

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Tit. 1. Directions for the holy spending of the Lord's Day in Families.*

*Direct. 1.* 'BE well resolved against the cavils of those carnal men, that would make you believe that the holy spending of the Lord's day is a needless thing<sup>a</sup>.' For the name whether it shall be called the Christian sabbath, is not much worth contending about: undoubtedly the name of 'The Lord's Day,' is that which was given it by the Spirit of God<sup>b</sup>, and the ancient Christians, who sometimes called it, 'The Sabbath,' by allusion, as they used the names, Sacrifice and Altar: the question is not so much of the name as the thing; whether we ought to spend the day in holy exercises, without unnecessary divertisements? And to settle your consciences in this, you have all these evidences at hand.

1. By the confession of all, you have the law of nature to tell you, that God must be openly worshipped, and that some set time should be appointed for his worship. And, whether the fourth commandment be formally in force or abrogated, yet it is commonly agreed on that the parity of reason, and general equity of it, serveth to acquaint us, that it is the will of God that one day in seven be the least that we destinate to this use; this being then judged a meet proportion by God himself, (even from the creation, and on the account of commemorating the creation,) and Christians being no less obliged to take as large a space of time, who have both the creation and redemption to commemorate, and a more excellent manner of worship to perform.

2. It is confessed by all Christians that Christ rose on the first day of the week, and appeared to his congregated disciples on that day, and poured out the Holy Ghost on them on that day, and that the apostles appointed, and the Christian churches observed, their assemblies and communion ordinarily on that day; and that these apostles were filled with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, that

<sup>a</sup> Since the writing of this, I have published a *Treatise of the Lord's Day*.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. i. 10.

they might infallibly acquaint the church with the doctrine and will of Jesus Christ, and leave it on record for succeeding ages<sup>c</sup>; and so were intrusted by office, and enabled by gifts, to settle the orders of the Gospel-church, as Moses did the matters of the tabernacle and worship then; and so that their laws or orders thus settled, were the laws or orders of the Holy Ghost<sup>d</sup>.

3. It is also confessed, that the universal church from the days of the apostles down till now, hath constantly kept holy the Lord's day in the memorial of Christ's resurrection, and that as by the will of Christ delivered to them by or from the apostles: insomuch that I remember not either any orthodox Christian, or heretic, that ever opposed, questioned, or scrupled it, till of late ages. And as a historical discovery of the matter of fact, this is a good evidence that indeed it was settled by the apostles; and consequently by Christ who gave them their commission, and inspired them by the Holy Ghost.

4. It is confessed, that it is still the practice of the universal church; and those that take it to be but of ecclesiastical appointment, some of them mean it of such extraordinary ecclesiastics as inspired apostles, and all of them take the appointment as obligatory to all the members of the church.

5. The laws of the land where we live command it, and the king by proclamation urgeth the execution; and the canons, and homilies, and liturgy shew that the holy observation of the Lord's day, is the judgment and will of the governors of the church. Read the homilies for the time and place of worship. Yea, they require the people to say when the fourth commandment is read, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." And the command of authority is not a contemptible obligation.

6. It is granted by all, that more than this is due to God, and the life that is in every Christian telleth him, that it is a very great mercy to us; not only to servants, but even to all men, that one day in seven they may disburden them-

<sup>c</sup> Mark xvi. 2. 9. Luke xxiv. 1.

<sup>d</sup> John xx. 1. 19. 26. Acts ii. 1. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2 Rev. i. 10. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. John xvi. 13—15. Rom. xvi. 16. 2 Thes. ii. 15.

selves of all the cares and business of the world, which may hinder their holy communion with God and one another, and wholly apply themselves to learn the will of God. And nature teacheth us to accept of mercy when it is offered to us, and not dispute against our happiness.

7. Common experience telleth us, that where the Lord's day is more holily and carefully observed, knowledge and religion prosper best; and that more souls are converted on those days, than on all the other days besides; and that the people are accordingly more edified; and that wherever the Lord's day is ordinarily neglected or misspent, religion and civility decay, and there is a visible, lamentable difference between those places and families, and the other.

8. Reason and experience tell us, that if men were left to themselves, what time they should appoint for God's public worship, in most places it would be so little, and disordered, and uncertain, that religion would be for the most part banished out of the now Christian world. Therefore there being need of a universal law for it, it is probable that such a law there is; and if so, it can be by none but God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Holy Ghost, there being no other universal Governour and Lawgiver to impose it.

9. All must confess, that it is more desirable for unity and concord sake, that all Christians hold their holy assemblies on one and the same day, and that all at once throughout all the world, do worship God and seek his grace, than that they do it some on one day, and some on another.

10. And all that ever I have conversed with, confess, that if the holy spending of the Lord's day be not necessary it is lawful; and therefore when there is so much to be said for the necessity of it too, to keep it holy is the safest way, seeing this cannot be a sin, but the contrary may; and licence is encouragement enough to accept of so great a mercy. All this set together will satisfy a man, that hath any spiritual sense of the concernments of his own and others' souls.

*Object.* But you will say, 'That besides the name, it is yet a controversy whether the whole day should be spent in holy exercises, or only so much as is meet for public communion, it being not found in antiquity, that the churches used any further to observe it.'

