No. 159.

"Who is my neighbour?"
Luke x. 29. — "But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour?"

This question, as it goes to the foundation of charity, is one in which we are all deeply concerned; and the beautiful answer given by our Saviour, at once an idea of the spirit of the morality of Jews and the views in which the Grec. considers man, as related to his species. We are to remember that the Samaritans were despised and detested by the Jews, and this gives additional force to the picture drawn in the instructive fiction connected with our text. It is as if Jesus had said, "yes, he was the true neighbour, who showed mercy on him; your priest and Levite, though of your own nation, though invested with the character of ministers of religion, wearing the garb of sanctity, they were not neighbours, for they looked on him in misery & passed by; but the Samaritan was
much as you seem to hate him of this race, hear the neighbour, for he took compassion on the distaste of strangers, with the heavenly kindness of one, who loves to do good, provided for his comfort and rest.

Thus we are taught by our Saviour, that everyone she needs our good offices, to whom we can do good, is our neighbour in the true sense, no matter whether he be Jew or Samaritan, heathen or sinner, high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, if he be in distress, if we can consistently with our clothes afford him relief, then we are placed in the situation of a neighbour to him. Thus the yes, builds our social duty on the broad foundation of universal benevolence. Man is the friend and brother of man. Wherever you meet a being, you meet one, who equally with yourself came from the hands of God as a child in his great family. She, like you, is sometimes happy, sometimes miserable, she needs assistance, sympathy, comfort. She is bound to others by this that he cannot, if he would, break, because, to whom others are bound by the same indissoluble connexion. The mutual
actual reaction of the members of society upon one another is the great law of society established by God Himself. We are made for each other, and as we will, we can never entirely shake off the relation in which the All has placed us. We may, if we please, convert it into a sense of bitterness and resentment, but we cannot escape from it. Now it is this necessary connexion, with the instructions of our Saviour, would direct us to make a source of happiness, by making it the bond of good offices and kind affections. These instructions set before us a noble picture of our common duties, our common interests, our common hopes. They teach us, that God has not sent us into the world, each one to walk in a line by separate paths, without casting a glance upon those, who are travelling to the same place, that we are not born for ourselves alone, that life is not designed to be a struggle of the selfishness of one against the selfishness of another, a continued contest for what we deem private good,—a perpetual conflict of avarice or ambition, in which the
against the most of goods it best is the virtues. It is for some better purpose that we have. In this real I am here standing at the entrance to exist in thousand forms of good and vice before us: we enjoy innumerable blessings, but are objects likewise to various calamities: this is a metley of chequered scene as a scene of trial most necessarily be. The principle of benevolence inculated in the instructions of X, is exactly the principle adapted to the wants of beings in such a condition. It is this, wh will swell the good, diminish the evils of life, wh prompts man to do what he may to help the happiness of ten the misery of others, wh prompts others to do the same for him, in short, it is that wh were it obs. ied of welcome among mankind, would make us all “good Samaritans”. Thus, the principle brought to view in the text or its connexion, is that its benevolence is unlimited as to its objects, that it embraces the race of man, of may find its exercise everywhere. But in this, as in all general propositions in morals, there is danger, lest we lose ourselves in vague enunci.
without a meaning. Universal philanthropy is a fume that has had the fate to be much abused. It has been so skewed to mean that sort of general benevolence, which is incompatible with private affection, that loves mankind at large, swallows up all love of individuals. We cannot suppose that our Saviour, by his answer to the question, "who is my neighbour," intended to inculcate that pretended universal love, which in its affected eagerness to benefit the whole loses sight of individual misery and seems the bond with which familiar friends. Such benevolence is fruitless, as it is not the benevolence of the Gospel. It has to be once a splendid, imposing appearance; it seems to be engaged in a great and mighty work; it professes to labour for the world; yet cannot stop to take notice of these calls for kind deserts, which near at hand may be met every day. It loves the whole, but loves none of the parts of which the whole is composed. Often it is the empty boast of those, who are willing to escape from the duties, yet near the appearance of benevolence; when it is not so, it is much too cold and abstract, a principle to form a standard of action for such a being as man. If we are to be moved
to valuable efforts, it must be by something brought near to us, something that we can realise, estimate, and feel. It is not by dwav ing r e a m i n e r t h e a b s t r a c t i d e a of the general good, but by actually doing good in particular instances, that the real benevolence of the go is tested. If you would excite a man to generous exertions, it would be in vain to talk to him of the beauty of universal benevolence; you must present some heinous object to his mind; you must bring before him some actual case; you must ring in his ears some real call. The affections of the heart become weak and faint, when they are obliged to wander far abroad in quest of what is called universal good, in the same way, as the waters of a stream, which, when confined within their proper channel, are deep and powerful, become shallow and weak when spread over a large surface. The law, which seems the All has established for the operation of our benevolent feelings, is that they shall begin in a small circle and spread to a larger one. They must be planted and rooted at home on the soil wherein live before they can extend their branches far abroad. The example of our Saviour shows us that his benevolence was of
that active kind, where it is in the particular cases brought before it. It is emphatically expressed, he went about doing good," doing good to individuals, relieving misery, strengthening weakness, conserving persons in private circles, as well as communicating the divine instructions, as mere the enlightener of men themselves. And so benevolence with us must be what it was with our Master: it must consist mainly in doing good in particular cases: for if before we act, we must have some magnificent plan of charity proposed to us, the result will probably be that we shall never act at all, at least to any purpose. It is by doing good in the circle we are called to move in, by doing good among our neighbors, in our town, or through the whole range of our connections, that we must, principally exercise and strengthen our benevolence. This is a rule of action that comes home to every man's bosom, of which neither the learned nor the unlearned can mistake the application. It will preserve us from every act of injustice or insolvency, give life or energy to the domestic affections, strengthen the sentiments of friendship and gratitude, and teach us to identify our feelings.
with wretchedness in all its forms. When we look into misery in its detail, we can adjust the means to the end, the relief to the necessity, but it is impossible to do so, if we embrace a sphere of action too vast for our grasp, too immense for our discernment. Do not imagine, I would censure or detract from the merit of wide spread charge benevolence. The world at the present day is full of splendid great schemes of charity of religious exaction, some of which are vain and foolish, some useful and commendable; those of them, all profess a moral and practicable object and use the best means for attaining their purpose, deserve the encouragement of storage, of such as heaven has enabled to deal in large benefactions. But with regard to the great mass from hand, the sphere of benevolence must be drawn within narrow limits; of all in that sphere, their exaction is as intense as well directed, as it is in their power to make it, they discharge their duty, if it is in their power to call upon them to give their money or services from indefinite schemes. Bring the force of your charity to bear well and judiciously in a small space, if you will do more good than in any other way. It is evident that
if this rule were practiced upon by the whole world, we should have no reason to complain of the want of an efficacious charity.

