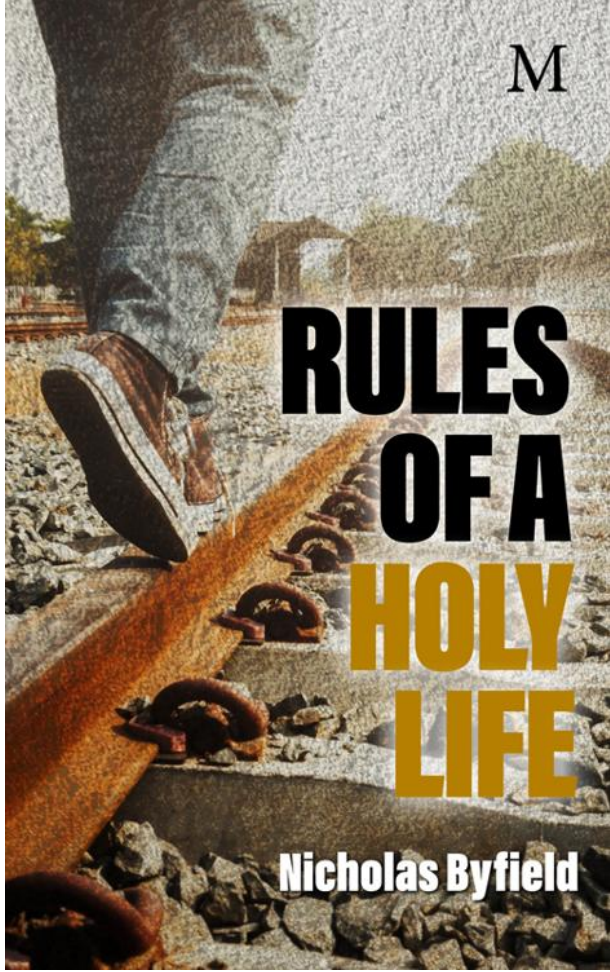




M

**RULES
OF A
HOLY
LIFE**

Nicholas Byfield



M

**RULES
OF A
HOLY
LIFE**

Nicholas Byfield

The Rules of a Holy Life

by Nicholas Byfield

Or a Treatise containing the holy order of our lives, prescribed in the
Scripture, concerning our carriage: Towards God, Towards men,
Towards our selves.

With general Rules of Preparation, that concern either the helps, or
the manner of a holy Conversation. By NICHOLAS BYFIELD
Preacher of God's Word at Isleworth in Middlesex.

PSAL. 50. vlt. To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I
show the salvation of God.

LONDON, Printed by G. P. for Ralph Rounthwaite, and are to be sold
at the Flower de-luce and Crown in Paul's Church-yard. 1619.

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project
Puritas (Logan West, with David Jonescue and Alex Sarrouf.)
www.puritansearch.org

Further revision and editing done by Monergism. Copyright
Monergism via universal text usage permission from the above.

Table of Contents

[Preface](#)

CHAPTER I: Containing the Preface, which shows the drift, warrant, profit, and use of the ensuing Treatise.

CHAPTER. II: Containing such Rules as in general men must take notice of, as preparations and furtherances to a godly life.

CHAPTER III: Showing the things that are to be avoided by such as would order their conversation aright.

CHAPTER. IV: Containing the general Rules to be remembered in the manner of doing all good duties.

CHAPTER V: Intreating of the rules that concern our carriage towards God, and in particular about the knowledge of God.

CHAPTER VI: Rules, that order is about the manifestation of our love to God.

CHAPTER VII: Rules, that concern the preservation of our love to God.

CHAPTER VIII: Containing general rules about God's service.

CHAPTER IX: Showing how we should carry ourselves in God's House.

CHAPTER X: Rules that order us about hearing of the Word.

CHAPTER XI: Rules about the Sacrament of Baptism.

CHAPTER XII: Rules about the Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER XIII: Rules about prayer.

CHAPTER XIV: Rules about reading the Scriptures.

CHAPTER XV. Rules about singing of Psalms.

CHAPTER XVI: Rules about Vowing and Swearing.

CHAPTER XVII: Rules about Fasting.

CHAPTER XVIII: Rules about the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XIX: Rules that show us how to carry ourselves, when we come into company, in respect of Religion.

CHAPTER XX: Rules that show us how to carry ourselves in company, in respect of the faults of others.

CHAPTER XXI: Rules that show us how to carry ourselves in company, and not give offense.

CHAPTER XXII: How we must carry ourselves out of company.

CHAPTER XXIII: Rules about works of Mercy.

CHAPTER XXIV: Rules that show us how to carry ourselves towards wicked men.

CHAPTER XXV: Rules that show us how to carry ourselves towards godly men.

CHAPTER XXVI: How we should preserve our love to the godly.

CHAPTER XXVIII: How we must carry ourselves towards such as are fallen.

CHAPTER XXIX: How we must carry ourselves: towards the weak Christian, &c.

CHAPTER XXX: Rules that concern ourselves: and so first in our general calling.

CHAPTER XXXI: Rules that order us in our particular Calling.

CHAPTER XXXII: How we should carry ourselves in the time of affliction.

Preface

To the noble and Religious Lady, the Lady Marie Vere, increase of joy and peace in Believing.

Madam,

It was most truly said by the Apostle of the Gentiles: godliness is great gain; Importing thereby, that if man would be incited to the care to get anything, for the profit might come thereby, it should be godliness: No skill in the world being comparable to that skill of being able to lead a godly life, for the sure, and speedy, & matchless gain it will bring unto a man: for besides that it only hath the promise of a better life, godliness were to be desired, and with all possible diligence to be sought after, for the very gain of it in this life: For to omit the consideration of the favor it breeds with God, & the unspeakable treasures of the grace of Christ, which always go with it, it were to be desired for the immediate effects it works upon men in itself. For if men love themselves, what should they desire more than that which tends to make themselves perfect? What should it advantage a man to have all things good about him, if himself be ill and vile? If men, that were only guided by the light of Nature, could (some of them) see clearly, that nothing was so good for a man as to live well (when yet they knew no other living well, then what was prescribed in their naked and natural Ethics) then how much more happy must it be for a man to live a religious life, by which he is brought more nearer to God, himself, and far above the condition of any natural man? Yea, if there were no more to be had by it, but the

peace and rest it brings unto a man's heart, it were above all outward things to be desired: for no man walks safely, that walks not religiously, nor can any actions of men produce any sound tranquility and rest of heart, but such actions as are prescribed by true Religion. What shall I say? If for none of these, yet for itself were a godly life to be had in singular request: for if men, with much expense of outward things, seek but the skill of diverse, natural, and artificial knowledges, and think it worth their cost but to be able to attain these Skills? how much more ought man to be at the pains, yea and cost too (if it were required) to get this admirable skill to live a religious life? This most gainful Subject is entreated of in this little Volume; I may truly say, that almost every sentence in this little Treatise, leads us to much and rich treasure, if the promises belonging to each duty were annexed thereunto: and therefore no Christian that loves his own soul, should think much of the pains of learning, or practicing these Rules.

I shall not need to exhort your Ladyship to the hearty care of those things you have been taught of God (long since) to profit, and have learned Jesus Christ as the truth is in him: your sincere profession and practice hath many Witnesses: and since you believed the Gospel of salvation, and were sealed by the Spirit of promise, you have a Witness within yourself, which will not fail in life or death to plead your abundant consolation. When I entreat of piety, righteousness, mercy and temperance, I entreat of things you have above many profited in.

I have presumed to dedicate these Directions to your Ladyship, and not without reason: you have heard the preaching of them with special attention, and have been a principal persuader to have them published for the common good, being many ways bound to acknowledge your Ladyship amongst my best Hearers and Friends. I cannot but beseech your Ladyship to accept of this small testimony of my unfeigned observance of your many praises in the Gospel, and as a pledge of my thankfulness for all your works of love to me and mine. The God of glory, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, make

you abound yet more and more, in all the riches of his grace in this life, and fill you with the comforts of the blessed hope of the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Your Ladyship's in the service of Jesus Christ, to be ever commanded, N. BIFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

Containing the Preface, which shows the drift, warrant, profit, and use of the ensuing Treatise.

The only thing intended in this Treatise is, to collect for thy use (Christian Reader) those directions scattered here & there in the Scriptures, which may, throughout the whole course of thy life, tell thee, what thou must do in the right order of thy conversation: How thou shouldst behave thy self toward God, and how thou shouldst carry thy self toward men, in all the occasions of thy life: In company, out of company: In all duties either of righteousness or mercy: and how thou shouldst dispose of thyself in affliction, and out of affliction, at all times.

And thou mayest be the more encouraged to study and practice these rules, because thou hast the most express & apparent word of God to warrant and require thy obedience herein.

Be not so profane, as to think, that here is more to do then needs, or that I burden the lives of Christians with a multitude of unnecessary Precepts, and so make the way harder then it is: For I require thy obedience in nothing, thou hast not reason to be persuaded to be enjoined thee by the pure word of God; And thou must know, to the confusion of thy security; that he that will walk safely, must walk by rule, Gal. 6. 16. He is yet in darkness, and walks on in darkness, and sees not what he doth, or whither he goeth, that doth not make the

Word of God the light unto his feet, and the Lantern unto his paths: Psal. 119. There is a holy order of life commended in the godly, Col. 2. 5. and God's promises are made to such as will dispose of their ways aright. A loose conversation is an ill conversation; and if ever we would see the salvation of God, we must be at the pains to dispose of our ways, and to see to it, that we dispose of our ways aright, Psal. 50. vlt.

The benefit thou mayest reap by this Treatise, is much every way, if the fault be not in thyself: for here thou mayest briefly behold the substance of a godly life; thou mayest in a short time inform thy knowledge in that great doctrine of practical Divinity: But especially thou mayest, by the help of this Treatise see a sound way, how to beautify thy own conversation, with the addition of diverse rules, which, perhaps, hitherto thou hast not taken notice of: God hath promised much peace, and comfort unto such as will walk according unto rule, Gal. 6. 16. Yea, he hath promised, that they shall see the salvation of God, that dispose their way aright, Psal. 50. vlt. It is true, it is a greater labor to travail in the way, then to show it; but yet it is a great benefit to be shown the way. Howsoever, it may not be denied, but it is a greater glory to observe these rules, then to know them, or prescribe them.

It may be thou wilt object, that the rules are so many, thou canst never remember them, and so not profit by them. I answer:

If I have made the rules no more in number then God hath made them in his Word, thou mayest not find fault with me.

Secondly, no man that is to learn any Trade, or Science, but he meeteth with more directions, then he can on the sudden reach to, or practice, and yet he rejects not his Trade or Science, because in time he hopes to learn it all. Would we put on a resolution to serve a Prentiship to Religion, and to work hard one whole seven years: oh, what work would we dispatch! How many Rules and Knowledges would we grow skillful in! But alas, after many years profession of

Christianity, the most of us, if all were put together, have not done the work, that might have been done in few days.

Thirdly, I answer, that it is not necessary thou shouldst lay all these Rules before thee at once, but mark out certain choice Rules, so many as thou canst well remember, and strive, by daily practice, to bring thyself to some kind of dexterity in observing them. There be some rules of each kind, which, if thou be a true Christian, thou knowest and observest already: These thou mayest continue to observe still, without loading thy memory about them. Now if those be omitted, then consider of the rest that remain, which of them do most concern thee, or would most adorn thy practice and profession, or are such as thou never hitherto didst make conscience of: Extract or mark out so many of those at a time, as thou wouldst in daily practice strive to attain, and when thou hast learned them, then go on, and prescribe to thyself new Lessons. To a carnal mind, all the way of godliness is impossible, but to a godly and willing mind all things, through the power and assistance of God, are possible: God will accept thy desire and endeavor, and will add strength and might, and encourage thee in all his ways. By prayer thou mayest form any grace in thee, by reason of the power the Lord Jesus hath to prevail for anything thou dost ask the Father in his name.

The last benefit may come to thee, if thou daily read these directions, is, that they will quicken thee to a great care of well-doing, and give thee cause to walk humbly with thy God, and abase thyself for thine own insufficiency: The Lord give thee understanding in all things, and unite thy heart unto his fear always, that thou mayest observe to do, as he commandeth thee, and not turn from the good way all the days of thy life.

CHAPTER II.

Containing such Rules as in general men must take notice of, as preparations and furtherances to a godly life.

The Rules of holy life may be cast into two ranks: the first containing such rules as are General: and the other, such as are Particular.

The general rules are likewise of two sorts: some of them concern certain general preparations, helps, or furtherances to a holy life, without which men in vain begin the cares, or endeavors of a reformed life: And some of them comprehend those necessary rules which are to be observed in the manner of doing all holy duties, and so are of singular use to be always remembered, when we go about any service.

Of the first sort there are many rules; for they that will address themselves to order their conversation aright, must be soundly careful in the observation of these directions following.

1 He must examine himself about his faith and repentance; he must be sure he is reconciled to God, and hath truly repented himself of his sins, 2. Cor. 13. 5. For unless he be a new creature, he is no creature, but a dead man, and so utterly unable for the practice of these rules following: And without God we can do nothing; and without God we are, till we live by faith: Besides, the pollution of our hearts or lives drawn upon us by the custom of sin past and present, will so infect all we do, that it will be abominable to God, and so lost labor.

This is the first Rule.

2. His next care must be to learn the knowledge of the rules of life; we can never practice what we know not, and therefore our next care and pains must be to get the knowledge of God's ways distinctly, and effectually, into our heads and hearts; Our direction must not be in our books, but in our heads; and a Christian must have his rules always before him, that so he may walk circumspectly by line and level, Ephes. 5. 15. understanding the will of God in what he is to do.

He is in the way of life, that hath and keepeth instruction, how to live, Prov. 10. 17. whereas he that will not be at the pains of getting instruction, erreth, as Solomon saith: And therefore we must take fast hold of instruction, and not let her go, but keep her: for she is our life, Prov. 4. 13. Knowledge then, of necessity must be had, or in vain we go about to live well. Now this is such a rule, as must not slightly be passed over, and it is not enough thus in general to require knowledge, but withal, I would show certain choice rules to be observed by us, if we would take a sound course to attain knowledge. He then that would prosperously seek sound knowledge, must remember these directions.

First, he must esteem knowledge, and labor to frame his heart to a high estimation of it, accounting it as great treasure, accounting the getting of wisdom above all gettings, Pro. 4. 7. We must seek for knowledge, as for silver, & search for her, as for treasure, and then with wonderful success shall we understand the right fear of the Lord, Prov. 2. 4. else our labor will be blasted and fruitless, if we bring mean thoughts to the exercise of directions for the attaining of knowledge.

Secondly, he must take heed that he consult not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1. 16 He must not regard other men's opinions, or his own carnal reason, but resolve to give glory to God and his Word, as willing to believe or do whatsoever the Lord saith unto him.

3. Thirdly, he must redeem the time, Ephes. 5. 16. Inasmuch as he hath lost so much time past, he must now provide to allow himself convenient and certain time to be spent this way for the attaining of knowledge, else to study by snatches and uncertainly, will be to little or no purpose. To complain of ignorance, will not serve the turn, nor will the pretense of worldly business excuse us: and therefore we must buy so much time of our occasions, as may be competent for the supply of our wants in knowledge.

4. Fourthly, in seeking knowledge, he must be wise for himself, Prov. 9. 12. He must strive to understand his own way, so to be careful to know the generals about religion, as his special care be in all things to refer what he reads or hears, to the particular directions of his own soul. This is a rule of singular Use, if it could be beaten into men's heads, and for want of this, many Christians, after long pains, & much time spent, have been found exceeding ignorant.

5. He must be swift to hear, Jam. 1. 19. with all frequency and attention, making use of the public Ministry, striving with his own heart against deadness, and drowsiness, and removing all impediments might be cast in his way from the world, or his worldly occasions, observing all opportunities for hearing, especially when he seeth the heart of his Teacher enlarged, and the power of Doctrine more then at other times, or in other things.

6. Sixthly, he must avoid vain questions, and fruitless contemplations, Titus. 3. 9. 1. Tim. 6. 20. 2. Tim. 2. 23. When the light of doctrine was so great in the Primitive times, this was one practice of Satan, to draw aside the studies of Christians from necessary and solid truths, to Genealogies or quarrels about words or vain controversies, falsely called oppositions of science: We must therefore be warned of this method of Satan, & till we know clearly the ways of life, allow ourselves no time for more remote studies, or fruitless Controversies. What riches of knowledge might some Christians have attained to, if they had spent the time (they have employed about controversies, genealogies, & general knowledge) in the sound building of themselves up in such things, as their souls apparently stand in need of?

Seventhly, he must not rest satisfied with a small measure of understanding; he must not give over when he hath gotten a little knowledge more then he had: he must desire to increase in knowledge, and never be well pleased with himself, while he is but a Child in understanding, 1. Cor. 14. 20.

8. Eighthly, He must inquire and take counsel, he must propound his doubts daily and carefully. He that would know much, must ask much, he must break off that wretched silence he is prone to, and provide, if it be possible, to enjoy the favor of some one or more, that are able to resolve his doubts from time to time. This rule hath incredible profit in it, if it be rightly practiced, Prov. 15. 12. & 20. 17, 18. & 27. 9.

