

thee, if He depart from thee grieved? Or is it ingenuous, thus unworthily to treat that noble guest, to affront God's sacred Spirit to his very face; and, in despite and mockery of him, to side with his enemy, the flesh? Is this thy kindness to thy best Friend, thy faithful Counsellor, thy infallible Guide, thy Minister and Oracle, thy sweet and only Comforter? What need I add, that thou breakest thy peace, woundest thy conscience, forfeitest the loss of God's countenance, and makest a gap in the divine protection for all evil to rush in at?

7. And lastly, *Consider the invaluable benefit of resisting, of not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh*, in two great instances:—

(1.) *Unutterable joy and pleasure will be shed abroad in thy soul, as often as thou gettest the day.*—I know no greater triumph than that of a Christian, when he is “more than conqueror through Christ that loves him.” O the peace, the joy, and holy glorying in the Lord, and in the power of his might, that a good man is even ravished and caught up into the third heavens with, when the Lord covers his head in the day of battle, and lifts it up above his spiritual enemies! To vanquish one's self, is a nobler exploit than to subdue a city; (Prov. xvi. 32;) nay, a vaster conquest than if one could, with that great Macedonian captain, achieve the empty title of “the vanquisher of the world.”

(2.) *Every conquest will increase thy strength and dexterity against the next assault.*—So that when the vanquished lust recruits its forces thou wilt be able to outvie thyself, and become more dexterous every time.

Nay, the mortifying of one earthly member, like the cutting-off a limb from the natural body, will make the whole body of sin tremble, all the rest of thy lusts will fare the worse, and by consent languish: so that every victory over any one corruption weakens that and all the rest, and breaks the way for future conquests.

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## SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A.M.

HOW MINISTERS OR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS MAY AND OUGHT TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO SICK PERSONS, FOR THEIR GOOD, AND THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

*If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*  
—Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

THESE words are part of Elihu's discourse uttered by way of rephension and conviction to Job, and by way of vindication and apology for God in his dealings with men; and although he premiseth this, that

God "giveth no account of his matters," (verse 13,) yet he doth, *ex abundanti*, give an account for God, and makes a defence, or gives a *rationale* of God's proceedings with men, &c.; where he shows that it is not man's torment or ruin that God desires, but his reformation and amendment. And that it may appear how sincerely and fervently he desires it, he shows that there are several ways and means which God useth, which are most powerful and likely to produce it.

1. He speaks to men in dreams. (Verse 15, &c.)

2. When that will not do, by afflictions. (Verse 19, &c.)

3. To make those afflictions more intelligible and more effectual, he sends "a messenger," &c. This is the business of the text: "If there be with him," &c.: wherein you may observe two parts:—

1. A supposition: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter," &c. (Verse 23.) 2. A position: "Then he is gracious to him," &c. (Verse 24.)

The words may be called "the sick man's cordial, or his restorative:" wherein you may observe: 1. The patient, expressed in the word "him." 2. The disease, his danger, and misery: "He is going down to the pit." 3. The Physician, who is described, (1.) *Ab officio*, "by his office," "a messenger." (2.) *Ab opere*, "by his work," "an interpreter." (3.) *A præstantid*, ["from his excellent qualities,"] a rare man, "one of a thousand," *multis e millibus unus*. 4. The physic: "To show unto a man his uprightness." 5. The cure: "Then he is gracious," &c. Where are considerable:—

(1.) The quality of it, the kind of the cure: "Deliver him from going down to the pit;" that is, from mortal sickness.

(2.) The spring of it, God's grace: "He is gracious."

(3.) The meritorious cause of it: "I have found a ransom."

(4.) The declaration of it: "He saith," &c.

The difficulties are neither many nor great; yet some things there are which need explication.

*If a messenger*—An angel; that is, by office, not by nature; for so the word is oft used in scripture, both in the Old Testament, "Behold, I will send my messenger," Hebrew מַלְאָךְ, "my angel," (Mal. iii. 1,) which the infallible Interpreter, the Lord Jesus, tells us was meant of John the Baptist: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send a messenger," &c. (Matt. xi. 10.)—and in the New Testament, (Rev. ii. 3,) where the pastors of the several churches are called "angels:" and so it is most fitly understood here, both because God did then and still doth most generally use the ministry of men rather than angels in counselling and comforting afflicted men; and because he is called "one of a thousand," a phrase which implies, as his excellency and fitness for that work, so the insufficiency of most of the same kind for it; which must not be charged upon the meanest of God's elect angels.

