensils in holy administrations I shall use; as a temple or an ordinary house, a pulpit, a font, a table, cups, cushions, and many such, which belong to the several parts of worship. (14.) Nor in what particular gesture we shall preach, or read, or hear. (15.) Nor what particular garments ministers or people shall wear in time of worship. (16.) Nor what natural or artificial helps to our natural faculties we shall use: as medications for the voice, tunes, musical instruments, spectacles, hour-glasses: these and such like are undetermined in Scripture and are left to be determined by human prudence, not as men please; but as means in order to the proper end, according to the general laws of Christ<sup>9</sup>. For Scripture is a general law for all such circumstances, but not a particular law.

So also for order and government, Scripture hath not particularly determined, 1. What individual persons shall be the pastors of the church. 2. Or of just how many persons the congregation shall consist. 3. Or how the pastors shall divide their work where there are many. 4. Nor how many every church shall have. 5. Nor what particular people shall be a pastor's special charge. 6. Nor what individual persons he shall baptize, receive to communion, admonish, or absolve, 7. Nor in what words most of these shall be expressed. 8. Nor what number of pastors shall meet in synods, for the communion and agreement of several churches, nor how oft, nor at what time or place, nor what particular order shall be among them in their consultations; with many such like.

When you thus understand how far Scripture is a law to you in the worship of God, it will be the greatest Direction to you, to keep you both from disobeying God and your superiors: that you may neither pretend obedience to man for your disobedience to God, nor pretend obedience to God against your due obedience to your governors, as those will do that think Scripture is a more particular rule than ever

<sup>9</sup> Of which I have spoke more fully in my Disput. v. of Church Government, p. 400. &c.

Christ intended it: and it will prevent abundance of unnecessary scruples, contentions, and divisions.

*Direct.* XII. 'Observe well in Scripture the difference between Christ's universal laws, (which bind all his subjects in all times and places,) and those that are but local, personal or alterable laws: lest you think that you are bound to all that ever God bound any others to.' The universal laws and unalterable are those which result from the foundation of the universal and unalterable nature of persons and things, and those which God hath supernaturally revealed as suitable constantly to all. The particular, local or temporary laws are those, which either resulted from a particular or alterable nature of persons and things as mutually related (as the law of nature bound Adam's sons to marry their sisters, which bindeth others against it) or those which God supernaturally enacted only for some particular people or person, or for the time. If you should mistake all the Jewish laws for universal laws (as to persons or duration) into how many errors would it lead you? So also if you mistake every personal mandate sent by a prophet or apostle to a particular man, as obliging all, you would make a snare of it. Every man is not to abstain from vineyards and wine as the Rechabites were; nor every man to go forth to preach in the garb as Christ sent the twelve, and seventy disciples; nor every man to administer or receive the Lord's supper in an upper room of a house, in the evening, with eleven or twelve only, &c. nor every one to carry Paul's cloak and parchments, nor go up and down on the messages which some were sent on. And here (in precepts about worship) you must know what is the thing primarily intended in the command, and what it is that is but a subservient means: for many laws are universal and immutable as to the matter primarily intended, which are but local and temporary as to the matter subservient and secondarily intended. As the command of saluting one another with a holy kiss, and using love-feasts in their sacred communion primarily intended the exercising and expressing holy love by such convenient signs as were then in use, and suitable to those times; but that it be done by those particular signs, was subservient, and a local alterable law; as appeareth, 1. In that it is actually laid down by God's allowance. 2. In that in other places and



