

A
S E R M O N

Preached in

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND,

BEFORE THE

S O C I E T Y

FOR

ENCOURAGING INDUSTRY,

AND

EMPLOYING the POOR;

August 8. 1753.

By

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B O S T O N :

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1 COR. Chap. 13. Ver. 5.

CHARITY --- seeks not her own.



H. E. Society for encouraging Industry and employing the Poor, at whose Invitation, we are now assembled in the House of Worship, being engaged in a Design that cannot but be esteemed one of the wisest and best Methods of Charity; — A Design which must be attended with great and singular Advantages to the Community, should it be carried into Effect; and which, in order to its being so, will require no small Attention and Pains from those who have the more immediate Direction of it, as well as the generous Disbursements of others, who may approve it, and wish it Success.

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We have therefore a very fair Occasion of considering at this Time, the Account which *St. Paul* has given us of christian Charity, in the few, but comprehensive Words of our Text.

Accordingly I shall in the FIRST PLACE, endeavour to describe this Virtue; and THEN consider the Reasonableness of it, and how greatly we are obliged and encouraged to cultivate it.

I BEGIN with endeavouring a brief Description of that disinterested Benevolence, which the Gospel so frequently and warmly recommends to us. Charity, says the Text, *seeketh not her own*. We are not indeed to imagine that the benevolent Man divests himself of all Regard to his own Interest, and actuated by a kind of mad good Nature, becomes wholly devoted to the Gratification of others, without any Concern or Relish for his own private Happiness. Were it possible for a rational Creature, to extinguish the Principle of Self-Love, far from being any Virtue or Perfection, this would at once appear a gross and monstrous Defect in his Constitution. For Self-Love is at least as necessary to the Support and Happiness of the World as social: both were design'd by the Author of Nature to exert themselves in us to a certain Degree; and we are sure they may both perfectly accord in the

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the same Breast, since our Lord has taught us to make the Love of ourselves, the Measure and Standard of Love to others: *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as Thy Self.* These Principles, opposite as they may seem, are so far from being really inconsistent, that they mutually strengthen and support, correct and refine each other; and the Perfection of Virtue lies, in maintaining them in a due Balance, and allowing to each it's proper Energy and Scope.

But tho' the charitable Man is not destitute of a prudent Regard to his own Interest, yet He does not confine his Attention to this: He does not make himself the Centre of all his Hopes and Wishes; He does not remain abstracted in Affection from the Rest of Mankind, and having burst the common Bond of Society, only love and feel for himself. The divine Principle that warms his Breast carries him out of himself; it unites him to others of the same Species; their Interest becomes his own; and their Sensations either of Joy or Sorrow are adopted by him. He weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with them that rejoice. He looks with Indifference upon nothing, that is not in it self indifferent to the Happiness of human Nature; and he relishes that Blessing most, which he can render most extensive, and in which
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the greatest Number of his fellow Men, may become joint Shareers with himself.

He is tenderly concerned for the *entire* Interest of his Neighbour, in all it's various Branches ; for the Wellfare of his Body, and the Prosperity of his Soul ; for the Success both of his secular and spiritual Affairs ; for his Comfort in this Life, and his Happiness in the next. To the spiritual Wants of Men, he cheerfully ministers, by instructing their Ignorance, and furnishing them with the Means of divine Knowledge ; by tenderly reproving their Vices ; by kindly resolving their Doubts ; by *speaking a Word in Season to those that are weary* ; and setting to the View of others, in his own Example, the several Vertues of Christianity, which when exerted into Action, do wonderfully draw the Attention, and captivate the Affections of the Beholder : — so that he practices pure and undefiled Religion, not only with a View to his own Salvation, but also to engage the Imitation of others ; and that his future Happiness may be augmented by theirs.

He ministers to the bodily Infirmities and Wants of Men, and comforts the Heart oppressed with the Sorrow of the World, — by sympathizing Looks ; by soothing Words ; by prudent

dent Advice ; by readily performing a Variety of friendly Offices ; and cheerfully distributing a proper Portion of that Estate which God has blessed Him. As for Riches — he has learned their just Value and true Improvement ; he knows that there is *no Good in them, but for a Man to receive and to do Good in his Life.* And that for which he chiefly values them, and blesses God the Giver of them, is, that they furnish him with many Opportunities of tasting the divine Pleasure, that flows from annihilating his Misery, and augmenting the Happiness of his fellow Men ; that they capacitate him to cultivate a Character, that appears with distinguished Advantage in holy Writ ; the Character of one who was the best, as well as the greatest Man in all the East. * “ For when the Bar heard him then it blessed him ; and when the boys saw him it gave Wizards to him ; because he delivered the Poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. — The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the Widow’s Heart to sing for Joy. He was Eyes to the blind ; and Feet to the lame ; and a Father to the Poor ”. This is the Use, this is the Advantage which the benevolent Man makes of his Wealth, and other superior Talents. He applies them to the Benefit of Men ; and in his Hands they become the

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* Job 29. from vs. 11th.

