

**A discourse : addressed to the gentlemen of the Faculty; the officers; the clergy; and the trustees of the Infirmary, at Liverpool, on their respective hospital duties; being an anniversary sermon, preached in May 1791 ... / by the Rev. Thomas Bassnet Percival.**

### **Contributors**

Percival, Thomas Bassnet, 1767-1798.  
Liverpool Infirmary.

### **Publication/Creation**

Manchester : Printed at the office of Nicholson & Co., 1794.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/cv8nsgvs>

### **License and attribution**

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

61852/P

*A DISCOURSE,*

ADDRESSED TO THE

GENTLEMEN OF THE FACULTY;

THE OFFICERS;

THE CLERGY; AND THE TRUSTEES OF THE INFIRMARY,

*AT LIVERPOOL,*

ON THEIR RESPECTIVE HOSPITAL DUTIES;

BEING AN

*Anniversary Sermon,*

Preached in May 1791, before the GOVERNORS of the INSTITUTION,

*For the Benefit of the Charity;*

BY THE

*REV. THOMAS BASSNET PERCIVAL, LL.B.*

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUIS OF WATERFORD;

AND TO THE COMPANY OF BRITISH MERCHANTS,

AT ST. PETERSBURGH.

*Manchester;*

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF NICHOLSON AND CO.

1794.



### ADVERTISEMENT.

*The following SERMON is inserted, by permission, in the Appendix to a CODE OF ETHICS AND INSTITUTES, adapted to the FACULTIES of PHYSIC and SURGERY, and entitled, MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE, by Thomas Percival, M. D. which has long remained in the press. The prosecution of this work has been suspended by the death of a beloved Son, for whose use it was peculiarly designed; who had nearly completed the course of his academical education; and whose talents, acquirements, and virtues, promised to render him an ornament to his profession. As it is uncertain when the undertaking will be resumed, a few copies of this DISCOURSE have been separately printed, for private distribution amongst friends.*

MANCHESTER, Feb. 24, 1794.



## A DISCOURSE,

addressed to the

GENTLEMEN OF THE FACULTY;

THE OFFICERS;

THE CLERGY; AND THE TRUSTEES OF THE INFIRMARY

at

LIVERPOOL,

ON THEIR RESPECTIVE HOSPITAL DUTIES.

*Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Galatians vi. 9.*

If we consider the circumstances of man, as placed in this great theatre of action; as connected with his fellow-creatures by various ties and relations; and with God himself, his creator and judge: If we consider the powers and faculties with which he is endowed; and that these are talents committed to his trust, capable of indefinite degrees of improvement, and which the Lord, at his coming, will demand with usury; we shall see the fullest reason for the apostolical injunction, *be not weary in well-doing*; and shall rejoice in the assurance, that *in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*. The sphere of human duty has no limits to its extent. Every advance in knowledge widens its boundaries; every increase of power and wealth multiplies and diversifies the objects of it; and length of years evinces their unceasing succession. Therefore, *whatsoever*  
thy



*thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* Vi-  
gour and perseverance are essential to every noble  
pursuit: And no virtuous effort is in vain. To be  
discouraged by opposition; to be alarmed by dan-  
ger, or overcome by difficulty, implies a state of  
mind unfitted for the christian warfare.

But the present interesting occasion calls for a  
specific application of the precept contained in our  
text. What is just and true, concerning the whole  
duty of man, must be equally just and true of eve-  
ry individual branch of moral and religious obli-  
gation. And it can require no deep research, no  
abstruse investigation, to work conviction on our  
minds, that the higher is the object we have in  
view, the more active and incessant should be our  
exertions in the attainment of it. The Institution,  
which now claims your most serious attention, is  
founded on the *wisest policy*; adapted to the no-  
blest purposes of *humanity*; and capable of being  
rendered subservient to the *everlasting welfare* of  
mankind.

The *wisdom* of such charitable foundations can  
admit of no dispute. On the lower classes of our  
fellow-citizens alone, we depend for food, for rai-  
ment, for the habitations in which we dwell, and for  
all the conveniencies and comforts of life. But  
health is essential to their capacity for labour; and  
in this labour, I fear, it is too often sacrificed. An  
additional obligation, therefore, to afford relief,  
springs from so affecting a consideration. He,  
who at once toils and suffers for our benefit, has a  
multiplied claim to our support; and to withhold  
it



it would be equally chargeable with folly, ingratitude, and injustice.

