

A sermon preach'd at the parish church of St. Andrew, Holborn, on ... May 16, 1759 ... before the President and Governors of the City of London Lying-In Hospital for Married Women ... / [Gregory Sharpe].

Contributors

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S E R M O N

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PREACH'D AT THE

P A R I S H - C H U R C H

O F

S^T. A N D R E W, H O L B O R N,

On W E D N E S D A Y, *May* 16, 1759.

B E F O R E T H E

P R E S I D E N T and G O V E R N O R S

O F T H E

C I T Y O F L O N D O N L Y I N G - I N H O S P I T A L
F O R M A R R I E D W O M E N,

A t S H A F T E S B U R Y - H O U S E i n A L D E R S G A T E - S T R E E T.

By G R E G O R Y S H A R P E, L. L. D.

Fellow of the R O Y A L and A N T I Q U A R I A N S O C I E T I E S.

Published at the Request of the S O C I E T Y.

L O N D O N:

Printed by C. S A Y, for the C H A R I T Y; and Sold at the H O S P I T A L.

M D C C L I X.

Ordered,

That the Thanks of the GOVERNORS of the CITY OF LONDON LYING-IN HOSPITAL FOR MARRIED WOMEN, AT SHAFTESBURY-HOUSE, in ALDERSGATE-STREET, be given to the Reverend Dr. GREGORY SHARPE, for the excellent Sermon by him preached this 16th of MAY 1759, at the Parish Church of St. ANDREW, HOLBORN; and that he be desired to print the same.

By Order of the President,

J. Nix, Secretary.



TO
JOHN THORNTON, Esq;
PRESIDENT,

Sir JAMES HODGES, Knt.
Mr. Deputy RICHARD MOLINEUX, } Vice-Presidents.
GEORGE NAPIER, Esq;

^{avig}
The Hon. THOMAS HARLEY, Esq; TREASURER,

THE STEWARDS,

And the rest of the GOVERNORS and CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE

CITY OF LONDON LYING-IN HOSPITAL,

THIS

S E R M O N,

Preached and Published at their Request,

Is Dedicated by

Their most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

GREGORY SHARPE.

JOHN THORNTON
PRESIDENT

St. James Hodges, Sec.
Mr. Deputy Richard Molinuk, }
George Naylor, Edr.

The Hon. THOMAS HARRIS, Edr. Treasurer

THE STEWARDS

And the rest of the Governors and Contributors

TO THE

CITY OF LONDON LYING-IN HOSPITAL

THIS

SERMON

Preached and Published at their Request,

Is Dedicated by

Their most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

GREGORY SHARP



ROMANS XIII. 8.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR HE THAT LOVETH ANOTHER HATH FUL-
FILLED THE LAW.



HE Obligation to Religion and Virtue, or the practice of all moral duties, is necessary and eternal ; no powers in heaven or on earth can dissolve it ; for without works of piety and goodness, justice and humanity, it is impossible to procure the good pleasure of the one, or the well-being of the other.

To reform the world, and make men better as well as more knowing, is the intent and purpose of our holy religion, calling us to repentance, and “ teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, “ we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* ” Not to deviate from the ways of wisdom, which are “ the ways of “ pleasantness and the paths of peace,† ” nor to release men from the strictest engagements to morality ; as if, by Faith alone, unattended

* Titus ii. 12.

† Prov. iii. 17.

with fruitful works, men might be justified in the sight of God: The consequence of which doctrine is, that the weightier matters of the law would by most be neglected, and sinners find too much encouragement in the practice of Vice here, if Faith without moral Righteousness is to save them hereafter*.

ST. PAUL, it is true, asserts that "a man is justified without the deeds of the Law;" but by "the Law" in that place he evidently means the judaical law, or ceremonious customs peculiar to the Jews, and not the law of nature, which was the original, all-comprehensive Law of God. For that equally selfish and perverse people would allow of no favor, no redemption due to the Gentiles, because they were not "under the law of Circumcision": St. Paul therefore, in the verse immediately following, asks, "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles?" to which he answers, "Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."†

THIS is not the only contempt of virtue men have mixed with their notions of the Gospel; for whilst some believe not the absolute necessity of moral righteousness, and yet lead a virtuous life, others