*Answer.* No sober man denieth that works of necessity for the preservation of our own or other men's lives, or health, or goods, may be done on the Lord's day: so that when we say, that the whole day is to be spent holily, we exclude not eating and sleeping, nor the necessary actions about worship; as the priests in the temple are said to break the sabbath, (that is, the external rest,) and to be blameless. But otherwise, that it is the whole day, is evident in the arguments produced: the ancient histories and canons of the church speak not of one part of the day only, but the whole: all confess, that when labour or sinful sports are forbidden, it is on the whole day, and not only on a part. And for what is alleged of the custom of the ancient church, I answer, 1. The ancientest churches spent almost all the day in public worship and communion: they begun in the morning, and continued without parting till the evening. The first part of the day being spent in teaching the catechumens, they were then dismissed, and the church continued together in preaching and praying, but especially in those laudatory, eucharistical offices, which accompany the celebration of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. They did not then, (as gluttons do now,) account it fasting to forbear a dinner, when they supped, yea, feasted at night; it being not usual among the Romans to eat any dinners at all. And they that spent all the day together in public worship and communion, you may be sure spent not part of it in dancing, nor stage-plays; nor worldly businesses. 2. And church history giveth us but little account what particular persons did in privats, nor can it be expected. 3. Who hath brought us any proof that ever the church approved of spending any part of the day in sports, or idleness, or unnecessary, worldly business? Or that any churches (or persons regardable) did actually so spend it? 4. Unless their proof be from those many canons of our own and other churches, that command the holy observation of it, and forbid these plays and labours on it; which I confess doth intimate, that some there were that needed laws to restrain them from the violation of it. 5. Again I say, that seeing few men will have the face to say that plays and games, or idleness are a duty on that day, it will suffice a holy, thankful Christian, if he have but leave, to spend all the

day for the good of his soul and those about him; and if he may be reading and meditating on the Word of God, and praying and praising him, and instructing his family, while others waste that time in vanity; especially to servants and poor men that have but little other leisure all the year, to seek for knowledge, or use any such helps for their salvation. As to a poor man that is kept hungry all the week, a bare liberty of feasting with his landlord on the Lord's day; would satisfy him without a law to constrain him to it; so is it here with a hungry soul.

*Direct.* II. 'Remember that the work of the day is, in general, to keep up knowledge and religion in the world, and to own and honour our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator openly before all; and to have communion with God through Christ in the Spirit, by receiving and exercising his grace, in order to our communion with him in glory. Let these therefore (well understood) be your ends, and in these be you exercised all the day, and stick not hypocritically in bodily rest and outward duties.' Remember that it is a day for heart-work, as well as for the exercise of the tongue, and ear, and knees; and that your principal business is with heaven: follow your hearts therefore all the day, and see that they be not idle while your bodies are exercised: nothing is done if the heart do nothing.

*Direct.* III. 'Remember that the special work of the day is to celebrate the memorial of Christ's resurrection, and of the whole work of man's redemption by him. Labour therefore with all diligence in the sense of your natural sin and misery, to stir up the lively sense of the wonderful love of God and our Redeemer, and to spend all the day in the special exercises of faith and love. And seeing it is the Christian weekly festival, or day of thanksgiving for the greatest mercy in the world, spend it as a day of thanksgiving should be spent, especially in joyful praises of our Lord; and let the humbling and instructing exercises of the day, be all subordinate to these laudatory exercises.' I know that much time must be spent in teaching and warning the ignorant and ungodly, because their poverty and labours hinder them from other such opportunities, and we must speak to them then or not all. But if it were not for their mere necessity, and if we could as well speak to them

other days of the week, the churches should spend all the the Lord's day in such praises and thanksgivings as are suitable to the ends of the institution. But seeing that cannot be expected, methinks it is desirable that the ancient custom of the churches were more imitated, and the morning sermon being suited to the state of the more ignorant and unconverted, that the rest of the day were spent in the exercises of thanksgiving to the joy and encouragement of believers, and in doctrine suited to their state. And yet I must add, that a skilful preacher will do both together, and so declare the love and grace of our Redeemer, as by a meet application may both draw in the ungodly, and comfort those that are already sanctified, and raise their hearts in praise to God.

*Direct. iv.* 'Remember that the Lord's day is appointed specially for public worship and personal communion of the churches therein: see therefore that you spend as much of the day as you can in this public worship and church-communion; especially in the celebration of that sacrament which is appointed for the memorial of the death of Christ until his coming \*.' This sacrament in the primitive church was celebrated every Lord's day; yea, and oftner, even ordinarily on every other day of the week when the churches assembled for communion. And it might be so now without any hindrance to preaching or prayer, if all things were ordered as they should be; for those prayers, and instructions, and exhortations which are most suited to this eucharistical action, would be the most suitable prayers and sermons for the church on the Lord's days. In the mean time see that so much of the day as is spent in church-communion and public worship, be accordingly improved by you; and be not at that time about your secret or family services, but take only those hours for such private duties, in which the church is not assembled; and remember how much the love of saints is to be exercised in this communion, and therefore labour to keep alive that love, without which no man can celebrate the Lord's day according to the end of the institution.

*Direct. v.* 'Understand how great a mercy it is, that you have leave thus to wait upon God for the receiving and

\* 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.

exercise of grace, and to cast off the distracting thoughts and businesses of the world, and what an opportunity is put into your hand, to get more in one day, than this world can afford you all your lives. And therefore come with gladness as to the receiving of so great a mercy, and with desire after it, and with hope to speed, and not with unwillingness as to an unpleasant task; as carnal hearts that love not God, or his grace or service, and are weary of all they do, and glad when it is done, as the ox that is unyoked.' "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways; nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." The affection that you have to the Lord's day, much sheweth the temper of the heart: a holy person is glad when it cometh, as loving it for the holy exercises of the day; a wicked, carnal heart is glad of it only for his carnal ease, but weary of the spiritual duties.