But *humanity* prompts, when the still voice of wisdom is not heard. Sickness, complicated with poverty, has pleas that, to a feeling mind, are irresistible. *To weep with those that weep*, was the character of our divine master; and, to the honour of our nature, we are capable of the same generous sympathy. Vain and idle, however, are the softest emotions of the mind, when they lead not to correspondent actions. And he who views the naked, without clothing them, and those who are sick, without ministering unto them, so far as his abilities and other obligations will permit, incurs the dreadful denunciation, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.*

It were an easy and pleasing task to enlarge on these general topics. But they come not sufficiently "home to mens' business and bosoms." And honoured as I am, by being thus called to the privilege of addressing you, I feel it incumbent on me to be more appropriate, by suggesting to your candid attention, the distinct and relative duties attached to the several orders, which compose this most excellent community. Permit me, therefore, to claim your indulgence, whilst I offer, with all deference and respect, but with the plainness and freedom of gospel sincerity, a few words of exhortation,

I. To



I. TO THE FACULTY ;

II. TO THE OFFICERS AND SUPERINTEND-  
ANTS;

III. TO THE CLERGY ;

And lastly, TO THE GENERAL BODY OF TRUS-  
TEES AND CONTRIBUTORS.

I. TO THE FACULTY. As man is placed, by Divine Providence, in a situation which involves a variety of interests and duties, often complicated and mixed together, the motives, which influence human actions, must necessarily be mixed and complicated. And wisdom and virtue consist in the selection of those which are fit and good ; and in the arrangement of all, by a just appreciation of their comparative dignity and importance. In the acceptance of your professional offices, in this INFIRMARY, it is presumed that you have been governed by the *love of reputation*; by the *desire of acquiring knowledge and experience* ; and by that *spirit of philanthropy*, which delights in, and is never weary of well doing. Let us briefly consider each of these principles of action, and how they ought to be regulated.

If we analyze the *love of reputation*, as it exists in liberal and well-informed minds, it will be found to spring from the love of moral and intellectual excellence. For of what value is praise, when not founded on desert? But the consciousness of desert, by the constitution of our nature, is ever attended with self-approbation : And this delightful emotion, which is at once the concomitant and reward of virtue, widely expands its operation ; and  
animates



animates, by a social sympathy, all who are the witnesses or judges of our generous deeds. From the same source, piety itself derives its origin. For how shall he *who loveth not*, or is regardless of the approbation of *his brother, whom he hath seen*, love or regard the favour of *God, whom he hath not seen*!

But let us remember, not to substitute for the legitimate and magnanimous love of fame, that spurious and sordid passion, which seeks applause by gratifying the caprices, by indulging the prejudices, and by imposing on the follies of mankind. To court the public favour by adulation, or empirical arts, is meanness and hypocrisy; to claim it, by high and assumed pretensions, is arrogance and pride; and to exalt our own character, by the depreciation of that of our competitor, is to convert honourable emulation into professional enmity and injustice.

You have been elevated by the suffrages of your fellow-citizens: You have been honoured by their favour and confidence. Rejoice in the distinction conferred upon you; fulfil with assiduity and zeal the trust reposed in you; and by being *unwearied in well doing*, rise to higher and higher degrees of public favour and celebrity!

The *acquisition of knowledge and experience* is a farther incentive to your generous exertions, in this receptacle of disease and misery. It is one important design of the institution itself; which affords peculiar advantages for ascertaining the operation of remedies, and the comparative merit of different modes of medical and chirurgical treatment. For  
the



the strict rules which are enjoined; the steadiness with which their observance is enforced; and the unremitting attendance of those who are qualified to make accurate observations, and to note every symptom, whether regular or anomalous, in the diseases under cure, are circumstances incompatible with the ordinary domestic care of the sick. To avail yourselves of them, therefore, is agreeable to sound policy, and consonant to the purest justice and humanity. For every improvement in the healing art is a public good, beneficial to the poor as well as to the rich, and to the former in a proportionably greater degree, as they are more numerous, and consequently more frequently the objects of it. On this point, however, peculiar delicacy is required; and as the discretionary power, with which you are entrusted, is almost without controul, it should be exercised with the nicest honour and probity. When novelties in practice are introduced, be careful that they are conformable to reason and analogy; that no sacrifice is made to fanciful hypothesis, or experimental curiosity; that the infliction of pain or suffering be, as much as possible, avoided; and that the end in view fully warrant the means for its attainment.