Means of enlarging the Happiness of the human Species. He can cheerfully retrench the Expences of Vanity and Luxury, that his Opportunities of doing Good may be the greater : he can gladly deny himself the Delicacies of Life, that others may be furnished with the Means of Subsistence : and were his Power equal to his Will, Pain and Poverty would be wholly unknown in the World. His Charity is not confined — to his Relations and Domestics — to a few of his more immediate Dependents — to a small Circle of Friends and Neighbours — or to his own Party or Sect in Religion. He esteems that Man his Neighbour, whoever he may be, that partakes of the same Nature with himself ; with whom he has any Intercourse ; to whom his Influence can any way extend ; who is pressed with any Misfortune that he can redress ; or who wants a kind Office that he can perform.

As the Happiness of others is the Object of his real and fervent Affection, he endeavours to do the *greatest* Good ; and therefore he prefers the Welfare of Communities to that of Individuals. And altho' his Charity extends to the whole Family of Mankind, and he can never be persuaded to do any Thing contrary to the general Interest ; yet as his Abilities are limited, he chiefly exerts himself for that Society in particular,

particular, to which he is most nearly related; in which his Influence will be most felt; and his benevolent Designs he will likely to take first.

Accordingly, that Charity that *forgets not her own*, forms the large-hearted and disinterested Patriot — his Bottom glows with Love to his Country — he prefers it's Peace and Prosperity to his chief Joy — his clear and active Head, his eloquent and persuasive Tongue are employed in it's Service — he is concerned that Religion and Vertue may be protected and flourish in it — he promotes wise and salutary Laws — he provides a sure Sanctuary to injured Innocence, and that just Vengeance may be dealt to the injurious — He forms Designs of enlarging the Wealth and Power of his Country, by enlarging it's Commerce; by removing what obstructs it's old Channels, and pointing out new ones; and by introducing and encouraging the most useful Arts and Manufactures. Such Designs, he is sensible, when carried into Effect, produce an unknown Deal of Good; the Fruits of them are reaped by vast Numbers at once; and they tend to keep alive Industry and Vertue among a People. And therefore, tho' his private Bounties do often visit *helpless Poverty*, in her retired Abodes; yet he takes Care, that these Bounties do not become the Wages of Idleness; being

being well aware, that *then* they would be worse than lost; and that nothing but Industry, and a full Employment of such as have Ability for Work, can make Plenty and Happiness circulate thro' a whole Community.

The Man of christian Benevolence, does not need to be greatly stimulated and provoked to fall in with any public-spirited Designs; for he is ever ready to go before others, or to contend with them — He does not always wait 'till Opportunities of extensive Beneficence offer themselves to him; but he *seeks* them; and if he has a Capacity for it, he *makes* them. He engages in generous Undertakings for the common Advantage, not with Coldness and Indifference, but with his whole Soul; with as much Eagerness and Alacrity, as the covetous Man embraces a fair Project for advancing his own private Interest: and with as much Concern for Success.

He is accordingly ready, to fall in with such Schemes for promoting the public Good, as are attended only with a Probability of Success. He knows, such is the State of human Affairs, that the best laid Designs, may by some Means or other be disappointed and miscarry. He knows that in most Things relating either to private or social Interest, something is to be hazarded;

zarded ; and he can cheerfully *cast his Bread upon the Waters*. And if the Good which he design'd, should happen after all not to take place, it is yet no small Comfort to him, that he heartily designed it ; and that it was not prevented by any Failure on his Part.

And as in prosecuting such benevolent Intentions, he is wise enough to foresee, from the common Course of Things, a Variety of Difficulties and Obstructions ; he is accordingly provided, with Caution to avoid them ; with Patience to endure them ; and with Resolution to press thro' them. Not will a few common Discouragements cool the generous Warmth of his Mind ; and prevail upon him suddenly to abandon a Design, that appears closely connected with that dear Object, the public Utility. And indeed, to face those Discouragements, and to sustain those Labours that at first, commonly attend any Undertaking of Importance to the Community, is no small Part of the Self-denial of that Charity that *seeketh not her own*.

Not does his large and generous Heart, content it self with doing Good, only to the present Age. He places himself in Imagination among future Generations ; and participates in the Pleasures and Pains of those who are to come after him.

him. His Breast is warmed with benevolent Presentations for Posterity ; and he endeavours that the Fruits of his Charity may remain and be enjoyed, when he himself has no more a Portion under the Sun ; and that those who are yet unborn, may have Reason to bless God, that he ever lived.

