

and Place which they live in. When had we ever greater Temptations to Love-killing principles and practices than now, except in the times of the miserable Wars? I need not name them to you. The harder it is for men to Love them that hate them, that censure them unjustly, that revile them, and reproach them, and make them odious, or that hurt them, the more cause have Ministers and all Christians to set a double watch upon their Love; Lest before they are aware, a *flaming* and consuming zeal, do tell others that *they know not what manner of Spirit they are of*, Luk. 9. 55.

9. Yea it is not only a time of great Temptation to this sin, but of *common guilt*: They are multitudes that are overtaken already with this sin. Is not the Land in a continual *heart war*? Are there not parties against parties, and cause against cause, and heart-risings, and passions, and censurings of Dissenters, to say no worse? And is it not time to bring water when we see the flames?

10. And I perceive *few know* so heinous a sin to be any *sin at all*; But all factions and parties are still justifying their Love-killing wayes, and reproaching those whom they have wronged; As if when they have sinfully withdrawn their Love from them, it were

were no crime to take away next, their good names, and all that they have but power to take away. And when they have cast their brethren out of their *estimation* and *affection*, they think it a piece of commendable zeal or justice, to cast them out of Christian communion, and if they could out of the Land and of the world. And shall Ministers stand by, and see men take such *sin* for *duty*, and *serve God* by abusing his *Servants*, and look for a *reward* for *dividing* and *pulling down* his Church, and never tell them what they are doing.

11. And the old Non-conformists who wrote so much against separation, were neither *blind* nor *temporizers*. They saw the danger on that side. Even *Brightman* our *Rev.* that writeth against the Prelacy and Ceremonies, severely reprehendeth the separatists. Read but the writings of Mr. *Fohn* *Pages*, Mr. *Fohn* *Ball*, Mr. *Hilderham*, Mr. *Bradshaw*, Mr. *Baine*, Mr. *Rathband*, and many such others against the separatists of those times, and you may learn that our Light is not *greater*, but *less* than theirs, and that we see not further into that cause than they did; and that change of times doth not change the truth; nor will warrant us to change our Religion, unless we will make our Religion subject to the wills and interests

rests of men, and change it as oft as the times shall change.

12. Lastly, if your *friends* tell you not of your *faults* and *errours* in *Love*, those whom you account your *enemies* will do it in *wrath*. And though all sober Christians should learn by the keenest rebukes of their Adversaries, yet passion and prejudice maketh it so difficult, that it usually hardeneth men more in their sin: And this is another thing, which causeth me the more to abhor division, and to long for the reconciling of the minds of all dissenting Christians; Because while they take each other for adversaries, nothing that is written or said by any is like to do the Adversaries any good. Nay I must confess when I see an adversary tell men of their sin, especially with furious spleen and wrath, mixing together words and swords, I am greatly afraid, lest by that temptation, Satan will draw the reprov'd to impenitency, and greatly harden them in their sin, and make them glory in that as a virtue, which such a person doth so reprove.

But if you will neither hear of your sin nor duty by adversaries nor friends, by fair speeches nor by foul, you fasten the guilt upon your selves. Remember I pray you, that I am not kindling fires, nor drawing
Swords

Swords against you, nor stirring up any to do you hurt, but only perswading all dissenters to love one another, and to forbear but all that is contrary to love. And if such an exhortation and advice seem injurious or intollerable to you, the Lord have mercy on your Souls.

III. And now without a spirit of Prophecy; I will foretel what entertainment this Paper must expect.

1. Some on the one side will say, It is sharper and rounder dealing than all this, that must cure the Schismes in the Church: And if you would heal our Divisions, why do you not conform your self, but stand out as one of the party that divideth?

2. Some on the other side will say, that it is an unseasonable time, when so much anger is breaking forth against those that we account *Dividers*, to mention their faults, and so to stir up more. I will give these men no other answer, than to bid them read the last part of this Book; or else do not talk till they know of what.

3. And some will say that I am doing that which will prove a hurt to my self and others. For if I should draw the People to Communion with the Conformists, there would little compassion be shewed to the Ministers that cannot conform. But selfish

fish wisdom must be shut out of the Council, when we are consulting about the healing of the Churches, and the good of Souls. And indeed there is little danger of this consequence, as long as the people are far more averse to Communion or Concord with the Parish-Churches, than the Non-conforming Ministers are. But suppose it prove true, should we not do good to Souls, and save men from sin, and heal divisions, at the dearest rate? What though it cost us more than is here mentioned; The reviving of decayed Love, and the closure of any of the Churches wounds, is a recompence worth our liberties and lives.

