

AN
O R A T I O N

DELIVERED AT THE

O R P H A N - H O U S E
O F C H A R L E S T O N , S O U T H - C A R O L I N A ,

O C T O B E R 18th, 1795,

BEING THE

S I X T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

O F T H E

I N S T I T U T I O N .

—————
By the Reverend GEORGE BUIST, D. D. ↗
MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF CHARLESTON.
—————

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T O

CHARLES LINING, Esquire, CHAIRMAN ;
ARNOLDUS VANDERHORST, SAMUEL BEEKMAN,
JOHN CHAMPNEYS, THOMAS ROPER, THOMAS
CORBETT, JOHN HUGER, STEPHEN LEE,
AND THOMAS HALL, Esquires,
COMMISSIONERS OF THE ORPHAN-HOUSE,

T H I S O R A T I O N,

DELIVERED AND PUBLISHED

AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE A U T H O R.



A N O R A T I O N, &c.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE honour of being called to address you on this occasion is somewhat qualified by the consideration, that the subject to which our thoughts are naturally directed, has been so often diseused, that no new argument can be advanced to gratify the ear of curiosity, and no additional lustre given to those which are already known, to render them more acceptable to hearers of a refined taste. But, disadvantageous as this may be to the speaker, it affords no sufficient reason why we should discontinue the celebration of this anniversary. In the course of a year, many things occur, to wear away the impressions which former discourses may have produced. The zeal which you felt at the commencement of the institution will gradually cool, unless renewed and revived by frequently presenting to your view the objects by which it was at first excited. It is a circumstance, too, highly encouraging, that I am not sent to you with heavy tidings, or desired to make unwelcome demands upon your charity; but rather to thank you for your former liberality, to congratulate you on the success with which your exertions have been attended, and to point out this institution as an object of the first importance to the community, and as highly deserving of your future patronage.

Had I no other purpose in view but to interest your affections in behalf of this establishment, I need go no farther than the objects before you. You now behold one of the most pleasing and affecting sights which can be exhibited to the benevolent eye—the most magnificent edifice of the kind

of which the new world can boast, erected on a spot formerly barren and unprofitable, to shelter and protect those tender plants whom misfortune and adversity had left exposed to every rude and noxious blast—more than one hundred of your fellow creatures, lately subject to poverty and want, and ready to fall victims to vice and ruin, happily rescued by your generous interposition, and decently clothed, supported and educated by your bounty. “ Deprived of every parental aid, you became their guardians; destitute of any abode, you provided for them a habitation; hungry and thirsty, you fed them and gave them drink; exposed continually to the wiles of the destroyer, you snatched them, with an angel’s hand, from destruction; in danger of every evil to which idleness and ignorance could render them liable, you employed and instructed them.” If the recollection of beneficent actions, and the consciousness of good intentions, though defeated by the perverseness of men, or by those untoward accidents to which all human schemes are liable, are a source of pure and exquisite enjoyment—your satisfaction must be greatly increased, when you behold your intentions carried into execution, and your labours crowned with complete success. But how must the imagination expand with hope, and the heart dilate with joy, when you look forward and behold those whom you now protect, entering into life; acting for themselves; filling useful and honorable stations in society; adorning and improving their country by their ingenuity and industry, or defending it by their valour; becoming, themselves, the fathers and mothers of families, and transmitting to their children’s children, a portion of that happiness which they have derived from this institution. In this point of view, you will no longer consider this house as merely an asylum from present misery, but as a nursery of useful characters, as a seminary of religion and virtue, as the source of an incalculable addition to the happiness and improvement of the human race.

It is the nature of charity not to *boast* or to *envy*: but it is no less a property of it to listen with delight to the voice of sincere praise. Without, therefore, subjecting myself to the charge of boasting, or of making invidious comparisons, I

may

may affirm, that of all charitable institutions, those which regard the education and maintenance of orphan and destitute children, may justly claim the preference. God forbid that I should seek to withdraw your compassion and support from the aged and infirm, whose arm is now unstrung, and who, declining into the winter of life, no longer display the blossoms of spring, or the fruit of autumn! God forbid that I should endeavour to dry up the sympathetic tear which flows for the sorrows of others; to make you deaf to the sigh of the afflicted, or render you less anxious to relieve the sick, and, by assistance and advice, to smooth the bed of death! God forbid that what is meant to excite charity, should create a jealousy of interest, or an interference of claims among institutions which have one common object in view, the relief of distress, the alleviation of human misery, in whatever shape it appears! My intention here is to congratulate you on the proper application of your charity; to encourage you to proceed in the same course; and to shew that, while other charitable establishments ought not to be neglected, this requires and deserves a more than common share of your attention and support. *Many of the fair daughters of Charity have done virtuously—but this excelleth them all.*