*An interpreter*—Namely, of the mind and will of God: Christ is the great Interpreter; (John i. 18;) but he, when he ascended on high, gave forth this gift, and left us interpreters in his stead. (Eph. iv. 11, &c.)

*To show unto a man his righteousness*—That is, man's own righteousness, to say nothing of the other senses [of the words]; for it is the sin

and unrighteousness of a man which causeth his disease, and the sense of that sin which makes his disease bitter and formidable: sin is the sting of every affliction. Now then *omnis curatio fit per contraria*, "all cures are wrought by contraries:" when therefore a faithful messenger or minister of Christ having\* made the sick man sensible of his sin, and afterwards of the pardon of it, and when he comes to discover to him his righteousness, uprightness, holiness, "then God is gracious," &c.; although it is not at all impossible that here may be a reference to Christ's righteousness; for Job is no stranger to that; and the word "ransom" carries an evident relation thither: so that both may be conjoined.

*Then he* (that is, God) *is gracious*—God is always gracious in himself, in his own nature; but he is gracious to none, but in his own way, and upon his own terms. God is not gracious to unrighteous and unholy persons; but when men return from their sins, &c., "God is gracious, and saith;" that is, God saith, "Deliver him." He saith so to his minister, he gives him commission to deliver him; that is, to declare him to be delivered. God delivers men *authoritative et realiter*, ministers only *ministerialiter et declarative*: it is an usual phrase; ministers are said to do that which they declare God will do: "I have set thee over nations and kingdoms," saith God to Jeremiah, "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy;" that is, "to declare that I will do it." (Jer. i. 10.)

*I have found a ransom*—I have received satisfaction, that is, in the death of my Son; which was a ransom satisfactory for the sins of his people. And, farther, it is by virtue of this ransom that God's people are delivered, not only from hell, but from any other miseries. Indeed, as divines distinguish of the resurrection of the godly and the wicked, so the temporal deliverances which wicked men receive,—they are the effects of common providence; but those which Christ's members receive, they have as the fruits of Christ's purchase. And well saith God, "I have found a ransom:" for it is beyond the wit of men or angels to find out such an admirable way for man's salvation. Thus you have had the coherence, division, and sense of the words.

There are several doctrines which these words would afford; but I shall forbear the very mention of them, and only speak of this one, which falls to my share.

**DOCTRINE.**—*That the seasonable instruction of sick and languishing persons is a work, as of great advantage, so of great skill and difficulty.*

I need not spend much time in the proof, yet something must be said of it: there are two branches.

I. It is of great advantage.

II. It is of great difficulty.

I. *That it is a work of great advantage.*—It is convenient to say something of this, because I take it to be a common mistake of many persons: they are apt to think, that sick-bed applications are in a manner useless and ineffectual. It may be a discouragement which the devil proposeth to ministers or others to make them neglect this work, or be formal in it, especially when the persons are ignorant or profane: the devil may suggest the invalidity of a sick-bed repentance, the customari-

\* The construction of the sentence requires this word to be "haa."—EDIT.

ness and hypocrisy of sick-bed desires, &c. Now, to obviate such suggestions, consider these things:—

1. *That the instruction of sick persons is God's institution.*—So you see in the text: “A messenger;” that is, one sent of God to this purpose. Now God's institutions are not in vain: every institution of God carries a promise in its bowels to him that doth not *ponere obicem*, [“place any hinderance in its way,”] that doth rightly use it. Ministers or Christian friends may go about it with much comfort; for it is God's work; as he said, “Have not I commanded you?” &c. It is one of those ways, as you see in the chapter, which God ordained to reclaim sinners; and when you attempt it, you may expect God's concurrence; you may pray in faith for God's assistance in his ordinance.

2. *God's mercy is proposed by himself, and may be offered by ministers, even to languishing persons.*—It is true, it must be done cautiously, as you shall hear; but it may be done. God doth indefinitely tender his mercy to all; and we must not limit where God limits not: ministers may safely follow God's example. And whereas it may be thought that such men only come to God, as driven by necessity; you must know that God is so gracious, that he receives even such whom mere necessity drives to him; and, indeed, all true converts are first persuaded to come to God by the sense of their own necessities, though afterwards they are elevated to a more noble disposition. God never rejected any upon this ground. How many came to Christ merely in sense of their bodily maladies, and were sent away with spiritual cure! Christ received her that came not to him till she had in vain tried all other physicians. So in that parable of the prodigal, wherein God is pleased to represent the methods of his grace in the conversion and salvation of sinners, you shall find that God doth not reject that poor prodigal, because he was forced home by that *durum telum, necessitas*, [“hard dart, necessity,”] by insuperable straits and difficulties.