4. And those that are most guilty of the Love-killing principles here detected, and are most eminent in *self-conceited ignorance*, will do by me and by this book, according to their Principles, and as they use to do by others. Before they have soberly read it over, they will carry about the Sectarian reports of it from hand to hand; And when one hath said it, the rest will affirm it, that [I have clawed with one party, and have girded at the other, and have sought to make them odious by bringing them under the reproach of Separation, and of censuring and avoiding the ungodly; and that being lukewarm my self, and a complier with sin, I would

would have all others do so too: And that these Reconcilers are neither flesh nor fish, and attempt impossibilities, even to reconcile Light and darkness, Christ and Belial; And that for the sake of Peace we would sell the Truth, and would let in Church-corruptions out of an over-eager desire of Agreement: And when they have all done, neither party will regard them, but they shall fare worse than any others; and will lose both sides, whilest they are for neither.] I know it is the nature of the disease which I am curing, to send forth such breath and scents as these; And I intend not to bestow a word to answer them.

5. And some of the wise and sober Ministers, who mark more the inconveniences of one side, than of the other, and look more to *outward occurrences*, than to the *Rule*, and to the inward state of Souls; especially such as have not seen, the times and things that I have seen, will think that though all this be true, it is unseasonable, and may give advantage to such as love not Reformation. And to them I shall return this answer.

1. That if we stay seven years more for a seasonable time, to oppose the radical sin of uncharitableness, we may be in our graves, and the sinners in their graves, and the sin may be multiplied and rooted past all hope
of

of remedy. And why may you not as well stay seven years more, for a seasonable time, to Preach down all other sins as well as this? Is this the least malignant, or least dangerous sin? 2. There was never a more seasonable time to tell men of their sin, than when the temptation to it is the greatest; when it is most growing and multiplying among us; When God hath been so heinously dishonoured by it; when the world doth ring of it; when many Volumes reproach them for it; And when the sensual and ungodly are hardened by it in their scorn of godliness, to the apparent peril of their damnation: yea more, to turn our complaints from our Law-givers upon our selves. It is want of Love, and it is Dividing principles and practices, that have silenced so many Ministers, and brought us into all the confusions and calamities which we see and undergo.

6. But there are many sincere and considerate Ministers, who knowing this which I say to be true, will be the more excited by it to lead the younger and passionate sort of Religious people, into the wayes of Love and peace, and to save them from the dangers here detected, and perswade them to the practise of these Directions. And for the use of these I write this Book.

And

And yet, to end as I began, I must add these notices, for your right understanding of it.

1. That this is not my first attempt upon this work; but the progress of what I have been upon these three and twenty years. About fifteen or sixteen years ago, I preach't on the third Chapter of Saint *James*, in a larger and a closer manner on this Subject, than here I write: because the times then called me to it.

2. I perswade no Christian to justify or own the sins or the least defects of any Church, Minister or People, in their Worship or in their lives, though I perswade you to Communion with the Churches, persons and worship-actions, which have many faults: (For on Earth there is no person, Church, or Worship faultless, and without corruption.) I justify not the faults of my own daily Prayers, and yet I never pray without them.

3. I am not perswading Ministers to any unwise and unseasonable Preaching, against the dividing Principles of the weak, when the necessities of the Auditory more require other Doctrine; (Much less to exasperating railings and invectives; And least of all to wrathful violence). But only with prudence, in season and with Love and gentleness;

ness, to lead men into the truth: If even with Infidels and Hereticks, *the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men; apt to teach; patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25.* How much more must the Children of Gods family be used with Love and tenderness. But if the fierceness of any contradict what I say, I only add, that it is not an unexperienced person that speaketh it, but one who through the mercy of God, hath long kept a numerous flock in Love and unity and peace by such like means; and hath seen the lamentable effects of the contrary way.

4. While I say so much in this Treatise against the *rash censuring of others*, I give you not the rule for mens censuring of *themselves*: They know more by themselves: They may search into the depth of their hearts and intentions, which we cannot do. They are allowed to be more suspicious & censorious of themselves, than of any others: It more concerneth them: And they have more to do with themselves; and may be bolder with themselves. We judg others in order to visible Church-Communion by visible and publick evidence.

C

dence. But in order to their preparation for the judgment of God, we must direct them to judge themselves according to the truth in the inward parts.