* It is not the author's design to insinuate, that man has any claim to eternal life in consequence of his actions only. He has no claim to life, much less to eternal life. If, indeed, man had not fallen, if he had been absolutely perfect in his obedience, according to the first Law imposed upon him, he could not have incurred the divine displeasure, he could not have been an object of punishment, he would have been happy for ever. But he failed, and it must be confessed that all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. Rom. iii. 23. The wages of Sin is Death. Rom. vi. 23. The law condemns, and sentence is to be pronounced: Mercy flows from the Sovereign; God is gracious to his fallen creature man; and, through the one Mediator between God and man, promises forgiveness of sin: He enters into a new covenant, whereby man is to be justified, considered as just and holy; but then he is to perform his part, and in consequence of his faith, to be good and merciful; a doer as well as a hearer of the word; "for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Rom. xi. 13. James i. 22.

† Rom. iii 28—30.

there are who think it not only reconcileable with, but of service to religion and the scriptures, to reject humanity, and put in practice almost every species of cruelty, every instrument of torture. Christianity is not much obliged to either of these parties; but the last is surely an abomination to the Lord.

So directly opposite is this to the rules delivered in scripture, and to the examples of Christ and his apostles, that one might justly wonder, how it ever could enter into the heart of man to conceive so strange an opinion, did not common experience convince us, that men do not always speak according to scripture, but force scripture to speak agreeable to their vain purposes, and to teach what it never intended. Would men faithfully report the words of our Lord, and not injuriously blend them with human inventions, the cause of Christ would soon become, what it really is, the cause of the whole world, and infidelity lose its only support. “ But there shall, says St. Peter, “ be false teachers, and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by “ reason of whom, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” * Offences will arise, whilst some declare moral duties to be dispensible or unnecessary, and others imagine great merits to result from the hottest persecution of men on account of matters of mere belief or speculation. But know ye, that “ all the law is fulfilled in one word, even “ in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” †

FAITH is indeed necessary to the character of a Christian, and all men that have opportunities of knowing the truth are obliged to believe in Jesus, who was the *finisher* as well as the *author* of our Faith: but without works of Charity and Love, all Faith is dead; which works alone can testify “ what manner of spirit we are of:”

* 2 Peter ii. 1.

† Galat. v. 14.

And would men but observe and obey the precepts of Christ, soon would a belief in his person and divine commission ensue.

BUT let a man believe in all things, and extend his faith even to the removal of mountains; let his zeal for religion be boundless, and his aversion to infidels never so great; if he wants humanity, if he has not charity, they will profit him nothing: his enmity becomes cruel, his zeal blind and intemperate, and his *faith* destitute of those “fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness and temperance.*”

THESE, when extended to all men, constitute the character of a true Christian-believer, and are properly called universal good-will or benevolence. The reasonableness and necessity of which virtue I shall, in this discourse, endeavour to shew, from the constitution of man, and the moral fitness of things, the nature of society, the happiness of individuals, the commands of Christ, and the example of God.

PHILANTHROPY, or the love of men, is not enforced by reason alone, but the make or natural disposition of man, and a vast variety of peculiar motives in the gospel, render the obligation to this duty more extensive and of greater force. The evidence from truth itself for universal love is indisputable, is obvious to men of the lowest capacity, and has the strictest right to a perpetual obedience. This results from the relations we bear to each other as social creatures, not formed for solitary lives, nor made to be independent one of another; for our interest is united, and the welfare of some depends on the happiness of others: we are not all endued with equal gifts and abilities, but stand in need of mutual aid and assistance.

* Galat. v. 22, 23.

EVEN selfishness, the reverse of sincere benevolence, often occasions mutual acts of kindness; for the most selfish wish well to such as are willing and have the power to serve them, and do what they call good, in hopes of a more beneficial return. This may be the cause of some little partial good in the world, by exciting the goodness or generosity of another; but, in the first instance, has so little to do with brotherly love, that it begins and ends in self-love only; and the same sordid principle that leads them to communicate good to those only from whom they expect more beneficial returns, will not only restrain them from serving any other person, but often induce them to perpetrate any acts of violence or injustice, so as they can be done with impunity, for the same sordid consideration.

IT is true, there is an innate desire in us to promote and increase our own happiness; and so far as it is innocent, it is allowable: but when we set false colours and pretences upon it, and study to circumvent, when we would be thought to serve and oblige, the serpent enters, and the dove takes its flight.

