

A TREATISE OF LOVE



JOHN ROGERS



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by John Rogers

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London, Printed by H. Lownes and R. Young, for N. Newbery, at the sign of the Star in Popes head Alley. 1629.

God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him,

1 John 4. 16.

This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye love one another,

1 John 3. 11.

And this Commandment have we of him, that he that loveth God, should love his Brother also,

1 John 4. 21.

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TO MY LOVING NEIGHBORS OF DEDHAM.

Loving and good Neighbors, the doctrine of Faith being gone forth into the World, I thought it not amiss that the Daughter should attend upon her Mother: and therefore to put forth a Treatise of Love, to follow after Faith, as they were both handled in your hearing

not very many years since. Now I desire that these things may live and speak unto you, when I shall be taken from you: In which two if you shall profit, you cannot but do well, God shall be much honored, and I shall have my great desire. Now this of Love, I dedicate unto you, that as you have learned in some measure to love one another. so that you do it still, and increase more and more. I found you, by the care & diligence of my worthy Predecessor, in a peaceable state. Thus, through God's mercy, have you continued without rents or divisions, sidings or part taking, in peace and unity these three and twenty years of my abode with you: wherein both the head and body of the Congregation looking one way, much ill hath been hindered, and much good done and maintained. And I hope so to leave you: yea, my hearts desire is, that you may live in peace, and godly love when I am gone, that as you have done, so you may draw altogether as one man. So shall nothing be too hard for you, nor no force of wickedness be able to prevail against you; As a bound Fagot cannot be broken, though the band loosed and sticks shattered asunder, becomes weak. As few or no suits of Law have been found amongst you, but differences either between yourselves agreed, or by indifferent Neighbors compounded; so do still in the name of God. And as I have ever found you forward in good sort to any deed of Charity, wherein you have been moved, besides the good provision made for your own poor: so I beseech you to continue, that you may show forth the fruit of the Ministry of the Word so long, so long continued among you; and other towns seeing your well-doing and good order, may be provoked by your example, and so God may have much honor by you, and he take pleasure to dwell among you, and be the God of your Posterity after you, from one generation to another. Which I beseech him to grant for his mercies and his Christ his sake.

And you that be young now (which God be thanked give good hope) if God let you live to stand up in your Predecessors rooms, see that

you labor to quit yourselves as well as they have done; and better will be required, as having more light every day, & their example to make use of. In which hope I take my leave, and commend you all heartily to the grace of God, remaining till death

Yours in what service of Love I can, JOHN ROGERS.

A TREATISE OF LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning Love

Having finished the Doctrine of Faith, let me add a few things concerning Love, which were delivered from the same Text, 1 John 3. 23. in my ordinary course one after another. This is the commandment of God, that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another. Which, seeing the holy Ghost hath joined together, as two necessary & inseparable companions; and that the duty of Love is of so necessary use in the course of our lives, I thought good to add some things hereof to the former Treatise. The holy Ghost having had occasion in Verse 22. of that Chapter, to speak of the keepers of God's commandments, who are the parties whose prayers God will hear; now in this Verse, lest any should doubt and ask the question, But what be those commandments? he therefore names them, and brings them all to these two heads; Faith in Jesus Christ, and Love to our brethren: and these he exhorts unto, to believe in Christ Jesus, and to love one another.

Now, in that the Apostle hath reduced to two heads all the commandments of God and our duties, he hath mercifully provided for our weakness, and prevented those carnal excuses whereby most men cloak their ignorance and careless neglect of heavenly things: Oh, they be so dull to conceive, and the Scriptures so dark, and they have such ill memories, and the Scripture so large, as they can make

no work of them; which is Adam-like, to turn the fault from themselves upon God. As if they should say, If God had given us shorter and plainer Scripture, and better wits and memories, we would have done great matters. But this is but the wickedness and falsehood of their hearts: for they can find wit and memory enough for the world, their profits, pleasures, or lusts, and what they have a mind to; and why should they not serve them for better things, if they would bend themselves thereto?

And God hath mercifully left us so much of his Word, as is necessary to salvation, clear and plain to every humble & teachable heart, that seeks help of God by prayer, and is willing to be ruled thereby. Yea, he hath gathered the whole into short sums; As the whole Law and will of God, so large and scattered in the Scriptures, is referred to ten words, Deut. 10. 4. which are the ten commandments, delivered by God, Exod. 20. and these ten referred to two, Matth. 22. 40. and these two to one, Galat. 5. 14.

So our whole direction concerning Prayer, is in that short plat-form called the Lord's-prayer. So hath the Church of God since, out of the Apostles writings, gathered all the things we are to believe unto eternal life, into twelve Articles. So hath God provided in this lightsome, (and in that respect) blessed age of ours, abundance of good Books of the points and principles of our Religion, some more large, some more brief; Catechisms for everybody's turn, that even the dullest, and of worst memory, may come to the knowledge of God, themselves, and their duties, and the things of salvation, if they be not shamefully careless. So that the ignorance of the people of this Land (which yet is fearfully gross, and more than any think for, but they that try it) is affected and willful; and therefore their condemnation will be (as more fearful than of other Nations, so) most just and inexcusable. It's lamentable to see how the precious

time is spent with many, in sinful courses and exercises; with most, in eager pursuit of the world, the profits, honors, and pleasures thereof, as if they were the necessary things, and end of our being here; when the means of the knowledge of God, and the things that concern our own happiness lie woefully neglected. Hath God after the long night of superstition, ignorance, and idolatry, that our Forefathers lay under, caused the day to arise, & the sun of Righteousness to shine so long upon us, and shall we yet love darkness and not light, be ignorant, and grope at noon day? Hath God set us up with those precious means of grace and life, and given us our full scope in them, when he hath denied them to Nations twenty times as great as ourselves, and shall we make sleight of them? Oh how many under the tyranny of Antichrist, that would skip at the crumbs that fall from our tables, would adventure their lives for the scraps and leavings of such things as we cast under our feet? They would and cannot; we may and will not: may we not justly fear, lest God ere long snatch his Word from us, and bestow it upon them, that will make better use of it?

The Lord awaken the people of this Land, to know the day of their Visitation, and to understand the things that belong to their peace, before the decree come forth, and it be too late.

Get knowledge and understanding, search the Scriptures, make use of such good helps as the time affords plentifully. Take our time: Say not, I am dull, I have a bad memory. God hath taken away these pretenses: therefore they will not go for payment at that day.

Next, observe, that Faith and Love are joined together as two inseparable companions: wheresoever one is, there is the other also, and miss one miss both. He that hath Faith, must needs have Love; for Faith worketh by Love, Gal. 5. Faith assuring us of God's love, to

us, makes us love God again, and our neighbor for his sake, at his commandment, and for his Image that is in him.

And wheresoever true Love is, there certainly Faith hath gone before; these can be no more severed than sun and light, good tree and fruit. As for that, 1 Cor. 13. If I had all Faith, and have no Love, I am a sounding brass, and tinkling cymbal: it's to be understood of the greatest measure of the Faith of miracles, which indeed might be severed from that of Love, as in Judas; not meant of justifying Faith, of which before in the Treatise of Faith.

This may be comfortable to many humble souls, that unfeignedly love God (as appears by good signs) that love his Word, Ordinances, and their Neighbors; but Saints especially, and yet doubt whether they have any Faith or no: they may as well doubt whether the sun be risen, when they see the beams thereof shine in at their window. It's impossible to have Love, till we have Faith wrought in us, which is the mother-grace; as impossible, as to have good fruit without a tree for it to grow upon.

2. This on the contrary, witnesseth fearfully against the people of England, and the most part everywhere, that there is no Faith among them, seeing Love is so scarce and hard to be found. The manifold idle and malicious willful suites in Law, the many contentions, brawling's, railings, and fallings out for trifles, do show there is but a little love. So much oppression, cruelty, extortion, bribery, simony, such racking and rending, every man for himself, not caring who sink, so he swim; so much deceit in bargaining's and dealings, in buying's and selling's, as one knows scarce whom to believe, everyone spreads a net for his neighbor, to catch him if he can: such covetous pinching, neglect of giving where cause is, of free lending, by reason of usurious lending, and innumerable such courses as

these, do cry out with a loud voice, that Love is but rare. Such neglect of duty to others souls, so few regarding to admonish, reprove, exhort, comfort, when, and where there is need, few able, fewer willing: Besides, so little love to the Saints and true servants of God. All these bear witness strongly, that Love is wanting; and therefore, certainly, that there is no Faith: which where it is, cannot but show itself by true Love in the fruits thereof. Let men therefore, whosoever they be, keep silence concerning Faith, except they can prove it by their Love; which while they live in the quite contraries thereto, they can never do.

Next, whereas Faith and Love being joined together, yet Faith is set in the first place, note, that though in regard of time, they be wrought together in the soul, yet in order of nature, Faith goes first, uniting us to Christ, from whom are derived into us, Love, and all other graces.

First, this confutes that Popish assertion, That Love informeth Faith, or gives a being unto it; which cannot be, since Faith is before it. It declares and makes Faith manifest where it is, and proves the soundness and truth of it, but gives no form or being thereto.

2. This showeth, that where Faith is not, there it's impossible Love should be; therefore an unbelieving man or woman, neither doth, nor can love God or their Neighbor: which is a fearful thing to be spoken, and yet most true: Therefore, Lord, how should it awaken such (which are the greatest part) to labor earnestly after this grace of Faith! get this and get all; and so on the contrary.

3. Lastly, let none of those that are about the work of Faith, hold off, and say, If I could love God as I would, and my Neighbor as I should, then I could believe: Nay, rather know, that you must first believe, and then you shall be able to love God and your Neighbor.

Object. But here some may object, that whereas the Apostle hath brought all our duties to these two, Faith in Christ, and Love to our Neighbor; that this is defective, for as much as the Love of God, which is the chief of all, is left out.

Answ. We are to know, that it's not left out, but necessarily included in the love of our neighbor, from whence that doth proceed: for as he that loves God, cannot but love his neighbor, so no man can love his neighbor truly, in whom the love of God is not wrought, for whose Image, and at whose commandment he loveth him, 1 John. 5. 2.

CHAPTER 2.

Of the Love of God.

Of which love of God, seeing both it's the principal, and that whereby we may know whether the love of our neighbor be in us, yea or no, which is the point we mainly intend in this Treatise; I will therefore speak a little of the same. The love of God is a most precious and honorable esteeming and affecting of him, with a chief delight in him above all things. God is worthy to be loved unmeasurably, because he is infinitely and unmeasurably holy, pure, perfect, and good in himself. Also because he hath been unmeasurably good to us, especially in giving his Son to the death for us. John 3. 16. So God loved, i.e., so unmeasurably and unutterably, &c. 1 John 4. 9, 10. & Ephes. 3. To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge: But that we cannot; therefore we must love him, as Deut. 6. 5. with all our heart, soul and might. But this we cannot neither, since the fall of

Adam; therefore we must love him with an upright heart, and this God will accept in Christ. We must love him simply and absolutely for himself, and all other things for him, in, and under him. We must not love him as we love other things, but above all other things in the world. Mat. 10. 37. He that loveth father or mother more, &c. Nay, Luke 14. 26. He that hates not father, &c. that is, when they would withdraw us from God and his Obedience: therefore Deut. 13. 6. are we bidden, if any, never so near and dear, should entice us to Idolatry, we should reveal him, that he may be put to death. If we love him not above all things, he is not our God.

And this we ought to do, first, because he is goodness itself, which is most worthy of all love, and wheresoever we see any part of this Image, it ought to draw our hearts unto it. Secondly, he hath created us after his own Image, redeemed us by his dear Son, preserved us always, and multiplied upon us, and daily reneweth innumerable mercies both for soul and body; and do not these (besides what he hath promised us hereafter) challenge all our best affections?

Thus have the worthy servants of God done in their several generations. The holy Martyrs, who have forsaken all for his love, and counted meanly of their lives for his Names sake: yea, chose rather to endure the uttermost torturing's, that cruel persecutors could inflict upon them, rather than do anything to his dishonor.

This condemneth all such as are so far from this love of God, as they are no better than haters of God: Oh, there be none so vile. Yes, we are all such by nature, till God work a change, Rom. 1. 30. and 8. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it's not subject to the will of God, nor indeed can be. Saint Paul, Rom. 5. Colos. 1. saith, we were enemies to God. 2 Chro. 19. 2. Wouldst thou love them that hate God: 1. Ahab a wicked Idolater, and such as he? so also in the

end of the Second Commandment, see if God call not Idolaters, and such as pretend great love to him, and are at great cost and pains with him, haters of him.

Such be all Atheists, Heretics, &c. Papists be Idolaters, and great haters of God, persecuting also his Truth & Saints with fire and sword. Among ourselves be many abominable blasphemers, contemners of God and all goodness: The better any person, thing, speech, action, or duty is, the more they hate it; and the worse anything, or any company is, the better it pleaseth them.

These be Satan's eldest sons, marching in the Fore-rank of the Devils Band, to whom (without rare Repentance) belongs nothing but a fearful expectation of vengeance, and violent fire to devour such adversaries, Heb. 10. 27.

It condemneth all such as love not God, which indeed are to be ranked with the former haters of God, save that they do it not in so high a degree. But most will say, they love God, or else it were pity of their lives, and they defy him, that shall say, they love not God: What, am I a dog? Thus, if great words would carry it, everybody would be lovers of God: but it's deeds must prove it, not words. And the Holy Ghost hath left us certain and infallible marks, to know the love of God by, by which if you will be tried, let us briefly hear some of them, and judge yourselves accordingly. They that love God, hate evil, Psalm 97. 10. They will keep God's commandments, John. 14. 21. 1 John 5. 3.

They that love God, would that all others did so, and draw as many to God as they can; as Philip did Nathanael, John 1. 41. Matthew the Publicans, Mat. 9. to our Savior Christ. Isaiah 2. 1. and rejoice to see any come home to God by Repentance, as the Angels of Heaven do.

They will grieve, when they see him wronged or dishonored; as Moses, when he threw down the Tables; and Phinehas, when he ran thorough Zimri and Cozbi. Lots righteous soul was vexed at the unclean conversation of the Sodomites.

They that love God, will love his Word, being holy and pure as himself, and containing his good will.

They love his faithful Ministers: he that receiveth you, receiveth me, Luke 10.

They will love God's Children and his Image, wheresoever they see it, 1 John 5. 1. Psalm 16. 3.

They will take pains in his service, as Jacob did night and day in Laban's, for the love he bare to Rachel: and be at cost, as David towards the building of the Temple; and Mary, with her box of precious ointment poured on our Savior Christ. Yea, and speedily he will go about what God calls him to; as Abraham that rose early to offer Isaac, and Hamor, who made speed to get the Shechemites to yield to the demands of Dinah's brethren, because he so dearly loved her.

They that love God, are willing and glad to meet him, or hear from him in the Ordinances of his Word, Prayer, Sacraments, as the wife desireth, and is glad to hear from her absent husband, and to send or receive tokens to him and from him.

They that love God greatly, are content to suffer for his Names sake; as Paul, that said, I am not ready to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the Name of Christ. And that worthy Martyr, that said, Shall I die but once for my Savior? I could find in my heart to die a hundred times for him.

Also they long for his last coming, for their full Redemption, and that they might be ever with the Lord, as 1 Thes. 4. 17. As the Church, Reu. 22. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Or else they long to be with him, in the meantime, as Paul, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.

Now, if these be the true and certain marks of the Love of God, and where these be wanting, or much more, where the contraries to these be found, there is no love of God; then must we necessarily conclude against the most part of people in all places, that there is little love of God abiding in them, as will appear, if we look over the particulars: which might strike terror into their hearts, if it were well considered.

For those whose hearts by these marks can bear witness on their sides, let them labor to increase more and more in this love of God, and see what privileges God hath promised and bequeathed unto them. Psal. 91. the three last Verses, Because he hath loved me, therefore will I deliver him, &c. He shall call upon me, and I will hear him, I will be with him in trouble, I will be with him, and glorify him: With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation. And John 14. 21. He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and show mine own self unto him. verse. 23. Yea, these are they, to whom God hath promised his heavenly Kingdom. James 1. 12. to them that love him.

Thirdly, it condemns those, that love anything more than they love God; as father, mother, wife, child, profit, pleasure, friend, yea, or life itself: which is no other than Idolatry, and to make that our God, which we love above God, and spiritual Adultery, as St. James calls it, James 4. 4. as a man that loves a harlot more than his own wife: yet what is more common than this? yea, the trade of it with the common sort, who for the sake of the things above named, care not

what duties they omit, or what sins they commit against God: who yet ought to be loved above all, and all things to be loved, in, and for him, and under him, and as may stand with our love to him, and not otherwise.

Yea, the servants of God, because their love is not perfect, suffer many things to come in between God and us, and steal our heart and affection in part from him, and that obedience that we owe unto him: which we ought to bewail deeply, and labor every day more and more, that his love may be greater in us, than to anything; nay, all things else that are in the world besides. And so much of the Love of God briefly, having taken it but by the way.

CHAPTER 3.

Of Love to our Neighbor: and first, what it is.

Now I come to handle the duty of Love to our Neighbor, as that which necessarily floweth from the Love of God. And of this, first, What it is: secondly, of the Notes it's known by: thirdly, of the Properties of true Love: and fourthly, of the persons that we ought to love.

1. Love is a sanctified affection of the heart, whereby whosoever is endued withal, endeavoreth to do all the good he can to all; but especially, to them that be nearest unto him.

1. It's an affection seated (as we say) in the heart, as all the other of hate, hope, fear, joy, grief, &c. as the understanding is in the head.

These are in themselves good, and not evil, being given to Adam in his creation, in whom they were all pure, well ordered, and in good tune, loving the good, and hating the contrary, and so in the rest. But ever since the Fall, they are utterly corrupted: the will and affections have not only lost all their purity, but the will is become most rebellious, and all the affections disordered, and turned the contrary way: As this of Love, is turned to the love of evil, to malice, revenge, and self-love.

2. I say it's a sanctified affection: for ere a man can love, he must be regenerate, & sanctified throughout; as in his understanding and will, so in his affections: which is, when a man is united to Christ by Faith, he is sanctified by the Spirit; that is, the old and cursed disposition that is in us by nature, is put away, and a new and contrary frame and disposition of soul, wherein we were at first created, is brought into us, the understanding enlightened, the will made pliant and frameable to the will of God, and so the affections purged and restored to their former integrity in some measure; as to hate the evil, so to love the good, to love God and our brethren for God's cause.

So that no unregenerate or unsanctified man, can love either God, himself, or anybody else. True Love proceeds from a pure heart, good conscience, & faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. 1. 5. from a soul purified by the spirit, 1 Pet. 1. 22. And Gal. 5. it's reckoned among the fruits of the spirit. And 2 Pet. 1. 7. its reckoned among other graces, Faith, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, &c. so that one is no more in us naturally, than the rest.

There be many things that the blind world call Love, which are not this grace that we speak of, nor come in any such account with God. That between the fornicator and his harlot, is no love but lust; as in

Amnon, which turned as soon into hatred. Between drunkards and thieves, is no love, but conspiracy: for Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth: that is, in that that is good.

Nor that natural love of parents to their children. This is in brute creatures: the Cow loves, nourisheth, and defendeth her Calf; the Goose and Gander tend and brood their young.