5. While I draw you to peace and moderation towards others, I desire not to quench the least degree of Christian zeal. Nay I endeavour to kill that which would kill it. The *purified peculiar people of the Redeemer* are zealous, but of what? not to consume and destroy one another, nor to hate and flye from one another; nor to vilifie and backbite one another; but they are zealous of good works: And Paul will tell you what are good works, Gal. 5. 22, 23. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: Be zealous in Loving all Christians as Christians, and all men as men: Be zealous for Peace: If it be possible, as much as in you lyeth, live peaceably with all men, Rom. 12. 18. Be zealously patient, gentle, good, meek, temperate. And the works of the flesh are-- hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies: A zeal for these is earthly sensual and devilish, as James telleth you. And remember that the word which is translated there [Envy] is [Zeal] in the Original: But our translators were afraid, lest the prophane would have mistaken it, if

it they had translated it [*Zeal*] ver. 16. *where zeal and strife is* (that is, a striving contentious zeal) *there is confusion and every evil work.*] If you believe this, how dare you blame me for writing to save you from *confusion and every evil work*?

6. I will conclude with the repetition of one thing delivered in this Treatise; that among all the rest, two separating dividing principles will never give peace to the Church where they prevail. The one is; the confounding mens *Title to visible Church Membership and Communion*, with their Title to Justification and Salvation. The other is, the *Imposing of new terms and titles* of Visible membership and Communion; and rejecting the sufficiency of the *terms and title of Christs appointment*. Christ hath solemnly and purposely made the *Baptismal Covenanting with him*, to be the *terms and title* to Church membership and Communion; And the *owning* of this *same Covenant* is the sufficient Title of the adult. And the Imposers that come after, and require another kind of evidence of Conversion, or Sanctification than this, do confound the Church, and enflame the people, and leave no certain way of tryal, but make as various *terms and titles*, as there are various degrees of wisdom and Charity.

C 2

rity,

rity, and various opinions, in the Pastors
(yea in all the people to whom they allow
the judgement of such Causes) in the se-
veral Churches. In this point, the sober
Anabaptists seem to come nearer the truth
than they.

I add no more, but Christs conclusion,
that a house or Kingdom divided against it
self cannot stand; The Book it self was
written near two years ago; but this Pre-
face, *Feb. 2. 1669.*

A N



AN

ABSTRACT OF THE DIRECTIONS.

1. Forget not the difference between the younger sort of Christians, and the Elder. The peril of the Church from young Christians. *Knowl. to be got by study. & hearing. &c. p. 14.*
2. Observe the secret workings of spiritual pride, and how deep rooted and odious a sin it is, and what special temptations to it, the younger and emptier sort of Christians have. *How can we be kept from it? & of a kind pride & stubbornness.*
3. Overvalue not the Common gift of utterance, nor a high profession, as if grace were appropriated to such alone, who are to be called Professors.
4. Affect not to be made eminent and conspicuous in holiness, by standing at a further distance from common Christians, than God would have you. *Separation from & false religion.*
5. Understand the true difference between the Church as Visible, and as Regenerate or mystical; and the several qualifications of the Members. What Scandals were in the primitive Churches, in Scripture times. *Hypocrites & such being in the Church, & of a kind pride & stubbornness.*
6. Understand well the different Conditions and terms of Communion with the Church as mystical and as visible, and the different priviledges of the members: that you may not presume to impose any Conditions which

which God hath not imposed, nor unjustly grudge at the presence of those that are not sincere.

7. Get ~~the~~ ^{rise} and deep apprehensions of the necessity and reasons of Christian Unity and Concord; and of the sin and misery of divisions and discord: what Scripture saith herein.

8. When any thing needeth amendment in the Church, the best Christians must be the forwardest to Reform, and the backwardest to divide on that pretence.

9. Forget not the great difference between the Churches casting out the impenitent; and the Godlyes separating from the Church it self, because the wicked are not cast out. The first is a great duty: the second usually a great sin. Luthers case.

10. Expect not that any one lawfully received into the Church by Baptism, should be cast out of it, or denyed the priviledges of the Church, but according to the rules of Christian discipline, by the power of the Keys; that is, for obstinate impenitency in a gross or scandalous sin, upon proof, and after sufficient private and publick admonition.

11. Understand what the Power of the Keys is, and what the Pastors office is; as they are the Governours of the Church, entrusted by Christ with the power of admission and rejection: that so you may know how far you are to rest in the Pastors judgment, and may not usurp any part of their office to your selves.