TRUTH is, or ought to be, the sovereign of the soul and all its powers, and should maintain an awful supremacy over all our appetites and passions.—And to render our obedience more easy, and even more pleasant to ourselves, as well as to convince us by our own sensation, that universal benevolence is the moral chain which holds the world together, God hath also implanted in us a tender concern for others, and by the reciprocal fluctuations of pain and pleasure, disposed us to find the sublimest of our gratifications in the assistance of our fellow-creatures.

HENCE humanity derives its name: hence it forces itself upon us: and even the vicious themselves not only find it difficult to resist and subdue

subdue its stimulations, but when they succeed in the conflict, are inwardly ashamed of their own victory.

EVEN our very instincts, filial and parental, have something both captivating and meritorious in them ; and we hardly wonder, that he who is deaf to the call of nature, should also be deaf to the call of God. Thus these general and kind dispositions are both a second argument for, and an additional motive to, universal benevolence : The third is proper to such alone as enjoy the benefits of Christ's appearance upon earth.

NOT reason, not affection only, but obedience to him whose name we bear, enforces this great and necessary precept, love all men. He hath left us laws which chiefly tend to promote universal love and kindness : he hath annexed to them the most powerful and prevailing sanctions, immortal happiness for them that obey, but inexpressible misery for the sons of disobedience : he hath united us into one body, of which body he himself is our head, that we, being members one of another, may exercise mutual love in imitation of him, who laid down his life for all ; and greater love than this we know hath no man* : he hath given us a common name, that we may be one community : he hath instituted baptism and the Lord's Supper as memorials, not only of his death, but of our faith and duty, as proper means to promote virtue and benevolence ; that in all things we may act as becomes the followers of him who was the great patron and example of Christian Charity.

THESE are motives to excite in us a general good-will, which the Gospel alone affords us ; and when united with the other reasons for benevolence, and added to the natural disposition of men, renders inhumanity or uncharitableness a most horrid and inexcusable offence.

* John xv. 13.

EACH of these arguments I shall now more fully explain; taking leave, however, to make this one observation by the way, that if men persecute their fellow-creatures, be it to promote what they may call Christianity, though they may bear the name of Christians, they are strangers to the religion of Jesus.

SUCH is the nature of our imperfect frame, that without affections, in many duties, in many offices, men would be supine and negligent. The full-blown powers of reason burst not forth at once with our beings, but are acquired and improved by industry and labour: a child, from this faculty alone, could not adequately perceive its duty, and some there are, who continue to be children, with respect to reason, so long as they live.

To assist us therefore in this obscure and dubious state, to point out natural evils, and their opposite pleasures, to incite to several offices and virtuous actions, God hath been pleased to join the additional force of passions to reason, that the one might provoke us to act where the other could not direct, and make us diligent, when we should be very slothful and remiss without them.

OF all these aids or incitements, Christian charity or universal love seems to be the most generous and powerful, for its influence is not confined to the breast it inhabits, but extends to every living thing. Man, as before observed, loves not himself alone, unless by a strange abuse of his nature, but delights in the good of his fellow-creatures, and to the utmost of his abilities is willing to promote their happiness: For "Love" or "Charity worketh no ill to his neighbour; *
 "Charity suffereth long and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity
 "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself un-
 "seemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no

* Rom, xiii. 10.

"evil,

“ evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all
 “ things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all
 “ things. * ”

REASON directs us to love our neighbours and the rest of mankind, but then it receives considerable strength from these natural affections: thus few can see, or hear, or read of the deep distresses of unfortunate men without tears; and from a compassion, peculiar to the human species, and natural to all minds that are not grossly vitiate and depraved, wish they had met with more happiness or a quick relief. This humane disposition extends itself to persons in all places and of every age; for we cannot chuse or fail to be affected at the recital of the miseries good and gallant men, who lived before us and in other parts of the world, may have endured, no more than we can avoid pity for our nearest neighbour in immediate distress.

ANOTHER argument, to convince us how natural this calm and universal benevolence is to men, may be deduced from the desires we all have for friendship and society. Let a man suppose himself in the unhappy circumstances of the Psalmist, thus expressed in the 18th verse of the 88th Psalm—“ My lovers and friends, hast thou put away
 “ from me, and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight?” Let a man imagine himself in a solitary place, removed far from the sight of his own species, and he will immediately lament his solitude, feel within himself a high esteem and love for his fellow-creatures, wish the friendship of some, the happiness of all.

