

A

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY.

PART III.

CHRISTIAN ECCLESIASTICS:

OR,

DIRECTIONS TO PASTORS AND PEOPLE ABOUT SACRED DOCTRINE,
WORSHIP, AND DISCIPLINE, AND THEIR MUTUAL DUTIES.
WITH THE SOLUTION OF A MULTITUDE OF CHURCH CON-
TROVERSIES, AND CASES OF CONSCIENCE.

READER,

THAT this Part and the next are imperfect, and so much only is written as I might, and not as I would, I need not excuse to thee, if thou know me, and where, and when I live. But some of that which is wanting, if thou desire, thou mayst find, 1. In my "Universal Concord." 2. In my "Christian Concord." 3. In our "Agreement for Catechising," and my "Reformed Pastor." 4. In the "Reformed Liturgy," offered to the commissioned bishops at the Savoy. Farewell.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Worship of God in general.

THAT God is to be worshipped solemnly by man, is confessed by all that acknowledge that there is a God^a. But about the matter and manner of his worship, there are no

^a Qui totos dies precabantur, et immolabant, ut sui liberi sibi superstites essent,

small dissensions and contentions in the world. I am not now attempting a reconciliation of these contenders; the sickness of men's minds and wills doth make that impossible to any but God, which else were not only possible, but easy, the terms of reconciliation being in themselves so plain and obvious as they are. But it is Directions to those that are willing to worship God aright, which I am now to give.

Direct. 1. 'Understand what it is to worship God aright, lest you offer him vanity and sin for worship. The worshipping of God is the direct acknowledging of his Being and perfections to his honour.' Indirectly or consequentially he is acknowledged in every obediential act by those that truly obey and serve him: and this is indirectly and participatively to worship him: and therefore all things are holy to the holy, because they are holy in the use of all, and Holiness to the Lord is, as it were, written upon all that they possess or do (as they are holy): but this is not the worship which we are here to speak of; but that which is primarily and directly done to glorify him by the acknowledgment of his excellencies. Thus God is worshipped either inwardly by the soul alone, or also outwardly by the body expressing the worship of the soul. For that which is done by the body alone, without the concurrence of the heart, is not true worship, but an hypocritical image or shew of it, equivocally called worship^b. The inward worship of the heart alone, I have spoken of in the former Part. The outward or expressive worship, is simple or mixed: simple when we only intend God's worship immediately in the action; and this is found chiefly in praises and thanksgiving which therefore are the most pure and simple sort of expressive worship. Mixed worship is that in which we

superstitiosi sunt appellati: quod nomen postea latius patuit. Qui autem omnia, quæ ad cultum Deorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent, et tanquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi, ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo, à diligendo diligentes, ex intelligendo intelligentes. Ita factum est in superstitioso et religioso; alterum vitii nomen, alterum laudis. Cic. Nat. D. ii. 72.

^b If they that serve their God with mere words, and ceremony, and mimical actions, were so served themselves, they might be silenced with Aristippus's defence of his gallantry and sumptuous fare, Si vituperandum, ait, hoc esset, in celebritatibus deorum profecto non feret. Laert. in Aristip. So Plato allowed drunkenness only in the feasts of Bacchus.

join some other intention, for our own benefit in the action ; as in prayer where we worship God by seeking to him for mercy ; and in reverent hearing or reading his Word, where we worship him by a holy attendance upon his instructions and commands ; and in his sacraments where we worship him by receiving and acknowledging his benefits to our souls ; and in oblations where we have respect also to the use of the thing offered ; and in holy vows and oaths, in which we acknowledge him our Lord and Judge. All these are acts of divine worship, though mixed with other uses.

It is not only worshipping God, when our acknowledgments (by word or deed) are directed immediately to himself ; but also when we direct our speech to others, if his praises be the subject of them, and they are intended directly to his honour : such are many of David's psalms of praise. But where God's honour is not the thing directly intended, it is no direct worshipping of God, though all the same words be spoken as by others.

Direct. 11. 'Understand the true ends and reasons of our worshipping God ; lest you be deceived by the impious who take it to be all in vain.' When they have imagined some false reasons to themselves, they judge it vain to worship God, because those reasons of it are vain. And he that understandeth not the true reasons why he should worship God, will not truly worship him, but be profane in neglecting it, or hypocritical in dissembling, and heartless in performing it. The reasons then are such as these.

