SOME RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

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Some rules for the conduct of life by William Caxton

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+ Introduction +

THE present year completes four centuries since William Caxton introduced the invaluable Art of Printing into England. Such an important anniversary will doubtless be marked in many Ways.

A Citizen and Goldsmith/ deeply interested/ reproduces in this pamphlet the excellent Rules for the Conduct of Life presented by the Corporation of London to every apprentice on Whom its freedom is conferred.

Rousdon + June. 1877.

SOME

Rules

FOR THE

Conduct of Life.

Consider your Ways. Hag. i. 5.

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1877.

Rules for the Conduct of Life.

Rule 1.

WHATEVER you at any time intend to do, consider the end which you therein propose to yourself, and be sure that it be always really good, or at least innocent. He who does any thing, and knows not why or wherefore, acts foolishly; and he who aims at an unlawful end acts wickedly, which is the worst sort of folly. If you are careful always to observe this fundamental rule, you will thereby avoid many sins which would disturb your conscience, and also many trifling actions which would tend to your discredit or trouble your repose.

Rule 2.

WHEN you have thus fixed upon a proper end to aim at in each action, then consider not only what are the lawful means to be used in order to this end, but also how these means are best to be applied. That which is unlawful ought not to be done, even for the obtaining of a good end; and means, in themselves good, have often failed of success, for want of prudence in the management of them.

Rule 3.

WHEN you are seeking for a good end, proper means, and the right way of using them, remember that the knowledge of all this must not rest in idle speculation or plausible discourse, but ought to be effectually reduced to practice, as often as you have an opportunity for it. The man who thinks wisely, and discourses judiciously, is never to be excused if his practice, when there is occasion for it, is not answerable to his thoughts and words. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* James iv. 17; Luke, xii. 47.

Take the sum and substance of these three rules in short:—Let the end you aim at be always good; be vigorous in making use of the proper means for the compassing of such an end; and in doing this be always very circumspect. If you proceed after this manner, you will certainly obtain the great end you propose to yourself in the life to come; and, if you fall short of some things which you desire in this world, you will have this comfort, that GOD thinks fit to deny them to you, not for any fault of yours, but for other good reasons, which he knows though you do not.