AND here I cannot but observe, he will not then think that mankind were originally in a state of war one with another; that envy, rage, and malice reigned in the purer ages of the world, or that it is natural for men to destroy one another, which some hardy writers have as-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

ferted, chusing, as it seems, to derive the characteristic of man from the most barbarous and selfish of the species, though to the disparagement of themselves; for no man would ascribe that quality or appetite to another which he did not first feel in himself: so that in reality they stamp their own characters on mankind.

BUT to return: The benefits of a benevolent affection to the world are evident from the strenuous opposition it makes to every vice, and the calm state of mind it affords him that it dwells in. Thus Esau, though rough by nature, and provoked by Jacob, yet “ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept.*” It must indeed be difficult for the good man, who cherishes this kind affection, to envy another’s happiness, to hate his neighbour, or to pant for revenge; clemency, kindness, and humanity, are the inhabitants of his bosom, and where those reside, all the brutal passions are exiled. And thus, even in this, is all the law fulfilled, “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

HAVING considered the natural disposition or tendency of the uncorrupted man to love his neighbour, I now proceed to consider the more abstracted reasons for this duty, and thence to shew how gross a crime habitual inhumanity certainly is.

To imitate God, in all things we are able, is not only most highly rational and just, but the sublimest of all moral duties: and as the whole direction of providence is for the good of its creatures, so the communicating happiness to the full extent of our power, is the nearest approach that man can make to the Divinity. In the pathetic language of St. John, God is stiled Love itself†; whence we may take leave to say, universal benevolence is the sacrifice he takes

* Gen. xxxiii. 4.

† John iv. 8.

most pleasure in, and is what in a more peculiar manner indicates the child of God. In a word, he hath given us a disposition to benevolence, hath set before us, in the works of creation and providence, glorious examples of goodness and mercy, and, therefore, as we have powers and faculties to imitate them, that imitation becomes an indispensable duty.

MAN, perhaps, was made an imperfect creature; that he might be a social creature, not able to supply his own wants, or even relieve his own thoughts; he found himself obliged to seek a companion and a friend.—All feeling the same wants and weaknesses, all repaired to the same center.—Hence intercourse, hence society.—Hence friendship and affection, and hence the chain of offices which holds the world together.

HE that lives for himself only, is no better than a beast of prey.—He does his utmost to dissolve society, or crumble it into so many wretched individuals.

NARROW as his own narrow heart, besides, is the circuit of his enjoyments.—Instead of sharing with the benevolent in every other man's prosperity, every other man's prosperity is productive of misery to him.—All reflected pleasure is lost upon him. In every eye that is turned towards him, on the contrary, he sees reflected his own malignity. And when he retires into himself, he finds, that in shutting his heart against benevolence, he has shut out all consolation. Whereas he who loves his neighbour as himself, entertains no such fear, incurs no such danger, partakes of no such curse, but, on the contrary, opens his arms to the whole kind, as having been a friend to all, a foe to none.

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Most men can judge right in their own cause, and declare how others should use them : it were to be wished then, that they would make this their rule, " To do unto all as they themselves would be done by."

AN inordinate thirst after power, and the dishonest pursuit of riches, oftentimes absorb humanity. Ambition indeed is not only an innocent but a laudable motive, when we incorporate the happiness of others with our own ; but when it is all out-designing and selfish, it is a demon of the worst kind, or in the language of St. James, it is " earthly, sensual, devilish," and never makes its appearance but as the adversary of mankind. Avarice, rapine and luxury march in the same train : these disown all ties, trample on all connexions, consult only their own passions and appetites ; and when usher'd by authority and armed with power, would license no appetites or passions but their own.

THE duty of universal love or charity appears not only from the constitution of man, from the example of Almighty God, " whose tender mercies are over all his works," and from the nature of society, but is in a peculiar manner enforced by Christ, who was pleased to make it the distinguishing character of believers, when he said, " by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* He frequently insists upon Charity as one of the greatest duties, the " end and fulfilling of the law." " Tho' I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, says St. Paul, and tho' I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1 and 8. " Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ; but Charity never faileth."