1. The first ariseth from the use of all the world, and the nature of the rational creature in special. The whole world is made and upheld to be expressive and participative of the image and benefits of God. God is most perfect and blessed in himself, and needeth not the world to add to his felicity. But he made it to please his blessed will, as a communicative good, by communication and appearance : that he might have creatures to know him, and to be happy in his light ; and those creatures might have a fit representation or revelation of him that they might know him. And man is specially endowed with reason and utterance, that he might know his Creator appearing in his works, and might communicate this knowledge, and express that glory of his Maker with his tongue, which the inferior

creatures express to him in their being^c. So that if God were not to be worshipped, the end of man's faculties, and of all the creation must be much frustrated. Man's reason is given him that he may know his Maker; his will, and affections, and executive powers are given him, that he may freely love him and obey him; and his tongue is given him principally to acknowledge him and praise him: whom should God's work be serviceable to, but to him that made it?

2. As it is the natural use, so it is the highest honour of the creature to worship and honour his Creator: is there a nobler or more excellent object for our thoughts, affections, or expressions? And nature, which desireth its own perfection, forbiddeth us to choose a sordid, vile, dishonourable work, and to neglect the highest and most honourable.

3. The right worshipping of God doth powerfully tend to make us in our measure like him, and so to sanctify and raise the soul, and to heal it of its sinful distempers and imperfections. What can make us good so effectually as our knowledge, and love, and communion with him that is the chiefest good? Nay, what is goodness itself in the creature if this be not. As nearness to the sun giveth light and heat, so nearness to God, is the way to make us wise and good; for the contemplation of his perfections is the means to make us like him. The worshippers of God do not exercise their bare understandings upon him in barren speculations; but they exercise all their affections towards him, and all the faculties of their souls, in the most practical and serious manner, and therefore are most likely to have the liveliest impressions of God upon their hearts; and hence it is that the true worshippers of God are really the wisest and the best of men, when many that at a distance are employed in mere speculations about his works and him, remain almost as vain and wicked as before, and professing themselves wise, are (practically) fools^d.

4. The right worshipping of God, by bringing the heart into a cleansed, holy, and obedient frame, doth prepare it to command the body, and make us upright and regular in all the actions of our lives; for the fruit will be like the tree;

^c Read Mr. Herbert's Poem called "Providence."

^d Rom. i. 21, 22.

and as men are, so will they do. He that honoureth not his God, is not like well to honour his parents or his king : he that is not moved to it by his regard to God, is never like to be universally and constantly just and faithful unto men. Experience telleth us that it is the truest worshippers of God that are truest and most conscionable in their dealings with their neighbours : this windeth up the spring, and ordereth and strengtheneth all the causes of a good conversation.

5. The right worshipping of God is the highest and most rational delight of man. Though to a sick, corrupted soul it be unpleasant, as food to a sick stomach, yet to a wise and holy soul there is nothing so solidly and durably contentful. As it is God's damning sentence on the wicked, to say, "Depart from me *;" so holy souls would lose their joys, and take themselves to be undone, if God should bid them, "Depart from me; worship me, and love me, and praise me no more." They would be weary of the world, were it not for God in the world; and weary of their lives, if God were not their life.

6. The right worshipping of God prepareth us for heaven, where we are to behold him, and love, and worship him for ever. God bringeth not unprepared souls to heaven: this life is the time that is purposely given us for our preparation; as the apprenticeship is the time to learn your trades. Heaven is a place of action and fruition, of perfect knowledge, love, and praise: and the souls that will enjoy and praise God there, must be disposed to it here; and therefore they must be much employed in his worship.

7. And as it is in all these respects necessary as a means, so God hath made it necessary by his command. He hath made it our duty to worship him constantly; and he knoweth the reason of his own commands. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve^f. If God should command us nothing, how is he our Governor and our God? and if he command us any thing, what should he command us more fitly than to worship him? and he that will not obey him in this, is not like to obey him well in any thing; for there is nothing that he can with less shew of reason except against; seeing all the reason in

* Matt. xxv. 41. vii. 23.

^f Matt. iv. 10.

the world must confess, that worship is most due to God from his own creatures.

These reasons for the worship of God being undeniable, the objections of the infidels and ungodly are unreasonable: as, *Object.* 1. 'That our worship doth no good to God; for he hath no need of it.' *Answ.* It pleaseth and honoureth him, as the making of the world, and the happiness of man doth: doth it follow that there must be no world, nor any man happy, because God hath no need of it, or no addition of felicity by it? It is sufficient that it is necessary and good for us, and pleasing unto God.

