

*medicus, incipit theologus,\** "Where the physician ends, the divine begins." Thus they begin to live at the end of their life: but you, if you be wise, take this counsel, and (O that my words might prevail with you!) desire to speak with able and godly ministers in the time of your health: that, that is the acceptable time; then may they give counsel freely, and you may follow their counsel thoroughly. That was the course of those converts, Acts ii. 37—47. They did not tarry till their souls were ready to breathe out themselves into eternity; but, in the time of their health applied themselves to Peter, &c.: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Make such applications to your friends in health, as you must do in sickness, if you mean to discharge your duty to God, or friendship to them: you will give them, and yourselves too, great ease and advantage by it, &c. Remember, what obligeth you to do it in sickness, obligeth you also in health; you are your brother's keepers; you have all *curam animarum*, "cure of souls." And as ministers are bound to this work *virtute officii*, "by virtue of their office;" so you are bound to it, *ex lege charitatis*: ["by the law of charity:"] and, surely, if every one of you are bound to deliver your neighbours' ox or ass, when you see it falling into a pit; much more are you obliged to have compassion upon their souls, when they are going down to the pit from which there is no redemption.

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## SERMON VII.

BY THE REV. JOHN KITCHIN, A.M.

HOW MUST WE REPROVE, THAT WE MAY NOT PARTAKE OF OTHER MEN'S SINS?

*Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.—*

1 Timothy v. 22.

THIS Epistle is a scripture-directory for church-government. In this chapter there are certain general rules, or canons apostolical, which St. Paul enjoins Timothy to observe:—

1. About *church-widows*, how they must be qualified. (Verses 3—16.)
2. About *church-elders*, how they must be ordered. (Verses 17—25.)
- (1.) About their maintenance and encouragement. (Verses 17, 18.)
- (2.) About their credit and reputation. (Verse 19.)
- (3.) About their reproof and correction. (Verse 20.)

true Philosophy, that moment he becomes foolish. The fourth edition is the only one in which this sentence is correctly printed, and in which the latent wit is preserved. The witty author couched his pleasantry in the word *insipit*, which, when thus written with *s*, in barbarous Latin signifies, "becomes foolish," or "exhibits his folly;" but when written with *c*, means simply, "he begins," or, "he commences."—EDIT.

\* "When the Physician ceases to prescribe for his patient, then the Divine commences his visits."—EDIT.

(4.) About their admission and ordination : “ Lay hands suddenly on no man.” (Verse 22.) Some understand this of the hands of absolution ; \* others, of the hands of benediction ; † others, of the hands of confirmation ; ‡ but most and best, of the hands of ordination ; § that is, “ Ordain no man, admit no man into this sacred and weighty office and function of the ministry, suddenly.” *Suddenly*, that is, not before natural capacity, not without competent ability, not unless qualified with piety, industry, gravity. ||

The danger follows : “ Neither be partaker of other men’s sins.”

1. Not of their sins *who would importune thee to ordain unworthy persons, consentendo*, “ by consenting.”

2. Not of their sins *who do ordain unworthy persons, imitando*, “ by imitating.” ¶

3. Not of their sins *who are ordained*, being unworthy persons ; \*\* and that,

1. Not of their sins **BEFORE ORDINATION**, *approbando*, “ by approving of them.” ††

2. Not of their sins **AFTER ORDINATION**, *confermando*, “ by confirming them in them.” For, says the apostle, in the next verse but one, “ Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment ;” (that is, the crisis, or test, or censure, or judgment of the church ; ) “ and some follow after.” This is the grammatical sense and logical analysis of the words.

But, beloved, I must take leave to handle the words in a greater latitude and extent. For certainly this caution is not intended to ministers only, neither is it to be confined to the case of ordination ; but, as Christ said upon another occasion, “ What I say unto you, I say unto all ;” (Mark xiii. 37 ; ) so here, what St. Paul writes to Timothy, he speaks to all. A private Christian as well as a minister, a church-member as well as a church-elder, must be sure to take heed, that he “ be not partaker of other men’s sins.” The case of conscience to be discussed this morning is this :—

#### CASE.

*How must we reprove, and not partake of other men’s sins ?*

And, indeed, this case is complex and double : it bears twins. (Canticles iv. 2.)

I. About **PARTICIPATION** of other men’s sins.

II. About **REPROVING** of other men’s sins. ††

I must beg leave to project and manage my discourse sermon-wise, and so commend to your Christian meditation this truth and doctrine. In the explication whereof, I shall handle the former case, and in the application, the latter.

#### DOCTRINE.

*It ought to be every man’s care, not to PARTAKE of any man’s sin : “ Neither be partaker.”*

\* SALMERON. † GUIL. † CHRYSTOSTOM, THEOPHYLACT. § THEODORET,  
CALVIN. || PAREUS, ESTIUS. ¶ ESTIUS. \*\* ŒCUMENIUS. †† ESTIUS *in loc.*  
†† In the fourth edition this line is omitted.—EDIT.

In the handling of which I shall endeavour to show you,

I. How a man may be guilty of other men's sins, or how many ways a man may be said to partake of other men's sins.

II. Why a Christian must be careful not to partake of other men's sins.

III. To apply it.

I. *How a man may be said to partake of other men's sins.*—To this I answer, There are many ways whereby we contract the guilt of others' sins. "Lord," says David, "who knows how oft he offends?" I will name some of them.

There are eight ways especially noted in scripture, by all which a man is made *partaker*, and becomes *guilty*, of the sins of others.

1. *By contrivance.*—By plotting and contriving of sin, by provoking and soliciting others to sin; and this is in an high degree to be guilty of other men's sins. Thus Jonadab was guilty of Amnon's incest, by his subtle contriving of that wickedness, by being a pander to that villany. (2 Sam. xiii. 5.)

When a man shall wittingly and willingly spread a snare in his brother's way, and either drive him in by provocation, or decoy him in by allurements, he makes himself a partaker of his sin. For example: to provoke a man to passion, to tempt a person to drunkenness and uncleanness, to put a man upon murder and bloodshed, to draw souls into error, heresy, blasphemy, &c.,—this is to espouse and adopt the sin, and to make it a man's own.

You know the story there, 2 Sam. xi.: Uriah was slain with the edge of the sword; David was many miles off when Uriah was slain; he died in the battle; Joab put him in the front, and the Ammonites slew him; but now, because David plotted and contrived all this, the scripture tells us that David was the murderer: "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." (2 Sam. xii. 9.) Though the blade was the Ammonites', and the hilt might be said to be Joab's; yet the hand was David's, and the deed was David's. The Ammonites *slew* him; but David *murdered* him. St. Paul tells us, he was a "blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." (1 Tim. i. 13.) Why, beloved, we do not read of any blasphemy that St. Paul uttered in all the Bible. "O, but," says he, "I compelled the saints to blaspheme." (Acts xxvi. 11.) *There was his blasphemy*, in compelling others to blaspheme.

Beloved, to incite and provoke any to sinful practices, to seduce and solicit any to loose doctrines and erroneous opinions, it is to be doubly guilty of those sins,—once by infection, and again by instigation.