* John xiii. 35.

IT is this that worketh righteousness and peace among men, and will fit us for heavenly pleasures in a future state, which no one can truly relish who has been a foe to benevolence in this, he not being qualified for the happiness of good men there, properly speaking, makes his own hell, and is a torment to himself. Then shall "the things of this world be done away," and he that placed his sole delight in them, must of consequence be miserable: Faith shall have its end, for "it is of things not seen," but "then we shall know even as we also are known: and hope will be perfect:" But love must remain, and be the practice and delight of the saints in heaven, as it should be of all men upon earth; especially Christians, who are bound to consider men, not merely as our fellow-creatures, but as brethren, and as members of one body united together under Christ our head; which close relation is beautifully described by St. Paul in the following words: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."—"Be ye therefore kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love,—distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality; bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not; rejoice with them that do rejoice, weep with them that weep; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

THIS is true Christianity; and would men consider it as they ought, would they consider how much humanity is enlarged, how much every virtue is enforced thereby, how much each doctrine tends to the promotion thereof, how light and easy is the yoke it imposes, infidelity would be no more, or in the vicious man only, who would continue to entertain it as a flatterer that countenanced him in his vices.

* Rom. xii. 4, &c.

To apply then what has been said to the present occasion, that we may become better men and better christians always, and at this particular time more thoroughly disposed to lend a compassionate ear, and stretch out a helping hand to nature herself, in throws and agonies importuning us for relief and consolation. — If we find ourselves inwardly prompted to the practice of universal charity, if the welfare of society requires it, if christianity, in a particular manner, inspires it — If to be on good terms with ourselves, to avoid the reproaches of our own hearts, which will be heard, let us resolve to be as deaf as we please, to bespeak the favour of God, and the good-will of men, we are to lose no opportunity of succouring our fellow-creatures in all places and at all times, according to our abilities and their distresses, how great is the duty, how pressing the obligation of contributing to the relief of the destitute married woman in the hour of her calamity, and to the preservation of her innocent, helpless offspring?

THE married woman, at such a crisis, and in such circumstances, was hardly ever before so meritorious an object of compassion and assistance. — Every such mother is now a friend to the community, every child an acquisition. — Marriage itself is become a state of discouragement. — Even the poor fly from it, because of the difficulties it exposes them to. — And inducements are wanting among them almost to continue the succession of mankind. — On the other hand, war consumes us; and if it were possible, according to the waste should be the growth.

In aid therefore of the motives already assigned, even policy itself might be urged. — If any supplemental consideration could be necessary to an assembly like this, by their own benevolent inclinations brought together — their own reflections will be worth a thousand arguments. — Fear, danger, expence, misery, are dreadful visitors. — These surround

round the bed of the poor when labour comes on — and only the hand of God can deliver from all.

THE poor, such as are comparatively so, I mean, are, and must of necessity be, a large majority, not only in ours but every other society.

BUT the good providence of God has so framed the mind, and has administered such a variety of palliatives, that this comparative degree, poverty, does not imply misery.

ON the contrary, if we were to look for comparative happiness, there being no other in this transitory life, we should probably find it scattered most liberally among those whom the proud call the poor.

NOT all the poor therefore come within the pale of this charity. — The object would be immensurable; the care superfluous — but such only as unhappy situations or unavoidable calamities have deprived of the means of helping themselves; such as, till this excellent expedient for their relief was thought of and put in execution, have been overtaken by their pains in the streets, and who have disgraced not only this country of ours, but even humanity itself, by their unpitied sufferings.

THAT our hearts therefore can never be with more propriety softened than for such wretches as these, or our liberality more unexceptionably bestowed than in furnishing them with this occasional succour, need not be insisted upon any farther.

If, therefore, the manner of distributing your bounties is suitable to the purpose; if care is taken to extend your favours to none but the miserable; if preference is shewn to none but such as are most emphatically so; if they are received and treated with gentleness and goodness;

if those who officiate do it not only with skill but alacrity ; if proper food and medicine are duly and seasonably administered ; if no religious or moral duty is neglected, and every care of every kind is taken both to preserve the child and re-establish the mother, our sensibility may be indulged without any reproach to our discretion.

