A DOUBLE SCHEME, OR TABLE;

CONTAINING, IN THE FIRST COLUMN,

The SINS most incident to the Members of particular Churches, plainly forbidden in the Word, and for which God sets Marks of his Displeasure on them.

AND, IN THE SECOND,

The DUTIES enjoined on them in the Scripture, in the conscientious Discharge whereof, they receive signal Fruits of his Favour.

I. Sin. THE first, and more general sin of church members, is, a defect in their care and circumspection, to prevent all just offences to them that are without: forbidden, Col. iv. 5. "Walk in wisdom towards them which are without." By a careless disregard of this rule, we harden the wicked in their sins, bring guilt upon ourselves, and reproach upon the name and ways of God.

II. Sin. The second, and more particular sin of some church members, is idleness, and neglect of their civil callings; against the express rule, 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. "There are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all: Such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." This brings poverty on themselves, and scandal on religion.

III. Sin. The third sin is tattlebearing, and revealing the secrets of families, and persons; whence many strifes arise, to the cooling and quenching of mutual love;

I. Duty. THEIR first duty is, to be often together in acts of Christian communion. Mal. iii. 16. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another," &c. Such meetings for prayers, repetition of sermons, and Christian conference, greatly conduce to mutual edification; which is the principal intention of Christian fellowship, Eph. iv. 16.

II. Duty. Their second duty is, to follow and back the great design of the gospel in the world, and therein assist the public ministry, by their private and prudent helping on the conversion of the carnal and careless world, Phil. iv. 3. "Help those women that laboured with me in the gospel, &c. For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, strive together with me," Rom. xv. 30.

III. Duty. Their third duty is humble condescension to the infirmities of their weaker brethren, and denying themselves in what they can, without sin,
expressly forbidden, Lev. xix. 16. “Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.” And 1 Tim. v. 13. Not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.”

IV. Sin. The fourth sin is an easy credulity of private whispers, and rash censures thereupon. This we ought not to do against the meanest member. 2 Cor. xii. 20. “Lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings,” &c. Much less against church-officers; 1 Tim. v. 19. “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.” This strikes at the bond of peace.

V. Sin. Their fifth sin is in their neglect of God’s ordinances upon slight diversions, when they are neither disabled by works of necessity, or mercy, contrary to Heb. x. 25. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Trivial occasions should divert no Christian from attending upon God’s ordinances.

VI. Sin. The sixth sin is a defect in zeal for God’s ordinances, manifested in their dilatory attendance; contrary to Psal. cxxii. 1. “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.” And unsuitable to their first practice, Gal. iv. 5. “Where is then the blessedness?” &c.

VII. Sin. The seventh sin is irreverence, and want of seriousness under ordinances: contrary to Psal. lxxxix. 7. “God is great-thought that they give them no offence. Rom. xv. 1. “We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” And ver. 2. “Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification.”

IV. Duty. Their fourth duty is to be exceeding tender of the church’s unity, both in judgment, love, and practice: avoiding (as much as may be, and as far as the gospel rule allows) all causes and occasions of division and separation. Rom. xvi. 17. “Mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them.” And Phil. ii. 1, 2. “If there be any consolation in Christ, &c. be ye like minded.”

V. Duty. Their fifth duty is a respectful carriage towards the meanest Christian, and to have higher esteem of others than themselves. External things make no difference with Christ; Rom. xii. 10. “In honour preferring one another.” Gal. iii. 28. “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Yet a decorum is to be kept suitable to civil differences; Eph. v. 21. “Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.”

VI. Duty. Their sixth duty is, meekly to receive reproofs from each other for their sins, especially when the matter is just, and the manner of delivering it regular; Psal. exli. 5. “Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: And let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil,” &c.