12. Study well Christs gracious nature and office; and his great readiness to receive the weakest that come to him; that so you may desire a Church discipline agreeable to the Gospel.

13. Yet lest you run into the worse extreame, remember still that the destroying of sin, and the sanctifying
of

of man to God, was the work of our Redeemer : And that Holiness and Peace must go together : And that our own Church-order and discipline, must be subservient to the inward spirituality and prosperity of the Church-regenerate ; And no such favour must be shewed to sinners as favoureth sin, and hindereth Holiness.

14. Though your Governours are the Judges, what persons shall be of your publick-Church-Communion ; yet it is you, that must judge who are fit or unfit for your private familiarity.

15. Understand how much it hath pleased God to lay all mens happines or misery upon their own choice : And seek not to alter this order of God.

16. Though the profession of Christianity which entitleth men to Church-Communion, must be credible ; yet remember that there are various degrees of Credibility : And that every Profession which is not proved false, is credible in such a degree as must be accepted by the Church.

17. Know how far it is that either Grace or Gifts are necessary to a Minister, that you may give to both their due.

18. Understand well the necessity of your Communion with all the Universal Church, and wherein it consisteth ; and how far it is to be preferred before your Communion with any particular Church.

19. Engage not your selves too far in any divided Sect, and espouse not the interest of any party of Christians, to the neglect or injury of the universal Church, and the Christian Cause.

20. Be very suspicious of your Religious passions, and carefully distinguish between a sound and sinful zeal ; least you father your sin on the Spirit of God, and

think you please him more when you most offend him.

21. Lend not a patient ear to backbiters ; nor hastily believe the most religious people, when they speak ill of others.

22. Make not your selves judges of other mens actions ; much less of their state, before you have a Call ; or before you have sufficient knowledge of the person and of the Case.

23. Mistake not the nature of the sin of Scandal, as if it were the bare displeasing of another : when it is the laying of a stumbling-block or occasion of sinning before another.

24. Make Conscience of Scandalizing one party as well as another : and those most, who are most in danger by your offence.

25. Be not over tender of your reputation with any sort of men on earth : nor too impatient of their displeasure, censures or contempt. But live above them.

26. Use not your selves (needlessly) to the familiar company of that sort of Christians, who use to censure them that are more sober, Catholick and charitable than themselves : Unless you be as much or more, with the soberer sort, who will shew you the sin and mischief of Love-killing principles and divisions.

27. Take heed of misjudging of the answers of your prayers, and of taking those things to be from God, which are but the effects of your prejudice, passion or weakness of understanding.

28. Do not too much reverence the revelations, impulses or most confident opinions of any others upon the account of their sincerity or holiness ; but try all judiciously and soberly by the word of God.

29. Take

29. Take heed least the trouble of your own disquiet-
ed doubting minds, do become a snare, to draw you
to some uncouth way of Cure; and so make the fancy of
some new opinion, sect or practice, to seem your reme-
dy, and give you ease; and so perswade you that it is
the certain truth.

30. Keep in the rank of a humble disciple or Learner
in Christs Church, till you are fit and called to be Tea-
chers your selves,

31. Grow up in the great substantial practical truths
and duties; and grow downwards in the roots of a clearer
belief of the Word of God, and the life to come: And
neither begin too soon with doubtful opinions, nor ever
lay too much upon them.

32. Lay not a greater stress upon your different words
and manner of prayer, than God hath laid: And
take heed of scorning, reproaching or slighting, the
words and manner of other mens worship, when it is
such as God accepteth from the sincere. Where the Case
about forms of prayer is handled.

33. When you are sure that other mens way of wor-
ship is sinful; yet make it not any other, or greater sin,
than indeed it is; and speak not evil of so much in it as
is good: And slander not God as a hater or rejecter of
all mens Services which are mixt with infirmities; or
as a partial hater of the infirmities of others, and not
yours.

34. Think not that all is unlawfully obeyed, which is
unlawfully commanded.

35. Think not that you are guilty of all the faults of
other mens worship with whom you joyn; no not of the
Ministers or Congregations: Nor that you are bound to
seperate from all the worship which is faultily perform-
ed; For then there must be no Church-Communion
upon

upon Earth. Where is more about extemporary prayer and imposed forms.

36. Yet know what Pastors and Church-Communion you may joyn with, and what not : And think not that I am perswading you to make no difference.

37. In your judging of Discipline, reformation, and any means of the Churches good ; be sure your eye be upon the true End ; and upon the particular Rule ; and not on either of them alone. Take not that for a means which is either contrary to the Word of God ; or is in its nature destructive of the end.

