

1774 Sermon
Education^{on}
of Poor

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Education

1774

1774

Orphan-Hospital, May 18. 1774.

ORDERED by the Committee of Managers, That their thanks be given to the Reverend Dr John Erskine, for his excellent Sermon preached before them this day; and that he be requested to give them a copy thereof to be printed.

JAMES SMOLLET, Prefes.

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THE EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN
RECOMMENDED :

A S E R M O N,

Preached in Lady Glenorchy's chapel, Edinburgh,

May 18. 1774,

Before the Managers of the Orphan-Hospital,

And published at their desire.

By JOHN ERSKINE, D. D.

One of the Ministers of Edinburgh.

E D I N B U R G H :

Printed by A. MURRAY & J. COCHRAN.

1774.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS

THE EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN
RECOMMENDED :

A Sermon preached before the Managers
of the Orphan-Hospital at Edinburgh,
May 18. 1774.

PSALM cxliv. 12.

*That our sons may be as plants grown up in
their youth; that our daughters may be as
corner-stones, polished after the similitude of
a palace.*

THOUGH the goodness of God is the original source of every blessing; yet, in the ordinary course of things, blessings are not immediately and miraculously poured down from heaven, but are, through the seasonable friendly conveyance of one creature, transmitted to another. The author of all things hath so framed, and doth so govern the wide-extended universe, that every part of it, willingly or unwillingly, promotes that perfection and happiness of the whole, and in particular of the human species, which was destined for them in the divine

decree. Angels are all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation. The sun, that he may enlighten, and animate, and cheer, and adorn the earth, cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race. With no less unwearied activity the other celestial bodies perform their stated revolutions, and contribute to the regularity, beauty, and harmony of the universe. If we descend to this lower region, there, even fire, hail, snow, vapour, and stormy wind, fulfil God's pleasure. Thus the general scheme of Providence, and the operations of animate and inanimate nature, strongly indicate man's obligation to obey the will of the supreme Lord of all, and in his sphere to promote the great designs of the divine wisdom and goodness. It is not enough that he cannot be charged with deliberately thwarting the end of his creation: if he is altogether unactive, and instead of rightly employing his talents, lives an indolent, dreaming, useless, unprofitable life, he is guilty of opposing the intentions of his maker, and on that account liable to condemnation. Good works, works whereby God is glorified, and the happiness of mankind promoted, are absolutely necessary to justify a profession of piety to God, and of benevolence to man; and we may well apply here what our Lord says in another case, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth *."

* Matth. xii. 30.

The acquiring or exercising eminent skill in useful arts and sciences, undoubtedly deserves to be ranked among good works; yet too often men are prompted to this by no higher principles than ambition, covetousness, nay, even love of ease and pleasure. Scripture therefore lays no stress on this, but lays great stress on works of charity and beneficence, as evidences of true religion. “My little children, (saith John *), let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth: and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.” And a greater than John represents the trial at the general judgment, as respecting the evidence men have given of suitable regards to the Redeemer, or the want of such regards, by having relieved or neglected to relieve those in distress †.

It is not, however, my present design to explain and enforce the grace of charity, or that extensive branch of it, compassion to the afflicted. I rather chuse to recommend one particular species of mercy, namely, the training up in such a manner the children of the poor, in the knowledge and practice of religion, and in useful industry, *that their sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, and that their daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace*: that their sons being early planted by divine grace in the house of the Lord, may grow up to full ma-

* 1 John iii. 18. 19.

† Matth. xxv. 31.—46.

turity and strength in his courts; and that their daughters, shining in their native sweetness, and adorned with a humble, modest, pious, meek, and quiet spirit, may exceed in beauty and gracefulness those polished pillars which embellish a royal palace.

Time will not allow me to delineate the manner in which children must be trained up, if we would have the comfort of this glorious and delightful sight. It would greatly contribute to the ease and interest of young people, and to the peace and felicity of all with whom they may stand connected, were they early formed to habits of compassion and humanity, courteousness and civility, truth and integrity, diligence and application, of submission to those above them in years or authority, and of bearing it with patience, that their humours are crossed, their desires not gratified, and their unreasonable hopes disappointed.

