1

Introduction

Quaker school teacher Josiah Forster first published this broadside in 1751, thirty years after the death of its author, William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania. The treatise, Christian Discipline: Or Certain Good and Wholesome Orders for the Well-Governing of My Family, is made up of two lists. The first is a set of religious instructions, made up of orders for worship, prohibitions against certain sinful actions, and commitments to the "Truth of God." Penn's ten tenets relating to "God's holy worship" are intended as a guide for the "Christian master and mistress" in the moral and religious leading of their family. The second list is a set of rules for guaranteeing the "civil discipline" of a household, in which Penn offers a more domestic guide in "matters . . . of a lesser nature" for the running of households. This second guide is particular, indicating times for waking, sleeping, and dining, as well as daily family routines and prohibitions against undesirable behaviors like visiting the "public-house in the town" and taking part in "unprofitable talk."

In the treatise, Penn refers to himself as the "Christian master" of his earthly family, but we might also read Penn's orders as his philosophy in the founding of Pennsylvania. Christian Discipline opens with a biblical quotation from Joshua 24:14-15: "choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Penn founded the colony as a place for religious tolerance and freedom of worship. Like Joshua, Penn would choose to "serve the Lord."

In 1751, Forster published Penn's rules as a call to return to "Christian Fervour and Concern." Penn's intention in writing Christian Discipline at least thirty years earlier was just that: to offer a guide for Christian families.

Image

CHRISTIAN . ISCIPLINE:

Certain good and wholfome ORDE S, for the well-governing of my Family, in a right Christian Conversion, as becometh the Children of the LIGHT and TRUTH of the most High GOD. Divided into Two Parts.

JOSHUA XXIV. 14, 15. Now therefore fear the LORD, and ferve Him in Uprightness and in Truth ; and put away the Gods which your Fathers ferved beyond the Flood, and in Egypt, and ferve the LORD : And if it feem evil onto you to ferve the LORD, choole you this Day whom ye will ferve, whether the Gods which your Fathers ferved that were on the other Side the Flood, or the Gods of the America, in whole Land ye dwell : But as for me and my Houfe we will ferve the LORD.

P A R T the First.

IMP.RIMIS,

Hole neep upon it, not the one go town topon more that is well pleafing confes to each other, and feck Peace and purfue it, for that is well pleafing unto GOD. Exourtury, That though every one have a particular Service appointed, yet that all fo live in the Love of CHRIST JESUS, who walk'd His Difciples Peet, as to be ready and willing to affit each other, for that becoment Brethren and Fellow-fervants. NINTULY, That all Drunkennefs, Lafcivioufnefs, Lying, Defraud.ag, Emulation, Back-biting, Tale-beering, Slandering, Curfing, taking the Name of GOD or CHRIST in vain, Pride, Stubbornnefs, Flattery, Sloth-fulnefs, Falfenefs, Bye-fervice, or fuch like Fruits of Darknefs, be not fo-much as named amongly on : For you well know that thole who do fuch Things cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD 3 and be affured, that after due Repronf, fuch fhall not continue in my Family.

TENTULY, And as it becometh a Chriftian Mafter and Miftrefs to re-our nothing from Servants that is not agreeable to the righteous TRUTH of GOD; fo they keeping in their Places, that you all make it folem. Matter of Conficence before the LORD to be upright, faithful, diligns, and obtdient towards them, not flighting them becaufe they are your Brethren.

P A R T the Second.

As I have acquitted my Confeience in experifying what was enjoined me of the LORD, to require from my Family about thefe Things which particularly relate to GOD's hole. Working, and their Chriftian Daty and Converta-tion : So was it my Defire to declare my Mind in Matters (the of a loffer Nature) yet needfary for the Civil Diffipline of my Family. And that now follows as proper to the Division or Table of Orders :

IMPRIMIS,

THAT the Family arise every Morning from the first of the third Month uill the first of the fifth Month about fix in the Morning, and from the first of the first Month to the first of the ninth Month about he first Hour in the Morning, and from the first of the ninth Month to the first of the eleventh Month about the first Hour, and from the first of the eleventh Month to the first of the third Month about feven in the Morning. SECONDLY, That all come to Breakfalt about the ninth Hour; that all come to Dinner about the Twelfth; and that all come to Sapper the fe-venth Hour.

SECONDLY, That all come to Breakfail about the ninth Hour; that all come to Dinner about the Twelfth; and that all come to Supper the fe-centh Hou. THIRDLY, That every One take it in their proper Turn to knock or ring all the Reft according to the feveral appointed Times in their respective Sea-tons, whether to religious Exercises or Meak, as they fhall be ordered. FourTHLY, That every Servant after Supper come and render to their Matter and Miltres an Account of what has been done the fame Day, and receive respective Infructions for the enfang Day. THITLY, That every One in their Turn take Care that all Gates and Doors be lock'd and bolted, and all Fires and Candles be extinguished before they go to Bed; and that the Men's Care be in what belongs to the Men, and the Malis in what concerns them. SXTHLY, That every One in their Turn take Care that all Gates and the Malis in what concerns them. IXTHLY, That all retire to Bed about the tenth Hour at Night. STATHLY, That is enjoined all to forberal load Difcourfes, and to go the Perion they have Bufines with, and not to bawl and loadly call airer them, it being both offenfive and unifernity. IXTHLY, That rome go to any Inn, or other publick Houfe in the Town, but on Bufines find known, and Lawe time. NINTHLY, That none take the Liberty of ablenting themfelves on any first be at Home, or lach One as by them full be appointed to overfee about on Bufines find known, and Lawe time. Thus and the offen the family. And that the Concern them, provided either Mafter or Mus-ter be at Home, or lach One as by them full be appointed to overfee about, or made publick Difficure. The mathe enter into unprofinable Take, but dipatch the Bufines they are minowed about, whether Errands or other with according to their respec-ture for ender publick Difficure. X, We PENN.