Ninthly, and lastly: He must be rightly ordered in respect of his Pastor. For the principal means of knowledge is assigned of God to be in the Ministry of his servants: and therefore if we would attain knowledge, we must dispose ourselves aright towards our Teachers, and to this end we must look to it,

First, that we pray for them, that their word may run and have free passage, & that God would make them able to open unto us the mysteries of his will, 2. Thes. 3. 1. 2. Colos. 4. 3. Ephes. 6. 19.

Secondly, we must keep their directions, and make conscience of it to be careful to obey them, in what they command us in the Lord, 1. Cor. 11. 2.

Thirdly, we must take heed of discouraging them. For this is not profitable for us. For the more cheerful and comfortable their hearts are, the more apt they are to find out profitable things for us, Heb. 13. 18. 1. Cor. 16. 10, 11.

And thus of the first and second rule.

Thirdly, he that would redress his ways aright, must get out of the way of wicked men: He must give over evil company, and sequester himself from the counsel and society of carnal and profane persons. The necessity of this rule is both proved and urged in these & many other Scriptures, Prov. 4. 14. Psal. 1. 1. 2. Cor. 6. 17. Eph. 5. 7, 8.

Fourthly, he must bring a mind full of care & desire, and resolution to practice the rules, when he hath learned them: he must as the

phrase is, observe to do God's will, Deut. 5. 32. He must be watchful and diligent, he must ponder upon the ways of God, beware lest he either neglect or forget to do them, Deut. 6. 17. & 31. 46. & 8. 11. 1. Corin. 16. 13. Prov. 4. 26. we must follow after righteousness, 1. Tim. 6. 11. and bind directions as signs upon our hands, &c. Deut. 8. 28. If we could be thus awakened, this rule would breed us unspeakable good in our conversation.

Fifthly, he must endeavor to settle his head and his estate in respect of his worldly affairs. It is a singular help to godliness, to reduce our outward callings into order, and every days experience shows, that confusions in worldly business breed miserable neglect in God's service. And therefore he that would profit in an orderly course of life, must provide to use the world so, as he may serve the Lord without distraction: He, that would run a race, abstaineth from all things, that might encumber him. No man, that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier: And therefore we may not think it much, if in our spiritual course God lay some restraint upon us, in respect of the cares and encumbrances in our outward Callings, 1. Cor. 7. 29. 35. &c. 2. Tim. 2. 4. 1. Cor. 9. 28.

Sixthly, He must walk in the way of good men, both setting before him their practice, as patterns of imitation, as also by conversing with them, that thereby he may gather encouragement, and help in well-doing. He is deceived, that thinks to go alone, and yet go prosperously in the course of a godly life: He may profit, and learn by many things he heareth, receiveth, and seeth among the godly. Prov. 2. 20. Phil. 4. 8, 9.

Seventhly, He must not be the servant of men, 1. Cor. 7. 23. other men's humors must not be the direction of this practice: He must so depend upon persons he hopes to get anything by in this world, as he be not thereby hindered in works of Religion, knowing, that he is Christ's Free-man.

He must haste to, and look for the coming of Jesus Christ, 2. Pet. 3. 12. He must often remember his latter end, and daily set before his eyes the coming of Christ, striving to stir up in his heart the desire after Christ, praying for it, and dispatching those works, that may prepare him thereunto: The remembrance of our accounts in the day of Christ will wonderfully quicken men to the care of well, doing, and the cause of the viciousness, and miserable neglect, and procrastinations of many is, their forgetting of their latter end: A great reason, why the directions about godliness are not entertained, is, because men put far away from them the day of the Lord: whereas the remembrance of the revelation of Jesus Christ, would put Spirit and Life into us. He dares not say from his heart, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, that is not resolved diligently to work the works of Christ.

9. He must not stay for company, but rather choose to run alone; or with a few, then hazard the loss of the Crown. Our life is a Race, and as in a race men stay not for company, but strive who may run foremost: so it is in the race of godliness: He must so run, as he may obtain: He must set out with the first, and run as it were for his life: As he must make use of the society of the godly, so he must not stay, till his carnal friends, and acquaintance will set out with him: He must be of Joshua's mind, that if the whole world will live in wickedness and profaneness, yet he and his house will serve the Lord, 1. Cor. 9. 24. & 14. 12. Josh. 24. 15.

Tenthly, he must in all things give thanks; when God gives him success in anything, or prospers the means to him, and helps him with victory over any sin, or strength to perform any duty, or bestows upon him any spiritual blessing, he must remember to praise God in the name of Jesus Christ. This will quicken him: Daily thankfulness will breed daily alacrity in well-doing: He that will not be thankful for beginnings of success in the practice of holy duties, will not hold out: This is the special will of Christ, that we should in all things give thanks, 1. Thess. 5. 18.

He must study to be quiet, and follow peace with all men, meddling with his own business, and avoiding all occasion of contention, that might distract him in his own course: A busybody is as good as nobody in respect of sound progress in sanctification: It is an excellent skill to be able to avoid the entanglements of discord; especially he must provide to have perfect peace with the godly. Though GOD be able to sanctify the oppositions of unreasonable men, yet we must take heed of drawing needless troubles upon ourselves; for that makes us neither to be, nor to be accounted the more holy, but contrariwise. The Apostle could not speak unto the Corinthians, as unto spiritual men, but as unto carnal; at the best, but Babes in Christ; and the reason was, because there was strife and envy, and division amongst them, Romans 9. 19. Hebrews 12. 14. Mark 9. vlt., I. Cor. 3. 3.

His eyes must look straight, and his eyelids right before him, Prov. 4. 25. He must take heed of going about, and fetching of compass in Religion, Jer. 31. 32. He must be still aiming at the mark of the high prize of his calling: being sure that the things he employeth himself in, tend directly to the furtherance of his salvation, and not lose his time in unprofitable studies, or practices, proceeding from one degree to another, till he come to a ripe age in Christ.

13. He must be conversant in the Scriptures, & be familiarly acquainted with them, that they may dwell plenteously in him: For those good words of God have not only light in them to direct us, but power also to assist us to do what they require, and by the daily reading and hearing of them, we shall be excited to more care of well-doing: we must exercise ourselves in the Word day and night, and never let them depart out of our hearts, but keep our hearts still warm, with the heat that comes from them, never suffering the warmth to go out through our long forbearance of the use of them, Col. 3. 16. Psal. 1. 2. Josh. 8. Isaiah. 8. 16, 20.

14. He must carefully persevere in his first love, Rev. 2. 4. The Lord is wont at sometimes or other, about the first conversion of a sinner, to

show himself with such power in his ordinances, and to reveal unto him such glories in the merits & gifts of Jesus Christ, and the happiness of his estate in him, that his heart is thereby fired to a cheerful liking of the means of salvation, and of godly persons, and to a wonderful desire after God, and care to please God. Now he that would prosper in a Christian course, must be wonderfully careful to preserve affection, & this spiritual love in his heart, and watch, against, and resist the first beginnings of decay, or coldness, or declining in his heart, and take heed of suffering his heart to be drawn away by the deceitfulness of sin, or the enticements of the world.

15. He must covet earnestly the best gifts, 1. Cor. 12 vlt. There are some duties in Piety or Mercy, or righteousness, which in respect of our places do most concern us, and would in a more special manner adorn our particular profession: so are there some gifts which do advance our communion with God, and do make us more profitable amongst men. Now these things we should study, and earnestly labor to frame ourselves to, and to express them more effectually in our conversation. This no doubt is the reason why the holy Ghost doth in Scripture make Catalogues of certain special duties, or graces singled out from the rest, and fitted to the conditions of the people who are written to: and this would be a singular advantage to us, if we also would single out to our use some few of the chiefest virtues or duties which we would daily set before us, and strive by prayer and all holy endeavour to fashion them to life in our hearts of lives.

16. He must renew often his mortification; man's heart is like fallow ground, which is not to receive seed, till it be broken up, and at best it is like a garden which will often need weeding. If we do not at sometimes in special manner humble our souls before God, worldly cares, or carnal delights will over-grow our desires and our practice, & choke the seed of the Word received by us; we must keep under our bodies, & bring them in subjection, and be often dragging our lusts to the cross of Christ, there to crucify them. Our practice is like

to sowing, which presupposeth plowing before, Jer. 4. 34. Hosh. 10. 12. 1. Cor. 9. 27.

17. He must watch for the opportunities of well-doing, and take heed of procrastination: he must seek righteousness, and haste to it, he must not put it off, till tomorrow, Isaiah 16. 5. Pro. 3. 28. & 23. 26. Amos 5. 14.

18. He must remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it: The commandment concerning the keeping of the Sabbath, to sanctify it, is placed in the midst between the two Tables, of purpose to show that the keeping of the Sabbath is a singular help to all piety & righteousness, and God hath promised a special blessing to the observers of the Sabbath, and gives strength by the rest of that day, the better to perform holy duties all the week after, Commandment 4. Isaiah 58. 13.

19. He must meditate much on the example of the godly of all ages, and strive diligently to learn their ways, and to quicken himself by the thought of their care, zeal, and sincerity. And thus he may also profitably set before him the examples of some of his own acquaintance, as excel in the gifts of Christ, and fruits of well-doing. The example of good men should be as forcible to draw us to good, as the example of evil men is to incline others to evil: we have been compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, who have lived in all ages of the Church: we must therefore stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old way to walk in it, and with all gladness follow any that are fit to be guides to us therein, Hebr. 12. 1. Jerem. 12. 16. & 6. 16.

20. He must go daily to him that teacheth to profit, begging of God to show him away, and to lead him by his Spirit unto the right practice of every holy duty, even to guide him in the plain path, Isaiah 48. 17. Psal. 27. 11.

Thus, I have set down those rules which are general helps unto godliness, and must be attended by a godly Christian.

CHAPTER III

Showing the things that are to be avoided by such as would order their conversation aright.

Now before I proceed unto the rules that concern the manner of well-doing. I will add unto the former directions, nine Cautions, or nine things which a Christian must take heed of in his practice of holy duties: As

1. First, he must take heed of wretchlessness, or a scornful carelessness of his own ways, he must not despise his ways: as if he cared not how he lived, or rested satisfied to be still, as he was: This carelessness proves the bane of many a soul, whereas He that keepeth his soul, keepeth his way, Pro. 19. 16. & 21. 5.

2. He must take heed of precipitation, or rashness, or too much haste: this is the ground of much false zeal, and the cause of strange evils in the practice of some Christians: but the godly Christian must learn of Solomon, to prepare his work in the field, and then build his house: he must get sound knowledge of the warrant of his actions, and guide his affairs by advice, and with serious preparation fit himself to the doing of what he is sure is good. He that hasteth with his feet, sinneth: what is done rashly, cannot be done well: Prov. 19. 2. As procrastination is a great vice; so praecipitation is no virtue, Prov. 24. 27 & 28.

3. He must have no confidence in the flesh, he must not rely upon his own wit, memory, reason, desires, virtues, praises, or power; but all his comfort and affiance must be in the merits, intercession, virtue, presence, and assistance of Jesus Christ his Savior, Phil. 3. 3.

4. He must not haste to be rich, for the desire of money is the root of all evil; and they cannot be at leisure for good duties, that are so

eager to compass great things in the world, Prov. 23. 4. & 28. 20.

5. He must take heed of the snares that arise from distrustful fears: There is a snare in fear, Prov. 29. 25. There are many fears will assault a man, that resolves to live well; As the fear that he cannot do good duties; The fear that God will not accept what he doth; The fear lest men should scorn him, or contemn him, or lest he should lose the favor of his friends, or such like. Now against all these must the godly mind be armed, and take heed that those fears prove not great hindrances to him; and especially take heed of that unbelief, or counterfeit humility, in disabling himself, or mistrusting God contrary to his nature and promises.

6. He must take heed of adding to, or detracting from the Word of God: He must not imagine more sins, then God hath made; that is, not trouble himself with fear of offending in such things, as God hath not in his Word forbidden: and so likewise he must not impose upon his own conscience, or other men's, the necessity of observing such rules of practice, as God never prescribed. This caution would case the hearts of many Christians, if it were discreetly observed and applied, Prov. 30. 6.

7. He must take heed of hardening his neck against reproofs: Pro. 29. 1. He must needs run into headlong evils, that is so proud as not to hear advice, or to reject reproofs; and it will be a singular furtherance to a holy life, to be easy to be entreated to leave his offenses, and to mend his errors.

8. He must take heed of beholding vanity: David prays, that God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity: He that would forsake vanity, must avoid the presence of vain persons, and the too much contemplation of vanity, shunning the reading and discourse of the enticements of others unto any sin, Psal. 119. 37.

9. And lastly, he must take heed of the beginning of evils in his own heart: he must keep his heart with all diligence, for thereout cometh

life: His practice will be easy to him, if he resist sin in the beginning, and drive out Satan from his holds within his soul, whereas he cannot but be much entangled and encumbered, that allows himself in the secret entertainment of contemplative wickedness; he must watch his heart, and strive for inward purity, Prov. 4. 23.

CHAPTER. IV.

Containing the general Rules to be remembered in the manner of doing all good duties.

Hitherto of the first sort of general Rules: The second sort concern the manner of well-doing: There are diverse things in the general, which are to be observed of the godly Christian in all good duties, which he ought to have perfect in his memory, and such as he might bring with him at all times to form his heart in respect of them, to beget in him that holy manner of carrying himself, which is requisite unto the acceptance of the good things he employeth himself in: and the rather should he be moved to the care of learning and expressing of these things, because the matter of good duties may be done by wicked men, as they were by the Pharisees, and yet all abomination to the Lord: That therefore he may not lose what he worketh, he must strive in every good action to express these nine things following in the manner of his behavior.

The first thing required in the manner of every holy duty, is Zeal: It is not enough that he do the duty, but he must do it affectionately, bringing with him the stirring of the desires of his heart answerable, and agreeable to the duty he would perform: Zeal hath in it two distinct things, willingness and fervency; It must not seem evil to him to do God's work, and in doing it, he must lift up his heart, so as he perform it with all his might, and with all his soul; and this he doth, when either he brings a heart delighting in good works, or

when he judgeth himself for what deadness, or distraction, or unwillingness he finds in himself: He is accounted zealous, when he strives for it, and lifts up his soul against the impediments which burden him: This zeal is necessary; Christ died to redeem a people unto himself, not only that would do good works, but that would be zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14.

2. The second thing required in the manner of good duties, is sincerity, all his actions must be done in the sincerity of his heart. The life of a Christian is like a continual Passe-over; Now this Feast he must keep always with the unleavened bread of sincerity, 1. Cor. 5. 8.

Now this sincerity he must show diverse ways, as,

1. By the truth of his heart, as it stands opposed to hypocrisy; he must not talk of well-doing, or seem to do it, but he must do it indeed.

2. By his respect to all God's commandments, when he can say with David, I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way. He that is truly sincere, accounteth that every word of God is good, and desires to yield obedience in all things. He hath not his reservations, or exceptions: He doth not with Herod give himself liberty to lie in the willful breach of one commandment, resting satisfied to have reformed himself in other things. As he would have God to forgive him all his sins, so his heart desires to forsake all sin, and so he desires also to do every part of God's work.

3. By propounding the glory of God, as the chief end of all his actions: His praise must not be of men, nor must he do good duties for carnal ends, 1. Cor. 10. 31.

4. By obeying without expostulating, though God give no apparent reason of his commandment. Thus Abraham shown his sincerity, when God bade him go out of his own country, though he knew not

whither he should go, Hebr. 11. 8. This is to obey simply, because God hath commanded it.

5. By obeying absent as well as present, in all companies as well as one. This praised the sincerity of the Obedience of the Philippians, Phil. 2. 12.

Thus of sincerity, which is the second thing required in the manner of well-doing.

3. The third thing is Constancy: He is blessed that doth righteousness always. Doing righteousness will not serve the turn, but it must be at all times, Psalm. 106. 3. Our righteousness must not be like the morning dew. It is not sufficient to do good by fits; we are no day laborers, but God's hired servants: He that is righteous, must be righteous still, Rom. 6. 19. Revel. 22. 11. There must be continuance in well-doing, Rom. 2. 7, 8.

Now to be constant in well-doing, is to do good duties,

1. Without weariness: It is required as a thing necessary to the manner of well-doing, that we be not weary of it, and that we faint not, Gal. 6. 9. This we must strive for by prayer.

2. Without discouragement: we must lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steppes to our feet. How much hindrance to well-doing, discouragement is, may appear by the similitude: feeble knees will dispatch but a little space of the journey, and hands that hang down, are not fit for work: great is the hindrance comes to many by their discouragements and aptness thereunto, which ariseth usually from pride, & the dregs of worldly sorrow, and ought much to be resisted by true Christians, Hebr. 12. 12, 13. Josh. 1. 6, 7.

3. Without impediment: That is, notwithstanding all the impediments may be cast in the way; Judgment should run down as waters, and righteousness as a flowing stream: we should overcome

all difficulties: you cannot stop the flowing stream, though you cast in great logs or stones, yea though you would go about to damme it up; and such should be the resolution of a godly Christian, Amos 3. 24.

4. Without wavering or uncertainty. It is uncertain running the Apostle impliedly forbids, 1. Cor. 9. 25. Our life is like a race: Now in a race it is not enough that a man run now and then, though he run fiercely for the time: He must not trifle & look behind, and stand still at his pleasure, and then run again, but he must be always running: so ought it to be with us in the race of godliness. It will not serve the turn to be good by fits, and to be forward in good things only at some times, and then be careless, and off the hooks, as we say, at other times.