Yet this care, however necessary, is by no means sufficient. Unenlightened reason hath taught these lessons; and men animated by no worthier motives than interest or honour, have in some measure practised them. These men are useful to society, from principles, which, had circumstances varied a little, would have led them to undermine it. An usefulness so precarious is not to be confided in. Constant and uniform goodness can only flow from real religion. Perhaps this is one reason why, in the 15th psalm, the heirs of heaven are described, chiefly from their performance

ance of social duties, and their freedom from the opposite vices : because, though in particular instances, there may be right conduct where there is no religion ; yet God, who trieth the heart, and hath pleasure in uprightness, often brings men into circumstances, in which religion alone can prevent their deviating from the paths of justice and charity.

Scripture every where represents right belief as necessary to produce such a religious temper. Without knowledge, the heart cannot be good ; and if men are sanctified, it is through faith in Jesus Christ.

A belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, or, which is the same thing, a belief that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, necessarily supposes a belief, that the world was in circumstances which rendered such a dispensation absolutely necessary for their recovery. The gospel proclaims liberty to the captives. To men insensible of their bondage, that proclamation must seem an insult, not a favour. They only who know their misery, and their utter inability to help themselves out of it, will welcome the tidings, that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost.

If, therefore, through the blessing of God, we would promote in young people that sense of their spiritual wants, without which Christ and his salvation will be viewed with indifference or contempt, let us endeavour to impress on their minds
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just sentiments of the being and perfections of God, and their relations to him as their creator, preserver, and bountiful benefactor. Let us remind them, that this glorious God, to whom they are indebted for all they enjoy, demands a perfect and persevering obedience to his laws, sees their actions, hears their words, knows the very thoughts of their hearts, and, as he is now the witness of their temper and conduct, will ere long be their judge. Let us appeal to their reason, if the loving the Lord God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves, is not fit and becoming ; and if the law which enjoins this love, and a corresponding practice, is not holy, and just, and good. Let us appeal to their consciences, if they have not failed of yielding a complete obedience to these infinitely equitable precepts ; nay, if matters are not wretchedly amiss with them ; if they are not under the dominion of corrupt inclinations and appetites, which hurry them on to courses equally opposite to their duty and to their interest, even when they see that their ruin in this and a future world must be the consequence ; if their evil dispositions have not been already increased, and are not in danger of being still farther increased, by intercourse with others as bad as themselves ; if they are not utterly unable to cure the moral diseases with which sin has infected their hearts ; and if, by known, deliberate, presumptuous wickedness, they have not rendered themselves unworthy of God's pity and help.

help. Let us ask them, if the God against whom they have rebelled, may not justly permit the evil spirits whose counsels they have followed, to lead them captive at their pleasure. Let us inculcate it upon them, that in God's favour is life; that those only are truly blessed whom he chuseth, and causeth to approach to himself; but that there is destruction to the wicked, and a sore and strange plague to the workers of iniquity; so that the stoutest-hearted among them shall find how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

Having thus opened the extensive demands of the law of God, and displayed its awful terrors; as we mean not to drive them to despair, we must also publish to them the glad tidings of salvation by the remission of sins, through the tender mercies of our God. Tell them, ye who wish well to their precious souls, that God so loved a wretched and a worthless world, as to send his only-begotten Son, to be wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our transgressions; that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but might have everlasting life. Tell them, that the blood of God's Son cleanseth from all sin; that his merits have intitled thousands of the chief of sinners, and can intitle thousands more, to eternal life; and that his Spirit can take the stony heart out of our flesh, and put into us hearts of flesh; that these inestimable blessings are freely offered to every hearer of the gospel, and none excluded from a share in them, save they who by final impenitence

and unbelief exclude themselves. Tell them, that the Redeemer, in the days of his humiliation, discovered a peculiar tenderness of affection for little children, by laying his hands upon them, and blessing them, and saying, "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven:" and that, to encourage those who devote to him the flower of their youth, and the vigour of their strength, he hath also said, "I love them that love me; and they that seek me early, shall find me." Solemnly warn them, that these words of salvation, which, when received with faith and love, are a favour of life unto life, will, if rejected or despised, prove a favour of death unto death.