But your noblest call to duty and exertion arises from the exalted *spirit of philanthropy*: And, on this occasion, I may address you individually, in the language of the first of orators, to the sovereign of imperial Rome: *Nihil habet fortuna tua majus quam ut possis, nec natura melius quam ut velis, servare quam-plurimos*. It is your honour and felicity to be engaged



engaged in an occupation which leads you, like our blessed Lord during his abode on earth, to *go about doing good, healing the sick, and curing all manner of diseases*. To you learning has opened her stores, that they may be applied to the sublimest purposes; to alleviate pain; to raise the drooping head; to renew the roses of the cheek, and the sparkling of the eye; and thus to gladden, whilst you lengthen life. Let this hospital be the theatre on which you display, with assiduous and persevering care, your science, skill, and humanity: And let the manner correspond with, and even heighten, the measure of your benevolence. With patience hear the tale of symptoms; silence not harshly the murmurs of a troubled mind; and by the kindness of your looks and words evince, that christian condescension is not incompatible with professional steadiness and dignity.

It is, I trust, an ill founded opinion, that *compassion* is not the virtue of a Surgeon. This branch of the profession has been charged with hardness of heart: And some of its members have formerly justified the stigma, by ridiculing all softness of manners; by assuming the contrary deportment; and by studiously banishing from their minds that sympathy, which they falsely supposed would be unsuitable to their character, and unfavourable to the practical exercise of their art. But different sentiments now prevail. And a distinction should ever be made between true compassion, and that unmanly pity which enfeebles the mind; which shrinks from the sight of woe; which inspires

B

timidity;



timidity ; and deprives him, who is under its influence, of all capacity to give relief. Genuine compassion rouses the attention of the soul ; gives energy to all its powers ; suggests expedients in danger ; incites to vigorous action in difficulty ; and strengthens the hand to execute, with promptitude, the purposes of the head. The pity which you should repress is a turbulent emotion. The commiseration which you should cultivate is a calm principle. It is benevolence itself directed forcibly to a specific object. And the frequency of such objects diminishes not, but augments its energy : For it produces a tone or constitution of mind, constantly in unison with suffering ; and prepared, on every call, to afford the full measure of relief. Appear, therefore, to your patients to be actuated by that fellow feeling, which nature, education, and christianity require. Make their cases, in a reasonable degree, your own ; *and whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.*

II. To you, the OFFICERS and SUPERINTENDANTS of this hospital, we cannot but ascribe views the most pure and public spirited. But zeal in the cause of charity, however sincere, can only be rendered usefully efficient by due attention to, and steady perseverance in the wisest means for its accomplishment. On the mistaken humanity of crowding your wards with numerous patients, by which disease is generated, and death multiplied in all its horrors ; on the fatal calculation of savings in medicines, diet, or clothing ; and on a strict attention to ventilation, cleanliness, and all the domestic



mestic arrangements, which have order, utility, or comfort for their objects; I trust it is needless to enlarge. But you will suffer me, I hope, to offer a few hints on the *moral* and *religious* application of the institution which you govern; a topic hitherto little noticed, though of high importance.

The visitation of sickness is a wise and kind dispensation of Providence, intended to humble, to refine, and to meliorate the heart. And its salutary influence extends beyond the sufferer, to those relatives and friends, whose office it is to minister unto him; exciting tenderness and commiseration; drawing closer the bonds of affection; and rousing to exertions, virtuous in their nature, profitable to man, and well pleasing to God. A parent soothed and supported under the anguish of pain by the loving kindness of his children; a husband nursed with unwearied assiduity by the partner of his bed; a child experiencing all the tenderness of paternal and maternal love, are situations which form the ground-work of domestic virtue, and domestic felicity: They leave indelible impressions on the mind; impressions which exalt the moral character, and render us better men, better citizens, and better christians. It is wisdom, therefore, and duty, not to frustrate the benevolent constitutions of Heaven, by dissolving the salutary connections of sickness, and transporting into a public asylum those who may, with a little aid, enjoy in their own homes, benefits and consolations which, elsewhere, it is in the power of no one to confer.