5. Without declining or going back. Job comforts himself against the aspersion of hypocrisy by this, that his foot had held on his steps, and God's ways he had kept, and not declined, nor had he gone back from God's Commandments, Job 23. 11, 12. Though he had not made such Progress as he desired, yet this was his comfort, he had not backslided by Apostasy.

And thus of the third thing also required in the manner of well-doing, which is Constancy.

4. The fourth thing required is fear: thus Pro. 28. 14. The man is blessed that feareth always. And 1. Pet. 1. 17. & 3. 2. Our conversation must be with fear: This fear excludes rudeness, carelessness, conceitedness, pride, & the like, & includes Reverence, awful regard of God's holiness, or holy presence (whom we should set always before us) and the fear of the deceitfulness of sin, and our own corrupt dispositions, and the care to avoid all occasions of offending God or men.

The fifth thing is simplicity. This is so necessary, as the Apostle mistrusted most the subtlety of the Devil, in beguiling Christians of

this simplicity, which they had in Jesus Christ, 2. Cor. 11. 3.

Now this simplicity contains in it distinctly diverse things.

1. A resting in those forms of holiness and happiness which God hath prescribed, when a man desires no more to make him happy, then what God hath offered and given in Jesus Christ, 2. Corin. 11. 3. and when he accounts nothing to defile him, but what God hath forbidden, and nothing needful to be done by him, but what God hath in his Word required.

2. A Dove-like innocence, and harmlessness, when the Christian shows a desire to be injurious to no man, but rather to seek the good of others, as well as his own, 1. Cor. 10. 24.

3. An ignorance of the depths of Satan, and the methods of sin, when he is not cunning in sinning, out simple concerning evil, no way desirous to get subtle excuses, or arguments to defend himself in evil, Romans. 16. 19.

4. A love of goodness for itself, and hatred of sin, as it is sin.

5. Meekness of wisdom, I am. 3. 13. which is shown three ways. 1. By lowliness of mind, when a man is not conceited, or wise in himself, but retains a sense of his own unfitness, and unworthiness, Job 37. 24. 2. By silence from his own praises, Prov. 27. 2. 3. By avoiding vain janglings, which arise out of Envy, or contempt of others.

6. The preserving of himself in the fear of God, notwithstanding the prosperity of evil doers, not envying the wicked, that hath success in his way, Prov. 23. 27.

The sixth thing required in the manner of well-doing, is Circumspection, Eph. 5. 15.

Now he walketh circumspectly or exactly:

1. That makes conscience to observe the lesser commandment as well as the greater, Mat. 5. 19.
2. That abstains from the very appearance of evil, 1. Thes. 5. 22.
3. That with discretion looks to the circumstances of things to be done, as time, place, persons, order, and the like: that doth not only do good, but is wise to do good, Romans 16. 19.
4. That lives without rebuke, and is unspotted of the world, Phil. 2. 15., Jam. 1. vlt. that is not guilty of any scandal, and gives no just cause to the wicked to blaspheme, but provides for things honest in the sight of all men, 2. Cor. 8. 21.
5. That will not do evil, though good might come of it, Rom. 3.

The seventh thing required in the manner of well-doing, is growth & increase: We must not only get grace and knowledge, and do good, but we must grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, 2. Pet. 3. 18. & this growth should have in it distinctly three things:

1. Abounding in good works, or a more frequent practice of all sorts of duties, that we have opportunity and power to practice, 1. Cor. 15. 58. Col. 1. 10.
2. The perfecting of holiness, 2. Cor. 7. 1. or the ripening of our gifts, & finishing of the good things we begin, not leaving off till we have accomplished them in some good measure and manner.
3. Progress, so as our works be more at last, then at first.

And all this we should strive for, both that so our profiting might appear, 1. Tim. 4. 15. and we may be fit to be an example to others, 1. Th. 1. 7.

The eighth thing required in the manner of well-doing, is Faith: we must walk by faith in all our actions, 2. Cor. 5. 7. Now faith is

employed partly in taking notice of God's will, as the warrant of our actions, and partly in overcoming the difficulties of well-doing, making us hold out, though we be scorned, or disgraced, or opposed in the world, and raising up our hearts to believe God's assistance, notwithstanding our own weaknesses, & partly in trusting God for the success, believing God's promises.

The ninth & last thing required in the manner of well-doing, is Moderation. This rule is expressed in these words, Eccles. 7. 16. Be not just over-much, neither be thou wicked overmuch: Now for the sense of these words, we must know in the negative, that this place is most profanely alleged by such as produce it as a reproof of strictness of life, and the refusal of the excesses of the time.

There are many things said to give a sense of those words.

1. Some refer these words to Justice, either Distributive, or Commutative, and that either in the case of a private person, or of a Magistrate. A private man must neither stand too much upon his right, nor yet suffer his innocence to be too much wronged. A Magistrate must not be too severe in a self-conceited Justice, nor yet too remiss in sparing or favoring wickedness.
2. Some think it restrains curiosity and carelessness, as if the sense were, Be not curious to pry or search into secret things, that are not revealed: for he that will be searching into God's majesty, may be oppressed by his glory: nor yet be so careless, as not to take notice of the truth revealed.
3. Some thus exceed not by too much preciseness on the right hand, or by too much profaneness on the left hand. On the right hand they go out, that bring in works of supererogation, and such as worship God after the precepts of men, and such as tie men's consciences to observe or avoid things without warrant of Scripture, and such as say they have no sin, and need not the grace of God.

4. Lastly, the fittest interpretation is theirs, that expound the words in this sense, Be not just over-much, that is, think not too highly of thyself in anything thou doest well, nor yet be wicked over-much, that is, account not too vilely of thyself, denying God's gifts in thee, and refusing the just comforts thou shouldest take to thyself; aggravate not against thy own soul thy weakness above reason and measure.

CHAPTER V.

Intreating of the rules that concern our carriage towards God, and in particular about the knowledge of God.

Hitherto of the general rules: The particular rules that concern the right ordering of our conversation, may be cast into three heads, as they direct us in our carriage,

1. Towards God.
2. Towards men.
3. Towards our selves.

All the rules that concern our duties to GOD, may be cast into two heads: 1. For they concern either the love of God, or 2. the service of God. This is an exact division; for all we owe to God, is fitly comprehended in these two, Love and Service: and the Scripture so divides in these and the like places, Commandment 2. Deut. 11. 23. & 30. 16. Josh. 22. 5. Isaiah 56. 6.

Now that we may be rightly ordered in respect of our love to God, we must consider of his love, either in the foundation of it, or in the exercise of it. The foundation of our love to God, is the true knowledge of God, 2. Chron. 28. 6. So that in the first place we must

soundly inform ourselves concerning this knowledge of God. Now the rules that concern the right knowledge of God, concern either the right conceiving of his nature, or our acquaintance with God, when we do aright conceive of him. That we may conceive aright of God's nature,

1. We must exclude out of our thoughts all likenesses, so as men do not think of God, representing him by the similitude of any creature: He that forbids Images of him in Churches, forbids it also in our heads, Commandment 2. Isaiah 40. Deut. 4.

2. We must strive to conceive of him according to his praises declared by his works, or in his Word. This is an excellent, and easy way to think of God. Since our hearts cannot conceive his Nature, we should fill them with the impression of his praises, and according to them direct our affection, and service to him: As I would bring this mind to prayer, or any other service of God, I cannot make any resemblance of the Divine Substance, whom I am about to serve: yet this will I do, I will remember that he that I pray unto, is most wise, most omnipotent, most just, most gracious, &c. Thus God proclaims himself by his praises, Exod. 34. 6. where God himself shows us a way how to conceive of him.

3. Thou must then silence thy reason, and exalt thy faith in the point of the Trinity, which must be conceived of necessity, because all service is due to the whole Trinity: Now thou needest not strive to resemble the Trinity in any likeness in thy mind, but only bring faith to believe that thy God is three in one.

4. It may yet help thy understanding to conceive, that God is in Christ, and the fullness of the God-head dwells in him bodily: and therefore when thou comest to worship, thou mayest set before thy mind the Human Nature of Christ, adoring the God-head in him, as conceiving of God in that human Nature thou thinkest of, Col. 2. 9. John. 17. 3.

5. That this may be the more clearly and comfortably done, thou must labor by sound advice and direction, to expel out of thy head those secret and rebellious Atheistical thoughts, which arise in thee about his Nature, Decree, Attributes, or Works: Men must take heed of smothering these Objections, but seek help against them in time.

Thus of the knowledge of God, as it concerns the right conceiving of his Nature.

There is required further such a knowledge, as brings us acquainted with God: we are commanded to acquaint ourselves with God, Job. 22. 21, 22.

Now, because it is an exceeding hard way for a mortal man to find out God, so as to enjoy familiarity with him: Therefore I will add some directions about it: For if thou wouldst acquaint thy self with God,

Thou must prepare thy heart for this Vision of God, by driving out filthy and unholy thoughts, and affections, For without holiness no man can see God. The pure in heart shall see God, Math. 5. 7. Hebr. 12. 14. 1. Chro. 19. 3. God delights to show himself familiarly in a clean heart.

2. Thou must beg this acquaintance by prayer: if thou seek it of him earnestly, though God be in himself invisible to mortal eyes, yet he will show himself to the eyes of thy mind: pray for his acquaintance, and he will be acquainted with thee: This is to ask after the Lord, and to seek God: if we seek him, he will be found, Psal. 105. 3, 4. But then we must remember three things;

1. To seek him with our whole hearts, we must pray with great earnestness and desire.

2. To seek him early, Psalm 119. verse 10. and while he may be found, God offers acquaintance in his Ordinances, and sometimes comes near, and knocketh at men's hearts, and works greater impressions

upon them: Now if thou wouldst call upon God heartily, he would show thee his presence.

3. To seek him constantly; we must seek his face continually: both till we find it, and after we have had acquaintance with him, it must be continued: we must not think much, if we be put to pray often and long, before we attain such an incomparable benefit.

4. Thou must give thy self, soul and body, to God, seriously, and from thy heart, devoting and promising to spend thy days in his service, and then he will reveal himself unto thee, Rom. 12. 1, 2.

5. Thou must wait upon his Ordinances, and watch, how the Lord speaks unto thee, either by his Word, or by his Spirit. For in them he shows himself to men, and converseth with them.

6. It is a great furtherance to our acquaintance with God, to keep company with his Household; for with them he dwells, and by conversing with them we may-occasionally often see God, 1. John. 3. 6, 7, 8, 12.

Thus of acquaintance with God.

There are other things to be further noted concerning our knowledge of God, such as these:

That when we attain unto any acquaintance with God, we must never rest, till we know him to be our God, Col. 2. 2.

That it must be our daily care to increase in the knowledge of God, laboring to plant in our hearts a more large and affectionate contemplation of the glories of God's Nature & Love.

That above all earthly things we should glory in it, if we attain some happy admission into God's presence, and ability to conceive of God, and to be acquainted with him, Jer. 9. 24.

CHAPTER VI.

Rules, that order is about the manifestation of our love to God.

Hitherto of the Rules that concern the knowledge of God, as the foundation of our love to God: The rules that should order us in the exercise of our love to God, follow; and those are of two sorts: 1. for either they concern the manifestation of our love: 2. or our preservation in the love of God; we must show our love to God, and we must keep ourselves in the love of God, Jude 21.

In our manifestation of love to God, we must look to both the matter, (as the things whereby) and also the manner how we should express our love to God.

For the first, there be diverse excellent Rules to be heeded of us in our practice, in observing whereof we may soundly prove the truth of our love to God: if we say we love God, we must show it by these things following.

1. We must avouch God to be our God, Deut. 26. 17. and so we do, if we do not only make choice of God above all things to set our hearts upon him, but also maintain our choice by a constant refusal of all idols in the world, even all things which might entice us to love them instead of God, by sound affection and practice declaring our resolution to cleave to God, as our sufficient happiness, though all the world follow their profits, or pleasures, &c.

2. We must provide and prepare a place for God, that he may dwell with us, wheresoever we dwell, Exo. 15. 2. It is a sign of our true love to God, when we cannot live without him: He that can be content to live in any place, where he is not powerfully present in his

ordinances, shows no love to God: It should be our chief care to seat ourselves so in the world, as the Lord and his presence may be provided for, that he may reign amongst us by the Scepter of his Word.

3. We shall show our love to God, by our love to the Lord Jesus the Son of God: we must kiss the Sun, Psal. 2. vlt. And if any man love not the Lord Jesus, he hath not the Father, 1. Cor. 16. 22. We show that we love God, when we highly esteem Jesus Christ, and make much of him in our hearts, & strive to fire our affections toward him; and this must be our care through the passages of our life, to form in us the love of the Lord Jesus, that we may long after him, and have the desires of our souls after him, and his coming.

4. We must show our love to GOD by walking with him, Genes. 17. 1. Mica. 6. 8. The Lord doth not account it a sign of love to offer to him a thousand Rams, or rivers of oil. But this is it that pleaseth him, To humble ourselves to walk before him.

Now we walk with God diverse ways.

1. When we set the Lord always before us, remembering his holy presence, & not daring to go long without thinking of God, Psal. 16. 18.

2. When we nourish the motions of the Spirit, and retire ourselves of purpose to entertain them.

3. When we daily have recourse to those means by which the Lord is pleased to converse with men, and not rest in the bare use of the means, but strive to find out the Lord in his holy presence, in every ordinance of his, Psal. 63. 1, 2.

4. When we use ourselves to Soliloquies with God, taking all occasions to speak to God by prayer and private meditation of things offered to us, out of which we could extract matter for frequent

Ciaculations, lifting up our hearts upon the very first motions of good unto God, Psalm. 63. 5, 6.

5. When our hearts are fired with longing desires after his presence of glory in heaven, 2. Cor. 5. 8.

Thus of our walking with God.

5. We should manifest our love to God by honoring him: For this is one special way by which God requires to have our love shown to him, Malac. 1. 6. Now there are many ways by which in our conversation we may declare our desire to honor our God: As,

1. By performing the care of businesses that concern his kingdom, above all other businesses, & showing our respect of the duties of the first table, that concern God, before the duties that concern men in the second table: we honoring him by seeking his kingdom first: First (I say) in the precedency of time, and first, in respect of the measure of our affections, Math. 6. showing a desire to please him rather than all the world.

2. By making a bold & open profession of GOD'S truth upon all occasions, without fear of oppositions or snares of the world.

3. By grieving heartily for his dishonors done unto him, by the blasphemies or profaneness of his enemies, Psal. 42. 3.

4. By directing all our actions to his glory, striving in all the things to order them so, that some way God may be praised by us, or others, 1. Cor. 10. 31.

5. By our willingness to suffer anything for his sake, though it were extremities, even the loss of all worldly things, yea and life it self, if we were called to it.

6. By honoring them that fear his name, and are begotten of him, and bear his Image, receiving them, & making much of them, and defending them for the love we bear to God himself, Psalm. 15. 1. John. 5. 1.

7. By hating them that are his enemies, as if they were our own, conceiving more dislike of them for dishonoring God, then for any wrongs they could do unto us, Psal. 139. 21, 22.

8. We honor God, when we speak of the Oracles of God with all reverence as may become the nature and glory of them, Commandment 3. 1. Pet. 4. 11.

9. We honor him by gifts bestowed upon him, when we bring to him our free-will offerings, such as are the first fruits of all our increase, when out of all things wherein God hath prospered us, we with gladness consecrate a part for the furtherance of his worship, or the maintenance of his poor: Prov. 3. 6. Isaiah 60. 6.

10. We honor him, when we praise him. One usual way by which we honor great persons in the world, is by taking all occasions to magnify them, by commending their virtues, or their worthy Acts: And this is likewise one great way of honoring God: & therefore with sorrow for our neglects herein, we should study his praises for the time to come, and strive for language to be able readily to do so.

Now God is praised diverse ways. Some of them belong not properly to this place, and therefore I will but touch them.

We praise God.

1. When we keep and observe carefully the solemnities set apart for his praise, as when we celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is therefore called the Eucharist, because it is to be performed as a thanksgiving, and praising of God.

2. When daily we take all occasions in private to bless God for his daily mercies: but let these and such like pass, as not proper to this place. We must praise him in our discourse to others: This is required of us in many Scriptures, Psa. 33. 1. Job 36. 24. Psal. 96. 4. But because this must not be done cursorily, diverse rules are to be observed: As,

1. That we may praise him effectually, we must wisely consider of his works, and so of his nature to extract from thence sound arguments of praise, Psalm. 64. 9.

2. We should do well for this purpose to keep Records, and Register up the special glorious works of God, Job. 36. 24. & 37. 14. Psalm. 78. 7.

3. When we do praise him, it must be done with our whole heart, speaking of his praises with all possible affection, and not as if we spake of ordinary things, Psalm. 9. 1.

4. We must thus praise him, not once, or for one work of his, but we must praise him for all his works, especially his wondrous works, Psal. 9. 1. & 105. 1, 2. & 106. 2.

5. We must praise him from day today, and continue to do it, while we live, Psal. 63. 4. & 96. 3.

6. This is a duty, that all the kindreds of the people are bound to: All the people must praise him, Psalm. 148. 12, 13. & 96. 6, 7, 8.