3. *Sick-bed repentance is not wholly impossible, though it be hard.*—Sickness is one means that God useth to work repentance. God can work repentance even upon a sick bed; and it is God that must do it even in health; and, to speak truly and strictly, although the means of repentance be more probable, and the truth of repentance more discernible, in health than in sickness; yet the practice of repentance is as hard a work in health as in sickness, seeing in both cases it is the great work of the omnipotent God, who hath ever challenged it as his royal prerogative to give repentance, whatever those *hostes gratie Christi*, [“enemies to the grace of Christ,”] as Austin calls them, say to the contrary; so that, in short, with men, repentance is always impossible: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil:” (Jer. xiii. 23 :) but with God it is always possible. And yet, to prevent the abuse of this, by a presumptuous putting-off repentance to the time of sickness and death upon this pretence, I must add, that such as put off repentance on such a pretext, do seldom meet with it. God doth seldom give repentance to such persons; and it is a general observation of all serious divines, that late repentance is seldom true, though true repentance is never late; it being the just

judgment of God, that they that intend to mock God by putting off repentance, should deceive themselves, and die without repentance.

II. *That it is a work of great difficulty, might easily be demonstrated.*—But that will appear in the further prosecution of it all along: only there are two arguments which the text suggests:

1. *That it is a work which God hath put into the hands of his chief officers, his ministers, who ought to be the most accomplished persons of all others, &c.*—This is one of those works for which God hath vouchsafed such singular gifts unto his messengers.

2. *That it is not every minister, neither, who is fit for this work.*—And therefore here it is required, that he be “one of a thousand.”

But this I shall pass over, and come to that which is allotted to me,—the resolution of this great and important case of conscience: *How ministers or Christian friends may and ought to apply themselves to sick persons for their good, and the discharge of their own consciences.*

I take it to be one of the hardest parts of the ministerial work, to make seasonable applications to such persons. I shall therefore endeavour to answer it, though not so fully as the point deserves, yet so far as the brevity of this exercise will permit, in these eight propositions or directions:—

1. *Endeavour must be used to understand the state of the sick person.*—As physicians do by sick persons: they inquire into the manner of their life, diet, &c. It is a great step to the cure to know the patient's temper; because, as bodily, so spiritual, physic must be suited to the temper, and disposition, and condition of the patient. And as physicians take pains in this, by conference with friends, and by examining the patient; so should ministers, by discourse with religious acquaintance, and by searching conference with the sick persons, endeavour to find out the truth. For why should not men be as accurate in healing men's souls as their bodies? since the very Heathen could say, That all our care should be translated from the things of the body, to the soul. So Epictetus, in his sixty-third chapter: Αφύιας σημειον, το ενδιτριβειν τοις ωρει το σωμα,\* &c. And as for the body, men prize those physicians most that best know their temper, &c.; so should sick persons prefer, *ceteris paribus*, [“things in other respects being similar,”] that faithful minister that hath most knowledge of them, &c.

2. *The great business is to bring the sick man to a true sight of his state and condition.*—Indeed this is a happy thing, whatever his condition be. If his condition be sound and good, then it is a happiness to know it, that he may have the comfort of it; if it be bad, yet it is a happiness to know it, that a man may be capable of counsel, and put into the way to amend it. It is true, evil men, like persons much in debt, care not to look into their books, and understand their debts; but they must be brought to it. And the worse thy condition is, the more art thou con-

\* “There is no surer sign of stupidity and want of sense, than to trifle away a great deal of time in things relating to the body; as, to be long at exercise, or at meals, or in drinking, or in the other functions of nature. For we ought to look upon all that is done to the body as things by the bye; and upon the improvement of the soul as that which challenges our time, and is the true and main end and business of our lives.”—DEAN STANHOPE'S Translation.

cerned to discover it; for, to be ignorant of thy condition, if it be good, only hinders thee from comfort; but if it be bad, it hinders thee from salvation. You and they must both consider, that as the heart is always deceitful, so then especially for three reasons amongst others: (1.) Then men are impotent, and unable to examine themselves; their natural parts are weakened, the eyes of their mind clouded; their mind is diverted by bodily pains, that it cannot attend, and so may sooner be cheated. (2.) Then men are slothful and listless as to all spiritual exercises. If even good men are slothful in their most healthful times, how much more evil men in times of sickness! The listlessness of the body generally makes an answerable impression upon the faculties of the soul; that being a received truth amongst physicians and philosophers, and ratified by daily experience, that *mores animi sequuntur temperamentum corporis*. [“The moral habits of the soul follow in the train of the body’s temperament.”] (3.) In times of sickness, men are greedy of comfort, and so will catch even at a shadow, &c. Upon all these grounds there needs the more caution, to set before his eyes the folly and misery of self-deceit, especially in everlasting matters.