38. Neglect not any truth of God ; much less renounce it, or deny it. But yet do not take it for your duty to publish all, which you judge to be truth ; nor a sin to silence many lesser truths, when the Churches peace and welfare doth require it.

39. Know which are the Great duties of a Christian life, and wherein the nature of true Religion doth consist : And then pretend not any lesser duty, against these greater ; though the least when it is indeed a duty, is not to be denied or neglected.

40. Labour for a sound judgement to know good from evil, least you trouble your selves and others by mistakes : Forsake not the guidance of a judicious Teacher, nor the Company of the agreeing generality of the Godly.

41. Let not the bare fervour of a Preacher, or the loudness of his voice, or affectionate utterance, draw you too far to admire or follow him, without a proportion of solid understanding and judiciousness.

42. Your belief of the necessary Articles of faith, must be made your own, and not taken meerly on the Authority of any. And in all points of belief or practice, which are necessary to Salvation, you must ever
keep

keep company with the Universal Church : For it were not the Church, if it erred in those. And in matters of Peace and Concord the major vote must be your guide. In matters of humane obedience your Governours must be your guides. And in matters of high and difficult Speculation, the judgment of one man of extraordinary understanding, is to be preferred before the Rulers, and the major Vote.

43. Reject not a good cause, because it is owned by some bad men : And own not a bad cause for the goodness of the Patrons of it. Judge not of the Cause by the persons, when you should judge of the persons by the Cause.

44. Yea, take the bad examples of religious men, to be one of your most perillous temptations. And therefore labour to discover what are the special sins of professors in the age you live in, that you may be specially fortified against them.

45. Desire the highest degree of holiness, and to be free from the Corruptions of the times : But affect not to be odd and singular from ordinary Christians in lawful things.

46. When you have to do only with stigmatized scandalous ones, to vindicate the honour of Christianity from their Scandal, go as far from them as lawfully you can : But with the Common sort of Sinners, whose Conversion you are bound to seek, go not as far from them as you can ; but purposely study to come as near them as lawfully you may, that you may have the better advantage to win them to the truth.

47. Whenever you are avoiding any error forget not that there is a contrary extream to be avoided, of which you are not out of danger.

48. Think more, and talk more, of your faults and failings against others ; especially against Princes, Magistrates and Pastors, than of their faults and failings against you.

49. Take

49. Take notice of all the good in others which appeareth; and talk rather of that behind their backs, than of their faults.

50. Study the duty of instructing and exhorting, more than of reproof and finding fault.

51. The more you suffer by Rulers or any men, the more be watchful, lest you be tempted to dishonour them; or to withdraw or abate the Love which is their due.

52. Make Conscience of heart-revenge, and tongue-revenge, as well as of hand-revenge.

53. When you are exasperated by the hurt which you feel from Magistrates, remember also the Good which the Church receiveth by them.

54. Learn to suffer by good people, and by Ministers; and not only by ungodly people, or by Magistrates.

55. When you complain of violence and persecution in others; take heed lest the same inward vice work in you, by Church cruelties, and damning censures, against them or others. Persecution and separation often have the same Cause.

56. Keep still in your eye, the State of all Christ's Churches upon earth; that you may know what a people they are through the world, whom Christ hath Communion with: and may not ignorantly separate from almost all the Church of Christ, while you think that you separate but from those about you. *Queres about separation.*

57. Yet let not any here cheat you by the bare names and titles of Unity, to the papal usurping head of the Church: nor must you dream of any Head and Center of Unity to the universal Church, but Christ himself.

58. Take heed of superstition, indiscreet zeal hath been the usual beginner of superstition: Malignity in that age the sharpest opposer, for the Authors sake: Formality in the next age hath made a Religion of it:

And

And then the zealous, who first invented it, have turned most against it, for the sake of the last owners; And thus the world hath turned round. Instances lay'd down of the superstition of Religious people in this age. 20. number.

59. If through the fault of either side, or both, you cannot meet together in the same assemblies; yet keep that Unity in faith, love and practice, which all neighbour Churches should maintain; And use not your different assemblies to reviling, and destroying Love and Peace.

60. When the Love-killing spirit, either cruel or dividing, is abroad among Christians; be not idle, nor discouraged Spectators; nor betray the Churches peace by lazy wishes, But make it a great part of your labour and Religion, to revive Love and Peace, and to destroy their contraries. And let no censures or contempt of any party take you off: But account it as comfortable to be a Martyr for Love & Peace by blind Zealots or proud Usurpers, as for the faith by Infidels or Heathens: And take the pleasing of God (whoever is displeased) for your full reward.