But numerous are the sufferers under sickness  
and



and poverty, to whom your hospitable doors may be opened, with the highest moral benefit to themselves and to the community. When admitted within these walls, they form one great family, of which you are the heads, and consequently responsible for all due attention to their present behaviour, and to the means of their future improvement. Withdrawn from the habitations of penury, sloth, and dirtiness; from the conversation of the loose and the profligate; and from all their associates in vice, they may here form a taste for the sweets of cleanliness; learn the power of bridling their tongues; and be induced, by this temporary absence, to free themselves from all farther connection with their idle and debauched companions. Let it be your sedulous care to foster these excellent tendencies: Encourage in the patients every attention to neatness: Tolerate no filth or slovenliness, either in their persons or attire: Keep a strict guard on the decency of their behaviour: Urge them to active offices of kindness and compassion to each other: Furnish the convalescents with bibles, and with books of plain morality, and practical piety, suited to their capacities and circumstances; and which will neither delude the imagination, nor perplex the understanding: Oblige them to a regular attendance on the public worship of the hospital, or of their respective churches: And, agreeably to your laws, neglect not to make provision for the stated and frequent administration of the holy sacrament. There is something in this office peculiarly adapted to comfort and fortify the mind, under  
the



the pressure of poverty, pain, and sickness. In the contemplation of that love, which Christ manifested for us by his sufferings and death, all the consolation is experienced, which divine sympathy can afford. *We have a high priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, and who holds forth to us this soothing invitation; *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Promote the celebration of an ordinance, adapted thus to fill the mind with gratitude, and to alleviate every woe. And let the example of our Saviour's resignation to the appointments of God be enforced by it, who in his agony exclaimed, *Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.*

III. I doubt not the cordial and entire concurrence of you, my REV. BRETHREN, the CLERGY, who officiate in this hospital, in the recommendation of the holy sacrament, not only as a stated, but as a frequent ordinance of the institution. With you it will rest to obviate every objection to the rite, and to give it the full measure of spiritual efficacy. Enthusiasm and superstition cannot be dreaded in the offices of rational piety, conducted by those who are rational and pious. And you will neither betray men into a false confidence, nor alarm them, when languishing under sickness and pain, with unseasonable terrors. *The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* Under such circumstances, vain will be the aid of skill or medicine, without the supports  
and



and comforts, which it is your sacred function to afford. You can

——— “minister to a mind diseased ;  
 “ Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
 “ Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
 “ And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
 “ Cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff  
 “ Which weighs upon the heart.”

SHAKESPEARE.

Being thus the *Physicians* of the soul, you are essential constituents of this enlarged system of philanthropy. Apply, therefore, with diligence and zeal, the spiritual *medicines* which it is your office to dispense. Here you have a wide field *for exhortation, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*. Convalescence peculiarly furnishes the *molliæ tempora fandi*, the soft seasons of impressive counsel. The mind is then open to serious conviction; disposed to review past offences with contrition; and to look forward with sincere resolutions of amendment. Many diseases are the immediate consequences of vice. And he, who has recently experienced the sufferings of guilt, will deeply feel its enormity; and cherish those precepts, which will secure him from relapse, and convert his past misery into future blessings.

LASTLY. But this large aggregate of good, which it is the design of the present anniversary to commemorate, depends, for its support and extension, on the GENERAL BODY OF CONTRIBUTORS to the charity. How deeply interesting, then, are the claims, which your fellow-citizens have to make on  
 your



your philanthropy! How important is it to the health of thousands, in rapid succession, that you should persevere in beneficence, and continue unwearied in well-doing! Ordinary bounty terminates almost in the moment when it is bestowed. The object of it being withdrawn, solicitude and responsibility are no more. But in this noble institution, charity exerts itself in steady and unceasing operations. It is a stream ever full, yet ever flowing; and through the grace of God, I trust, will be inexhaustible. From your zeal, your concord, and liberality, these *sacred waters of life* proceed. Be watchful that they are not poisoned in their source, nor contaminated in their progress. Let your *zeal* be employed in searching out and recommending proper objects of relief. *Call to you, according to the injunction of our Saviour, the halt, and the maimed, the lame, and the blind; for they cannot recompense you: Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* Suffer no prejudices, either political or religious, to contract the bounds of your charity. *Pass not by, on the other side, from a fellow creature who has fallen amongst thieves, because he is not of your party, of your sect, or even of your nation. But, like the good Samaritan, have compassion on him, and let oil and wine be poured upon his wounds, in this hospitable Bethesda.* Guard, most sedulously guard, against the spirit of dissension. You are united in the labours of christian love; and having one common and glorious cause, the contest should be for pre-eminence in doing good, not for the gratification of pride, the indulgence of resentment, or  
even