Hence is that frequent expression among the Fathers, concerning Arius the heretic: that, look how many souls he had seduced to his heresy and blasphemy, so many several additions of torments he had in hell, as guilty of all their sins. O man! whoever thou art that makest thy neighbour drunk, by putting the bottle to his mouth; (Habak. ii. 15;) that callest to thy brother, saying, "Cast in thy lot amongst us, and let us have one purse;" that enticest the soul of the simple with a "Come, let us take our fill of loves, and solace ourselves until the morning;" I tell thee,

Thou art guilty of all their sins, and mayest justly be punished with all their plagues : for this, Christians, is a most devilish practice,—to tempt and provoke others to wickedness. All sins, indeed, are devilish sins, *per modum servitutis* ; but some sins are devilish sins, *per modum imaginis*. In all sins, “men bear the devil’s yoke ;” (1 John iii. 8 ; ) but in some sins, “men bear the devil’s image.”

Five sins especially the scripture brands as devilish sins ; and this is the chief : (1.) *False accusation* : “Men shall be false accusers,” *devils*, says the Greek. (2 Tim. iii. 2, 3.) (2.) *Lying* : “Ye are of your father the devil : for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John viii. 44.) (3.) *Pride* : “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” (1 Tim. iii. 6.) (4.) *Persecution* : “The devil shall cast some of you into prison ;” (Rev. ii. 10 ; ) that is, devilish men-persecutors. (5.) *Temptation*, as this is : “Get thee behind me, Satan,” says Christ to Peter, when he tempted him. (Matt. xvi. 23.) He that shall either hinder another of doing that good which is commanded, or shall further another to the doing of that evil which is prohibited, is justly chargeable with both their sins.

2. *By compliance*.—By consenting and complying with sin and sinners : so a man makes himself partaker. Though he has no hand in it, yet, if he has a heart in it ; though he does not act it, yet if he likes it, and loves it, and approves it ; though he does not persecute God’s saints and ministers, yet, if he saith, “Aha, aha ! so would we have it ;” it is enough to make him guilty before God.

Saul,—he had no hand in St. Stephen’s death, he did not cast one stone at him ; but because he looked on with approbation, and stood by with consent,—“Saul was consenting unto his death,” (Acts viii. 1,)—therefore was he esteemed guilty of his blood and murder ; and so himself confesses, when God had awakened him, and humbled him to repentance : “When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was consenting unto his death ;” (Acts xxii. 20 ; ) and so charges himself as guilty of it.

God looks not upon *the outward man* so much as upon *the heart* ; according to the frame and inclination of the heart, according as the pulse of the heart beats, so is every man in the account and esteem of God. If sin has once stormed the *fort-royal* of the heart, though it never appears in the *out-works*, the garrison is lost. That which is upon the stage of the heart after consent, is as truly acted in the sight of God as that which appears in the outward man by commission. “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” (Matt. xv. 19.) Why, beloved, from the hand proceed “murders and thefts ;” (Eph. iv. 28 ; ) from the eye proceed “adulteries and fornications ;” (2 Peter ii. 14 ; ) and from the tongue proceed “false witnesses and blasphemies.” (Psalm cxx. 3.) O, but the heart is the forge of all.

You may murder a man with a thought, as they say the basiliak will with a look,—such a poisonous thing a wicked heart is : and let me tell you, it is the heart-murder, and the heart-adultery, and the heart-blasphemy, and the heart-iniquity, that God especially judges ; according to

that famous place: "I the Lord search the heart, to give every man according to his ways;" (Jer. xvii. 10;) that is, "according to what I see acted and done upon the stage of the heart," says God; he does not only judge *the actions*, but he judges *the very intentions*.

3. *By connivance*.—By a sinful dissembling, flattering, and winking at others in their wickedness and sins, so men become guilty of others' sins: "The leaders of this people cause them to err:" (Isai. ix. 16:) it is in the Hebrew, "*The blessers of this people cause them to err.*"\* Beloved, the blessers of men in wickedness are the leaders of men in wickedness. He that shall wink at and flatter men in sins, when he knows in his conscience that they do wickedly,—he makes himself captain and *master of misrule* among them. And thus we are too prone to be partakers of magistrates' sins, and governors' sins, and great men's sins, patrons' sins, and landlords' sins. If the grantees of the world profane the sabbath, dishonour God, rant and swear, and scoff at religion; out of a base, cowardly spirit, or out of a carnal, covetous heart, we flatter them and let them alone, it may be, applaud them; as he said, *Tu fac hunc dominum, te facit ille Deus*; "Do but make him a lord, and he straightway makes thee a God!" as if we were not to distinguish between *the persons* of men and *the vices* of men; or as if so be we more feared a mortal man, whose breath is in his nostrils, than we do the immortal God, who can frown us into hell in a moment. O, this is to be deeply guilty of other men's sins! See how sharply God by his prophet taxes and reproves this daubing in those wicked upholsterers, that "sew pillows to every elbow," Ezek. xiii. 17, and so forward. Read it at leisure.

I fear this has been the sin of former times and governments: God grant it may not be the sin of present and future ages,—for men to connive at any that promote their own interests!

Alas, my brethren! methinks the interest of piety, and the interest of conscience, and the interest of the eternal God, Judge of quick and dead, should swallow up all the interests of the world. If Nebuchadnezzar himself should set up a golden image, and would have it worshipped, I tell you it is not treason for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to say, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." (Dan. iii. 16.) Besides, let not men deceive themselves; for such persons as can so easily betray the interests of God, will never be afraid, if opportunity serve, to oppose the sovereignty of man, whose authority he bears; and are not indeed Hushais, but Zibas; not David's *friends*, but David's *flatterers*.

4. *By sufferance*.—By permitting the sins of others, so we become guilty, by suffering others to sin, whom we are bound in duty, and may be able by authority, to hinder. And thus, as in the former particular we are guilty of magistrates' sins, in this particular magistrates oft-times become guilty of our sins. Kings, and rulers, and subordinate magistrates become oft-times deeply guilty of their people's sins; namely, by

\* מאשרי העם *Beatificantes populum.*

sufferance, by tolerating errors, and heresies, and blasphemies, on the one hand, or by suffering wickedness and profaneness, on the other.

That ruler or magistrate that shall suffer either loose opinions or principles that are contrary to sound doctrine to be broached, or loose ways and customs that are contrary to the power of godliness to be observed, and shall not use his authority to prevent and suppress them, —he contracts to himself the guilt, and draws upon himself the mischief, of all those sins and enormities. Just as he that licenses a book to the press, if there be any faults of ignorance, or error, or poisonous opinions, they may be justly charged upon him and laid at his door; though he is not the author, yet because he is the licenser; though he is not the parent, yet because he is the midwife. So if there be any heresy and blasphemy tolerated in a place, if there be any profaneness and ungodliness suffered among a people, because it has the magistrates' *imprimatur*, and he suffers it to pass the country without whipping, therefore he is highly guilty.

Sabbath-breaking abounds: "Let it pass," says the mayor of a town. Drunkenness abounds: "Let it alone," says the justice of peace. Profaneness abounds: "Let it go," says the minister. Sirs, if it should be thus, this were to bear the sins of a whole parish, and a whole county, and a whole nation, upon a man's back at once. See that [in] Revelation ii. to this purpose; where you find the sins of the people charged upon the governors, for their permission and toleration, both sins of doctrine and practice. OF DOCTRINE: "To the angel of the church in Pergamos, write; I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." (Rev. ii. 12, 14, 15.) This is charged upon the *angel*, "the overseer and governor," of the church. He should have hindered it, and he did tolerate and permit it; and it was his sin. And so OF PRACTICE; "Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce," &c. (Rev. ii. 18, 20.) To suffer Jezebel to teach in a nation, is to suffer painting, and wantonness, and uncleanness: these were the sins of Jezebel; and to permit them, is to partake of them.

