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Pietas Hallensis: Being an Historical Narration Of the wonderful FOOT-STEPS OF Divine Providence In Erecting, Carrying on, and Building the ...

Francke, August Hermann

London, 1705

CHAP V. Of the Advantages which may be Expected from such Endeavours.

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CHAPTER V

Of the Advantages which may be Expected from such Endeavours.

Spiritual Advantages.

Chiefly intended.

AS for the Spiritual benefits which may be expected to accrue from such endeavours, and which we are chiefly to regard, they may easily be guessed at; considering the main scope of the whole Undertaking; which is nothing else but the Salvation of Souls and their Conversion to life everlasting. Now as the Soul is the principal part of a Man, and to be manag'd with much greater care than the Body; so the design of the Undertaking was never to lay up Provision for the Body; but this was only used as the means to make a nearer step towards the Reformation of the Soul.

If any Body put another Construction on it, and being prejudiced with many groundless suspicions, question the sincerity of our pretensions to that great end, he is desir'd to have patience till the day comes wherein the Lord will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: And so to leave the Sentence to God, who alone is able to search the most secret recesses of the heart, reserving this as a Prerogative most peculiar to himself.

II.

In the mean time I doubt not but Persons of candour and unbiass'd judgment, may without much difficulty penetrate into the bottom of this Affair, by taking an impartial Survey of the whole Method, whereby the Work is carried on. Which may be known.

The End we aim at, and the *Means* we make use of, for obtaining the same, are all of a piece. Whatever is applied to this purpose, tends directly to our great End without the least digression from it. The means we use are of that Nature, that no body can find fault with 'em under any pretence whatsoever. The *Word of God* is instilled into the Children from their Youth up, and none dares charge us, no not with the least insinuation, that these heavenly Oracles are sophisticated either by Humane Traditions, or other erroneous mixtures. Unfeigned *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ, is laid for a Foundation, and a real sense of *Godliness* attended with a conscientious behaviour, are the most material points, to the obtaining whereof our earnest Endeavours are constantly directed. By taking an impartial survey both of The End and Means.

As near as is possible, such men are chosen to manage the Work of Inspection and Education, as we can safely rely upon for their Candor and Integrity (as well as ability) on that behalf; expecting that they will render themselves worthy Examples both by their Words and their Actions. And if it happens that we unexpectedly mistake in our Election, the Person convicted

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ed of any misdeameanour, is oblig'd to make room for one that is better qualified.

We prevent also, as much as in us lies, the spreading of infectious Examples amongst the Children, lest they be perverted from the right way. And we take it very kindly, when any body assists us with good advice, how to lay a deeper Foundation of the Principles of true Piety, and of training up Children to them. Now such and the like things are known so well, that the most malicious cannot deny it to be so.

III.

Beggars instructed in Religion.

Two Hours are set a part every Day, wherein all manner of Poor, Blind, Lame, and impotent Persons, both such as live amongst us, and such as come from abroad; as likewise Exiles, and such as have lost their Goods by Fire; and in a word, all sorts of distressed People, are carefully Instructed in the Principles of Religion, Admonish'd, Comforted, and at length supplied with some Bodily Relief. And this I think every one will allow to be a Method useful for the Publick good.

IV.

Poor Orphans Educated.

Many poor Orphans, for whose Education no body was in the least concerned, and who otherwise of necessity had been drawn away into numberless disorders and most hainous Sins, have been withheld from the dangerous courses which a Beggar's Life might have expos'd 'em to; and put under good Discipline, and Instructed in the Word of God. Whereby in time they may become good Christians; and profitable Subjects, which without

without question, must turn to the general good of the Kingdom.

VI. Many Boys of good natural Parts and Endowments, by reason of which they might be made fit for great Undertakings, lying hitherto Buried under the Rubbish of Ignorance, for want of Education, because of their Parents Poverty, or otherways, and whose pregnant Genius would enable them to become great Instruments of mischief to their Country; Are now found out, and Educated for the common benefit, to which they may sometime prove useful, by promoting the Good and Advantage, whether of Church or State; which is a thing that deserves the Applause of every one.