Institutions of this nature may justly be stiled more *charitable* than any other, because they relieve greater wretchedness. There is not, in nature, a more striking picture of weakness and helplessness than man in the first stage of his existence. Some animals are capable of providing for their defence and nourishment from the moment of their birth: and all, in a short space of time, are independent of foreign support. But man, like a tender*and delicate flower, must be reared with infinite care and attention; and requires, for many years, the fostering hand of the parent. Happily the natural love of offspring, and the dictates of reason, combine to call forth the parental assistance. But when this support is, by the decree of heaven, removed—when they to whom they were accustomed to look for bread, are laid in the dust—when the unconcerned stranger, immersed in the pursuit of business or pleasure, passes by regardless of their distress; can imagination figure to itself a state more helpless and wretched? The very

cries

cries and tears, by which alone they can express their misery, speak more forcibly in the ears of the compassionate, than the most pathetic orator can in their behalf.

And yet, such has been the situation of most of those who have been received into this house. Some of them have been found wandering in the streets, without father or mother; without friend, except the compassion of the charitable, and the benevolent providence of Him who is the father of the fatherless, the shield of the stranger and the support of the orphan; scarcely acquainted with their own names; and truly able to say, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but we have not where to lay our heads.* Others have been ushered into the acquaintance of the Commissioners by the disconsolate mother, whose tears still flowed for the head and supporter of herself and her children, and who has addressed them in the piteous language of the widow of Israel to the prophet of old: *Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord. Thine handmaid hath nothing in the house save one pot of oil, and behold! the creditor is come to take my two sons to be bond men.* In other cases, the children have been taken from the bedside of their aged, sick or infirm parents, who have thus been spared the heart-rending necessity of hearing them call for bread, while they had none to bestow; and who have then yielded with less reluctance to the irreversible sentence of heaven, when they knew that those whom they loved, and who would be the greatest losers by their death, were not left to wander in the wide world, friendless and forlorn, but were provided for in this house, where there is bread enough and to spare. In short, others have been found in situations still more wretched and deplorable: the offspring of an illicit connection, ready to be sacrificed to that shame which natural feeling, as well as human opinion, have attached to every deviation from innocence; or breathing that noxious atmosphere which infects the haunts of profligacy and impurity, and which infallibly leads those who are contaminated with it, first, to the loss of virtue and honour, next, to idleness and intemperance, and last of all, to a shameful and untimely end.

Institutions of this nature are not only more charitable in their

their origin, but also more varied and extensive in their objects. In common with others they have it in view to provide food and raiment, a place of habitation, health and comfort, for those who are destitute of them. And so far they deserve an equal share of praise and encouragement. But the plan of this institution extends farther, and penetrates deeper into the constitution of human nature. It is not satisfied with the removal or suspension of present misery, but provides against its return, and lays the foundation of future comfort and happiness, by accustoming those whom it protects to habits of industry and application, and by teaching them some art or profession, in the prosecution of which they may acquire a decent and honourable subsistence. This institution, while it relieves outward indigence, likewise removes inward misery. It sees the immortal inhabitant of this earthly tabernacle stript and naked; mangled by vice, and bleeding at every pore; bound in fetters by ignorance, and struggling in vain for relief. Like the good Samaritan, it hastens to his assistance, breaks his chains, and removes his intellectual distress and misery. It pours the oil and wine of consolation into the wounded spirit. It causes the light of knowledge and instruction to shine into the dark and benighted mind. It feeds the hungry soul with that meat which endureth for ever. It gives to the thirsty the water springing up unto eternal life. It sows those seeds of virtue which will bring forth a rich harvest in future life, and will flourish when all human schemes and institutions shall have passed away.

