

cherish it till we love mercy, when we dwell on every tender sentiment that opens the mind and enlarges the heart, then it becomes a virtue. Too many are ready to excuse themselves and to say that their circumstances are but just easy to answer the demands of their family, and that, upon the great and the opulent, the whole burden of relieving the indigent ought to fall. But do these men indulge themselves in no expenses unsuitable to their rank and condition? Imaginary wants are boundless, and Charity will never begin if we wait till these have an end. Every man, whether rich or poor, is concerned in this subject, and he who has little is as much bound to give something out of that little, as he who has more is obliged to give more. When the poor widow threw her one mite into the treasury she exercised a nobler charity than all the rich had done. The smallest gift may be the greatest bounty. Put thyself then in the room of some poor unfriended wretch, beset perhaps with a large family, broken by misfortune, and pining in poverty, while silent grief preys upon his vitals; in such a case what wouldst thou think it reasonable that thy neighbour should do? That, like the Priest and the Levite, he should look on with an eye of indifference, and pass by on the other side; or like the good Samaritan, should pour balm into thy wounded mind? Be thyself the judge! and whatsoever thou thinkest it reasonable that thy neighbour should do unto thee, "go thou, and do likewise."

Throughout the whole of this discourse I have considered brotherly kindness and charity in the most enlarged sense of the terms, without regard to the particular modes in which they display themselves in life. It is certain that the objects of beneficence are diversified in their nature and degrees of importance. I have no hesitation in assigning the primary place in the scale to that active charity which has for its object the relief of moral and spiritual distresses, and which aims to accomplish its object by enlarging the means of religious instruction for the poor, by disseminating the word of life, and by affording the means  
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