

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHARITABLE.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE REQUEST

OF THE

FEMALE HOSPITABLE SOCIETY,

OF PHILADELPHIA,

IN THE

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

On Lord's-day Evening, December 22, 1811.

BY JACOB J. JANEWAY, A. M.

JUNIOR PASTOR OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

PHILADELPHIA:

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A SERMON, &c.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor. Psalm, xli. 1.

AT the request of a female, charitable society, I stand, before this audience, an advocate for the poor. On occasions like the present, it is the duty of a preacher of the gospel to avail himself of the opportunity which they offer for cherishing, promoting, and invigorating the principles of christian benevolence; as well as to endeavour to obtain that immediate pecuniary aid, for which he is to solicit. I have, therefore, chosen as a subject suitable to the design of our present meeting in this house of God, the text just read. My main object in discussing it, will be, to illustrate and prove the *blessedness* of that man, who, from principles of christian benevolence and christian duty, considers and relieves the wants of the poor. But, previously to entering on this subject, suffer me to detain you, while I make a few brief remarks, intended to give a just view of the character contemplated by the sacred writer.

This character is formed by steady, permanent principles of christian benevolence, displaying themselves in a continued series of liberal deeds. The performance of a few charitable actions, will not secure blessedness to their author. *Sympathy* is found in almost every human breast, and will prompt even the most covetous and hard-hearted to occasional acts of compassion. Depraved and reprobate indeed must be that wretch, who has so far divested himself of human nature, as to be destitute of all feeling for the miseries of his fellow-creatures. The libertine, who, in gratifying his lusts, entails wretchedness for life on the victim of his seduction, and disgrace on an innocent and virtuous family, will listen with sympathetic interest to the tale of wo, and give freely to alleviate distress. Even in thieves and robbers, who subsist by plundering their fellow men, nature has been known to revive on certain occasions, and prompt them to acts of compassion. The sons of ambition, who found their *infamous* glory on the ruins of cities and nations, and cement it with the blood of thousands slain, have sometimes done remarkable deeds of charity. Shall we call these blessed? No; a *curse*, and not a blessing, rests upon their guilty heads.

There is another principle from which charitable actions flow. It may be denominated *natural benevolence*. This is more powerful than sympathy. Native feeling

may melt at the sight or description of wo; it may contribute to the relief of distress that happens to present itself, and give when application is made in behalf of absent misery: but it will not subject itself to the trouble of searching out the abodes of wretchedness, and carrying an unsolicited supply to want. But native benevolence does more. It will not only weep at distress, and give occasional charity; it will also go to the house of sorrow, and endeavour to wipe away the tears of the widow and the fatherless. Human nature is in all, depraved and alienated from God. Daily observation, however, proves the natural dispositions of men to be widely different. While some, by nature, are revengeful and malicious, delighting in acts of cruelty; others are placable, kind, and benevolent. Persons of this latter description, form amiable and useful members of society, and no doubt derive pleasure and advantage from the exercise of their mild and sweet dispositions.

But they sustain not the character, nor are they entitled to the blessedness, of which the inspired writer speaks. This character is formed by a *religious principle*, superadded to native sympathy and benevolence. The man who bears it, is animated by a sense of *duty* to God, as well as of kindness to his fellow-creatures. The principles from which we act, must be consecrated by grace to the glory of Jehovah, or they cannot secure

to us what Sacred Scripture emphatically denominates *blessedness*. Principles of lower aim, may obtain for us a portion of enjoyment and providential favours; but they cannot secure to us the sublime honour of being styled *blessed*, by a voice from heaven. The religion of Jesus Christ has done more to alleviate the wants of the poor and the sufferings of the miserable, than natural feelings in their fairest forms. Hospitals, poor houses, and other asylums for wretchedness, constitute one of the distinguishing glories of her reign. Till the Saviour of our race inspired his disciples with a portion of his merciful and benevolent spirit, the world never beheld buildings erected for such noble purposes.

