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DIRECTIONS OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Concerning

Secret and Private VVORSHIP, and
mutuall edification, for cherishing
Piety, for maintaining Unity, and
avoiding Schisme and Division.

WITH

*An Act for observing these Directions, and
for censuring such as use to neglect*

FAMILY VVORSHIP.

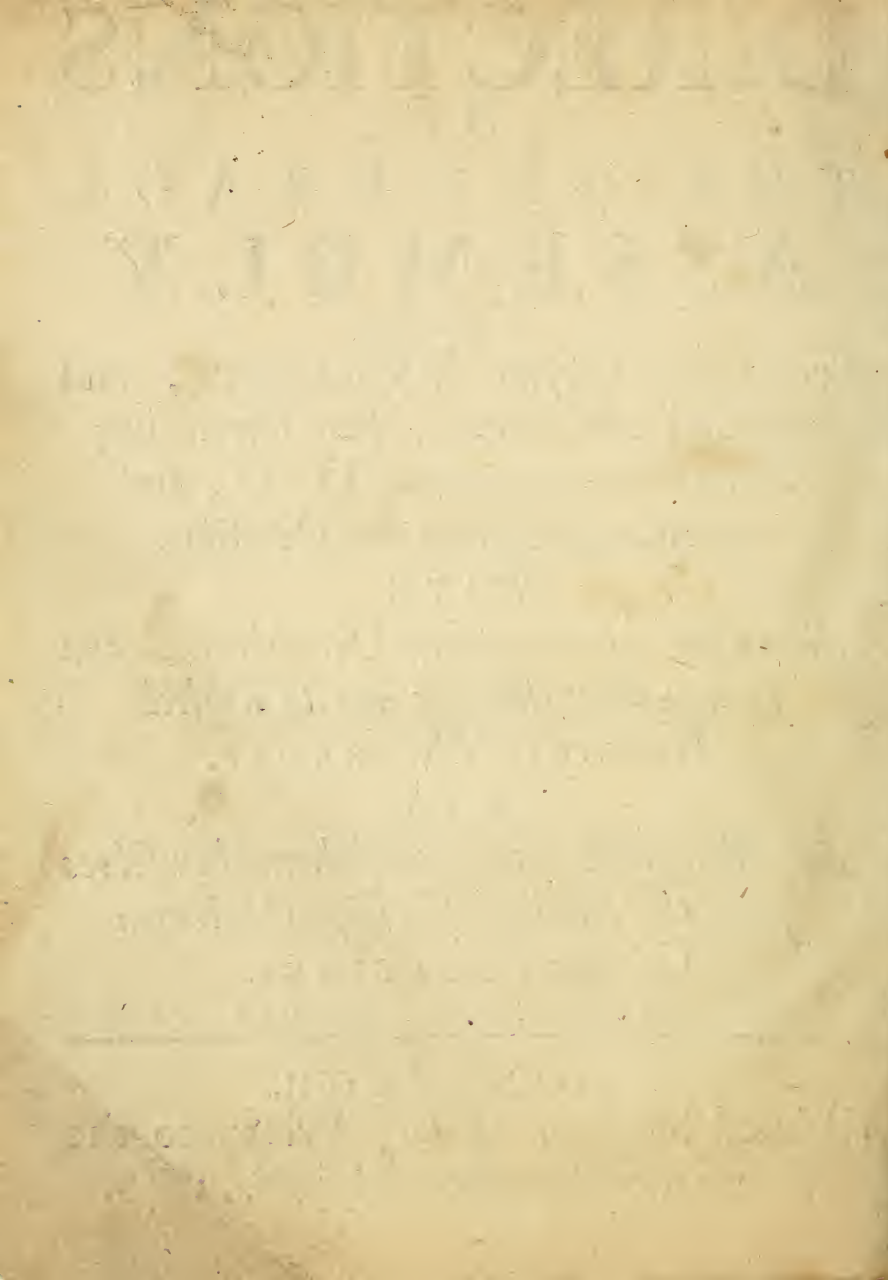
AND

*An Act against such as withdraw themselves
from the Publike Worship in their own*

CONGREGATIONS.

EDINBURGH,

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Sess. 19.

Act for observing the following Directions, and for censuring such as use to neglect Family Worship.