3. *Ministers and others must take great heed, lest, while they avoid one extreme, they run upon another; which is a common error in practice.*—Some, for the prevention of despair, have made such unseasonable applications of comfort as have begotten presumptuous hopes. Others, again, to prevent presumption, have so indiscreetly aggravated things, as to render them hopeless, and so careless, &c. There must therefore be a prudent contemperation of things together: as the wise physician mixeth several ingredients; he puts-in, indeed, things of a sharp and corroding nature, which may eat out or remove the noxious humours, but addeth to them things of a more gentle temperature, which by their lenity may correct the acrimony of the former. God himself sets us a copy by the mouth of Samuel: “Ye have done all this wickedness.” There are the corrosions; he faithfully discovers that, and doth not daub with them. Yet, lest the disease should rather be exasperated than removed, he adds this healing counsel: “Yet turn not aside from following the Lord;” and this cordial: “The Lord will not forsake his people.” (1 Sam. xii. 20, 22.) And Ezra follows it: “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with God.” (Ezra x. 2, 3.)

4. *The same methods are not to be used to all sick persons.*—You might as well give the same pill to all diseased persons; whereas that which would cure one will kill another: you may as well make one suit for all bodies. Discreet physicians diversify their applications, according to the difference of the patient’s disposition and condition: so here. And there are many differences to be eyed here:—

(1.) *Difference of tempers, whether tender, or rough and stubborn.*—As you read, it is the husbandman’s “discretion” that “the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is the cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod;” (Isai. xxviii. 27;) so it must be the discretion of a minister, to have respect to the different tempers of men, in his

applications to them. It is said of Christ, he taught the disciples as they were able to bear.

(2.) *Difference of education and conversation.*—Some have been nuzzled [nursed] in ignorance, others brought up in the knowledge of the truth; [the] not considering of this occasions much mischief. Discourse to an ignorant person of the necessity of faith and repentance, you lose your labour oft-times; he conceits he hath believed and repented; for he takes *faith* to be a believing (though without any grounds) that God hath pardoned him, and *repentance*, a crying “God mercy!” &c. One must consider where foundations must be laid, and where we need only raise superstructions. Some have had a loose and profane education, others civil and religious: the former require more terror, the latter more caution, lest they deceive themselves.

(3.) *Difference of guilt.*—Great difference is to be made in the handling of sinners of a smaller size, and inveterate sinners: as God expects, so ministers must endeavour, that sorrow may bear some proportion with the sin. Peter, having sinned grievously, wept bitterly. (Matt. xxvi. 75.)

5. *It is a very bad guide to follow the counsels or desires of sick persons, or their carnal friends.*—It fares with faithful ministers as with honest and able physicians, that are many times ill thought of by the sick man and foolish friends. When they put\* him to pain or trouble, they charge him with cruelty, and delighting to torment the poor man unnecessarily; and, it may be, think of discharging him, and getting a physician, that will deal more gently with him: whereas, indeed, he is the sick man's best friend; and many times should he not pain him, he would kill him. So is it here: come to a sick man, he cries: “Comfort, for God's sake.” So say his friends; and they think all is done, if they can get comfort! Why, you shall have it, but in due time; you shall have ease, health, &c.; but you must be contented to wait for it, and expect it in due order. First, you must be sick: oft-times that physick is the best which makes you sickest. You shall be healed; but, if you would proceed regularly, and work a true cure, you must first have your wound searched, and then healed, else you have only a palliative cure, and the wound will fester inwardly: and it is an horrible mistake of sick persons,—they think comfort is all they are to look after. I tell you, it is not present comfort, but everlasting happiness, you must make [it] your business to get: it is not the *eubavasia* † of Augustus, “to die quietly, like a lamb,” as the vulgar phrase it; but a scripture *eubavasia*, to “die the death of the righteous.” It is not so much a calm, and sweet, and easy passage, (the fishes have that, when they swim down the sweet stream of Jordan, into the Dead Sea, where they perish,) but a safe harbour. One may go to heaven in a storm, and to hell in a calm; and which is better, judge you. Those wretches in Psalm lxxiii. “have no bands in their death;” and yet death hath dominion over them. Comfort is not the great business you need.