*Direct. vi.* 'Avoid both the extremes of profaneness and superstition in the point of your external rest:' and to that end, observe 1. That the work is not for the day, but the day for the holy work: as Christ saith, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath<sup>g</sup>." It is appointed for our good, and not for our hurt. 2. The outward rest is not appointed for itself, but as a means to the freedom of the mind for inward and spiritual employments: and therefore all those outward and common labours and discourses are unlawful, which any way distract the mind, and hinder either our outward or inward attendance upon God, and our edification. 3. And (whatever it was to the Jews) no common words or actions are unlawful, which are no hindrance to this communion, and worship, and spiritual edification. 4. Yea, those things that are necessary to the support of nature, and the saving of the life, or health, or estate and goods of ourselves or our neighbours, are needful duties on that day: not all those works that are truly charitable, (for it may be a work of mercy to build hospitals, or make garments for the poor, or till their ground) but such works of mercy as cannot be put off to another day, and such as

<sup>f</sup> Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

<sup>g</sup> Mark ii. 27.

hinder not the duties of the day. 5. The same word or action on the Lord's day which is unlawful to one man may be lawful to another; as being no hindrance, yea, a duty to him: as Christ saith, "The priests in the temple break or profane the sabbath, (that is, the outward rest, but not the command) and are blameless<sup>h</sup>." And the cook may be lawfully employed in dressing meat, when it were a sin in another to do it voluntarily without need. 6. The Lord's day being to be kept as a day of thanksgiving, the dressing of such meat as is fit for a day of thanksgiving is not to be scrupled: the primitive Christians in the apostles' time, had their love-feasts constantly (with the Lord's supper, or after) on the evening of the day; and they could not feast without dressing meat. 7. Yet that which is lawful in itself, must be so done as consisteth with care and compassion of the souls of servants that are employed about it, that they may be deprived of no more of their spiritual benefit than needs. 8. Also that which is lawful must sometimes be forborne, when it may by scandal tempt others that are loose or weak, to do that which is unlawful: not that the mere displeasing of the erroneous should put us out of the right way; but the scandal which is spoken against in Scripture, is the laying a temptation before men that are weak to make them sin. 9. Take heed of that hypocritical and censorious temper which turneth the holy observation of the day, into a ceremonious abstinence from lawful things; and censureth those as ungodly that are not of the same mind, and forbear not such things as well as they. Mark the difference between Christ and the Pharisees in this point: much of their contention with him was about the outward observation of the sabbath; because his disciples rubbed out corn to eat on the sabbath-day; and because he healed on the sabbath, and bid the healed man, "Take up his bed and walk:" and they said, "There are six days in which men ought to work; they might come and be healed on them<sup>i</sup>." And a man that is of their spirit will think that the Pharisees were in the right: no doubt Christ might have chosen another day to

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xiii. 15.

<sup>i</sup> Luke vi. 1. 5, 6. xiii. 12. 14—16. John v. 17, 18. Mark i. 21. 24. ii. 23—28. iii. 2, 3. 5. vi. 2. 5. Luke xiv. 1. 3. 5, 6. John v. 9, 10. 16. vii. 22—24. ix. 14. 16.



heal on; but he knew that the works which most declared the power of God, and honoured him before all, and confirmed the Gospel, were fittest for the sabbath day. Take heed therefore of the Pharisees' ceremoniousness and censoriousness. If you see a man walking abroad on the Lord's day, censure him not till you know that he doth it from profaneness or negligence: you know not but it may be necessary to his health, and he may improve it in holy meditation? If you hear some speak a word more than you think needful, of common things, or do more about meat and clothing than you think meet; censure them not till you hear their reason. A scrupulousness about such outward observances, when the holy duties of the day are no whit hindered by that thing, and a censoriousness toward those that are not as scrupulous, is too Pharisaical and ceremonious a religion for spiritual, charitable Christians. And the extremes of some godly people in this kind, have occasioned the Quakers and Seekers to take and use all days alike, and the profane to contemn the sanctifying of the Lord's day.

*Tit. 2. More Particular Directions for the Order of Holy Duties.*

*Direct. 1.* Remember the Lord's day before it cometh, and prepare for it, and prevent those disturbances that would hinder you, and deprive you of the benefit.' For preparation: 1. "Six days you must labour, and do all that you have to do." Dispatch all your business, that you may not have it then to hinder and disturb you; and see that your servants do the same. 2. Shake off the thoughts of worldly things, and clear your minds of worldly delights and cares. 3. Call to mind the doctrine taught you the last Lord's day, (and if you have servants, cause them to remember it) that you may be prepared to receive the next. 4. Go seasonably to bed, that you and your servants may not be constrained to lie long the next morning, or be sleepy on the Lord's day. 5. Let your meditations be preparatory for the day. Repent of the sins of the week past as particularly and seriously as you can; and seek for pardon and peace through Christ, that you come not with guilt or trouble upon your consciences before the Lord.

*Direct. II.* 'Let your first thoughts be not only holy, but suitable to the occasions of the day.' With gladness remember what a day of mercies you awake to, and how early your Redeemer rose from the dead that day, and what excellent work you are to be employed in.