Understand me not to mean, that all religious persons are remarkable for the grace of charity. Often religion has to contend with dispositions the very reverse; with covetousness and malice, in hearts where it resides. Of such base materials, to form a temper eminent for mildness, forgiveness, mercy, and benevolence, requires an uncommon exertion of divine grace. Miracles of this kind, have been wrought. Religion, however, does, in all cases, where it lives and reigns in the heart, subdue and mortify the passions opposed to charity. Hence, inspiration brands covetousness with the name of *idolatry*, and assures us that the covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

* Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 10.

But, when divine grace superadds to strong natural feelings and benevolence, the principle of religion, then is formed a character distinguished for charity. It is the delight of such a man to consider the poor. His heart feels for their wants, and his head contrives for their relief. He has bowels of compassion that sound within him at the cry of misery, and his hands become the willing instruments of succour. Such a man will accommodate himself to the ever-varying forms of human wretchedness. According to his ability, he will be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the fatherless: he will plead the cause of the poor, deliver him out of the hands of the oppressor, and make the widow's heart leap for joy. While others confine their attention to the bodily and temporal wants of their fellow creatures, he, looking with compassion on the state of their immortal souls, will endeavour to relieve their spiritual miseries. His mind will teem with thoughts on this subject. He will devise plans for conveying religious instruction to the poor, and infusing into their hearts the consolations of the gospel; or willingly lend his aid in carrying into effect plans which may have been already proposed. This is the noblest charity.

You see the character which the royal writer has in view. We proceed to prove that such a man is blessed, and to lay open the sources of his happiness.

The testimony of David, in favour of this truth, is not unworthy of regard. His life was a checkered scene. Through a great variety of vicissitudes, he passed from the humble state of a shepherd's boy to that of a mighty king. He saw much of the world; and with a mind formed as his was, he made sage observations on the various conditions of human life. This man lays it down as a maxim, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor."

We have, in our text, more than the opinion of a fallible writer. It is the declaration of an inspired penman; it is the voice of infallible truth. He who made the human heart, and all the springs of its enjoyments; he who knows, with unerring certainty, the pleasures and the miseries which it feels; he pronounces blessed the man of charity; him that considers and relieves the wants of the poor. Blessed, then, he *must* be.

Seems it to any that the objects which engage the liberal man's attention, are mean, and that little honour can result to him from visiting the poor, the sick, and the dying? The poor dwell in hovels; they appear in tattered garments; they pass unnoticed through life. Pride looks down upon them with contempt. The rich too often disdain to show them any regard, and reject their applications for aid. But, because pride and riches turn from them as objects unworthy of notice, does the merciful man debase himself, when he stoops to enter their mean

abode, tenderly to inquire into their case, and kindly to extend to them relief? Who are the poor? Have they forfeited humanity, by dwelling in huts and appearing in rags? Are they not human nature still; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? Are they not rational and immortal beings, as well as ourselves, and candidates for the same eternity? Who then can debase himself, by succouring human nature in distress; a nature which the Son of God wears in heaven, amid all the splendours of his exalted state. Let a monarch descend from his throne to perform acts of charity to the wretched, and when he rises to resume his seat, his crown will shine upon his head with increasing brilliancy.

But, the poor are vicious and depraved. With grief, we confess that they too frequently are so: and would to God, that we were not constrained to confess the same lamentable fact with regard to the rich. If poverty tempts the former to steal, and take the name of the Lord in vain; riches often swell the haughty worm with pride, so that he denies his God, and impiously says, “Who is the Lord?”* Both classes have vices peculiar to their respective conditions: and it is not hard to determine which is most injurious to the welfare of society; vice confined by poverty to obscurity, and appearing in its own naked deformity; or vice made conspicuous by wealth, and dressed up in all the allurements of fashion.

* Prov. xxx. 8. 9.

Be it so, that the poor are vicious: and is it not a work worthy of a rational creature, to endeavour to reclaim them, and make them virtuous and pious? Need any man blush to own, that he has been on the angelic errand of imparting religious instruction to the ignorant, and endeavouring to turn the steps of an immortal being, from the ways of sin and death, to the path of holiness and life?