Natural parts
cultivated.

VII. More Free-Schools have been set up by occasion of such Endeavours, whereby Parents reduc'd to want, and unable to put their Children to School, or provide them with necessary Books, have an opportunity of sending 'em where they may be taught gratis; by means whereof many a Youth, who would otherwise abandon himself to the government of sensual and brutish Lusts, is as it were pluck'd out of the Jaws of Satan, and instructed in the Principles of Religion, and other useful learning; so that he himself reapeth the benefit of the School where he is bred, and the Commonwealth of a well qualified Member.

Children
taught gratis.

VIII. And what else may such Foundations be more properly accounted, than Seminaries

The Advan-
tage of such
Free-Schools.

set up for the general good of the Country? Here a Foundation is lay'd for training up good Workmen in all Trades, good School-Masters, nay good Preachers and Counsellors; who of course hereafter will think themselves the more oblig'd to serve every one, because they have both an experimental knowledge of God's Providence from their Youth up, and the benefit of a sound and solid Education. And this may put Sovereign Magistrates in good hopes, that from such and the like endeavours, may proceed the best and most faithful Subjects fitted for their service, who also may prove instrumental in due time to retrieve others from their vicious course of Life.

VIII.

A means to rid
the Country of
vicious People.

By such Undertakings therefore the Country will be clear'd by degrees of Stubborn Beggars, Thieves, Murderers, High-way Men, Foot-Pads, and the whole pack of loose and debauch'd People, who (as we may find if we search into the true Reasons of such overflowing Wickedness) commonly let loose the Reins to Disorder and Impiety, because they never imbibed so much as the least tincture of a good Education. Now an Undertaking of this kind, may prove a real Foundation of putting some stop to the fierce torrent of such headstrong Vices, and so conduce both to the Spiritual and Temporal good of the whole Country.

IX.

And the Foundation of a
Reformation.

Further, whereas by such charitable Endeavours for the solid Education of Youth, not only a World of such and the like mischiefs

chiefs is prevented, and a Foundation lay'd, whereon a new structure of a Reform'd Life may be rais'd up; but also by such visible Instances of Alms well-bestow'd, many may be encourag'd the more willingly to contribute their charitable assistance towards the support of so necessary a Work, who perhaps could not be otherwise induc'd thereto by the most perswasive Rhetorick, without such real demonstrations of the benefit propos'd; 'tis manifest that the management of such an Affair as this may prove no small help to Magistrates, for the better regulation of such attempts, whenever they may think fit to engage themselves therein. As for the People, they will by such charitable Foundations come to be melted down more and more into a gentle and Charitable temper of Mind: And have the untractableness and stubbornness of their natural disposition mollified by mutual acts of Charity; which will take off much trouble from the Magistrate, by preventing these disorders, which sometimes cannot be suppressed without great care and application.

X.

'Tis moreover a means to wear off, at least in some measure, that *Stain* which the Christian Religion hath contracted in these our unhappy days; viz. That there is such a crowd of poor helpless People, in the midst of these who stile themselves *Christians*; whereas the Lord requires of His People, that there should be no Poor amongst em. Hence it is no small Honour to a City or Country

Country if the Poor be regularly order'd and maintain'd.

XI.

An occasion of
many Prayers
to God for the
Nation &c.

The Prayers of Poor Fatherless Children, and of all such as enjoy the benefit of Hospitals, are the strongest Wall and Fortrefs, to defend a City and Land from the Invasions of any Adversary; as on the contrary, the Tears or Sighs of poor distress'd People, who commonly express their Grievances in that manner, when they lye neglected under extream necessity, draw down the dreadful displeasure of Almighty God, against that unhappy Nation wherein such cruelty is practis'd.

XII.