Nor that civil love that is between ordinary people in the world, that stands only in eating and drinking, prating and playing together, which they count such love and good fellowship, as who so speaks against, and calls for better spending of the time, is cried out upon, as an enemy to all love, and not to be suffered. But our Savior Christ, nor the Gospel, comes not to bring such friendship, but rather debate. Such as that, was among the Heathen, and is only carnal, whereas true love respecteth the soul, and that most of all; which is no whit seen, nor thought of among carnal men.

Unregenerate men cannot love their neighbors; for while they be kind to their bodies, and have no care of their souls, is this worthy to be called Love? It's as one's friend or child should have a hurt in the brain, and another in the heel, and he should carefully look to the heel, and let the brain putrefy.

Carnal Parents, that pamper their children's bodies, and prank them up brave, and lay for great portions for them, and suffer their souls to welter in sin, and die and perish for want of instruction, admonition, prayer, and holy example, is this to be called Love? what do they more than Turkish Parents?

The wicked Magistrate, that is very friendly to all the Country, and keeps a good house all the year, and yet suffers sin to reign, and houses of disorder to abound in his circuit, the Sabbaths to be

profaned, and, like Gallio, cares for none of those things, call you this Love?

The negligent Minister, that sets on the great Pot, and keeps good Hospitality among his neighbors, and yet suffers their souls to famish for want of breaking to them the Bread of life. The carnal neighbor, that to the body of his neighbor is very kind, but suffers sin to rest upon his soul, and rather nourisheth him therein, than rebuketh him thereof; this in the language of the holy Ghost, is hatred and no love, Levite. 19. 17.

And what hold is there of unsanctified men's love one to another? They may be very inward, and great friends now, and on the sudden, upon a small occasion, fall out, and become deadly enemies. They oft go arm in arm to the Ale-house or Tavern, embracing each other, and stab one another ere they come forth.

See a lively picture of this, Judges 9. in that sworn friendship that was between Abimelech, and the House of Shechem, who yet came shortly to hate each other so, as they never [relent,] till they had wrought each other's destruction. And no marvel; for even the Heathen could say, That true friendship was grounded only upon virtue.

Neither can unregenerate men (much less) love the children of God: For there is a natural enmity between the seed of the Woman, and the seed of the Serpent, which all are, till they be regenerate; nor can any man love grace in another, till he be sanctified, and gracious himself.

They may be convinced in conscience, that they be the good servants of God, and better than themselves, as Saul was of David, Herod of John the Baptist, Pilate of our Savior Christ, pronouncing him Just.

They may be restrained from hurting them, as Laban and Esau from hurting Jacob, one in his hot pursuit of him, the other in his meeting him with four hundred men. If a man's ways please God, he will make his enemies at peace with him, Proverbs 16.

As Daniel was preserved safe among the Lions, and the three Children took no hurt in the fire.

Nay, they may do them good, as Cyrus did the Jews, restoring them to their land and liberty, and furnishing them with all necessaries to the building the City and Temple of Jerusalem.

Ahasuerus also and Artaxerxes to Ezra and Nehemiah, and by them to the people of God. But they do it, as Caiaphas, that uttered that prophesy, not of himself, but as he was high Priest that year. So these are used of God to such purposes: As the Ravens that brought Elias bread and pottage in the morning, and again at even.

But love them they cannot, at least, not for their godliness sake. They may do a man outwardly some good, & tis not amiss to take it, yet it's not good to be too much beholding to them.

And what hold is there of their good will? If they cry Hosanna now, they may cry Crucify him by and by. If as Acts 14. 18, 19. they so highly esteem us, as to be ready to defy us, yet by and by, upon a lying report, they will be ready to stone us. As Herod revered John the Baptist, and yet at the persuasion of Herodias, cut off his head.

David saith, it was his familiar, that ate bread with him, and took counsel with him, that yet lift up his heel against him, Psal. 41. 9. They are gone, and hide their heads. If the multitude go the other way, or the times begin to turn anything dangerous, when they have

most need of them they are gone. Nay, no bond of benefits bestowed, no nor of nature itself, is strong enough to bind such a man sure to the child of God. Our Savior Christ made Judas his Disciple, an Apostle, of his own Family, Table, and Messe, made him his Purse-bearer, and yet how villainously did he betray him into the hands of his utterest enemies? Jehoiada preserved the life of Joash when all his brethren were slain, help him to the Kingdom, and was a guide to him as long as he lived with him; yet how ungratefully and wrongfully did he cause his good son Zechariah, a Prophet, to be put to death?

And for the bonds of nature never so near, our Savior Christ foretold that which experience hath proved often true, Matth. 10. 21. That the brother shall betray the brother, father the son, and children shall rise up against their parents, to get them put to death. There is no hold of any unregenerate man, but he may prove a persecutor; therefore what trust to be given to his love?

Use. This shows the miserable state of unregenerate men, that they can neither love God, themselves, nor anybody else, while they are in this case: what should such a man do in the world? One would think it should make him weary of himself. If he would consider, and believe it, so it would. Oh beg of God, by his blessed Word and holy Spirit, to work a mighty work of change in your hearts, and to sanctify you throughout, that from hence you may be able to love God, your own selves, and others in a right manner; till which time, you cannot so much as love your own wife and children, as you ought to do.

2. It teacheth also God's people, not to trust too much to such men and their love: live peaceably with them, use them kindly, accept kindness from them, but open not our selves too far to them, lean not

too much on them, lest they prove like Egypt, a broken reed, that will run into our hand, and they prove like a sliding foot and a broken tooth. For if they be pent, they will burst: They are like a Jade, that will draw while its going, but is not sure. If the time alter, there is no hold, but he may betray thee: As Pilate, who knew our Savior Christ to be innocent, and that all was wrongfully and of malice that was done against him, and he sought many ways to rid his hands of him, and to save his life, yet when they urged him, that he was not Caesar's friend, if he let him go, then he passed sentence of death against him.

Object. But some will say, I am not of your mind, I will trust my honest neighbor before these runners to Sermons, none will sooner deceive one than they. I know one that came from a Sermon, and went and hired his neighbor's house over his head.

Answ. I deny not but as ever there have been, so now be some, that make a show of godliness, and deny the power of it: and then the world is no wiser, than to judge and say so of all professors; which is a most fowl wrong, and a false thing. For there are to be found, that dare not deal unfaithfully, but say as Joseph, How should I do this wickedness, and sin against God? they have the Spirit of God within them, and the fear of God in their hearts to bridle them, which the carnal person hath not, nor anything that one may warrant will tie and hold him. And this even the men of the world know: for they will put the matters of greatest trust into their hands. I have known a very carnal Master, that having diverse ruffianly servants that he delighted in, and a couple of sober Christian men; and to these he committed his keys, and matters wherein greatest faithfulness was required, which yet he heartily affected not, but they were fit to serve his turn. So in matters of Arbitrement, they will put their case to such as be of best report for godliness in the Country, persuading

themselves, that they will deal uprightly and with a good conscience. And the truth is, he is not worthy the name of a Christian, and its pity of his life, that will not do better than any carnal man in the world.

It followeth in the description of love, whereby whosoever is endued therewith: for its not to be found in every bush, but its rare; and he that hath it, hath received it from the Father of lights, and it's a gift of God's Spirit. Look for it therefore from above.

Endevoureth to do, &c. So that howsoever love is in the heart, yet it lies not still, nor sits idle, but is working like the good housewife, Prov. 31. both by words and deeds, to soul and body: therefore that love, that is all within in the heart, and none in the hand and life, is a dead love, a carcass, like the dead Faith that St. James speaks of, that is without works, and like bad men's love to God, which is without obedience to his commandments.

Endevoureth to do, &c. Puts forth itself, and doth what it can, though not what it would, creeps where it cannot go, wisheth it could, grieves that it cannot, gives two mites, a cup of water, &c.

And indeed, what we do here is rather endeavor, than any great matter that wre attain to, especially at the first. And a true endeavor with increase, God accepts, Hos. 6. 3. 1 Cor. 28. 7.

It commands all the powers and abilities of the soul, to further the good of the Beloved, to whom it wisheth all good: therefore the eye sees, the tongue speaks, the foot walks for the good and benefit of the party beloved: Why Love will have it so. The memory is a faithful remembrancer, the mind plods and counsels, the affections pursue all purposes and occasions for his help, all other things neglected, Why Love will have it so. Nay, patience is enjoined to bear all the wrong that such one doth, compassion must pity all the wants that

such one hath, humility and modesty give way to anything that he requireth. Why Love will have it so. Love is like the great wheel of the clock, all are turned about when that stirs: it sets on work all the other graces in the soul to their several works.

[To do good.] So that love doth no hurt, its contrary to its nature; whatsoever hurt is done to souls, bodies, goods, names, Love may wash her hands of it, as none of her doing; but whatsoever good is done, that is of her.

[To do good.] Love contents not itself to do no evil, but labors to do good: the harmless, yet unfruitful fig-tree was accursed. Such only as have done good, will stand on the right hand at the last day.

[To all.] For though brotherly kindness be to the Saints, yet Love, 2 Pet. 1. 7. reacheth to all, near and far off, strangers, enemies, within, and without the Pale of the Church, Turks and Pagans, we must pray for them, & do them any good if they come in our way, as the Samaritan did to the Jew fallen among thieves, Luke 10.

[But especially to them that be nearest.] So God gives leave, nay commandment, that love begin at ourselves and ours, & so proceed. First, seek our own salvation, then others; our own bodily preservation from danger, then others. First, begin with our own family, 1 Tim. 5. 8. then to our kindred, 1 Tim. 5. 4. then to our own Town, then to strangers, as far as we can, and God requires no more.

If any therefore, having good gifts, resort to other folks houses to repeat Sermons, and never do any such duty among their own company (which I have heard of some) these are justly to be suspected of pride and hypocrisy.

They also, that in outward things prefer strangers before their own kindred, and kinsmen before children, do not well. To bestow upon Copes-mates that please them, or spend on lewd companions, or be surety for them or any other, to the hindrance or undoing of wife and family, is not Love, but folly and cruelty.

[Nearest also in the spiritual bond.] For we must especially love the household of Faith, Gal. 6. 10.

Quest. Whether should we love our natural or spiritual kindred best?

Answ. No doubt, the Saints before our natural kindred, that be but carnal, as our Savior Christ did, Who is my brother? He that doth the will of God, he is my brother, sister, and mother: yet we must help our kindred, whom God's Word bindeth us to provide for, as children and parents in their necessity, though not godly, before the Saints, if both be in equal need together, because these be most specially committed to our care. As a rich bad man, and a godly poor man be at our house together, I must love the godly best, and he must have the highest room in my heart, but yet I may and must set the ungodly rich man highest at my table, because God is the author of degrees among men, and so the author of order, not of confusion. So is it in the other case of my natural and spiritual kindred.

This is the virtue so oft commanded, and so highly commended in the holy Scriptures; commanded, Rom. 12. 10. & 13. 8. commended, Col. 3. 14. called the bond of perfectness. It binds up all the duties that we owe to our neighbor, which are many; holds them together, as the band doth the Fagot-sticks. It makes every duty easy; as where this is not, every duty is irksome, nothing comes well off hand. It ties societies together and families. It's the strength of Kingdoms, Cities, Corporations, and Villages: Oh how it keeps out evil, and sets up

good; by it small things have proved great, and for want of it, great things have come to nothing.

In a Town, when chief men hold together, what evil can stand against them? what good may they not effect? As on the contrary, when some would pull down houses of mis-rule, and others, to cross them, and out of spleen to them, shall strive to uphold them: when some would bring in the Ministry of the Word, and others oppose it, how must not the Devil needs have his throne in such a place?

In a Family, when husband and wife both draw the right way, God's worship goes up in that house, children and servants be well governed, the outward state prospers. But when they be divided and disagree, prayers be interrupted, no good can get forward: when one would go to the Sermon, the other is against it; one would govern the children, the other cockers them, nothing can do well: for the band is broken that should hold all together, and make all strong. Even servants that agree not, nay, horses if they draw not together, the work cannot get forward.

2. Its the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. 13. 8. Gal. 5. 13, 14.

3. It's a very comely thing in the eyes of God and men, only hateful to the Devil, to whose Kingdom this is a great enemy. It's very precious, and of most fragrant smell: Also is very fruitful in all good wheresoever it is, as appears, Psal. 133. the whole Psalm.

4. Love is the beneficial virtue; other virtues benefit our selves, but this doth good to others. Faith draws all from Christ to us. Love lays out all it hath for others good: as the Sun that shines forth his light to others, having it for that end, and not for itself. Faith is like the bung of the barrel, that takes in the beer or wine; Love is like the tap, that lets it forth, to the benefit of them that need. If a man be never so full

of knowledge and other good gifts, and have not this tap, others may starve for all that; and he himself is but a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. We are not borne for ourselves, nor our Talents given us to hide: but the perfection of all our gifts, spiritual and temporal, is the well employment of them for the good of others. The useful man, is the happy man, that keeps the best house, and most drink of his cup, especially in spiritual things.

5. This is the virtue that makes us most like to God; for he is love, and continually exercised in doing good to all, even to the ends of the world: yea, to his enemies, though specially to his children, to souls, to bodies, and every way, and he is not weary to do good, even to such unworthy ones as we are. So that when we be full of love; giving here, lending there, forgiving this wrong, and passing by that injury, requiting good for ill hath been done to us, when we be instructing, counseling, admonishing, comforting, praying for any that need, we are like unto God in our measure, and like to our Lord Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, Acts 10. 38. So must we walk in love, Ephes. 5. 2. Love must be our continual walk, and we must never be out of it: for then we are out of our way. All our ways and works towards our brethren, must be in love, and savor of love. All our life must breathe love: as when we come in heaven, it shall be the common air we shall breathe and draw in. So that what is love, but the life and soul of the world, and that, without which all things else are nothing? 1 Cor. 13.

Oh that I could so paint out the face of this lovely Virtue, and set it before you, that every soul that sees it, may fall into a deep love and liking therewithal.

But alas, how lamentable a thing is it, that so excellent and necessary a virtue, should be so scarce and rare to be found among men as it is,

and that in these days of the Gospel, and when the God of peace and love dwells amongst us, whose people we profess ourselves to be! Alas, it's as it were banished out of the earth, and departed from the sons of men, and found but at a few hands, and there but scantily. But pride and contention, oppression, deceit, malice and revenge, and all contraries to love, have taken possession of all places, of most hearts: yea, even among true Christians what cold affection, what hollowness, strangeness, hard surmises, readiness to fall out for trifles? little power to forgive & to pass by wrongs, to overcome evil with good, which yet God doth to us every day. It's easy to hear, read, and pray; let's show the fruit of them in love.

Oh let us everyone suffer ourselves to be provoked, yea, and overcome in this, that we labor to be possessed of this grace of Love, in whom it hath not hitherto taken place: and they, in whom its begun, that they would increase in it more, as 1 Thes. 4. 10. Hereby it shall appear, that we regard God's commandment, we shall do much good, and strengthen the places where we live.

We shall know we are not of the Devil, but of God, 1 John 3. 10. and shall be like unto him; & what should we desire so much, as to represent our Maker, and to have his Image shining forth in us?

And the more love God hath showed to us, the more let us show to others; the more he hath given us of temporal or spiritual gifts, give the more to our brethren, Freely ye have received, freely give. The more God hath forgiven us, the more let us forgive others, the more patient and slow to wrath he hath been with us, the more patience see we show towards our brethren. And here with let us stay ourselves, when we find readiness to be provoked, or to revenge; and think it a most unreasonable thing, that God forgiving us a thousand talents, we should catch and hold our neighbor by the throat for a

hundred pence. If this grace of Love be in us and abound, we shall honor God much, and our holy profession, get a good report, and much love in the Church of God, and further our own account against that day, and provide for the increase of our glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER 4.

Of the Notes, whereby love to our Neighbor may be known.

Now to this end, that none may deceive themselves, but may try whether they have in them this grace of Love or no, or in what measure, I will set down some of the chief acts, effects, or fruits of it, as notes whereby it may well be known, as a tree by the fruits.

1. Love is not left-handed, but interprets, and takes things at the best. As it commends what is plainly good, so it interprets favorably what is doubtful, until it know the contrary; speeches, or actions of men, towards our selves or others, if they may be well taken, it will not take them ill. As the mother, when the child cries, saith a pin pricks it, it hath the fret, or breeds teeth, she is loath to say, its nothing but frowardness, and so to chide or fight. When Joseph's brethren, out of malice, had fold him into Egypt, and afterward were afraid he would remember it, what construction makes he of it? God sent me hither aforehand to provide for you. As our Savior Christ did, when his Disciples were so sleepy in the garden: though he mildly rebukes them for it, yet he favorably helps it, saying, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Yea, if a thing be plainly evil yet Love will make it no worse than it is. It will not say, it was done deliberately, and of set purpose, when it was done rashly; maliciously, when it was done weakly only, and in temptation. For one may do injury to a bad action, and it's better to think and speak a little better of it, than worse than it is. Always provided, this be understood, not of palpable, notorious fowl evils, nor of continued courses in sinning; for what good or charitable construction can be made of these? When such therefore be plainly reproved, and told their danger, and they cry out, Oh you may not judge: Why, what can Charity itself judge, but that you are of the Devil, and in the state of damnation for the present, and without sound Repentance forever? Its therefore no property of Love, but a fowl fault, and a sign of a corrupt conscience to extenuate and blanch fowl sins in bad persons.

2. It will depart from his own right, rather than break peace; as our Savior Christ, Matthew 17. 27. Abraham to Lot, Gen. 13. 9. If thou wilt take the left hand, I will take, &c. As it will give way in conference to one that is stiff, though one know he hath the truth, so it be in small matters: After offenses, it will soon yield and seek reconciliation, though it were meet the other should seek to him. It stands not upon terms: it will lay down the bucklers, go on the lower ground, yield the way or the wall to those, that it were meet should yield it to him. For why? it more prizeth and esteemeth Love, than small matters.

3. It doth no hurt, it's against the nature of it so to do, neither in life, chastity of our neighbor, goods, or good name. See this in the two chief patterns of Love: in God towards his, and parents towards their children, who do nor can do them no hurt, at least, parents, in their conceit.

4. It seeks not her own things, but others as well, as is commanded, 1 Cor. 10. 24.

5. It provoketh nor exasperateth not, but strives rather to please, as far as it may with good conscience: As we see in a loving mother toward her child, so also in whomsoever it is truly found.

6. Its not easily provoked, 1 Cor. 13. 5. but forbears, forgives, puts up, &c. which is well seen in God, and a natural mother with her unquiet child.

It will cover natural infirmities, such things as be little weaknesses in our brethren, yet not done of set purpose, nor growing into extremities, but only natural defects. As some be a little too quick, some a little too slow, some see a fault, and be a little too ready to speak, others somewhat too slow to speak, or reprove a fault. Some be a little too fine, some a little too homely and plain; if they were not all so much on either hand, it were better. Some be somewhat too earnest in their business, if it were not altogether so much, it were better; yet not much amiss, and it's their nature, who be yet very gracious: Some be a little too negligent, some be a little too merry, some a little too solemn: these and such like Love will cover, or else nothing. Love will not stand upon them, rebuke or reproach them, or deal hardly with them for these, but wisely bear with them, and in love cure them, if it can.