Institutions of this kind are also more lasting in their effects. Other charities are confined to the individuals who are the objects of them. This, which regards the young and rising generation, extends farther than the imagination can reach: it blesses ages and races of men which are yet unborn: in the revolutionary course of human affairs it may even prove the means of obtaining relief to the children and descendants of those who are its present supporters, and who wisely lay up, by practising pious and generous deeds, a good foundation against the time to come.

But the beneficial effects of such an institution are by no means to be considered as doubtful and remote. They are cer-

tain and immediate. By promoting the happiness of these orphans, you are in fact promoting your own interest. By saving them from want and temptation, you are depriving the scaffold of its victims; you are defending your lives from the dagger of the assassin; you are securing your house and property from the insidious attempts of the midnight robber. By a religious system of education, you improve the national character, and retard the progress of infidelity and impiety, which are the certain forerunners of the downfall of that state in which they prevail. By enuring these your adopted children to habits of activity, industry and virtue, you lay the surest foundation of national prosperity; which consists not in any local advantages of soil and climate, or in the abundance of gold and silver; but in the useful labour and active industry of the inhabitants. Natural advantages are useless when unimproved. Gold and silver may be consumed and dissipated. But active and industrious citizens are a never-failing and permanent national resource. In short, by this public mode of education, you form a host of patriots and warriors, who know no parent but their country, and owe no debt of gratitude but the advancement of the general weal. *These are our ramparts*, said an ancient statesman to one who enquired concerning the fortifications of his city, and pointing to a band of young men who were educated at the public expence. And I have no doubt every skilful politician will agree with me in thinking, that this house, appropriated as it is, to the maintenance and education of orphan boys and girls, is a more effectual defence to the state, than the bulwarks and loud-toned instruments of destruction which formerly rested on the same foundation. Of the final success of this establishment, and of the future destinies and fortunes of these orphans, we shall predict nothing. But we know that in other countries, where such institutions have been of longer standing, some who were educated and supported at charity schools, have afterwards become commanders of fleets and armies, have risen to the higher departments of state, occupied a seat on the bench, or ministered at the altar of the Lord. The object of this institution, it is confessed, is of a humbler, though not less useful kind; being confined chiefly to the

mechanical walks of life: and I am happy to say, that the tradesmen and artificers of this city, by their numerous applications for apprentices, shew a decided preference for such as have been educated here, above those whose temper, morals and habits of application, have been destroyed by maternal indulgence.

Such being the excellent tendency and beneficial effects of institutions of this nature, it may not be improper to enquire, for a moment, into the principle from which they originate. It cannot, I think, be denied, that there exists in the original constitution of human nature, a principle or feeling of compassion which is excited by the sight of distress, and which prompts us to relieve the object thereof. Whether the performance of beneficent actions is wholly disinterested, or is founded on a desire to escape from that pain which we feel at the sight of misery, or to obtain that happiness which flows from the relief of distress, is of no importance in the present enquiry. It is of more consequence to observe that this feeling, unless when strengthened by superior motives, is but a casual and precarious instrument of good. It ceases to operate except in the immediate presence, and within the audible cry of misery. The inferences and conclusions of reason give additional energy and stability to this principle. But after all, it remained an imperfect provision for human misery, till improved and strengthened by the benevolent system of religion published to the world by Jesus Christ. Of this it formed the most essential part, being inculcated as the distinguishing mark of discipleship; being supported by motives the most powerful and sublime; and being recommended to us by a perfect model of philanthropy and compassion. In relieving the distresses of others, we only copy the example of our Great Master, who “found the sons of men as fatherless children, outcasts from paradise, in a state of utter destitution; who opened for them a house of refuge, fed them with celestial food, gave them the water of life to drink, clothed them with the garments of salvation,” and then inculcated on his followers, this commandment—*As I have loved you, so ought you to love one another.*

This reasoning is supported by fact. In the history of ancient

ancient times, a few solitary instances of individual benevolence may be met with; but it is from the introduction of Christianity that we date the origin of charitable establishments. Then benevolence began to operate upon a regular and systematic plan. Then the rich learnt to part with their goods for the relief of the poor. Houses were built for such as had none. Hospitals were prepared for those who wanted a physician. And the naked and hungry brethren of Jesus were clothed and fed at the common expence of that society of which they were members.

The benevolent and compassionate genius of the gospel is fully apparent in its effects. It has dispelled former ignorance and barbarity; softened and civilized human society; refined and humanized the manners of men; restrained the ravages and cruelties of war; mitigated the severity of punishment; diffused more extensively civil liberty and social rights; and elevated the lower orders of men to a rank and importance in society.