OBJECTION. But some may object, and say, "Why does God then permit sin to be in the world? He might hinder it, and he might prevent it, if he would. There could be no wickedness acted under the sun, but by God's permission. The devil could not tempt Job, and Satan could not sift Peter, without leave and commission from God; neither could any wicked man act his villany, and spit out his venom, without God's sufferance. If permission of sin be a partaking of sin, how shall we vindicate God from the imputation of unrighteousness?"

ANSWER. (1.) This was Marcion's wicked and malicious cavil at God's providence about the first transgression. "Why would not God, who foresaw the issue, hinder Eve and the devil from conference and communion together, that so sin might have been prevented, and the world been everlastingly happy? unless," saith he, "God was either envious and

would not, or weak and could not, hinder it!" To which Tertullian replies: "Because God was arbitrary and free in his gifts." Austin answers: "Because it was his will." Prosper and Hilary reply: "The cause may be unknown: it cannot be unjust." All which is enough *obturare*, "to muzzle" that heaven-daring "mouth" of blasphemy. But afterward Austin answers, that "though sin be the worst thing in the world, yet the existence of sin is not ill;" as poison would do no hurt, if men would not meddle with it. But that satisfies not our case. Therefore,

(2.) *Though God hath authority, and is of ability, to prevent and hinder the commission of sin, yet he is not bound in duty so to do.*—"God is under no tie and obligation," but his own purpose and pleasure: *Deus non tenetur legibus*, "God is a law to himself." Herein lies the guilt and evil of man's permitting of sin:—he is bound in duty, as well as furnished with ability and authority, to prevent it; and therefore his permitting of sin is a partaking of sin: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" (Exod. xxii. 18:) man is bound to hinder profaneness and wickedness, if he can; but so is not God. Though he is of infinite power and ability to restrain it, or to remove it, yet he is not bound in duty; and so it is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law; but where there is no law, there is no transgression."

(3.) It is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin, when he may hinder it, *because he can by his infinite wisdom order it to his own glory.*—He suffered Pharaoh to harden his heart, that he might be glorified on Pharaoh. (Rom. ix. 17.) Pharaoh's sin turned to God's glory. As he makes all *penal* evils work together for our good; so he makes all *sinful* evils concur to his own glory.

(4.) It is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin, *because he can turn every man's sin to a greater benefit and advantage.*—"Ye thought evil against me," saith Joseph to his brethren; "but God meant it unto good." (Gen. i. 20.) He can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness. God suffers toads and serpents to live, because they are useful; they suck the noxious and hurtful gusts from herbs and flowers, and so make them wholesome for man's use. So God permits sin in the world, because he knows how to make it useful: he can make an antidote of the viper's flesh. He did, by an excellent and rare chymistry, extract the greatest mercy from the greatest mischief, the greatest good from the greatest evil:—the salvation of mankind from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

5. *By influence of bad example.*—By setting loose and bad examples for others to imitate. So men are guilty of others' sins; as, namely, when children sin by the examples of their parents, those very parents are guilty of their children's sin. So we have some families that inherit the lusts, as well as the lands, of their ancestors; parents swear and curse, and so do children; parents are drunkards, and so are children; parents are unclean, and so are children; as they make them rich by their *livings*, so they make them wretched and debauched by their *lives*: this is to make themselves partakers of all their sins. So when people sin by the

looseness and licentiousness of their minister, that minister is guilty of those very sins that the people so commit ; which made Austin, though a very holy man, so exceeding jealous of himself in this case, that that was his constant prayer, *Libera me, Domine, a peccatis meis alienis*. "Lord," saith he, "deliver me from mine other men's sins!" those sins that others have committed through my carelessness and incogitancy.

And indeed examples are more cogent and influential a great deal than precepts. The adulteries of Jupiter and other pagan gods did mightily draw the people to imitate their wantonness ; and Augustine gives the reason : *Magis intuebantur quid fecerat Jupiter, quàm quid docuit Plato* : "They more minded what Jupiter did, than what Plato taught."

Jeroboam the son of Nebat is said *to make Israel to sin* : that is his brand. How did he make Israel to sin ? Why, by his law he commanded them to sin ; but by his practice and example he made them to sin. He set up calves in Dan and Bethel, and whole herds of people ran a lowing after them. So it is said of St. Peter, that he compelled the Gentiles to Judaize : "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. ii. 14.) How did St. Peter compel the Gentiles to Judaize ? "Not by any thing he preached to them," saith Jerome, "but by his example :"  
*Non docentis imperio, sed conversantis exemplo*.\* A stone, you know, thrown into the water, makes itself but one circle ; ay, but that one perhaps begets a score, or a hundred. So it is here : he that sets an evil example sins not alone ; he draws hundreds, it may be, into sin after him. He is like a man that sets his own house on fire ; it burns many of his neighbours', and he is to be answerable for all the ruins.

6. *By inference from a bad example, or by imitation*.—So a man is guilty of another man's sin, not only by *pattern*, in setting bad examples, but also by *practice*, in following bad examples ; and thus that man that will be drunk because another was drunk, or that breaks the sabbath because others do the like,—he is not only guilty of his own particular sin, but he is guilty also of their sins whom he imitates and follows ; and the reason is, because bad examples are not *land-marks* for us to go by, but they are *sea-marks* for us to avoid. Hence you shall find in scripture mention made of children by imitation as well as by nature, and people by imitation as well as by nation, and kings by imitation as well as by succession. I will give you an instance of all these. Look into that, Judges xviii. 30 : "The children of Dan set up the graven image : and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan." Here Jonathan, an idol-priest, is called the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh ; that is, the grandchild of Manasseh. Now it is clear in scripture, that Gershom was the son of Moses, and not of Manasseh. (Exod. ii. 22 ; xviii. 3 ; 1 Chron. xxiii. 15.) And so Jonathan must be the grandchild of Moses, and not of Manasseh. But the Jews and learned critics tell us, that he is called the grandchild of Manasseh for a double reason : (1.) Because the scripture, consulting the honour of Moses, did conceal his pedigree as to Moses ; for it had

\* *Epistola Hieronymi intra opera Augustini, Epist. 11.* "The eleventh epistle of St. Jerome, inserted in the Works of St. Augustine."—EDIT.



been a disgrace to Moses to have had upon record an idol-priest in his lineage; and, (2.) Which is to my purpose, he is called the grandchild of Manasseh, and that by *προληψις* and "anticipation," because he followed him in his idolatry: he was no whit like Moses, but rather imitated Manasseh, and so he is called his grandchild.

For the other instance, see Isaiah i. 10: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." Why, beloved, these that the prophet speaks to,—they were the people of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Why does the prophet call them the people of Gomorrah? Even for this reason,—they did imitate those filthy Sodomites and Gomorrhites in wickedness, and wantonness, and looseness, and so became guilty of their sins, and worthy of their names.