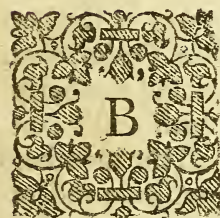
He Generall Assembly, after mature deliberation, doth approve the following Rules and Directions, for cherishing Piety and preventing Division and Schisme, and doth appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders in each Congregation, to take speciall care that these Directions be observed and followed; As likewise that Presbyteries and Provinciaall Synods enquire and make triall, whether the saids Directions be duely observed in their bounds, and to reprove or censure (according to the quality of the offence) such as shall

be found to be reprovab^le or censurab^le therein. And to the end that these Directions may not be rendered ineffectuall and unprofitable among some through the usuall neglect of the very substance of the duty of Family Worship, The Assembly doth further require and appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders, to make diligent search and enquiry in the Congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any Family or Families which use to neglect this necessary duty; And if any such Family be found, the head of that Family is to be first admonished privately to amend this fault; And in case of his continuing therein, he is to be gravely and sadly reprov^d by the Session. After which reproof, if he be found still to neglect Family Worship, Let him be for his obstinacy, in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the LORDS Supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein till he amend.

A Ker.



DIRECTIONS OF THE
 Generall Assembly, concerning
Secret and Private Worship and
 mutuall edification, for the cherishing Piety,
for maintaining Unity, and avoiding
 Schisme and Division.



Besides the publike Worship in Congregations, mercifully established in this Land, in great purity; It is expedient and necessary, that Secret Worship of each person alone, and Private worship of Families be pressed and set up: That with Nationall Reformation, the profession and power of Godlinesse both Personall and Domestick be advanced.

I. And first for Secret Worship; It is most necessary, that every one apart and by themselves be given to prayer and Meditation, The unspeakable benefit whereof is best known to them who are most exercised therein: This being the mean whereby in a speciall way communion with God is entertained, and right preparation for all other duties obtained: And therefore it becometh not onely Pastours, within their severall Charges, to presse Persons of all sorts to per-

forme this duty Morning and Evening , and at other occasions , but also it is incumbent to the head of every Familie, to have a care that both themselves and all within their charge be daily diligent herein.

II. The ordinary duties comprehended under the exercise of Piety , which should be in Families when they are convened to that effect , are these : First, Prayer and Praises performed, with a speciall reference as well to the publike condition of the Kirk of G O D and this Kingdom , as to the present case of the Familie , and every member thereof. Next , Reading of Scriptures with Chatechizing in a plain way, that the understandings of the simpler may be the better enabled to profit under the publike Ordinances, and they made more capable to understand the Scriptures when they are read ; Together with godly conferences, tending to the edification of all the members in the most holy Faith : As also , admonition and rebuke upon just reasons from these who have Authority in the Familie.

III. As the Charge and Office of interpreting the holy Scriptures , is a part of the Ministeriall Calling, which none (howsoever otherwise qualified) should take upon him in any place , but he that is duely called thereunto by God and his Kirk : So in every Familie where there is any that can read , The holy Scriptures should be read ordinarily to the Family ; And it is commendable that thereafter they confer , and by way of conference make some good use of what hath been read and heard : As for example , if any sin be reproved

ved in the Word read, use may be made thereof, to make all the Familie circumspect and watchfull against the same ; Or, if any judgement be threatned or mentioned to have been inflicted in that portion of Scripture which is read , use may be made to make all the Family fear, lest the same or a worse judgement befall them, unlesse they beware of the sin that procured it. And finally, if any duty be required, or comfort held forth in a promise, use may be made to stirre up themselves to imploy Christ for strength to enable them for doing the commanded duty, and to apply the offered comfort: In all which the Master of the Family is to have the chief hand ; And any member of the Family may propone ane question or doubt for resolution.

IIII. The head of the Family is to take care that none of the Family withdraw himself from any part of Familie-Worship: And seeing the ordinary performance of all the parts of Family-Worship belongeth properly to the Head of the Family ; The Minister is to stirre up such as are lasie , and train up such as are weak, to a fitnesse for these exercises. It being alwayes free to persons of Qualitie to entertain one approuen by the Presbyterie for performing Family exercise; And in other families where the head of the Family is unfit, that another constantly residing in the Family, approuen by the Minister and Session, may be imployed in that service ; Wherein the Minister and Session are to be countable to the Presbyterie. And if a Minister by Divine providence be brought to any Familie, it is requisite, that at no time he convene a part of the Familie

lie for Worship secluding the rest; Except in singular cases, specially concerning these parties, which (in Christian prudence) need not, or ought not to be imparted to others.

V. Let no Idler who hath no particular calling, or vagrant person under pretence of a calling, be suffered to perform Worship in Families, to or for the same: Seeing persons tainted with errors or aiming at division, may be ready (after that manner) to creep into houses and lead captive silly and unstable souls.

V I. At Family worship a special care is to be had, that each Family keep by themselves; Neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting persons from divers Families; Unlesse it be these who are lodged with them or at meal, or otherwise with them upon some lawfull occasion.