Object. 11. 'Proud men are most unlike to God; and it is the proud that love to be honoured and praised.' *Answ.* Pride is the affecting of an undue honour, or the undue affecting of that honour which is due. Therefore it is that this affectation of honour in the creature is a sin, because all honour is due to God, and none to the creature but derivatively and subserviently. For a subject to affect any of the honour of his king, is disloyalty; and to affect any of the honour of his fellow-subjects is injustice: but God requireth nothing but what is absolutely his due; and he hath commanded us even towards men, to give "fear and honour to whom they are due^r."

Direct. 111. 'Labour for the truest knowledge of the God whom you worship.' Let it not be said of you, as Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "Ye worship ye know not what^h:" nor as it is said of the Athenians, whose altar was inscribed, "To the unknown Godⁱ." You must know whom you worship; or else you cannot worship him with the heart, nor worship him sincerely and acceptably, though you were at never so great labour and cost: God hath no pleasure in the sacrifice of fools^k." Though no man know him perfectly, you must know him truly. And though God taketh not every man for a blasphemer, and denier of his attributes, whom contentious, peevish wranglers call so, because they consequentially cross some espoused opinions of theirs; yet real misunderstanding of God's nature and attributes is dangerous, and tendeth to corrupt his worship by the corrupting of the worshippers. For such as you take God to be, such worship you will offer him; for your

^r Rom. xiii. 7.

^h John iv. 22.

ⁱ Acts xvii. 23.

^k Eccles. v. 1. 4.

worship is but the honourable acknowledgment of his perfections; and mistakingly to praise him for supposed imperfections, is to dishonour him and dispraise him. If to know God be your eternal life, it must needs be the life of all your worship. Take heed therefore of ignorance and error about God.

Direct. iv. 'Understand the office of Jesus Christ as our great high priest, by whose mediation alone we must have access to God.' Whether there should have been any priesthood for sacrifice or intercession if there had been no sin, the Scripture telleth us not expressly; but we have great reason to conjecture there would have been none, because there would not have been any reasons for the exercise of such an office. But since the fall, not only the Scriptures, but the practice of the whole world doth tell us that the sinful people are unmeet immediately thus to come to God, but that they must come by the mediation of the priest, as a sacrificer and intercessor. So that either nature teacheth sinners the necessity of some mediator, or the tradition of the church hath dispersed the knowledge of it through the world: and certainly no other priest but Christ can procure the acceptance of a sinful people upon his own account; nor be an effectual mediator for them to God, unless in subserviency to an effectual mediator who can procure us access and acceptance for his own sake. For all other priests are sinners as well as the people, and have as much need of a mediator for themselves. 1. See therefore that you never appear before God, but as sinners, that have offended him, and have deserved to be cast out of his favour for ever, and such as are in absolute necessity of a mediator to procure their access and acceptance with God: come not to God without the sense of sin and misery. 2. See also that you come as those that have a mediator in the presence of God; even Jesus our high priest who appeareth before God continually to make intercession for us: come therefore with holy boldness, and confidence, and joy, having so sure and powerful a friend with God, the beloved of the Father, whom he heareth always.

Direct. v. 'Look carefully to the state of thy soul, that thou bring not an unholy heart to worship the Most Holy God.' Come not in the love of sin, nor in the hatred of ho-

liness; for otherwise thou hatest God, and art hated of him, as bringing that before him which he cannot but hate. And it is easy to judge how unfit they are to worship God, that hate him; and how unlike they are to be accepted by him whom he hateth. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple¹." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me^m." "Who shall abide in God's tabernacle, but he that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness?" God will be sanctified in them that come nigh him; and are unsanctified persons fit for this? and can the unholy offer him holy worship? "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" is it fit then to serve and honour him^o? "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity^p." It is a purified, peculiar, holy people that Christ hath redeemed to be the worshippers of God, and as priests to "offer him acceptable sacrifice^q." If you will "receive the kingdom that cannot be moved, you must have grace in your hearts to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire^r." I know an ungodly person, as soon as he hath any repenting thoughts, must express them in confession and prayer to God. But as no prayers of an ungodly man are profitable to him, but those which are acts of his penitent return towards God; so no worship of God hath a promise of Divine acceptance, but that which is performed by such as sincerely return to God: (and such are not ungodly). "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight^s." I know the wicked must "seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he