As for example: a wife, a godly woman, good housewife, loving & dutiful in good measure, but somewhat cursed, and quick of speech, or not so cleanly as were to be desired; a good husband in love will bear with these, and be thankful for the main that he finds in her.

So a woman hath a husband, good in all the substantial points of the husbands duty, but he is somewhat too glum, not so affable and

cheerily as might be, or whose nature will not suffer him to use such complements to his wife, as some can do with facility; Love will reach her to bear with this. A servant is very trusty, religious, and careful to please, only somewhat slow; the Master or Mistress must not rebuke him too oft, too openly, too sharply for it, as a thing they can hardly remedy: no perfection to be expected in any. If you can cure it by a loving and private admonition sometimes, do.

So a Neighbor confers with his Neighbor, and he is a little too quick and harsh: but love will not see it, but considers it as a natural infirmity; therefore will not exasperate him, or be put out of patience by him, answering him tartly again, but passeth it by, and goeth on in kind and friendly manner.

Love will also cover and put-up wrongs done unto it, not seeing small ones, passing by somewhat greater; as considering he himself is a man, and so subject to offend his Neighbor, and so may stand in need of his pardon. As also that he offends God daily, and would be glad to obtain pardon; therefore he must pardon his Neighbor, or else can have small hope or boldness to come before him for mercy; and this often, yea unto seventy times seven times.

If they be greater matters, yet Love will easily accept of indifferent conditions of agreement. If they be so great as they so endanger our name and estate as they are not to be passed by, then its lawful to flee to the Magistrate, and take the benefit of Law; yet so, as Love will teach the party to lay away malice, and to forgive the revenge. And in going to Law, these two Caveats must be observed: First, that it be not for trifles. These should rather be forgiven, 1 Cor. 6. 7. Why rather suffer ye not wrong? Secondly, that it be the last Remedy, when all other ways of more peaceable agreement have been tried. It

must be as the cutting off a member, when it cannot be healed otherwise.

Hitherto belongs also that Love will teach us to hide and cover folks faults from the world, except we have a cause and calling to speak thereof, but rather of their virtues.

7. Lastly, Love is bountiful, beneficial, and helpful, not keeping what it hath to itself, but ready to distribute and communicate to the good of others, whether spiritual or temporal gifts. Spiritual; for love begins at the soul, and doth good to that first, of children, servants, neighbors. It will communicate any gift it hath to them that need it, taking to heart their spiritual wants, instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, comforting the afflicted, admonishing them that be out of the way, exhorting then that begin to faint or stagger in the way, & praying for all.

So for outward things, it will cause men to give to the poorest that are to be helped by Alms, as they be able: and lend freely to them that be a degree above the poorest, which having a Trade, and skill and will to follow it, yet want stock to employ themselves and their company. These a man is as much bound in conscience to lend unto, according to their ability and honesty to pay again, as to give a piece of bread or a penny to a poor miserable Creature, Mat. 5. 42. Deut. 15. 8. By this shore, many a reeling house hath been kept from falling flat to the ground. By this help, many have lived handsomely, and brought up their families, that else must have come to uttermost misery.

To the wealthy that have no need of us, yet to be neighborly and friendly, in lending or exchanging Courtesies with them! To invite them sometimes to us, & to go to them being invited: And in their

sickness or heaviness to visit them, and comfort them in the best manner we can.

Use. Now seeing Love is such a thing, and that these be the fruits of it, If we look abroad among men, we shall be forced to say there is but little love in the world: for, where be these Properties spoken of, to be found? as may appear in going over them.

1. Who takes not things in the worst part, hardly construing men's words and actions; doubtful ones, it may be not bad, taking them to be evil; those that be bad, making them worse? Thus the Jews mis-interpreted our Savior Christ, John 2. Destroy this Temple, &c. which afterward cost him his life. 1. Chro. 19. 3. How was David's good and loving Action towards Hanun wickedly mis-construed? which cost the lives of many thousands. Old Eli offended in this, 1 Sam. 1. 14. judging Hannah drunk, because she prayed, and her voice not heard. What more common than to say, Men do that they do to be seen, and to win credit, when yet they do it sincerely, and to please God? Or, having invited one to our house, and he comes not, to think or say he doth it out of some spleen, or want of good will. Many a time in a year are we forced to recant, and with shame say, I thought it had been worse meant than now I see it was. This is the cause of innumerable contentions and breaches among men.

2. For departing from men's right, who doth it, but stand out stiffly to the utmost? This is a usual speech, It is my right, and I will have it. I ask no more but my right, and that I will not lose. This is thought but reasonable, and he is thought an honest man that will have but his right. But it's an ill speech and resolution, whether it be in conference: If a man know he hath the truth, though it be but in small matters, yet he will hold it out, though the other be never so peremptory, till they fall flat out, whereas in small truths it's better to

give in; Or in dealings, covenants, bargains, bonds, men will have their right: and yet herein extreme right may be extreme wrong.

Always provided, that we give not away other folks right, especially God's. Moses would not yield a hoof, Exod. 10. 9, yet most men, stiff in their own, will yield enough of God's right, can cut large thongs out of that. They will not let their servants play one hour on the six days, yet can let them play on the seventh what they will. So are sins against the first Table made small account of, in comparison of the breaches of the second.

3. Whereas Love hurts no way, whence comes all the hurt and mischief that is done among men; stabbing, killing, fighting, quarrelling, railing, reviling, scolding, &c. all the defiling's of men's wives, children, and servants? So for bribery, thievery, cozenage, false weights, false wares, &c; slandering, defaming, backbiting, mocking, and such like: All these abound everywhere. I am sure Love doth none of them. Love was not at the doing of these.

And for seeking others good as well as our own, O Lord, where is this? But in all men's courses, the greatest part, yea, and among Christians, they seek themselves too much, and others too little.

4. Also that men will so readily provoke one another by words and deeds, they care not how.

5. For being provoked. Lord be merciful to us, who can bear anything? but taunt for taunt, quip for quip; he shall have as good as he brings. If there be a little trespass done them, Oh how men stand upon it, and study revenge? Hence the innumerable suits in this land, many thousands in a year for mere trifles, that ten times as much is spent in them as is sued for.

A shame for England to be so contentious, having the Gospel of peace amongst us. Oh, men's stomachs be up straight, all their blood is in their face, or else look as pale as ashes, or secretly practicing to revenge. Hand on the dagger straight; on the top of the house by and by, and fly in one another's faces for trifles: so far off are we from forgiving till seventy times, as our Master Christ hath commanded. So short spirited, as we can bear nothing; and that which is worse, if we have taken up a displeasure once, it's not easily laid down, but Sun after Sun, Moon after Moon, yea some, year after year can carry it about with them: quickly provoked, but hardly pacified, especially truly. It may be, some will not be seen to live in open enmity, yet have hearts unsound, and full of secret grudging's, that cause open breakings out upon every occasion. Men can bear nothing, but are straight carried after revenge.

6. And for speaking of our neighbors' virtues, and hiding their faults, without just cause, and calling to the contrary, where is that to be found? Nay, the contrary is most woefully common; little of men's virtues spoken, except a word or two, to make way for a But, and to speak of their faults: and these we delight to be much in, as the Crow that seeks out the carrion, & the Hog that delights to lie in the mire, rather than upon the green grass: like the Fly, that if there be but one galled plat on the horses back, delights rather to sit on that, than on all the whole body besides.

7. And for the last, where is communicating of spiritual good things? Parents bring up their children brave, but how few catechize, instruct, admonish them, pray with them, and for them?

So for servants, their governors give them meat, drink, and wages, and hold them to work on the six days, but little care how they spend the Sabbath, or for instructing and examining them, calling them to

reading and prayer: and what love call you this, but such as you show to your beasts?

So for neighbors, what Christian conference is there, what admonishing them that be out of the way, but rather let them run on, and talk of them behind their backs, and that oft times with rejoicing, which is fearful?

What consolation is given to the heavy? who lays their case to heart? how few are able to speak a word in season, and to comfort fitly? but utter vain and frothy speeches to them, fitter to do hurt than good. And for such as be troubled in conscience for their sins, alas how few have any skill of such things? nay, many will rather deride, and make a scoff at them, saying, they have run to Sermons so long, till they will go out of their wits. Who provokes one another to that that is good? but every man saith, Who made me my brother's keeper? Nay, men are so far from these, as they seek all they can to drive others from God and goodness, by their cursed counsel and wicked example, and by all the discouragements they can devise, of threats, mocks, and taunts. And is not this fearful? where is true Love in the mean time? that is a great way off.

And for outward things, how backward are most in giving to the poor any more than needs must? what contentions at making of rates, though God hath freed us from the chargeableness of the Legal service, and hath freed us from that intolerable burden of the Rogues, that swarmed like Locusts all over the Land; whose burden lay on us very heavy; as they that be of years can remember, which yet yielded small comfort, the greatest part of them being a cursed generation of idle and sinful Varlets: which seeing God hath marvelously and mercifully rid us of, what encouragement should it be to us, to relieve our own true poor?

And for lending, where is this in use? but rather, as if God had never given precept of it, or as it were a Statute repealed; and that is out of date, so is this duty of lending. That cursed and cruel trade of Usury, hath eaten up, and banished out of the Country this Christian duty of free-lending.

Some rich men are so grim and so austere, as a poor man dares not speak to them for such a thing. And indeed, how few be there, that have anything to lend at any time?

Some lend out all so near to Usury, as they have not to lend, but borrow rather: Or if a poor man do any work for them, they cannot pay them of a good while, they be so bare. For as soon as any money comes in, it must out again straight, as if it would burn a hole in the Cupboard, or would be half an undoing to them, if it lay there but a week or two.

Others are ever purchasing, and so keep themselves bare, and in debt, and then they whine at every charge, and wrangle at rates, and are never fit or ready to lend, or to any good use. Such bring a curse upon themselves, making themselves borrowers, when they might be lenders, Deut. 28. 44.

Others be so miserable, as though they have it, yet they will not lend. So for the last duty of neighborly dealing, inviting, visiting, these are decayed; so that we may believe in all these respects, these be the times foretold, Matth. 24. 12. wherein Love should wax cold.

Yet indeed there is a great deal of counterfeit love, of fawning, crouching, and congeeing, of pot-companionship, and joining together in evil.

A great deal of self-love also, making others faults great, and our own small, or none; nay, sometimes making them virtues: extenuating and making light of the virtues of others, highly esteeming our own; seeking ourselves in all our dealings and courses, with little regard of our neighbors: which self-love the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3. 2. foretells shall be in the last times, and sets it in the fore-front, as the cause of many other evils that follow.

Now let every man examine himself in particular touching these things, and so make use to his own soul for comfort, or the contrary.

But who shall not find himself failing in every one of them? whereby we have much cause to be humbled; and the courses of the common sort are wholly contrary to all these properties of true Love, whereby they may conclude fearfully against themselves.

CHAPTER 5.

Causes of the want of Love to our Neighbor.

Now to this end, that every man may the better see how to mend that that is amiss, let us a little look into the causes of this want of Love, and what are the hindrances of the fruits thereof. The main and general cause is an evil heart, pestered with self-love, and many lusts that be contraries to Love.

1. More particularly. Want or weakness of Faith is one great cause. When our Savior Christ told his Apostles, they must forgive till seventy times seven times, what said they? Luke 17. 4, 5. Increase our

Faith. Assurance of God's love to us, in pardoning our many sins, and giving his Son Jesus Christ, and assurance of eternal Life, makes us love again, and both to give and forgive; which are two principal duties, and fruits of Love. Pride, and the following Vices are hinderers of the exercise of Love.

2. Pride, whereby men think highly of themselves, and meanly of others; think they may speak or do anything, but others may do nothing to them. Only by pride do men make contention, Prov. 13. 10. Humbleness causeth love, Ephes. 4. 2. Pride makes men think themselves so wise and good, as everybody should say as they say, do as they do, and after a sort do homage to them; if they do not, then the peace is broken straight.

Pride will not endure a reproof: therefore being told of a fault, they fall out deeply; as Joash with Zechariah, Ahab and Jezebel with Elijah, Herod with John.

3. Covetousness is another: this makes men contend for trifles, the least damage done him is thought so great (looking on it in a false glass) as its sufficient to break Love, and cause a suite.

It causeth men to oppress, to use false weights & sleights, &c. It hinders both mercy to the poor, and all other neighborly offices of inviting, and the like.

4. Envy hinders Love exceedingly. When one envies at the prosperity of another in whatsoever kind, of temporal or spiritual good things; As Laban's sons did at Jacob, which changed their countenances towards him, and made him weary of his place. Cain, that envied that Abel's sacrifice was better accepted than his, and Esau that Jacob was blessed, Ishmael, that Isaac was the son of the Promise: what breach of Love, and woeful fruits followed of all these?

5. Frowardness & shortness of spirit breaks Love very oft: for angry words stir up strife, Prov. 15. 1.

6. These days of peace are an occasion, through men's corruption, that men grow hollow and strange, and to set light by one another. Troubles cause men to make much of each other, and cling together: as the sheep, that out of danger, and in a fair day, scatter themselves over a field, in a storm, or when they see a dog come, run all together.

These and such like, be woeful causes of the want of Love, which also bring forth as lamentable effects everywhere, both in Church and Common-wealth. What woeful breaches, hideous contentions, what hard measure and wrongs are offered, what enmities and oppositions, to the hazard of the Church, danger of the Common-wealth, and overthrow of the prosperity of many Parishes?

What ruin brings this want of Love upon many Families?

And among particular persons, what breakings out both in word and deed, to the dishonor of God & Religion, & the undoing each other many times, both in soul and state? to the disgrace of the Gospel, and ill example of the beholders, and hurt to their own souls, by keeping them from, and disabling them for the right performance of holy duties, which cause cold prayers, and those not heard; and hereby either kept from the Sacrament, as many times it is (Oh fearful thing to be spoken) or else slubber it over, and come with festered hearts, and so lose the benefit: nay, by such unworthy coming, they provoke the wrath of God, and eat their condemnation as much as in them lieth; but oft times they eat and drink their judgment, a sore sickness, and may be, their own death, or the death of wife, or some child that is dear to them, to teach them and others by their example the price of such boldness.

Now seeing these things be so, the Lord give us everyone hearts, where we find ourselves faulty, to humble ourselves, and crave mercy, and to labor to be reformed in this point. Therefore, first, let's labor to pluck up these noisome weeds out of our hearts, that this precious plant of Love may grow therein.

1. Strive against Infidelity, and labor to get Faith, and the increases thereof, if by God's grace we have it already.
2. In humbleness of mind, labor to esteem others better than our selves.
3. Labor for a moderate affection toward these outward and base things in comparison, setting more by Love, and the sweet fruits of it, than by them all; and therefore much more, than by small trifles.
4. Avoid envy. Is our eye evil, because our Masters eye is good? we have more than we might look for.
5. Strive against tetchiness and shortness of spirit. Think what a base lust, and sinful distemper it is, how it exalteth folly, and how ill it becomes us, and what an enemy it is to true Love.

And labor we, that this love to our brethren may show forth itself in all good fruits, in judging the best, departing from our right, not provoking, nor being easily provoked, but forbearing and forgiving offenses and wrongs, and communicating of what God hath imparted to us of any kind. and that for these Reasons; weigh them well.

1. First, God requireth it of us, who is Love, 1 John 4. 8. and if we perform it, we do not so much serve our neighbor, as please God, who takes it to himself; and in neglecting this, we neglect not our neighbor only, but God, who takes himself wronged in this behalf.

2. Our neighbor is our own flesh, and everyone hath some part of the Image of God in him, or upon him.

3. The Word abundantly calls for it, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper puts us strongly in mind of it.

4. No better argument, that we are in the light, love God, and are Christ's Disciples, be translated from death to life, be endued with that excellent grace of true Faith, than this, that we truly love one another, John 13. 34, 35. 1 John, 3. 14. As a King is not known by his apparel, great company with him, &c. which may be some meaner man, but by his Crown; so is not a Christian known by his hearing Sermons, or good words, but by his Love.

5. The beauty of a Christian is Love: he is the best Christian, that loves most, whose lips feed most, whose branches spread widest.

6. And for forgiving wrongs, what should we do else? God forgives us many & great debts, and ill dealings with him, and shall we be ready to revenge every petty trespass? See Matth. 18. 34. what became of him that did so. God bids us ask forgiveness on no other condition, than that we forgive our neighbor, Mark 11. 25, 26. And no better sign, that a man is forgiven of God, than to forgive our neighbor; and no man can be assured of that, but he will forgive. Let us therefore of the sea of compassion that God hath shed out upon us, let fall some drops of it upon our neighbor.

Also we may stand in need of our neighbors forgiveness: for who lives, and is not subject to offend his neighbor one way or other? No cause therefore we should seek revenge, which every Turk, yea, every beast can do; but pass by offenses, which is the glory of a man, Prov. 19. 11. Keep out anger therefore in such cases if we can, or if we be not so strong, yet let it not rest in us, souring in our hearts: Let not

the sun go down upon it. The world counts this base, but indeed its truly honorable. It's the honor of God, Micah 7. 18. and so it makes us like him. Let us therefore labor to do thus; and not a little or some few times, but get a long-skirted Love, which will cover a multitude of offenses, as St. Peter saith, 1 Pet. 4. 8. or, as Prov. 10. 12. All trespasses.

7. And for distributing things temporal or spiritual as we have, great reasons there be. God gives to all, both good and bad: he hath given us what we have; (for what hast thou, that thou hast not received?) and given us them to be good stewards, and dispensers thereof, to the good of others, 1. Pet. 4. 10.

And the more we give, the more we have, and not the less; it increaseth in the giving, as the loaves in our Savior Christ's hands, especially in spiritual things; yea, in temporal: therefore giving is compared to sowing, which in good ground is usually with increase. Therefore a worthy Minister upon occasion asking his wife, whether there were any money in the house, she answered, that she knew but of one three pence; Well, saith he, we must go sow: that is, give something to the poor, knowing that to be the way of bringing in, Prov. 11. 24, 25. Deut. 15. 10. The best thrift is to be merciful, and the way to beggary in a man's self, or his posterity, is to be pinching.

And to conclude all, Love in the exercise of it, will bring much peace to our consciences, and comfort us not a little on our death-bed, that we have not lived to ourselves, but to be useful to many, especially to souls. It procureth us love in the places we live in, and in the Church of God a good report.

No man is well beloved, though he have good things in him, if he be not loving. Oh, say they, he is a good honest man, I think, but he is a harsh censurer, contentious, so hasty that no man can tell how to

Speak to him, he is a strait man, lives all to himself, few the better for him by counsel, admonition, encouragement, and the like: and so for outward things, very close-handed and near.

But if a man be full of love, it will procure him love again, he shall be well spoken of while he lives, and mourned for when he dies, which is a good mercy of God, and the temporal reward of righteousness and love. Pro. 10. 7. The memorial of the Just shall be blessed. Thus they wept for Dorcas, and showed the coats she had made, Acts 9. 39. But a proud, churlish, close man, shall live without being desired, and die without being mourned for.

These would have love, good will, and credit in the Country and Town they live in, but they will not seek by this way to procure it, will not be at the cost, be not useful, liberal, &c. let them never look for it: Let them win it, if they will wear it. Others care not, so they may scrape all to themselves, what the world say of them; let the good name go which way it will. But these are base minded persons, and they carry little better than a curse about them, while they live.