The last instance you have in 2 Chronicles xxviii. 19: "The Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz king of Israel." Ahaz, all know, was king of Judah, and not king of Israel; but he is called king of Israel, because he imitated the wicked and idolatrous kings of Israel: he was not so by succession, but he was so by imitation.

Hence it is that God is said to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," because they make themselves guilty by imitation: and this may be a key to unlock that place of the apostle: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived:" (2 Tim. iii. 13.) Deceivers are *worse*, but the deceived are *worse and worse*: if they see a bad example, and will not avoid it, but copy it, they are worse than worse. The deceiver is guilty of the deceived's sin by instigation, and the deceived is guilty of the deceiver's sin by imitation.

And this is the woful, intricate, perplexed labyrinth into which sin doth precipitate careless and ungodly sinners. If thou committest that sin which none before committed but thee, thou art guilty of all the sins of future generations by thy example,—as Adam was in the world, and Jeroboam in Israel. And if thou committest any sin because others have committed it before thee, thou art guilty of all the sins of former generations by thy imitation: and so sin never goes alone; a single sin is as great a solecism in divinity as a single *thank* is in grammar and morality. And that you may know, Christians, I do not speak without book in so saying, witness that dreadful place: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city:" Mark! "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew," though slain in Jehoash's reign, almost nine hundred years before, yet ye slew, "between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. xxiii. 34—36.) And why? Because they sinned "after the similitude of their fathers' transgression." O what matter of humiliation is this to every soul that continues in any known sin!

7. *By countenance*.—By delightful society and company with wicked men to countenance them, so we become partakers of their sins: "But

now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 11, 13.) As you would avoid the sin, avoid the sinner. *Eating* does denote intimate fellowship and familiarity ; and we cannot be intimate with such without contracting their guilt to our own souls. It is true, indeed, all commerce with such is not forbidden ; for then, as the apostle says, "we must needs go out of the world ;" (verse 10 ;) but intimate society is, upon this account. And therefore the apostle, or at least the translator, does here seem critically to distinguish between "companying," and *keeping company* : "I wrote to you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators. But now I have written unto you not to keep company." (Verses 9, 11.) Company we may—(yea, we cannot avoid it,) but *keep company* we must not—with wicked men. As elsewhere the Holy Ghost distinguishes between "sinning" and *committing sin* : "He that is born of God doth not commit sin," saith St. John. The holiest man on this side heaven cannot but *sin*, saith the same apostle ; ay, but "he that is born of God does not commit sin ;" *sin* he does, but *commit sin* he doth not ; that is, he doth not delight in it, he doth not use it, he doth not make it his practice : so here.

We read in scripture where wicked men have often fared better for the godly ; as Laban for Jacob, and Potiphar for Joseph, and Ahab for Jehoshaphat, &c. ; but we never read that godly men fared better for the company of the wicked, but rather worse : "Depart from me, ye evil doers : for I will keep the commandments of my God." (Psalm cxix. 115.) It is a very hard matter to *keep wicked company*, and to *keep the the commandments of God* together.

The Lacedæmonians would never suffer a stranger to be with them above three days, for fear of infection and corruption with their evil manners. And verily those that are strangers to God and godliness should be as little as may be our companions.

8. *By maintenance*.—By upholding and encouraging men in their sins, though thou never committest them thyself, yet thou art guilty. "He that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 11.) Though thou dost not commit it, yet if thou dost applaud it, and rejoice in it, and say, "It is well done," thou art a partner. If thou art not *the mother* of it, yet thou art *the nurse* of it ; if thou art not *the father* of it, yet thou art *the guardian* of it ; and God will lay the brat at thy door, as sure as if thou hadst begot it.

Thus I have done with the first thing, *How we become guilty, or how many ways partakers, of other men's sins*. There are many more might be named, as *by hindering good, by excusing evil, by administering occasion, by not reproving, not mourning, not reclaiming, &c.* But these and many more that practical authors handle,—they are but underling-sprigs from the great branches that I have opened.

II. *Why a Christian must be careful to avoid, and not to partake of, other men's sins : The reasons of the doctrine ?*

ANSWER. Out of a three-fold principle :

1. Out of a principle of *charity to our brethren.*
2. Out of a principle of *pity to ourselves.*
3. Out of a principle of *piety to God.*

1. *Out of charity to our brethren.*—That we be not means and instruments to promote their ruin and destruction: for, to partake of other men's sins, though it does more burden us, yet it does never a whit ease them, but does rather harden them, and confirm them in their practices; for company in sin makes men act it with the greater confidence. Now, this is to do the devil's part in the habit of a friend. Sirs, we must be charitable; charity is the golden rule; charity is the bond of perfection. Now, if it be a piece of charity to help up our brother's ox or ass, when he is fallen into a ditch; (Exod. xxiii. 4;) sure it is more charity to do as much for his soul: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." (Jude 23.) Sin is the deep ditch of the soul, and sin is the hell-fire of the soul, as it were: here should be lifting and plucking indeed.

The neglect of this duty of keeping one another from sin, the scripture calls an "hating of our brother." "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt not suffer sin upon him." (Lev. xix. 17.) I observe, in company, that if many persons sit together by a fire, and a spark fly upon any one of them, every one is ready to shake it off and beat it off; and why should not we be as friendly and charitable to men's souls, when sin, which is as hell-flakes, lies smothering in their consciences, or burning upon their souls?

2. *Out of pity to ourselves.*—That we may keep ourselves from the blood of other men's souls, and secure ourselves from the judgments of other men's sins. For the former, says St. Paul: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts xx. 26, 27.) Had the apostle connived at, or consented to, their sins, God would have made inquisition for the blood of their souls at his hands. For the latter, says Jacob: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations: O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Why? O, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." (Gen. xlix. 5—7.) He would not have a hand in their sinful union, because he would not have a share in their dreadful division: they were united in sin, and they must be divided in punishment.

3. *Out of piety towards God.*—God forbids it: "Be not ye partakers with them;" (Eph. v. 7;) and God forbid that we should do it! Nay, God abhors it and condemns it: "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers," &c. "These things hast thou done: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." (Psalm l. 18, 21.) This sin is a breach of all the law at once, being against the rule of charity. He that hath his own sins alone, doth only *commit* them; but he that takes other men's sins, doth highly *approve* them; and this greatly dishonours God. It is worse partaking of sin, than committing of sin. "They do not only do the same," saith the apostle, "but have pleasure in them that do them:" (Rom. i. 32:) that is worse. Wherefore Zelophehad's daughters pleaded

in mitigation of their father's offence, that "he died in his own sin;" (Num. xxvii. 3;) he was not partner with Korah, but died in his own sin. It is worse to be a partner, than to be an actor.

### III. Application.

1. *Information*.—Is there such a thing as "partaking of other men's sins" after this manner?

(1.) Hence you may be informed of the equity and justice of God's proceeding in punishment.—You oft-times see God punishing one man's sin upon another, or at least hear of it; and you think it strange. Why, this (Edipus will read you the riddle; this clue will conduct you through the labyrinth:—They have been, some way or other, partakers of those sins, either by contrivance, or by compliance, or by connivance, &c., one way or other, else God would never punish them: if they have not been actors, they have been abettors. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God punishes children for the sins of their parents; (Exod. xxxiv. 7;) ay, but those children have been *κοινωνοι*, "partakers," certainly by approbation, it may be by imitation. God punishes servants for the sins of their masters; (Gen. xii. 17;) but, sure, the servants were *κοινωνοι*, "partakers" by consenting,\* it may be by executing. God punishes wives for the sins of their husbands; (Gen. xx. 18;) but those wives were *κοινωνοι*, "partakers" still by admitting, by enduring. God punishes ministers for the sins of the people; (Ezek. xxxiii. 8;) but then those ministers are *κοινωνοι*, "partakers," sure enough, by not instructing, by not reproofing: still the justice of God is vindicated.