I do not pretend, in this short imperfect Sketch, to have given you a full Description of Christian Charity. I shall therefore subjoin the Delineation which *St. Paul* himself has made of this divine Virtue. Charity, says He, in our Context, “suffereth long and is kind” — It knows how to endure an Injury, and often to return a Kindness to him that offers it. — “Charity envieth not” — But gives to every Man his just Portion of Respect and Praise ; and is inwardly glad at his Prosperity — “Charity vaunteth not it self ; is not puffed up ; doth not behave it self unseemly” — It discharges a Man’s Temper and Behaviour of all indecent Pride and Insolence ; and softens him to an obliging Condescension and Sweetness of Manners. — “It is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil” — It puts the most candid Construction upon the Words and Behaviour of another, and is neither easily nor excessively angry — “It rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth” — Instead
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of taking Pleasure in the Follies and Vices of others, it is rather glad when the Cause of Truth and Righteousness prevails in the World—and far from being suspicious, censorious, or revengeful —“ It beareth all Things ; believeth all Things ; hopeth all Things ; and endureth all Things ”.— This is that divine Temper which the Gospel designs to form us to ; and which the Spirit of God produces in the Heart of every sincere Christian. For we may remember that Charity is reckoned in Scripture among the Fruits of the Spirit — It is an Emanation from Him, whose Office it is to correct the moral Disorders of the human Mind ; and who assists us in the Prosecution of that Goodness, which is an Image of himself.

I proceed now to suggest some Things that may serve to recommend this disinterested Charity ; and to shew, how greatly we are obliged and encouraged to cultivate such a Temper.

IN the FIRST PLACE then ; the benevolent Man acts agreeable to the Law of Nature ; and to that Constitution of Things, which we find is in Fact established in the World. A very little Reflection upon human Nature, and the Circumstances of Things in the present State, may convince us of the Truth of that old Maxim, That no Man is born for himself alone. Every Individual

Individual cannot but be sensible that he is not a Whole, and capable of subsisting by himself; but rather a Member of the great Body of Mankind, which must dissolve and perish, unless the several Parts are compacted and kept together by some common Tie; — and this Tie can be nothing else, but universal Benevolence. The Author of Nature has plainly framed and fitted us for one another; and our mutual Wants, Weaknesses and Dependencies, do oblige us to unite together, and embrace and support each other by a mutual Charity. Nothing can be more evidently agreeable to the Constitution of Nature than such a Conduct; since the Constitution of Nature renders it absolutely necessary — And if I cannot subsist in any tolerable Manner without the kind Assistance of my Neighbour; I may also know, that my Neighbour cannot stand by himself without me: And if I think it reasonable to call upon him for Aid, it is certainly full as reasonable, that he, in his Turn, should demand Assistance from me. Mutual Benevolence then, is an universal and fundamental Law of human Nature: — a Law of the last Importance to Men — for should we generally allow our selves to transgress it; all Things would immediately rush into Confusion; and the World be either deserted of it's Inhabitants, or become a Place of extreme Misery. Universal Charity,
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may very well be compared to the great Law of Gravitation, by which all Particles of Matter mutually operate upon, and attract each other. It is by the Energy of this Principle — that the Earth is consolidated and supported — that the heavenly Bodies are preserved in their Harmony — and dispence their benign Influences upon us with so nice a Regularity. Nor is Attraction more necessary in the natural, than Benevolence is in the moral World. Benevolence is the Cement and Support — of Families — of Churches — of States and Kingdoms — and of the great Community of Mankind. It is this single Principle, that constitutes and preserves all the Peace and Harmony, all the Beauty and Advantage of Society. And this leads me to observe,

SECONDLY ; That the Law of Charity is agreeable to, or rather partly constituted by, the natural Feelings and Propensities of the human Heart. We find implanted in our Bosoms certain social Instincts, which do naturally and unavoidably lead us to an Intercourse with our own Species, and to reciprocal Kindnesses and good Offices. This is evident from the Affection which Parents bear to their Children ; which carries them with Cheerfulness thro' all the Cares and Fatigues of their Education, till they are able to stand alone in the World, and provide

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for themselves ; and from the tender Concern for their Welfare with which they continue to follow them, after they are dismissed from their own immediate Care. This is evident, from the warm Affection which Children of the same Family commonly bear to one another ; — from the Disposition that appears in Men to form themselves into little Companies and Friendships ; and from that strong Uneasiness or Compassion, which immediately arises in the human Breast, upon the Sight of a miserable Object ; especially in Children, and such as have not by an Habit of Cruelty rendered their Hearts hard and insensible. Such benevolent Propensities as these, found in some Degree in all Conditions of Men, do plainly shew that mutual Kindness, is really a Law of our Nature. And hence it is, that when any one discovers an Insensibility to the Wants and Distresses of his own Species ; we commonly call him, inhuman : intimating thereby, that he has divested himself of an essential Principle of human Nature ; and forfeited the Name of a Man.