All, however, are not vicious. The poor can boast of men, who have thrown new lustre over human nature. Among them have been found, in every age, the saints of God. “Hearken, my beloved brethren,” says an apostle, pleading their cause, and showing that they are worthy of respect, as well as the rich; “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”* The celebrated Francis Xavier, justly styled the apostle of India, possessed only a mat on which he sometimes lay, and a small table covered with his writings and a few books; and, at last, after a life of extensive usefulness, died on the sea-shore, in a wretched cabin, that could not protect him from the severity of a piercing wind.† The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, his prime ministers of state, suffered hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and had no certain dwelling place.‡ At

* James ii. 5. † See his life, p. 114. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 11.

the gate of a luxurious rich man, was once seen, in the mean form of a beggar, soliciting the crumbs which fell from his table, lying covered with sores, which dogs, more feeling than their master, came and licked, Lazarus, the saint of God; who, in a few days after, was beheld by this very rich man from the place of torment, in Abraham's bosom.* And what sheds on a state of poverty a lustre unspeakably more glorious, the Son of God himself was a poor man, dependant for his subsistence on charity. Of a condition in life thus honoured, the poor need not be ashamed; and the rich may count it a privilege, to minister to the wants of those who suffer its privations.

Blessed, then, is he that considereth the poor. He is blessed in his own mind—blessed in the opinion of good men—blessed in his likeness to the Saviour—blessed in the prayers of the poor—blessed in the favour of God—and blessed in his future reward. Let us, for a few moments, examine each of these sources of enjoyment.

HE IS BLESSED IN HIS OWN MIND. Greatly they mistake, who place happiness in external objects. The seat of it is the soul of man. It consists chiefly in the exercise of certain affections of the heart; and depends on external objects no farther, than they serve to call

* Luke xvi. 19—31.

these affections into exercise. Among these affections, benevolence, mercy, and charity, hold a distinguished rank. With them God has connected a high degree of pleasure; and with opposite passions, such as malice, revenge, envy, and covetousness, a high degree of pain.

The covetous man stoops to the meanness of inventing excuses for withholding his alms—excuses, which justify him neither to others, nor to his own conscience. He degrades himself in his own eyes. Love of money contracts his soul—it restrains his liberty of action. It is a prison—it is bonds and fetters. But the liberal man has no occasion to invent paltry excuses to save his money. He gives cheerfully, if he have the means, and the object be worthy of aid; or he refuses, and assigns a reason, which, if it accord not with the views of others, yet satisfies his own mind. Charity gives to his heart a certain enlargement—to his soul a certain expansion, which cannot be described; and to be known must be felt.

Is a benevolent temper a source of sorrow? The benevolent man will, we confess, weep over the bed of affliction, and his heart will bleed at scenes of distress. But his pain is mingled with pleasure. At the instant in which his heart melts with pity, conscience says, It is right; and a sweet satisfaction is diffused over his soul.

THE CHARITABLE MAN IS BLESSED IN THE OPINION OF GOOD MEN. There is hardly any other

virtue so generally applauded, as liberality to the poor. It holds a very conspicuous place among those things which St. Paul denominates lovely and of good report. The man who abounds in acts of mercy and charity, will surely reap, as his reward, *a good name*. It is not reputation at which he aims, while thinking on the wants of the poor, and contriving how he may relieve them. He knows, and observes the precept of his Saviour, who commands us to study secrecy in our alms-deeds. But the veil cannot always be drawn over them. There are occasions, on which concealment is no duty, and when the charity of the most modest must come under the notice of others: and Providence, in fulfilment of the promise that, if we do our alms in secret, our heavenly Father, who seeth in secret, will reward us openly;* brings to light benevolent works, that the author of them may gain, what he did not seek in doing them—*the praise of men*.

