

to every one that which is his due. Let us fairly apply the principle. God is the giver of all things we possess. Has He not then a just right to assert his own claims first, and to have those claims satisfied—and these claims are the first fruits of all thine increase. Let us then ask ourselves whether we have complied with these claims—whether we have consecrated the *first fruits* of all our gains to Him to whom they are undoubtedly due—whether we have, during our whole lives, or any portion of them, examined our increase, and given a just portion to God. If we have not, let us not talk of our regard for justice—the word may issue from our lips—but our consciences, if we let them freely speak, will tell us that we are ungrateful as well as unjust.

To God himself, who is above all want and independent of every thing, it is impossible that we can make any adequate return for his marvellous loving kindness toward us—He is beyond the reach of our goodness by the all sufficiency of His nature. He is therefore pleased to put our Brethren in his place, because our benevolence can extend to them—to make them his *proxies* for receiving our duty to him in this respect; and to consider any service rendered to them, as done to himself “My goodness extendeth not to thee (said the Royal Psalmist) but to the saints that are in the earth”—“Forasmuch as thou hast done it to the least of one of these little ones (said our Saviour) thou hast also done it to me.”

There can be no object more worthy of our benevolence or more touchingly interesting to the human heart than an Orphan Asylum. Here helpless innocent indigence snatched from all the misery and loneliness and helplessness of parentless infancy, from the wretchedness of beggary and, it may be presumed, from the consequent vicious courses into which unprotected childhood is so apt to be seduced, and placed here under the immediate care of the best substitute for a father and a mother that the watchful superintendence of kind hearted ladies, themselves mothers or sisters, can procure, warmed, clothed, fed, educated and fitted for future usefulness in this world, and trained for future happiness in God's eternal kingdom. Here is every thing to awaken, in our hearts, the purest feelings of satisfaction, arising from this beautiful view of distress in its most affecting form relieved, misery of the worst description averted, and the most forlorn despair succeeded by comfortable repose and joyful hope. It is a spectacle which it is impossible for any one of the least sensibility to contemplate without emotions of tenderness and delight, and which we may venture to say our Lord himself would have looked upon with complacency.

Let, then, this little nursery of all that is most calculated to excite in our minds the purest and most pleasurable feelings of benevolence, of pity and compassion, of joy and hope, continue to hold its strong claim upon our support. This little foundation of one of the best schemes that human compassion has yet invented for alleviating the deepest distress, while it tends to improve the moral and religious condition of the poor, depends chiefly for its support on the voluntary contributions of the public. You, who are assembled here, are a portion, and it may be presumed, from the fact of your attendance here, not the least interested portion of that public. You, I am sure, will not only cheerfully give “of the first fruits of your increase,” will not relax your influence with others, but will continue your exertions with renewed energy, encouraged and cheered by the contemplation of that success, which has hitherto crowned the efforts of those who have been engaged in this great and valuable labor of love.

The Treasurer's Accounts for the past year were then submitted, audited, and ordered to be published.

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