CHAPTER 6.

Properties of true Love.

Now yet for our further direction in this point of Love, I will set down some such Properties, as the Scripture requireth in it; as that it must be mutual, common, sincere without feigning, fervent, pure, constant; all gathered out of 1 Pet. 1. 22.

First, it must be mutual, it must come from one to another mutually, and be at every hand: as God commands others to love us, so us to love others. so that none is free from this duty.

Many will look for a great deal of Love from others, that care not how little they show themselves; would be visited, but care not to visit others: would have their own virtues commended, will not do so by others; have their infirmities covered, but will not do so: would not be provoked, yet will provoke: would not that others should be quickly angry with them, yet they will with others.

Alas, this is great weakness: for its a more blessed thing to give, than to receive, Acts 20. 35. And we should rather strive to go before, and set others in our debt by love, and be on the forehand.

A good mind rather remembers the debt that is going from him, than that which is coming to him. This oft comes of pride in some men, to look for much of others, and perform little themselves.

The husband oft looks his wife should walk at an inch with him, though he will break ells out of square. So sometimes it falls out with the wife towards her husband, look for much, and perform little. This is no equity: we must do, as we would be done to.

Its more dangerous for us to neglect our duty to others, than that they neglect to us; for this is but a small want, but the other makes us liable to God's judgment. Let us therefore strive who shall do most duty each to other; husband to wife, neighbor to neighbor: and not the contrary.

2. It must be common: One another. It's in the plural number, and shows a community; that we must not love one, or two, or a few, but all, and especially all that fear God. Love communicates itself, and is

not engrossed to a few. Many can be content to love one, or two, or a few as they list, but they set light by the rest, yea oppose and justle with some, and live unkindly with them. This is no true love, neither ought it so to be. Yea, we must love the meanest that fear God, and not neglect them. The meanest member of the body is regarded by the greatest. Though they be of low degree in the world, yet seeing they be members of that glorious body of Jesus Christ, we must not have the faith of him in respect of persons, James 2. 1. Seeing God hath vouchsafed to give his Son for them to redeem them, his Spirit to sanctify them, and hath prepared a place in heaven for them, we must not despise them. Nay, these we ought the rather to encourage, and to hearten on in well-doing, seeing so few of that sort have any good in them, and they have many discouragements. They will bear their poverty the better. It's a great cheering to them, when they see themselves regarded. And nothing is more comely, than to see wealthy ones to be affable, and to speak kindly, and to the hearts of the poor that be godly; as Boaz did to Ruth. For, being fellow-brethren and fellow-members as dear to God as they, should a little wealth lift up the mind? The Lord is the Maker of them both, Prov. 22. 2. James 2. 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, that they should be rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom? &c.

3. It must be without feigning, Rom. 12. 9. 1 John 3. 18. Not in word, or in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. God hates dissembling in everything: whether in love pretended to himself, when is no such thing, or towards our neighbor, in any of our dealings with him. God loves simplicity and plain dealing; as in Jacob and Nathanael.

If Love, which is the main virtue, be counterfeit, what shall become of all the duties that proceed from thence? God's love to us was not feigned and in show, but sincere and real, when he gave us his beloved Son to the death for our sins.

Here two sorts of persons are justly to be taxed: 1. Such as pretend to love, when yet they hate. 2. Such as make show to love, and do not. For the first, Psal. 28. 3. Psal. 12. 2. & 55. 21. & 62. 4. Pro. 26. 24. read these places. Thus did Joab to Amasa, 2 Sam. 20. Judas to our Savior Christ, Saul to David, 1 Sam. 18. 17. 25. giving him his Daughter to be a snare to him, requiring no jointure, but an hundred fore-skins of the Philistines, hoping thereby he might fall into their hands. which persons carry a mark of Reprobation about them. Psalm 28. 3. Workers of iniquity, to whom belongs some notable judgment of God. They be like the Devil, who pretended love to Eve, when he sought her ruin, and of all her posterity. So to our Savior Christ, Mat. 4. All these will I give thee &c.

As these be more dangerous to those they hate, than if they did openly show it (for then they could better beware of them: One Enemy within the Walls is worse than ten without) so are they worse for themselves: For, any vice masked and cloaked under a show of virtue, is double iniquity. And as our Savior Christ said to the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. 23. 14. Ye shall receive greater damnation; so shall these.

Yet how common is this? many will speak fair as may be to their Neighbor, when yet they intend mischief against them, or as soon as their back is turned, mock or jest at them, speak evil, or raise up some slander against them, or do them what hurt they can. If we know any have dealt so with us, let us take heed that we never do so by them or any other, but loathe it, as hateful and devilish.

For the second sort: There be that pretend they love, but alas! try, and you shall find no such thing. A deal of Court-holy water, congees, and crouching's; a handful of true hearty love, is worth ten armfuls of their congees down to the ankles: they will salute Good morrow, and

Good night, when yet they mind, nor heartily wish no good. These are clouds without rain, plashes that deceive when most need is; vessels with false bottoms, that have a little water on the top, but empty below: Such as will earnestly invite, when they know one cannot or will not stay, proffer kindness, when they think it will not be needed; but if it happen to be accepted, and made use of at any time, then they either have some shifts to avoid it, or else do it with much unwillingness, and grumbling behind the parties back.

So those that pretend they love the poor, yet come to them in their behalf, and nothing shall you get, but what they are forced unto, and hardly that.

So many good Ministers and Christians have found small kindness in their need, at the hands of such, as yet in their prosperity have professed good will, and made great shows of love to them; they might have done full ill for all these: what love call you this? It's like Faith without works, which God will condemn. So to speak well of such and such men, to pity them, and say they are worthy men, and pity they should want, yet never do anything for them. If God should feed them thus, they would soon complain.

4. The fourth thing required in Love, is, that it must be pure. It must come from a pure heart, as St. Peter speaks, and be agreeable to the rule of the pure Word of God.

Pure Love is seen in diverse things: First, it loves for some virtuous and good actions: therefore the love of the Adulterer and his Mate, of Drunkards and Thieves, that be sworn brothers, is no love.

To love a man, because he can dice well, or swear deeply, drink others under board, or mock and deride wittily, or rail bitterly against the servants of God; this is cursed love: for true Love

rejoiceth not in iniquity; as we have heard. A worse note cannot be, than when one sees one fight cunningly or desperately against God, to love him the better. These be no better than Rebels, and Conspirators against the Majesty of God.

2. Pure Love is that, which is grounded on Grace and Religion, and on no transitory thing; or in those that have no grace, we love them for conscience of God's commandment, and because of that part of the Image of God that is in them: which condemns the carnal love of the most, which love only for worldly respects; for strength, beauty, or any inward gift of the mind not sanctified: as wit, skill in Arts, music, play. These are worthy love, but to love only for these, is not true and pure Love; for thus loved the Heathen: worldly men's love is for such respects, and no other. Yea, even God's servants fail this way sometimes, as old Isaac, that loved Esau for his skill in hunting, David loved Absalom for his beauty; and so doth many a man his wife, which do ill to build love on so false grounds: for when these fail, oft the love goes after.

3. Pure Love is in respect of the party himself, whom we love, and for no respect to ourselves, or any commodity of ours. And such was God's love, in giving his Son to us miserable sinners; which condemns the world, who only love for self-respects: As he is my Uncle, Friend, loves me, or hath done this or that for me, or may do me a pleasure; therefore I will make much of him, or for fear he may do me a shrewd turn: This, if it be shaken out of the clouts, will be found but self-love; we have a respect and aim only to, and at ourselves, Mat. 5. 46. Many a man shows kindness, or doth good to some only, to purchase credit.

The husband loves his wife, because she pleaseth him well, is fair, a good housewife, and for nothing else: this is self-love. All the Papists

charitable deeds were all self-love; for they were done with opinion of merit, and so they loved themselves rather than the parties they gave unto. So is all the love of worldlings; examine it, and you shall mostly find it to be self-love; they have some reach at themselves.

4 Pure Love is, when we so love a man, as we love his soul; and therefore will suffer no evil to rest upon him, but hate the sin in him whom he loves most dearly, and will counsel him to all good, and from all evil. Therefore so to love our neighbor, as not to tell him of his fault for angering or disquieting of him (if he be such as we may speak to) is hatred rather than love, as God saith, Leviticus 19. 17.

So Parents, that love their children so well, as they will not nurture, rebuke, correct them; they hate them, they slay them in following their ways: He that spares the rod, hates his child, Prov. 13. 24. Its as one should be so tender over a child, as not to suffer the wind to blow upon it; and therefore hold the hand before the mouth of it, but hold so hard, as he strangles the child: As the Ape that hugs her young so hard, as she kills it.

Again, friends persuade a man to do this or that for preferment, that he cannot do with good conscience: Oh they love him, they would fain see him preferred. Woeful love to the body, to destroy the soul.

A neighbor hath a child, or cattle strangely handled; one comes in of love, and persuades him to send to such a cunning man, or good Witch (the worst instrument of the Devil of all) for help. Is he a friend, that will do that that shall vantage one a penny, and ere the year come about, hinder him a hundred pound?

So when a good Christian is ready to suffer for a good conference, and a friend comes and says, Oh I pray cast not away yourself, I wish you well; be not too nice, do as others do. Cruel love is this, to

persuade them to save their bodies, by doing that, whereby they should cast away soul and body forever: As Peter adviseth our Savior Christ not to go up to Jerusalem to suffer, but to favor himself, Matth. 16. 22. which was to dissuade him from doing his Fathers will, and from that, whereby Peter himself and all mankind should be saved, and without which they had all been lost forever: what love therefore was this? you may see by the thanks our Savior Christ gave him, who bade him get him behind him Satan; for he savored not of the things of God, but of the world.

5. Next, our Love must be fervent. We must love earnestly, and hotly as we can; and secondly, constantly: for in these two things stands fervency. First, for the earnestness of our Love; as we must stretch it to as many persons, and in as many duties as we can, to soul, to body, in giving, forgiving, &c. as we have heard before; so in these we must not be sparing, but in giving, liberal; for he that sows sparingly, shall reap sparingly, 2 Cor. 9. 6. So in forgiving plenteous, to seventy times, &c. For thus is God to us, in giving for soul, body, goods, name, to ourselves and ours, day & night, never weary in doing us good, never upbraiding. In forgiving, how merciful, in passing by our manifold offenses, and that daily? And the rather, because a little love is soon quenched; therefore we must so love, as though we meet with many temptations from the parties themselves, or from others, that yet we suffer it not to be extinguished. And we must love fervently; not doing these duties when we can well, and have nothing to let us, but forget our pleasure, profit, ease, &c. to do our neighbor good. Love seeks not her own things. It is laborious, 1 Cor. 13. as in the Samaritan, who set up the wounded man upon his horse, and went on foot himself, and left all the money in his purse for his charges, and promised to send more. And as he that rose out of his warm bed, to lend his neighbor loaves. As they that gave out of their main stock, or sold their lands to relieve the necessities of the

Church, Acts 2. 44. Above and beyond all comparison ten thousand times, was the fervency of the love of God the Father, when he parted with his own and only Son out of his bosom, for our Redemption, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who forsook the glory of Heaven, and laid down his life here upon earth, to save us miserable sinners, and his utter enemies.

Oh how doth this condemn the cold, yea, frozen love of the world? And where there is a spark, yet it is so weak, as the least drop of water will quench it. We will not speak a word in defense of never so good a man or cause, if it will hinder our selves never so little, or procure us but a frown.

How worthily on the contrary did Jonathan, who spake for David to Saul his father, to the danger of his own life, 1 Sam. 20. 33. So Ester endangered her life to speak for the Church; I will go to the King, If I perish, I perish, Hest. 4. 16.

6. Lastly, our Love must be constant; not easily broken off, but continuing to the end, Heb. 13. 1. Ephes. 4. 3.

Thus is God's love to his, John 13. 1. which we must imitate. The Devil will seek to break it off, and our selves (being men) are frail, and many occasions will be ready to be offered; therefore we had need with all diligence, to strive to hold and maintain it alive in our hearts.

How doth this rebuke the inconstancy of many men, that are won (as we say) with an apple, and lost with a nut; that will upon every sleight occasion break friendship? If God should so deal with us, what should become of us? But his love is constant to his, notwithstanding their daily provocations.

Yea, he loves them in adversity, and their low estate; yea, best then, and is nearest them with his comforts. So it ought to be with us; for then our neighbor hath most need of us, and then our love will show itself to be most free, and not mercenary. But how contrary is this everywhere? While they be in prosperity, they have many friends, which in their affliction go aloof off; as David oft complaineth, and Job, to whose very wife his breath was strange in the day of his affliction. Ruth did quite contrary, & very commendably, who vowed to her mother-in-law Naomi, that nothing but death should separate between them.

CHAPTER 7.

Whom we must love.

Now followeth, to speak of the persons whom we ought to love: and they are all men upon the face of the earth, good and bad, without or within the Pale of the Church; our love must stretch itself to any of them: they are our neighbor, whom we are bidden to love as ourselves; as we may see in the Parable of the Samaritan: these we ought to do good to, if they need, and we be able; and for these we must pray.

Yea, we ought to pray for every particular person, that we know or can see, because we know not (whatsoever he be now) but he may belong to God.

We must therefore love all; our enemies, and all men whatsoever they be, but especially the Saints and People of God. And of these I will speak severally, and in order.

And first of the love of our enemies. That we must love our enemies, is required inclusively in these words of 1. John. 3. 23. that ye love one another; and in those words, that be the sum of the two Tables, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: as may appear by comparing Exod. 23. 4, 5. with Deut. 22. 1, 2. He that is called in one place thine enemy, is called in the other thy brother or neighbor. More plainly its required, Pro. 25. 21. Matth. 5. 44. But ere we proceed to the proof of this point, let us see who are the enemies we must love, by showing the kinds of enemies that there be, and withal clear some Scriptures that seem to countenance hatred of our enemies. Enemies be public or private, God's enemies or ours. Public, be such as oppose & hate the Religion and truth of God, and persecute it in the professors thereof, or are enemies to any good courses and godly proceedings, and so to us for the same. These again be either curable or incurable: for the curable, such as Saul was, who afterward became a Paul; we must hate their sins, pray against their devices, but love their persons. The incurable we must hate their sins directly, and their persons indirectly.

Thus we hate the person of the Devil; though he be God's creature, yet because he hath sinned against the holy Ghost, and is God's desperate, final and incurable adversary, therefore we are bound to hate him: So might, nay ought we to do, if we knew any man or men to be such: as S. Paul did, who 2. Tim. 4. prayed against Alexander, that God would reward him according &c. and the Primitive Church against Julian the Apostate.

Of these David meant, Psal. 139. 22. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? yea I hate &c. and Psal. 109. & 69 22. to the 29. and in many Psalms he prays for the final and utter destruction of his enemies, which is a sign of utter hatred. But this was not because they were his enemies, but God's as well; and not that only, but desperate and irrecoverable ones, which he saw by the spirit of God, being extraordinarily and infallibly informed: thereof: whose prayers were but prophecies of the final destruction of these men, as Psal. 63. 9. & 54. 5. But for us, because we have not the like measure or gift of the spirit, we have no such warrant to hate or pray directly against any man's person.

Of these also are meant such places, where we are bidden to rejoice at wicked men's destruction, Psal. 52. also Psal. 58. 10. We also, though we know not men's final estate, yet if we see any notorious enemies of the Church, and Gospel, and good men, taken away, may give God thanks, and in some sense rejoice, namely, that God hath showed himself careful of his Church, and hath provided for his glory, the comfort of his people and passage of goodness, and for the terror of other bad ones; but not to rejoice as its their destruction: but as we should pray for them while they live, so pity them being cut off, that they have brought misery upon themselves.

Object. But an objection or two may be made. Our Savior Christ tells us, we must hate father and mother, wife and child &c. for his Names sake.

Answ. True, when they stand in opposition against Christ, and would pull us from him, we must then say, Get thee behind me Satan, and tread upon them if they stand in our way to hinder us from following Christ. We must hate their counsel, but yet love their persons, and pray God to open their eyes and turn their hearts.

Object. 2. God bade the Israelites kill the Canaanites, man, woman and child, and spare none.

Answ. If God bade them hate them, they had a warrant so to do; for we must love our enemies in God and for God, and not against God, and we must obey his commandment. But God bade them not hate them, but kill them, and so they might do, and yet wish well to them, and pity them. The same may be said of all just wars: we may hate the bad cause of our enemies, overthrow their enterprises, and slay their persons, and yet pity them, and pray for their salvation. As the Magistrate also, that puts a malefactor to death for his offense, and to terrify others by his example, yet hates him not, but desires that his bodily punishment may be an occasion to bring him to Repentance, to the saving of his soul; and therefore gives him godly counsel, grants him respite and time, sends Preachers to him to labor with him. So in the other.

And thus much of God's enemies. Besides these, we may have private enemies, that be upon occasion fallen out with us, that hate and hurt us, and have done us wrong, and seek our mischief. These our enemies we must love: and of these principally, as also of God's curable enemies, is our speech to be understood in all that follows.

We must love our enemies: that is, we must carry a tender affection towards them, as desiring their good, wishing salvation to their souls, and outward prosperity, so far as may stand with God's glory, and their good, rejoicing at their welfare, and grieving at the contrary: and this we must show forth by all signs and fruits of good usage every way. which are referred, Mat. 5. 44. to these three heads: first, Bless them: that is, speak kindly to them and of them: secondly, Do good: that is, be ready to help and relieve them: and lastly, Pray for them that hate and persecute you; even pray to God to pardon

them, and to turn their hearts. And thus are we to do to those, that be never so deadly set against us; yea, and never so wrongfully. And mark, that in this last cited place, we are first bidden to love them: the beginning must be in the affection of the heart, that so the other duties required may be performed, and that in a right manner, without which, the one or the other, or both will fail: and then that we must not say we love them only, but show it by the fruits. Rom. 12. 20. If thine enemy hunger, feed him, &c. overcome evil with goodness. Prov. 24. 17. we are forbidden to rejoice at our enemies fall, either into sin or punishment.

Thus David put on sackcloth, fasted, and prayed, when his enemies were in affliction. Elisha bade the King set bread & water before his enemies, and them that came to take the Prophet, 2 Kings 6. So did our Savior Christ to his Precept (Matth. 5.) join his Pattern, not only not revenging, as St. Peter saith, being reviled, he reviled not again, being persecuted, he threatened not: but on the contrary, prayed for them that put him to death; Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. Thus he spake kindly to Judas, when he betrayed him with a kiss, and called him Friend, Matth. 26. 50. Thus Stephen prayed for his persecutors, even in the act of their stoning of him; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, Acts 7. at the end.

Now listen to some Reasons, to move us to this difficult duty, and the Lord make them powerful to persuade us thereto.

First, They be our own flesh, Isa. 58. 7. therefore we are not to hurt them, nor turn away our face from them to do them good.

Secondly, they have some part, at least of God's Image in them, in their soul, being an immortal spirit, in the Majesty of their face above all creatures, in their authority they bear, or age, or gifts, or the like.