THE MAN OF WHOM WE SPEAK, IS BLESSED IN HIS LIKENESS TO THE SON OF GOD. In the mission of our Saviour, benevolence, and compassion, and mercy, shone most conspicuously. He came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. In a spiritual sense, all for whose benefit he laboured and suffered, were poor—indebted to God ten thousand

* Matt. vi. 3, 4.

talents, without ability to pay one.—“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.”* While discharging his public ministry on earth, he did not court the society of the rich in this world’s goods. He was, indeed, willing to impart instruction to them, because he came to save persons of all ranks and descriptions; and a few rich men were found among his disciples: but he was generally seen surrounded by the poor and the miserable. To them chiefly he imparted the doctrines of heavenly wisdom, and the efficacy of his healing power. His immediate attendants, the apostles, whom he afterwards sent to convert the nations, were poor men, fishermen of Galilee: and when John sent two of his disciples to Jesus, to inquire whether he were the Messiah, he bade them tell John, among other characteristics by which he might be known, “The poor have the gospel preached to them.”† Here is the perfect copy, after which we must write—the spotless example, which we must imitate—the unerring standard, by which we must govern our conduct. The man, who, from principles of Christian benevolence and piety, considers the poor; stoops to enter their mean abodes; inquires into their wants, and conveys to them spiritual

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† Matt. xi. 4, 5.

instruction, and temporal aid:—the man, who visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to pour the oil of consolation into their bleeding hearts, and dry up their tears;—the man, who takes the orphan by the hand, to guide him through life, to save him from the dangers of temptation and vice, and to conduct him to Heaven at last:—this man approaches the example of the great Redeemer, who went about doing good, bearing the infirmities and wants of human nature. Blessed man! The happiness of Heaven consists in seeing, and in being like to the Son of God: and our happiness on earth increases, in proportion as we grow in resemblance to him, in temper and in conduct. “Take my yoke upon you,” said Jesus, “and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

THE BENEVOLENT MAN IS BLESSED IN THE PRAYERS OF THE POOR. Despised as the poor are, they have an interest in the court of Heaven. Their cry is heard by the Almighty, whether it ascend in supplications for blessings on the heads of their benefactors, or in complaints against their oppressors. Wo to those who venture to afflict the widow and the fatherless! When they cry to the Lord, he will assuredly hear them; for he has, in his holy word, promised to hear them. But happy the

* Matt. xi. 29.

man who considers and relieves their necessities; for if God hears when they complain against oppressors, certainly he will, when they pray for blessings on their kind benefactors. Let the thoughtless and giddy, who never pray for themselves, contemn the prayers of the poor: he who knows the efficacy of prayer, will prize “the blessings of him that was ready to perish,” more than the favour of the rich, or the smiles of the great. The poor cannot repay their benefactors in kind; but they can in prayers. A payment with usury! In one sense, the giver is the debtor; for our Lord Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give, than to receive.”

THE MAN OF CHARITY IS BLESSED IN THE FAVOUR OF GOD. Imagine not, my hearers, that I would countenance that delusive and dangerous notion, that by alms we can purchase this blessing. To atone for his injustice, the extortioner has given in charity a part of his unlawful gains; and profligates have bequeathed large sums to build churches, and found asylums for the poor, in hope that their posthumous charity might cover the multitude of their sins. Delusive imaginations! Charity without faith, and alms without devotion, will never save the soul. The favour of God is perfectly *gratuitous*—bestowed *solely* on account of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, it is a fact, that he has wisely established a connexion between his favour and the charity

of believers. He approves of their alms, and will bless them for them. “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall also be watered himself.* Almighty God, my hearers, is the *patron* of the poor. For reasons known to himself, he leaves them in destitute circumstances: but he does not forget them. He commits them to the care of the rich, with a solemn charge to supply their wants, and not to let them suffer. Hence, the Sacred Scriptures abound with precepts enjoining, and with promises to encourage charity. Nay, the Most High condescends to stand *surety* for the poor, and to hold himself *debtor* to their benefactors. This is no fiction of the imagination—it is a plain Scripture truth. Hear the words of Solomon: “He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”† Observation and experience authorize us to assert, not only that God is a faithful as well as able surety, but that he repays the liberal *in kind*.—“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to poverty.”‡ Look at the truly charitable man. Behold the blessing of God resting on his dwelling, and prosperity attending his worldly affairs;—a hedge planted by the Almighty around him for his security, and losses turned into gain! My text is followed with these consoling promises:—“The Lord

* Prov. xi. 25.