And indeed, so closely are the social Affections interwove with our Nature, that it is strange to observe, what an hard Matter some Men find it wholly to eradicate them. For it is remarked, that even Robbers and Murderers, who have bid
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Defiance to all the Laws of Society, are yet naturally led to found smaller Communities among themselves; in which they pay a Regard to the Rules of Justice and Kindness. And so evidently do they show that the benevolent Instincts are not wholly extinguished in their Breasts, that they cannot enjoy the Spoils of Rapine, without sharing them among their Companions; nor can they relish the Fruits of Violence, unless they are intermixed with some Sensations of Friendship. Since then the Necessity of observing the Law of Love is so great; since the State of the World affords so much Scope for the Exercise of it; and Men have such strong natural Propensities to Kindness and Friendship, we may from all this be well assured,

In the third Place, That the Charity which seeks not her own, is agreeable to the Will of our Almighty Creator; and an important Law of his Kingdom. He has founded that Constitution of Things, which renders mutual Benevolence so absolutely necessary — He, the Father of Mercies, has softened the human Breast with Compassion — And He, in the Wisdom of his Providence, affords us so many and so various Occasions, for the Exertment of it. He has yet more plainly and expressly obliged us to mutual Love, by the written Revelation of his

Will: and added the greatest and most affecting Motives to encourage us to the Practice of this Vertue. God, not only observes and approves our Charities, but has represented himself in his Word, as taking the Place of the Indigent and Miserable among Men, and accepting every Kindness done to them, as tho' it were an Obligation laid upon himself. "He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord." — Disinterested Benevolence, is in a peculiar Manner, the Law of Christianity; and not the least Honour of our divine Religion. The Love of God, is indeed the first and great Commandment: but the second, which obliges us to love our Neighbour as ourselves, our Lord has told us, is like unto the first; — of great Importance, and universal Obligation: This is the Temper, which He recommends to his Followers, as their amiable Characteristic, and that by which they might best distinguish themselves, from the rest of Mankind. "By this, shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another." Nor is there a Grace of the christian Life, that is more frequently mentioned, or has larger Elogiums bestowed upon it, in the Writings of the Apostles. "† Tho' I speak, says St. Paul, with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And tho' I have
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the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing." *This is the End of the Commandment — This, is the Band of Perfection.*

In the FOURTH PLACE, What can be more honourable, or endear us more to our fellow Men, than such a generous extensive Charity. "Your Gods, says Cicero to the Epicurians, deserve no Worship or Adoration, with whatever imaginary Perfections you may endow them; for they are totally useless and inactive." No Talents entitle us to Esteem, but such as are applied to the Good of Mankind. Where Benevolence is wanting, the Character is odious and shocking; but where this prevails, it is not only right, but beautiful. This sheds a Glory round the Person who possesses it, like that which was seen on *Moses*, when he came down from the Mount; or that which sat upon *St. Stephen*, when his Face was beheld at the Face of an Angel.

It encloses our Nature, by conforming us to the best, and most glorious Patterns. It is that, by which great and good Men in ancient Days, have rendered their Memory dear to Posterity.

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Their patriotic Spirit, their diffusive Benevolence, has given them the good Name which is better than precious Ointment; — so that they are had in everlasting Remembrance; and live in History, the Ornaments of human Nature, and Patterns for succeeding Generations. A public Spirit, was the chief Quality, which the Pagan Nations admired in their Heroes when living; and for which they paid them divine Honours after their Decease. This distinguished Moses, the celebrated Lawgiver of the Jewish Nation. How bravely did he sacrifice, even in the Prime and Vigour of Life, the Pleasures of Luxury, and the tempting Prospect of Power, to the Interest of his Country. The Court of Pharaoh, had no Entertainments for him, while his Brethren the Israelites, were groaning under a cruel Bondage. He chose to take his Lot among them, and to share in their Sufferings, rather than to triumph upon the Ruins of their Liberty and Happiness, as the adopted Son of Pharaoh's Daughter. And after resigning the Hopes of a Crown, what glorious Hazards did he run, that that he might become, under God, their Deliverer, and lead them from the Land of Slavery. "He forsook Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King; and refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the

the Pleasures of Sin for a Season ; esteeming the Reproach of Christ, greater Riches than the Treasures in *Egypt* *." — The same Spirit inhabited the Breast of *David*, who was afterwards chosen by God, to rule over this favourite Nation. His Life was almost a continued Scene of Toil and Danger for the publick Good. And how passionate are his Wishes, for the Prosperity of his Kingdom ; and of *Jerusalem* in particular, the beloved Metropolis ! " Pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem* ; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces. For my Brethren and Companions Sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good. † " — The same disinterested Benevolence, animated the Apostles of our Lord, and carried them thro' such uncommon Labours and Sufferings, in propagating thro' the World, the glad Tidings of Salvation. *St. Paul* in particular, was remarkable for it ; who so vehemently desired the Happiness of the whole Jewish Nation, that he could almost " wish himself accursed from Christ, for his Brethren, his Kinsmen according to the Flesh §. — This Temper reigns in the blessed Angels. They

* Heb. xi. 24. — 27. † Psal. 122. from ver. 6.