(2.) Hence be informed *what piety, and strictness, and watchfulness are more especially required of those that have the care of others*.—For example: kings, and parents, and masters, and magistrates, and ministers,—they should be exemplary in godliness. They have *curam animarum*, and therefore they should have *curam animæ*; they have "care of other men's souls," and therefore they should look well to "their own." The want of this was her crime and complaint: "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Canticles i. 6.) O, those that are keepers of vineyards had need to have special care of their own vineyard!

(3.) Hence take an account *why the wicked of the world do so hate the godly, and reproach and revile them*.—It is this: They will not be partakers of their sins; they will not commit them, neither will they connive at them; and this is the reason why the world hates them. Ahab hates Micaiah; and himself gives the reason,—because he reproveth him: "I hate him," he "doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings xxii. 8.) He never speaks well of me. Herod hates John Baptist because he reproves him. No wonder that ministers, of all kind of men in the world, are most hated. The case is plain: because they are reprovers. Godly ministers are wicked men's reprovers, and wicked men are godly ministers' reproachers: "They think it strange ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (1 Peter iv. 4.)

(4.) Here is *matter of reproof and humiliation this day for our want*

\* In the first edition, this word is *consulting*.—EDIT.

*of watchfulness in this kind.*—O which of us can say, that we are free from the guilt of other men's sins? Every man may cast this *bur* of reproof and lamentation at his own conscience, and there let it stick. Parents, every one: "Ah my children's sins!" Masters: "Ah my servants' sins!" Ministers: "Ah my people's sins!" Rulers: "Ah my subjects' sins!" O let us deeply mourn for want of relative holiness, and more frequently and fervently pray that prayer: "Lord, forgive me my other men's sins!"

2. The SECOND USE is *of exhortation and caution together.*—Is it so, that it ought to be every man's care not to partake of any man's sin?

O Christians! let me entreat you, then, to be very mindful of this duty: be persuaded, beloved, and the Lord persuade you, to be tenderly careful and watchful, that "you do not partake of other men's sins." These are infectious times and places that we live in; and multitudes there are that catch diseases and distempers from others. But let me tell you, Christians, that bodily diseases are not half so catching as sin is. Sin is an infectious, contagious, pestilential plague, that spreads mightily in the world. O take heed, take heed, that the guilt of other men's sins do not one day lie upon your conscience, and be put upon your account!

Let me enforce this counsel in the words of our apostle here; and they are very weighty and emphatical:—

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another;" and amongst the rest this is one: "That thou be not partaker of other men's sins." (1 Tim. v. 21, 22.) Give me leave to prosecute this in these three particulars:—

1. By laying down some arguments to press this caution and exhortation.

2. By pointing at what sins especially you must not partake of.

3. By showing you how you may so manage the business, and order the matter, as not to be partakers of other men's sins; what are the antidotes against this infection.

1. *To lay down the arguments.*

(1.) Consider: *You have sins enough of your own, you have no reason to partake of other men's.*—It is cruel to "add affliction to your bonds." Jesus Christ had no sins of his own, and therefore he could and did bear ours; he did *take* all men's sins, though he did not *partake* of any man's sins: all were his by imputation: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" (Isai. liii. 6;) but none were his by perpetration and participation. It is not so with us. Alas! we have sins enough of our own. Man, woman, thine own pride will damn thee, if thou dost not repent; and thine own hypocrisy, and formality, and worldliness, and hardness of heart. Thou hast no need to take the sins of others. Said the daughter of Zelophehad, "Our father died in his own sin;" (Num. xxvii. 3;) ay, that is enough to kill a man, and damn a man,—*"his own sin."*

(2.) Consider: *It is a most monstrous sin, it is a most dreadful sin, to partake of other men's sins.*—The apostle speaks of committing iniquity "with greediness." (Eph. iv. 19.) Sirs, there is no such greedy sinning

as this,—for a man to lick up, and swallow down, and devour, other men's sins. Naturalists tell us, that *serpens serpentem devorans fit draco*, "If a serpent swallow down another serpent, it becomes a dragon." O Christians! this sin of devouring other men's sins is a dragon-sin, a monstrous sin, a dreadful sin, a devilish sin; and therefore take heed of it!

(3.) Consider: *If you partake of other men's sins, you shall certainly partake of other men's plagues.*—"Come out of her, my people," says God, namely, from Babylon, "that you be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4.) See Prov. xiii. 20: "A companion of fools shall be destroyed;" not only "*fools* shall be destroyed," but "*a companion of fools* shall be destroyed." If you sin with them, you shall suffer with them, and you shall suffer more because of them. Read that: And the rich man said, "I pray thee, father Abraham, that thou wouldest send Lazarus to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (Luke xvi. 27, 28.) Why would not he have his brethren to come to hell to him? Divines determine, [that it was] not out of any love to their souls; there is not that charity to be supposed in hell. O, but [it was] because the sight of them, and company of them, would increase his torment. This will be the shrieking and howling in hell among damned souls one to another: "O woe-worth the day that ever I saw *thy* face!" "O that ever I saw *thy* face!" "Thou hast brought *me* hither!" "And thou hast brought *me* hither!" and so they will torment one another to all eternity!

2. *What sins we must especially take heed of partaking of.*

ANSWER. *Of all sin whatsoever*: "Abstain from all appearance of evil;" \* (1 Thess. v. 22;) but especially of three sorts of sins, which may be called epidemical plagues. (1.) Church-sins, (2.) National sins, (3.) Family-sins. But I shall speak nothing of the first, but little of the second, and most to the third.

(1.) Among *national sins*, especially take heed of profaneness. This is obvious; this is an universal, spreading plague, that is like to infect the whole kingdom, if God does not in mercy prevent it. There is a deluge of profaneness breaking in on every side; swearing, drinking, whoring, sabbath-breaking, scoffing, and mocking at religion: all the countries ring again. Men are now grown bold, and audacious, and incorrigible in their wickedness; that, like a Titan-brood, they even threaten heaven itself with an over-daring impudence, as if they would storm the palace of Jehovah, and pluck him out of his throne. O take heed of partaking here!

(2.) *Family-sins.*—We must have a care of partaking here, and so much the more watchful must we be, in that family-sins, of all sins, are most catching and infectious. As it is with bodily diseases, if one be sick in a house, they of the blood, and kin, and family, are likeliest to catch the distemper, because of their frequent and intimate converse

\* *Loquitur apostolus de peccatis gravioribus iisque maxime quæ publicum offendiculum pariunt.*—ESTIUS in loc. "The apostle here speaks of the more grievous sins; and, chiefly, those which produce the greatest public scandal and offence."—EDIT.

especially: so it is here; if there be any predominant lust lurking in a family, all are apt to be infected with it, if they are not marvellous circumspect and watchful.