times the same signs have not the same signification, and aptitude to that use at all, and therefore would be no such expression of love; or else have also some ill signification. So it was the first way of baptizing to dip them over-head; which was fit in that hot country, which in colder countries it would not be, as being destructive to health, and more against modesty; therefore it is plain that it was but a local, alterable law. The same is to be said of not eating things strangled, and blood, which was occasioned by the offence of the Jews; and other the like. This is the case in almost all precepts about the external worshipping gestures: the thing that God commanded universally is a humble, reverent adoration of him by the mind and body. Now the adoration of the mind is still the same; but the bodily expression altereth according to the custom of countries: in most countries kneeling or prostration are the expressions of greatest veneration and submission: in some few countries it is more signified by sitting with the face covered with their hands: in some it is signified best by standing: kneeling is ordinarily most fit, because it is the most common sign of humble reverence; but where it is not so, it is not fit. The same we must say of other gestures, and of habits: the women among the Corinthians were not to go uncovered because of the angels<sup>r</sup>; and yet in some places where long hair or covering may have a contrary signification, the case may be contrary. The very fourth commandment however it was a perpetual law as to the proportion of time, yet was alterable as to the seventh day. Those which I call universal laws, some call moral; but that is no term of distinction, but signifieth the common nature of all laws, which are for the governing of our manners. Some call them natural laws, and the other positive: but the truth is, there are some laws of nature which are universal, and some that are particular, as they are the result of universal or particular nature: and there are some laws of nature that are perpetual, which are the result of an unaltered foundation: and there are some that are temporary, when it is some temporary, alterable thing in nature from whence the duty doth result: so there are some positive laws that are universal or

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 10.

unalterable, (during this world) and some that are local, particular or temporary only.

*Direct.* XIII. 'Remember that whatever duty you seem obliged to perform, the obligation still supposeth that it is not naturally impossible to you, and therefore you are bound to do it as well as you can: and when other men's force, or your natural disability hindereth you from doing it as you would, you are not therefore disobliged from doing it at all: but the total omission is worse than the defective performance of it, as the defective performance is worse than doing it more perfectly'. And in such a case the defects which are utterly involuntary are none of yours imputatively at all, but his that hindereth you (unless as some other sin might cause that). As if I were in a country where I could have liberty to read and pray, but not to preach, or to preach only once a month and no more; it is my duty to do so much as I can do, as being much better than nothing, and not to forbear all, because I cannot do all.

*Object.* 'But you must forbear no part of your duty?'

*Ans.* True: but nothing is my duty which is naturally impossible for me to do. Either I can do it, or I cannot: if I can, I must (supposing it a duty in all other respects), but if I cannot, I am not bound to it.

*Object.* 'But it is not suffering that must deter you, for that is a carnal reason: and your suffering may do more good than your preaching.' *Ans.* Suffering is considerable either as a pain to the flesh, or as an irresistible hindrance of the work of the Gospel: as it is merely a pain to the flesh, I ought not to be deterred by it from the work of God; but as it forcibly hindereth me from that work, (as by imprisonment, death, cutting out the tongue, &c.) I may lawfully foresee it, and by lawful means avoid it, when it is sincerely for the work of Christ, and not for the saving of the flesh. If Paul foresaw that the preaching of one more sermon at Damascus was like to hinder his preaching any more, because the Jews watched the gates day and night to kill him, it was Paul's duty to be let down by the wall in a basket, and to escape, and preach elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. And when the Christians could not safely meet publicly, they met in

\* See Mr. Truman's book of Natural and Moral Impotency.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 25.

secret". Whether Paul's suffering at Damascus for preaching one more sermon, or his preaching more elsewhere, was to be chosen, the interest of Christ and the Gospel must direct him to resolve: that which is best for the church, is to be chosen.

*Direct. xiv.* 'Remember that no material duty is formally a duty at all times: that which is a duty in its season, is no duty out of season.' Affirmative precepts bind not to all times, (except only to habits, or the secret intention of our ultimate end, so far as is sufficient to animate and actuate the means, while we are waking and have the use of reason). Praying and preaching, that are very great duties, may be so unseasonably performed, as to be sins: if forbearing a prayer, or sermon, or sacrament one day or month, be rationally like to procure your help or liberty to do it afterward, when that once or few times doing it were like to hinder you from doing it any more, it would be your duty then to forbear it for that time (unless in some extraordinary case): for even for the life of an ox or an ass, and for mercy to men's bodies, the rest and holy work of a sabbath might be interrupted; much more for the souls of many. Again I warn you, as you must not pretend the interest of the end against a peremptory, absolute command of God, so must you not easily conclude a command to be absolute and peremptory to that which certainly contradicts the end; nor easily take that for a duty, which certainly is no means to that good which is the end of duty, or which is against it. Though yet no seeming aptitude as a means, must make that seem a duty, which the prohibition of God hath made a sin.