§ Rom. 9. 5.

do not disdain to become the Ministers of Providence, to inferior Beings. • They are the Guardians of human Kind : and their Benevolence renders them warm and active *as a Flame of Fire*, in all Offices of Kindness to the Heirs of Salvation.

Charity conforms us to the Son of God himself : in whom it appeared with a Lustre truly divine. This, brought him from Heaven to Earth ; and carried him *about doing Good*. This supported him under the amazing Humiliations and Sorrows of his Life ; and adorned it with so many Miracles of Mercy. And this engaged him at last to lay down his Life for the Salvation of Men. What other Motive can we need, my Brethren, to awaken in us a warm diffusive Benevolence ! when we † “ know the Grace of our Lord Jesus, who tho’ he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we thro’ his Poverty might be rich ”. What Heart can resist those melting Words of our Redeemer ? “ Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another ”.

Nor is there any Thing that can give us a nearer Resemblance of the great Father of

† 1 Cor. 9. 6

Spirits ; the Pattern of Perfection. To his free, disinterested, and boundless Goodness, we owe our Beings : and the Universe, with all it's Exuberance of Beauty and Happiness sprung from the same Source. God is Love ; — He delights to exercise Loving-Kindness in the Earth ; his tender Mercies are over all his Works. And to be benevolent, is really to partake of a divine Nature.

AGAIN ; The Temper we are recommending, does in the most effectual Manner advance our private Interest. If Charity seeketh not her own, yet she always finds it ; and Self-Love may be improved as a Motive, to the Practice of this Vertue. It gains us the Confidence of Men, and enlarges our Credit in the World. It derives the Blessing of Heaven upon our secular Affairs, and entitles us to the peculiar Care of Providence. || ¹⁴ " Trust in the Lord, and do good, and so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed. The liberal Soul shall be made fat ; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. " The Advantages of it descend to our Posterity ; the Blessing of God comes upon them also : and the Kindnesses of the good Man, are not seldom repaid to his Children. * ¹⁵ " I have

|| Psal. 37. 3.

* Psal. 37. 25. 26.

been young, says the Psalmist, and now am old; yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, or his Seed begging Bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his Seed is blessed."

And as Happiness is the only Thing worth possessing, for it's own sake; we ought to remember, that Charity is the very Temper of Happiness. It puts the Soul into a natural, and right Posture: it frees us from the violent Distortions and Convulsions of Envy and Malice, and such like rancorous and tormenting Passions; and immediately gives us a serene Self-Enjoyment.

The selfish Man can only enjoy his own single Portion; and it would be well for him, if he could enjoy that: but this we find is seldom the Case. "† There is an Evil under the Sun, and it is common among Men: a Man to whom God hath given Riches and Wealth, so that he wanteth nothing for his Soul of all that he desireth; yet hath he not Power to eat thereof." His Heart is so contracted, and hard, that it admits but few Pleasures; and feels those only that are of the grossest Kind. Whereas the benevolent Man, has a quick Sensibility of the purest and most sublime Entertainments. And while he relishes those Enjoyments that proper-

ly belong to himself, he has the Art of converting the Enjoyments of others into his own. His large and open Heart partakes of the Satisfaction of all around him. But especially does he share in that Happiness which he himself has produced. They only who have tasted it, can know, the refined Luxury of doing good : and it is very hard to describe the soft and exquisite Touches of Pleasure, that play upon the Heart of that Man, who stills the Cry of the Orphan ; who comforts the Widow's Heart : and by finding an Employment for honest Poverty, chases away mooping Idleness, and meagre Want ; and introduces cheerful Industry, and smiling Plenty, in their stead. The Joy, which the good Man receives, upon such Occasions, is greater than what he communicates. The Donor, as our Lord has observed, is happier than the obliged ; for *it is more blessed to give than to receive.* — The Pleasure returns upon himself ; but it returns improved and enlarged. Even the very Tears of Benevolence, are more delightful, than the Joys of Selfishness. Compassion is an agreeable Anguish ; — a Kind of Pleasure, that we cannot be persuaded to part with, but for a greater one of the same Nature, — the Relief of the suffering Object.

Thus it appears, that the social Affection.

were implanted in us, not only for the sake of others, but also for our own ; *and that by cultivating these, we enlarge the Means of private Happiness. The most direct Way to secure this, is to treat it as wise Men do Fame : if we employ our Attention wholly upon it, and attempt to grasp it too eagerly, it flies from us and eludes our Hopes : but if we seem to neglect it, and heartily pursue the Good of others ; Self-Enjoyment comes to us of it's own accord.