¹ Psal. v. 3—7.^m Psal. lxxvi. 18.^o Psal. xv. 1, 2.^o Rom. viii. 7, 8. See 2 Cor. vi. 15—18.^p 2 Tim. ii. 19.^q Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.^r Heb. xii. 28, 29.^s Prov. xv. 8.

is near :” but it must be in “forsaking his way and thoughts and turning to the Lord!” Simon Magus must first “repent of his wickedness,” and then pray that the thoughts of his heart may be forgiven him^a. O come not in thy unholy, carnal state to worship God, unless it be as a penitent returner to him, to lament first thy sin and misery, that thou mayst be sanctified, and reconciled, and fit to worship him.

Direct. VI. ‘Yet take it not as sufficient that thou art in a state of sanctification, but also particularly sanctify thyself to every particular address to God in holy worship.’ Even the child of a king will not go rudely in dirt and filthiness into his father’s presence. Who would not search his heart and life, and cleanse his soul from his particular pollution, by renewed repentance and purposes of reformation, before he venture to speak to God? Particular sins have made sad breaches between God and his children, and made foul work in souls that the blood of Christ had cleansed. Search therefore with fear, lest there should be any reviving sin, or any hidden root of bitterness, or any transgression which thou winkest at, or wilfully cherishest in thyself; that, if there be such, thou mayst bewail and hate it, and not come to God as if he had laid by his hatred of sin.

Direct. VII. ‘Whenever thou comest to worship God, labour to awaken thy soul to a reverent apprehension of the presence, and greatness, and holiness of his majesty, and to a serious apprehension of the greatness and excellency of the holy work which thou takest in hand.’ Remember with whom thou hast to do^x. To speak to God, is another kind of work than to speak to the greatest prince on earth, yea, or the greatest angel in heaven. Be holy, for the Lord your God is holy. To sanctify the name of God, and come in holiness before him, is to apprehend him as infinitely advanced above the whole creation, and to come with hearts that are separated from common things to him, and elevated above a common frame. A common frame of heart in worship (such as we have about our common business) is mere profaneness. If it be common it is unclean. Look to your feet when you go to the house of God^y. Put off the shoes of earthly, common, unhallowed affections, whenever you

^a Isa. lv. 6, 7.^x Acts viii. 22.^y Heb. iv. 13.^z Eccl. v. 1.

tread on holy ground, that is, when you are about holy work, and when you draw near the Holy God. In reverent adoration say as Jacob, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven^a."

Direct. VIII. 'In the worship of God, remember your communion with the holy angels, and with all the hosts of heaven.' You are the servants of the same God, and though you are yet far below them, you are doing that which tendeth towards their dignity; for you must be equal with them. Your work is partly of the same kind with theirs: it is the same holy Majesty that you admire and praise, though you see him yet but as in a glass. And the angels are some of them present with you, and see you though you see not them: you are commanded to respect them in your behaviour in God's worship. If the eye of faith were so far opened, as that in all your worshipping of God, you saw the blessed companies of angels, though not in the same place and manner with you, yet in the same worship and in communion with you, admiring, magnifying, extolling, and praising the Most Glorious God, and the glorified Redeemer, with flaming, fervent, holy minds, it would sure do much to elevate your souls, and raise you up to some imitation and resemblance of them^a. You find that in God's public worship, it is a great help to the soul, in holy cheerfulness and fervour, to join with a full assembly of holy, fervent, cheerful worshippers: and that it is very difficult to the best, to keep up life and fervent cheerfulness in so small, or ignorant, or profane a company, as where there is none to concur with us. O then, what a raising help would it be, to praise God as within the sight and hearing of the heavenly praises of the angelical choir! You see how apt men are to be conformed to the company that they are in. They that are among dancers, or gamesters, or tipplers, or filthy talkers, or scorers, or railers, are apt to do as the company doth, or at least to be the more disposed to it. And they that are among saints, in holy worship or discourse, are apt to imitate them much more than they would do in other

^a Gen xxviii. 17. See Isa. vi. 1, 3, 5.