VII. Duty. Their seventh duty is, to communicate their spiritual stock of gifts, graces, and experiences, not interfering with
ly to be feared in the assembly of
the saints; and to be had in re-
verence of all that are round
about him.” And this is mani-
fest in vain attires; 1 Cor. xi.
10. “The woman ought to have
power on her head, because of
the angels.” And unseemly pos-
tures and gestures; Eccl. v. 1.
“Keep thy foot when thou goest
to the house of God; and be
more ready to hear, than to give
the sacrifice of fools.”

VIII. Sin. The eighth sin re-
provable in them, is, the neglect
of giving and taking due reproofs
from each other; contrary to Lev.
xix. 17. “Thou shalt in any wise
rebuke thy neighbour, and not
suffer sin upon him.” And Christ’s
own rule, Matth. xviii. 15. “Go,
and tell him his fault between
thee and him alone.” And so
for taking reproofs, see Psal. cxli.
5. “Let the righteous smite me,”
&c.

IX. Sin. The ninth sin is, mu-
tual strifes and animosities, not
seasonably and prudently com-
sed among themselves, but scan-
dalously exposed to the view of
the world; contrary to the apo-
stle’s rule, 1 Cor. vi. 5, 6. “Is
there not a wise man among you,
&c. But brother goeth to law
with brother, and that before the
unbelievers? Now therefore, there
is utterly a fault among you.”

X. Sin. The tenth sin is, the
privateness of their spirits, center-
ing too much in their own con-
cerns; expressly condemned, Phil.

public officers, nor by sinful par-
tiality including some, and ex-
cluding others (to whom it is as
due, and who may have more
need) from the benefit thereof;
1 Pet. iv. 10. “As every man
hath received the gift, even so
minister the same one to another.”
1 Tim. v. 21. “Observe these
things, without preferring one
before another, doing nothing by
partiality.”

VIII. Duty. Their eighth duty
is, cheerfully to communicate their
outward good things for the relief
of their brethren; Heb. xiii. 16.
“To do good, and to communi-
cate, forget not.” And the bet-
ter to enable them hereunto, to be
diligent in their callings; Eph.
iv. 28. “Working with his hands,
that he may have to give to him
that needeth.” And especially
to make comfortable provision
for their ministers, not by way
of courtesy, but duty; 1 Cor.
ix. 14. “Even so hath God or-
dained, That they which preach
the gospel, should live of the gos-
pel.”

IX. Duty. Their ninth duty
is, not only to relieve the distres-
sed members of Christ, but to
seek out, and visit them; to
know their spiritual and temporal
wants, in order to a full dischar-
gement of that duty; Jam. i. 27.
“Pure religion, and undefiled before God
and the Father, is This, to visit
the fatherless and widows in their
affliction,” &c.

X. Duty. Their tenth duty
is, to put charitable constructions
upon doubtful words and actions;
and if either will admit a double
ii. 21. "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." And contrary to scripture example, 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

SIX BENEFITS OF WALKING BY THE FOREGOING RULES.

I. Benefit. STRICT and heedful attendance to these rules, will put a lustre upon religion before the world, and make it glorious in the eyes of such as now despise it. Tit. ii. 10. "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Which he here speaks, to encourage all to ordinate walking.

II. Benefit. This will allure and win the world over to Christ, and wonderfully prosper and further the design of the gospel. Phil. ii. 15, 16. "That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, &c. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

III. Benefit. This will effectually stop the mouths of all detracting and blaspheming enemies of religion. 1 Pet. ii. 15. "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

IV. Benefit. This will eminently glorify God, which is the ultimate end of our beings. Matth. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

V. Benefit. This will fill the people of God (by way of evidence) with much inward peace. Gal. vi. 16. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy upon the Israel of God."

VI. Benefit. This will secure the presence of God with, and among us; whence results both the efficacy of ordinances, and the stability and glory of the churches: For Christ walks among the golden candlesticks, and threatens the churches, in case of defection from gospel rules, "to remove the candlestick out of his place, except they repent," Rev. ii. 1, 5.

FINIS.