6. *The same course, for substance, is to be taken for the conversion of sick and healthful persons, &c.*—There is but one way to heaven for all

\* The rest of the sentence requires the commencement to be, *When he puts*, &c.—EDIT.  
 † Vide SÆTONIUM De XII. *Cæsariis*, lib. ii. 90.—EDIT.

persons ; and therefore consider with yourselves what you would do, if they were in health, and what were necessary then ; why, that same course you must take now ; and if it be more troublesome to sick persons, they may thank themselves for it, who neglected the time of their health, &c. Indeed, sick men are apt to favour themselves, and to think God will accept of less from them than [from] others ; whereas, if possible, they have need to do more than others, and to make the more haste, having the less time for their work.

7. *The greatest care must be, to keep sick persons from those errors whereby such persons commonly miscarry.*—Such as these :—

(1.) *Insensibleness of their danger.*—Whereas the first step to a cure, is to know one's malady. It is a dreadful thing to see poor ignorant and unconverted sinners, at the very brink of the pit, ready to drop into hell, and not at all affected with it, &c. If ever you mean to do them any good, you must awaken them out of that mortal sleep or lethargy, lighten their eyes with a conviction of their danger, lest they sleep the sleep of death.

(2.) *Willingness to be deluded.*—You may know it thus : if a daubing minister or friend offers comfort, how greedily they catch it ! They will receive comfort upon any grounds, nay, upon no grounds, but upon the bare words, it may be, of a time-serving and man-pleasing minister. But let a serious and faithful minister come to them, and show them their sad, and sinful, and hazardous condition, and demonstrate it by irrefragable arguments, they will not yield to it. But, as St. Peter speaks, *Λαθῶσαι γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θελοντάς* : “This they willingly are ignorant of.” (2 Peter iii. 5.) You must possess them with the folly of such a temper, the unavoidable misery of self-deluding persons, &c., and the dread of disappointment when too late.

(3.) *Carelessness and listlessness.*—This is the temper of many ; knowing the difficulty of believing, repenting, &c., and remembering their own guilt, they cast off the care of that which they think will be to no purpose, &c. You must therefore possess them with the necessity of Christian carefulness ; what madness it is to be careless now, which is the only season of caring to any purpose, &c. ; what folly it is to free themselves from the care of a few days, to ascertain \* to themselves everlasting care and torment, &c. Also you must possess them with the benefit of this care, and laying it to heart, &c.,—that it is God's course, in opening the heart, to stir up this care.

(4.) *Resting in generals.*—*Dolosus versatur in generalibus.* [“An artful and treacherous man deals in generalities.”] This deceives many in hell : you may discourse excellently against sin in the general, and raise in them some passion against it, yet not profit them at all, &c. For, true repentance takes notice of particular sins, &c. ; and as generals have no existence, but in the particulars, according to principles of philosophy ; so it is sin in particular which doth primarily affect the heart of a true penitent.

(5.) *The concealment of some hidden way of wickedness,* I believe, hath sent many to hell : they would never make their disease known,

\* In the old English signification of *assure*.—EDIT.



through fear of shame, &c. ; as some persons have died of those diseases which they have smothered. It is true, a man is not bound to make confession of all his sins to a minister, as we rightly assert against papists ; but yet all divines grant, that in many cases it is both expedient and necessary to acknowledge thy wickedness to men ; and, to say nothing of those cases wherein it is sometimes necessary, nor of many reasons which make it frequently expedient, I shall only instance in one, which is sufficient of itself many times,—that the physician, knowing more exactly thy malady, may more effectually proportion his remedy. Possess them with this in such cases,—How infinitely better it is to have some shame before a friend, who will cover your shame, and hate to reproach you with it, than before all the world ! Convince them what folly it is to be unfaithful to themselves, &c.