† Prov. xix. 17.

‡ Prov. xi. 24.

will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.”

Finally:—HE WHO CONSIDERETH THE POOR IS BLESSED IN HIS FUTURE REWARD. Is it necessary to repeat it, that we disclaim the idea of merit; and believe that as the forgiveness of sins in this life, so future happiness, is bestowed as a blessing purchased by the Redeemer, and issuing from the sovereign mercy of God? Still we maintain it as a truth, that there is such an established connexion between good works and future glory, that the one will, as to measure, be regulated by the other; and those who are ready to distribute and willing to communicate, lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, and take hold on eternal life.* Deeds of mercy and charity performed by a true christian, go before him into the next world; prepare for him a palace in Heaven, and add new jewels to the crown of glory, that will hereafter encircle his brow. In the great day of retribution, he will hear his Saviour and judge acknowledge himself *debtor*, for all acts of kindness shown to his saints. And O what floods of joy will pour

* 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

into his soul, while he and others are thus addressed, before angels and God, by the King from the throne of his glory! "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from 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 clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."*

Suffer me to close the illustration of my subject by this remark, that, although those who act from principles of natural benevolence, unsanctified by the grace of God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, can expect no reward in the next world; yet their reward in temporal blessings is sure. The Lord will repay their acts of kindness to his poor, and *especially* those done to his own people. The connexion between charity and providential favours, is perhaps more invariable in reference to persons acting merely from natural, than in reference to those who act from *sanctified* benevolence. The latter, if they receive not their reward in this life, will in the next; but the former must receive it here, or lose it forever.†

* Matt. xxv. 34—36, 40.

† The case of Potiphar, Joseph's master, and that of Jehu, king of Israel, might be urged as decisive proofs of the position asserted above. See Exod. xxxix. 1—6. 2 Kings x. 29—31.

These, my hearers, are the sources of happiness opened to him “that considereth the poor.” He is blessed in his own mind—blessed in the opinion of good men—blessed in his likeness to the great Redeemer—blessed in the prayers of the poor—blessed in the favour of Almighty God—blessed in his future reward—and pronounced blessed by the voice of inspiration. Who, then, will not arise and say, “blessed is he that considereth the poor?”

This blessing comes on the society, the application of which I have the honour this evening to present; especially on those active females who, from the principles of a sympathetic heart and christian benevolence, sustain the burden of its duties. They exhibit the character, and they are entitled to the blessing, which I have attempted to describe. To convince you of this, it will be sufficient to state the nature of their institution, and the plan on which they act.

This society is composed of benevolent females of all christian denominations; and is named **THE FEMALE HOSPITABLE SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA, FOR THE RELIEF OF SICK AND INDIGENT WIDOWS AND ORPHANS, AND AGED AND DESTITUTE, FEMALE STRANGERS.** Their charity respects the souls, as well as the bodies, of the poor and miserable: it is intended, not only to relieve their temporal wants, but to remove their

spiritual necessities. For the accomplishment of their two-fold design, they have appointed, beside two other officers, a governess, a visiting committee, and a board of managers. The duty of the governess is, to superintend the general concerns of the society. Five of the most pious and best qualified members, compose the visiting committee. It is made their duty to visit poor females in affliction, “without respect to nation, colour, or profession;” and impart to them religious instruction and consolation, by reading to them the Sacred Scriptures, by pious conversation and exhortation, and by holy prayer. This heavenly charity, they offer, not only to poor females in the city, but also to those in the bettering-house and hospital; and extend it even to those unhappy and depraved females, who, on account of their vices, are confined in the prison. The members of this committee, are authorized to expend, monthly during the winter season, a certain sum in relieving the bodily distresses of the sick.