*Direct. III.* 'Rise full as early that day as you do on other days.' Be not like the carnal generation, that sanctify the Lord's day but as a swine doth, by sleeping, and idleness, and fulness. Think not your worldly business more worthy of your early rising, than your spiritual employment is.

*Direct. IV.* 'Let your dressing time be spent in some fruitful meditation, or conference, or hearing some one read a chapter:' and let it not be long, to detain you from your duty.

*Direct. V.* 'If you can have leisure, go first to secret prayer:' and if you are servants, and have any necessary business to do, dispatch it quickly, that you may be free for better work.

*Direct. VI.* 'Let family-worship come next, and not be slubbered over slightly, but be serious and reverent, and suit all to the nature or end of the day.' Especially awaken yourselves and servants to consider what you have to do in public, and to go with prepared, sanctified hearts.

*Direct. VII.* 'Enter the holy assembly with reverence and joy, and compose yourselves as those that come thither to treat with the living God, about the matters of eternal life.' And watch your hearts that they wander not, or sleep not, nor slight the sacred matters which you are about. And guard your eyes, that they carry not away your hearts; and let not your hearts be a moment idle, but seriously employed all the time: and when hypocrites and distempered Christians are quarrelling with the imperfections of the speaker, or congregation, or mode of worship, do you rather make it your diligent endeavour, to watch your hearts, and improve what you hear.

*Direct. VIII.* 'As soon as you come home, while dinner is preparing; it will be a seasonable time, either for secret prayer or meditation; to call over what you heard, and urge it on your hearts, and beg God's help for the improvement of it, and pardon for your public failings.'

*Direct. ix.* 'Let your time at meat be spent in the cheerful remembrance or mention of the love of your Redeemer; or somewhat suitable to the company and the day.'

*Direct. x.* 'After dinner call your families together, and sing a psalm of praise, and by examination or repetition, or both, cause them to remember what was publicly taught them.'

*Direct. xi.* 'Then go again to the congregation (to the beginning) and behave yourselves as before.'

*Direct. xii.* 'When you come home call your families together, and first crave God's assistance and acceptance; and then sing a psalm of praise; and then repeat the sermon which you heard;' or if there was none, read one out of some lively, profitable book; and then pray and praise God; and all with the holy seriousness and joy which is suitable to the work and day.

*Direct. xiii.* 'Then while supper is preparing, betake yourselves to secret prayer and meditation; either in your chambers or walking, as you find most profitable;' and let your servants, have no more to hinder them from the same privilege, than what is of necessity.

*Direct. xiv.* 'At supper spend the time as is aforesaid (at dinner):' always remembering that though it be a day of thanksgiving, it is not a day of gluttony, and that you must not use too full a diet, lest it make you heavy, and drowsy, and unfit for holy duty.

*Direct. xv.* 'After supper examine your children and servants what they have learnt all day, and sing a psalm of praise, and conclude with prayer and thanksgiving.'

*Direct. xvi.* 'If there be time after, both you and they may in secret review the duties, and mercies, and failings of the day, and recommend yourselves by prayer into the hands of God for the night following:' and so betake yourselves to your rest.

*Direct. xvii.* 'And to shut up all, let your last thoughts be holy, in the thankful sense of the mercy you have received, and the goodness of God revealed by our Mediator, and comfortably trusting your souls and bodies into his hands, and longing for your nearer approach unto his glory, and the beholding and full enjoying of him for ever.'

I have briefly named this order of duties, for the memory

of those that have opportunity to observe it: but if any man's place and condition deny him opportunity for some of these, he must do what he can: but see, that carnal negligence cause not his omission. And now I appeal to reason, conscience and experience; whether this employment be not more suitable to the principles, ends and hopes of a Christian, than idleness, or vain talk; or cards, or dice, or dancing, or ale-house haunting; or worldly business or discourse? And whether this would not exceedingly conduce to the increase of knowledge, holiness and honesty? And whether there be ever a worldling or voluptuous sensualist of them all, that had not rather be found thus at death; or look back when time is past and gone, upon the Lord's day thus spent, than as the idle, fleshly and ungodly spend them?

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### *Directions for profitable Hearing the Word Preached.*

OMITTING those Directions which concern the external modes of worship (for the reasons mentioned Part. iii. and known to all that know me, and the time and place I live in) I shall give you such Directions about the personal, internal management of your duty, as I think most necessary to your edification. And seeing that your duty and benefit lieth in these four general points: 1. That you hear with understanding. 2. That you remember what you hear. 3. That you be duly affected with it. 4. And that you sincerely practise it, I shall more particularly direct you in order to all these ends and duties.

#### *Tit. 1. Directions for the Understanding the Word which you Hear.*

*Direct. 1* 'Read and meditate on the Holy Scriptures much in private, and then you will be the better able to understand what is preached on it in public, and to try the doctrine, whether it be of God.' Whereas if you are unac-

quainted with the Scriptures, all that is treated of or alleged from them, will be so strange to you, that you will be but little edified by it\*.

*Direct. II.* 'Live under the clearest, distinct, convincing teaching that possibly you can procure.' There is an unspeakable difference as to the edification of the hearers, between a judicious, clear, distinct and useful preacher, and one that is ignorant, confused, general, dry, and only scrapeth together a cento or mingle-mangle of some undigested sayings to fill up the hour with. If in philosophy, physic, grammar, law, and every art and science, there be so great a difference between one teacher and another, it must needs be so in divinity also. Ignorant teachers that understand not what they say themselves, are unlike to make you men of understanding: as erroneous teachers are unlike to make you orthodox and sound.