And therefore parents, and masters, and governors of families had need to be reformers, both of themselves and all under their charge; for, beside that this is the most compendious and safest way to state-reformation and church-reformation,—every family being a kind of a little kingdom of itself, and a little church of itself, wherein the master is both king, priest, and prophet;—beside this, there is the sound of this argument and reason to alarm them, namely, as they desire to have their souls and consciences free from the guilt of other men's sins.

Plato, seeing a child do mischief in the streets, went forthwith and corrected his father for it. That father that does not correct his child when he does amiss, is justly corrected for his faults; and it is the pattern of God's judicial proceedings. As he visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children who *imitate* them; so he visits the iniquities of the children upon the fathers, who *countenance and indulge* them. As Jacob was countable to Laban for the whole flock; not a sheep or a lamb lost or torn, but it was required at his hands; (Gen. xxxi. 39;) thus must family governors be accountable to God for every lamb in the fold, for every child in the family, for every servant in the house. Says God to him, "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." (Luke xvi. 2.) So will God one day cry aloud in thine ears: *Quintili Vare, redde legiones!* \* "Husband, father, master, wife, give an account of thy husbandship, and give an account of thy fathership, give an account of thy mastership, give an account of thy wifeship," &c. This made Joshua undertake for his house, as well as for himself. (Joshua xxiv. 15.) And this made David careful of his house, as well as his heart: "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart;" (Psalm ci. 2;) not only *with a perfect heart*, but *in his house with a perfect heart*, so as to reform his family, that that may be the church of God; (Col. iv. 15; Philemon 2;) as well as to reform himself, that he may be the "temple of God." (1 Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19.)

Ah! how many families are there whose houses are not the "church of God," but the "synagogue of Satan" rather! "God is not in all their thoughts;" God is not in all their mouths, except it be in swearing, and cursing, and blaspheming. Their "bellies are their god," and their lusts are their lord. It is said of Noah's ark, that it "was pitched within and without." (Gen. vi. 14.) "Such," says one, "is the condition of many a man's house: it is a Noah's ark; it is pitched within and without; nothing but the pollutions and defilements of sin in every room, and passage, and corner. *Idleness* stands at the door; *unconscionableness* walks in the shop; *covetousness* lurks in the counting-house; *luxury* sits at the table; *pride* looks out at the window; *wantonness* lodges in the bed;—all pitchy and filthy both within and without."

\* SUTTON *Vita*, lib. ii. 23.—"It is related, that Augustus was in such a state of consternation," (at the loss of the three legions in Germany, under the command of Quintilius Varus,) "that, having allowed his beard and his hair to grow for several months, he sometimes, through agony, struck his head against the doors, and cried out,—*O Quintilius Varus! restore me the legions which you lost!*"—EDIT.

And therefore, Christians, for the Lord's sake, out with all this rubbish, if it should be found in your families. How do you in London here delight to have your houses clean; and hereupon sweep them, and wash them, and rub them! O that you would be as careful to cleanse your families from sin, as you are to cleanse your houses from dirt! How soon would this great city become "a habitation of righteousness," and "a mountain of holiness!" How would this family-reformation prevent the guilt of family-sins, and keep out family-distractions, and secure from family-desolation! Therefore, sirs, set up family-watchfulness, and family-correction. Let every house be an house of correction of itself; and set about family-reading, and family-conference, and family-repetition, and especially family-prayer; that all your houses may be like God's house: you know his is called an "house of prayer:" "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." (Isai. lvi. 7.) So should yours; they should be houses of prayer, all of them: if they be not, let me tell you, they are no better than dens of thieves. Saith Christ, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matt. xxi. 13.) There is no medium betwixt these two; if your houses be not "houses of prayer, they are certainly "dens of thieves;" if you do not pray to God for your mercies before you receive them, and praise God for your mercies when you enjoy them, you do but rob God of his mercies; they are not given but thrown, and snatched indeed rather than received.

3. Now, and in the last place, we come to the ANTIDOTES: *How we must so carry it, and order the business, as not to partake of other men's sins.*

ANTIDOTE I. *Exercise an holy jealousy over others*, ("I am jealous over you," saith St. Paul,) especially thy relations; and this is the way to deliver thy soul from their sins. Job, sacrificing for his children, said, "It may be that my sons have sinned." (Job i. 5.)

ANT. II. *Watch against the sins of others*.—Have your eyes about you: take heed of contriving, complying, winking at them. If it be in your power, take heed of suffering them. See David's paroxysm of zeal in this case, Psalm ci. 2, &c.

This is the direction in the text, which must not be omitted: "Keep thyself pure;" take heed of infectious places, and infectious practices, and infectious company.

ANT. III. *Pray against them*.—Pray against profaneness, pray Augustine's prayer, "Lord, deliver me from other men's sins!"

ANT. IV. *Mourn for them*.—Mourn for the sins of the nation, and mourn for the sins of thy relations; for the sins of thy brethren in their obstinacy, that they will not be reformed. Christ came to sinful Jerusalem with weeping eyes, and with a mourning heart: "O Jerusalem!" David mourned for the wickedness of the times that he saw. (Psalm cxix. 136.) "Many walk," says Paul, "of whom I tell you weeping." Thus did God's people of old free themselves from national sins, and particular men's sins. When they could not be reformers, they turned mourners. (Jer. xiii. 17.) And see how prevalent this is with God! These mourners are the only people to deliver a nation, or at least



to deliver themselves from the sins and plagues of a nation, when God makes an overflowing scourge to pass through. (Ezek. ix. 4.) On the other side, not mourning for the sins of others makes us adopt and espouse the sins of others. (Dan. v. 22.)

ANT. v. *Reprove them.* (Ezek. iii. 17—19.)—If we would not partake of the sins of others, we must reprove the sins of others. (Lev. xix.; Ezek. xxxiii. 7—9.) So the apostle saith expressly; (Eph. v. 11;) intimating that you do certainly approve them, if you do not reprove them. Reprove heresy, blasphemy, drunkenness, oaths, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, and every sin you hear or see committed. The ravished virgin under the law was to cry out; (Deut. xxii. 25—27;) in this case God takes silence for consent. As there is a holy silence to God's correction; (Aaron held his peace;) so there is a sinful silence under man's corruption; (Eli held his peace also;) Aaron's silence was a good silence; but Eli's silence was a naughty silence. We must be silent under God's correction; but we must not be silent under man's corruption. (Lev. v. 1.) Therefore, saith St. Paul, "Reprove them:" the best way to avoid "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," and to free a man's soul from the guilt of other men's sins, is to reprove them: that is the antidote against this infection. Thus the Ephesians practised as St. Paul preached. St. Paul does not more advise them to this duty, than St. John does commend them for this duty. Says the Holy Ghost there, in Rev. ii. 1—3, compared together: "Thou hast borne, and yet hast not borne," God's correction, man's corruption: "I know thy patience, and how thou canst not bear," &c.: it is no breach of patience to be impatient against sin and sinners. But now, beloved, because this sword of reproof is a very dangerous weapon, if it be not rightly handled, an edge-tool that we must be marvellously chary how we meddle with; there is required therefore a great deal of skill, and prudence, and wisdom, and watchfulness, to a right and successful managing of this duty. He that would fasten this nail of reproof in the conscience of his offending brother, had need be a very wise man. (Eccles. xii. 11.) Yea, as I remember Isidorus Pelusiota [says,] Το μὲν ἐπιτιμᾶν ῥαδίον. ["It is indeed an easy matter to bestow rebukes."] Every one can find fault and reprove another for the same; but to do it discreetly and seasonably and successfully, requires a great deal of wisdom; and to this end I shall give you these rules. Reproof is double: 1. *Ministerial*, and by way of authority; and, 2. *Fraternal*, by way of charity.