Thirdly, our Savior Christ commands it: But I say unto you, Mat. 5. 44. The Scribes and Pharisees had taught, they should love their friends, and hate their enemies: But our Savior Christ, the Law-maker, and so the truest Interpreter thereof, the Doctor of his Church, he of whom the Father bade from heaven hear him, Matth. 17. 5. who is also our Lord and King; bids us love our enemies.

So that if he may be heard, who is only to be heard, and if his authority and commandment may bear sway with us, that only ought to command our consciences; then must we do so. So that though Scribes and Pharisees say, Love friends, and hate enemies; though the Devil say so, flesh and blood say so, and do so, yet there is another to be heard against all these; But I say unto you, &c. Let us therefore listen to his voice.

Fourthly, so shall we be the children of God, and be like him, who makes his sun to shine, and rain to fall on the just and unjust: and besides many outward mercies, gives them the Gospel, to call them to repentance; And even loved us when we were his utter enemies, and when as he might have glorified himself in our condemnation; yet he so loved us, as he gave his own dear Son to redeem us; and hath effectually called diverse of us to the Faith of his Son Jesus Christ, and the hope of eternal life. Oh Love unspeakable, to be showed to enemies! Now what should we desire, and is our happiness, but to be like him? Now when we can love our enemies indeed, it will be a certain evidence we are the children of God: a sign we love God dearly, when we can do this difficult thing for his sake: And a sign of much grace to mortify the rebellion of our nature, that lusteth to the quite contrary. And we can have no mark we are the Lord's, except we can do this in some measure, and strive after it more and more.

Fifthly, God's people must do singular things, such as the world cannot attain to. Now every Publican, civil person, hypocrite, can love his friends, and hate his enemies, but we must do more: God hath showed us singular mercy; therefore we must yield him singular obedience, and show forth the power of his grace that is in us. We must not be singular in conceits, opinions, and courses of our own devising; but we must be singular, in obeying such commandments of God, as the world will not be brought unto: and to reproach us for such singularity, shows them to be of this world that do it.

Sixthly, this hath reward from God, so hath not loving them only that love us, which is self-love; we shall have their love still its like, and there is the reward we are like to have: but in loving our enemies, we shall have a reward, Prov. 25. 22. not of merit, but of promise for our encouragement.

Seventhly, we are commanded, Matth. 5. 48. (whence all these reasons are collected) that we should be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect. This is a degree of grace, and profiting in Christ's School, to be able to love our enemies; which we must strive unto, in this and the like duties; not contenting ourselves to hear, read, come to the Sacrament, which not only weaklings in grace, but hypocrites can do, and do continually, nor yet holding our selves satisfied with some small measure of Love, or other graces, as Faith, Patience, &c. but to strive forward to some good degrees of them, and of the fruits of the same in our course, as occasion serves: of which this loving and doing good to our enemies, are principal ones.

Eighthly, hereby we shall, it may be, convert and overcome our enemies to love the truth; As the patience of the Martyrs, was a mean of the conversion of some, who suffered soon after them. Or at least, it will be a convincing them, and leaving them without excuse; as

Saul, by David's innocence, who twice might have killed him, and did not, was convinced, and cried out, Thou art more righteous than I, 1 Sam. 24. 19.

Ninthly, we shall provide herein well for our own comfort, both in life and in death; when in all adversities and wrongs by wicked men, our enemies, our hearts can testify with us, that we seek no revenge, that we can pray for our persecutors. For this argueth much love to be in us, and that it is fervent, as God commands. As that is a great fire, that warms not only them that be near, but gives heat to them that be far off: So is this Love.

This then, first confuteth the Doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, of which we have heard: which is Doctrine and Divinity for our turn, and well suiting to our nature; but it's too pleasing to nature to be good: nay, it's to be abhorred.

2. The Papists also, who, little better, teach, that in two cases only we are bound to help our enemies, in the case of extremity, or of scandal. For other things, to love them, or pray for them, or do them good in other cases, its but a counsel our Savior Christ gives, and no commandment. If men can do it, it's well; but if they cannot, it's not required. But this is false; our Savior Christ speaks in the Imperative and commanding Mood, and urgeth it hard, with diverse reasons: therefore it's not left to our discretion, but flatly required, as in other Scriptures.

3. It rebuketh the contrary nature that is in us, and the practice of the world, which quite against this Precept of loving, praying for, and doing good to our enemies, do hate them, rejoice at their fall, envy at any good that comes to them, speak all ill to them, and of them, interrupt all ill against them, requite one evil with another, taunt with taunt, suit with suit, blow with blow, and seek to do them all

evil. Yea, and men think they should be borne with, and not blamed for this: Why, say they, he is mine enemy, and that wrongfully, I never did him hurt, yet he hath raised lies and slanders of me, or thus and thus abused me: What then? what mastery else were it for you to love him? Oh but this cannot be heard of; whereby it appears, that most men are carnal, and of the Devil.

They say, they owe them no love; Well, yet you owe God all love, you cannot deny, and he hath turned over some of the love you owe to him, to be paid to your enemy, and he will take it as paid to him; and this is but just in common dealing among men.

Nay, it's a fault too much among many Christians, that show great weakness this way. If they be wronged, Oh how they swell, and how far they will go in revenge, both by words and deeds, and how long they dare lie herein? whereby they bewray they be more flesh than spirit, as Paul said to the Corinthians. While these things are thus, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1 Cor. 3. 3.

My Brethren, these things ought not so to be. This is not the persuasion of God's Spirit. Indeed, the spirit that is in us lusteth after envy; but the Scripture teacheth better things: The wisdom that is from above, is, first, pure, then peaceable, full of mercy, and good fruits. Therefore this revenging course, which is counted wisdom, if it be any, its earthly: that is, of the men of this world; sensual, of our own corrupt lust and desire, and Devilish, he is the author and teacher of it.

Oh that we could be brought to see our sin every of us in this point, and be humbled, that there is such a nature in us, so contrary to the will of God, and for our practice, that hath been so bad, and lets every one of us bewail heartily, and repent of that that is past: and

for time to come, lets labor for greater grace, that when any such occasions be offered us hereafter, we may show better fruits.

And though we talk with our enemy, or debate the matter, keep passion away, and do it patiently; yea, or if we reprove him, if he be worthy, or take the benefit of Law or Magistrate, yet let it be without revenge. We are not bound hereby to love their sins, nor their needless society, nor to furnish them with kindness, that might make them fitter to do hurt, nor to relinquish our right, or our good cause; but that we be free from hatred and revenge, yea, and further, to overcome their evil with goodness, as God doth, and commandeth.

And first, that we beware of revenge, which is a wicked thing, and that for these Reasons:

First, Vengeance is the Lord's, and he will repay. It's his office and privilege: to revenge therefore, is to take the Royalty out of his hand; as one should put the Lord chief Justice out of his seat, and judge his cause himself. He must revenge to whom it belongs, as Psal. 94. 1, 2. therefore the Egyptian said to Moses, when he would have parted him and the Israelite, Exod. 2. 14. Who made thee a Judge over us? Noting, that men must not avenge without authority: therefore our Savior Christ bade Peter put up his sword, when he cut off Malchus' ear: with a reason, Because who so avengeth without a calling, shall perish by the sword.

We must therefore commit our case to God, as our Savior Christ did; for he can also do it most wisely, and most righteously, 1 Pet. 2. 23. we will do it foolishly and partially, as we see in daily experience. Leave it to him, he will not fail to do it, and well too.

2. When we revenge our own wrongs, we leave the Lord nothing to do, except it be to turn his wrath from our enemy, on whom we have

been revenged already, to ourselves, for our sin of revenging, as Pro. 24. 17, 18.

3. When we revenge, we do we know not what: we consider not who smote us. It's the Lord, as Job said, The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, when the Chaldeans had robbed him. No evil in the City: that is, of punishment, but the Lord hath done it, Amos 3. 6. which made David so quietly bear Shimei his railing, because the Lord set him on work so to do for his humbling.

Our enemy is but as Ashur, the Lord's rod, to beat us with; therefore to revenge, is to wring the rod out of God's hand, and break it, or cast it into the fire, which is but an ungracious childes part. When God bids us love our enemies, he bids us but kiss the rod, to pull down our stomachs, which many wise mothers will make their young ones do betimes.

So also its the Devil in thine enemy, that doth thee wrong in goods, life, or name, who hereby seeks to drive thee to revenge, or some other sin; as he did to move Job to curse God, by all the troubles he brought upon him; therefore resist the Devil, and not the man: for the Devil aims not at thy goods, or name, to hurt thee in them, but to draw thee to sin, to the hurt of thy soul. If thou canst therefore, resist Satan herein, and avoid the sin he seeks hereby to bring thee to commit, thou shalt play a wise man's part, and so instead of revenging thyself on thy enemy, be revenged upon Satan, thy chiefest enemy.

4. When we revenge, we do our selves ten times more hurt, than we do our enemy: we hurt him a little, it may be, in his body, goods, or good name, and wound ourselves deeply in our own souls; hit him in the skin, and pierce the caul of our own hearts: As the Be, that to sting another, loseth shortly her own life. It's the foolishhest thing in

the world to revenge; but a wise part, to commit it to God, best for us, and worst for our enemy. Oh its no dealing with a man that commits his cause to God, no standing before him: for though God would part from his own, yet he will not give away his servants right. It were better for an enemy, that the party that he hates, should devise all ways of revenge in the world, by himself, and by his friends against him, than that he should put it up quietly, and leave it to God.

And let us not stay ourselves here, in avoiding revenge, but go forward to love our enemies, and labor to do good against evil, as we are commanded, Rom. 12. vlt.

Object. I cannot do it: for he hath deserved all ill of me; and can I then do him good?

Answ. And have not you done so against Almighty God, and yet he doth you good daily?

Object. It's a base part for me, being wronged, disgraced, and abused, not to challenge him, and be avenged of him, if I can, else I shall be counted a cowardly fool, much more if I should do him good.

Answ. This is but carnal Divinity, which counts it great courage to turn again and revenge, which Heathens & Turks can do, and every Bull and Bore can do, and that its baseness to put up wrongs. But it's quite contrary: for its true valor to overcome ourselves, and conquer our unruly lusts and sinful passions, and to obey the commandment of God, Prov. 16. 32. he is more mighty that can rule himself, than he that conquers many others: And that is true baseness, for a man to be so led by his passions, as he can be are nothing, no, though God command, and the contrary turn to his own destruction.

Object. When you have said all you can, it is impossible.

Answ. No, it's not impossible, though a hard thing it is, I grant: and therefore by the way, for such as profess they can bear all indignities done them, and can do them that do them, all good, as if there were no such matter, and find no difficulty in it, (and yet but ordinary persons neither) for my part, I do not believe them, and I doubt, they do but deceive themselves. If it were not hard to be done, it were not so worthy of a Christian. Its therefore a yoke, but easy; a burden, but light to the spiritual man, that is well assured of the love of God to him, and of the forgiveness of many sins. But to the carnal man, I grant, its wholly impossible.

Let's labor therefore for this Faith and Assurance of forgiveness, whereby we may be enabled to do this difficult work.

Now to draw to an end of this point of Love to our enemies, let us, I beseech you, be persuaded seriously to weigh the reasons that have been used to move to this duty, and let us suffer ourselves to be overcome of them.

It's the most noble and heroical duty, and truly worthy of a Christian man: hereby we shall prove ourselves to be the children of God, and do like to him; which ought to be our greatest ambition.

Hereby we shall show ourselves to have profited well in the School of Christ, and that we have not learned to do that everybody can do, but to do some singular thing; for so may God expect of us, after all this cost of his Word bestowed upon us, and that we are grown past children and weaklings, on towards perfection, even to do difficult duties, and such as are most contrary to our rebellious nature. The Lord persuade our hearts to conceive well of, to believe, and obey this point.

Me thinks, whiles I am speaking. of these reasons, the heart somewhat yields to this duty, and there seems as if one should have some power to do it: and I am persuaded, that there be diverse, that at the hearing and reading of these things, if they were tried now they be hot, could be able to do something this way.

But let them sink down so deep into our hearts, as they may abide with us, that if hereafter occasion shall be offered, we may be able to show forth the force and fruit thereof. We must look to meet with wrongs and enemies; therefore lets learn to take out this lesson beforehand.

Oh that we could but learn this one point at this time! how happily should we have spent our time? Hereby we shall honor our profession, convert or convince our adversaries, and provide much comfort to our own souls: As that worthy Master Greenham, a man subject to many slanderous reports, that yet would say, these two things comforted him: First, that he found his heart not ill, but well affected to his brethren: Secondly, that when he was alone, he could humble himself to God, and pray him to forgive him, that raised them up.

Let's labor hereunto: what else do we hearing so many Sermons continually, if we mean not to show forth the power thereof?

CHAPTER 8.

Of Love to all men.

Next unto our Enemies, whom must we love more? We must love all other men. Not only our kindred, friends, acquaintance, our neighbors of the same town, country, or nation, but even all that dwell upon the face of the earth, high, low, rich, poor, men, women, young, old, bond, free, without or within the Church, that either are or ever may be the people of God. True, our love must begin at those that be nearest us, and must be most to those within the Church, especially to the household of Faith; but it must stretch itself far, and wide, and over all, and we must do all duties of Love to them, as occasion shall be offered and we be able. For whosoever hath or shall have need of our help, he is our neighbor, whom we are bound to love, because God hath commanded it, and he is our own flesh. Our prayers, as a main duty of love, must reach at one time or other to all, and do them what other good we can. We must pray for the poor Pagans, that God would send his light and truth amongst them, that they in time may be brought into the bosom of the Church, and the sheepfold of Christ Jesus.

For the Lord's ancient people the Jews, that he would be pleased to make those dry bones to live, and to take the veil of unbelief from off their hearts, that they may at last come to embrace and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to their eternal salvation. And that God would in mercy bring in the fullness of the Gentiles, and to that end that he would hasten the ruin of Antichrists Kingdom, that those nations that have long lain under the bondage of that man of sin, and in the darkness of superstition and Idolatry, may be set at liberty, and have the light of the glorious Gospel to shine among them, to teach them to know and worship the true God aright, and to believe in Jesus Christ, which is life eternal.

And for those within the Church, we ought to pray to God to continue his mercy towards them, and to give them grace to walk worthy

thereof. And for those that be fallen into their enemies hands, and be in great distress every way, we ought to send up continual fervent prayers and strong cries, out of the bowels of compassion towards their miseries, unto Almighty God the father and protector of his Church, that though he hath punished them for their sins as pleased him, yet that he would in judgment remember mercy, and humble their hearts under his heavy hand, pardon their sins, and restore their former liberties to them again. Yea and as their bodily necessities shall be truly made known to us, we should be ready to reach out our hand to the relief thereof.

Ob. If any will say, They be strangers to me, what have I do with them?

Ans. Let such a one know, that yet God's Image, nor his express commandment ought not to be strange unto us, but ought to provoke us to this duty. Yea they that be never so ignorant, profane, ungodly, whether rich or poor, we must wish well unto them, and seek their good: for as we must not hate the vices for the persons sake, so neither the person for the vice's sake. Our love towards them, may be a mean to win them to God.

Use. But alas, how few be there that think any such thing required of them? and therefore no marvel though no conscience be made of the performance thereof: for even in those things that they know to be the will of God and their duties, yet few will be brought to the obedience of them. Who so pities the miserable state of those that know not God, nor have any means of salvation, but be out of the pale of the Church; as to pray earnestly to God, that he would in mercy visit them in his due time? Alas, multitudes pray not for their own selves and families, their neighbors and nation; and therefore no marvel they look not so far.

But, me thinks, that fearful Prayer the Church maketh against such, Psalm 79. 6. should strike fear into them, to move them to seek to avoid the dint and danger of it.

How sew lay to heart the long and sore afflictions, nay, the woeful desolations of our brethren in the Palatinate, Bohemia, and places adjoining; and therefore pour out compassionate repenting and fervent prayers to God for them? We hear of their unspeakable miseries, but are not affected with them, either to profit by their harms unto sound repentance ourselves, or to put to our helping hand, by our instant prayers to seek their deliverance. We talk much of them, and would fain see an end of their troubles, and a return of things, but few be those that do pray for them, and that so seldom, and so coldly, as we can have as little comfort, as they have hitherto found benefit: for what fruit can be expected from prayers, not joined with true repentance? for God hears no sinners; and let him that calls upon the Name of the Lord (and looks to be heard) depart from iniquity.

I doubt not but some there are, that do compassionately and feelingly wrestle with God for them, from time to time, yea, do afflict their souls to obtain mercy for them, whose prayers are assuredly not shut out, or forgotten before God, but shall in due time have blessed effect; but these, I doubt, are but a very few.

And for other duties of Love, no marvel, if (as occasion serves) they be coldly performed to those that be further off, when we are found so faulty towards those we daily converse with. What extreme failing in the duties of forgiving wrongs, and doing good to souls and bodies of those we have to do with? Of which we have spoken already upon one or two several occasions; therefore I now speak no more thereof:

only I pray God to give us this true Love, that may reach out itself to all men, as occasion is, or shall be offered.

CHAPTER 9.

Of Love to the Saints.

Now I come to the love we owe to the Saints and true people of God; and these are to be loved in the greatest degree of all other men, and to be had in high price and account, Gal. 6. 10. Psalm 15. 4.

Thus did David, Psalm 16. 3. All his delight was in the Saints. Psal. 119. 63. He was their companion. Psal. 101. He would have such to attend upon him, and such only as near as he could. So Cornelius, Acts 10. 7. had a soldier that feared God, that was at his hand.

Reasons of this are: First, the Image of God is most clearly seen in them: we are to reverence and love the least part of it, wheresoever we see it, even in wicked men; how much more then, the brightness of it, which stands in the graces of the Spirit, wisdom, holiness, and righteousness, wherein they most lively resemble their Maker? And the more of this we see, the more we ought to love, in children, friends, neighbors, or whomsoever. This is to be esteemed far above wit, beauty, strength, wealth, activity, or any gift of Nature or Art; these be toys to grace: Favor is deceitful, and beauty vanity, but one that fears God, he or she, shall be praised. Therefore herein Rebecca was wiser than Isaac, who loved Jacob for his grace, more than Esau for his skill in hunting.

Secondly, God loves them best; therefore so should we. As whom the King favors, all do honor. These be his secret ones, precious in his account, as the apple of his eye; he hath rebuked Kings for their sakes.

When he drowned all the world, he preserved his little number: As Lot in Sodom's destruction. Yea, if there had but ten righteous persons been found in five Cities, they had all been saved from the burning. These be marked in Jerusalem from the common destruction, Ezek. 9. These he sealed, Revel. 7. to be preserved from the plagues bodily and spiritual, that should come upon the world. He makes more account of one righteous one, than of a thousand other, Isa. 43. 3, 4. As he did, when to make way for his people, the Jews, into Canaan, he gave seven mighty Nations to the sword.

Thirdly, they be more excellent than any other, Prov. 12. 26. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: meaning, that is not righteous, but wicked. More excellent in this life, at his death, and in the day of judgment. These are written in the Book of Life, be washed white in the blood of the Lamb, clothed with his Righteousness, a richer robe than ever Solomon wore on his back: adorned with the precious Jewels of God's sanctifying graces, attended by the Angels, borne from above, the children of God, members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, heirs of all things here, & shall at death, and after the day of Judgment, be inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, prepared for them before the beginning of the world. And for the wicked, we may say, as Psal. 1. 4. It is not so with them. And therefore good reason these should be best beloved.