We come, therefore, to the conclusion, that when our Saviour gave to the term neighbour or large and liberal a meaning, he did not intend to inculcate, as has been done in later ages, that pretended benevolence, which loses itself in shades of indefinite views, and which would make us ashamed of those associations of feeling that prompt us to exertion in our little department of society. No, the benevolence of the Saviour is universal, it is true; but not universal in any such sense, as to destroy the obligation to exertion in small circles or particular cases. It is true, it teaches us that the man, who is compassionate, who is active in mercy, who regards no distinctions of rank, or country, or opinion, so he may best promote the interests of true humanity, is the real neighbour. If this he gave the word an enlarged and noble meaning, which it never had before; but this is a different thing from teaching us, that the truly benevolent man is he, who the only, who cannot stoop to such partial and trifling things.
as small acts of beneficence, but aspires after some imaginary good to the whole world. No doubt, and by selecting a Samaritan to represent the true neighbour, intended to meet the prejudices of the few, 
that notwithstanding their animosity towards that nation, the spirit of benevolence was not to be 
lettered or cramped within the bounds, nor their prej-
dudices, the offspring of a poor and guilty jealousy might 
be prescribe, but that it was free as air, it would find 
its objects of its exercise wherever it roamed. This is 
the sense, in which benevolence is universal; it is universal, because it overlocks all the distinctions, 
its passions pride or rivalship would set up, because it does not confine its exertions to these, who are of 
its own sect, of its own party, its own opinion; because it regards no man as an enemy, in any such sense, 
as to shut him out from a right to kindness, compa-
passion, - because whatever be the sphere, in which God 
appoints it to move, in that sphere it "goes about 
doing good." - It is the principle in general, the dispo-
sion to benevolence at all times and places, that our
I wish I to enforce by holding up to our view the beautiful picture of the conduct of the good Samaritan.

I should not have you suppose, by the remarks I have made, that I would confine benevolence within small exclusive limits, or that the exertions of private charity are in any way inconsistent with that benevolence which reaches to the whole family of man. On the contrary, the exercises of good and kind dispositions in particular cases are the only sure means of leading the heart to universal philanthropy. From the fireside, benevolence radiates to our country, to mankind. It has been well observed, that "to be attached to the subdivision, to love the little planet we belong to in society, is the first link in the series, by which afterwards ascend to a love of mankind." There are some whose benevolence is exclusive of even selfishness, who think they have discharged the duties of their charity when they have been kind to their family circle, their relatives, dependants. This narrow confined habit of feeling, acting, is as much an error, as that
of these, who waste their zeal in edifying unwieldy plans of goodness. But it seems to me, the spirit of the age is, to be ashamed of humble detached lotments in the vineyard of human usefulness, to reach forth after great effects, as if it cannot attain there, to do nothing. Much wealth of labour have been wasted in enterprises, which are little else, but sounding names, as men have gone forth officiously, as it were, to assist heaven in taking care of the world. Doubtless many of these engaged in these plans are very sincere of honest men; they mean to effect much, I think they actually do effect much. But it is very easy to flatter ourselves we are doing good, when we are absurdly employed, as if we were beating the air. There is something very alluring, apparently heroic, something that flatters human pride, in having a share in such great and far reaching operations; something that is apt to make us look down with contempt on that Samaritan benevolence, this humble enough to be industrious, vigorous, discreet, in a small sphere of charity. But after all this modest spirit of beneficence is the most easy way of preparing the heart for this
approbation. She is loved dwelleth in love.