Thus of the fifth way of showing our love to God, and that is by honoring him.

The sixth way by which we must show our love to God, is, by trusting in him; As men show, whom they love most, by relying most upon

them, and their favor and help; Now there are diverse cases, in which we must show our trust in God.

1. By relying upon his mercy for our justification and salvation: and in this we should most use our trust, as being in a business that most highly concerns us, Isaiah 45. 24, 25.

2. By committing all our works to him, for assistance in them or success of them: This is to commit our way to God to be careful to seek his assistance to help us, to do our duty, and then to leave the success of all to his blessing, Psal. 37. 3, 5. Prov. 16. 3.

3. By believing all that he saith is true, whether he promise, threaten, or comfort by his Word, upon all occasions believing his Prophets, 2. Chro. 20. 20.

4. By staying our hearts upon him in all our distresses: Now in the time of distress we may prove, that we trust in God diverse ways:—
As,

1. By running to him, and pouring out our hearts before him, making our moan unto him, Psa. 18. 2. & 62. 10. Look amongst men, to whom we first run to make our moan in our distress, and that person is he whom we most love, and trust: so is it toward God.

2. By casting our cares and burdens upon him, Psal. 55. 22.

3. By not respecting the proud, and such as turn aside to lies, Psal. 40. 4.

4. By relying upon his help, Joel 3. 16. Isaiah 50. 11. but then we must observe how we must rely upon God's help: For there are many things we must cast out of our hearts in affliction: When we have been with the Lord and committed ourselves to him, we must rely upon him,

1. Without leaning to our own understanding, or willful inclination to follow our own courses, and projects, Prov. 3. 5.
2. Without murmuring or repining at our condition, or vexing ourselves at the providence of God toward us, Psal. 37. 7.
3. Without fear, that is, without mistrustful fears, and servile perturbations, imagining evils, which the Lord hath not brought upon us, Psal. 3. 6. & 27. 1.
4. Without using ill means to get out of distress, Amos 5. 4, 6.
5. Yea, lastly, without care, that is, without distrustful carking cares, Phil. 4. 6.

Thus of the sixth way of showing our love to God, and that is by trusting in him.

The seventh & last way, by which we must show our love to God, is, To obey him: For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: Neither is the sign in this, that we do what God requires for the matter, but that his commandments are not grievous unto us: We love God, if we love to do his work, and if we lift up our hearts in his ways, setting upon his work with a special readiness, and strength of desire, and more than ordinary care, 1. John. 5. 2. 2. Chron. 17. 6. & 19. 2.

Thus of the matter, that is, the things by which we must show our love to God; The manner also is to be considered: For in all those things which we would do at any time to prove our love to God, we must look to the manner how we do them, as was a little touched before: Now distinctly we must bring to the declaration of our love to God, two things;

1. Fervency.

2. Fear.

For the first, we must love God, and show it in all the fruits of our love; How? Even with all our hearts, and all our souls, and all our might, and all our understanding. Our hearts must be more inflamed than they are, in showing love to wife, children, friends, parents, &c. We must love God above all, Deut. 6. 3. & 30. 6.

For the second, we must love God and show it too, but it must be with fear. Howsoever with men true love casts our fear: yet God being so infinite in Glory and Majesty, we must love him, but yet with fear. Now that this may not be mistaken, I will set down the particulars of this fear.

We must show our fear:

1. By entertaining awful thoughts of his dreadful Majesty, casting out all vile, mean, and vain thoughts of him, Dan. 6. 26.

2. By departing from evil, that might any way displease him, being tender in this point, not daring to presume, or plead impunity, or freedom from danger, but in all things desire to avoid what might anger him, Prov. 3. 7.

3. By using all terms of hearty abasement of ourselves, when we come before him: Thus Abraham calls himself dust and ashes; and thus we should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, 1. Pet. 5. 9.

4. By doing his will, without fearing man, or any other creature, Isaiah 8. 12, 13.

5. By a daily and reverent remembrance of his continual holy presence.

6. By trembling at his judgments, Psa. 4. 4. Hab. 2. vlt.

7. By the humble using of all the means of communion with God, using his Ordinances with all convenient reverence, attention, and abasement of our selves. Mal. 2. 5.

8. Lastly, By the reverend use of his very Titles, fearing that great, and fearful Name of the Lord our God, Deut. 28. 58.

CHAPTER VII.

Rules, that concern the preservation of our love to God.

Hitherto of the Rules that concern the manifestation of our love to God: The rest of the Rules serve to teach us, how to preserve in us this love to God. Now that we may continue in our love to God, we must observe these Rules.

1. We must separate ourselves from all others to be his, Lev. 20. 26. avoiding fellowship with the servants of a strange God, that might any way entice us from the love of God; yea, we should so much alienate our hearts from all Idols, that we should not make mention of their names, and therefore daily confirm our hearts in that purpose to cleave to God alone, Lev. 20. 26. Mal. 2. 11. Exod. 34. 11. 14, 15. Exod. 23. 13. Act. 11. 23. Josh. 23. 8.

2. We must beware, that we forget not God, nor go too long without effectual remembrance of him. They that can live whole days and weeks without any care to think of God, may be snare their hearts are void of the love of God: and as ever we would continue to love God, we must be careful every day to remember him, and think upon him, Deut. 6. 12. & 32. 18.

3. We must labor to edify ourselves in our most holy faith; we must build up our hearts in the assurance of that wonderful love God hath

shown to us: and this will preserve and keep us in our love to him again, Jude. 20.

4. We must pray in the holy Ghost, as is shown in the same place: prayer preserves acquaintance with God, and exceedingly quickens the heart; and besides, draws from God new pledges of his love to us, which may serve to kindle our affections toward him.

5. In the same place another rule is imported; and that is the daily expectation of the Coming of Christ: for the terror of that Day will move us to show all possible love to God, and so will that singular Glory we are assured to receive in that Day.

6. In the use of all God's Ordinances, we must be careful to seek out the face of God, which is that special presence of his grace. For the love of God will decay in us, if once we come to use the means only for form, and an outward show, Ps. 105. 4. And if we miss of God in his Ordinances, we must never be quiet, till we find him whom our soul loveth, Cant. 3. 1. Psalm. 63. 1.

7. We must preserve the truth he hath delivered to us; yea, we must contend for it: for sound doctrine laid up in our hearts, will preserve in us soundness of affection to God, Jude 3.

8. We must get Catalogues of God's praises in particular, and fill our hearts with the knowledge & contemplation of them.

9. If we would be preserved in the love of God, we must labor to attain to the ability to rejoice in God, and delight ourselves in God. A wife that would increase her love to her husband, must strive to solace herself often with her husband, and to form in her heart a special delight in him: So must we do to God. This is miserably neglected, and yet exceeding necessary: Nor is it an ordinary joy we should take in God, but we should joy in him, first, with all our hearts: 2. not for a time, but always, every day; nor with common, but with exceeding joys, Phi. 4. 4. Ps. 37. 4. & 68. & 105. 3. Now that this point may be the better understood, I will consider of two things:

first, what it is to delight and joy in God: secondly, what we should do that might delight, and take pleasure in God.

1. For the first, this delight in God hath in it four things distinctly.

1. First, a spiritual satisfaction, or contentment arising from the assurance of God's love to us, as having enough that he regards us; thus David saith, his soul was satisfied as with marrow, Psal. 63. 5. & 149. 2.

2. Secondly, a joyful entertainment of all passages of love between God and us; especially in the use of his Ordinances.

3. Thirdly, a delightful contemplation of God and his mercies.

4. Fourthly, a glorying in God, and extolling of his praises, as by discourse, so by singing of Psalms, 1. Cor. 1. 31. Psal. 33. 1. & 105. 3. & 68. 3, 4.

Now for the attainment of the joying in God.

1. We must mourn often for our disabilities herein, & pray to God to form this delight in us.

2. We must restrain carnal joys, and cares: for the excess of both doth exceedingly dull the heart, and with-draws it from care of delight in God, John. 2. 8. Phil. 4. 4, 5, 6.

3. We must exercise ourselves with all the joy we can in the Word of God, Psal. 119. 14, 16.

4. We must take heed of listening to Objections against the love of God to us, whether they arise from Satan, or our own flesh.

5. We must often observe the miseries of the wicked in comparison of our happy estate in Christ, Hab. 3. 17, 18.

6. We must seek a delightful conversation with the godly.

7. We must take heed of domestical evils, our home sins, the corruptions that would daily prevail in us, Job 22. 23, 26.

8. We must restrain our own unbelief about the acceptation of the good duties we perform, and to this end we must take heed, that we be neither just overmuch, by attributing too much to ourselves: nor yet wicked overmuch, in condemning all we do, as hateful to God. For this last doth marvelously hinder us from joying in God.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing general rules about God's service.

Hitherto of the first sort of Rules, that concern our carriage toward God, namely, those that concern our love to God. Now the second sort of Rules follow, and that is, those that concern the service of God, and these may be cast into two ranks: 1. for they either concern the parts of God's worship: 2. or the time of God's worship.

The Rules that concern the parts of God's worship, 1. are either general, which bind us to the good behavior in all parts of God's worship: 2. or else certain specialties of Direction, that concern some part of God's worship only.

Now for the general rules, we should know and remember, that there are nine things to be looked to, and brought to the practice of every part of God's worship.

1. The first is preparation; we must in some sort confer with our own hearts, and prepare them, before we go before God to do any service, Job 11. 13. Psal. 4. 4. Ezech. 7. 10.

2. Secondly, we must come with all reverence & godly fear, Hebr. 12. 28. Psal. 2. 11.

3. Thirdly, we must perform the service in repentance for our sins: we must not come before God in the love of any sin: if we do, we lose our labor, and God will loath our works, Isai. 1. Job. 11. 14. We must have clean hands, and a pure heart, or else no service of God will be accepted, Psalm. 119. 11. & 24. 4.

4. Fourthly, it must grieve us, that others will not serve God, Psalm. 119. 139.

5. Fifthly, we must perform every service in the name of Christ, or else it cannot be accepted, by reason of that evil that cleaves to our best works, whether we pray or give thanks, or Whatsoever we do, we must do it in the name of Christ, Col. 3. 17.

6. Sixthly, in every service of God we must so near as it may be, give God the first place, preferring the respects of God and his worship, before ourselves, or the regard of others: we must serve him betimes, seeking God in the first place, Job 8. 5. Math. 6. 34. Psalm. 5. 3.

7. Seventhly, when we do any service to God, we must do it with all our hearts, with as much willingness as may be, so as it may appear, that we love to be his servants, as the Prophets phrase is, 1. Sam. 12. 10. 1. Chron. 28. 9. Isaiah 56. 6.

8. Eighthly, in all service we must strive so to serve God, that we may please him, not only careful to do the duty, but careful of God's acceptation. In good duties being chiefly careful to see God's approbation, not caring so much for the praise of men, as the praise of God. In every part of God's worship, our praise must be of God, and not of men, Heb. 12. 28. Rom. 2. 26.

9. Ninthly, we must cleave to God with detestation of all things, or persons, that might any way draw us away from his service, Deut. 13. 4, 5.

CHAPTER IX

Showing how we should carry ourselves in God's House.

Hitherto of the rules to be observed in all parts of God's worship generally.

The special rules concern 1. either, God's public worship in his House: 2. or else the particular parts of God's worship each by themselves.

The godly Christian ought with all care to lay before him the rules that bind him to the good behavior in God's House, & to strive to fashion his nature and practice, as may become the glory of God's public service and presence, and so there be diverse things which in a special manner he must look to in performing God's public service.

For concerning these public duties, these rules must be observed.

First, that all sorts & degrees of men must appear before God publicly to do him homage and service. None must be spared or freed, men, women, and children must all take notice of it, that they are bound hereunto, Deut. 31. 11, 12.

Secondly, we must come ourselves with all possible reverence, and look to our feet when we enter into the house of God, and strive to show before all men our most careful respect of God and his holy ordinances: For God will be sanctified in them that come nigh him,

and he looks for it at our hands by our reverend behavior, to be glorified before all the people, Levite. 10. 3. Eccl. 5. 4. We should then show a most holy fear of God's name, and presence, Psalm. 5. 7.

Thirdly, in public duties, that of the Prophet David should be true of us: The zeal of God's house should eat us up, Psal. 69. 9. and this special zeal we should show:

1. By loving God's house above all the places in the world, our hearts should be fired in us in that we respect, that we may truly say with David, O how I love thy house! Psalm. 26. 8.

2. By confirming our own hearts in a resolution to resort to God's house with all joy and gladness, notwithstanding the scorns and oppositions of worldly men and persons.

3. By stirring up others with all importunity to go up with them to worship God in Zion, Isaiah 2. 2.

4. By making haste to God's worship, going to the house of God with the first, & with willing hearts, with a holy thirst after the means, flocking and flying thither as the clouds, or as so many doves to their windows, Zach. 8. 21. Psal. 110. 3. Isaiah 35. 1. & 60. 8.

5. By forwardness and cheerfulness in contributing towards the maintenance of God's House, and service in the means thereof, Isaiah 60. 8, 9.

6. By grieving heartily, because other men neglect or contemn the House of God, and have no more mind to keep God's Law, Psalm. 119. 136.

Thus of that special zeal we should show about God's public worship.

4. Fourthly, we should in all public duties serve God with one consent and one heart. There should appear in God's servants a wonderful desire of Unanimity and concord. They should serve the Lord with one shoulder, that when they speak to God, it may be as the voice of one man, when the Lord speaks to them, they should hear with one heart. It is a marvelous glory in Religion, when people can come once to this, to serve the Lord with one shoulder, Zephan. 3. 9.

Lastly, in the 52. Psalm. v. 8, 9. we may gather three other rules, which in a special manner fit us for a right behavior in God's house.

1. First, we should always be as green Olive trees in the house of the Lord. Howsoever it go with men in the world, yet when we come before the Lord, our hearts should rejoice and revive, and our spirits be fresh and cheerful, and our affections should be healed of all the cares or distempers were before in them. God's ordinances should have such a power over us, as to make a sudden fresh spring of desires, and holy thoughts in us. There is this power in the ordinances of God to effect this, if the fault be not in us, I mean, when these ordinances are exercised in the power & life of thē.

2. Secondly, we must trust on the mercy of GOD, bringing a heart ready to believe every good word of God, resolving, that if the Lord will speak comfortably to his servants, we will not dishonor his consolations through carelessness, or unbelief: but receive them with all our hearts, and establish ourselves in the safe keeping of his good word.

3. Thirdly, we must resolve to be thankful, with all tenderness for all experiences of God's presence and goodness towards us in the means, vowing with David, to praise him forever for them. And if the Lord do with-hold his power and presence for a time, so as we feel not the effectualness of his ordinances: yet we should resolve without

distemper, to wait upon the Lord, and observe him according to the seasons of his grace.

CHAPTER X.

Rules that order us about hearing of the Word.

Thus of the rules that we must observe in all public service of God. Now there be certain special rules which must be particularly headed in each part of God's worship by itself. And first I will begin with those rules, which we must more specially observe in hearing the Word of God, and these are of three sorts.

1. Some bind us to the good behavior, before we come to hear.
2. Some at the time of hearing.
3. Some after we have heard.

1. Before we come to hear, we must bring with us two things.

1. A resolution to deny our own wits, reasons, opinions, and conceits, and empty our heads of all persuasion of our own skill, to judge in the things of the kingdom of God, being ready to believe and think in all things, as God shall teach us out of his Word. We must be fools, that we may be wise, 1. Cor. 3. 18. humbling ourselves at his very feet to receive his Law, Deut. 33. 3.

2. We must bring with us a meek and quiet spirit, a mind quieted from passions, lusts, and perturbations, and at rest from the turmoiling cares of this world. The world is able to do great things in our hearts, if we receive it with meekness, I am. 1. 19.

Secondly, at the time of hearing, we must look to two rules.

First, we must hearken without distraction: we must hear, as it were for our lives, we must incline our ears, and shake off all impediments arising from our own drowsiness, prejudice, or vain thoughts, or distracting objects, Isaiah 55. 3. Psal. 119. 113.

Secondly, we must prove all things, and keep that which is good. We must hear with judgment, and hearken for ourselves, having special care to look to that doctrine which in particular concerns us to lay it up in our hearts, and apply it effectually. This is a rule of singular thrift in godliness. If we did mark what sin in us the Lord reproveth, or what comfort is specially fitted to our hearts: or what direction doeth specially concern us: He hath an honest memory that will be sure to keep these things, though he forget all the rest, and he hath a wretched memory, and heart too, that forgets these things, though he could repeat all the Sermon verbatim.

Thirdly, after we have heard, two things also must be further done.

First, we must by meditation labor to make those things we have heard, which concern us, fast, that they run not out of our minds, and we must take heed that neither the Devil steal away the good seed, nor our own heart through negligence forget it. Neither is this a work for an hour after, to keep these things till we may repeat them to others, but ought to be our daily work, especially the week after to think so often of them, till there be a sure impression of the Word in our hearts, Hebr. 2. 1, 2.