4. Lastly, they be most useful, and can do us most good, by their counsel, example, prayers, when we be present with them, yea, absent from them: He that walks with the wise, shall be the wiser;

much good may we learn, and comfort may we get, by conversing with them, that be truly godly.

For their sake the world continues; if the number of the Elect were fulfilled, the wicked should no longer rout here, but come to judgment, and be sent to their own place.

For their sake, and at their prayers, many plagues are kept from the Land; as at Moses prayers they were from the Israelites: Many judgments entered, have been removed, as Plague and Pestilence, and unseasonable times; yea, final desolation prevented: and had it not been for a few, we might have looked to have been as Sodom, and as Gomorrah. All fare the better for the Righteous sake; as all that were in the ship with Paul, had their lives given them, and were preserved from drowning for his sake, Acts 27.

Use. 1. This then serves to reprove the folly of carnal people, that so dote upon wealth and honor, and things of this world, as if they that had them were the happy men; Oh they be made, they cannot do amiss. And these, in their language, are usually called the best men in the Town, and these they crouch to and admire, when grace and the fear of God in any is little regarded; esteeming the servants of God without wealth (how gracious soever) but poor snakes.

But, Oh folly and madness to worship the Golden Calf! so highly to esteem men for red and white earth, gifts of God's left hand, given even to his enemies, things transitory & soon fading away, and that cannot keep their owners from the damnation of hell; and not to esteem of the precious graces of God's Spirit, given from above only to his Elect, and which do abide unto everlasting life.

Elisha, that worthy Prophet of the Lord, was of another mind, who, but for the goodness that was in King Jehoshaphat, would not have

once looked towards Jehoram, that wicked King of Israel, 2 Kin. 3. 14. which folly, of preferring wealth above grace, the Apostle St. James rebuketh, Cap. 2. 1, 2. &c.

Secondly, this rebuketh such, as make account of all alike, especially, if they be anything civil; one as welcome to them as another, as much commended in life and at death: like as well of the civil, as of them that be truly religious, show as much countenance, yield as much help to one as to the other. If they have anything to give, they put no difference between the poor, good, or bad.

These are justly to be suspected, and to be thought to be neither Fish nor Flesh; for where true grace is, their eyes be anointed, that they can see a difference between men, and grace will draw to grace, and as discern it, so embrace it: for though we challenge no such gift, as some that say, If they talk but half an hour with a man, they will know whether he be the child of God or not; yet, I say, God gives grace to discern grace where it is, from bare civility, at least by conversing with them, and to prefer one infinitely before the other.

Many will commend a mere civil man, in whom it's easy to discern, that there is not one dram of piety or true grace, to be as honest a man as need to be, and think and speak as well of him, as of a true good Christian; but this is a very dangerous sign, that there is no more but civil honesty in themselves.

Thirdly, this reproveth a more fearful sin yet, and yet the common practice of some, that instead of loving the godly best of all persons, they can worst away with them. They could love such a kinsman, tenant, servant, &c. but that he is (as they call them) a Puritan, and they cannot abide these precise fellows. Nay, they have loved such and such a one, till it pleased God to convert him, and ever since they could never abide him: As the chief Priests dealt by Saul, after he was

converted, and became a Paul. Why? he was the same man that he was, only he was better now: So it's with the other that I spake of; which is a plain argument, that they hate them for their goodness, as David complains, Psalm 38. 20. Though they pretend they hate them for this or that fault, yet, that is not so; for they love those that live in greater faults, and themselves live in far greater, than they can possibly charge them withal: The truth is, it's because they are better than themselves, and dare not be companions with them in evil, 1 Pet. 4. 4. therefore the openly profane hate them: They hate them, because they fly a higher pitch, than they are willing to put themselves to the pains to attain to, and so they count they discredit them, who, but for these precise ones, should be counted the best, and as good, as one would desire.

Besides, these tell them, that their fruitless profession of Religion will not serve to bring them to Heaven; and therefore urge them to look further, which they are not willing to do; and this makes them wish, they were all out of the way: for they only trouble the world, they should be quiet but for them. And thus our Savior Christ and the Gospel bring variance, not into the same Town where before all went hand in hand to sin, but into the same Family; because some will receive the Gospel and the power of it, some others will not: therefore they are now at odds, that were all one before in evil.

This sin hath most fearfully over-spread this Nation, so that its more safe from the hatred and ill tongues of most, to be anything, rather than to be zealous and godly. A fearful thing. Every man loves a courageous soldier, a diligent and resolute servant for his Master, a man forward in his business; only forwardness and zeal for God and in Religion, that cannot be endured. These be they that be the troublers, and a burden to the places where they be, and so to the Land, and be railed on as the vilest persons, when as yet these are

perhaps upon their knees, pleading with God for the Nation, when multitudes are swilling, and swearing, and provoking God's wrath against it; therefore we have small cause to be weary of them: the Land, no doubt, fares the better for them every day.

Is this the fruit of above threescore years peace and plenty of the Gospel; wherein it had been meet we had all been such as I mean: that is, zealous and true hearted Christians, that now those few that labor to show forth the power of true godliness, in an universal obedience to the Word they profess, that these should be had in derision, and be a wonder in Israel? As sure as we live, if all in this Land served God, as it is to be feared, some do, in an idle and mere ceremonious coming to Church, hearing of Sermons, and receiving the Sacrament, and yet live as they list, and keep their lusts still, and the sins they have a mind to; God would soon ease himself of us, and vomit up such a lukewarm Nation: for how odious is this to God, to have people draw near to him with their lips, when their hearts are divided from him, and run after their sins: to hear his Word, and hate to be reformed, or to mend a little in what they list, and no further than they please; to call upon God, and yet depart not from evil; in receiving the Lord's Supper, to profess Faith in Christ, and obedience to all God's commandments, and in their lives to show the clean contrary every day? what is this but to provoke God against us, and to deceive our own souls?

And as for those particular persons that are haters of God's true servants, they are no such themselves, and their state is fearful. For they are not led by the spirit that David and Cornelius was, and which I pray God I may ever be. They be no true Members of the Church here, nor shall be heirs of God's Kingdom hereafter, as Psal. 15. 4. None of Christ's Disciples, who are known by loving their Brethren, John 13. 35. nor are translated from death to life, 1 John 3.

14. but remain under death to this hour: Nor have any love to God in them, 1 John 5. 1. for if they loved him that begetteth, they would love those that are begotten of him.

But they are of the seed of the Serpent, bearing enmity against the seed of the Woman, against Christ in his members; of Cain's lineage, of the brood of Ishmael, worse than Balaam; Numb. 23. that said, How shall I curse, where God hath not cursed? or detest, where God hath not detested? are led by Satan, who is an accuser of the Brethren, Revel. 12, 10. who provide woefully for themselves: for God said to Abraham, and so to all that be of the seed of Abraham by true faith, I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.

Their ill will is indeed against Christ, and reacheth to him; as he said from heaven to Saul, Why persecutest thou me? and, Its hard kicking against the pricks. Look throughout all the Scriptures, and you shall see, that fearful judgments have overtaken the haters, and pursuers, or opposers of the true servants of God. Later Histories of the Church, and our own daily experience affords abundance of very true, sensible, and fearful examples in this kind. And if at the day of judgment, they that have done them no good shall be set on the left hand, and hear this doleful sentence, Go ye cursed &c. then what shall become of them that have hated them, and done them hurt? Let everyone therefore that hath been guilty in this thing, repent deeply of it, as there is cause, and so shake off this black and fearful Mark, else the time will come, when they shall wish, and would think themselves happy, to be shadowed under their wing whom now they hate; when they shall see them received, and themselves refused.

Yet here again let me put in this by the way, that I count not those for God's true servants who are such only in Profession, and not in their

Practice.

Some zealous Professors there are, which yet are not so diligent in their callings as they ought to be. Some not so careful to keep out of debt, or not to pay their debts, but hang on every bush, and break promises shamefully, to the just opening the mouths of their Neighbors. Some be rash and indiscrete, given to censure too deeply. Some spend all their zeal in crying out against Ceremonies, and neglect matters more belonging to edifying themselves and others. Some forsake their own Ministers when they preach, very uncharitably and indiscreetly. Some separate themselves from the Church, and our Ministry and Society altogether. Now if a Minister, or any Christian shall show his dislike of such courses in general, or rebuke any particular person for any of them, he is not to be ill thought of for so doing, nor to be reputed a hater of God's servants.

Fourthly, there are diverse sorts of them that be no open enemies to God's children, that yet will be found no other, when God shall come to judgment; and therefore here to be discovered and reprov'd. They be not with them; therefore they be against them. They can sit and hear them unjustly evil spoken of, and yet be never grieved, nor once open their mouths in their behalf. That pry into their lives, and if they can spy a hole in their coat, they reproach them by it, and tell it from one to another, and that with no grief. Can cast out a scoff against them: That care not for their company. Delight rather in those that spend the time in telling News or Tales, of this or that body: with these they can sit long; but for other that will hold to any godly speech, they take no pleasure in them: They make matches with such rather than with those; invite them, and love their company to choose. These be lukewarm Christians, Neuters, neither the one, nor the other, of both sides, of every side: but God can see them to be Enemies, and will set them on his left hand; when it will

not serve them to plead that they never hated them, or opposed them. Let men look well to this Point: for there be many that think well of themselves, for good Christians, that yet will be found of this number: But as they can have no sound peace to their Consciences, so shall they never have good name in the Church of God, till it be otherwise.

Fifthly and lastly, let this be a Consolation to all those whose hearts do bear witness, and their practice bewray that they truly love the Saints; they can have no better sign of the grace of God, or that they be true Members of the Church here, and shall be inheritors of glory hereafter; that they love God, be Christ's Disciples, and be translated from death to life. Always provided, that you deceive not yourselves in this point, as no doubt diverse do, To think, that because you love someone or two choice ones, that you are a lover of God's people, though you neglect all the rest: which is not so; for whosoever loves any in truth, loves the grace of God in whomsoever he sees it, rich or poor, high or low. Or because you love some that be of your Kin, or for some outward good qualification they have, or some common gift of learning, eloquence, or because they be rich, or be such as have done you some pleasure, or may do: for if your love be set upon God's servants for such by respects, this is not the true Love of the Saints: But if you love them simply for the work of God's sanctifying grace that you see or hear to be in them, though you never saw them, nor never shall, yet for the grace of God your heart is knit to them, as Jonathan's to David: or if you know and live near them, though they never did you any special good turn, or be nothing to you outwardly and in the flesh, nay, though any such have reprov'd you of some fault they have seen in you, yet you love them for the Image of God that shines in them: yea, though you see, hear, or know some imperfections in them, and things worthy blame, yet seeing signs of

sincerity you love them notwithstanding, are glad when they do well, and grieve at the contrary: this is good.

Examine yourselves by these things; if you be taken tardy, then deceive yourselves no longer: If your heart witness on your side by these trials, then be comforted, and labor to increase in this grace, that so your evidence may be strong: And the rather, because this hath kept many from sinking in time of Temptation, when all other evidences have been to seek. Thus much of the love that all ought to bear to the People of God.

CHAPTER 10.

How true Christians should love each other.

Now I will add yet one thing more, and that is, How true Christians should love and carry themselves towards each other. They ought to love one another most entirely, and more than they do, or can love the common sort. They must love them as fellow-members of the same mystical body whereof Christ is the head. Now how do the members of the natural body love, stick together, and seek the good of each other, defend and tender one another, rejoice in each other's well-fare, and grieve at the contrary? so ought the Members of the spiritual body much more, if it were possible. We cannot love all thus; for all are not fellow-members in this body of Christ.

Secondly, they must love as brethren: therefore the love that is to be between them is called Brotherly kindness, 2 Pet. 1. 7. Therefore

though some scoffing Ishmael's deride this name, and say, Oh you be of the Brethren: yet we are not to be ashamed of this name, seeing GOD so speaks.

God's children be brothers and sisters; they have the same Father, which is God, the same Mother, the Church, begotten by the same immortal seed, the Word of God, nourished with the same milk, and meat of the same Word and holy Sacraments, heirs of the same Inheritance in Heaven by Christ Jesus. A better Brother-hood than that of nature, as much as the spirit is better than the flesh: Yea, and a more lasting Brother-hood; that will last when this is vanished away, which lasteth only for this frail life of ours, but the other abideth forever. Therefore our Savior Christ said, Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren? Natural Brethren ought to love dearly, how much more we that are of a better kindred?

Its very pleasing to God our Father; and to the Church our Mother, that all their children should live in love, as Psal. 133. 1. and a joy to all the brothers and sisters; As it is a joy to any earthly Parents to have their children love well together: and the contrary is very grievous, and they will mourn to each other, There be two Boys can never agree, two Girls that love not one another; what will they do when we are gone?

Now to love as Brethren, is this; To have Brotherly affections each to other inwardly, and to declare the same outwardly by brotherly actions. For the first, we are bidden, Rom. 12. Be affectioned to love one another; as to weep with them that weep, to have compassion of their miseries, as Heb. 13. 9. As the Samaritan had compassion on the man that fell among Thieves. And our Savior Christ had compassion on the spiritual misery of the People, Mat. 9. 36. St. Paul was affected with the miseries of the Jews, and took them deeply to

heart, Rom. 9. 1, 2, 3. So Nehemiah, hearing of the distress of the Church of the Jews at Jerusalem, though he were well himself, yet he so mourned for them as it was seen in his face. The contrary is blamed, Amos 6. No man is sorry for the affliction of Joseph.

So to rejoice with them that rejoice, as Luke 1. 58. yea, though it were ill with ourselves. As Paul in prison, yet rejoiced to hear of the welfare of the Churches. These brotherly affections be so necessary, as all brotherly actions not proceeding from these, are in no account with God; As a man may give all his goods to the poor, and have no love, and so be but a tinkling Cymbal, 1 Cor. 13. As if a man should give, that he might merit thereby, or to purchase credit, or for companies sake, or with upbraiding; and from no compassion of the poor man's misery, it would neither please God, nor profit him that doth it.

So to admonish one (which is a special duty of Love) but if done with twitting & reproaching, as glad they have some matter against him, it hath lost his grace and reward with God.

And herein, the poor may show as much love to their fellow-brethren as the rich; which may comfort them which are ready to be discouraged, and think they are unhappy, and have nothing to show any love in; Yes, you may be as plentiful in brotherly affections, as any other.

Now for brotherly actions, they must be adjoined to show the truth of the affections; they be counterfeit, if not thus approved, as 1 John 3. 17. like those speeches, James 2. 15, 16.

Brotherly actions be to the soul and body, as need is. To the bodily necessities of our fellow brethren in ordinary wants, we must give of our superfluity; in extraordinary calamities, of our main substance:

And to think it honor enough, that God makes us givers to them, that be as dear to him as ourselves, and shall be inheritors of the same glory with us, though we abound now, and they be suffered to want.

So to the soul in admonition, exhortation, consolation, and prayer, which are the principal and most profitable fruits of our love one to another. And all these ought to be performed purely, fervently, and constantly, as we heard in handling the properties of Love.

But, Beloved, if we come to look for these things among Christians, they will all be found very much wanting, both brotherly affections, and brotherly actions, and those that be, oft not pure, but with looking at ourselves, not fervent, but faint and few, nor constant, but short and brittle, broken off by affliction, especially, if it continue, when yet there is most need: for a brother is borne for adversity.

Many Christians will be kind to another in the beginning of their affliction, and for a little while; but if it hold long, then most fail him, and their love is spent as it were. Or otherwise, their love is broken off by some unkindness, and not readily soldered again so strong as it was afore.

There is much strangeness between Christians; they care not one for another almost: they see each other at Church, but not all the week after. Peace hath made Christians proud and careless; every man can subsist by himself, and hath no need of his brother: We may justly fear, God will send us troubles, to make us glad one of another.

But there is use enough one of another even now, if we had eyes to see it, to help, encourage, comfort, and confirm each other in our holy profession and Christian course, against the manifold discouragements and temptations we are subject to meet with; and to whet on, and set an edge one upon another, that grow so dull; to

lay our brands together, that we may catch some heat from one another; to mind one another of such changes as may come, and so of our last end, to prepare for them in time.

Stronger Christians, and of better gifts, look so hoverly on the weak; so the rich upon the poor: Fie upon it, are they not your brethren? do you not know them, because of their russet or leather coat? he hath as much grace, may be, more than you, and shall have (it may be) a better place in Heaven than you; and do you esteem so meanly of him? Its counted pride, when any will not know their poor kindred; know Jesus Christ and the grace of God in them, and disdain not their company, though your inferiors; seeing, as you may comfort and refresh them by your love, so you may receive much benefit from them again.

Christians should meet together, not to feasting only, but sometimes to build up one another by holy conference. and this will increase love greatly: for when we see the grace of God one in another, and get good one by another, our love is hereby greatly furthered.

Another fault too much among many Christians, is, as want of bowels of tender compassion towards our brethren in distress, so there is not that forwardness and freeness to relieve their necessities.

First, for their bodily wants, there is too much straitness ofttimes; whereas if we did consider, that they are not only our own flesh (as the common sort are) but our fellow-members, fellow-brethren, and such as whom God might have made us takers from them, and them givers to us, it would enlarge our heart and our hand towards them. Well, what we do for them, is not to fellow-members and fellow-brethren only, but to Christ Jesus himself; and it shall be so counted for at the last and great day. Its not so much theirs to whom we give it, as it's our own, and furthers our reckoning: As the seed is not the

grounds so much, as the owners that sows it, and for his benefit. It will be all reckoned ours at the great payment day, even to a cup of cold water: and we shall see he hath not forgotten any work of our love, but hath kept just books and true accounts, and will then say to us, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit, &c. For I was oft, in my members, in a poor condition, and ye ministered unto me; now receive a thousand-fold, even that Kingdom that was prepared for you from the beginning of the world.

And for relieving their spiritual wants, there is oft too much want of compassion and care. How far may a Christian go out of his way, ere another, with the spirit of meekness, will step in by a wholesome admonition, to stop him in his course? The heavy not comforted with a word in season, nor the fainting encouraged, but every man minding his own matters, as though we were strangers, and God had given us no charge one of another.

Nay, there is yet a greater fault to be found among many Christians, than these two that I have spoken of, and that is this, That sundry of them can take leave to fall out, and contend with each other, and that very deeply: sometimes for words, sometimes for small matters of the world; yea, and some when they be out, cannot find the way in again, nor are they ashamed of that they have done, but can lie and continue in it month after month. Is this the behavior of fellow-members? think we our Head Christ will endure or bear it, to have his body thus rent one member from another? nay, one would think, is this possible: What do you think of yourself, that you are a true member of Christ by Faith? Well, and what do you think of him, that you are thus rent and divided from? I dare not but think (you will say) but he belongs to God. And do you think then, that the member of Christ should either thus deal, or thus be dealt withal, and that by his fellow member? He that should see one member in a man's

natural body, offering hurt and violence to another, would he not think the man were mad? What shall we say then, when Christians can so eagerly pursue each other in words and deeds (as too oft is seen) shall we say they be in their right mind? but rather, that the spirit of pride, or covetousness, or some such humor, hath intoxicated their brains. This will cost them dear, or ever they can make their peace with God and their Conscience; and they must fall out as deeply with themselves for their folly, & with indignation take a holy revenge of themselves, that they may fear ever to do the like again.