## II. And here we come to the second case; namely, REPROOF.

1. *He that reproves another must be very careful that himself be faultless and blameless, as much as may be.*—Otherwise he is not acting his charity, but bewraying his hypocrisy. "Thou therefore which teachest another," &c. (Rom. ii. 21, 22.) This is hypocrisy, saith Christ. (Matt. vii. 3—5.) And here there are two things couched in this:—

(1.) *A man must be faultless in reference to sin in general, as much as may be, that will reprove another.*—The snuffers of the sanctuary under the law were of pure gold; and it behoves that man that will be a snuffer in God's house,—to correct others, to amend others, and reprove others,—

to be very upright and circumspect in all things, and then he may admonish with the greater advantage, authority, efficacy. "Let the righteous smite me," &c., saith David. (Psalm cxli. 5.) A man of a strict and severe life, and religious and righteous conversation, carries a kind of a majesty and authority along with him, at which the guilty consciences of guilty sinners cannot but recoil; as Herod did to John Baptist, though John had reprovèd him, and touchèd him to the quick. (Mark vi. 18, 20.) And then,

(2.) *A man must be blameless in reference to that sin [which] he reproveth especially.*—Else, in healing his brother, he doth but stab himself. If thou reprovest pride in others, and art proud thyself; covetousness, and art covetous thyself; drunkenness, and art a drunkard thyself; thou dost but, like David in Nathan's parable, pronounce the sentence of thine own condemnation. (Rom. ii. 1.) But here I must enter one caution: none is exempted from this duty for unfitness: no; "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

2. *As he must take heed that himself be faultless, so he must be sure that his brother be faulty.*—For, otherwise, it is not to reprove him, but to reproach him; and so, instead of doing a Christian duty, a man commits a devilish sin; he becomes an "accuser of the brethren," instead of a reprovèr of the brethren. (Gal. ii. 11.) And here are likewise two things considerable:—

(1.) It must be *a truth* that thou reprovest him for.

(2.) It must be *a sin* that thou reprovest him for.

(1.) It must not be a conjecture, or imagination, or jealousy, or rumour, or hearsay, that is ground sufficient for reproof: for all these may be false; and the rule of charity is, *Quisque præsimitur esse bonus nisi constat de malo.\** But, verily, the guise of the world is far otherwise. We deal with our brethren as the persecuting Pagans did with the primitive Christians; put them into lions'-skins, and into bears'-skins, and then bait them, and tear them to pieces. Alas! the poor Christians were harmless, meek lambs; but they disguised them, and so abused them. Thus it is now; Christians are apt and ready to put their poor brethren into I know not what kind of monstrous ugly shapes, of their own imagining and devising, or else of other men's traducing and reporting; and, without more ado, they fall foul upon them: this is not to imitate our Saviour. (Isai. xi. 2—4.) Not from rumours, but with "righteousness and equity." As God said in destroying of Sodom, so should we say in reprovèing our brethren: "I will go down now, and see." (Gen. xviii. 21.)

(2.) It must be a breach of some command, affirmative or negative, directly or reductively; either the omission of that which is good, or the commission of that which is evil. We must be Catos, not Momuses. As the Pharisees to Christ, (Matt. xix. 3.) so here, "Is it lawful to reprove a man for every cause?" No; the disciples were quite out in reprovèing the children for coming to Christ in this chapter, when it was not their sin, but their duty. (Verses 13, 14.) Quakers make a stir about

\* "Every man is presumed to be good, unless his wickedness be manifest."—EDR.

cuffs, and bands, and ribbons, and laces, and such like minute trifles of pharisaical humility: if they can prove these [to be] sins, let them reprove them in God's name; but if they are indifferent things, it is censoriousness, uncharitableness, and pragmatism to rail at them; and not Christian reproof.

3. *He must manage his reproof to sincere ends; must take heed that his aims and intentions be upright and honest in reproof.*—Take heed of mingling any wild-fire of pride, and vainglory, and ambitious humour of contradicting and controlling others, with thy zeal of reproof. This heat must be holy heat, a fire of the sanctuary, as free from the smoke of by-ends and self-interest as may be, purely for God's glory, and out of hatred unto sin, and out of love to the salvation of thy brother's soul. Diogenes, it is storied, reprov'd Plato's pride, by trampling upon his velvet chair and cushion; but, says the author, *Majori fastu superbum Platonem Diogenes superbiōr*.\*

4. *He must manage his reproof in fit season.*—There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. Reproof is a duty grounded upon an affirmative precept. Now, it is well observed by divines, that affirmative precepts bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*; we must always reprove, but we must not reprove always; it is a *constant* duty, but it must be done in a *seasonable opportunity*. There are certain *mollia fandi tempora*,† “words upon the wheels,” as Solomon calls them, “that are like apples of gold;” (Prov. xxv. 11;) and let me tell you, Christians, one word spoken in season is worth a thousand other words. Now, it is impossible to define and determine all the nicks of time wherein a man should strike in with a reproof; for this must be left to the wisdom and experience of every Christian, that makes it his business to be his brother's keeper; and let him assure himself, he must expect to lose many an admonition, shoot many an arrow of reproof, as Jonathan did his, under and over, on this side and the other side, before he hit the mark.

#### RULES.

1. *He must take a season wherein the offender is capable of reproof.*—If a man be drunk, we must stay till he be sober; as Abigail. (1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37.) So, if a man be all in a heat of passion, we must stay, and come to him, as God did to Adam, in the cool of the day, when the fit was over.

2. *We must take a season wherein we have occasion to commend a man for his virtues, and then rub him up for his faults.*—“Sir, you are thus and thus; O but if you would but mend this and that, how excellent it would be!” So St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 17.

3. *We must do it as soon as ever we can.*—And the sooner the better: a green wound is easier healed than an old sore. (Lev. xix. 17.)

4. *If we have long waited for fit seasons, and yet cannot find them, you had better make a breach upon one's prudence than one's conscience.*—

\* “When Diogenes trampled on what he deemed to be the pride of Plato, he exhibited a specimen of his own greater pride and consummate arrogance.”—EDIT. † “Suitable times for speaking to a man, when he is inclined to be specially bland and courteous.”—EDIT.

Discretion then must give place to necessity : out with it, and leave the success to God.

5. *He must manage his reproof with due conditions and qualifications.*—And, beloved, there are seven properties of that reproof that will, in all likelihood, both benefit and better our brother, and also secure ourselves from participation of his sins.