Nor is it enough that we teach young people the doctrines and duties of Christianity. As they are in danger, both from their companions, and those farther advanced in life, of imbibing that instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge, we must also make them know the certainty of the things wherein they are instructed; arguing with them, that a scheme so glorious as Christianity must needs have God for its author; and that God hath borne witness to its divine original, by signs, and miracles, and divers mighty works, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; and especially by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

If the rising generation rightly understood, and firmly believed the great truths of the gospel, that faith would purify their hearts from inordinate affection

tion to the riches, pleasures, and honours of this world, and inflame them with ardent love to their God and Redeemer; that love, by enlarging their hearts, would animate them to run with chearfulness in the way of God's commandments; nay, constrain them to live to him that died for them, and rose again. And thus the doctrines of our holy religion, when received, not as the word of man, but as they are in truth, the word of the living God, would powerfully excite to a becoming behaviour in every character and relation of life.

The most transient reflection on these things may convince us, that no good man bestows a more useful and important charity than he who contributes to the Christian education of poor children. It may not however be improper, as the plainest truths are often overlooked, to represent to you some of the peculiar excellencies of this species of charity. And,

I. This charity tends to prevent misery, and therefore is more noble than that which only alleviates distress, or procures it a short and uncertain relief. Our relish for good, I readily acknowledge, is then most exquisite, when that good is obtained and enjoyed after we have long felt the opposite evil. Yet scarcely would any man purchase that increase of pleasure, by years of poverty and sickness, of torture of body, or of anguish of spirit. You account yourself more indebted to him who preserves you from adversity, than to him who, in misfortunes, which his sea-

sonable compassion and care might have easily averted, affords you a scanty and imperfect supply; and he is justly esteemed to do another a greater kindness, and better to promote his interest, who endeavours to prevent his becoming wicked, than he who only attempts to reclaim him from a course of abandoned wickedness when actually engaged in it. That very principle which inclines us to pity and relieve the distressed, or to reform the vicious, will, if wisely directed, also incline us to wish and endeavour, that distress and wickedness may be prevented. He that doth good as objects of distress happen to fall in his way, refreshes his own bowels, hearkens to the voice of humanity, and acts a truly amiable and worthy part: but he who, from a steady settled principle of piety and benevolence, is anxious to ward off the evils of every kind incident to man, and to contrive schemes for advancing and securing their happiness, exercises a more perfect charity, not extorted on the sight of misery by mere animal impulse, but flowing from a liberal soul devising liberal things. I might add, that the good done by such charity, though greater in itself, is often done with much less trouble and expence. It is far easier to put a young person in a way to feed and clothe himself, than to minister to the necessities of those whom idleness and debauchery have reduced to indigent circumstances. When the body is bowed down with disease, the spirit sunk with sorrow, or the heart hardened with the deceitfulness

deceitfulness of sin, our charity may come too late, and, though kindly meant, may prove ineffectual. Educating the children of the poor is therefore an excellent charity. Many who must have groaned under pinching poverty, eat the bread of sorrow, and drunk the water of affliction, are thus put in a condition to secure a livelihood to themselves and families, to enjoy the comforts of life, nay, to minister out of their abundance to the necessities of others; many whom vice might have brought to an infamous, untimely end, in consequence of such care, live beloved and honoured, and die lamented; and many who would have been holden with the cords of their sin, and died without instruction, become eminent and exemplary Christians, shining as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And this leads me to observe,