But, the distribution of the temporal charity, belongs *chiefly* to the managers. They are twenty-four in number; and have divided among them the several wards of the city. It is their duty to visit applicants for charity, at their places of residence; and carefully to inquire into their character, by every prudent method. If they find the applicants to be unworthy, they advise and persuade them to forsake their evil ways, and inform them, that

while they continue to lead irregular and disorderly lives, the beneficence of the society cannot be extended to them. But, if they discover their applicants to be worthy objects, cards of recommendation are given to them, which being presented to the governess, at the store-room, the poor receive either employment, or other relief suited to their circumstances. The society endeavour to distribute their charity, so as to discourage idleness and encourage industry; and, therefore, they use as much of it as they can, in furnishing the needy with different kinds of work, for which they pay them a generous price.

This benevolent institution has now been in existence for several years; and, during that period, it has, in various ways, afforded relief to many hundreds of poor and sick females, and imparted religious instruction to many, ignorant of the path of duty and the way to eternal life. And it is confidently believed, that God has owned its labours of love, and that much good has been done to the immortal souls, as well as to the perishing bodies, of the destitute.

In the name of my Master and Saviour, I hail you, ye pious females, who thus consider the poor, as blessed of him who made Heaven and earth. Go on in your benevolent course; tread in the steps of your Redeemer; visit the widow; succour the fatherless; feed the hungry; clothe the naked; pity the imprisoned; instruct the ig-

norant; reclaim the vicious; show the way to Heaven, and encourage your straying sisters to follow you in it. Blessed work! a work in which angels would delight to be employed: and well they might; for in such a work, the Lord of angels spent his life. Ye gay, ye thoughtless females, who flutter through our streets—who sparkle in the ball-room—who agitate your bosoms with debasing passions at the card-table—who sully at the theatre, that delicate flower, *female modesty*—who wear away life in doing *nothing*—come hither, and learn, from these benevolent females, how to *live*;—learn the *luxury* of doing good.

The society will pardon me, if I have trespassed on their feelings. It is true, that I came not here to praise them; but it was necessary to state the nature of their institution and plan of operation, previously to an application for the aid of this assembly: and, after the statement that was made, how could I forbear to express the emotions of my soul, and say, Blessed women! for ye consider the poor?

My hearers, I turn to you, and, in the name of this pious and benevolent society, solicit earnestly your assistance in carrying on their judicious labours of love among the poor, and in giving them greater extent. In the illustration of my text, enough was said in favour of charity in general. It only remains, that some brief

observations should be made, to recommend the present application.

No room is left for urging an objection, which is very frequently urged against giving alms,—the fear that they will be improperly used. The exhibition already made of the plan adopted by this society, for disposing of their charity, does it away completely. It is not to *common street-beggars* that they give; but to the poor whom they find, after careful inquiry, and personal visits to them, to be worthy objects: and these they assist, by furnishing them with employment, and by giving articles of food, clothing, and medicine, and seldom by granting money. The *books* of the society, which are regularly kept, and which I have had the pleasure of inspecting, prove this latter, as their *constitution* does the former fact. You may, then, bestow your alms on this occasion, with full confidence that they will be prudently and judiciously applied.

I will give, exclaims the benevolent heart. It is enough to know, that a good use will be made of my charity. I feel thankful for the present opportunity to testify my gratitude to my heavenly Benefactor. And who will not give, demands the preacher, when *ladies* are willing to be our almoners? Are they willing to spend their time, and expose their health, by passing through our streets, alleys, and lanes, when wet and muddy, or frozen and covered with snow, in quest of

suitable objects on whom to bestow our charity; and is there an individual who can refuse to help them on this angelic errand? Dares one soul leave this house of God without presenting an offering to the Lord?