Is this the behavior of brothers and sisters, to fly in one another's face, to live at such odds, as that all the Parish takes notice of it? If natural brethren should do so, all men would cry shame of it. Doth our father like this, think you? our mother, and fellow-brethren round about, that see or hear of it, do you think this goes not to their hearts? And think you, you do not open the mouths of Canaanites and Perizzites that are everywhere, and hear of it? Think we good, to give them such just matter to speak evil of us, and of our holy profession for it? Our father Abraham could say to his inferior Lot, Let there be no strife between me and thee: for we are brethren. A body would think that the name Brother, should either prevent all strife, or at least quickly break the neck of it.

Though good Christians, may out of brittleness of nature, fall out on the sudden, yet, me thinks, grace should enforce them to recall themselves, and yield to each other, and come in, though they were of never such a proud and stout stomach naturally. Else may they not suspect themselves to be bastards, rather than right bred brothers? to be wooden legs, and no living members? at least they have got the numb palsy, for which they had need to seek speedy remedy.

Let us, I beseech you, so many of us as have been faulty in any of these three things, see how ill they have becomed us, be ashamed and humbled for them, and amend, that we may have sound arguments, that we are true members of Christ's body, and lively and feeling ones.

Think like brethren, speak as brethren, both to face and behind their backs, and do like brethren, so shall we glorify God our Father, credit and comfort the Church our Mother, and our fellow-brethren, and stop the mouths of Papists, Atheists, profane ones, mere civil ones and worldlings, that would not a little rejoice at our divisions.

Put on brotherly affections, show them by brotherly actions, let not small matters make unkindness, depart from much for peace and love, let our differences be speedily compounded by others, if we cannot agree them within ourselves; fear rather to do the least wrong, than to suffer a greater: so shall we be fit to do good one to another upon all occasions; for goodness goes forward where love is, but contention or unkindness stops the course of all that is good. So shall we also be stronger against our common adversaries, the World, and Devil, which do so hate us, as a body would think it were meet for us to stick fast and close together, and make much one of another, seeing this wicked world is bent against us.

Let me conclude this my speech to you Christians, with that blessed exhortation of Saint Paul, 2 Cor. 13, 11. Finally, my Brethren, fare ye well, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

CHAPTER 11.

Of relieving the poor.

I Will add but one thing more, and so make an end of what I purpose to say of this duty of Love, in which I have been longer than I thought of at first: And that is touching one branch, and duty of love, which is the relieving the necessities of the poor; of which, because I have spoken something in one of the Notes of Love, namely, that its Bountiful, I will be so much the shorter; handling some things here, that were not there so convenient to be spoken of.

The Scriptures, both of Old and New Testament, are plentiful about this Point, either Commandments touching it, and Promises of blessing thereto, or Threatening's against the neglect of it.

In the Old Law God commanded to leave their Grounds unsown, and Trees ungathered the seventh year, for the poor, Exod. 23. 10, 11. Leu. 25. 3. And the years that they sowed and gathered in, they were bidden to leave gleanings, Deut. 24. 19. to the end.

How oft in the Prophets doth the Lord call for Mercy? yea, tries the truth of their Religion, and performance of holy Duties by this, as St. James doth, chap. I. and the last verse, giving such charge of the poor in general, particularly, of the widow, stranger and fatherless.

It is commanded, Isaiah 58. 7. a very excellent place, plain and plentiful; and in most of the Prophets its called for, as a thing that the Jews much failed in, and were covetous and cruel. Heb. 13, To do good, and to distribute, forget not, &c. Ephes. 4. 28. Mat. 5. 45. He commands it, whose we are, and all we have at his appointment. I will add a few Reasons to move to this Duty:

1 To let pass to speak of the example of God, who fills the whole world with his goodness, and feeds both man and beast; who hath also been bountiful to every of us that are unworthy (as Jacob said) of the least of his mercies; Let the examples of God's servants, who herein obeyed and imitated the Lord in all ages; let them move us. Elisha took order for the poor widow, for the payment of her debts, and for her own maintenance, 2 Kings 4. Job was notable in this duty, as appears Chap. 31. from verse 16. to 21. Our Savior Christ of that little that he received for his maintenance, yet gave something to the poor: therefore (Judas carrying the bag) when our Savior Christ bade him, that he did do quickly, the Disciples thought he had meant he should give somewhat to the poor. Zacchaeus, being converted, gave half his goods &c. Luke 19. So Acts 2. & 4. the rich sold, and relieved the poor. Dorcas a good Woman this way, Acts 9. towards the end. Cornelius also a notable example, Acts 10. 1. There was also a contribution made by the Christians for the poor Brethren in Judea, because of a famine was among them, Acts 11. 29. Onesiphorus is commended, and Gaius for a host to the poor Saints of God.

2. Its a sacrifice very acceptable to God, Heb. 13. 16. Phil. 4. 18. as Cornelius his Alms came up into remembrance before God, Acts 10. 4. Yea, so pleasing, as when his service and that cannot stand together, he prefers mercy before sacrifice, Hos. 6. 6. And so pleasing, as no duty of Religion, ordinary or extraordinary, is welcome to God, if this duty be wanting, as Isaiah 1. & 58. from verse 5. to 13. What stronger motive can there be than this, seeing it's our happiness that we can do anything that GOD will be well pleased with?

3. We are but Stewards in respect of God (though owners among men) who hath so delivered these things out of his hand to us, as yet

he hath reserved a Royalty in them, and the appointing how they shall be disposed, and will call us to account of our stewardship, who hath appointed the poor a part: therefore without this, we can bring in no good bills of account.

We must not be like the Giants den, that have all the footings coming to us, and none from us. As that rich churl that coming over among his Tenants at the half year, a poor body asked him a penny, No he told them, he came to receive money, and not to give: the contrary had been better sense and reason a great deal. Else how can we show our selves thankful to God, that hath made us able to give, that might have made us receivers, the tail as well as the head, it being in his hand to make poor or rich, and there being nothing in us to move him to give us the better part?

It's a great honor to be the Almnors of the King of Heaven and Earth, and that to those that be not our own flesh only, but may be, such as belong to the Kingdom of God, as well as our selves. If we should see an Ox or Ass in misery, ready to famish, or lying under the burden, we ought to pity and help them: how much more our Christian Brother? Its honor enough that we may be givers and lenders, though we keep not all to ourselves. Its good manners for them that sit at the upper end of the Table, when they have cut well, to set down some to them that sit below, that all may go away satisfied, and praise the Master of the Feast.

4. By our liberality and merciful dealing we shall bring much glory to God: for we shall cause many thanks to be given him from the poor, 2 Cor. 8. and make them more to depend upon God, and to speak good of his dispensing of things; that though he hath appointed some to be poor, yet hath also commanded the rich to have respect unto them.

5. We shall do them a great deal of good whom we relieve: First to their bodies, feeding their hungry bellies, clothing their naked loins, refreshing their bowels: Or by lending we set them to their work, whereby they may get to live of. Next to their souls, keeping them from murmuring, impatience, theft, discontent: if they have no goodness in them it's the way to break their hearts, and to bring them to good, or else to convince them at least: if they have any good, we shall comfort their hearts, strengthen their faith, and make them serve God much the more cheerfully.

But especially we shall do our selves a great deal of good: First, we shall procure many prayers of the children of God for us. which is no small benefit, 2 Tim. 7. and the three last verses, the third Epistle of St. John the first and second verses: St. Paul prayeth earnestly in the one place for Onesiphorus, and St. John in the other for Gaius his host; and such prayers be not in vain.

Besides, we bring upon ourselves a great many blessings, God having made such promises of blessing to this Duty rightly performed.

We provide well for our outward estate: for he that soweth liberally, shall reap liberally, and with increase. God hath given his Word for requital, Pro. 19 17. So that we have God in our Cupboard for it (as we may say with holy reverence) he is the Poor's Surety, whose word is better than any man's bond: Heaven and Earth must be empty ere he will fail to pay. He that finds seed to the sower will supply to such, 2 Cor. 8. His righteousness shall endure for ever, Psal. 112. God will not put him out of his Farm that pays his Rent so well, but bless his stock and store, his crop and increase, Deut. 15. 10. Eccles. 7. 1.

Yea, he will bless them, not in their goods only, but in their names, they shall have love and a good report, which is better than a good ointment, and than much silver and gold, Prov. 22. 1. How fresh and

sweet is Mary's name still, for her ointment poured out; and Gaius, whose name is used, when we speak of a bountiful man to the people of God; he is a Gaius we say? Yea, God will bless such in their souls, Prov. 11. 17. Isa. 58. from verse 8. on forward. Matth. 5. the merciful shall obtain mercy. As on the contrary, God will not hear the prayer of the unmerciful man, Isa. 1. 15. Prov. 21. 13. He that stops his ear at the cry of the poor, &c. Nay, God will not bless the merciful man in this world only, but at the resurrection of the Just, Luke 14. when they shall hear this comfortable and most sweet word, Come ye blessed, &c. because he counts it as done to himself; and will we not give to God that gives all, nor to Jesus Christ, that spared not his life for us? If we say, Yes to God or Christ, we will give anything, else God forbid; God takes it done to himself, that is done to any of his. Whereas the Lord will plague both here and hereafter the unmerciful man: here, as Nabal, whom he struck that he died; and the Fool, Luke 12. that had all for himself, never mentions anybody else, was struck with sudden death; and hereafter, as the rich glutton, Luke 16. for no covetous or unmerciful man shall ever come in the Kingdom of heaven: but there shall be judgment without mercy, to them that show no mercy: they that will not give crumbs of bread on earth, shall be denied drops of water in hell.

Nay, God will not only bless the liberal and merciful man himself, but his posterity after him, Psalm 37. 26. The son of a Tennant, that paid his rent duly, shall not be put out his of Farm. Whereas God will curse the posterity of unmerciful men, and pluck from them the poor's portion, which their wicked fathers unconscionably hoarded up among their own; God will let the extortioner catch him, or give him up to a riotous wasteful course, that shall consume all: one way or other God will draw it out of his belly; and he oft dies in misery, whose father had no mercy.

Therefore, howsoever they have a Proverb, Happy is that son, whose father goes to the Devil, yet its most wicked and false: for even for outward happiness they miss of it, except it be some odd one, that by Repentance breaks off, and heals his fathers sin by mercifulness to the poor.

So that every way a merciful man provides well for himself, furthers his reckoning, and brings a great heap of blessings upon himself and his. But an unmerciful cruel man is well called a miserable man; for of all men, a covetous man is most miserable, in goods, name, soul and posterity, here and hereafter.

Use 1. This rebuketh a number of cruel, and unmerciful, and hard-hearted men, of whom there are everywhere some seen. True, the Gospel (God be thanked) hath prevailed with many, and they show forth some good fruits of their Faith and Love: But a number be userers, oppressors, grinders, rakers, all for themselves, and so covetous, as they will part from nothing by their good will: if anything come from them, it's so hardly, as one should wring water out of a stone, or pull away a piece of their flesh; as Nabal, that sent away David's servants empty, and with a churlish answer.

Some others so prodigal and riotous, and given to their pleasures, and to all excess, as they waste their state so fast, as they disable themselves to do that good they might; it's not to be had: Luxury keeps them so bare, which if they had grace to measure their matters with judgment, might live a great deal better themselves, and do much good where need is.

Or if some be so rich, as they hold their state, yet they lay it on so upon themselves and theirs, as no cost is spared upon brave apparel, new fashions, costly and curious diet, hawks, hounds, dice, cards, gaming's, that yet when it comes to a matter of giving, are as

pinching, as they that have not the tithe of their estate, can betee nothing, to the poor or good uses, very frank in idle expenses to serve their own lust, very sparing to those that have need; like the Glutton, Luke 16. who spared nothing from himself, nor nothing for poor Lazarus. And those, Amos 6. that fed to the full of the fattest, and drunk of the sweetest, till they were fitter to stretch themselves, and tumble upon their costly beds, then to do any good, yet they had not so much as a thought of the poor that were in want. And as the Fool, Luke 12. that made account he had much, and all for himself; Soul, eat, drink, and take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for (thee) for many years.

Notwithstanding the commandment of God, which they cannot be ignorant of, and the Law of Nature, which would be holpen, if they were poor, God's and good men's example, and the many promises of blessing made to this duty, yet are no whit moved by all these, but fast glued to the world, and can hear nothing that should pull anything from them. This was one of Sodom's sins, Contempt of the poor.

Let these sorts of men know, they are not so ill for others, as they be for themselves: As they show well, there is no love of God or men in them, as 1 John 3. Who so hath this worlds good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his compassion against him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? So they will pull some judgment of God upon their own heads, as their Predecessors, whom I have named, have done. And this is one reason, no doubt, that men's goods shift masters so oft; besides the ill account they will make of their stewardship, when they shall be called thereto, for which they must make their reckoning, to hear no better sentence than, O evil and unfaithful servant, take him, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness.

Let these better bethink themselves in time, and break off their sins by repentance, and their unrighteousness by mercy to the poor, that there may be a healing of their error, and a preventing the judgments of God: Oh that my counsel from God may be acceptable to them.

2. But for those, that out of conscience of God's commandment, and faith in God's promises made to this duty, out of a zeal to bring glory to God, do good to others, and to further their own reckoning; make conscience to be doing good with a merciful heart, carry a liberal hand, as God gives ability in themselves, and occasion from others: let them take it to themselves, as a good mark of the truth of their Religion, and know they can no way provide better for their comfort, or the continuance of God's blessing upon them and their estate, than by continuance in this duty.

3. And thirdly, let this provoke all sorts of men, to take knowledge of this duty of mercifulness to the poor, as one part of God's will; and well weighing the reasons used to provoke thereto, set themselves to make conscience of the performance thereof: which that they may do indeed, they must be persuaded to remove out of the way certain vices, that be deadly enemies thereto, and labor for the contrary virtues.

1. The first is Unbelief, which, as it breeds many other vices, so that of Unmercifulness; for that casts so many doubts and fears of what they may want themselves, and that it will hinder them in their estate, to give here and there, as they withdraw: therefore labor for Faith to believe, that as God will perform all his promises, so those made to this duty; and therefore that it's the high way to thriving. and this will set us to it, and that with cheerfulness.

2. Pride, which is seen in excess of costly attire for ourselves and ours, aiming at high pitches and great portions for our children, and

such and such estates must be obtained; this must needs hinder liberality: therefore the Apostle, 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. forbids women to be decked with costly apparel, but commands to array themselves with good works: Noting, they cannot do both; for the back is a thief: the meaning is, when its superfluous, and beyond their ability, all duties discharged: Oh what an infinite deal of good might be done, if but the superfluities of folks apparel were taken away, which might very well be spared!

3. The like may be said of intemperance excess of cheer, variety & costliness of dishes at men's tables: God allows to men according to their degrees, to some usually, to others at festival times & days of greater rejoicing; yet to none excess: or so as they thereby be disabled for such good works as their place calls for at their hands. The excess of this Land in these two forenamed things, would abundantly not only relieve the wants of our poor at home, but would make a blessed supply of the most woeful and crying necessities of our distressed brethren abroad.

And is it meet that some should be hungry, and others drunken? as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 11. 21. Were it not much meeter, that they had our superfluities (which do us but hurt) to supply their necessities, and so both should be better? The Lord give us at last to make conscience of this Duty; its more than high time so to do.

4. Idleness and unthriftiness, which usually go together, are great lets of liberality. For, if one go ever to the heap, and by labor add nothing thereto, in time it will consume, and so he shall have nothing for himself nor the poor: therefore the Apostle, Ephes. 4. 28. commands to work with the hands, that so there may be wherewith to give to them that want.

But usually idleness is joined with spending, gaming, drinking, and such unthrifty courses, and this hastens beggary the faster, and so prevents liberality in a high degree. The provident and thrifty are fittest to do good: as the good House-wife in the last of the Proverbs.

5. Covetousness is especially to be cast out, as the direct opposite to mercifulness to the poor, as contrary as fire and water: which is an insatiable desire of getting more, setting men's hearts on the world so eagerly, as it were heaven or happiness, and making it their God, so as they cannot endure to part from it; not knowing that they are base and transitory things, and that the perfection of them is in their well employment.

Lets therefore be entreated to remove these lets out of the way, that this duty may be carefully performed.

But yet let us not content ourselves to do this Duty of Mercifulness to the poor, but labor like Christians to do it in a right manner: for that is all in all, that makes or mars. For we may give much, and yet not please God, nor profit ourselves. Therefore diverse Rules to this purpose must be observed:

1. We must give or lend righteously, that is, of our own lawfully come by; not what we have gotten by oppression or wrong, which is to rob one, to give to another. We must not keep the poor as the Lion or Fox keep their Whelps or Cubs, with that we have got by rapine, but with our own: therefore giving is called Righteousness, Psal. 112, not only to show that its a duty that must be done, but it must be done in Righteousness. Therefore Micah 6. these two are joined together, to do justly, to love mercy. Zacchaeus first restored what he had got wrongfully, and then gives of his own just gotten goods to the poor.

Contrary to this, is the practice of some usurious, covetous, or sacrilegious persons, who when they have got much by Church robbery, and selling Church livings, or by oppressing and undoing many families; to still the gnawing of their Consciences, give somewhat to the poor at last. But its abomination to God, and their sins cry louder for judgment, than their liberality for any blessing.

Quest. But here it may be demanded, whether servants may give of their Masters goods?

Answ. No doubt, without Masters or Dames consent in one kind or other, they may not, it shall be theft to them, rather than anything pleasing to God.

Quest. May children give of their Parents goods?

Ans. No: not except they have some consent.

Quest. May such as are behind hand, and owe more than they be worth, or able to pay; may these give?

Answ. No: by no means. They boast of false liberality.

2. We must give freely, without expecting a recompense. Not therefore with opinion of merit to earn heaven, as Papists mercenarily do: Or to help themselves out of Purgatory; that is base: Nor do it Pharisaically, with ostentation, and desire to be seen.

We may look upon the Promises made by God to this Duty, to encourage us the more; yet to do it freely, because its commanded us of God.

Not expecting anything from man. What is freer than gift, as we say? So when we lend to our poor Neighbor, it must be free, not looking

he should earn it out, as it were, or do as much for us some other way; fie upon it. Nay, we ought not so to look for our own again, as that be the chief thing we aim at, but to do him a pleasure.

3. Cheerfully, as a free-will offering. God loves a cheerful giver: as Zacchaeus stood forth and gave &c. The Macedonians 2 Cor. 8. counted and called it a grace and favor, that they might have their hand in so good, acceptable & gainful a work. Men sow cheerfully in good ground.

Therefore its not to be done by force of Law, as some: Nor yet by such importunity of Neighbors, fain to use so many Arguments, and such a deal of do to persuade and get them to it. Not grudgingly or of necessity.

4. Seasonably; not tomorrow, if they now need, and we have it, Pro 3. 28. we know not what may fall out by then, what temptation they may meet with. Also we may be dead, or they: He gives twice, that gives quickly.

Also help them ere it be too late: shore them up when they begin to reel, so they may stand a good while; not let them alone till they fall flat down. A little in time may do more good, than much more after. We must not tarry till they have sold their cupboard, bed, their best coat; fie upon it. If one be lent to in time, he may be upheld, that else must soon come to receive Alms. So to give to the poor in their sickness, before they be too far spent.