*Direct III.* 'Come not to hear with a careless heart, as if you were to hear a matter that little concerned you, but come with a sense of the unspeakable weight, necessity and consequence of the holy Word which you are to hear: and when you understand how much you are concerned in it, and truly love it, as the Word of life, it will greatly help your understanding of every particular truth.' That which a man loveth not, and perceiveth no necessity of, he will hear with so little regard and heed, that it will make no considerable impression on his mind. But a good understanding of the excellency and necessity, exciting love and serious attention, would make the particulars easy to be understood; when else you will be like a stopped or narrow mouthed bottle, that keepeth out that which you desire to put in. I know that understanding must go before affections; but yet the understanding of the concerns and worth of your own souls, must first procure such a serious care of your salvation, and a general regard to the Word of God, as is needful to your further understanding of the particular instructions, which you shall after hear.

*Direct. IV.* 'Suffer not vain thoughts or drowsy negligence to hinder your attention.' If you mark not what is taught you, how should you understand and learn? Set yourselves to it, as for your lives: be as earnest and diligent

\* Psal. i. 2. cxix. Deut. vi. 11, 12.

in attending and learning, as you would have the preacher be in teaching<sup>a</sup>. If a drowsy, careless preacher be bad, a drowsy, careless hearer is not good. Saith Moses, "Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day."—"For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life<sup>b</sup>." You would have God attentive to your prayers in your distresses, and why will you not then be attentive to his words; when "the prayers of him are abominable to God, that turneth away his ear from hearing the law?" "All the people were very attentive to hear Christ<sup>c</sup>." When Ezra read the law "from morning till mid-day, the ears of all the people were attentive to it<sup>d</sup>." When Paul continued his Lord's day exercise, and speech until midnight, one young man that fell asleep, did fall down dead as a warning to them, that will sleep when they should hear the message of Christ<sup>e</sup>. Therefore you are excused that day from worldly business, "that you may attend on the Lord without distraction<sup>f</sup>." Lydia's attending to the words of Paul, accompanied the opening of her heart and her conversion<sup>g</sup>.

*Direct. v.* 'Mark especially the design and drift, and principal doctrine of the sermon.' Both because that is the chief thing that the preacher would have marked; and because the understanding of that will much help you to understand all the rest which dependeth on it, and relateth to it.

*Direct. vi.* 'Mark most those things which are of greatest weight and concernment to your souls.' And do not fix upon some little sayings, and by-discourses, or witty sentences; like children that bring home some scraps and words which they do but play with.

*Direct. vii.* 'Learn first your catechisms at home, and the great essential points of religion, contained in the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments. And in your hearing, first labour to get a clearer understanding of these; and then the lesser branches which grow out of these, will be the better understood.' You can scarce bestow too much care and pains in learning these great essential points. It is the fruitfulest of all your studies. Two things further I here advise you to avoid. 1. The hasty

<sup>a</sup> Prov. iv. 1. 20. v. 1. vii. 24. Neh. i. 6. 11. Psal. cxxx. 2. Prov. xxviii. 9.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

<sup>c</sup> Luke xix. 48.

<sup>d</sup> Neh. viii. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Acts xvi. 14. xx. 9.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 35.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xvi. 14.

climbing up to smaller points (which some call higher) before you have well received these, and the receiving of those higher points, independently, without their due respect, to these which they depend upon. 2. The feeding upon dry and barren controversies, and delighting in the chaff of jingling words, and impertinent, unedifying things, or discourses about formalities and circumstances:

*Direct.* VIII. 'Meditate on what you hear when you come home, till you better understand it<sup>b</sup>.

*Direct.* IX. 'Inquire where you doubt, of those that can resolve and teach you.' It sheweth a careless mind, and a contempt of the Word of God, in most people and servants, that never come to ask the resolution of one doubt, from one week's or year's end to another, though they have pastors or masters that have ability, and leisure, and willingness to help them: "When Christ was alone, they that were about him with the twelve, asked him the meaning of his parable<sup>c</sup>."

*Direct.* X. 'Read much those holy books which treat best of the doctrine which you would understand.'

*Direct.* XI. 'Pray earnestly for wisdom, and the illumination of the Spirit<sup>k</sup>.'

*Direct.* XII. 'Conscionable practising what you know, is an excellent help to understanding<sup>l</sup>.'

*Tit. 2. Directions for Remembering what you Hear.*

That want of memory, which cometh from age and decay of nature, is not to be cured: nor should any servant of Christ be overmuch troubled at it; seeing Christ will no more cast off his servants for that, than he will for age or any sickness: but for that want of memory which is curable, and is a fault, I shall give you these Directions following.

*Direct.* 1. 'It greatly helpeth memory to have a full understanding of the matter spoken, which you would remember.' And ignorance is one of the greatest hindrances to memory. Common experience telleth you this, how easily you can remember any discourse which you thoroughly un-

<sup>b</sup> Psal. i. 2.    <sup>c</sup> Mark iv. 10.    <sup>k</sup> Eph. i. 18.    Acts xxvi. 18.    James i. 5.  
<sup>l</sup> John xii. 7. 17.

derstand (for your very knowledge by invention will revive your memory); and how hard it is to remember any words which are insignificant, or which we understand not. Therefore labour most for a clear understanding according to the last Directions:

*Direct. II.* 'A deep, awakened affection is a very powerful help to memory.' We easily remember any thing which our estates or lives lie on, when trifles are neglected and soon forgotten. Therefore labour to get all to your hearts, according to the next following Directions.