PHILIP. iv. 8, 9. And whatfoever Things are true, whatfoever Things are honeft, whatfoever Things are juft, whatfoever Things are pure, whatfoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praife, think on the Things, and the GOD of PRACE be with us.

A COPY of the above ORDERS of DOMESTIC ORCONNY, was preferred to me a little after the AUTHOR'S Death, by a worthy Friend who lived fome Time in the Family. And as their RULES are to generally influctive, there is no Houfhold to which they may not in feveral Refrects prove beneficial. That Part relating to religious Conduct, thews what a Spirit of Clriftian Ferrour and Concern then appared amongly us. And were that I rative of Retirement but imitated in Part, it would be a Means of transmity Spiritual Strongerth, if we were rightly exercised 3 to when there is an Abitation of Boo and Mind from the Purfuit of Temporal Things, and a calm Centering down to the ETERNAL Rock, we thereby give ourfelves and Families the faireft Opportunities for the Enjoyment of that Divine Fortitude wherein our Prefervation flands. J. FORSTER. 1751.

Christian Discipline: Certain Good and Wholesome Orders for the Well-Governing of My Family..., 1751. (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC00246.01)

William Penn on the "Well-Governing of My Family," ca. 1700

Excerpt

William Penn's Christian Discipline: Certain Good and Wholesome Orders for the Well-Governing of My Family..., 1751. (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC00246.01)

AS it becometh us, to whom is made known the only wise, invisible, and omnipotent GOD; and that heavenly spiritual Worship which only pleaseth Him, always to retain Him in our Knowledge, with all due Fear, Godly Reverence, and sincere Obedience: So more especially, it is my Command in the heavenly Authority, as a Christian Master of my Family, That all in it, and of it, who profess the Truth with me, do meet and assemble every Morning, with all Humility and Godly Fear, to wait upon the Almighty GOD our Creator, and to receive and enjoy His living Mercies and refreshing Rresence, that being sanctify'd by Him, we may hallow His Name, and return the Praise due to Him from Men and Angels for ever.

Secondly, That every Day about the eleventh Hour, (unless diverted by some extraordinary Occasion) it is also expected, that all come together again, and every one in his Turn, read either the Scriptures of Truth or some Martyrology, or History of the People of GOD, or Boks of Friends, as shall be provided for that Purpose.

Thirdly, That the same Practice be observed about the sixth Hour in the Evening, to the End, that we may be stirred up to abhor the Actions of evil Doers, so to embrace and follow the Example of Patience, Zeal, Holiness, and Constancy in the Righteous, who only were and are of the Flock and Family of GOD.

Fourthly, That those Days, which are appointed to meet publickly to worship GOD upon, none under any Pretence (if in Health, and not unavoidably engaged to the contrary) neglect going to such Meetings (as the Manner of some may be) but that they constantly and timely attend and frequent the same, as becometh a Family fearing the LORD, and that is zealous for His everlasting Truth.

Fifthly, That there be a Watch kept over every Mind, so that it may not err from the Counsel of GOD, and the weighty Government of His holy Truth, in whatsoever it is exercised about, least Darkness and Deadness come over it, and the evil One enter to sow all Manner of evil Seeds, as

William Penn on the "Well-Governing of My Family," ca. 1700

Strife, Envy, Evil-watching, Levity, Pride, and all such like; and the latter End of such is worse than their Beginning.

Sixthly, that every one keep out of unsavoury Words that provoke Lightness, which load the righteous Witness in themselves and others.

Seventhly, That none call each other bad Names, nor give themselves to Wrath or Railing, but if any Thing of Difference should happen, let none sleep upon it, nor the Sun go down upon his or her Wrath, but confess to each other, and seek Peace and pursue it, for it is well pleasing to GOD.

Eighthly, That though every have a particular Service appointed, yet that all so live in the Love of CHRIST JESUS, who wash'd His Disciples Feet, as to be ready and willing to assist each other, for that becometh Brethren and Fellow-servants.

Ninthly, That all Drunkenness, Lasciviousness, Lying, Defrauding, Emulation, Back-biting, Tale-bearing, Slandering, Cursing, taking the name of GOD or CHRIST in vain, Pride, Stubbornness, Flattery, Slothfulness, Falseness, Eye-service, or such like Fruits of Darkness, be not so much as named amongst you: For you well know that those who do such Things cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD; and be assured that, after due Reproof, such shall not continue in my Family.

Tenthly, And as it becometh a Christian Master and Mistress to require nothing from Servants that is not according to the righteous Truth of GOD; so they are keeping in their Places, that you all make it solemn Matter of Conscience before the LORD to be upright, faithful, diligent, and obedient towards them, not slighting them because they are your Brethren.