With regard to the ways in which we may manifest benevolence, shifting the character of the benefaction, they are very various; it must be left to the judgment of each one to select for himself. Giving money is certainly not the only; perhaps, not the best way of doing charity, because it may encourage indolence on the part of the needy, and conferring the temporary means of indulgence excite desires, which cannot be gratified, if they could, would be no advantage to the individual. Yet money may put in motion other streams of charity, that may be useful. Still there are modes of practising benevolence, which require no wealth, nor are as much in the power of the poor, as of the rich. It is in the power of everyone, in some measure, to administer consolation to the afflicted by kind attention and generous sympathy. Among the various wise purposes, no affliction is designed to answer, one is the kind we together with strangers, teach us to love one another, to make us feel our mutual dependence on weakness, our need of each other's aid, our frailty.

Another important way of imitating the benevolent
spirit of the good Samaritan may be found in performing these offices of kindness. It affects the moral welfare of happiness of men, & yet these nothing is necessary but a true temper of a true heart. There sick minds, as well as sick bodies: the soul may be the evidence of diseased passions & affections, as well as the animal frame be full of maladies; & he, who by good example, good advice, a kind, discreet management, does something toward healing these moral diseases, is the true neighbor in the Geo. sense. Peace making is likewise a work of benevolence; if he is indeed a good Samaritan, who pours oil or wine into the heart wounded by passions or strife, who seeks to quell those angry disputes & furious contests, who leave the mind diseased, cleansed, & unfit, for any pure honorable duty, who waste & embitter the few hours which given us on earth for improvement of peaceful preparation for eternity. Again, benevolence is displayed in treating the characters of others with kindness, in putting to shame the greedy appetite for scandal, alike in truth & falsehood, in vindicating innocence in discouraging the deadly spirits of slander, in step-
flying the idle tale, that circulates, of a ready
chief, a gratifies spite, as it goes. In short, it must
be rejoin to attempt to enumerate the ways in
which the character of the good Samaritan may be
exemplified. Every beneficent man will find them
in abundance around him.

You have doubtless, my friend, anticipated the ap-
plishment of my remarks to the objects of the society,
this afternoon, requests your attention.

Among the trials of life, few come to us with a
more desolating power, than sickness, in its cent-
tless forms or from its thousand sources. Of these, as
nothing else, to admonish us, how entirely helpless
and dependent we are, this one would I think, would
teach us the solemn lesson not to be forgotten. The
man, who today walks the round of his duty or
work, busy, emulous, striving, warned by the con-
tests of eager in the competitors of the world, with
the light heart of from step of health, tomorrow
may be laid on the bed of pain, languishing, in
helpless imbecility, in the struggle of agony, or in
the insensibility of a shattered mind. Sickness is a
stem moralist, that teaches us the humbling lesson.

- What we may become inaday, their weak at ac-
moving may be his hold on life, other in the morning
feels the keenest sense of existence. May we,
in these frustrating calamities it once by becomes us to
really sound each other with support, aid, and comfort.

It gives me great pleasure to believe, that this society
has been it is a vast usefulness, benevolent, and judicious
friend to the sick & distressed; that it has softened
pain, alleviated anguish, & supplied the needy; that
by collecting together into a common stock small con-
tributions from each, it has done more good, than
could have been done, had the same charity been
diffused in scattered & separate spectres. Any indi-
cation of a desire to make benevolence felt in its op-
ations must be grateful to every friend of humanity;
while the means are judiciously applied to pro-
 mote be good & end, let us cement in the prayer that
Heaven may bless them. And we should never forget,
that this kind disposition has so happy effects on
those who communicate assistance, as on those
who receive it. It would be for our own interest to
be benevolent, even if we did no good to others. Nothing so softens the heart, so bends the will, so purifies the character; nothing so powerfully tends to check the thoughtless and feeling spirit so often produced by the artificial distinctions of life, to smooth down asperities, to bring us all to the common ground of our common nature. Above all, it is the spirit of heaven; it is the spirit which makes the happiness of heaven. Yes, I believe met a harp rings to the praise of God on high, that is not inspired by the mere writing without this, the united streams of men and angels would be but as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals.

Sept. 1822

At home, Sept. 15th, 1822, afternoon: for the Female Society.