Hard time! Stagnated business! Depreciating property! True; God has visited us for our sins, and, *perhaps*, for want of mercy to the poor. But, on whom presses most the severity of the times? On the rich, or on the poor?—On those who have enough, and to spare; or on those who suffer for want of that employment by which they earn their daily bread? The pressure of the times is, the *very reason* why we should assist the poor. It demands a more than common exertion for their relief. When the number who need to be watered, is multiplying, it is not the time to stop, or contract, but to enlarge, the stream of our charity. The season has, indeed, been favourable in respect to fuel. But, because God has been kind to the poor, let us not be unkind. Recollect, that you who have money to lay up wood for the winter, have profited most by the mildness of the weather. The needy can buy only a small quantity at a time: and before the expiration of winter, the price of this necessary article, may be greatly advanced upon them.

Ah! my hearers, what a contrast between your condition and that of the poor! You have more than sufficient to supply your present wants, and a stock laid up

for the future: but, the poor have only a supply from day to day—often want even that—and still more frequently know not whence provision for to-morrow is to come! You, married females, enjoy the pleasant society of your husbands, and depend on them for your support, and that of your families: but, the poor widow has been bereaved of the joy of her life—has lost the pillar of her hope—him in whom she trusted for support; and been cast friendless upon a wide and unfeeling world. When your children ask for bread, and need clothing, you give them bread and clothing: but, how often does the poor disconsolate mother hear the cry, *bread! bread!* when she has none to give to her hungry children; and see them *shivering* in the cold, when she has no warm raiment with which to cover them! You gather your flocks around a comfortable fire, and they are defended against inclement weather: but, see the wretched offspring of poverty *shaking* over a few expiring coals of fire, in a hut, through the openings of which, drive the wintry blasts, and the falling snow!

From this contrast, what emotion should spring? Heavenly Benefactor, my thankful heart will give to thy suffering creatures,—something to supply the destitute, to comfort the widow, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to warm the frozen.

In this large and populous city, human want and misery appear in every form. The managers of this so-

ciety could, in the course of the winter, conduct you to places, where you might behold scenes sufficient to make a heart of stone weep, and break open the clenched fist of covetousness itself. Here, they might show you a female, deserted by her husband, just ready to be confined, without clothing to cover her expected little stranger. There, they might discover to you, in a miserable hovel, a saint of God, about to ascend to a mansion in the skies; but, by a mysterious Providence, suffering many privations. Oh! who will not relieve the wants of this heir of glory? that, when she enters into the presence of her Lord, she may say, In yonder world, that man, that woman, gave me charity. Here—But, instead of multiplying cases, let one, and that a recent case, suffice. O scene of sorrow! The information comes from the lips of an eye witness—a manager of this society. In a miserable place, was discovered a poor family; not long since arrived from a foreign country. It consisted of a man, his wife, and four children. They had but one bed. The man had been sick several months, and was found lying on the *floor*, with *something like a coverlet* under him, dying of his disease. His wife also was sick, with a fever and ague. She had an infant, six months old, at her breast. One of the other children, emaciated with want and disease, so that his little bones appeared, was seen lying on some *shavings*. The man died the week be-

fore the last: and he left his wife and children, in great distress, strangers in a foreign land! Scenes of this kind often occur. Words cannot paint them. They almost break the hearts of the managers.

Such are the objects for which I plead. Could I lay them before your eyes, I should have nothing to say but, *Look at them!* The sight would melt your hearts, and plead with eloquence irresistible. In the name of such suffering females, and fatherless children, I ask *bread, clothing, fuel*, and other *necessaries* of life. Give, my hearers. If you are Christians, give:—if you have natural benevolence, give:—if you have the common feelings of humanity, give. Give *liberally*; and the Lord will repay you.

Were Jesus Christ to enter this temple, and, standing in the place which I now occupy, ask your charity; who could refuse? Jesus Christ is present. You see not him; but he sees you. In his name, and in his presence, I request alms for his suffering creatures, and for his beloved saints. To the throne of his glory and judgment look, and, anticipating the day in which he will inquire, whether you relieved the wants of the poor, and especially those of his own disciples,—bestow your alms.