The Additional Directions to the Pastors.

1. Let it be our first care to know and do our own duty: And when we see the peoples weakness and divisions, let us first examine and judge our selves, and lament and reform our own neglects. Ministers are the Cause of most divisions.

2. It is needful to the peoples Edification and Concord, that their Pastors much excel them, in knowledge and utterance, and also in prudence, holiness, and heavenly mindedness: that the reverence of their callings and persons may be preserved; and the people taught by their Examples.

2. In-

3. Inculcate still the necessary conjunction of Holiness and Peace; and of the Love of God and Man: And that Love is their Holiness itself, and the sum of their Religion; the End of faith, and the fulfilling of the Law. And that as Love to God uniteth us to Him; so Love to man must unite us to each other. And that all doctrine and practices which are against Love and Unity, are against God, against Christ, against the Spirit, against the Church, and against Mankind.

4. If others shew their weakness by unwarrantable singularities or divisions, shew not your greater weakness, by impatience, and uncharitable censures or usage of them: especially when self-interest provoketh you.

5. Distinguish between them that separate from the Universal Church; or from all the Orthodox and Reformed parts of it; and those who only turn from the Ministry of some one person or sort of persons, without refusing Communion with the rest.

6. Distinguish between them who deny the Being of the Ministry and Church from which they separate: and those who remove only for their own Edification, as from a worse or weaker Ministry, & a Church less pure.

7. Distinguish between those who hold it simply unlawful to have Communion with you: and those who only hold it unlawful to prefer your assemblies before such as they think to be more pure.

8. Remember Christs interest in the weakest of his Servants; and do nothing against them which Christ will not take well.

9. Distinguish between weakness of Gifts and of Graces: and remember that many who are weaker in the understanding of Church-orders, may yet be stronger in grace than you.

10. Think on the Common Calamity of mankind:

what strange disparity there is in mens understandings, and will be : And how the Church here is a Hospital of diseased souls ; of whom none are perfectly healed in this life.

11. Distinguish still between those truths and duties, which are or are not of necessity : and between the tolerable and the intolerable errors. And never think of a Common Unity and Concord, but upon the terms of necessary points ; and of the primitive simplicity ; and the forbearance of dissenters in tolerable differences.

12. Remember that the Pastoral Government is a work of Light and Love : And what these cannot do, we cannot do. Our great study therefore must be first to know more and to Love more than the people ; and then to convince them by cogent evidence of truth ; and to cause the warmth of our Love to be felt by them, in all the parts of our ministration and converse : As the warmth of the Mothers milk is needful to the good nutrition of the Child. The History of Martin.

13. When you see many evils which Love and evidence will leave uncured ; yet do not reject this way, till you have found one that will better do the work, and with fewer inconveniences.

14. When you reprove those weak Christians, who are subject to errors, disorders and divisions ; reflect not any disgrace upon piety it self : but be the more careful to proclaim the honour of Godliness, and true Conscientious strictness, lest the ungodly take occasion to despise it, by hearing of the faults of such as are accounted the zealous professors of it.

15. Discourage not the people from so much of Religious exercises, in their families, and with one another, as is meet for them in their private stations.

16. Be

16. Be not wanting in abilities, watchfulness and diligence, to resist Seducers by the evidence of truth; that there may be no need of other weapons: And quench the sparks among the people, before they break out into flames.

17. Be not strange to the poor ones of your flocks; but impartial to all; and the servants of all: Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

18. Spend and be spent for your peoples good, Do all the good that you are able for their bodies, as well as for their souls. And think nothing that you have too dear to win them, that they may see that you are truly fathers to them; and that their welfare is your chiefest care.

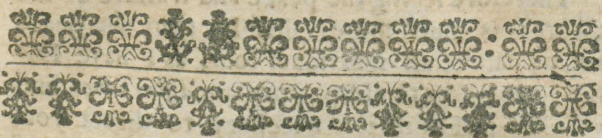
19. Keep up the reverence of the ancient and experienced sort of Christians; and teach the younger what honour they owe to them that are their Elders in age and grace: For whilst the Elder who are usually sober and peaceable, are duly revered, the heat of rash and giddy youth, will be the better kept in order.

20. Neither neglect your interest in the Religious persons of your charge, lest you lose your power to do them good; Nor yet be so tender of it, as to depart from sober principles or wayes to please them: Make them not your Rulers; nor follow them into any exorbitancies, to get their love, or to escape any of their censures.