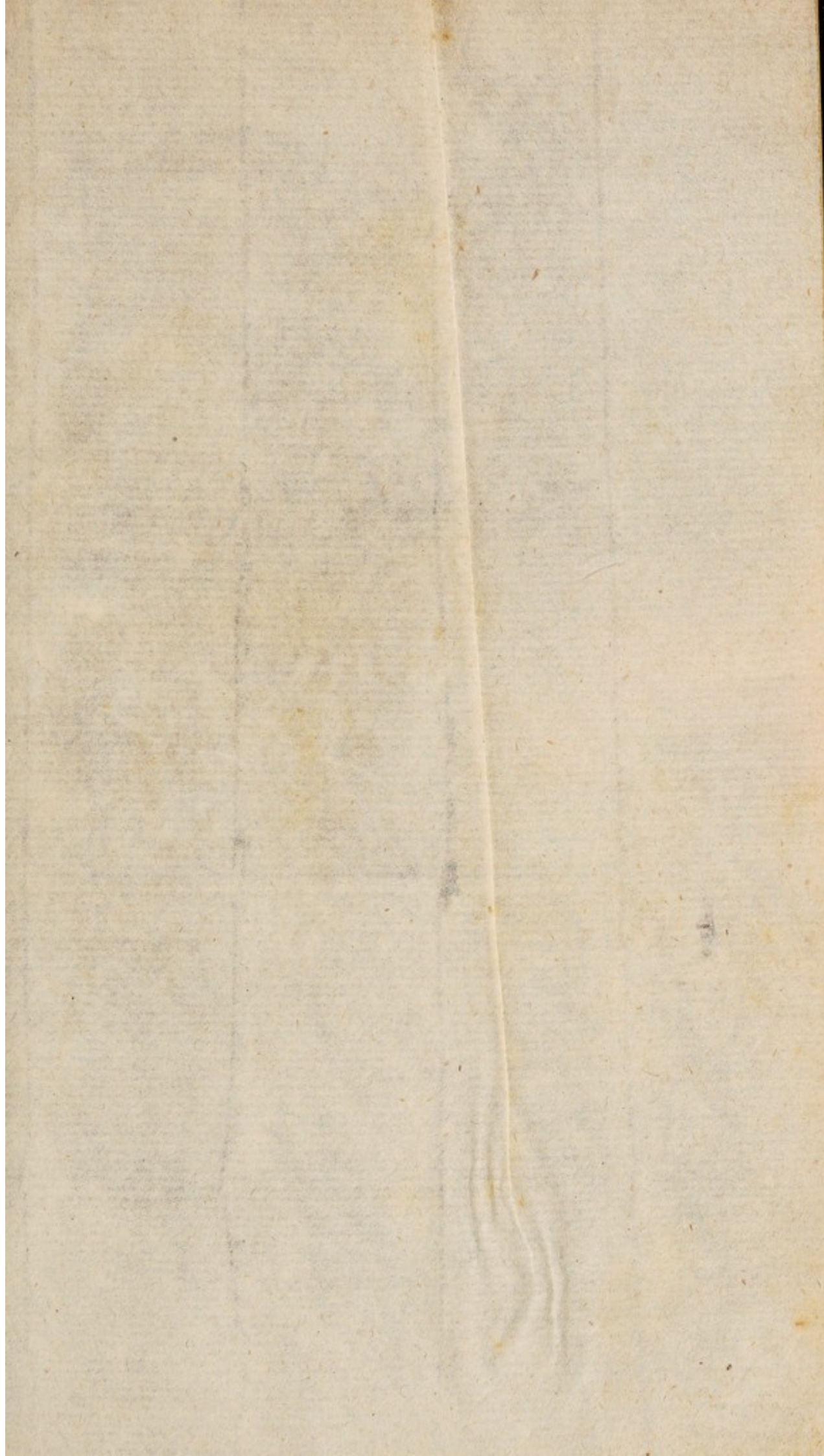


even for the interests of friendship. To your liberality in contribution no appeal can be required; no new incitement can be urged. What your judgment approves; what experience has sanctioned; and what touches the tenderest feelings of your hearts, must have pleas that are irresistible.

It only remains, then, that we cordially unite in offering our devout supplications to the throne of grace, in behalf of all those *who are afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate; that it may please the God of all consolation to relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions: And finally, that we may be delivered from all hardness of heart; from all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches; and, having been taught that all our doings, without charity, profit nothing, that this most excellent gift, the bond of peace, and of all virtues, may be poured into us abundantly, through the merits and mediation of our blessed Lord and Saviour.*

FINIS.







... In your ...  
... I have ...  
... What your ...  
... I have ...  
... I have ...  
... I have ...  
... I have ...

... that we ...  
... our ...  
... grace ...  
... to ...  
... in ...  
... all ...  
... giving ...  
... of all ...  
... be ...  
... and ...  
... profit ...  
... the ...  
... through ...  
... Lord ...