The Joys of Benevolence, are indeed so great, and it so certainly tends to private Happiness, that some have confounded it with Self-Love. And because we so unavoidably do good to our selves, by doing good to others, they have denied that any such Principle as disinterested Charity, is to be found in human Nature. But whence is it that the good Man is so closely united to his Neighbour, that he becomes another Self : and in relieving him, he relieves himself ? This intimate Union, which is the Foundation of the Pleasure, can only be made by some benevolent Instinct, or Principle ; and this Principle, whatever we may call it, must be disinterested. We cannot take Delight in the Happiness of others, unless we really love it ; and have some generous Affections that terminate in it, as their ultimate Object.

IN the LAST PLACE, The Charity which the Gospel recommends, will be a Fund of Joy to us, thro'out Eternity. Besides the present Pleasure and Advantage which it yields, it is among the Things that *accompany Salvation*; and to which the Promises of eternal Life, the free Gift of God thro' Jesus Christ, are annexed. As it leads us to make the proper Improvement of our Powers and Advantages; and to fill up the Station assigned us in the World; it prepares us, to appear with Comfort before our Judge; who has let us know, that Charity is one special Article, upon which Men shall be tried in the Day of Recompence.— And that then, Acts of Kindness to the indigent will be accepted and rewarded by him, as tho' he himself had needed and received them. * “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me ”.

This Grace is no small Part of our “ Meekness for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. ” It is the very Temper of Heaven; and constitutes in a good Measure the Harmony and Felicity of it. There, it abides for ever; and its Pleasures will be perpetually improved. For tho' Faith and Hope may be done away, yet *Charity never fails.*

* Matth. 25. 40

THE Subject might afford us several important Reflections ; but I shall wave them all, and come immediately to say something upon the Occasion of our being now met together.— And having endeavoured to open in some Measure the Nature of christian Benevolence, and offered some Things to engage you to the Practice of it : I would now beg Leave to point out to you one particular Channel, in which I humbly apprehend your Charity ought to flow ; and to call upon you to assist and strengthen the Society not long since formed among us, *for encouraging Industry and employing the Poor.*

There is scarcely any need, to represent the Goodness of such a Design in general ; and to shew of what Importance it is to a Community, to promote Industry, and discountenance Idleness. Idleness — The Nurse of Vices ; the Enemy of Self-Enjoyment ; and destructive at once both to the Bodies and Souls of Men. Like the fabled *Gorgon's Head*, it turns Men into Stocks and Stones, or renders them worse than Blanks in the Creation of God. It enfeebles the Body, and tends to fill it with Diseases.— It hebetates and rusts the Faculties of the Mind ; and introduces a certain Lassitude, and gloomy Inquietness, which often renders Life itself, tasteless or burdensome. If it does not find Men poor, it
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Idleness makes them so : and leads them on to Intemperance and Debauchery : to the little Arts of Falshood and Knavery ; and at length to Rapine and Murder. . Nor is it less inimical to the public Welfare, than to private Happiness. Idleness, will either totally destroy a Community ; or keep it forever poor and low ; and render the fairest Advantages of Nature, the most extensive Bounties of Providence, altogether useless. In vain are the *Lixas fallen to us in a pleasant Place ; a goodly Heritage* : In vain have we warm Suns, and prolific Showers : an healthful Air, and a fruitful Soil : In vain do our Shores form themselves into large and commodious Havens : In vain do the stately Pines and Oaks grow around us ; and the Fish crowd in such Multitudes upon our Coasts ; — these Advantages are lost, unless properly improved by the Hand of Industry. Idleness would sit still, and pine and starve amidst all these Means of Plenty, neither *sucking of the Abundance of the Seas ; nor digging for the Treasures hid in the Land*. How charitable then is their Design who endeavour to banish this Foe to public Happiness : and to introduce *Industry* in it's stead.

When we mention this Vertue, we cannot but immediately reflect upon the Blessings, which under the Smiles of Providence, it has procured
to

to Mankind ; — the Fields it has planted and reaped ; — the Flocks and Herds it has raised ; — the Cities it has founded and supported : — the Navies it has built ; and the Commerce it has sustained. Industry, turns even the Wilderness into a fruitful Field, and the barren Rock into a luxurious Soil. Those Nations to whom Nature has been parsimonious, or rather, to whom Providence has given but few natural Advantages, have by the Dint of Diligence, not only procured themselves the Necessaries, but even abounded in all the Comforts of Life.