^a See Mr. Ambruse's book of Communion with Angels; and Zanchy on the same subject: and Mr. Lawrence's and Dr. Hammoud's Annotat. on 1 Cor. xi.

company. And what likelier way is there, to make you like angels in the worshipping of God, than to do it as in the communion of the angels? and by faith to see and hear them in the concert? The angels disdain not to study our studies, and to learn “by the church the manifold wisdom of God^b.” They are not so far from us, nor so strange to us and our affairs, as that we should imagine ourselves to be out of their communion. Though we may not worship them^c, we must worship as with them.

Direct. ix. ‘Take special care to the matter of your worship, that it be such as is agreeable to the will of God, to the holiness of his nature, and the directions of his Word; and such as hath a promise of his acceptance.’ Offer him not the sacrifice of fools, who know not that they do evil, and are adding to their sins, while they think they are pleasing him. Bring no false fire unto his altars: let your zeal of God be according to knowledge. For no zeal will make a corrupt, unlawful kind of worship, to be acceptable unto God^d.

Direct. x. ‘See that you perform every part of worship to the proper end to which it is appointed: both as to the ultimate, remote, and nearest end.’ The end is essential to these relative duties. If you intend not the right end, you make another thing of it: as the preaching of a sermon to edify the church, or putting up a prayer to procure God’s blessings, is not the same thing as a stageplayer’s profane repeating the same words in scorn of godliness, or an hypocrite’s using them for commodity or applause. The ultimate end of all worship and all moral actions is the same, even the pleasing and glorifying God^e. Besides which every part of worship hath its proper, nearest end. These must not only be distinctly known, but actually intended. It is God in Christ that a holy worshipper thirsteth after and seeketh for in every part of worship, either to know more of God, and of his will, and blessings; or to have some more communion with him, or some further grace commu-

^b Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.

^c Col. ii. 18.

^d Adulterium est, impium est, sacrilegium est, quodcumque humano furore instituitur, ut dispositio Divina violetur. Cyprian. Eccles. v. 1, 2. Lev. x. 1—3. Rom. x. 2, 3.

^e 1 Cor. x. 31. 2 Tim. ii. 4.

nicated from him, to receive his pardoning, or cleansing, or quickening, or confirming, or comforting, or exalting grace; to be honoured or delighted in his holy service, or to make known his grace and glory for the good of others, and the honour of his name. Here it is that God proclaimeth his name as Exod. xxxiv. 6. The ordinances of God's worship are like the tree in which Zaccheus climbed up (being of himself too low) to have a sight of Christ. Here we come to learn the will of God for our salvation; and must enter the assembly with such resolutions as Cornelius and his company met, Acts x. 33. "We are all here met to hear all things commanded thee of God:" and as Acts ii. 37. and Acts xvi. 30. to learn what we must do to be saved. Hither we come for that holy light, which may shew us our sin, and shew us the grace which we have received, and shew us the unspeakable love of God, till we are humbled for sin, and lifted up by faith in Christ, and can with Thomas, as it were, put our fingers into his wounds, and say in assurance, "My Lord and my God:" and as Psal. xlviii. 14. "This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Here we do as it were with Mary sit at the feet of Jesus, to hear his Word^f, that fire from heaven may come down upon our hearts, and we may say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he spake to us, and while he opened to us the Scriptures^g?" Here we cry to him as the blind man, "Lord that I may receive my sight." We cry here to the watchmen, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth^h." Here we are in his "banqueting house," under the "banner of his loveⁱ." We have here the sealing and quickenings of his Spirit, the mortification of our sin, the increase of grace, and a prospect into life eternal, and a foresight of the endless happiness there. See then that you come to the worship of God with these intentions and expectations; that if God or conscience call to you (as God did sometime to Elias) "what dost thou here?" you may truly answer, I came to seek the Lord my God, and to learn his will that I might do it. And that your sweet delights may make you say, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee^k." If thou come to

^f Luke x. 39.^g Luke xxiv. 32.^h Cant. iii. 3.ⁱ Cant. ii. 4.^k Psal. lxxxiv. 4.

the worship of God in mere custom, or to make thy carnal heart believe that God will forgive thee because thou so far servest him, or to quiet thy conscience with the doing of a formal task of duty, or to be seen of men, or that thou mayst not be thought ungodly, if these be thy ends, thou wilt speed accordingly. A holy soul cannot live upon the air of man's applause, nor upon the shell of ordinances, without God who is the kernel and the life of all: it is the love of God that brings them thither, and it is love that they are exercising there, and the end of love, even the nearer approach of the soul to God, which they desire and intend. Be sure then that these be the true and real intentions of thy heart.