II. The pious education of poor children is charity to the souls of men. By directing our bounty into this channel, those may become really religious, who would otherwise have grown up among us a lewd and profligate race, void of all knowledge and sense of duty. If he acts charitably, who, by feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, lengthens out for a little a short, precarious, and wretched life; doth not he act still more so, who by recovering a sinner from the error of his way, saves a soul from death, and covers a multitude of sins? If it is kindness to ransom from outward captivity, is it not superior kindness

ness to contribute our endeavours, by a religious education, to turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God? If giving a piece of bread, or a cup of cold water, shall not lose its reward; what shall be the reward of those who supply perishing souls with spiritual food, and conduct them to Christ, the fountain of living waters? The Prophet Daniel hath told us, "They (says he *) that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Those, we may reasonably conclude, shall shine brightest in the firmament of glory, who in this lower sphere did most resemble the Sun of righteousness. In his temper and conduct, and in his only, compassion and love may be discerned in their fullest perfection. These, it must be allowed, he gloriously displayed, in giving food to the hungry, health to the sick, eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, nay life to the dead. Yet it was for other, and still nobler purposes, that the Sun of righteousness arose on a dark benighted world. He left the bosom of the Father, he lived a life of sorrow, and at last submitted to a shameful and accursed death, that he might bring in an everlasting righteousness, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, dispel the clouds of ignorance and vice, destroy the works of the devil, redeem from all iniquity, and puri-

* Dan. xii. 3.

fy to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. His charity in all things has the pre-eminence : but no acts of charity of which we are capable, so much resemble his, and therefore none are so excellent, as those whereby we promote the salvation of precious and immortal souls. Do you then call yourselves Christians, and yet grudge a little expence in that cause, for which God spared not his own Son, but delivered him to the death ? Are there amongst us multitudes of young people, ready to perish for lack of knowledge, exposed an easy prey to the devil, the world, and the flesh, and running on, insensible of danger, in the broad way that leadeth to destruction ; and shall not your eyes pity, and your hands help ? If you are not blind, you must see them in imminent hazard of being sentenced to dwell with devouring flames and everlasting burnings. There is a possibility your charitable endeavours may deliver them from so dreadful a doom, and can you deny them that charity ? If their danger move you not, at least be moved by your own. Remember who he was that said, “ If thou forbear to deliver them that
 “ are drawn unto death, and those that are ready
 “ to be slain ; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it
 “ not ; doth not he that pondereth the heart con-
 “ sider it ? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not
 “ he know it ? and shall not he render to every
 “ man according to his works * ? ”

* Prov. xxiv. 11. 12.

III. The pious education of poor children, is a charity in which, of all others, there is the most probable prospect of doing good, and the smallest danger of misapplication. Objects of charity are many, and our relief cannot possibly reach them all: it is therefore our duty to order our alms with discretion, to bestow them chiefly on those who most need, and best deserve our help; and not to disable ourselves from relieving such, by misplacing our charity upon others, sufficiently able by honest labour to support themselves. Now these rules of prudence strongly recommend the charity of erecting and supporting schools for poor children. These little-ones have no arts in begging, no dissembled tokens of misery to impose upon us, no affected clamours to overbear us: but, ah! how many disorders and diseases, natural and moral, are incident to their infirm and tender age! and to what various hazards are both soul and body exposed through their own weakness and levity, and through the carelessness of others! Yet they feel not their worst disease; their greatest necessity they are utterly insensible of, and the dreadful dangers that hang over their heads alarm them not. They have no parents, or their parents are incapacitated by poverty or ignorance, to sow in their young hearts the good seed of the word: that soil, therefore, without the assistance of others, must remain barren, or be overspread with briars and thorns, which, through the blessing of God
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on due and timely culture, might have become fruitful in every good word and work.