And why may not Industry be encouraged to reside here, as well as in other Places : and render us as happy as it has done them. Perhaps our Soil and Scituation, tho' upon the whole we have no reason to complain, make it at least as necessary for us, as it is for any of our southern Neighbours : and certainly our Climate is as well adapted as theirs, to carry us thro' the Labours of it. If our Land should be thought more stubborn, and hard to subdue ; our Bodies at the same time, may be more healthy and robust. Nor is the civil Liberty enjoyed among us, and upon which our Nation and it's Colonies may justly value themselves, an inconsiderable Encouragement to Industry. We cannot wonder to see Idleness prevail in those Countries, where
 Tyranny

Tyranny nots upon the Fruits of honest Diligence *. We cannot wonder that Men should abandon themselves to inglorious Sloth, and seek for no more than what is necessary to a bare Subsistence, when Poverty is their best Security; and if they plant, they are assured before-hand that another will reap. But how strange must it appear in us, to neglect our natural Advantages, or make but little Improvement of them, when every Man may sit under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-Tree; and enjoy with Security, what he has earned with the Sweat of his Face. When ev'ry Man partakes in that Liberty that sweetens Labour; and renders the Fruits of it worth the Enjoyment.

— * But what avail her unshuffled Stores,
 Her blooming Mountains, and her sunny Shores,
 While proud Oppression, in her Valleys reigns,
 And Tyranny whips her happy Plains?
 The poor Inhabitant beholds in vain,
 The red'ning Orange, and the swelling Grain:
 Joyless he sees the greasing Oils and Wines,
 And in the Myrtle's fragrant Shade repines:
 Seerves in the mouth of Nature's Bounty cast,
 And in the laden Vineyard dies for Thirst.

Oh Liberty, Thou Goddess heav'nly bright, &c.

Allison's Liberty from York, to Lord Halifax

The Strength and Prosperity of a Country, depend in a good Measure upon the Industry and full Employment of it's Inhabitants, and not altogether upon their Numbers. This is evident from the Case of *Ireland*, which a few Years ago abounded in Idleness and the miserable Attendants of it; and notwithstanding it's fertile Soil, did not support it's own Children. Inasmuch that one who was well acquainted with the State of that Kingdom, and a hearty Friend to it, had Occasion to make this Remark. † " We are a Country, where contrary to the old Maxim, Numbers are the Poverty, not the Riches of the Nation ". So that while we are endeavouring to increase our Numbers, and extend our Settlements, it behoves us to take Care, that the Community be not like some sickly Bodies, which swell and enlarge their Bulk, tho' the Habit is relaxt, and the nobler Organs of Life fatally distemper'd. Industry and Frugality must promote and accompany our Growth; they must drain off the ill-Humors of the State; and give that Strength and Compactedness to the Parts, which constitutes the true Health and Vigour of the whole.—Nor is there a more effectual Way to encourage an Addition to our Numbers, than to find a full Employment for

† Dr. Swift.

more; and by establishing some profitable Manufactures, to make Provision for their comfortable Subsistence. For those Places will naturally abound with People, where there is Plenty of the Means of a Livelihood.

As to the particular Method of employing the Poor, which this Society has gone into, by setting up the Linnen Manufacture; it is perhaps, as likely to benefit the Community, as any way that can well be devised. Great Quantities of Linnen are imported yearly from *Abbeville*, and consumed among us: so that could we supply our selves with this Article, it must be a prodigious Saving to the Province. Our Soil is well suited for the raising of Flax; and I am told it is now cheaper among us, than in *Ireland*: And as the Enlargement of this Manufacture will increase the Demand for Flax, it will encourage the better Improvement of our Lands and support the Farmer, as well as the Manufacturer. The Flax-Seed may serve us as a very profitable Article of Exportation: and as the Linnen Manufacture grows in *Ireland*, the Demand for Seed will grow with it. The Province of *Pennsylvania*, exported the last Year, no less than ten Thousand Hogsheads; computed to be worth seventy Thousand Dollars: tho' fifteen or twenty Years ago, they exported none. This

may show us, what this Article of Exportation, inconsiderable as it now is among us, may one Day arise to.

And if we consider the Number of Hands that this Business will employ, especially of poor Widows and Orphans, who have of late Years so much increased in the Town, and whose Support, for want of proper Employment, has been a prodigious Weight to the Community, we cannot hesitate as to the Expediency of it.— Spinning is a Work, peculiarly adapted to prevent Idleness; as it may be carried on almost at any Season; as it may be laid aside and resumed many Times in a Day, without Disadvantage; and so serve to fill up those little Vacancies of Time, that necessarily intervene between other Kinds of Business. These little Savings of Time, may amount to something valuable at the Year's End: and all this is agreeable to the Command of our Lord upon another Occasion; “*Gather up the Fragments that nothing be lost.*” In this Way, the Poor of the Town, who have certainly less Employment now than formerly, and who perhaps would be glad to work at a cheaper Rate, may improve their Time to good Advantage: and be prevented from sliding into an Habit of Idleness, and the wretched Consequences of it. In this Way, the Children of the Town, and especially

especially those of the lower Sort, may be happily formed to an Habit of Industry : an Habit which is seldom acquired unless the Foundation for it be laid in the Beginning of Life. They may be trained up, not only to endure, but even to love a constant Employment. And some who have visited the Spinning-Schools, have observed with Pleasure, that this is the Case already : and that Industry adds something, even to the innocent Gaiety and Sprightliness of Childhood.