But in nothing is the humane spirit of Christianity more conspicuous than in improving the state of children. In the most polished nations of antiquity we observe on this subject laws the most ridiculous, and customs the most shocking to humanity. Their legislators had too much wisdom not to perceive that the youth were an important part of the community; and that, if they did not sow in spring, they could not reap in harvest. But war and conquest constituted the policy of every state previous to the christian æra; their institutions were all calculated for this end; and barbarous laws counteracted, and often triumphed over, the feelings of nature. At Sparta, the new-born infant was exposed to the examination of a council of men, the most inflexible in their dispositions, and the most severe in their manners; and if it had the appearance of being weak and sickly, it was deemed unworthy to live. At Athens, it depended on the will of a capricious and dissipated father, whether any of his children should be allowed to live; and as the state made provision for the maintenance only of those whose parents had fallen in battle, the children of the poor, or unhappy orphans, were for the most part consigned to destruction; exposed in the desert, to the

uncertain affection of the wild beast, or left in the high way to the mercy of the accidental passenger. At Rome, the father's authority over his children was absolute and unlimited. They could be sold into slavery, or put to death at his pleasure.

But Christianity has restored to nature its rights, and to virtue its reign. With the severe legislators of antiquity compare the mild and merciful Lawgiver of the universe; whose meekness of temper and suavity of manners were acknowledged even by his enemies; who, in all his actions, displayed the utmost affability and condescension; who, on many occasions, shewed a peculiar affection and attachment to children; who delighted to have them about his person; and who frequently exhibited them to his disciples, as fit emblems of that innocence, simplicity and docility, which ought to characterise the subjects of his moral government. *Suffer little children, said he, to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

Hear then the sum and conclusion of the whole matter. You, who are the generous patrons and supporters of the Orphan-house, have, by your attention to this institution, shewn yourselves to be *charitable men, enlightened patriots* and *good Christians*. The catalogue of human virtues furnishes no additional encomium.

The success of every institution depends on the wisdom and fidelity with which it is conducted. Upon this principle the Orphan-house may reasonably expect all that success of which the nature of human affairs will admit. The general management and superintendance of this institution has wisely been committed to those whom their fellow-citizens have entrusted with the security of their lives and properties, I mean the INTENDANT and WARDENS of this city.

To you,

GENTLEMEN,

I wish to address myself with that deference and respect which are due to those whom the voice of their country has invested with authority. Our religion teaches us, that they who rule are entitled to double honour; but at the same time it exhorts rulers to rule with diligence. Responsibility is invariably attached to stations of honour and trust. If nobler

laurels are to be gained, greater toil is to be undergone and more danger is to be encountered. By accepting the office which you now hold, you have pledged yourselves to the community, that you will discharge the duties thereof with diligence and fidelity.

Among the many duties attached to your station, none appears more important than a due regard to the proper management of this institution. Here you must lay the foundation of almost every other improvement in the administration of the police. The education of youth is the most interesting object which can occupy the attention of the rulers of the community. This age is the seed-time of life, and if this is neglected, the consequences will be as injurious, as if the seed-time were left out of the year. As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined. The habits and manners of the youth determine the character and conduct of the man. The instructions and exhortations of the ministers of religion will be delivered in vain, unless the mind has been previously prepared for receiving them, by a virtuous education. To no purpose will you enact laws and regulations for the maintenance of good order and sobriety, unless you encourage in the youth, habits of industry and virtue. In vain do you employ your time and money in cleaning and repairing the streets, if you do not free them from the impurities of vice, and from those disgusting sights which squalid poverty presents. You will have done but half your work, if you content yourselves with lighting the nightly passenger on his way, and still leave the minds of the lower orders of people in the darkness of ignorance. You cannot beautify and adorn the city in any way so effectually, as by introducing purity of manners, and training up these children to industry and virtue. The encouragement of this institution is not only a sublime instance of charity—but also the truest economy, the best way of husbanding the public money. The more of it that is expended here, the less will be consumed in the poor-house. In proportion as the number of those who are benefited by this institution is increased, the expence of guarding your lives and properties will be diminished. The patriotic republicans of antiquity, lived themselves in mean and incon-

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venient dwellings: they displayed their splendor and magnificence in their public works, and in the temples of their gods. Shew yourselves imitators worthy of them; and by your attention to institutions of public utility, manifest your zeal for the public good.