Breeds useful
Ministers and
School-Masters

A great many Students, partly by being kept under a strict Discipline themselves, partly by being every Day employ'd in teaching the Children, are prepar'd for a skilful Management of Schools up and down in the Country: And having been us'd to a good and exact Method, they may prove instrumental to effect in some measure the Reformation of Schools, which is so necessary at this time; especially if they should happen to get into Parsonages, or Parochial Cures, and so come to be intrusted with the particular Inspection of Schools.

XIII.

Makes the U-
niversity Flour-
ish.

As the whole University here, has been set up for the real good of our Church and State, so this general good is so far advanc'd by means of this Undertaking, as the number of Students in the University has been not a little augmented thereby. Now
the

The number of Students freely maintain'd in the Hospital amounts to Fifty, Sixty, Seventy, nay, sometimes Eighty altogether at one time; not to mention those who in expectation of such a benefit come hither, which must needs make a considerable addition to the number of the Students in Divinity.

XIV.

What Spiritual benefits the City of *Hall* in particular, and *Glantha* in the Suburbs, have reapt from this Foundation, is sufficiently known, and no body can deny, unless those whose judgments are darken'd and corrupted by bitter Envy, or rank Atheism; so as to render them stupidly insensible of a Work, whereby not only many Fatherless Children are brought up to the glory of God, but also a way found out whereby poor People, both Old and Young, in the City and Suburbs, may arrive to a competent knowledge of Christian Principles, not only by Publick, but Private Instructions; there being several Schools erected for this Purpose.

The City benefited.

In such parts of the Parish as are furthest off from the common Schools, because it would be difficult for Children to go every day so far, particular Schools have been set up, nearer their respective habitations; and all pretences cut off, which Parents might alledge to excuse their backwardness in sending their Children to School. If they are unable to pay for schooling, they may send 'em to a Free-school, where any Child is provided with Books, Paper, and other ne-

cessaries. Which is another benefit redounding to the City and Country by these endeavours.

XV.

Nobody has reason to think, that these Advantages which have been hinted at, are only the evaporations of an Idle Brain, without any real ground of hope to enjoy 'em in time to come. For according to the common sense of Mankind, one may easily judge, that as a Tree but newly planted cannot bring forth a full crop of Fruit in its first Years; so these endeavours (which were begun but about six years ago) cannot arrive to any considerable degree of perfection, nor produce those happy effects in so small a space of time, which may Hereafter be expected. Yet in the mean while I assure the Reader, that the Lord hath given us already so many Proofs of his Blessing, that we have no reason, when we cast an eye upon those first Fruits, to hope less hence than the aforementioned Advantages and benefits. Not to mention now, that one may confidently foretel the event of such things, if the *Means* design'd for obtaining the *End* be rightly applied. What else could inspire us with courage to attempt any good thing? But while I thus speak, I do not deny that humane infirmities, and even scandalous abuses, may too frequently insinuate themselves into the best contriv'd projects. Many a Plant perhaps may be nipp'd in the bud.

XVI

XVI.

Besides these Spiritual Advantages re-
 dounding to the Publick, and which we have reason to hope for, we may also easily discover several outward or accidental benefits, likely to be the result of such an Undertaking. Thus many a poor workman has got his living whilst the House was a Building. Many a poor Student has been supplied with some relief: And who can deny, that it must needs tend to the good of a place, where all the Domesticks, Servants, and Apprentices, are used to a godly and orderly way of living, as they are in the Hospital; there being every where so great a want of pious and faithful Servants. Many a beggarly Child is now Educated in such a way, that he hereafter may get his own livelihood, and so prove serviceable to others, to whom he would have been a burden, if he had without restraint pursued the course he was engaged in. Many a poor Widow being reduc'd to the utmost Straits, and not knowing where to get any relief for her Children, is readily supplied, and the Children brought up with greater Care, than perhaps their own Fathers would ever have done.

XVII.

And in fine every one, I think will confess that a Town or Country is so much the more abundantly bless'd with Temporal advantages, by how much the more effectual care is taken for the maintenance of the Poor; Experience it self bearing witness, that these Governments are the most flourishing, which

Other Advan-
 tages of these
 Schools.