*Direct. xv.* 'It is ever unseasonable to perform a lesser duty of worship, when a greater should be done; therefore it much concerneth you to be able to discern, when two duties are inconsistent, which is then the greater and to be preferred:' in which the interest of the end must much direct you; that being usually the greatest which hath the greatest tendency to the greatest good.

*Direct. xvi.* 'Pretend not one part of God's worship against another, when all, in their place and order, may be done.' Set not preaching and praying against each other;

\* John xix. 38. Acts xii. 12, &c.

nor public and private worship against each other ; nor internal worship against external ; but do all.

*Direct.* xvii. ' Let not an inordinate respect to man, or common custom be too strong a bias to pervert your judgments from the rule of worship ; nor yet any groundless prejudice make you distaste that which is not to be disliked.' The error on these two extremes doth fill the world with corruption and contentions about the worship of God. Among the Papists, and Russians, and other ignorant sorts of Christians, abundance of corruptions are continued in God's worship by the mere power of custom, tradition, and education : and all seemeth right to which they have been long used : and hence the churches in South, East, and West continue so long overspread with ignorance, and refuse reformation<sup>2</sup>. And on the other side mere prejudice makes some so much distaste a prescribed form of prayer, or the way of worship which they have not been used to, and which they have heard some good men speak against, whose judgments they most highly esteemed, that they have not room for sober, impartial reason to deliberate, try, and judge. Factions have engaged most Christians in the world into several parties, whereby satan hath got this great advantage, that instead of worshipping God in love and concord, they lay out their zeal in an envious, bitter, censorious, uncharitable reproaching the manner of each other's worship. And because the interest of their parties requireth this, they think the interest of the church and cause of God requireth it ; and that they do God service when they make the religion of other men seem odious : when as among most Christians in the world, the errors of their modes of worship are not so great as the adverse parties represent them (except only the two great crimes of the popish worship : 1. That it is not understood, and so is soulless. 2. They worship bread as God himself, which I am not so able as willing to excuse from being idolatry). Judge not in such cases by passion, partiality, and prejudice<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Majus fidei impedimentum ex inveteratâ consuetudine proficiscitur : ubique consuetudo magnas vires habet ; sed in barbaris longe maximas : quippe ubi rationis est minimum, ibi consuetudo radices profundissimas agit. In omni natura motio eo disturnior ac vehementior, quo magis est ad unum determinata. Jos. Acosta de Ind. lib. ii. p. 249.*

<sup>3</sup> See Bishop Jer. Taylor's late book against Popery.

*Direct. xviii.* ‘ Yet judge in all such controversies with that reverence and charity which is due to the universal and the primitive church.’ If you find any thing in God’s worship which the primitive or universal church agreed in, you may be sure that it is nothing but what is consistent with acceptable worship ; for God never rejected the worship of the primitive or universal church. And it is not so much as to be judged erroneous without great deliberation and very good proof. We must be much more suspicious of our own understandings.

*Direct. xix.* ‘ In circumstances and modes of worship not forbidden in the word of God, affect not singularity, and do not easily differ from the practice of the church in which you hold communion, nor from the commands or directions of your lawful governors.’ It is true, if we are forbidden with Daniel to pray, or with the apostles to speak any more in the name of Christ, or are commanded as the three witnesses, Dan. iii., to worship images, we must rather obey God than man ; and so in case of any sin that is commanded us : but in case of mere different modes, and circumstances, and order of worship, see that you give authority and the consent of the church where you are their due.

*Direct. xx.* ‘ Look more to your own hearts than to the abilities of the ministers, or the ceremonies or manner of the churches’ worship in such lesser things.’ It is heart-work and heaven-work that the sincere believer comes about ; and it is the corruption of his heart that is his heaviest burden, which he groaneth under with the most passionate complaints : a hungry soul, inflamed with love to God and man, and tenderly sensible of the excellency of common truths and duties, would make up many defects in the manner of public administration, and would get nearer God in a defective, imperfect mode of worship, than others can do with the greatest helps : when hypocrites find so little work with their hearts and heaven, that they are taken up about words, and forms, and ceremonies, and external things, applauding their own way, and condemning other men’s, and serving sathan under pretence of worshipping God.