(1.) *We must reprove seriously and in good earnest, so as to knock the nail up to the head in the conscience of the sinner.* (Psalm l. 21.)—So should we, in our reproofs of our brother, charge him home : “These things hast thou done ; there is no denying.” “Thou art the man,” says Nathan to David. Before he was in his parable ; but now he speaks plain English, as we say. “This Jesus whom ye have crucified,” says Peter to the Jews ; and thus we should set things in order before him. “Sir, is not this and that highly to dishonour God, and to crack your credit, and to shame your profession, and to impair your body, and to waste your estate, and to wound your conscience, and to damn your precious and immortal soul ? And therefore, for the Lord’s sake, think on it, and amend it.” A loose and squibbing kind of reproof is like an *ignis lambens*, [“a lambent flash,”] as soon off as on, and does the man more hurt than good ; as Eli’s careless and loose reproving of his lewd sons did rather harden them in their villany, than any way reform them. As it is with weak physic administered to a sick man ; if \* it doth only stir the humours, but not purge them away, it leaves the body in a greater and worse distemper than it was before : so it is here. Therefore, says the apostle, [“Reprove”] *αποτομῶς*, “cuttingly.” (Titus i. 13.) A finger that is but just pricked, and no more,—it is apt to rankle and fester, and be worse ; but let it bleed, and there is no danger ; it will then soon be healed.

(2.) *We must reprove impartially, and without respect of persons.*—Good men, if they miscarry, must be reproved as well as bad men. If Peter temporize, Paul will not spare him ; nor Barnabas neither ; they shall hear of it. (Gal. ii.) Again : great men, be they never so great,—they should be admonished as well as others, so long as they are under the great God, and subject to great failings and miscarriages ; kings, and nobles, and magistrates, as well as meaner and inferior persons. Nathan reproved David, though a king ; and so did Elijah, Ahab ; and Nehemiah reproved the nobles and rulers for usury and sabbath-profanation. Certainly, if any be fit to teach great men, they are as fit to reprove them ; for both must go together. (2 Tim. iv. 2.) That is but a drone-like preaching that hath lost the sting of reproving. It is the great unhappiness of princes and nobles, that they have so many flatterers about them, and so few reprovers. Carneades, in Plutarch, was wont to say, that “great men’s sons learned nothing well, but to ride horses ; for men would be sure to flatter them. If they run, they would lag behind, that they might outrun them ; if they wrestled, they would fall on purpose, that they might seem to cast them, &c. But a horse, not knowing a prince from a peasant, would down with him if he could not rule him.” Just so it is now : let great men do what they will, both against scripture, and reason, and law, and conscience, they will not

\* *If* is omitted in all editions except the first.—EDIT.

want their parasites, both to encourage them and applaud them. If there be not a law for Cambyzes to marry his sister,—tush! what of that?—there is a law for Cambyzes to do what he pleases; and thus men, out of cowardice, and fear of frowns and wrath, dare not reprove guilty greatness. O, but if a man be a faithful monitor, he must be impartial in his reproofs. Agag must be reproved, as well as the poorest Amalekite; and the mountains must be touched, let them smoke and fume never so furiously, to allude to that place, Psalm cxliv. 5. This made that excellent emperor Theodosius so much esteem Ambrose; namely, that he durst and would, out of the sense of his duty, reprove even the highest and proudest. *Ambrosium ob hoc dignum episcopi nomine solum novi.*\* But here humility must be used.

(3.) *We must reprove discreetly, making a difference between man and man.*—For though it is true, that all are to be reproved that are offenders, especially within the pale of the church; (1 Cor. v. 12; )—except they be scorers, whom Christ calls “dogs” and “swine,” (Matt. vii. 6,) and obstinate “heretics;” (Titus iii. 10; )—yet all must not be handled in the same manner. Some will do more with a rod than others will do with a scorpion. A glass is not to be handled so roughly as a brassen vessel. This rule St. Jude gives, verses 22, 23. Some must be dealt withal with lenitives, others with corrosives; some gently reproved, others sharply rebuked; according to the tenderness or stubbornness of their disposition, or according to the nature and quality of their offences. And here abundance of rules might be laid down about public, private, great, small, seldom, or frequent, offences. In one word, “a reprovor must be like the thresher, that the prophet describes,” as one says. (Isai. xxviii. 27, 28.)

(4.) *We must reprove compassionately, with the deepest sense of our own failings and miscarriages, and so with the greater pity to their infirmities.* (Gal. vi. 1.)—Bernard said of himself, that he never saw another man sin, but he was distrustful and jealous of his own heart: *Ille heri, et tu hodie, et ego cras;*† and this would file off a great deal of that rigour and roughness that renders a reproof so unpleasing, and so unprofitable; for, verily, Christian tenderness and compassion in the reprovor is the best way to work sense and passion in the sinner:

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi.*—HORAT. *De Arte Poet.* 103, 104.

This is the way to mollify men's hearts; whereas, by a lordly, domineering, austere, rigid reproof, instead of rendering thy brother God's friend, thou dost but render thyself his enemy. (James i. 20.)

(5.) *We must reprove charitably, with the greatest love to men's persons.*—Even then, when we show the greatest zeal against their sins; for it is one thing to be angry with the sins, and another with his person; therefore, we should consult our brother's credit, and esteem,

\* “On this account Ambrose is the only man whom I have known to be worthy of the title of bishop.”—EDIT. † “He committed sin yesterday, and you may commit it to-day, and I to-morrow.”—EDIT.

† “If you would have me weep, begin the strain;  
Then I shall feel your sorrows, feel your pain.”—FRANCIS'S Translation.

and honour, and person, while we stab his sin; and not, as one said well, "in healing a wound in his conscience and conversation, to leave a scar of reproach upon his person, and a brand of shame and ignominy upon his name:" that were to do the work of an enemy under the vizard of a friend. And thus I remember the Jews generally interpret that law, Lev. xix. 17; that is, say the Talmudists and Gemarists, "Thou shalt rebuke thy brother, *so as to reform him*; but thou shalt not rebuke thy brother, *so as to shame him*; thou shalt rebuke him in love and lenity: he that shames his brother by rebuking him, bears his sin; nay," say they, "he that shames his brother shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven:" their meaning is, unless the fault be notorious, and public, and scandalous; for then they may shame him: "I speak this to your shame," saith Paul.

(6.) *We must reprove meekly, not in rage, and passion, and bitterness, but in meekness, and sweetness of spirit.*—This rule the apostle gives. (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Though there may be some warmth in a reproof, so as to fetch off the hair; yet it must not be scalding hot, so as to fetch off the skin. Elisha \* did that with a kiss which his man could not do with a staff: beloved, when a kiss will do better, O take heed of carrying your teeth in your tongues. Take soft words and hard arguments to convince gainsayers; and so gentle reproofs, and solid reasons, to reduce offenders.

(7.) *We must reprove scripturally.*—My meaning is, as near as we can, to reprove our brethren in scripture-text, and scripture-language, that so it may not seem to be we that speak, so much as the Spirit of our Father that speaks in us; and this is to reprove with authority. (Titus ii. 15.) What greater authority and majesty wherewith to awaken the conscience of a sinner than the word of God, by which he should be ruled, and by which he must certainly be judged?

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Know, reader, that God took the author to glory, before he could finish this sermon for the press.

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## SERMON VIII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL LEE, A.M.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHAT MEANS MAY BE USED TOWARDS THE CONVERSION OF OUR  
CARNAL RELATIONS?

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*—Romans x. 1.

THIS noble argumentative Epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans, was written and dated at Corinth, when he was now even ready to set

\* In all the editions, this is misprinted *Elijah*.—EDIT.