But while, as far as your funds will permit, you encourage and extend this institution, let it not be forgotten that you will more effectually promote the design thereof, if you can find leisure for personal attendance and inspection. This will raise in the children, a spirit of emulation, and a laudable desire to excel; because they will perceive that you take an interest in their welfare and improvement, and will find themselves distinguished according to their progress and good behaviour. This will tend, also, to excite the diligence and exertions of those servants and dependents whom you employ under you in this house. For though the exhibition of this day affords ample testimony of the fidelity and prudence of all concerned in this establishment, it cannot be denied that the present zeal can be kept up only by your constant and regular superintendance.

Above all, let it be your chief care to make a wise and discreet choice of commissioners—to elect to this important and honourable station, none but men of known integrity and prudence; men fearing God, and hating covetousness.

Happily the existing circumstances leave no room here, but for praise and congratulation. Were I not afraid to wound that modesty and humility which are inseparably attached to great and good characters, I would describe minutely, and you would hear with pleasure, the unwearied diligence with which the COMMISSIONERS, without fee or reward, attend to the business of this institution; frequently to their own detriment, and the interruption of their private affairs. I would call upon the distressed parents to declare, how easy of access they have ever found them, and how ready to listen to their tale of woe. I would teach these children to rehearse the many instances of paternal affection, anxiety and care which they have experienced, and the many proofs of zeal for their interests, and of their readiness to give them advice, and even pecuniary assistance from their

private fortune after they had left the house. In their book of laws, which is open to the inspection of every one, I would point out the salutary regulations which they have established for the management of their important charge. I would lead you through the different apartments of this building, and direct your attention to the plenty which reigns there, to the economy which is practised, and to the good order which prevails among the children. I would then request you to follow me into the place of their education, and mark the proficiency many of them have made; a proficiency that might well put to the blush some who have enjoyed all the advantages which the good fortune of being descended from rich and respectable parents confers. In short, you should be present at their hours of devotion, and hear with what fervour and zeal, they, every morning and evening, offer thanks to heaven, who has raised them up in you such generous patrons and supporters. There is but one fact, however, which I shall distinguish with a particular notice, as a proof of the great attention which is paid to the health, diet and comfort of the children. Out of 183, who have been received upon this establishment since its foundation, in five years (the term of its duration) only six have died; making one in 152 annually: a circumstance, which, considering the precarious period of life, is almost incredible, and is not to be equalled in any other climate, even the most favourable to the health and longevity of the human race.

I have only to beseech you, GENTLEMEN, as you have hitherto deserved well of the community, not to relax in your exertions. Consider the important trust reposed in you. A higher compliment could not have been paid to the virtues either of your head or heart, than to commit to you the management of an institution which requires so much of both. I need scarcely remind you of that pleasure which you have so often felt, the pleasure of doing good, the delight of relieving the wretched. At times, indeed, you will be called to witness afflicting scenes; but it is consoling to think, that even these have the happiest tendency to soften and improve the heart. In general, you will find in this house a
pleasing

pleasing retreat from the rougher labours of business and the more disagreeable duties of your station. A seminary of children, engaged in the little toils and labours suited to their years; indulging their playful and sportive dispositions, and displaying without dissimulation or reserve, their hopes and their fears, their loves and their hatreds, their joys and their griefs, is a delightful subject of contemplation. It is the picture of man's primeval state, and reminds us of those happy days of innocence and peace, which were spent in quietness under the paternal roof, before we were acquainted with the cares and sorrows and vices of the world. Here, seated on an eminence, you enjoy a delightful calm and serenity, while you behold the world beneath you vexed with the din of politics, and wearied with the noise of folly. Other patriotic deeds may gain applause, but scenes like these administer comfort. Nay, the applause which such works acquire to their performers, though not so loud and noisy, is far more lasting and satisfactory. In the eye of reason, goodness ranks before greatness, and benevolent deeds before the most heroic exploits. They confer laurels which never fade, and bestow honours which no breath can blast. The erection of this edifice will be remembered to the immortal honour of its founders, when the proud monuments of human ambition and folly shall have mouldered into dust; and when the heroes and conquerors and destroyers of the human race, who have filled the earth with widows and with orphans, shall have sunk into oblivion, or are remembered with abhorrence. But this is the smallest part of your reward. Yours are the joys of self approbation. Upon you shall come the blessing of those who were ready to perish. When those years arrive, wherein the idle, who have wasted their time unprofitably, and the selfish, who have employed it solely for their own private advantage, shall say they have no pleasure, you will be able to recollect with satisfaction the several events of a life spent in promoting the glory of God, and the good of your fellow creatures. In that hour, when human strength is nought but weakness, and all the glory of man withers away as the flower of the field, your labours of love in behalf of this house, will be to you a source of sup-