Rise, deacons, and receive the charity: and afterwards we shall render praise to God, who giveth both the ability and the disposition to minister to the wants

of the poor and miserable. O for a willing heart, and obedient hands! Compassion inspire every breast! Be it so, God of mercy! Amen.

The following are the names of persons to whom donations, or communications relative to the society, may be addressed.

Mrs. MARY ANN SNYDER, Governess, No. 321,
Market-street.

Mrs. ELIZABETH VAN PELT, Treasurer, No. 149,
Chesnut-street.

Miss ELIZABETH NORMAN, corner of Race and
Fifth-streets.

F. M'ILVAINE, Esq. No. 79, Lombard-street.

Philadelphia, Feb. 22, 1812.

REVEREND AND ESTEEMED SIR,

THE Female Hospitable Society present you their sincere thanks, for the kindness you manifested in delivering the late annual Charity Sermon for the benefit of their Institution: and respectfully beg leave to request a copy for publication.

This favour is solicited, not only by the Society, for whose immediate assistance you, so kindly and effectually, advocated the cause of the indigent; but, also, by repeated desires of a numerous and respectable audience, present on the interesting occasion.

This request would have been made immediately succeeding the delivery of the discourse, were it not for an unwillingness of the members to cause you further trouble, or trespass on your goodness and time.

I am, reverend sir,

In the name and behalf of said Society,

With gratitude and respect,

MARY ANN SNYDER, *Governess.*

REVEREND JACOB J. JANEWAY.

Feb. 22, 1812.

DEAR MADAM,

THE facts which, in conversation, you stated to have occurred in consequence of the preaching of my Sermon, dispose me to regard it as a *duty*, to comply with the request of the benevolent Society over which you preside.

This discourse is, therefore, given to the public with an encouraging hope, that as God, it appears, was pleased to bless the *delivery*, so he will graciously bless the *perusal* of it, in promoting the exercise of that amiable and useful temper, *christian charity*.

With prayers for the prosperity of the institution,

I am your's, &c.

J. J. JANEWAY.

Mrs. SNYDER.

Feb. 24, 1812.

THE FEMALE HOSPITABLE SOCIETY,

Present their sincere thanks, to the Physicians who volunteered their services, in the Medical Department of their Establishment. The succeeding Report, will manifest their industry and skill, and show the happy result, of their indefatigable labours in the cause of suffering humanity.

REPORT.

“The number of Patients attended by the Physicians, that were under the notice of the FEMALE HOSPITABLE SOCIETY, from September 25th, 1810, to December 25th, 1811, are Three Hundred and Seventy-Eight. viz:

Cured,	230
Relieved,	96
Died,	26
Removed,	16
Remaining,	10
Total,	378

The Physicians, are:

J. H. LAMBERT, No. 25, Filbert-street,

N. S. ALLISON, No. 70, South Eighth-street, and
No. 10, South Fourth-street:

Who continue to attend the patients, recommended by the Members of the Society. Parents may have their children Vaccinated, by applying to either of the Physicians.”

The Society beg leave to render acknowledgments to a generous public, for the liberal aid, which they have more than once conferred on this institution. They have also to acknowledge, the kindness of the board of Guardians of the poor, of this city, who have presented them with sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents, likewise to mention the unsolicited donation of twenty-nine dollars, from EDWARD McNEIR, Esq. of Richmond, Virginia, by the kindness of PETER MIERCKEN, Esq. of the district of South-wark, in addition to former favours from the same gentlemen.

Their thanks are also due, to the unknown benevolent person, who transmitted Ten Dollars to the care of the Rev. Mr. JANEWAY, for the use of the Society. The respected donors, may rest assured, that their charity will be faithfully applied to the destined object.

It is with pleasure, that the managers inform the patrons of this charitable undertaking, that independently of the articles manufactured, and now for sale at the Domestic Warehouse, No. 6, South Third-street; they have two hundred yards of Linsey, fabricated by the poor, and appropriated to their use for clothing exclusively, and free of expense.