*Direct. III.* 'Method is a very great help to memory.' Therefore be acquainted with the preacher's method; and then you are put into a path or tract, which you cannot easily go out of. And therefore it is, that ministers must not only be methodical, and avoid prolix, confused, and involved discourses, and that malicious pride of hiding their method; but must be as oft in the use of the same method, as the subject will bear, and choose that method which is most easy to the hearers to understand and remember; and labour to make them perceive your tract.

*Direct. IV.* 'Numbers are a great help to memory.' As if the reasons, the uses, the motives, the signs, the directions, be six, or seven; or eight; when you know just the number, it helpeth you much to remember, which was the first, second, third, &c.

*Direct. V.* 'Names also and signal words are a great help to memory.' He may remember one word, that cannot remember all the sentence; and that one word may help him to remember much of the rest. Therefore preachers should contrive the force of every reason, use, direction, &c. as much as may be into some one emphatical word. (And some do very profitably contrive each of those words to begin with the same letter, which is good for memory, so it be not too much strained, and put them not upon greater inconveniences); as if I were to direct you to the chiefest helps to your salvation, and should name, 1. Powerful preaching. 2. Prayer. 3. Prudence. 4. Piety. 5. Painfulness. 6. Patience. 7. Perseverance. Though I opened every one of these at large, the very names would help the hearers' memory. It is this that maketh ministers that care more for their people's souls, than the pleasing of curious ears, to



go in the common road of doctrine, reason, uses, motives, helps, &c. and to give their uses the same titles of information, reproof, exhortation, &c. And yet when the subject shall direct us to some other method, the hearers must not be offended with us: for one method will not serve exactly for every subject, and we must be loath to wrong the text or matter.

*Direct. VI.* 'It is a great help to memory, often in the time of hearing to call over and repeat to yourselves the names or heads that have been spoken.' The mind of man can do two things at once: You may both hear what is said, and recal and repeat to yourselves what is past: not to stand long upon it, but oft and quickly to name over, e. g. The reasons, uses, motives, &c. To me, this hath been (next to understanding and affection) the greatest help of any that I have used; for otherwise to hear a head but once, and think of it no more till the sermon is done, would never serve my turn to keep it.

*Direct. VII.* 'Grasp not at more than you are able to hold, lest thereby you lose all.' If there be more particulars than you can possibly remember, lay hold on some which most concern you, and let go the rest; perhaps another may rather take up those, which you leave behind. Yet say not that it is the preacher's fault to name more than you can carry away: for, 1. Then he must leave out his enlargement much more, and the most of his sermon; for it is like you leave the most behind. 2. Another may remember more than you. 3. All is not lost when the words are forgotten: for it may breed a habit of understanding, and promote resolution, affection, and practice.

*Direct. VIII.* 'Writing is an easy help for memory, to those that can use it.' Some question whether they should use it, because it hindereth their affection. But that must be differently determined according to the difference of subjects, and of hearers. Some sermons are all to work upon the affections at present, and the present advantage is to be preferred before the after perusal: but some must more profit us in after digestion and review. And some hearers can write much with ease, and little hinder their affection; and some write so little and are hindered so much, that it recompenseth not their loss. Some know so

fully all that is said, that they need no notes; and some that are ignorant need them for perusal.

*Direct. ix.* 'Peruse what you remember, or write down, when you come home; and fix it speedily before it is lost; and hear others that can repeat it better.' Pray it over, and confer of it with others.

*Direct. x.* 'If you forget the very words, yet remember the main drift of all; and get those resolutions and affections which they drive at.' And then 'you have not lost the sermon, though you have lost the words; as he hath not lost his food, that hath digested it, and turned it into flesh and blood.

*Tit. 3. Directions for holy Resolutions and Affections in Hearing.*

The understanding and memory are but the passage to the heart, and the practice is but the expression of the heart: therefore how to work upon the heart is the principal business.

*Direct. i.* 'Live under the most convincing, lively, serious preacher that possibly you can.' It is a matter of great concernment to all, but especially to dull and senseless hearts. Hearken not to that earthly generation, that tell you, because God can bless the weakest, and because it is your own fault if you profit not by the weakest; that therefore you should make no difference, but sit down under an ignorant, dumb, or senseless man. Try first whether they had as willingly have a bad servant, or a bad physician as a good one, because God can bless the labours of the weakest? Try whether they would not have their children duly reprov'd or corrected, because it is their own faults that they need it? And whether they would not take physic after a surfeit? though it be their own fault that made them sick. It is true, that all our sin is our own fault; but the question is, What is the most effectual cure? What man that is alive and awake, doth not feel a very great difference between a dead and a lively preacher?

*Direct. ii.* 'Remember that ministers are the messengers of Christ, and come to you on his business and in his name. Hear them therefore as his officers, and as men that have

more to do, with God himself, than with the speaker<sup>m</sup>. It is the phrase of the Holy Ghost, "All things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do<sup>n</sup>." It is God with whom you have to do, and therefore accordingly behave yourselves<sup>o</sup>.

*Direct.* III. 'Remember that this God is instructing you, and warning you, and treating with you, about no less than the saving of your souls. Come therefore to hear as for your salvation.' Can that heart be dull that well considereth, that it is heaven and hell that is the matter that God is treating with him about?