port and consolation. And in that day of retribution, when the merciful shall obtain mercy, and all the frivolous and hard hearted sons of mirth shall be swept away, as the chaff before the wind, you shall hear with delight this sentence of approbation and reward: *Come ye blessed! inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from before the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked and ye cloathed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. For in as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. For whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, shall in no wise lose his reward.*

I am, last of all, to address myself to you for whose benefit this institution is intended. And here much might be said, were it possible to clothe my sentiments in language which your tender and uninformed minds could easily understand. But, as this is not the case with the greater part of you, I shall consider the subject with more brevity than perhaps its importance requires.

Those of you who are capable of judging and feeling at all, must, on this occasion, at the sight of your benefactors, be filled with sentiments of joy, gratitude and love. Once were you orphans and fatherless, but now these are your mothers and your fathers, your sisters and your brethren. To them ought to be transferred that affection which would have been due to your own parents, had you been fortunate enough to have experienced their kindness. Perhaps their claim is stronger than that of any natural parent, because they were bound by no tie of affection, and they expect no recompence but a proper improvement, on your part, of the opportunities which they have put in your power. The wretchedness of your former condition, which was not at all diminished by the inability of many of you to perceive its full extent, compared with your present comfortable situation, clearly points out to you how much you owe to the generosity of the public. Every meal you eat, every time you look to this stately building, destined for your dwelling, should call up to your view your kind supporters, and bring the tear

of

of gratitude into your eye. You ought farther to consider, that even had you been able to struggle through the various ills of poverty, want and disease, incident to your former condition, you would still have laboured under the most serious disadvantages in your progress through life. Ignorant and vicious, you could not have risen to eminence in any situation. Without friends to patronise and advise you, or to introduce you into the world, discouragement and disappointment would have attended you in every pursuit. But, by being received into this house, you have been adopted, as it were, into an honourable family. You are now the immediate children of your country, who will not fail to provide for you, if you are not wanting to yourselves. You have now friends and patrons, to whom you may look up for counsel and protection. Reflections like these are sufficient to melt the most insensible heart, and have been often found to reform the most stubborn and untractable, with whom punishment and restraint were of no avail. But how shall you evince your gratitude, and your sense of our kindness? You cannot, in person, thank every individual of your supporters: and it may never be in your power to make any return. The only way, then, in which you can shew your gratitude, is by a proper behaviour, a diligent attention to your improvement while you are in this house; and a grateful recollection, after you have left it, of the kindness you have here experienced, together with a faithful discharge of the duties which may belong to your future station in life. Thus your benefactors will have the satisfaction to know, that their money and pains have not been bestowed in vain; and thus you will confute an ancient objection to such institutions, that they who have been educated in them, have generally become vicious and abandoned, when they entered into life, because they had no parents and friends to whom they were responsible for their conduct. In this way you will more effectually benefit your successors, and promote the interest of the Orphan-House, than by the most liberal contribution which success in business might enable you to make.

Upon you, my young friends, are incumbent all the duties which belong to others of the same age and sex. But I only mean

mean to mention such as are peculiar to your situation. The first is diligence and application in whatever you are appointed to perform. Now you must lay the foundation of your success in future life. While the heart is yet tender, habits are soon formed, impressions are easily made, and lessons of wisdom sink deep into the mind. Those golden days, which you now enjoy, will soon pass away, but they will never return; and whether well or ill employed, they will leave lasting memorials behind them. As you now sow, you will hereafter reap. Remember then that every thing depends upon your own exertions. You have no inheritance but your talents, and no friends but such as your fidelity and diligence may procure you. The child of prosperity who wastes the precious season of youth in idleness, only exposes himself to future contempt and disgrace; you thereby expose yourselves to utter ruin and misery. Remember also, that your time is not your own—that you eat the bread of others—and that you are, in a sense, the property of the public, to whom you are responsible for every moment of your life.