As the danger of misapplying this charity is small, so the prospect of doing good by it is probable. It is in these days of their youth, that our endeavours to form them useful members of society, and sincere Christians, bid fairest to prosper. They brought into the world with them, it must be acknowledged, irregular appetites, and hearts disaffected to God and goodness: but they have not as yet strengthened, by a long course of presumptuous sin, this their natural depravity, hardened their hearts from God's fear, and provoked his Spirit to cease to be a reprovcr to them. In their first and early years, it fares in some degree with their minds as it does with their bodies; they are more supple and pliant, and can with less difficulty be bended into any form: whereas in riper age they grow rigid and stiff, and preserve that shape and figure into which they were first moulded. Hence Solomon advises, * "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Not but that there have been, and will be, many exceptions from this general observation. Yet still there is no circumstance in life which has greater influence than education on mens sentiments and manners: and even when those well trained up, are overcome by the pollutions that are in the world,

* Prov. xxii. 6.

through lust, or satisfy themselves with an empty form of godliness, conscience often recoils, and the good principles imbibed in childhood, one time or other, pierce them with such anguish and contrition, as at length happily issue in repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. The recovery of those from the slavery of sin and Satan, who have grown old in ignorance and vice, is a much harder task: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard her spots? then may they who are accustomed to do evil," and want the knowledge which is the foundation of religious impressions, "learn to do well."

IV. Charity to poor children is of most extensive influence, in promoting the glory of God, the advancement of religion, and the temporal prosperity of a nation. It is indeed a noble charity, to support those in the decline of life, ready to sink under the double load of poverty and sickness; it is a still nobler charity to recover from the snare of the devil, the aged sinner, whose iniquities are multiplied more than his days, and whose steps at once hasten towards the grave, and towards eternal destruction: yet we cannot plead, that the general good of mankind is much promoted by such charity. They who are about to leave the world, have little ability or leisure to reform it. The young and gay regard their repentance as the effect of dotage, or at best necessity, not of a sincere and rational choice. It is otherwise when youth are trained up in the good ways of God.

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The happy effects of this charity are not confined to the immediate objects of it. Through the blessing of God they often extend to their parents, their children, their friends, their neighbours, to the church and nation, and even to distant countries and future ages. Parents disabled by poverty to maintain and educate their children, are eased of that burden, nay, see a hopeful appearance that these children may prove to them what Obed was to Naomi, a restorer of their life, and a nourisher of their old age. Poor children having been accustomed by timely discipline to be tractable, and obedient to the advice and authority of their teachers; submission to rulers, who in the just constitutional exercise of their power, are ministers of God for good, and terrors only to evil doers, becomes easy to them, and they are in little danger of disturbing the quiet either of church or state: whereas they whose obstinacy, self-will, rudeness, and pride, have been suffered to take root in youth, will be apt to prove uneasy under the gentlest yoke, and rebellious against the best of governments. Many who would otherwise have contracted habits of pilfering and cheating, or at least have sunk into a vagrant, loitering, inactive life, may be habituated to useful labour, and instead of pests or burdens, become eminent blessings to society, and greatly increase the national wealth, which chiefly flows from the number of hands employed in arts and manufactures. Families which otherwise would have pestered the public with swarms of

noxious creatures to prey upon its vitals, thus become nurseries of honest industrious servants, diligent and skilful apprentices, and profitable members of the commonwealth. The errors and disorders of men in low life, greatly affect the public prosperity and peace : now many of these errors flow from ignorance of religion ; from the baneful influence of loose examples ; from idleness, which strengthens every irregular appetite, and opens a wide door to every temptation ; and from necessitous straitened circumstances, which often leave men little leisure, and less inclination, for minding the one thing needful ; yea, suggest to them dishonest shifts for bettering their circumstances. Against these inundations of public confusion, charity-schools, when well regulated, are a considerable fence, by good instruction, by good discipline, and by accustoming young people to industry and application.