*Direct.* IV. 'Remember that you have but a little time to hear in; and you know not, whether ever you shall hear again. Hear therefore as if it were your last.' Think when you hear the calls of God, and the offers of Grace, I know not but this may be my last: how would I hear if I were sure to die to-morrow? I am sure it will be ere long, and may be to-day for aught I know.

*Direct.* V. 'Remember that all these days and sermons must be reviewed, and you must answer for all that you have heard, whether you heard it with love, or with unwillingness and weariness; with diligent attention or with carelessness; and the Word which you hear shall judge you at the last day. Hear therefore as those that are going to judgment, to give account of their hearing and obeying<sup>p</sup>.

*Direct.* VI. 'Make it your work with diligence to apply the Word as you are hearing it, and to work your own hearts to those suitable resolutions and affections which it bespeaketh.' Cast not all upon the minister, as those that will go no further than they are carried as by force: this is fitter for the dead than for the living. You have work to do as well as the preacher, and should all the while be as busy as he; as helpless as the infant is, he must suck when the mother offereth him the breast: if you must be fed, yet you must open your mouths, and digest it, for another cannot digest it for you; nor can the holiest, wisest, powerful minister, convert or save you without yourselves, nor deliver a people from sin and hell, that will not stir for their own deliverance. Therefore be all the while at work, and abhor an idle heart in hearing, as well as an idle minister.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 1.

<sup>o</sup> See Luke x. 16. 1 Thes. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Heb. iv. 13.

<sup>p</sup> John xii. 48.

*Direct.* VII. 'Chew the cud, and call up all when you come home in secret, and by meditation preach it over to yourselves.' If it were coldly delivered by the preacher, do you consider of the great weight of the matter, and preach it more earnestly over to your own hearts. You should love yourselves best, and best be acquainted with your own condition and necessities.

*Direct.* VIII. 'Pray it over all to God, and there lament a stupid heart, and put up your complaints to heaven against it.' The name and presence of God hath a quickening and awaking power.

*Direct.* IX. 'Go to Christ by faith, for the quickenings of his Spirit.' Your life is hid in him, your root and head; and from him all must be conveyed: he that hath the Son hath life; and because he liveth, we shall live also. Entreat him to glorify the power of his resurrection, by raising the dead; and to open your hearts, and speak to you by his Spirit, that you may be taught of God, and your hearts may be his epistles, and the tables where the everlasting law is written<sup>9</sup>.

*Direct.* X. 'Make conscience of teaching and provoking others.' Pity the souls of the ignorant about you. God often blesseth the grace that is most improved in doing him service; and our stock is like the woman's oil, which increased as long as she poured out, and was gone when she stopped<sup>r</sup>. Doing good is the best way for receiving good: he that in pity to a poor man that is almost starved, will but fall to rubbing him, shall get himself heat, and both be gainers.

*Tit. 4. Directions to bring what we Hear into Practice.*

Without this the rest is vain or counterfeit, and therefore somewhat must be said to this.

*Direct.* I. 'Be acquainted with the failings of your hearts and lives, and come on purpose to get directions and helps against those particular failings.' You will not know what medicine you need, much less how to use it, if you know not what aileth you. Know what duties you omit or carelessly perform, and know what sins you are most guilty of,

<sup>9</sup> Col. iii. 3, 4, John xv. 1—5. xi. 25. xiv. 19. Phil. iii. 7, 8. Acts xvi. 14. John vi. 45. <sup>2</sup> Cor. iii. 3. 6. 17, 18. Heb. viii. 10. x. 16. Jer. xxxi. 33.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 12. 14. 16.

and say when you go out of doors, I go to Christ for physic for my own disease. I hope to hear something before I come back, which may help me more against this sin, and fit me better for my duty, or provoke me more effectually. Are those men like to practise Christ's directions, that either know not their disease, or love it and would not have it cured?

*Direct. II.* 'The three forementioned are still presupposed, viz. That the Word have first done its part upon your understandings, memory and hearts.' For that Word cannot be practised, which is not understood, nor at all remembered, nor hath procured resolutions and affections. It is the due work upon the heart that must prevail for the reformation of the life.

*Direct. III.* 'When you understand what it is in point of practice that the preacher driveth at, observe especially the uses and the moving reasons, and plead them with your own hearts; and let conscience be preaching over all that the minister preacheth to you.' You take them to be soul-murderers that silence able, faithful preachers, and also those preachers that silence themselves, and feed not the flock committed to their care: and do you think it a small matter to silence your own conscience, which must be the preacher that must set home all, before it can come to resolution or practice? Keep conscience all the while at work, preaching over all that to your hearts, which you hear with your ears; and urge yourselves to a speedy resolution. Remember that the whole body of divinity is practical in its end and tendency, and therefore be not a mere notional hearer; but consider of every word you hear, what practice it is that it tendeth to, and place that deepest in your memory. If you forget all the words of the reasons and motives which you hear, be sure to remember what practice they were brought to urge you to. As if you heard a sermon against uncharitableness, censoriousness, or hurting others, though you should forget all the reasons and motives in particular, yet still remember that you were convinced in the hearing, that censorious and hurtful uncharitableness is a great sin, and that you heard reason enough to make you resolve it. And let conscience preach out the sermon to the end, and not let it die in bare conviction; but resolve, and be past wavering before you stir: and above all

the sermon, remember the directions and helps for practice, with which the truest method usually shuts up the sermon.