This Undertaking is at present in much greater Forwardness, all Circumstances considered, than could well have been expected. The Benefit of it is already, in some Measure, felt : And it is in Part owing to this Manufacture, that the Gentlemen who have the Care of the Poor in the Town, have now fewer Calls for their Relief than formerly. There are about Two Hundred and Fifty, who get the chief of their Subsistence, by spinning for the Society ; and near as many more, who spin for themselves : And so far are People from being backward to send their Children to be taught, that more are offered, than the present Stock of the Society will allow them to provide for : so that there is great need of the Contributions of the well-disposed, to carry on an Undertaking so happily begun.

Linnen.

Linnen, I am informed, is now made cheaper among us, than it can be imported and sold. But if this were not the Case at present, it ought not to discourage us from prosecuting the Design. Habit and Experience will bring along with them, many facilitating expediting Arts, by which the same Work may be done in less Time, and consequently be afforded cheaper. This has been found true in all Countries, where such Manufactures have been established; and accordingly wise and public spirited Persons, have been ever ready, by joint Stocks and Subscriptions, to overcome the Difficulties that always attend them in their first Introduction. And should this Undertaking, after so much has been done towards it, fail at last, for want of proper Support, it cannot but prove a very great Discouragement to any future Attempts of this Nature, for the common Good.

The Public are very much obliged to those Gentlemen who have the more immediate Conduct of this Design; and who have generously given so much of their Time and Attention to it; as well as to others, who have assisted it by their Subscriptions. We hope none will be weary of thus doing well, since they have such a fair Prospect of reaping in due Season, if they faint not: and that many others will now be induced

induced to fall in with and promote the Undertaking : more especially since our honoured RULERS have been pleased to patronize it ; and to make a considerable Grant for it's Encouragement. It is by a general and hearty Concurrence in such good Designs, that we may hope to see Vertue, Plenty, and Happiness, take up their Residence among us.

We have now an Opportunity of dispensing our Charity in a Way the most effectual to relieve the immediate Objects of it : and to benefit the whole Community : — An Opportunity to shew our Compassion to the Poor, not only upon Account of their Poverty, but also that Idleness, which is often the Parent of it, and a more miserable Thing than simple Poverty : and by finding an Employment for them, to put them into a Capacity of decently refunding, in a good Measure, what they receive ; and of increasing the Welfare of the Community, in Proportion as they are relieved themselves. It is painful to a generous Mind to be wholly dependent, and merely a Recipient ; and the Poor of this Sort will rejoice to find, that they are not altogether burdensome or useless : but can turn the Bounties by which they themselves are supported, into a common Good.

We have now an Opportunity of contributing to the Happiness of many poor Children ; by providing them with the Means of an honest Livelihood. And it is not unlikely, that by such Charities, many among us will be formed to the beautiful Character which *Solomon* has given us of the virtuous Woman. * “ She looketh
 eth Wool and Flax, and worketh diligently with her Hands. She considereth a Field and buyeth it ; with the Fruit of her Hand, she planteth a Vineyard. She layeth her Hand to the Spindle, and her Hands hold the Distaff. She maketh fine Linnen and selleth it, and delivereth Girdles unto the Merchants. She looketh well to the Ways of her House-hold, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness ”.

We have now an Opportunity of expressing our Benevolence even to late Posterity ; by contributing to a Design that looks forward to them, and which, if properly supported, may prove a *Foundation for many Generations*.— And if our Breasts are warmed with disinterested Charity, we cannot but be concerned for those that are yet to be born : Like the benevolent old Man, in *Cicero's Book of Friendship*, who planted Trees for the Benefit of Posterity ; and if he

* *Prov.* ch. 31.

to give the Poor a comfortable Subsistence, according to his wise Appointment, by Means of their own Industry. " Let thy Work appear, O Lord, unto thy Servants, and thy Glory unto their Children: Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the Work of our Hands: That the Sons of *New-England*, may be as Plants grown up in their Youth; That her Daughters may be as Corner Stones, polished after the Similitude of a Palace: that our Garners may be full, affording all manner of Store: that our Sheep may bring forth Thousands and ten Thousands in our Streets: that our Oxen may be strong to labour: and there be no Complaining in our Streets. Happy is the People, that is in such a Case; yea happy is that People, whose God is the Lord."

F I N I S.