Nor is it only the temporal prosperity of a nation which this charity is calculated to advance ; it tends also to promote the spread of genuine Christianity. Parents who have lived without God in the world, may be excited, by the blessing of God on the prayers, examples, and endeavours of their children, to join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten. When, by divine providence, these dear and promising youths enter upon public life, and intermingle in the business and conversation of the world ; instead of corrupting others by an infectious example, by
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irreligious and dissolute principles, or by licentious and obscene discourse, it may be hoped, that their mouths shall speak wisdom, their tongues talk of understanding, and their hands be ready for every good work of industry and of charity. While their light thus shines before men, others seeing their good works, will glorify their heavenly Father. Their amiable example will recommend the good ways of God to men who have hitherto been strangers or enemies to religion. One and another of them shall be accosted thus, perhaps by such from whom they would have expected it least: "I will go with you; for I have seen that God is with you. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." And when that God who setteth the solitary in houses, shall make them families like a flock, the things that they have heard and known, and their teachers have told them, they will not hide from their children, that the generation to come may know them, even the children that shall be born, that they also may arise, and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments. Thus one generation shall praise God's works to another, and shall declare his mighty acts. The Redeemer's name shall endure for ever, and shall be continued as long as the sun; nay, the blessing shall extend to distant countries as well as to future ages. Considerations respecting the life that now is, or that which is to come, carrying the persons of

of some, and the influence of others, to foreign lands, shall carry with them the gospel of Christ. Thus men shall be blessed in Jesus, and all nations shall call him blessed. God, for the glory of his name, will sow his people in all corners of the earth, that he may pave the way for saying to them that were not his people, "Thou art my people;" and for their saying, "Thou art my God." In the dark places of the east and of the west, of the south and of the north, now full of the habitations of cruelty; religion, without enthusiasm or superstition, liberty without licentiousness, government without tyranny and oppression, shall find new abodes. What hurts or defiles shall be more and more removed; and the earth become full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Say not, that things so glorious cannot be hoped from the education of poor orphans: I flatter myself, they may be hoped from the education of many of the dear youths now before me. Of what grace, or of what gift of the Spirit, does the obscurity of their birth, and the poverty or death of their parents, render them incapable? Consult the history of past ages. Is there not often a wheel within a wheel, which, in an amazing manner, raises men of the meanest descent to the most eminent and important stations? Or hearken to what the sacred oracles declare: "God raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out
" of

“ of the dunghill, that he may set him with prin-
 “ ces, even with the princes of his people *.”
 God hath formerly chosen, and we know he can
 still chuse, “ the weak things of the world, to con-
 “ found the things which are mighty; and base
 “ things of the world, and things which are despi-
 “ fed, yea, and things which are not, to bring to
 “ nought things that are †.”

These considerations abundantly justify the pru-
 dence of the gentlemen, who having raised, by
 their own generous contributions, a fund for main-
 taining, cloathing, and instructing poor orphans,
 from all corners of the kingdom, were erected in-
 to a corporation for that purpose, A. D. 1742.
 Such has been the success of this benevolent insti-
 tution, that many hundreds have been instructed
 in the principles of religion, reading, writing, a-
 rithmetic; and in spinning, and such other employ-
 ments as might best fit them for usefulness as
 tradesmen or household-servants. For twenty years
 past, there have been in the house from thirty-
 five to fifty children. The interest of their capital,
 and voluntary donations, enabled the corporation
 last August to increase the number of orphans to
 sixty; and since that time, to defray the expence
 of several alterations and improvements made on
 the Hospital. The managers being allowed the
 use of this chapel for occasional sermons, the col-
 lections at which go to the orphans, have turned

* Psal. cxiii. 7. 8.

† 1 Cor. i. 27. 28.

a considerable part of the house, formerly reserved for preaching, into comfortable and healthy apartments for lodging the children, which are capable of containing double the number now in the house, and where nothing, save the narrowness of their funds, prevents their receiving many destitute orphans, who solicit admittance. Surely this simple detail of facts will be motive sufficient with the benevolent and humane to patronize this institution. It is now more than time to hasten to a conclusion.