Secondly, we must yet further see to it, that we be doers of the Word, yea we must observe to do: as the phrase of the holy Ghost is. It is the wisdom of God so to dispose of his ordinances, that we receive our directions by parcels, and there is a time of interim between Sabbath

and Sabbath, Sermon and Sermon, that we might in that space learn to frame ourselves to the obedience of the truths received, that so we might be ready to receive new lessons from the Lord. The surest way for the husbandman to keep his seed, is not to lay it up in his barn, but to cast it into the ground. For what is sowed, he may receive again with advantage; or if he might fail of a harvest from his seed in nature, yet godly men shall never fail to receive what they sow by practice, with increase. So much of the Truth, as is put into practice, is sure forever: The rest may be lost: and it is a singular help to a Christian, if he set upon his obedience, while the doctrine is yet fresh in his mind; for delay will compass him about with many difficulties, and he will want those inward incitation's, that might stir up his heart with power and strength to obey.

CHAPTER XI.

Rules about the Sacrament of Baptism.

Thus of the rules of our carriage about hearing: Next we are to consider, how we are to order ourselves in respect of the Sacraments: The Sacraments are two: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

The duties we are bound to in respect of Baptism, concern either

1. Our children.
2. Our selves.
3. Others.

For our children, it is our duty to present them unto Baptism, but withal we must look to it, that it be done in due time, and with faith

and thankfulness to God: In due time, so as thereby we signify our great estimation of God's mercy to our seed, and our great desire to have the Covenant sealed, even unto them. We must also bring them to Baptism with faith in God's Covenant. The Lord hath bound himself to be our God, and the God of our seed: Now it is our parts to give glory to God, and to declare before the Lord our persuasion of his goodness and claim to that part of his Covenant. By faith we plead our right, whereas by unbelief we give God occasion to neglect our seed. I add also with thankfulness, because we ought with great joy and acknowledgement of the free grace of God, to behold our seed admitted in the sure covenant of mercy and salvation with our selves, and ought to think that God hath done more for our children, to admit them into Covenant by Baptism, then if the greatest person on earth had made upon them the assurance of some great estate of maintenance or preferment.

Secondly, for ourselves, we must make conscience of it, to make use of our own Baptism, and that throughout the whole course of our life: It is given us as a seal of God's promises, and as a vow of our obedience, and so we must make use of it all the days of our life, especially in three cases:

First, in the case of doubting and fear of the forgiveness of our sins, or of the salvation of our souls: for Baptism saveth us, that is, effectually assures us of our salvation; and we do not offend in trusting God's promise made in his Word, and signed and sealed in Baptism. As certainly doth it save our souls, as the Ark saved the bodies of Noah and his household; so as we cannot miscarry, if we leap not out of the Ark into the Seas of waters. Let us stick to our Baptism, and then we are safe: The washing in Baptism did assure the washing of our souls by the Blood of Christ for our sins. If I be tempted to doubt of my salvation, I must say to my own soul, Hath not the Lord provided me the Ark of Baptism to preserve me from the seas of his wrath? And if I doubt the forgiveness of sins, I must

say, Hath not the Lord washed me from my sins by the blood of his Son? Did he not show me so much in Baptism? We sin shamefully, in that we do not make this use, but neglect the confidence Baptism should work in us, as if the Lord had but dallied with us, or that Baptism were but some idle Ceremony, 1. Pet. 3. 21. 1. Cor. 15. 29. Act. 22. 16.

2. Secondly, in the case of temptation to commit sin: we ought to fight against sin by his mighty weapon of our Baptism, and so we may do by diverse arguments: As,

First, in my Baptism I have made a vow to God, that I would cleave to him in Jesus Christ, and renounce the world, the devil and sin: and shall I break my vow to God, that would be ashamed to break my promise to men?

Secondly, my Baptism was the Baptism of repentance: and shall I yet live in sin? My body was washed: and shall my soul be still impure? Math. 3. 11. Mark. 1. 4. Acts 13. 24.

Thirdly, by Baptism I was assured of the virtue of the death of Christ to kill sin in me: And shall I not believe the operation of God, that he can deliver me from the power, or powerful temptations, or inclinations to any sin? Shall I not seek strength of Christ? or shall I betray myself to the devil and the flesh? In Christ I am dead to sin, and shall I yet live therein? Rom. 6. 1, 3. Col. 2. 12.

Thirdly, our Baptism must be used against the doubts of persevering, or whether we shall be kept unto salvation, and whether our bodies shall be raised again at the last Day: for God hath assured all this unto us in our Baptism, that we have our part not only in the death of Christ, but also in the resurrection of Christ: and if Christ be raised in us, Christ can die no more, either in himself, or in our hearts, and the same power, that raised him out of the grave, will also raise up our bodies at the last Day, as is pleaded, Romans 6. 10, &c. Galath. 3.

27, 28. 1. Cor. 15. 29. 1. Pet. 3. 21. If we be baptized, and believe, we shall certainly be saved, Mark. 16. 16.

Thus as it concerns ourselves.

3. In respect of others, we are bound to the good behavior in Baptism, as to acknowledge the communion of Saints: so are we tied to preserve our selves in all brotherly love with the godly, who wear the same Livery with us, and are Soldiers pressed to the same war, and have taken upon them the same holy Vow with us: we are bound in Baptism to love them, to stand for them above all other people, and to live with them in all holy love, to our lives end, Ephes. 4. 3, 4, 5. 1. Cor. 12. 13. & 1. 13. Gal. 3. 27, 28.

CHAPTER XII.

Rules about the Lord's Supper.

Hitherto concerning Baptism: The Rules that concern the Lord's Supper, follow.

Now concerning this Sacrament, we are charged with these things:

1. First, Examination, 1. Cor. 11. we must examine ourselves, and so eat and drink: Examine ourselves, so as we be sure there be no sin in our hearts and lives, which we have committed, but we are desirous to forsake, and do unfeignedly judge ourselves for it, being as desirous to forsake it, as we desire God should in the Sacrament forgive it.

2. Secondly, The discerning of the Lord's Body and Blood: so coming to partake of these outward signs of Bread & Wine, as we withal

know and believe the presence of Christ; and that God doth as effectually give Christ to the soul of the believer, as he gives Bread and Wine to his body: yea, we must thus discern and believe, that he is there offered and given unto us also, and that God doth not delude us, but as truly gives us the Body and blood of Christ, as he doth by the Minister give us the bread and wine, 1. Cor. 11.

Thirdly, the showing forth of the death of Christ: This is a solemnity, where we must intend to make a solemn remembrance of the Passion and Death of our Savior, not only in being present at the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine, but in raising up in our hearts a thankful remembrance of his grievous sufferings and death for our sins, Math. 26. 1. Cor. 11.

Fourthly, Fellowship and loving communion with the godly, which we both signify, and vow in the Sacraments, and testify before God and men, that we will cleave unto them above all the people in the world, as being the same bread with us, even members of the same Mystical Body of Christ, 1. Cor. 10.

Fifthly, special reconciliation with such as we have offended, bearing malice to no man, and desiring and seeking peace with all sorts of men, Math. 5. Rom. 12.

Sixthly, and lastly, the vows of sincerity, resolving to keep this feast all our life in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, even to spend. our days in all uprightness of heart, and unfeigned hatred of all sin and hypocrisy, 1. Cor. 5. 8.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rules about prayer.

Thus of the Sacraments.

The Rules concerning prayer follow; where besides the general Rules, that belong to all worship, these things in special must be heeded concerning prayer.

1. Thy words must be few, Eccles. 5. 1, 2. and the reason is, because God is in heaven, and thou art in earth: He is full of Majesty and Wisdom, and thou art an infirm and sinful creature: Length of itself doth not commend prayer; we must speak as becomes the Majesty of God, without vain repetitions and babblings, pattering over of the same things is not pleasing to God: As affectation is ill in anything, so much more ill in prayer. This Rule may be unsavory in the taste of some that are transported with rash zeal: But let them take heed of will-worship: the words are so plain in the Text, as they must inform themselves about them: The Lord knew what was fittest for us, when he gave us this charge.

2. Thy heart must be lifted up in the performance of this duty; This is often imported in diverse Scriptures, and this lifting up of the heart hath diverse things in it.

1. Understanding: thou must be advised what thou prayest for, and know thy warrant, that what thou askest is according to God's will. 1. Cor. 14. 15. 1. John. 5. 14

2. Freedom from distractions: Thy heart must be cleansed from passions and lusts: Thy prayer must be without wrath, 1. Tim. 3. 8. And as the distractions arising from passion must be avoided, so must all other distractions.

3. Fervency, or the stretching out of the affections according to the matter of prayer; thou must express the affections of prayer: for God looks at the prayer of thy heart, not at the prayer of thy lips only.

3. Thou must pray with all manner of prayer, according to the occasions of prayer: Thou must pray at thy set times daily, and thou must pray also with ejaculations (as Divines call them) that is, those sudden and short speeches to God, when thy heart is moved upon special occasion: Thou must use Supplications, Deprecations, Intercessions, Confessions, giving of Thanks, or the like, according to thy necessities, or the other occasions of thy life: Thou must strive to get a fitness and language to speak unto God for thy self in thine own words, as may best express the desires of thine heart, Eph. 6. 18

4. Thou must continue and persevere in prayer without ceasing: prayer must be the work of thy whole life, not an exercise for a fit, for a day or two, or a week or two, or a month or two: thou must make conscience of prayer always, Ephes. 6. 18. 1. Thess. 3. 17.

5. When thy prayer is grounded upon God's will, thou must be instant, and not faint, or be discouraged: Thou must pray without doubting and wavering, as resolved never to cease praying, till God hear and show mercy. 'It is baseness of mind, not humility, to be quickly discouraged: if God entertain us not according to our expectation, or liking, we must not be weary of seeking to God, but set upon prayer, with a resolution to take no nay, Luk. 18. 1. I am. 1. 6.

6. Thou must remember supplication for all Saints, especially to pray heartily for Magistrates & Ministers; especially those under whose charge thou art, Ephes. 6. 18, 19. 1. Tim. 2. 1.

7. Thou must look to it, that in all things thou give thanks: Let the Lord see the truth of thy heart herein, that what thou obtainest from God, especially by prayer, thou wilt with all gladness remember and acknowledge: This Rule must by no means be forgotten, 1. Thess. 5. 18. Colos. 4. 2.

CHAPTER XIV.

Rules about reading the Scriptures.

Thus of the Rules that concern prayer: There remains the reading of Scripture, and singing of Psalms, as the other parts of the ordinary worship of God.

Concerning the reading of the Scriptures, I will instance in one place of Scripture only, which contains the charge given to Joshua, chap. 1. 8, 9. which comprehends the substance of the necessary directions about private reading. I say necessary; for godly men may, and have advised diverse courses for reading of Scripture, which are not absolutely necessary, but arbitrary, as may stand with the leisure and capacity of the person that will read: such are those directions, that show how many chapters may be read in a day, and what things may be observed in reading, &c. which, as they may be profitable to many Christians, & expedient too, yet they must not be understood so, as that those persons sin, which read not so often, or so many chapters, or the like. The things therefore that must necessarily be observed by such as can read the Bible, I take to be these:

First, they must exercise themselves therein daily, they must constantly be employed therein, & if their occasions interrupt them at some time, they must redeem it at other times: This is the praise of the blessed man, That he exerciseth himself in God's Law day and night; that is, constantly, Psal. 1. 2.

Secondly, in reading they must meditate therein, that is, they must observe profitable things, as they read, attending to reading, & marking what the Lord saith unto them by that part of the Word which they read: This is that meditation, which is chiefly required of a Christian, to get into their hearts good thoughts from the matter they read of, so as they may the better be enabled to employ their thoughts all the day after.

Thirdly, The Word of God must not depart out of their mouth; they must make the best use of it they can, in conference to speak of it to others, for the edification of themselves and others.

Fourthly, They must observe in their reading, what the Lord saith unto them, that concerns their practice: They must observe to do according to those holy directions they read of: They must bring a mind desirous, and resolved to let the Word of God both inform them, & reform them, making conscience of it, to let God direct them by his holy Word read, and not only by the Word preached to them: Their lives must be bettered by their reading, and to that end they must observe the chiefest things they can, out of their reading, to remember them in their practice.

CHAPTER XV.

Rules about singing of Psalms.

The rules, that concern the singing of Psalms, are summarily comprehended in that place, Col. 3. 16. and they are these:

1. First, they must teach one another by their Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs. They must learn to profit, and make good use of the holy matter contained in the Psalms they sing.
2. Secondly, they must sing with their hearts, they must attend to the matter they sing of, & lift up their hearts, as well as their voices.
3. Thirdly, they must sing with grace in their hearts, they must employ the graces of the holy Spirit, or God's Spirit in singing of Psalms, as well as in prayer, or any other ordinance of God.
4. Fourthly, they must make melody to the Lord: They must direct their songs to God, and to his glory, and not use them as mere civil

employments, but as parts of God's service.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rules about Vowing and Swearing.

Hitherto of the Rules, that concern the most usual parts of God's service: There are other parts of God's service, which are to be used, but at certain times, and upon special occasions, & these are Vows, and Oaths, and Fasting.

The rules about Vowing are briefly comprehended in that place, Eccles. 5. 3, 4. and they are chiefly two.

1. First, Before thou vowest, consider: consider, I say, thine own strength, whether thou be able to do it: and consider also the end, that it be to God's glory; and consider the matter, that thou vow not things unlawful: and consider what may be the events of thy Vow, for all Vows being made before the Angel, that takes notice of all Covenants, it will be in vain afterwards to plead, it was an error, thou wast mistaken: God may be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands: Be not rash therefore, to cause thy flesh to sin therein.

2. Secondly, when thou hast vowed thy vow to God, defer not to pay it, be sure thou perform it: it is a grievous offense to break a lawful vow: Better it is thou shouldst not vow, then that thou shouldst vow, and not pay.

Thus of Vowing.

Concerning the Oath, when thou art called to swear, thou must observe these Rules:

First, that thou swear not by anything which is not God, Jer. 5. 7.

Secondly, that thou swear in truth, that is, that thy conscience know, what thou swearest is true.

Thirdly, that thou swear in judgment, that is, with due consideration of the nature of God, and with sound deliberation, not rashly, and diligently weighing of all things, that belong to the matter thou swearest about.

Fourthly, that thou swear in righteousness, that is about lawful things, & just matters: Thou must not swear to do unjust things, as David swore to kill Nabal: nor must thou swear about impossible things, or about things that are doubtful and uncertain: Nor in the form of thy oath must thou use such words, as be contumelious to God, or express not sufficient reverence to the Divine Majesty, as they that wickedly swear by any part of Christ, or such like.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rules about Fasting.

Thus of Vows and Swearing; Fasting follows: Now if we would keep a religious Fast unto God, we must observe these two Rules.

First, we must look to the strictness of the abstinence in the day of our Fast; for we must abstain from all sorts of meat as well as one, and from all labor also, and from our costliest apparel, and from recreations and usual delights: We must keep the day, as we keep the Sabbath, in forbearing our own works, Jon. 3. 6, 7. 1. Cor. 7. 5. Joel 1. & 2. Levite. 16.

Secondly, the time must be spent in religious duties, as a Sabbath, especially in the exercises that concern the humiliation of the soul, in renewing of our repentance, for the obtaining of pardon of sin, or some special blessing of God, or the preventing, or removing of some great judgment of God.

The former rule concerns only the ceremony, or outward exercise of the body: but this rule contains the substance of the duty, without which a religious fast is not kept unto God, who regardeth not the hanging down of the head like a bull-rush, if the soul be not humbled before God for sin: Lev. 16. 29. Joel 1. 14. & 2. 16, 17.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Rules about the Sabbath.

Hitherto of the Rules, that concern the parts of God's worship: The rules, that concern the time of God's worship, follow, and this time especially is the Sabbath day.

Now the rules, that bind us to the good behavior concerning the Sabbath, concern either the preparation to the Sabbath, or the manner of performing holy duties on the Sabbath.

The preparation to the Sabbath, contains in it these things.

First, the ending of all our works on the six days, as God did his: Gen. 2. 2.

This example of God is set down, not only to show what he did, but to prescribe unto us, what we should do, as is manifest by urging this example in the reason of the commandment: We must then take order to finish the works of the week days with such discretion, that

neither our heads be troubled with the cares of them, nor our hands tempted to work about them on the Sabbath day.

Secondly, the preventing of domestical grievances, and perturbations, Levite. 19. 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbath. Discords and contentions, and heart-burnings in the members of the family, extend their infection, and hurt, even to the profaning of God's Sabbath. The Lord looks not to be served aright in his House, if people live not quietly, and lovingly, and dutifully in their own houses.

Thirdly, we must cleanse ourselves, that we may keep the Sabbath, Nehem. 13. 22. Which place, though it speak of Legal cleansing, yet it shadows out that Moral and perpetual care of cleansing ourselves, that ought even to be found in us. And thus we do cleanse ourselves, when we humble ourselves, that we may walk with God, confessing our sins, even the sins of the week past, & making our peace with God, through the name of Jesus Christ.

Thus of the duties of preparation: Now for the manner of keeping the Sabbath, the rules prescribe unto us these things:

1. Rest from all our works, whether they be works of labor, or works of pleasure. Works of labor the Scripture instanceth in such, as are selling of victuals: Nehem. 13. 15. Carrying of burdens: Jerem. 17. Journeying from our places, Exod. 16. 29. The business of our callings done by ourselves, our children, servants, or cattle, which the words of the Commandment forbid. And as works of labor, so also works of pleasure are forbidden, Isaiah 58. 13.