*Direct. iv.* 'When you come home, let conscience in secret also repeat the sermon to you.' Between God and yourselves, consider what there was delivered to you in the Lord's message, that your souls were most concerned in. What sin reproved which you are guilty of? What duty pressed which you omit? And there meditate seriously on the weight and reasons of the thing; and resist not the light, but yet bring all to a fixed resolution, if till then you were unresolved: not ensnaring yourselves with dangerous vows about things doubtful, or peremptory vows without dependence on Christ for strength: but firmly resolving and cautelously engaging yourselves to duty; not with carnal evasions and reserves, but with humble dependence upon grace, without which of yourselves you are able to do nothing.

*Direct. v.* 'Hear the most practical preachers you can well get.' Not those that have the finest notions, or the cleanest style, or neatest words; but those that are still urging you to holiness of heart and life, and driving home every truth to practice: not that false doctrine will at all bear up a holy life, but true doctrine must not be left in the porch, or at the doors, but be brought home and used to its proper end, and seated in the heart, and placed as the poise upon the clock, where it may set all the wheels in motion.

*Direct. vi.* 'Take heed especially of two sorts of false teachers. Antinomian libertines, and autonomian pharisees.' The first would build their sins on Christ; not pleading for sin itself, but taking down many of the chief helps against it, and disarming us of the weapons by which it should be destroyed, and reproaching the true preachers of obedience as legalists, that preach up works and call men to doing, when they preach up obedience to Christ their King, upon the terms and by the motives which are used by Christ himself, and his apostles. Not understanding aright the true doctrine of faith in Christ, and justification, and free-grace (which they think none else understand but they), they pervert it and make it an enemy to the kingly office of Christ, and to sanctification, and the necessary duties of obedience.

The other sort do make void the commandments of God by their traditions, and instead of the holy practice of the laws of Christ, they would drive the world with fire and sword to practise all their superstitious fopperies; so that the few plain and necessary precepts of the law of the universal King, are drowned in the greater body of their canon law, and the ceremonies of the pope's imposing are so many in comparison of the institutions of Christ, that the worship of God, and work of Christianity is corrupted by it, and made as another thing. The wheat is lost in a heap of chaff, by them that will be law-givers to themselves, and all the church of Christ.

*Direct. VII.* 'Associate yourselves with the most holy, serious, practical Christians.' Not with the ungodly, nor with barren opinionists, that talk of nothing but their controversies, and the way or interest of their sects (which they call the church), nor with outside formal ceremonious pharisees, that are pleading for the washing of cups, and tithing of mint, and the tradition of their fathers, while they hate and persecute Christ and his disciples. But walk with the most holy, and blameless, and charitable, that live upon that truth which others talk of, and are seeking to please God by the "wisdom which is first pure, and then peaceable and gentle," when others are contending for their several sects, or seeking to please Christ, by killing him, or censuring him, or slandering him in his servants<sup>a</sup>.

*Direct. VIII.* 'Keep a just account of your practice; examine yourselves in the end of every day and week, how you have spent your time, and practised what you were taught; and judge yourselves before God according as you find it.' Yea, you must call yourselves to account every hour, what you are doing, and how you do it; whether you are upon God's work, or not; and your hearts must be watched and followed like unfaithful servants, and like loitering scholars, and driven on to every duty, like a dull or tired horse.

*Direct. IX.* 'Above all set your hearts to the deepest contemplations of the wonderful love of God in Christ, and the sweetness and excellency of a holy life, and the certain incomprehensible glory which it tendeth to, that your souls may be in love with your dear Redeemer, and all that is

<sup>a</sup> Jam. iii. 17, 18.

<sup>a</sup> John xvi. 2, 3. Matt. xxv. 40. 45.

holy, and love and obedience may be as natural to you.' And then the practice of holy doctrine, will be easy to you, when it is your delight.

*Direct. x.* Take heed that you receive not ungrounded, or unnecessary prejudices against the person of the preacher.' For that will turn your heart, and lock it up against the doctrine. And therefore abhor the spirit of uncharitableness, cruelty, and faction, which always bendeth to the suppressing, or vilifying and disgracing all those, that are not of their way and for their interest: and be not so blind as not to observe, that the very design of the devil, in raising up divisions among Christians is, that he may use the tongues or hands of one another to vilify them all, and make them odious to one another, and to disable one another from hindering his kingdom, and doing any considerable service to Christ. So that when a minister of Christ should be winning souls, either he is forbidden, or he is despised, and the hearers are saying, 'O, he is such, or such a one,' according to the names of reproach which the enemy of Christ and love hath taught them.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### *Directions for profitable Reading the Holy Scriptures.*

SEEING the diversity of men's tempers and understandings is so exceedingly great, that it is impossible that any thing should be pleasing and suitable to some, which shall not be disliked and quarrelled with by others; and seeing in the Scriptures there are many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction<sup>a</sup>. And the word is to some the savour of death unto death<sup>b</sup>. You have therefore need to be careful in reading it. And as Christ saith, "Take heed how you hear<sup>c</sup>;" so I say, Take heed how you read.

*Direct. i.* 'Bring not an evil heart of unbelief. Open the Bible with holy reverence as the book of God, indited by the Holy Ghost. Remember that the doctrine of the New Testament was revealed by the Son of God, who was

<sup>a</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.

<sup>b</sup> Mark iv. 24. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Luke viii. 18.