21. Let not the Pastors contend among themselves: especially through envy against any whom the people most esteem. A reproof of ignorant, pious, backbiting, quarrelsome Ministers.

22. Study our great pattern of Love and tenderness, meekness and patience: and all those texts which commend these virtues; till they are digested into a nature in you, that healing virtue may go from you, as wasting fire proceedeth from the incendiaries. The Texts recited,

DIRECTIONS



DIRECTIONS

FOR

Weak Christians,

How they may escape the troubling, dividing and endangering of the Church by their Errours in Doctrine, Worship, and Church-Communion.

IF we had never been warned by the History of the Sacred Scripture, or of the former Ages of the Church, yet our experience in this present Age is enough to tell both us and our Posterity, how great perturbations, and calamities may come to the Church of Christ, by the miscarriages of the more zealous Professors of Religion! and how great a hinderance such may prove to the prosperity of the Gospel; to the Love and Unity of Christians; to the Reformation, and holy order of the Congregations, and to all those good ends which are desired by themselves. How great a dishonour they may prove to the *Christian name*, and what occasions of hardening the wicked in their contempt of *Godliness*, to their everlasting ruine, and the sufferings of Believers.

D

There-

Therefore seeing the peace and welfare of the Church, is much more valuable, than the peace and welfare of an individual soul, as I have Directed you how to escape your own disturbance and undoing, so I think it as necessary to direct you, how to escape being the Plagues and disturbers of the Church, and the instruments of Satan in resisting the Gospel, and destroying others. And you should be the more willing to hear me in this also, because by hurting others you hurt your selves, and by wronging the Church of God, you cross your own desires and ends (if you are Christians indeed ;) and by doing good to others, and furthering the cause of Godliness and Christianity, you do good to your selves and further your own Consolation and Salvation.

DIRECT. I.

First, observe this General direction ; see that you forget not the great difference between Novices and experienced Christians ; between the babes and those at full age ; between the weak and the strong in grace : Level them not in your estimation. It is not for nothing that the Spirit of God in Scripture maketh so great a difference between them, as you may read in *Heb.* 5. 11, 12, 13, 14, & 6. 1, 2. *1 Tim.* 3. 6. *1 John* 2. 12, 13, 14. There are babes, strong men, and fathers among Christians. There are some that are dull of hearing, and have need of milk, and are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and must be taught the principles ; and there are others who can digest strong meat, who by

reason of Use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Novices must not be made Pastors of the Church. It is not for nothing that the Younger are so often commanded reverence and submission to the Elder; and that the Pastors and Governors of the Church, are usually called by the name of Elders; because it was supposed that the elder sort were the most experienced and wise, and therefore Pastors and Rulers were to be chosen out of them. And why is it that children must so much honour their fathers and mothers, and must be governed by them? It is not merely because generation giveth the Parents a propriety in their children: For God would not have folly to be the governour of wisdom, upon pretense of such propriety: But it is also because that it must ordinarily be supposed that Infants are ignorant, and Parents have understanding, and are fit to be their Teachers, as having had longer time and helps to learn, and more experience to make their knowledge clear and firm. If the young and unexperienced were ordinarily as wise as the aged or mature, why are not children made governors of their Parents, or at least commanded to instruct and teach them, as ordinarily as Parents must do their children? The Lord Jesus himself would be subject to his mother and reputed father in his Child-hood. *Luke 2. 51.* Can there be a livelier conviction of the arrogance of those novices, who proudly sleight the judgments of their elders, as presuming groundlessly that they are wiser than they? Yea Christ would not enter upon his publick Ministry or Office, till he was about thirty years of age. *Luke 3. 23.* He is blind that perceiveth

ceiveth not in this example, a most notorious Condemnation of the pride of those that run with the shell on their head into the Ministry, or that hasten to be Teachers of others, before they have had time or means to *learn*; and that deride or vilifie the judgments of the aged, who differ from their conceits, before they understand the things in which they are so confident. It was thought a good answer, in *John 9. 21.* [*He is of age, ask him:*] But they that are *under age* now think their words to be the wisest, because they are the boldest and the fiercest. The *old* were wont to *bless* the young, and now the young deride the old. It is the character of a truculent people *Dent. 28. 50.* that *they regard not the person of the old*: that is, They reverence not their age. How many vehement commands are there in *Solomons Proverbs* to the younger sort, to hearken to the counsel of their Parents? The contrary was the ruine of *Eli's* sons; and the shame of *Samuels*, *1 Sam. 8. 1. 5.* Was *Rehoboam* unwise in forsaking the counsel of the aged, and harkning to the young and rash? And are those people wise that in the Mysteries of Salvation, will prefer the vehement passions of a novice, before the well-settled judgment of the experienced aged Ministers? I know that the old are too oft ignorant, and that wisdom doth not always increase with age: But I know withall, that Children are never fit to be the Teachers of the Church; And that old men *may be foolish*, but too young men are never wise enough for so high a work. We are not now considering, what *may* fall out rarely as a wonder, but what is ordinarily to be expected.