Which Coun-
 try is like to
 be the most
 Flourishing.

which concern themselves most to provide well for the Poor.

CONCLUSION.

Conclusion.

This, Beloved Reader, is the account of the Hospital and other Charity-Schools, which I would at present sincerely offer to your consideration, in order to promote the Honour, Praise, and Glory of God the giver of all good, and to encourage my Fellow-Creatures in Faith and Charity. I have studied Brevity as much as I could, and only set down such things, as I thought might prove the most serviceable for the edification of the Reader. I mean, that he might magnify the Lord, and that every lover of truth might be rightly inform'd of what has been hitherto done, in this Affair.

In the Account it self, I have to the best of my knowledge neither wrong'd nor flatter'd any person whatsoever, though I had a fair opportunity to have done both. Hence I may with good reason require every Reader, to give an unreserv'd credit to what has been deliver'd here. I am in good hopes, that many a Person, who thinks it worth while to peruse these Sheets, will, for the future at least restrain himself from all rash Censures, and Repent if he has in any respect judg'd before the time. Likewise, that many, by reading these endearing Proofs of the infinite Love and Goodness of our great God, will find no small Ease and Comfort in the midst of their dismal Circumstances, exciting 'em to run with the greater courage the race that is set before 'em. If that be in any degree the result of this Account,

I shall be very well satisfied with such a Blessing.

But if it should happen, that some in reading over these Papers, find themselves prompted cheerfully to second our endeavours with some actual contribution, and lay out some of the generous efforts of their charitable inclinations, towards the Education of poor Children; I here assure the Reader, that it is rather an effect *accidentally* resulting from hence, than a thing directly propos'd to myself in the publication of this Narrative.

I would have no Person upon the face of the Earth (let him be never so great, eminent, wealthy, pious or well-inclin'd) think that I put my trust in him. The Lord, by numberless proofs of his Veracity, hath most clearly demonstrated, that this Honour is due to him alone; and that I am in gratitude bound to depend on him with intire Confidence, (and O that He by His Spirit might more and more enable me to do this!) and keep from Idols. In the midst of the greatest Trials he hath impressed a lively sense of that word upon my Mind: *Rectius ad Patrem quam ad Fratres.* 'Tis better having recourse in time of Tribulation, to the Father, than to the Brethren. For all they that look unto him are lightned, and their Faces are not ashamed *Psal. 34. v. 5* And the Lord hath taught me also by happy experience, the Truth of what follows in the next verse: *This Poor Man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* I hope that such as Fear God, will not brand me with Ingratitude for the plainness

ness of my speech, nor be offended with me that I do not rely upon them, but upon God. The acts of Charity by any one perform'd upon the Lord's Work, are far nobler and endearing, if they be done in singleness of mind, and offer'd up with a sincere regard to the Honour of God, and the benefit of our Fellow-Creatures. 'Tis the character of true Love, not in the least to be puffed up in regard of its charitable Deeds, but to let 'em sink into oblivion, like a Sacrifice wholly consum'd by the Fire of the Altar; confiding entirely in Christ Jesus, and seeking after nothing, but to increase from the fulness of Christ, the inward power and vigor of the Spiritual Life, lying under a deep sense of its own unworthiness, that so it may unite it self nearer and nearer to him who is the Giver of all good Gifts.

In short, if I should go about to enumerate all the happy effects, which both at home and abroad have resulted from the example of our endeavours in this Affair, they would require a particular Treatise by themselves. But at present, I think I have sufficient reason to forbear to insist any further upon that subject. In the meantime, the Lord hath fully assur'd me, that the world will never be able to suppress 'em. The Lord I am sure will water this his Lilly, that it may still more and more diffuse the fragrancy of its Smell. For the Lord Liveth, and prais'd be God who is my hiding place: and let the God of my salvation be exalted *Hallelujah!*