2. Readiness and delight. We should love to be God's servants on this day, Isaiah 56. and consecrate it with joy, as a glorious privilege to us, Isaiah 58. 13. abhorring weariness, or a desire to have the Sabbath gone, and ended, Amos 8.

3. Care and Watchfulness. We must observe to keep it: Exod. 31. 16. we must take heed to ourselves, that no duty be omitted, and that we

no way profane it, tending our hearts, and our words, Jer. 17. 21.

4. Sincerity, and this sincerity we should show diverse ways.

First, by doing God's work with as much care, as we would do our own, or rather showing more care for the service of GOD. They had their double sacrifices on the Sabbath, in the time of the Law, and we should study, how we might please GOD in especial manner on that day, choosing out the things that might delight him: God hath taken but one day of seven for his work; and shall we not do it willingly? Further, if we respect our selves, shall we not be as careful to provide for our souls on the Sabbath, as for our bodies on the week days?

2. By observing the whole day, as well as a part, and keeping the Sabbath in our dwellings, as well as in God's house: God requires the whole day, and not a part. As we would not be contented our servants should work for us only an hour, or two in the six days: so neither should we yield less unto God, then we require for our selves. Nor will it suffice to serve God by public duties in his House, unless we serve him also by private duties in our own dwellings, Commandment 4. Levite. 23. 3.

3. By avoiding the lesser violations of the Sabbath, as well as the greater, especially not transgressing of contempt, or willfulness in the least things we know to be forbidden. The Prophet instanceth: Isaiah 58. 13. We must not speak our own words. Thus of sincerity.

5. The fifth thing required of us, is Faith: we must glorify GOD by believing, that he will make it a day of blessing unto us, and perform that blessing he hath promised, accepting our desire to walk before him in the uprightness of our hearts, and passing by our infirmities, and frailties. We many times disturb the rest and Sabbath of our souls by unbelief, Commandment 4. Genes. 2. 2. Exod. 31. 13. Ezech. 20. 20. & 46. 2, 5.

6. The last thing is Deprecation: we must beseech God, when we have done our best, to show us mercy, and spare us for our defects and

weaknesses. Thus we must end the day, and reconcile ourselves to GOD, that the Rest of Jesus Christ may be established in our hearts, Nehem. 13. 22. And thus of the rules, that bind us to the good behavior, in respect of the time of God's worship.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rules that show us how to carry ourselves, when we come into company, in respect of Religion.

Hitherto of the rules, that concern our carriage toward God?

Now it follows, that I break open those directions, that should bring our lives into order in respect of men: And these rules are of two sorts, for either they are such, as bind us to the good behavior towards all men, or such, as order our conversation toward some men only, as they are considered to be either wicked or godly.

The rules that concern all men, may be cast into two heads, as they belong either to righteousness, or to mercy.

The rules that belong to righteousness, order us either in company, or out of company.

The rules which we are to observe in company, concern either,

1. Religion, or
2. The sins, and faults of others: or
3. Our own inoffensive behavior towards all men.

1. For the first, when we come in company, we must be careful to be that which may become the glory of God's truth, and the Religion we

profess, that we take not up the name of God in vain: And thus we shall rightly order ourselves, if we observe these Rules:

First, to be soundly advised, before we fall into discourse of Religion, not doing it, till God may be glorified by it; A wise man concealeth knowledge, but the heart of fools will publish foolishness: It is as great a discretion to know how to conceal knowledge, as it is to know how to use knowledge.

Secondly, avoid vain janglings, and contradiction of words, such as are

1. Doubtful disputations about Ceremonies, and things indifferent, which may entangle the weak, and keep them from more necessary cares and knowledge, Rom. 14. 1.

2. Curious Questions, about things that are not revealed in the Word, Rom. 12. 3. Be wise to sobriety.

3. Unprofitable reasonings, such as were those about Genealogies, in the Apostles time, 1. Tim. 1.

Thirdly, If thou be asked a reason of the hope that is in thee, by such as have authority to require it, or need to seek it, then answer: But be sure to remember two things; namely, that thou answer with all reverence, as may show how much thou art affected with the Majesty of God's truth, and withal with meekness, that is, without passion or frowardness: and without affectation, or conceitedness, or willfulness in thine own opinions, 1. Pet. 3. 15.

Fourthly, let thy communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay: otherwise, customary and vain swearing, is a most damned sin, and such as God will surely plague.

CHAPTER XX.

Rules that show us how to carry ourselves in company, in respect of the faults of others.

Thus of our carriage in company in respect of Religion. Now concerning the faults of others, we must observe these Rules:

First, we must never in our discourse justify the wicked, or condemn the righteous; all excess in words is evil, but this is an abomination to the Lord: We must ever honor those that fear the Lord, and as for vile persons, they are to be contemned, Psal. 15. 4. Amos 5. 15. Prov. 17. 15.

Secondly, let thy conversation and discourse be without judging, Math. 7. 1. lam. 3. 17. It is time exceeding ill-spent, that is spent in censuring of others. And the rather should we take heed of judging, if we consider how the holy Ghost hath matched that sin in that place of James, we must be without judging, without hypocrisy: as if he would signify, that great Censurers are commonly great Hypocrites; and as any are more wise, they are more sparing of their Censures.

Thirdly, thou must not walk about with tales; take heed of Tale-bearing: He goeth about as a slanderer, that revealeth a secret, though it be true he speaketh. It is a marvelous evil custom, that many have to fill up their discourse with the report of the frailties of others, which they by some means or other, come under-hand to know: This is an evil frequently condemned in Scripture, and yet most usually practiced; as if it were lawful to speak of anything which they know to be true: Thou shalt not walk about with Tales, nor stand against the blood of thy neighbor: A strange connection, by which the Lord imports, that this Tale-bearing is a kind of murder; and it is true in the case of many a man; thou wert as good lay violent hands upon him, as with that licentiousness of words to divulge tales concerning him, Prov. 20. 19. & 11. 13. Levite. 19. 16. And for the better strengthening of this rule, thou art yet charged to look to thy

ears too, as well as thy tongue; Thou must not receive evil reports against thy neighbor, but make it appear, thou art not pleased with such Tales, Psal. 15. 3. Yea, thou art forbidden the society of such persons, as carry Tales; Thou must not meddle with Talebearers, nor with such as flatter with their lips; Certainly such creatures commonly flatter the present, and reproach the absent, Prov. 20. 19.

Fourthly, if thou do know an offense in any, with whom thou conversest, thou shalt not hate him in thy heart, but rather reprove him plainly: For, he that rebuketh a man, shall afterward find more favor then he that flattereth with his tongue, Lev. 19. 17. Prov. 28. 23.

Fifthly, as for the mere frailty of others, hold thy tongue, pass by them: A fool despiseth his neighbor, but a man of understanding will hold his peace, Prov. 11. 12. Commonly they that have most defects themselves, are aprest to contemn others for their weaknesses: but a wise man must so distinguish of the faults of others, that he cover mere frailties, and learn of God to pass by the infirmities of his servants: The Antithesis shows, that a wise man doth not' only hold his tongue, but restrain his thoughts from thinking the worse of others for such infirmities.

Sixthly, against the passions & wrongs of others thou must arm thyself with a soft answer, and be sure thou render not evil for evil, Prov. 15. 1. 1. Thess. 5. 15. or rebuke for rebuke, 1. Pet. 3. 9.

CHAPTER XXI.

Rules that show us how to carry ourselves in company, and not give offense.

Thus of our carriage towards others in company, as it respects their faults: Now followeth the third sort of rules, which order our behavior toward others in company in respect of in-offensiveness. It

ought to be our principal care to carry ourselves so, as nobody may take offense at us.

Now these rules may be directed to their heads, as they concern, of our behavior toward others.

1. The humility,
2. The discretion,
3. The purity,

We must carry ourselves humbly, discreetly, and honestly in our conversation with others, so shall we converse with much amiableness, and reputation:

First, unto the humility of our conversation belong these Rules:

1. First, be soft, show all meekness to all men, restraining the inordination of thy heart, endeavoring to show thyself gentle, and peaceable, and harmless, and easy to be entreated, Tit. 3. 1, 2. Prov. 8. 13. I am. 3. 13.
2. Secondly, thou must bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart to get knowledge, and profit thyself by others, Pro. 23. 17. This is the same with that of James, be swift to hear, and slow to speak, Jam. 3. 19.
3. Thirdly, put not forth thyself, nor stand in the place of great men, till thou be called, Prov. 25. 6.

In general, concerning humility, the Apostle Peters phrase is much to be noted, he saith, we should clothe ourselves with humility: which notes both the great measure of it, it should cover all our actions, and also the continuance of it: When we go amongst men, we should stir up our hearts, and fashion ourselves to express this grace, and not

dare to be seen without humility, no more than we would be seen without our clothes. Humility hides our nakedness, and pride and passion lay it open to the view and contempt of others.

2. Secondly, neither is humility all that is required to make our conversation without offense, or provocation; but we must also carry ourselves discretely, and to this end there are these excellent Rules:

First, thou must consider to speak what is acceptable, and avoid what may irritate; there is singular use of this rule, if it were followed, Prov. 10. 32, 13. & 13. 23.

Secondly, thou must mark those that cause division and offenses, and avoid them, and shun the society of such, Rom. 16. 17, 18. This will breed thee much peace, and deliver thee from much suspicion in others.

Thirdly, thou must make no friendship with the angry man; for either by much conversing with him, thou mayest learn his ways, or else it will be a snare to thee, that thou shalt neither know how to keep his favor, nor yet how to break off from him, without much unrest and inconveniences, Prov. 22. 24, 25.

Fourthly, it is a great discretion in evil time to be silent. In things wherein thou mayest endanger thy self, and not profit others, it is thy best way, and a wise course, to forbear speech of such things, Amos 5. 13.

Fifthly, so likewise it is thy discretion in matters of danger to forbear the communicating of thy secrets to any, though thou mightest be tempted to a persuasion of trust in those, to whom thou wouldst reveal them: It may often repent thee to have spoken, but seldom to have held thy peace, Micah 7. 5.

Sixthly, with-draw thy feet from thy neighbor's house, lest he be weary of thee and hate thee: This is an excellent rule given by Solomon, Pro. 25. 17. If thou wouldest converse with reputation, take

heed of idle gadding from house to house, when thou hast no occasion or employment: Thou mayest draw hereby much secret contempt, and loathing of thee, when thy emptiness and vanity shall be thereby discovered. An empty conversation, that hath in it no exercise of piety or virtue, if it be frequent, occasioneth secret, and unutterable scorn.

7. Restrain thine own passions in conversing. There are none so wise, but if they show their passions of immoderate anger, fear, grief; yea, or joy, but they discover much weaknesses in their disposition, which would be covered if thou didst bridle the excess of thy passions. A wise man covereth shame, when a fool is presently known: It is the best praise not to have such weaknesses; but the next to this, is by discretion to bridle ourselves, so as we may hide our weaknesses from breaking out.

Lastly, thou mayest make good use of that direction of Solomon about thy friend, Bless not thy friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning; for it may be accounted a curse to thee: Take heed of flattery, which instead of effecting thine own ends, may bring thee out of all respect. He doth not forbid the just praise, and encouragement of friends, but the intending of praise of purpose to the uttermost notice of thy friend (this is to praise him with a loud voice) and the affectation of preventing others in praising; and of doing it in such things as are not yet sufficiently known to be praiseworthy, and to set one's self so to praise, as if he studied to do nothing else, but humor his friends, especially if it be but once perceived, that thou dost it but for thy own ends. It is a great part of wisdom, to know how to speak of the praise of others, so as neither sinister ends be intended, nor the humoring of those we praise: to do it sparingly and seasonably, is a great discretion.

And thus of the Rules, that make our conversation amiable, in respect of discretion.

3. Thirdly, that our conversation may not be hurtful and offensive, we must look to the purity of it, and so these Rules following are of singular use:

First, in general, Refrain thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak not guile, Psal. 34. 13. For he that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his soul, Pro. 22. 23. Take heed of the usual vices of the tongue: for thereout may come much mischief, and discontent to thyself and others.

Secondly, in particular look to thyself carefully, that thou avoid those three evils mentioned by the Apostle: Ephes. 3. 4. viz. Filthy speaking, Foolish talking and jesting. By jesting he means those biting jests, that under pretense of showing wittiness, or conceit, do secretly leave disgrace upon the persons whom they concern.

Thirdly, avoid with detestation the excess in drinking and reveling, and suffer thyself upon no pretense, to be drawn to give way to thine own practice in them, 1. Pet. 4. 3.

CHAPTER XXII.

How we must carry ourselves out of company.

Thus of thy carriage in general in company. Now out of company thou must look to these things:

1. First, thou must fashion thy heart, by the use of all good means, to the love of all sorts of men. This <H&G>, love of men, is a virtue little thought on: yet greatly necessary, as a foundation of all practices in conversing with others, and we should labor to abound in love towards all men, 1. Thes. 3. 12.

Secondly, remember to pray for all sorts of men: This is a precept given us in charge by the Apostle, 1. Tim. 2. 1. and belongs to this place, and we ought to make conscience of it according to the occasions of our callings, or acquaintance with other men: we should even in secret seek to profit our neighbors by praying for them.

Thirdly, we should provide, even out of company to order our affairs so, as that we may live,

1. Honestly without scandal, 1. Cor. 10. 32. Phil. 1. 10.
2. Justly, without deceit or fraudulent dealing, Lev. 19. 35. 36. 1. Thes. 4. 16.
3. Peaceably without strife with any, if it be possible, Prov. 3. 29, 30. Zach. 7. 10. Hebr. 12. 14.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Rules about works of Mercy.

Hitherto of the rules, that concern righteousness.

Mercy followeth. Now in showing mercy, diverse things are charged upon us.

First, Willingness. We must give cheerfully: For the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. We must love mercy, as well as show mercy. Our hearts should be ever answerable to our power. We must be ready, and prepared to show mercy, abhorring delays, and putting off of time, or seeking excuses: Our ears should be open to the cries of the poor, rather than be behind hand; we should sell, that we might give alms, Mich. 6. 8., 1. Tim. 6. 18., 2. Cor. 9. 4, 5, 6, 7., Pro. 22. 23, 13., Luke 12. 33., Pro. 3. 27, 28.

Secondly, Labor and Diligence. We should take pains, and work hard according to all the occasions of mercy. This is the Apostles phrase: God will not forget your work, and labor of love, Heb. 6. 10. We must be forward to do those works of mercy, that require our pains and travail about them, as well as those we may do and sit still, 2. Cor. 8. 16, 22.

Thirdly, Liberality: We must open our hands wide, Deut. 15. 8. we must be rich in those good works, 1. Tim. 6. 18. we must not give sparingly, 2. Cor. 9. 6. we must give to our power, and sometimes beyond our power: 2. Cor. 8. 2. we should desire to answer the expectation had of our bounty, especially the expectation of our teachers that know us and our estates, 2. Cor. 8. 24. we should strive to abound in this grace also, as well as in other graces of the Spirit, 2. Cor. 8. 9. we should give to seven, and also to eight, Eccles. 11. 2. we must make good measure, yea and pressed down, Luke 6. 8.

Fourthly, Humility. There is great use of humility, in showing mercy. Now we should show our humility diverse ways about mercy: As

First, in helping others, without exalting ourselves, and domineering over them. The rich must not think to rule the poor, and to command them, as if they were their vassals: we should so show mercy, as not to stand upon terms of their beholdingness, to whom we show mercy, Prov. 22. 7.

Secondly, in not despising the poor; we must not think of them meanly, and contemptuously, because they stand in need of our help, whether it be in body or mind, Prov. 14. 21.

Thirdly, in accepting exhortation, showing ourselves willing to be called upon, and stirred up to mercy, 2. Cor. 8. 17.

4. By our penitency, when we go to God, after we have done our best, and confess the corruption that cleaves unto us, even when we have shown our best desires to communicate to others, and withal striving

to plow up the fallow ground of our hard hearts, that they may be more fit to express the bowels of mercy, Hos. 10. 12.

Fifthly, the Macedonians shown their humility in this, that they prayed the Apostle to accept their gifts, giving themselves also to be disposed of to the Lord, and unto them by the will of God, 2. Cor. 8. 5.

Thus of the humility to be shown in doing works of mercy.

A fifth thing required in showing mercy, is Faith; and faith is needful in two respects.

First, to believe God's acceptance of the mercy shown. For a godly Christian, that is not vain-glorious, hath so mean an opinion of his best works, that he finds need to fly to God's promises, and dares not trust upon his own goodness. Now God hath promised to accept of that we do, if there be a willing mind: The will is accepted for the deed, 2. Cor. 8. 12.

Secondly, to believe the success and reward from God, and that we shall not lose, by what is so expended. Though the persons to whom we show mercy, should be so ungrateful, that it were as bread cast on the waters: yet we ought to believe, that our seed cast on the waters, shall bring us a plentiful harvest, Eccles. 11. 1. And it is certain, whatsoever the persons be, yet what is given, is sowed. And if the Husbandman do not think his come spoiled, that he casts upon his land, no more ought a Christian to think that to be lost, that is given to the poor. Nature may disappoint the hope of the Husbandman, but in works of mercy, there is no venture, but a sure increase from the Lord, 2. Cor. 9. 9, 10. and therefore our faith should make us get bags to put up the certain treasure we shall gain by mercy from the Lord, Luke 12. 33.