Quest. ' But how shall I know whether indeed it be God himself that I am seeking, and that I perform his worship to the appointed ends?'

Ans. In so great a business it is a shame to be unacquainted with your own intentions. If you take heed what you do, and look after your hearts, you may know what you come for, and what is your business there. But more particularly you may discern it by these marks: 1. He that hath right ends, and seeketh God, will labour to suit all his duties to those ends, and will like that best which is best suited to them: he will strive so to preach, and hear, and pray, not as tends most to preferment or applause, but as tendeth most to please and honour God, and to attain his grace: and he will love that sermon or that prayer best, that is best fitted to bring up his soul to God, and not that which tickleth a carnal ear. Mark what you fit the means to, and you may perceive what is your end. 2. If it be God himself that you seek after in his worship, you will not be satisfied without God: it is not the doing of the task that will satisfy you, nor yet the greatest praise of men, nor of the most godly men; but so far as you have attained your end, in the cleansing, or quickening, or strengthening of the soul, or getting somewhat nearer God, or pleasing or honouring him, so far only you will be contented. 3. If God be your end, you will be faithful in the use of that more private and spiritual worship, where God is to be found, though no human applause be there to be attained. 4. And you will love still the same substantial, necessary truth and

duty, which is to your souls as bread and drink is to your bodies; when those that have carnal ends will be looking after variety and change, and will be weary of the necessary bread of life. By observing these things you may discern what are your ends in worship.

And here I must not let go this necessary Direction, till I have driven on the reader with some more importunity to the serious practice of it. It is lamentable to see, how many turn the worship of God into vile hypocrisy, and dead formality; and offer God a carrion for a sacrifice, and yet their consciences are so far from checking them for this heinous sin, that they are much pleased and quieted by it, as if they had deserved well of God, and proved themselves very godly people, and by this sin had made him amends for the common sins of their lives. Is it God himself, and his sanctifying grace that those men seek after in his worship, who hate his grace and scorn sanctification, and can leave God to be enjoyed by others, if they may but enjoy their fleshly pleasures, and riches, and honours in the world? Even the haters of God and holiness are so blinded, as to persuade themselves that in his worship they are truly seeking that God and holiness which they hate. And O what a deal of pains is many a formal hypocrite at to little purpose; in spending many hours in outside, heartless, lifeless worship, while they never thirsted after God, nor after a holy conformity to him, communion with him, or fruition of him, in all their lives! O what a deal of labour do these Pharisees lose in bodily exercise which profiteth nothing, for want of a right end in all that they do! because it is not God that they seek: when "godliness is profitable to all things¹." And what is godliness but the soul's devotedness to God, and seeking after him? We have much ado to bring some men from their diversions to God's outward worship: but O how much harder is it to bring the soul to seek God unfeignedly in that worship where the body is present! When David in the wilderness was driven from the sanctuary, he crieth out in the bitterness of his soul, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God: my tears have been my meat

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?" You see here that it was God himself that David thirsted after in his worship. Alas! what is all the outward pomp of worship, if God be not the end and life of all? Without him how vain a thing would the words of prayer, and preaching, and the administration of the sacraments be? It is not the dead letter, but the quickening spirit that maketh the dead in sin to live; that convinceth or comforteth the soul; or maketh the worshipper holy or happy. Nay it is some aggravation of your misery, to be destitute of true communion with God, while you seem to worship him; and to be far from him in the heart, while you draw so near him with the lips: to boast of the temple of the Lord, and be forsaken by the Lord of the temple! That Capernaum shall be cast down to hell, that is but thus lift up to heaven; and it will be easier for Sodom in the day of judgment, than for such as had the public ordinances without God. David left the ark with Absalom at Jerusalem; but God was not with Absalom but with David. No marvel if such hypocrites grudge at all that is costly in God's service; even the necessary maintenance of the ministers: for if they have only the shell of ordinances without God, it will scarce requite them for their cost. No marvel if they think all their pains too much, when they take up with the chaff which is scarcely worth their pains. No wonder if they find small pleasure in God's service: for what pleasure is there in the husks or chaff, or in a deaf nut? No wonder if they grow no better, no holier or stronger by it: for what strength will chaff and shadows breed? No marvel if they are quickly weary, and if a little of such religion seem enough, when the life, and spirits, and strength, and sweetness is neglected. O sinners, remember, that God desireth not yours but you, and all your wealth and service is as nothing to him, if he have not yourselves, (when yet you are so little worth the having). Nay, how earnestly doth he sue to have you! How dearly hath he bought you! he may challenge you as his own. Answer this kindness of God aright: let no ordinance nor any common mercy satisfy you, if you have not God himself. And to encourage you let me further tell you,