Most

Most of the Churches confusions and divisions, have been caused by the younger sort of Christians: Who are in the heat of their zeal, and the infancy of understanding: Who have affection enough to make them drive on, but have not judgement enough to know the way. None are so fierce and rash in condemning the things and persons which they understand not, and in raising clamours against all that are wiser and soberer than they. If they once take a thing to be a sin which is no sin, or a duty which is no duty, there is no person, no Minister, no Magistrate, who hath age, or wisdom or piety enough, to save them from the injuries of juvenile temerity, if they do not think and speak and do according to their green and raw conceits.

Remember therefore to be always sensible of the great disadvantages of youth, and to preserve that reverence for experienced age, which God in nature as well as in Scripture hath made their due. If time & labour were not necessary to maturity of knowledge, why do you not trust another with your health, as well as a studied experienced Physician, and with your Estates, as well as a studied Lawyer? And why do not Sea-men trust any other, to govern the ship, as well as an experienced Pilot? Do you not see that all men ordinarily are best, at that which by long study they have made their profession.

I know those that I have now to do with will say, that Divinity is not learnt by labour and mens teaching, as other Sciences and Arts are; but by the teaching of the spirit of God: and therefore the youngest may have as much of it as the eldest.

Ans. There is some *truth* and some *falsehood*, and much *confusion*, in this objection. It is *true* that the saving knowledge of Divinity, must be taught by the Spirit of God: But it is *false* that labour and humane teaching are not the means which must be used by them, who will have the teaching of the spirit. And the objection confoundeth,

1. The spirits teaching us by inditing the Scripture, with the spirits teaching us the meaning of the Scripture.
- 2 And it confoundeth the common knowledge of Divinity, with the saving knowledge of it.

No man commeth to a common knowledge, fit for a Teacher of others, without the spirits teaching us by the Scripture: For that was the first part of the spirits teaching us, to inspire the Prophets and Apostles to deliver a teaching Word to the Church, by which we might all be taught of God through all generations. But many men have excellent common knowledge, by this word, and by the common help of the spirit, without that special help which begetteth saving knowledge. Many prophesied and wrought miracles in Christs name, who had no saving knowledge of him, *Mat. 7. 22, 23.* And Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, even by them that did it of strife and envy, to add affliction to his bonds: *Phil. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18.* saving knowledge must have a special help of grace; And they which had but ~~Solomon's~~ knowledge, may by the spirit have saving knowledge in a little time, by bringing it to the heart, and making it clear, and lively and effectual. But that may be a means of saving others, which saveth not the man that hath it. And all knowledge requireth time and labour, to obtain it, though the Spirit giveth it, and though

it may be sanctified to us in a little time.

1. Consider I pray you, why else it is, that God hath so multiplied commands, to dig for it as for Silver, and search for it as a hidden treasure : to cry for Knowledge and lift up our voice for understanding : to wait at the posts of wisdoms doors : to search the Scriptures and meditate in them day and night : Is not this such study and labour as men use, to get understanding in other kind of professions? Are not these the plain commands of God? and are they not their deceivers who contradict them.

2. Is it not a blaspheming of Gods spirit, to make it the Patron of mens sloth and idleness, under pretense of magnifying grace? When so many Texts command us diligence, and slothfulness is so great a sin? And none are so forward to preach as these same men that cry down mens teaching.

3. Why hath God settled a Teaching Office in his Church, and commandeth all to attend and hear and learn; if we are taught by the Spirit without mans help? Why were the Apostles sent out into all the world? And why are they commanded to teach all Nations, and to teach the Church all that Christ commanded them? and why doth he promise to be with them to the end of the world? but that this is the way of the Spirits teaching, to teach those first who are our outward teachers, and then to help us to understand them? And those are taught of God, who are taught by those who are sent of God to be their teachers, and have the inward concurrence of his grace.