The salutary effects of hospitals and charity-schools must, in a great measure, depend on the wisdom and faithfulness of their directors, in improving their funds to the best advantage; on their caution in preferring, without partial regards, the most proper objects of charity; and on their care in intrusting their instruction with men of conscience and abilities. Permit me, therefore, to remind the managers of this hospital, that all their deliberations and decisions will be reviewed at a higher tribunal, and their most secret springs of action unveiled before an assembled world. If they have been unfaithful in the mammon of unrighteousness, who will commit to their trust the true riches *? And if through their unfaithfulness multitudes are miserable in time and eternity, who might have been happy in both worlds, had they managed the concerns of the public with the same care they would have managed their own, can we

* Luke xvi. 11.

suppose,

suppose, that the blood of souls, souls whose salvation ought to have been precious in their sight, will not be required at their hands?

But as many who now bear an honourable part in the administration of public charity, must soon resign to others that important trust, it concerns those who have the right of nominating their successors, if they would do justly and love mercy, and if they would not add to their own guilt, by being partakers of other mens sins, to chuse men fearing God, and hating covetousness; that despise the gain of a prostituted conscience, will not be unduly biassed by solicitations, and shake their hands from holding of bribes: and however public virtue be ridiculed, permit me to say, that experience hath shown us, and I hope will continue to show us, that such men may be found. Nor should modesty or indolence lead them to decline, what persons less qualified are too often eager to solicit. Perhaps there are few ways by which men who enjoy leisure and opulent fortunes, and are in easy circumstances of life, can do the world more substantial service, than by undertaking such trusts from benevolent and disinterested motives, and managing them with integrity and care. Such, therefore, if tempted to decline that burden, would do well to consider the doom of the servant who hid his talent in a napkin; and that to him that knoweth to do good, and hath opportunity of doing it, but doth it not, to him it is sin.

I shall now turn to the master and mistress employed in teaching the children in this Hospital.

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Let not so excellent and well-appointed a charity in any measure miscarry through your negligence or misbehaviour. The public expects, and God himself, to whom you must give an account, demands, that you should exert your best endeavours, by useful religious instruction, by a pious example, by necessary discipline, and by fervent prayers, that the youth intrusted to your care may become useful members of society, and sincere disciples of Christ. While your allowance from the public bears so small a proportion to that important and difficult work in which you are employed, your faithful services will find a nobler reward in the testimony of a good conscience, and sometimes too, in the pleasure of observing the seeds of knowledge, religion, and virtue, springing up under your culture, and promising a plenteous harvest: and though, in this respect, your labour should seem in vain, your work shall be with the Lord, and you shall receive a full recompence at the resurrection of the just. Be not therefore weary in well-doing, though your employment has peculiar temptations to weariness and discouragement; for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not.

I mean not, in what I have said, to trespass against justice and truth, by insinuating the least reflection on those intrusted with the government of this Hospital, or with the instruction and inspection of the orphans. There is however no impropriety in warning men against evils which at present they hold in the utmost abhorrence, otherwise

therwise the meek and gracious Jesus would not have thus cautioned his disciples : “ Take heed to
 “ yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be o-
 “ vercharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,
 “ and cares of this life.”

Time allows me to say little to the dear orphans. Let your hearts burn with gratitude, and let your mouths be daily filled with the high praises of God, who put it into the heart of the founders and supporters of this institution to provide for your necessities, and to secure you an education in all respects so proper for you, that, by improving it aright, you may be happy both in time and through eternity. Pour out your prayers to God for the managers, and for the master and mistress of the Hospital, who have taken a care of you which your own parents, by poverty or by death, were disabled to take. Were it not for that care, you might have remained in the thickest Egyptian darkness, even in the midst of Goshen, and, tho’ born in the pale of the visible church, have lived and died strangers to the saving truths of the gospel. O consider, that these early instructions, which are now your happiness, if neglected, will prove your misery, aggravate your guilt here, and increase your punishment hereafter ! Your case will be the worse for present advantages ; and it would have been better for you not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after you had known it, to depart from the holy commandment. But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. May the blessing of the Lord rest on every one of you ; and may many of
 you

you be honoured to be eminent blessings to the British nation, and to the church of God.