A sixth thing required in showing mercy, is discretion, and discretion should show it self

First, by distributing our alms in the fittest course we can, having a principal respect to godly poor. He that showeth mercy, ought to have a good eye, Prov. 22. 9.

Secondly, by observing our own ability, so to ease others, that we burden not ourselves, 1. Cor. 9. 14, 15.

Thirdly, by taking heed that we spend not upon the rich by needless entertainments, what ought to be bestowed upon the poor, Prov. 22. 16. Luke 14. 13.

Fourthly, by avoiding scandal, or giving offense, that none blame us in our abundance, but providing things honest in the sight of God and men, 2. Cor. 8. 20, 21. yet so as we endeavor in a holy & discreet manner to provoke others by our zeal, 2. Cor. 9. 2.

A seventh thing required in showing mercy, is Sympathy, Pity, a Fellow-feeling of the distresses of others, being like affectioned and laying their miseries to heart, Heb. 13. 3. Col. 3. 12. Rom. 12. 16. Job 30. 25. There should be bowels in our mercy.

The last thing is Sincerity. Now this sincerity should be shown diverse ways, as:

1. In the matter of our alms. It must be of goods well gotten. For God hateth robbery, though it were for burnt offerings, Isaiah 61. 8.

2. In the manner we must show mercy, without wicked thoughts, or grief of heart, Deut. 7. 7, 8. to 12. and without hiding ourselves from the poor, Isaiah 58. 7. and without excuse to shift off the doing of it, Prov. 24. 11, 12.

3. In the ends. That we do not our works to be seen of men, or to merit of God: but with an unfeigned desire to glorify God, and make our profession to be well spoken of, and show the true love and pity we bear to the creature in distress, Math. 6. 2. Cor. 9. 19.

4. In continuing our mercy; not forgetting to distribute, but still remembering the poor, Heb. 13. 16. Galat. 2. soundly performing the mercy with constancy, which we have purposed, willed, or promised. It were an excellent order, if Christians would follow the Apostles rule, every week, as God hath prospered them, to lay aside for the poor, 1. Cor. 1. 16. 2. 2. Cor. 8. 11.

5. In the kinds of mercy, that we be ready to show spiritual mercy, as well as corporal, and in corporal mercy to do good all the ways we can, as well as one way: As by lending, protecting, releasing, visiting, and giving; and thus to the poor, to such as are fallen into decay, and to the strangers also: as many Scriptures require.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Rules that show us how to carry ourselves towards wicked men.

Hitherto of the rules that concern all men: Now the particular rules direct our carriage either toward wicked men, or toward godly men.

Our conversation toward wicked men may be ordered by these rules:

First, we must avoid all needless society with them, and shun their infectious fellowship, especially we must take heed of any special familiarity with them, or unequal yoking ourselves with them, by marriage, friendship, or leagues of amity, Psal. 1. 1., 1. Cor. 6. 17., Eph. 5. 7, 11., Prov. 23. 20. & 4. 14, &c.

Secondly, when we have occasion to converse with them, we must study how to walk wisely towards them, so as we may be so far from giving scandal, as if it be possible, we may win them to glorify God and his truth in our profession. It requires much skill to order ourselves aright in those things that are to be done in the presence of wicked men, or in such things, as must come by report unto them,

and their scanning. Now there are diverse things of admirable use in our carriage to put them to silence, and to make them in their consciences at least to think well of us: Such as are:

1. Mortification. A sound care to reform our ways, and true hatred and grief for our own sins, will cause many times wicked wretches to say of us, that we are the people of the Lord, Isaiah 61. 3, 8. I say, a sound care of reformation for to profess a mortified life, and yet in anything to show, that we can live in any fault without repentance, this provokes them exceedingly to speak evil of the good way of God. Therefore the first care of a Christian, that would be rightly ordered toward wicked men, must be to live without offense, and to discover a true mortified mind, and a heart broken for sin.

Secondly, to speak with all reverence, and fear, when we entreat of matters of Religion, much amazeth the profane conscience of a wicked man. Whereas cursory discourses of such grand mysteries, and empty and vain janglings do exceedingly occasion a confirmed willfulness, and profaneness in such men, 1. Pet. 3. 16. & Prov. 24. 26.

Thirdly, it is a most winning quality in all our carriage, to show meekness of wisdom to express a mind well governed, free from passions, and also from conceitedness, frowardness, affectation, and the vain show of what we have not in us in substance. For each of these have in them singular matter of irritation, and provoke wicked men to scorn, and hatred, and reviling.

Fourthly, there is a holy kind of Reservedness, which may adorn the life of a Christian in his carriage among wicked men: And this Reservedness is to be shown:

1. In not trusting ourselves too far with them, not believing every word, not bearing ourselves upon every show of favor from them. For as too much suspicion of them breeds extreme alienation, if they perceive it: so credulity is no way safe: Pro. 14. 15. John 2. 24.

2. By abstaining from judging of them that are without. It is a most intemperate zeal, that spends itself in the vain and bootless censure of the estate of those that are without. Those censures have in them matter of provocation, and nothing of edification. It were happy for some Christians, if they could with the Apostle say often to their own souls, What have I to do to judge them, that are without? 1. Cor. 5. 12, 13.

3. By studying to be quiet, and meddle with our own business, casting about, how to cut off all occasions, by which we might be entangled with any discord, or contentions, or much business with them. It is a godly ambition to thirst after this quietness of life, 1. Thes. 4. 12.

4. By our silence in evil times, always avoiding all such discourses, as might bring us into danger, without any calling for our own edification, or the edification of others. Many a man hath smarted sorely for want of this bridle for his tongue, when his words could do no good to others, and much hurt to himself, Amos 5. 13. David held his peace while the wicked were present, Psal. 39. 1.

5. In forbearing to reprove scorers, Prov. 9. 7, 8. & 23. 9.

6. In seasoning the words with salt, so as they discover not vanity, lightness, vain-glory, malice, or desire of revenge, or the like faults in their speeches.

7. In answering the fool, but not according to his folly, that is, not in such pride, passion, or reviling fashion, as the fool objects in, Prov. 26. 4, 5.

8. In getting out of their company, when we perceive not in them the words of wisdom: If we see they grow once to be perverse, outrageous, or willful in any notorious offense of words or works, we must get from amongst them.

Thus of the eight ways wherein we should show reservedness: they are of excellent use, if men would study them, and practice them.

5. Mercy is amiable even in the eyes of wicked men: and merciful Christians, that are full of good works, do bring a great deal of honor to Religion: It is true Religion, and undefiled, to visit the fatherless, and widows, and to be unspotted of the world: A conversation, that is unrebukable, and full of mercy also, cannot but be very honorable: whereas Religion itself, when it is seated in the breasts of such Christians, as have forgotten to show mercy, and do not study how to be doing good to others, is exceedingly darkened in the glory of it, and many times extremely ill spoken of: A true Christian should hold it a great disparagement, that any Papist, or carnal man in the world (in equal comparison) should put them down, for either the tenderness, or the abundance of works of mercy, 1. Pet. 2. 12. Math. 15. I am. 3. 25.

6. When we have cause, & a calling to speak for the truth, or to reprove sin, it is an excellent grace to be undaunted, & free from servile fears, flattery: To give place to wicked men in God's cause, or to fear their faces in the quarrel of Religion, or to show a mind that would repent of well-doing, or that basely would stoop some way to honor ungodly persons for our own ends, is so far from gaining true favor with evil minded men, that it makes them to scorn and hate us, and Religion so much the more: whereas a godly man, that is unmovable, & refuseth to praise the wicked, or justify the ungodly, and when he hath cause, will contend with them, as Solomon's phrase is, and not be like a troubled fountain, or a corrupt spring: he may for the time receive ill words from the wicked, but his heart is afraid of him, and his conscience doth admire him, Pro. 24. 25. & 28. 4. & 25. 26., 1. Cor. 16. 22.

7. The like advantage is brought to the conversation of a godly man, when he can show like patience, and firmness of mind, in bearing all sorts of afflictions, and crosses. Patience in affliction makes a great

show before a wicked man, that well knows how unable he is so to carry himself, 1. Pet. 3. 14.

8. Lastly, to love our enemies, and show it by our fruits in forgiving them, or being ready heartily to pleasure them, and overcome their evil with goodness: To pray for them, when they revile and persecute us, is a transcendent virtue; evil men themselves being Judges, Luke 6. 27. to 31. Prov. 20. 22.

CHAPTER XXV.

Rules that show us how to carry ourselves towards godly men.

Thus of our carriage toward the wicked: how we should carry ourselves toward the godly, followeth to be considered of:

The sum of all is, that we must walk in love: If we can soundly discharge our duty to the godly, in respect of loving them unfeignedly & heartily, and constantly, we perform all that is required of us toward them: And this love to the godly is so necessary, as that it is imposed upon us, as the only Commandment given by Christ, who in one word tells us the substance of our duties, John. 13. 34., Ephe. 5. 2., 1. Pet. 2. 17., 1. Cor. 16. 14.

Now the Rules which in particular bind us to the good behavior in respect of our love to the godly, concern either the manifestation of our love to them: or the preservation of our love to them.

We must show our love to the godly diverse ways:

First, by courtesy and kindness towards them, and that in a special manner, being affectioned toward them with a brotherly love and kindness. No brethren in nature should show more kindness one to another, then Christians should, Eph. 4. 33. Rom. 12. 10.

Secondly, by receiving and entertaining them: we must receive one another, and be harborous one to another; and this with entireness of affection: Negatively, it must be without grudging, 1. Pet. 4. 9. Affirmatively, we must receive one another, as Christ received us into glory, that is: First, without respect of desert; We have done nothing to deserve heaven; yet Christ hath received us to glory: so, though the godly have not pleased us any way greatly, yet because they are the children of God, we should make much of them, and entertain them gladly. Secondly, not thinking anything too dear for them: Christ hath not envied us the very glory of heaven, and therefore what can we do to the brethren, that should answer the example of Christ? Rom. 15. 7.

Thirdly, by bearing their burdens; for so we should fulfill the Law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2. There are two sorts of burdens press the godly: One inward, such as are temptations, and their own corruptions; the other outward, such as are afflictions of all sorts: Now in both these, this rule holds; for when we see a godly Christian mourn and lament his distress in respect of his infirmities or temptations, we must bear his burden, not by soothing him in his sin, as if it were no sin, but by laying his grief to our own hearts, and striving to comfort him with the promises of God. This is not to make ourselves guilty of their sins, or to bear with their sins, but to help them out of their grief by consolation, out of their sin by direction. Note, that this is charged upon us, when sin is a burden to them, not before; for till then we are rather to reprove them, or admonish them: But then we are to take notice of this Rule, when they confess their sins, and are weary of them, and sorry for them: And thus also in their outward burdens we must bear them by comforting them, and advising them, and helping them, and showing our affection to them, as if it were our own case, so far as we have a calling, and power to help them.

Fourthly, by considering one another, to provoke unto love, and good works, Heb 10. 24. Note the duty and the manner how it is to be done: The duty is, to stir up others all we can to the increase of love and abundance of all good works: the manner is shown two ways;

First, we must provoke them to it, both by example, and by exhortation, and all good ways, that might fire in them the desire of well-doing. Secondly, we must consider one another, we must study the estates of others, their wants, impediments, means, gifts, callings, &c. and accordingly apply our selves for the best advantage to help them forward. It is not enough to do it occasionally, but we must meditate of it, and cast about, how, where, and when we must yield this help, and encouragement, and furtherance.

Fifthly, by doing whatsoever we do for the godly, heartily, and with all faithfulness, as if it were for ourselves, or our own brethren, or kindred in nature, not being slothful in service; or such as disappoint the trust reposed in us: we should do all things we undertake for them, with all fidelity and care, 3. John. 5. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8, 11. Yea, we should care for their good and profit, as we would care for the good of the members of our own body: for such are they to us in the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, as the former place to the Romans showeth.

Lastly, we should show our love to the godly, by employing the gifts of our mind, as may be best for their good: As every man hath received the gift, he must so minister the same, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God. There are diversity of gifts in the godly, as knowledge, utterance, prayer, and the like. Now these are given to profit withal, 1. Pet. 4. 10. 1. Cor. 12. As for example, The lips of the wise must disperse knowledge, Pro. 15. 7. So when Christians meet together, as any have received a Doctrine, or a Psalm, or an Interpretation: so must he minister it for the profit of others, 1. Cor. 14. 26. and so must we help one another by prayer, either absent, or present, 2. Cor. 1. 11.

CHAPTER XXVI.

How we should preserve our love to the godly.

Thus of the Rules that concern the manifestation of our love to the godly: Now there are further diverse things to be observed for the preservation of our love to them: and these may be cast into two heads: for, they are either such things as we must do; or, such things as we must avoid.

The things that we must do to preserve love are these.

First, we must strive to be like minded in matters of opinion; many discords or abatements of affection grow among Christians for their differences of opinion in diverse things. It is true, that difference of Judgment should not cause difference in affection: If we cannot be of one mind, yet we should be of one heart; yet we see the contrary, and therefore every Christian should make conscience of it, to be so wary and so humble in his opinions, especially in things doubtful, or not so necessary, as to take heed of admitting, who might show dissent from the godly; or if he must needs dissent, yet to be very wary how he discover it to the vexation, or entanglement of others. Now because this is very hard to persuade Christians unto, mark how vehemently the Apostle speaks of it, Rom. 15. 5, 6. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded, that ye may with one mouth and one mind glorify God. We must learn of the Apostle to pray fervently for this, that our natures, and the natures of others, with whom we converse, may be fitted hereunto: and 1. Cor. 1. 10. the Apostle adjures them by the name of Jesus: I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. And in the Epistle to the Philippians cha. 2. ver. 1, 2, 3. He urgeth them with strange vehemency to import the necessity of this duty: If, saith he, there be any consolation in Christ, or any fellowship of the Spirit, or any bowels of mercy, be like minded, having the same love, being of one mind. And certainly, this earnestness in requiring this duty, imports, that some perverse

Christians will smoke one day, for their presumption and waywardness, and pride of opinions.

2. We must follow the things, which may make for outward peace; and to this end we must labor to show all meekness in our carriage, and longsuffering in for-bearing one another, and forgiving one another, Ephes. 4. 2, 3, 4.

3. We must strive to heat our affections to such a degree, as that it may be able to cover the infirmities of others: He must get a covering love, that will live constantly in the love of the godly: A love, that will cover a multitude of faults, 1. Pet. 4. 8. Prov. 10. 12.

4. We must confess our faults one to another, I am. 5. 16. It doth exceedingly preserve love, if men, when they have offended, or wronged others, would quickly, and easily, and heartily acknowledge their offenses: Nor doth this rule hold in case of trespass only, but when we have not wronged others, yet discreetly to complain of the corruption of nature that cleaves to us, and the infirmities which daily trouble us: This doth work not only compassion, but great increase of affection in others towards us: For acknowledgement prevents their secret loathing of us for such frailties, if they should discover them. And besides, it makes them the willing to give us leave to reprove their faults, when they see we are as willing to reprove our own; Besides the ease it brings to our own hearts many times to make our moan to others, when our consciences are troubled.

CHAPTER XXVII.

What we must avoid, that our love may be preserved.

Thus of what we must do to preserve love; Now further, that love may be preserved amongst the godly, these things following are to be

avoided.

First, Suites in Law; A Christian must have many considerations of his cause, before it can be lawful for him to go to law with his brother; These kinds of contentions are most unnatural amongst Christians, and prove not only scandalous in respect of others, but extremely grievous and poisonous to themselves, 1. Cor. 6. 1, 4.

Secondly, Dissimulation: our love must be without feigning, in deed, and in truth, not in show, or in words, Rom. 12. 9. 1. John 3. 18.

Thirdly, Conceitedness. This is a vice, that extremely vexeth others, and alienateth affection: we must not be wise in ourselves, but rather in lowliness of mind esteem another better than ourselves, and show it both by making our selves equal to them of the lower sort, and by going before others in giving Honor and Praise, Rom. 12. 10, 16., Phil 2. 4., Pro. 12. 15.

Fourthly, rejoicing in iniquity. Our love must be holy and pure, if we would have it preserved. It must have nothing in it, that is unseemly, nor must it be an affection, that will take pleasure in the vices, or faults of those, with whom we converse, 1. Cor. 13. 5, 6.

Fifthly, the minding of our own things: we must not study for ourselves, and our own ends only in conversing, 1. Cor 13. 5. The meaning is not, that we should leave our callings, and our houses, to spend the greatest part of our time in our neighbors houses, but he prohibits, First, Worldliness, and excessive cares about our business, and the things of this life, which hinders needful society with the godly: and secondly, he forbids self-love in conversing, when men in all things aim at their own profit, or pleasure, or credit, and do not as well seek the good of others: we may mind our own things, but not only.

6. Sixthly, Fickleness and Unconstancie: we must look to it, that brotherly love continue, Heb. 13. 1. and to this end we must look to the levity of our own natures, and strive to make good, by

continuance, the affection we have conceived and professed to others. Some are of such unconstant dispositions, that they will love vehemently for a fit, and suddenly fall off without reason, but not without singular shame, and blemishing of their reputations. For such tempers are hardly fit for any society. Now this must be repented of, and reformed.