V I I. Whatsoever hath been the effects, and fruits of meetings of persons of divers Families in the times of corruption or trouble (in which cases many things are commendable, which otherwise are not tollerable) Yet when God hath blessed us with Peace and the purity of the Gospel, such meetings of persons of divers families (except in the cases mentioned in these directions) are to be disaproved, as tending to the hinderance of the Religious exercise of each Family by it self, to the prejudice of the publike Ministry, to the renting of the Families of particular Congregations, and (in progresse of time) of the whole Kirk: besides many offences which may come thereby, to the hard-
ning

ning of the hearts of carnall men; and grief of the
godly.

VIII. On the Lords day, after every one of the
Family apart, and the whole Family together have
sought the Lord (in whose hands the preparation of
mens hearts are) to fit them for the publike worship,
and to blesse to them the publike Ordinances; The
Master of the Family ought to take care that all within
his charge repair to the publike Worship, that he and
they may joyn with the rest of the Congregation;
And, the publike Worship being finished, after prayer,
he should take an account what they have heard; And
thereafter to spend the rest of the time which they may
spare, in Catechising and in spirituall conferences
upon the Word of God; Or else (going apart) they
ought to apply themselves to reading, meditation,
and secret Prayer, that they may confirm and increase
their Communion with God; That so the profit
which they found in the publike Ordinances may be
cherished and promoted, and they more edified unto
eternall life.

IX. So many as can conceive Prayer, ought to make
use of that gift of God: Albeit these who are rude and
weaker may begin at a set form of Prayer; But so, as
they be not sluggish in stirring up in themselves (ac-
cording to their daily necessities) the spirit of Prayer,
which is given to all the children of God in some mea-
sure. To which effect, they ought to be the more
ervent and frequent in secret Prayer to God, for en-
bling of their hearts to conceive, and their tongues to

expresse convenient desires to God for their Familie. And in the meantime, for their greater encouragement, let these materials of Prayer be meditated upon, and made use of, as followeth:

Let them confesse to God how unworthy they are to come in his presence, and how unfit to worship his Majesty; And therefore earnestly ask of God the spirit of Prayer.

They are to confesse their sins, and the sins of the Family, accusing, judging, and condemning themselves for them, till they bring their soules to some measure of true humiliation.

They are to poure out their souls to God, in the Name of Christ, by the Spirit, for forgivenesse of sins, for Grace to repent, to beleeeve, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and that they may serve God with joy and delight, walking before him.

They are to give thanks to God for his many mercies to his People, and to themselves; and especially for his love in Christ, and for the light of the Gospel.

They are to pray for such particular benefites, Spirituall and Temporall, as they stand in need of for the time, (whether it be Morning or Evening) as health or sicknesse, prosperity or adversity.

They ought to pray for the Kirk of Christ in generall, for all the Reformed Kirks, and for this Kirk in particular, and for all that suffer for the Name of Christ; for all our Superiours, The Kings Majesty, the Queen, and their Children for the Magistrates, Ministers, and whole body of

the Congregation whereof they are members, as well for their Neighbours absent in their lawfull affairs, as for those that are at home.

The Prayer may be closed with an earnest desire, that God may be glorified in the comming of the Kingdome of his Son, and in the doing of his will; And with assurance that themselves are accepted, and what they have asked according to his will shall be done.

X. These Exercises ought to be performed in great sincerity, without delay, laying aside all exercises of worldly businesse or hinderances; Notwithstanding the mockings of Atheists, and profane men; In respect of the great mercies of God to this Land, and of his severe Corrections wherewith lately he hath exercised us. And to this effect, persons of eminencie (and all Elders of the Kirk) not only ought to stir up themselves and their Families to diligence herein; But also to concurre effectually, that in all other Families, where they have Power and Charge, the said Exercises be conscionably performed.

X I. Besides the ordinary duties in Families which are abovementioned, extraordinary duties both of humiliation and thanksgiving are to be carefully performed in Families, when the Lord by extraordinary occasions (private or publike) calleth for them.

X I I. Seeing the Word of God requireth, That we should consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; Therefore, at all times, and specially

in this time wherein profanity abounds, and mockers, walking after their own lusts, think it strange that others run not with them to the same excess of riot, Every member of this Kirk ought to stir up themselves and one another to the duties of mutuall Edification, by instruction, admonition, rebuke, exhorting one another to manifest the Grace of God, in denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and in living godly, soberly, and righteously in this present world, by comforting the feeble minded, and praying with, or, for one another: Which duties respectively are to be performed upon speciall occasions offered by divine providence; As namely, when under any calamity, crosse, or great difficultie, counsell or comfort is sought, Or when an offender is to be reclaimed by private admonition, and if that be not effectuell, by joyning one or two more in the admonition, according to the rule of Christ, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

XIII. And because it is not given to every one to speak a word in season to a wearied or distressed conscience, It is expedient, that a person (in that case) finding no ease after the use of all ordinary means private and publike, have their addresse to their own Pastour, or some experienced Christian: But, if the person troubled in conscience, be of that condition, or of that sex, that discretion, modesty, or fear of scandal, requireth a godly grave and secret friend to be present with them in their said addresse, It is expedient that such a friend be present.