I shall now address myself to all who are capable, by their charitable contributions, of helping forward the good education of poor children. If you have no children of your own, your freedom from the charge of maintaining and providing for a family seems to commit the children of the poor to your compassionate regards. Let it therefore be your delightful work, to resemble him who is a father to the fatherless, and the orphan's stay; and he will give you a name and a place better than that of sons and of daughters. If God has blessed you with children, natural affection to them should suggest to you thoughts of pity for destitute orphans, who want advantages for temporal and eternal happiness, which your children, and even many of the children of the poor, enjoy. Perhaps a little laid out for their relief may derive a blessing on yourselves and families: whereas your shutting up your bowels of mercy, and withholding more than is meet, may blast your best endeavours for your own offspring.

And now, may the Lord strengthen the bars of Zion's gates, and bless her children within her; may he make peace in her borders, and fill her with the finest of the wheat; may our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, our daughters as polished stones carved after the similitude of a palace; and may the Lord make all grace to abound towards us, that we always having sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.

To the PUBLIC.

Edinburgh, May 1774.

THE utility of hospitals for the relief of the distressed and destitute, appears every day more obvious; and the increase of luxury, with the high prices of provisions, render them at this time more necessary than ever.

Those foundations which provide for the education of youth, are evidently of the happiest consequences to society. Humanity and public spirit have accordingly established several of these in this city, for the reception of the poor children belonging to different classes of the inhabitants. The ORPHAN HOSPITAL alone requires no hereditary qualifications. Its doors are open to destitute children of both sexes from all corners of the kingdom. The only requisites are, that they be really destitute, free of infectious distempers, and not under seven, nor above twelve, years of age. Such orphans are in this hospital comfortably maintained and clothed; they are instructed in the principles of religion, in reading, writing, and arithmetic; they are accustomed to working in the house; they are taught to spin their own cloaths, and such other employments as may best fit them for usefulness, as tradesmen and household-servants, and they are not dismissed till the managers think them able to earn their own bread; they are then recommended to proper masters.

This institution owes its rise, and in part its support, to voluntary donations. The contributors to it were erected into a corporation by royal charter 1742. Providence has smiled upon the design. Since that time, many hundred orphans have received their maintenance and education in it, who are now useful members of society; and by the liberal donations of many well-disposed Christians, the corporation is now possessed of a stock that produces such an annual revenue, as, with the voluntary donations, is sufficient to maintain about sixty children: yet a much greater number could be accommodated in the house. With deep regret, therefore, the Managers often find, that, from the state of their funds, they can admit but a few of the many helpless children who apply to them; and they are indeed obliged to refuse their assistance to numberless destitute orphans, both of this city,
and

and from other places, who are not intitled to admission into any other hospital, and whose unhappy circumstances, were they known to the wealthy and benevolent, would doubtless excite their compassion.

The Managers think it their duty to take this method of making their situation known, and solicit the benefactions of the religious, the humane, and the patriotic, towards the support and more extensive usefulness of an institution, which, notwithstanding its present precarious and confined situation, has been attended with very eminent advantages.

Every donation amounting to L. 5 Sterling is added to the capital stock, if not otherwise directed by the donor; and a donation of L. 150 Sterling intitles to present an orphan to the hospital for ever.

Donations may be given in to Mr Robert Scott-Moncrieff merchant in Edinburgh, Treasurer to the Hospital, or to any of the present Managers.

List of the President and Committee of Managers.

President of the Corporation.

The Hon. Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, one of the Senators of the College of Justice.

Committee of Managers.

James Smollet, Esq; one of the Commissaries of Edinburgh.

Alexander Belfches, Esq; Advocate.

Mr William Walker senior, Writer.

Walter Scott, Clerk to the Signet.

John Forrest senior,

James Thomson senior, } Merchants.

Charles Wallace,

John Caw, Assistant-Secretary of Excise.

Alexander Donaldson, } Bookfellers.

William Gray,

William Dickson, Dyer.

William Thomson, Weaver.

James Gentle, Brewer.

James Young, Wigmaker.

Walter Coffer, Accountant

William Galloway, Comptroller } to the Hospital.

James Forrest, Clerk