To diligence you must add humility, docility and submission to your superiors. These are qualifications highly becoming in men of all ages; in youth they are peculiarly amiable and graceful: but in you, who derive every thing from the charity of others, and who, without their assistance, would have been outcasts and pests of society, they are indispensably requisite.

Endeavour, likewise, while your minds are yet susceptible of tender impressions, to cultivate generous and charitable dispositions. *Remember, that ye were bondmen in the land of Egypt*, is an argument frequently addressed by the Almighty to the people of Israel, when he inculcates humanity and compassion in their dealings with the poor, or with their bond servants. And most certainly no consideration is more powerful to excite sentiments of tenderness and compassion than the actual feeling of present, or the recollection of past sufferings. Remember then, that you were once helpless, friendless and forlorn; and, though you cannot relieve, be ever ready to compassionate others who may be in the same situation—to weep with those who weep, and to rejoice with those who rejoice.

The choice of companions is an object of the first importance to youth; but this your situation has not left in your power. On this subject, therefore, I have only to recommend, that you be careful to maintain harmony and concord with one another. It is comely for brethren to dwell together in unity; and brethren, in many senses, you are—brethren in affliction, as well as by adoption into the same family. Let all wrath, contention and strife, be put away far from this house; and let it be the mansion of peace and brotherly love. Is not the number of your friends sufficiently small already, that you seek, by unnecessary feuds and contests, to make enemies of those whom a community of wants and sorrows, and habits of familiarity and intercourse ought to have knit to you for ever, and to have rendered through life instruments of mutual happiness and support.

On a day sacred to festivity and joy, I wished to have said nothing which might throw a cloud over the fair prospect which I have held forth to this audience. But I am particularly charged to inform you, that repeated, and I am afraid, well-founded complaints have been made to the Commissioners, of the improper behaviour of some of you, not only in the streets, but even in the house of God; and thus publicly to warn the offenders, that unless reformed by the ordinary modes of correction, they will be made an awful example to the rest, will be finally expelled from this house, and their place supplied by others who shall prove more deserving of the kind support which they here receive.

In a word, my young friends, while you are careful to express your gratitude to your benefactors; to prove by your conduct, that you are not unworthy of their favour; and to shew to each other that kindness and humanity which your mutual wants and weakness require, forget not to lift up your minds to the Supreme Being, the author of your existence, “the inspirer of all the love and friendship which have ever been shewn you by others, the supporter of your infancy, the guide of your childhood, the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years.” Let it be the first object of all your wishes and endeavours to obtain his favour; and know, for your encouragement, that they who seek him

early

early shall find him. Without the blessing and protection of the Almighty, all hope of happiness and success in life were vain: possessed of these, you have the best reason for trust and confidence. His arm can give strength to the weak. His grace will enable you to resist every temptation. His comforts will delight your souls in the day of adversity and distress.

Let us, therefore, unite, with one heart and with one voice, in offering thanks and praise to him who hath hitherto helped us; and in imploring his future blessing and protection to this institution, without which all our endeavours will be ineffectual.

P R A Y E R.

GOD of infinite perfection! Father of all mercy! Fountain of every good word and work! Protector of the helpless! and rewarder of all virtuous deeds! with humility and reverence we now present ourselves before thee, bringing with us these sons and daughters of affliction, and desirous to place them under thy almighty protection. Do thou, who hast set thy glory above the heavens, and who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, hear with acceptance the prayer and praise which are addressed to thee from this place.

While Angels and Archangels, and the Spirits of the Just, behold thy perfections and glory unveiled, we contemplate thee only in thy works. But there we see marks of regularity and order which proclaim that thou art wise: There we perceive the sources of enjoyment scattered with a profusion which announces thy goodness and love. If we behold suffering and sorrow at times pervading thy universe, we know that thou never afflictest thy children but for their moral discipline and improvement in virtue, which is the ultimate and leading object of thy administration. When we consider our own nature and state, we lament our degraded condition; but when we open that sacred volume which thou hast given to guide us into the way of truth, we contemplate with astonish-

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ment and love that stupendous scheme of mercy which thou hast executed through thy Son for repairing the ruins of our fall, and restoring our nature to its primitive virtue and happiness.