By contribution, voluntary contribution, all is done : establishments are out of sight. Charity is the sole foundation of the building ; and if that should fail, even the very hope of the poor would fail with it.

BUT we profess ourselves to be Christians, and while christianity remains, charity cannot fail.

“ What ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, “ ye have done it unto me,” is one of the divine sayings of Christ himself.*

CAN a Christian then refuse a boon thus pathetically required by the Lord who bought him ? Can those who are required to love, forbear to pity and relieve one another ?

ALL are brethren, though all are not alike furnished with the goods of this world ; and the highest prerogative of the rich, is that of the will and power they are intrusted with, of correcting the errors of fortune, and administering balm to the wounds of adversity.

ACCORDING to our opulence should be our charity.

LET those, therefore, who have to spare, spare from their vanities and amusements here, to lay up treasure in heaven.

* Matt. xxv. 40.

To those who have accustomed themselves to acts of humanity and generosity, this lesson will not be a hard one.—The soft heart is apt to melt, the tender eye to flow, the liberal hand to communicate.—Benevolence is the blossom, beneficence is the fruit.—By your fruit ye shall be known to be the disciples of Christ.

AND could those who are made of more stubborn materials, or who by a habit of selfishness have laboured to fortify their hearts against all the approaches of compassion, be prevailed upon to try what the luxury of goodness is, they would have reason to be angry with themselves for having so long withstood their own happiness.

THE great reward of Christians, it is true, is not immediate; the kingdom of their master is in heaven, and the never-fading crowns of glory they are to wear cannot be given them till they are immortal; but there is a less reward in the gift of conscience, which is instantly bestowed upon every man that is merciful and good.—Even our present happiness depends much upon our gratifying the more public, generous and social qualities of the heart: and he who has denied himself these benevolent gratifications, is almost as great an enemy to himself as he is to mankind. He is entitled to no pity from others, and will find no resources within himself to bear up against the frowns of fortune, and the scorn of men; he will receive no comfort from others, have no peace within; for where there is no pity, there is no patience. Nor is this all; for he who is rich in this world's goods, but poor in good works, is the man who was found at the marriage of the King's Son without a wedding garment.* Let us above all other things take care to be clad with Charity †; for of these three, Faith, Hope and Charity, the greatest is Charity ‡. In this

* Matt. xxii. 11.

† Col. iii. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

world it will procure us what is most valuable in it, the praise of good men; and when we die, our works are said, in scripture phrase, to follow us, || to bear good testimony in our favour, and to be our best friends in that state where every act of mercy makes a place. This is the true use, the proper friendship of mammon or riches.

THE surest way to obtain a blessing on ourselves, will be to confer a blessing upon others. — If we are infirm ourselves, we cannot but pity the infirmities of others; and if we do not also endeavour to relieve them, what right have we to expect mercy from God, who have refused it to a fellow-creature in distress? If, on the other hand, all is sun-shine and summer to us now, the winter of life will come, when the flowers of the spring will fade, when these gay scenes shall pass away like a tale that is told, or a short-liv'd vision, when, to use an eastern proverb, the remembrance of youth shall be a sigh, and conscience call upon us, in the hours of retirement, to examine our past conduct. — Then it will appear of what inestimable value is the good we have done to others.

PERFECTION is not of human attainment; we have all our faults and foibles; in many things, says St. James, we all offend, and, therefore, should do our best to atone for those offences by acts of mercy and benevolence. As weak and imperfect beings we are sure to offend, and if we will not do good, what flattering hopes can we entertain of forgiveness? Though man is no longer innocent, he may however be beneficent; and beneficence is better than innocence; for he that does good deserves to be esteemed above him who only does no harm. Let us, therefore, lose no opportunity of doing good to others, not only for their sakes but for our own, and, particularly not the present, for of delay there is no end; “and ye know not what

“ hour your Lord doth come. Be ye ready, for in such an hour as
 “ you think not, the son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and
 “ wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household
 “ to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom
 “ his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing*.” Let us secure
 this blessing to ourselves, promised to all who shall watch the op-
 portunity of distributing to the necessities of others; and then what-
 ever events arise in the world, we may safely rely upon the good pro-
 vidence of God, and with holy confidence address him in these words
 of our blessed Lord and Saviour—“**THY WILL BE DONE.**”—

* Matt. xxiv. 42, &c.

F I N I S.