8. *Take heed of healing the souls of sick persons slightly.*—This we are very apt to, (1.) From the sick man's greedy desire of comfort ; (2.) From the expectation and desire of carnal friends ; (3.) From our own careless hearts, that love not to put ourselves to any trouble or reproach, which we shall meet with, if we be faithful in this case. However, take heed of it : “They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” (Jer. viii. 11.) This is the case : a soul, whether in sickness or in health, must first be wounded, then healed. There must be sorrow and travail, ere the man-child be brought forth. There must be true repentance, and godly sorrow, deep sorrow : (they daub that tell you otherwise, and make God a liar :) great heaviness of heart, &c. Repentance is neither a short nor a superficial work. Persuade them to wait God's leisure, and in God's way, for the cure ; not to precipitate your work. Persuade them not to be afraid of sorrows, troubles, &c., but rather to fear the want of it. For here is a common and a fatal mistake : most men are afraid of sorrow, and labour to drive away sorrow ; whereas, indeed, sorrow is the midwife of all true joy. Tears of penitential sorrow are the streams that lead us to “the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand ;” it is none other than the gate of heaven, the fountain of comfort : and, on the contrary, to be a stranger to godly sorrow, is one of the dread-fullest signs of a lost soul. The laughter of such a person is a *risus Sardonicus*,\* a deadly joy. Labour more to work a solid than a sudden cure.

There are other directions I thought to have given ; but these may suffice ; and I will conclude all with two or three USES, first to ministers, then to people.

#### USE I.

I. *To ministers.*—Hence we may learn the great difficulty of the ministerial work : we see one reason why Paul said, “Who is sufficient for these things ?” O what a sin and shame it is to see what persons venture upon this work ! that such undertake to be shepherds of Christ's flock, that are hardly fit to be set with the dogs of the flock ! “Father, forgive them ! they know not what they do.” Many act as if they thought this were all the work of a minister,—to make a few sermons,

\* A *Sardonic smile* signifies a kind of “convulsive laughter,” or “forced grin.”—EDIT.

read some prayers, &c. No, no; a minister must be "thoroughly furnished to every good work." He must be apt and able for every work; this, among others. O what angelical abilities doth it require! Acuteness, to discern the sick man's temper; knowledge, to understand the nature of all spiritual diseases, the symptoms, the prognostics, as also the antidotes and remedies; wisdom, to make suitable, speedy applications. O how hard a case is it! Many sick men can neither endure *morbum*, nor *remedium*, neither the "disease" of their souls, nor their "remedy," &c. A minister had need know all things, understand all persons, discern the subtilties of men's hearts, and not be ignorant of the wiles of the devil.

How many knots must he be able speedily to untie! How many cases must he be able to give speedy resolution to! And he must be supposed to have laid up with great industry, because he must "bring forth out of his treasure things both new and old." O the difficulty! It is a sad thing to consider, that many souls do perish, not only *vi morbi*, "by the force of their disease," but also *errore medici*, "by the error of their physician," by the mistakes of their ministers: and, as Galen speaks of physic for the body, it is also true of the physic of the soul: *In medicina nihil exiguum*: "In physic nothing is little." A small error there, may occasion fearful mischiefs; so a small mistake in souls' concerns may occasion a soul's everlasting ruin.

## USE II.

II. *To people*.—Is it of such difficulty? O labour you to do your work in health, while time and strength last, before the evil days come, &c. It is a serious admonition of Gregory, in his book *De Curâ Pastoralis: Salus corporis, quando ad bene operandum accepta despicitur, quanti sit muneris amissa sentitur*: "He that neglects the time of health for the doing of his great work,—he shall feel the worth of it by the want of it." I beseech you, let me reason with you: "Why will you run a hazard, when you may go a safe way? Consider what woful straits you will bring yourselves to. If you do not ponder your ways, and fix your thoughts, and afflict your hearts, you kill your souls; if you do, perhaps your bodies, &c. What a dreadful dilemma is this! &c. The physician chargeth you not to trouble yourselves with sad thoughts, lest you overthrow your bodies; and the minister, if he will be faithful, must charge you to trouble yourselves, lest you lose your souls. O consider now; *now* you may consider, you have the use of reason; *then* reason may be lost, &c. *Now* God will accept of you; *then*, it may be, he will reject you. (Prov. i. 20—32.) *Now* you are at leisure to consider; *then*, "sufficient unto the day will be the evil thereof." And therefore be persuaded to improve the time of health. It is the general custom of sick persons to send for ministers to prepare them for the future life, when they despair of the enjoyment of this present life. A learned man wittily observed, that, as they say, *Ubi desinit philosophus, insipit medicus* :\* so it may be said, *Ubi desinit*

\* "At the point where the *Philosopher* ends, there the *Physician* exhibits his folly;" conveying an intimation, that, whenever a *Physician* deserts the enlightening guidance of a

*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.