O thou inexhaustible source of every good and perfect gift! Send thy almighty grace into our hearts, and form in us thy own image. Enable us to co-operate with thee in that great plan, which thou art carrying on from age to age, for counteracting the fatal effects of that disorder which sin has introduced into the moral system. Implant within us the seeds of every virtue which is ornamental to our nature, and well pleasing in thy sight. Inspire us with a principle of universal benevolence. Breathe into our souls that spirit of charity which is the bond of perfection. May we feel that generous sympathy, which weeps with those who weep, and rejoices with those who rejoice. Teach us that candour which thinketh no evil. As we expect mercy from thee, may we forgive our neighbour the wrongs which he has done us. As we hope for divine succour in the day of distress, may we be ever ready to relieve and assist the wretched.

Father Almighty! without whose assistance and protection nothing can prosper, we beseech thee to regard with favour this institution: May it effectually answer the great design of its establishment, and, in every case, may human compassion prove a remedy for human misery.

Father of the fatherless! be gracious to these Orphans who have no friend and protector but thee. O merciful and compassionate Shepherd of Israel! who carriest the lambs in thy arms, and gently leadest such as are with young, defend this tender flock from evil. Preserve them in the path of righteousness, innocence and peace. Grant that they may make due proficiency in the several branches of education allotted to them. Inspire them with gratitude and love to their benefactors, but especially to thee, their greatest benefactor and friend. Grant that they may live in harmony and concord with one another; and, when they leave this place, may they, by their conduct, do honor to themselves, and prove a blessing to their country.

Bless with thy almighty patronage every seminary of learn-

ing;

ing; and render effectual the exertions of parents, guardians and teachers, in behalf of the young and rising generation.

Pour down thy choicest blessings on the friends and supporters of this institution. May they experience that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; and though he may seem to cast away his bread as it were upon the waters, he shall find it after many days. Grant that all who are concerned in this institution may discharge, with fidelity and diligence, the various duties of their stations; and may, in every thing, look up to thee who art the friend of the poor, and the protector of the oppressed!

Ruler of the Universe! we offer up our earnest supplications in behalf of these lands wherein we live. Bless the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; and grant that peace, happiness and prosperity may ever attend them. May we put a due value on the inestimable blessings of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy; may we be grateful to thee, the author of them: and may we transmit them pure and unimpaired to the latest generations.

Pour down thy blessings on thy servant THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. Protect his person, prolong his life, and guide his counsels, that his government may be a blessing to those over whom he is placed.

We pray for all Governours, Judges and Rulers, more particularly, THE GOVERNOUR of this state, and the MAGISTRATES of this city. Teach them to rule in thy fear, and to thy glory; employing the power with which they are intrusted, as a terror to evil-doers, and as an encouragement and protection to those who do well.

Bless, O God! this city and all its inhabitants. Let not our sins and follies provoke thee to visit us in wrath. Spare thy destroying sword; and restore us to our wonted health and prosperity.

Let not the Lord be angry, and we will yet farther supplicate for the whole human race, the distressed and fallen family of mankind. See, O God! the afflictions of the afflicted! May the sigh of the prisoner come up before thee. Look down with compassion on the sufferings of the just. Bend thine ear to the cry of the miserable. O, may thy kingdom come!

come! May thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven! May ignorance, superstition, tyranny, bigotry and wrath cease for ever! May the mild genius of the gospel appear in the lives of its professors! May virtue again shine forth as in the days of old, and convert these abodes of sin and misery into mansions of holiness and peace!

May thy name be hallowed and thy glory advanced by all thy rational and moral offspring throughout thy vast universe, henceforth, even for ever more! AMEN.



South-Carolina District, to wit—

(L. S.) **B**E it remembered, that on the twenty-sixth day of October, in the twentieth year of the independence of the United States of America, Charles Lining, in trust for the Orphan-House, has deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims, in the following words, to wit :

“ *An ORATION delivered at the Orphan-House of Charleston, South-Carolina, October 18th, 1795, being the sixth anniversary of the institution, by the Reverend GEORGE BUIST, D. D. Minister of the Presbyterian church of Charleston.*” In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, intituled, “ *An act for the encouragement of learning; by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.*”

THOMAS HALL, Clerk

of South-Carolina district.