Seventhly, we must take heed of vain-glory, and an over-eager desire of credit and estimation above others. For this is the cause of much unrest in our own hearts, and of much interruption in brotherly love. And why wouldest thou be so highly esteemed of? Thou considerest not the hard task thou layest upon thy self, to be ever careful to answer that great praise, or estimation thou desirest: Nor markest thou, how thereby thou art made to offend against thy brother: by envying him, by backbiting; or other ways of provocation, nor yet how little this commends thee to God, Gal. 5. 26.

Eighthly, take heed of judging thy brethren, not but that thou mayest say, that sin is sin, but look to thyself in two things:

First, that thou censure not thy brother about things indifferent, or doubtful: such as ceremonies were and are. This is flatly forbidden, Rom. 14. 3, 13.

Secondly, that thy suspicions transport thee not to condemn thy brother for hidden things, the things of darkness and counsels of the heart: till thou be sure of the fault, or offense, thou mayest not judge, or censure, 2. Cor. 4. 5.

Ninthly, if there be any occasion of grievance that love may be renewed, or preserved, look to two things:

First, that thou render not reviling for reviling, 1. Pet. 3. 9.

Secondly, that thou grudge not against thy brother, or by whispering deprave his actions, or backbiting, or complain against him to his

disgrace in things, where the right is not apparently discovered, I am.
5. 9.

Lastly, if thou wouldest preserve thyself in the love of the godly, then thou must take heed of forsaking the assembling together of the Saints: Thou must preserve all ways of exercising the Communion of Saints, and hold fellowship with them in God's House, and in your own dwelling. Prophaneness must not draw thee from the Temple, nor worldliness from society, and loving, and profitable conversation with thy godly friends and acquaintance, Heb. 10. 25.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

How we must carry ourselves towards such as are fallen.

Hitherto of such rules of conversation, as direct us in our carriage toward the godly considered in general. Now there are other rules, which concern only some of the godly: Namely:

1. Such as are fallen.
2. Such as are weak.
3. Such as are strong.
4. Such as are especially knit unto us in friendship.

For the first, those that are fallen, are either fallen from God, or fallen from thee. Such as are fallen from God, are either fallen grossly, and of habit, or by infirmity, and suddenly.

Those, that are fallen grossly, are either guilty of foul vices, or else of extreme omissions, such as that, which the Apostle instanceth in of Idleness, and the general neglect of their callings.

Now towards both these thou must be thus ordered:

First, warn them in the beginning, and reprove them sharply, 1. Thes. 5. 14.

Secondly, if they mend not, avoid them, withdraw thyself from them, converse not familiarly with them, let them not be the companions of thy life, 1. Cor. 5. 11. 2. Thes. 3. 6, 14.

Thirdly, if they repent, forgive them, and comfort-them, lest they be swallowed up of grief, 2. Cor. 7. 2, 8.

Now if they be fallen by infirmity, either they are likely to offend again, or not. If they be likely to fall further, save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jude 23. but if not, then restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, comfort him, deal gently with him, Gal. 6. 1.

This of thy carriage to such as are fallen from God.

As for those, that are fallen from thee, by trespassing against thee, thou must observe these rules of carriage towards them.

First, in slighter wrongs do all things without reasonings, or murmurings: either speak not of it, or so, as thou show no repining, or vexation about it, Phil. 2. 14. Secondly, in great wrongs, thou must do two things:

First, observe the method of our Savior Christ: when the trespass is secret, go and tell him of it between thee and him: If he mend not, then take two or three other discreet godly persons with thee, and tell him of it again: if he yet mend not, then divulge it, and acquaint the Church with it: Either seek a public sentence upon him from

authority, or acquaint the godly generally with it: and if these courses will not amend him, then abandon his society, as if he were a Heathen, or a Publican, Matthew 18. 15.

Secondly, if by any of these courses he repent, forgive him, yea, and that as often as he saith, it repenteth him, if he should do thee many injuries, Luke 17. 3, 4.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How we must carry ourselves: towards the weak Christian, &c.

Thus of thy carriage toward them that are fallen.

Towards weak Christians we must be thus ordered:

First, we must take heed, that we entangle them not with, doubtful disputations in matters of ceremonies, or things indifferent, Rom. 14. 1.

Secondly, we must get the skill to bear with their weaknesses, & mere frailties, Rom. 15. 1.

Thirdly, we must be wonderful careful, that we do not offend them, or cast any stumbling blocks in their way, Math. 18. 1. Cor. 10. 32.

Fourthly, we must encourage them, and comfort them, and support them all we can, 1. Thes. 5. 14.

Fifthly, in things indifferent, we must not think it much to cross ourselves to please them, and to suffer a little bondage in the restraint of our liberty, rather than vex them; especially for the

furtherance of their souls in the means of their salvation, we should become all things to all men, Gal. 5. 13. 1. Cor. 9. 20, 21, 22.

3. Towards strong Christians we must be thus ordered:

1. First, we must acknowledge such, 1. Cor. 16. 18.

2. We should set them and their practice before us, as patterns, & examples of imitation, 1. Cor. 5. 17. Phil. 3. 17.

3. We should submit ourselves to such, to let them advise us, & admonish us, and with all should submit our judgments in things doubtful to theirs, 1. Cor. 16. 16. 1. Pet. 5. 5.

4. Towards thy friend thou must be thus ordered.

1. Never forsake him, Prov. 27. 10.

2. Give him hearty counsel, Prov. 27. 9.

3. Be friendly to him, Prov. 28. vlt.

4. Communicate thy secrets to him, John 15. 15.

5. Love him with a special love.

1. As thine own soul, Deut. 13. 6.

2. Let thy love be at all times, even in adversity, Prov. 17. 17.

3. It must be a sincere love, that looketh not for gifts, or rewards, Pro. 19. 6.

4. It must be such a love, as will reach to his posterity also, if need be,
2. Chro. 20. 7

CHAPTER XXX.

Rules that concern ourselves: and so first in our general calling.

Hitherto of the rules of order in respect of God, or our neighbors.
Now follow the rules that concern ourselves:

And these are of two sorts. For they are either such, as order us at all times, or such as order us in the times of affliction.

The first sort concern either our general, or particular calling.

The rules that concern our general calling, as in this place they are to be considered of, concern either: 1. our Faith: 2. or our repentance: 3. or our hope.

1. The rules, that concern our Faith (supposing the Christian to be informed in the things contained in the former Treatises) are only these two:

First, thou must be expert in the Catalogue of promises, that concern infirmities, mentioned in the third Treatise. For those will preserve thy faith in God's favor, against the daily experience of frailty, and infirmity in thyself. For thou mayest by them see, that thou hast no reason to doubt of the continuance of God's love to thee only, because of thy many weaknesses. For in those promises, he hath and doth declare, how graciously he is inclined to his servants, and passeth by their frailty, and accepteth their desires and endeavors, &c. This rule will prove a main support of the contentment of thy life: and therefore let not Satan make thee either despise, or neglect it.

Secondly, thou shalt do well to establish thy judgment particularly in the doctrine of the principles expressed in the fifth Treatise; and by sound learning of them settle thyself, so as thou be no more carried about with the wind of any contrary doctrine: It should be the labor & care of all good Christians to keep the pattern of wholesome words, 2. Tim. 3. 13.

Concerning thy repentance, as now it is to be urged upon thee; after thy assurance one rule is of singular use, and that concerns the Catalogue of present sins: By the directions in the first Treatise, I suppose thou hast delivered thyself from the body of sins, so as the most of those evils mentioned in thy first and great Catalogue, are shaken off, never to be committed again, and so thou hast no more to do about them, but give God thanks for thy deliverance from them through Jesus Christ: Now because after thy first repentance, there will remain some corruptions, which as yet are not rooted out; thy course for thy whole life, for these remainders of sin, would be this: Make thee a Catalogue of thy present sins, even of such evils as thou findest thyself yet daily prone unto. Examine thyself seriously to this end: it may be thou wilt find 6. or 8. or 10. or more, or fewer evils, which yet hang upon thy nature and life: Thy course for the use of this Catalogue may be this: I suppose thou art instructed so far, as to know the profit of daily calling upon God: Now whereas in prayer thou dost; or oughts' to make confession of thy sins, instead of a more general confession, use still thy Catalogue, that is, labor every day to judge thyself distinctly for those sins that do presently annoy thee: Hold on this course constantly; till thou have gotten power against all, or any of them, and as thou findest virtue against any of them, so alter thy Catalogue, giving thanks for the sins thou gettest head against, and putting them out of thy Catalogue. The pains is little, it is once done for a long time, and thy memory will easily carry thy special present faults: Besides, this distinct daily remembrance of thy present sins, will make thee more watchful against those sins; & thou mayest once a year, or once a quarter, or before every Communion, examine thyself anew, and mend thy Catalogue, by putting in any corruption, which thou discoverest then, or at any

time, to arise anew in thee, and putting out such evils, as by prayer thou hast gotten victory against: Thus mayest thou see the state of thy soul distinctly all the days of thy life, discerning when thou goest forward or backward: Besides, this course of daily judging thyself, keeps thee out of the danger of any wrath from God.

Concerning thy hope, there are four things for thee to do.

First, pray constantly and earnestly, for the knowledge of the great glory is provided for thee: Thou must form the admiration of heaven in thee, by prayer: for naturally it is not in us, Ephes. 1. 18, &c.

Secondly, thou must use all diligence to perfect thy assurance of heaven, when thou diest, Heb. 6. 12. 1. Pet. 1. 13.

Thirdly, thou must strive to accustom thy thoughts to the daily contemplation of heaven, that thy conversation may be in heaven, Phil. 3. 20,

Fourthly, thou must strive to direct thy heart, and enable thyself to the expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ; thou must labor for that skill distinctly, to be able to wait for the coming of Jesus Christ, and to show that thou lovest his appearing, 1. Thes. 1. 10. & 2. Thess. 3. 5., Gal. 5. 5, 2. Tim. 4. 8.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Rules that order us in our particular Calling.

Thus of the Rules that concern thy General Calling: in thy Particular Calling there are seven things to be avoided.

The first is slothfulness, and thou art guilty of this sin, both when thou dost not the labors of thy calling, and when thou observest not

the seasons, and opportunities of thy Calling, Prov. 10. 4, 5. And that thou mayest be free from this sin, thou must avoid together with it the occasions of it: And so thou must avoid 1. The love of sleep, Pro. 20. 13. 2. Good fellowship, & haunting of Ale-houses, and Taverns, and keeping company with dissolute persons, Prov. 21. 17. 3. Wandering from thine own house, even that unnecessary going from house to house, though it be not to places of ill fame. Fourthly, thou must take heed of pertinacious entertainment of doubts and objections about thy Calling, thou shouldst be afraid of excuses for idleness, especially to be so self-willed, as to be glad of anything may seem to patronize thy slothfulness, Prov. 20. 4. & 15. 19. & 26. 16. And therefore to conclude this Rule, when thou art about thy calling, what thou dost, do with all thy power, Eccles. 9. 10. and rest not in words or prattling: He is not diligent, that brags much of what work he can or will do, but he that doth it indeed, Prov. 14. 23.

The second sin to be avoided in thy particular calling, is Unfaithfulness, Prov. 20. 6. and so thou must take heed of breach of thy promise in thy dealings with men, Psal. 15. 6. and also thou must take heed of all deceitful courses, all ways of fraud and cozenage. It is a hateful thing in men, when they are such as cannot be trusted, either because they make not conscience of keeping their words, or because they will use so much cunning and deceit, and dissimulation, & lying in their dealings.

The third sin to be avoided, is Praecipitation, hastiness, and unadvised rashness arising out of the levity of men's minds, or their willfulness. Providence and wise Diligence is wonderful requisite unto a right ordering of ourselves in our Callings, Pro. 21. 5.

The fourth sin to be avoided, is Passion or perturbation; and that hath in it both uncheerfulness and unquietness: uncheer. fullness, when men are not content with their Callings, or Gifts, or Estates, 1. Cor. 7. 17. unquietness, when men are froward, & carry themselves peevishly, or cholericly with those that are about them. This sin of frowardness is vehemently censured & condemned in Scripture,

Prov. 11. 29. Psal. 37. 8. Pro. 16. 32. & 19. 11. & 25. 28. whereas God requires a quiet, contented, and merry heart, Pro. 17. 22. Eccles. 9. 7, 8.

The fifth thing to be avoided and shunned, is the Temptations of thy Calling; every Calling in the world is assaulted with certain temptations, and they are usually of two sorts; For first in all Callings there are certain unlawful courses held for gain by wicked men, which we call the sins of such a Calling. These unjust courses thou must learn to avoid, and abhor, and so exercise thy Calling, as thou shun those sinful courses used by wicked men in that Calling: secondly, every Calling is assaulted with crosses, & afflictions: Now in these afflictions the devil is wont to tender ill counsel, to persuade to sin, or the use of unlawful means, or other sins of distrust in God: All these thou must avoid.

Sixthly, thou must take heed of Worldliness, or setting thy heart upon these earthly things thou art to deal with in thy Calling: Thou must ever be ready to confess, and show it by thy practice, that thou accountest thyself to be but a stranger and Pilgrim in this world, Heb. 11. 13. and if riches increase, thou must look to it, that thou set not thy heart upon them, Psal. 62. 10. Thou must use the world, but not love the world, 1. John. 2. 15. Thou mayest and oughtest to be careful to do the duties of thy Calling; but thou must in nothing be careful about the success, but submit thyself in all things to God, Math. 6. 1. Cor. 7. 32. Thou must behave thyself like a weaned child, Psal. 131. 1, 2. Take heed of eating too much honey, Prov. 25. 16, 17. & 27. 1, 2.

The seventh, and last thing thou must avoid, is profaneness, which is to use the works of thy Calling without exercising thyself in the Word of God, and daily prayer for God's blessing upon thy labors, and the creatures thou art to use, Psal. 90. 1. Tim. 4. 3, 4. Gen. 24. 11, 12, 26, 27.

CHAPTER XXXII.

How we should carry ourselves in the time of affliction.

Thus of the Rules of carriage which concern thyself at all times: Now follow the Rules that show thee how to behave thyself in the time of affliction and adversity. When thou art in affliction, thou must consider what thou must avoid, and what thou must do.

Thou must avoid eight things.

First, Dissembling: Make not thyself poor when thou art rich; nor sick when thou art well, Prov. 13. 7.

Secondly, Shame; Be not ashamed of that condition God brings thee into: bear thy crosses with spiritual magnanimity, account not thyself dishonored by God's hand, who doth all for the best, 1. Pet. 4. 16.

Thirdly, Impatience: grieve not at God's works: sorrow not after the world: Fret not at God or man; Refuse not God's chastening, but with patience bear what is laid upon thee: It is the Lord, let him do whatsoever he will with thee, Prov. 3. 11.

Fourthly, Fainting, or discouragement of heart: Live by faith; call not God's love into question: keep thee in the good way, Prov. 24. 10.

Fifthly, Trust upon carnal friends; Rely not upon-man, but upon God: Trust not in the arm of flesh, Prov. 27. 10.

Sixthly, too much Carefulness for the means how to get out of affliction: Commit thy way to God, and put thy trust in him; use all lawful means, but distress not thy heart with bootless cares: Cast thy care upon God, for he careth for thee, phil. 4. 6. I am. 4. 10.

Seventhly, Sudden fears; Be not so amazed with the first tidings, or beginnings of any affliction, discover not such want of faith, as to be guilty of those violent passions of fear; God's love is unchangeable: and though heaven and earth should go together, yet God will be with thee; He will not leave thee, nor forsake thee, Prov. 3. 25.

Eighthly & lastly, Carelessness of thy ways; be not secure in sinning, but let thy crosses melt off some of thy dross, & draw thee near to God: Go not on boldly to sin without regard; if the Lord have any quarrel against thee, humble thyself and depart from iniquity, Prov. 14. 16.

The things then thou must do on the contrary side, are these: When thou art in affliction, thou must do these things:

First, thou must pray, and call upon the name of the Lord; as these express Scriptures require, I am. 5. 13. Psal. 50. 15. 1. Cor. 4. 12, 13.

Secondly, thou must bear thy cross with patience, and contentation, I am. 1. 4. 1. Pet. 3. 15. Isaiah 5. Phil. 4. 6. 2. Cor. 6. 8. Prov. 12. 9.

Thirdly, thou must labor for wisdom to know how to carry thyself discreetly, and to use all good means for thy deliverance, I am. 1. 5.

Fourthly, thou must be sure to show thy trust in God, and cast thy burden on the Lord, I am. 5. 7, 8. Nahum. 1. 7. Psal. 27. vlt. & 37. 7. & 55. 22.

Fifthly, thou must show thy obedience to God; and that thou dost,

1. If thou submit thy self to God's will, Heb. 5. 8.

2. If thou judge thyself, & acknowledge thy sins to God, Hosh. 5. vlt. Job 36. 8.

3. If thou be constant in the good ways of godliness, Psal. 37. 34.

4. If thou learn more righteousness, & art made by thy crosses to do holy duties with better affections, Isaiah 26. 11.

FINIS.

MONERGISM BOOKS

Rules of a Holy Life, by Nicholas Byfield. Copyright © 2023

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions. May 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068