XIV. When

XIV. When persons of divers Families are brought together by divine providence, being abroad upon their particular Vocations, or any necessary occasions, As they would have the Lord their GOD with them whithersoever they go, they ought to walk with GOD, and not neglect the duties of Prayer and Thanksgiving, but take care that the same be performed by such as the company shall judge fittest: And that they likewise take heed that no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

The drift & scope of all these Directions is no other but that upon the one part, the power and practice of godlinesse among all the Ministers & Members of this Kirk, according to their severall places and vocations, may be cherished and advanced, and all impiety and mocking of Religious exercises suppressed: And upon the other part, that under the name and pretext of Religious Exercises, no such meetings or practices be allowed, as are apt to breed error, scandall, schisme, contempt or mis-regard of the publike Ordinances and Ministers, or neglect of the duties of particular Callings, or such other evils as are the works not of the Spirit but of the Flesh, and are contrary to Truth and Peace.

A. Ker.



*Act against such as withdraw themselves
from the publike worship in their own Congregation.*

SINCE it hath pleased GOD of his infinite goodnesse to blesse his Kirk within this Nation, with the riches of the Gospel, in giving to us his Ordinances in great purity, liberty, and withall, a comely and well-established order: The Assembly, in the zeal of God, for preserving Order, Unitie and Peace in the Kirk, for maintaining that respect which is due to the Ordinances and Ministers of Jesus Christ, for preventing Schisme, noisome Errours, and all unlawfull practices, which may follow on the Peoples with-drawing themselves from their own Congregations, Doth charge every Minister to be diligent in fulfilling his Ministry, to be holy and grave in his conversation, to be faithfull in Preaching, declaring the whole counsel of GOD, and as he hath occasion from the Text of Scripture, to reprove the sinnes & errours, and presse the duties of the time; & in all those, to observe the rules prescribed by the Acts of Assembly, wherein if he be negligent, he is to be censured by his own Presbyterie. As also ordains every member in every congregation, to keep their own Paroch

Paroch Kirk, to communicate there in the Word and Sacraments; And if any person or persons shall hereafter usually absent themselves from their own Congregations, except in urgent cases made known to, and approven by the Presbyterie, The ministers of these Congregations whereunto they resort, shall both in publike by Preaching, and in private by admonition, shew their dislike of their with-drawing from their own Minister; That in so doing, They may witnesse to all that hear them, their due care to strengthen the hands of their fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord, and their detestation of any thing that may tend to Separation, or any of the above-mentioned evils: Hereby their own Flock will be confirmed in their stedfastnesse, and the unstable spirits of others will be rectified. Likeas the Minister of that Congregation from which they do withdraw, shall labour first by private admonition to reclaim them: And if any after private admonition given by their own Pastour, do not amend, in that case the Pastour shall dilate the fore-said persons to the Session, who shall cite and censure them as contemners of the comely order of the Kirk; And if the matter be not taken order with there, It is to be brought to the Presbyterie: For the better observing whereof, the Presbyteries at the Visitation of their severall Kirks and Provincial Assemblies, in their censure of the severall Presbyteries, shall inquire hereanent: Which inquiry and report shall be registrate in the Provincial Books, that their diligence may be seen in the Generall Assembly.

A. Ker.

F I N I S.

Fourth K. A. is communicated in the 77th
 Statement. And if any person or persons shall
 after this assembly attempt themselves from their own Con-
 gregation, except in regard to the known ex-
 press approval by the Presbytery, the minister or
 these Congregations who are the proper authorities
 in such cases, nothing shall be done by any minister,
 from their office of their with drawing from their
 own Minister, that is to say, The may withdraw
 to all that hear them, their duty to themselves is
 that of their fellow-laborers in the work of the
 Lord, and their rejection of any thing to say any
 to separation, or any of the above-mentioned
 Presbytery their own. I think will be confirmed in their
 resistance, and the minister of the Congregation
 rejected. I think the minister of the Congregation
 from which they do withdraw, shall not be by
 private communication to withdraw them: And if any other
 private communication given by the same Presbytery do not
 amount, in that case the Presbytery shall declare the dis-
 tance to the Session, who shall then and declare
 this to the Session, who shall then and declare
 that as consequences of the body of the Presbytery;
 And if the matter come before the Session, it is
 to be brought to the Presbytery: But the power of
 leaving whosoever, the Presbytery as the Visitation of
 their several K. A. and Provincial Assemblies, in their
 conduct of the several Presbyteries. All in the same
 manner: With inquiry and report to the Session in
 the Provincial Books, that their diligence may be seen
 in the General Assembly.

Oct. 1771.