If it be God himself that thou seekest in his worship

(sincerely) thou shalt find him: because thou hast chosen the better part, it shall not be taken from thee. Because thou hungerest and thirstest after him thou shalt be satisfied. What joyful news is this to the thirsty soul! 2. Thou art most welcome to God with these high desires: this holy ambition and aspiring of love is only acceptable to him. If all ordinances be nothing to thee without God, he will see that thou understandest the true use of ordinances, and put down thy name among his lovers, whom he cannot despise. He loveth not to see men debase their souls, to feed on husks and chaff with hypocrites, any more than to feed on filth and dirt, with sensualists and worldlings. As he accepted Solomon's prayer because he asked not for little things, but for great, so he is very much pleased with the soul, that is unsatisfied with all the world, and can be content with nothing lower or worse than God himself. 3. Nay because thou seekest God himself, thou shalt have all things with him that are worth the having^m. When hypocrites have but the carcase and shadow, it is thou that shalt have the substantial food and joy. As they that were with Paul when he was converted, did hear the voice but saw no manⁿ; so others shall hear the sound of the Word, and the name of God; but it is thou that shalt see him by faith that is invisible, and feel the power and efficacy of all. Thou shalt hear God speak to thee, when he that sitteth in the same seat with thee, shall hear no more than the voice of man. It is he that seeketh after God in his ordinances, that is religious in good sadness, and is employed in a work, that is worthy of an immortal, rational soul. The delights of ordinances as they are performed by man, will savour of his imperfections, and taste of the instrument, and have a bitterness often mixed with the sweet; when the delight that cometh from God himself will be more pure. Ordinances are uncertain: you may have them to-day, and lose them to-morrow! when God is everlasting, and everlastingly to be enjoyed. O therefore take not up short of God, in any of his worship, but before you set upon it, call up your souls to mind the end, and tell them what you are going to do, that you miss not of the end for want of seeking it. The devil will give hypocritical worldlings leave to play them

^m Matt. vi. 33. Rom. viii. 28.ⁿ Acts ix. 7.

with the most excellent ordinances, if he can but keep God out of sight, even as you will let your children play them with a box of gold, as long as it is shut, and they see not what is within.

Direct. xi. 'Be laborious with your hearts in all God's worship to keep them employed on their duty; and be watchful over them, lest they slug or wander.' Remember that it is heart-work that you are principally about. And therefore see that your hearts be all the while at work. Take yourselves as idle when your hearts are idle. And if you take not pains with them, how little pains will they take in duty! If you watch them not, how quickly will they lie down, and forget what they are doing, and fall asleep when you are in treaty with God! How easily will they turn aside, and be thinking of impertinent vanities? Watch therefore unto prayer and every duty°.

Direct. xii. 'Look up to heaven as that which all your duties tend to, that from thence you may fetch your encouraging motives.' Do all as a means to life eternal: separate no duty from its reward and end. As the traveller remembereth whither he is going all the way, and a desired end doth make the foulest steps seem tolerable; so think in every prayer you put up, and in every duty, that it is all for heaven.

Direct. xiii. 'Depend upon the Spirit of God for help.' You cannot seek God spiritually and acceptably without him. Think not that you are sufficient to worship God aright without his help. Where this is despised or neglected, you see what lamentable work is made by blind, corrupted nature in God's service. Sensual wretches that have not the Spirit, are fitter for any thing than to worship God^p. "If he that hath not the Spirit of Christ be none of his^q," then he that pretends to worship God without the Spirit of Christ, can ill think to be heard for the sake of Christ.

Direct. xiv. 'Look also to your tongues and the deportment of your bodies, that the whole man may worship God in holiness as he requireth.' Pretend not your good meanings, nor the spirituality of your worship, to excuse you from worshipping also with your bodies. Your hearts

° 1 Pet. iv. 7. § Tim. iv. 5.

¶ Jude 19.

¶ Rom. viii. 9.

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