5. Wisely: not lashing it on too fast, but measuring it out as it may continue. Psal. 112. Measure our affairs by judgment. Few err on this hand; yet some have been so lavish in house-keeping, entertainment and giving, as they have over gone themselves. This is to pull out the tap: We must draw as need is. A good house-keeper will not set the

barrel on the green, for everyone to drink that will, and more than need; so he should soon make an end, and have no comfort when he hath done.

Also we must give wisely, as we may do most good with that we give. Therefore we must take care, that they have it that have most need: Not the lusty to have it, and the old, lame, blind, impotent, and young children to want. It's a great disorder in some great men's keeping open house at Christmas, that the rude, idle and profane round about, they come thither to meat, but the very poor indeed, which cannot travel in the dirt, and cold, and crowd, they sit at home and want.

No doubt, if it pleased them to send to their Neighbor-Towns in money what they think good to bestow, to be distributed by the Officers and chief of the Town that know how to give it indifferently, and where most need is, it would be much greater relief to the poor, and so a more charitable work, and save themselves a very great deal of trouble, and prevent a great deal of sin committed by that rude company, in their unseasonable returning's home, besides their rudeness there.

6 We must give to the good especially, Gal 6. True, we must give to all; I mean, to such as follow their calling: but for those that can work, and will not, let them starve. Give even the bad in their want, if they be diligent to do what they can; yet give them with instructions, admonitions to keep their Church, have a care of their souls, and to bring up their children to work, not to pilfering, idleness, or begging, rebuking them for these or any such faults; as they that be most poor are very graceless, and godless almost.

So may we do good both ways But to the household of Faith, give them with more cheerfulness, and good encouragement of them in

their good course, and behold Jesus Christ in them: when all be alike to us, its no good sign, but when these be worst regarded, there can be no worser sign.

7. Orderly. To our own kindred first, 1 Tim. 5. and so on to our own Town, and so further, as God gives occasion and ability.

8. According to every man's ability. To whom much is given, of them is much required. The Master called his servant that had five Talents to account for five. 1 Tim. 6. 17. Rich men are charged to be rich in good works: he that hath but little, little is of him expected; if it be but a cup of cold water, a widow's mite, where is no more, it shall be as well accepted, as great things of the rich. For God requires not of a man according to that he hath not, but according to that he hath: and that he will require.

Its therefore a great fault in most Parishes, that the meaner sort bear the chiefest burden, and not the richest: but a man, not a quarter sometime, not half a quarter of their substance, shall be half as much in charge as they. Fie upon such inequality: amongst men of good conscience, it ought not so to be.

Though it were but a foolish thing for one of us to say, If I were such a rich man, I would do thus and thus much good more than such a man doth; because we were never in that state: and therefore know not the temptations belonging to that state: yet this we may truly say, that such and such a rich man hath means in his hand to do very much good: Oh what elbow room he hath? he might reach out his hand two ways, ten ways, and be never the worse. Towards the Ministry of the Word, to help a poor body out of great trouble, &c. What is it for a rich man to give here twenty shillings, there forty shillings, five pound to this good use or that? And when some charge is to be borne by a company of mean men, to exempt them, and bear

it all himself; what good by lending poor young beginners, and such as want stock?

But alas, how far off is it from the most such? Some do no good: others nothing answerable to their ability. They lose their honor that God hath put upon them.

Truly let them look to it: for they have great accounts to make: And if their receipts be found great, and their laying's out small, God will cast such bills in their faces, and themselves into hell.

9. We must give according to everyone's need: for their need should be the whetstone to our liberality: As in dear times, or in time of sickness and distress, to reach out our hand more than ordinarily; not to give hand over head, as much to those that have less need, as to those that have more. The wicked will be most clamorous, and if we go by that, oft times the better minded poor, which be more bashful & slow to speak for themselves, shall have wrong; therefore we ought to inform ourselves, as well as we can, of every ones wants, especially, in our own Parish, and to carry our hand accordingly: we must not be bountiful to our wealthier neighbors, and pinching to the poor. If we cannot do both, let our feasting the wealthier alone, and do good to the poor; for that will be the truer & more certain testimony of our love, because they cannot requite us again. But you shall have some, that will spare no cost, to make a feast to them that have no need, (which, with the other too, hath his place) that yet are very miserable to the poor, and will the same day of such feast, shake up a poor body like a dish-clout, that comes but for some of the scraps. Let not these boast of their Love.

And then to show our selves most kind & helpful, when their need is greatest: for a brother or neighbor is borne for adversity, and that is the trial of love. God is never so near his servants with his comforts,

as in their greatest afflictions: And therefore, while a man is in prosperity and good case, to salute him, use him kindly, be glad of his company; and when the world frowns on him, and God casts him behind, then not to know him, to shake him off, go on the other side of the way, or if we must needs take notice of them, then to speak slightly to them, hoverly, and be strange and far off, this is no true love: and yet this is that that many a one finds in the world, as Pro. 14. 20. & 19. 4. 7. These be like winter-plashes, that be very broad when there is no need of them; but in summer are dry, when they should do most good.

Thus many a worthy Minister, while they have enjoyed their health and Ministry, have had countenance of all sorts, both Gentlemen and Yeomen, that after, by some occasion, having had the case altered with them, have gone up and down moping, and nobody, especially of the wealthier sort, take notice of them, but shun them, as if they had the Plague about them. So the wives of many painful Ministers, while their husbands lived, were made account of, and invited, that when God hath taken their husbands from them (when they had most need of comfort) have found cold friendship, not of strangers only, but even of those that professed greater love to the parties deceased. This is but carnal, or at least but cold love, that is then farthest off when there is most need of it; whereas true Love rejoiceth to be showing itself, where is most good to be done.

10. We must give with compassion, and out of a pitiful heart and feeling of others miseries; as we are bidden, Col. 3. 23. to put on tender mercies, and bowels of compassion, &c. and 1 Pet. 3. 8. Be pitiful, &c. and Isa. 58. 10. Pour out our soul to the hungry: that is, have compassion of their miseries. Thus did the Lord to us, when we had plunged ourselves into irrecoverable misery, he took pity on us, and gave us his blessed Son, &c.

So had he compassion on the groanings of Israel under Pharaohs bondage. So in the book of Judges diverse times, Judge. 10. 16. so also, Neh. 9. 17. This will prove us to be living members, not dead stocks. A little given with compassion, is more acceptable to God, than never so much without, 1 Cor. 13. yea, compassion alone is much accepted with God and men, where there is nothing else to be had.

Which condemns the great Alms-deeds of Papists, that proceed from no compassion towards the poor, but out of love to themselves, to save their own skins. That give to be seen of men, that give by constraint of authority, or for shame, and to avoid reproach, or to satisfy the requests of friends: Or those that give with twits and taunts, and proud insulting's, checks and upbraiding's, especially towards those that be anything well minded: all these have their reward they are like to have, except their work had come from a better root: Whereas many a poor body coming to their poor sick neighbor, with pitiful moaning's, out of a grieved heart, & water in their eyes, beat up their pillow, watch with them all night, or tend them a day or two (which can very hardly spare the time from their own bellies) or of their little give them a little, this is a very rich gift, and pleasing to God, and shall not go unrewarded. Let not the poor therefore be discouraged, and say, I live like an unprofitable person, & can do nobody any good; but consider what our Savior Christ said of the Widows two mites cast into the treasury, and be of good comfort.

Now seeing compassion is so necessary, & gives such commendation to our liberality, it shall be good for us to use the best means we can, to stir it up, or procure it in us.

1. It shall be therefore good, to take a true report from such, as can relate the miseries of any that we are to give unto, and so well weigh and mark it, as it may move us. Thus did Nehemiah, Cap. 1. so weigh the misery of God's people that was told him, as he was very deeply affected therewith.

2. To put ourselves into their person, & think (as it might have been our case, as well as theirs, so) what we would be glad to find from others, if it were. Consider, they be not brute beasts, but even our own flesh; and therefore to pity them.

3. So by our own afflictions that God sends us at any time, to be moved to pity others; and from the comforts that we find in them, from God or Men, be provoked to the like compassion towards others, 2. Cor. 1. 4.

4. Especially, it's of very great force to this purpose, to go and see the miseries of our poor brethren, their ruinous & cold houses, poor fire to make amends with, empty cupboards, thin clothing, and so near the wind, cold lodging, slender covering; and to see what exceeding pains some take early and late, to see others in how great pain and affliction they lie, and how little to comfort them, &c.

5. If our heart be not made of an Adamant, this will move us, & a great deal more than all that we can hear. The sight of the eye moves much, either to good or evil; which the Devil well knew, when he tempted Eve to look upon the Apple, and when he set Bathsheba naked and bathing before David's eye, which did more hurt than if he had heard of such a thing: So is it powerful to move to good. Therefore Saint James bids us, visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, &c. Our Savior Christ seeing the people scattered, &c. Mat. 9. had compassion on them: So the Samaritan saw the wounded man, and had compassion of him.

It were therefore a comely thing sometimes for wealthy women to look into the poor's houses, and see a sight that might move them, and that they might report of to their husbands. Their coat would sit never the worse on their backs, if they did so: neither need they think scorn, seeing the glorious Angels attend about them, if they be good, and God himself is with them.

This also is comely for Ministers and their Wives.

Especially it is requisite for them to do so, that are in office, and have taken for the time the special charge of the poor; so shall they answer their name of Overseers, which few do, but go by hear-say, which is oft uncertain, or that which is worse, by the words of the poor themselves; the worst most-what being most bold and importunate, when others that have more need, and are better to be regarded, cannot so well speak for themselves.

These Rules being carefully observed in our Relieving the poor, it will not only be profitable to them, but it shall be well pleasing to God, and bring much comfort and blessing to our own selves here and hereafter: Without which, howsoever others may have benefit, yet ourselves shall certainly lose our labor.

But now I draw to an end of this duty of mercy to the poor, Do you think that the carnal and unbelieving heart of man will willingly yield hereto, without any further questioning or opposing against it? Oh no: for though those that are of God will hear God's Word, and his Commandment, and Reasons that he useth to move to the obedience thereof, will overcome and prevail with them, yet to the unregenerate, nothing can be so spoken, but they have many carnal reasonings and objections to make against the same. Some whereof I will here make known, and briefly answer them, and so wind up with a word or two of the duties of the poor.

Object. 1. My goods are mine own, I will do with them what I list, and nobody shall make me give, but where and when I see good myself.

Answ. Though thy goods be thine own among men, yet God hath but committed them to thee of trust, and reserved a right in them, commanding thee to dispose of part of them to the poor, to whom he hath given none, and will accordingly call thee to account for the same: therefore thou art not such an absolute owner of them as thou imaginest, but an accountant and steward.

Object. 3. If I give to everyone that will ask, and say they have need, I may give away all, and make myself a beggar.

Answ. That's not required of thee, but to give with discretion. As for the young man that was bidden by our Savior Christ to sell all, and give to the poor, and follow Christ; it was a commandment of trial peculiar to him, not binding all: and yet we see it not plainly required of him, that he should give away all.

Again, they fear a false fear: for when some of them hinder themselves much by running into usury, of a covetous mind to purchase withal, some others by riotous expenses in apparel, by suretyship, or other blind courses that they take; then every little thing that they give to the poor, or any good use; oh this will beggar them. No, no, look well about thee, and thou shalt find its not thy liberality beggars thee, but somewhat else; leave that, and thou mayst do well to thyself, and much good to others.

Object. 3. Though I have enough now, yet I cannot tell what I may want hereafter; I will be sure to provide for myself, and if I leave anything when I die, I will give them somewhat then: As one that lying upon his death bed, put a piece of Gold in his mouth, and kept

it there, and being asked his reason, he answered, Some wiser than some, I mean to keep this till I am dead.

Answ. A right objection of a covetous distrustful man, that will trust God no further than he sees him; no, though he hath promised to reward liberality with plenty. What a wretched mind is this, to think that God will fail men ever the more that obey him? And whereas they think to make sure of enough for themselves, it's not all, nor ten times so much that could keep them from beggary and misery, if God should set himself against them. And to give when they die, its little thanks; for they cannot carry it with them.

Object. 4. All is little enough for myself and my children: for I mean to leave my eldest son a good estate, and I have diverse daughters that I purpose to match well; and therefore must get them good portions, as its expected in these days, and then they must have education accordingly.

Answ. But who bids you fly such high pitches, and set down such portions, and in the meantime neglect God's commandment, and your duty to the poor? This is the high way to pull down your children. Do as you may, all duties discharged, and there an end: for if you hoard up the poor's part in your children's great portions, God will draw it out of your, or your children's bellies.

Object. 5. They be never the better for all that is given them, they draw all through their throat.

Answ. If some be not, yet some be thrifty, and its well seen and well bestowed of them: If any abuse your liberality, you may cut them the shorter, but let not others fare the worse for them.

Ob. 6. They be ill tongued, one may give them never so much, & they will not give one a good word.

Answ. It may be we spoil our gift in the manner of bestowing it, and so it loseth its grace and credit. 2. Though some be unthankful and ill tongued, yet all are not so: they that be, yet give them, and overcome them.

Object. 7. They be so bad and so wicked, as its pity to give them.

Answ. We give it not to their badness, but to their poverty: and may be our goodness to them with good counsel, may make them better. But some blame not their badness for hatred of their sin, but as an excuse to save their purses: but that is not a sufficient plea.

Object. 8. They be so thievish one can keep nothing for them almost, abroad especially: They break my hedges, carry away my bars, pluck up my stiles; I will give them nothing, not I.

Answ. This is most what rich men's faults: for if they would take order that every family should do what work they are able (according to the Law of God, and the good Statutes of the Land) and then what they cannot reach to by their labor, to supply to them for necessaries, everyone being held to work, most part of this would be prevented. And then if any were taken in such offense, and were well punished, either by the whip, or else their collection that week kept back, you should hear few such complaints. But if they be not as well looked to, to follow their work, as to give them a little collection, a great many will beg or steal, rather than get it by working.

Object. 9. Some of them that make a great show of Religion, yet if they get money into their fingers that one hath lent them, one cannot

tell how to get it again, for all their great preciseness, and running to sermons.

Ans. True; some such offenses there be, more is the pity: but this must not wholly take our mind from the duty of lending, nor let all fare the worse for the fault of some few: Or if we should do well for any that we thought well of for soundness, and after they proved but Hypocrites; yet if our minds were upright in that we did, we shall not lose our reward

Object. 10. There be such a number of charges every way, to the King, and for Soldiers, to the Ministers, to the repairing the Church, to Bread and Wine for the Communion, and Briefs, and one Collection or other, that I can never a Sunday be quiet: and now you come for the poor; I think you will have all; I see no reason to be at all these charges.

Answ. For those that be to the King, it's our bounden duty, and they be abundantly recompensed in the peace and quietness that we enjoy under his Government. And for the Church, small cause to grudge at that, seeing it is a trifle towards his service that gives all. And that we give for the good of our souls, is the best bestowed money that can be, if the fault be not in our selves. For anything we do in compassion to them that be in want, God hath given his word himself to see that requited. So that if it be well considered, there is no such cause of this grumbling at any one, or all of these charges.

Object. 11. If you will not be quiet, but follow me thus with Give, give, and Pay, pay, I will make a shortcut of it, I will break up house and go live in a great Town, and eat and drink, and be merry with my friends, and put out my money to usury.

Answ. If you do, you shall carry many curses with you, and a guilty conscience, and the hand of God will follow you, and it may be you may have as small joy of it, as your Predecessor in the twelfth of Luke, when he had thought to have nestled himself in his wealth for many years, and lived at ease, he was suddenly arrested, with O fool, this night they shall fetch away thy soul, and then whose shall these things be? There is no flying from the duties that God requires: therefore listen and learn, obey and be blessed.

CHAPTER 12.

Of the Poor's duties.

Now for the Poor's duties, a word or two. I speak to you from the Lord, how you should behave yourselves in this your condition (and its very needful) know them, and God give you a heart to do them.

You must labor to be contented with your estate, & give glory to God, and know it to be the state that he seeth fittest for you, if you were borne to it; or he hath brought you into it, especially, if you have by any wicked courses brought it upon yourselves, you can have the less comfort in it. But if you can be so wise as make it unto you a spur to true repentance, you shall be happy.

Keep your Church diligently, though your clothing be mean: Keep holy the Sabbath day, and know nothing is lost by that: Pray daily, and labor to live in the fear of God, that though you be poor to the world-ward, yet you may be as St. James saith, Cap. 2. Rich in Faith,

and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him.

Follow your calling diligently, that as much as may be you may eat your own bread, & that God may move men's hearts to supply willingly that that is wanting. Be not over clamorous: Keep a good tongue, though men deal not very well with you.

Carry yourselves dutifully and humbly towards the rich, and all your superiors; not saucy, surly, ill-tongued: patient and meek, when you receive a reproof, and not swell or give ill words.

Be thankful for any kindness you receive; First and chiefly to God, who gives the ability, the commandment and the heart to do you good; and upon former experience, depend upon him in after needs: and resolve, that whatsoever want you suffer, you will use no unlawful means to help yourselves, but rather make known your burdens, and God will make a way. Secondly, be thankful to those, whom he hath made his instruments to do you good, so God gives good leave; and see it practiced by godly Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 31. 8. In token of your thankfulness, pray to God for them, that God would bless their basket and store, themselves and theirs, especially, that he would give them much joy and comfort to their souls, and to have long life and happy days.

For you that are borrowers, borrow no more than you have possibility of paying again. Appoint such a day, as in all likelihood you may repay it: work night and day to keep touch, borrow it of another to pay, rather than break day; for if you keep your day, you keep your friend. Or if you be much disappointed that you cannot, then come before the day, tell your case, and crave favor, and a new day, and show yourselves as careful to pay, as ever you were to borrow; so shall you have a good conscience, and provide well for

yourselves: for if you deal honestly, you shall not need to fear but you shall find friends.

Many there be, that care not what they borrow, & never care for paying; they cared to borrow it, they say, let the Owner care to come by it again: they do not mean to take two cares. which bear the mark of wicked men, Psal. 37. 21. for the godly make great conscience of it, as the son of the Prophets, that was so sorry for the loss of the axe; Alas, Master, it was but borrowed, 2 Kin. 6. 5. And the Prophet Elisha wrought a miracle to this purpose, increasing the oil in the Widows cruse, and bade her sell it, and, first pay her debts, and then live of the rest: For we must owe nothing to any, but to love one another; that is, not willfully, or through carelessness, but what we can, & mean to pay. They will appoint, it may be, a near day, though they know no means to compass it, only to obtain their purpose: But when they have it, they care to keep no day, nor yet come at the Creditor, nor in his sight, as near as they can. These play the fools as well as the wicked men, and undo themselves utterly, which otherwise might have been upheld, and lived comfortably of their credit, though they had no ability of their own. But when they have no ability nor credit neither, they must needs hasten apace to misery, and thank themselves.

Let all, that have any wit or conscience, take heed of this: But especially, let all those, that make greater profession of Religion than others, beware of this, that they give no just occasion to carnal men, to speak ill of them, and their holy profession for their sakes; nor to the godly to be grieved by their unfaithfulness.

FINIS.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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