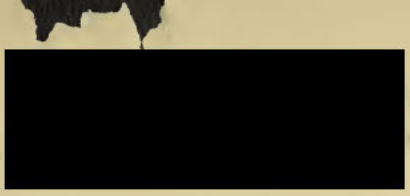

EFFICIENT PHILANTHROPY

Extracts from an Address by

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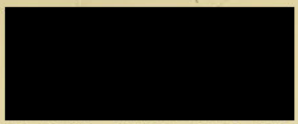

EFFICIENT PHILANTHROPY

By George Hodges, D. D.

Two persons are involved in every philanthropic transaction: one the giver, the other the receiver. It follows that there are two kinds of philanthropy according as the emphasis is put upon one or the other of these two. When the main thought is for the giver, it is subjective philanthropy. When the main thought rests upon the receiver, it is objective philanthropy.

SUBJECTIVE PHILANTHROPY.

The motto of subjective philanthropy is, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." The only requirement is to be cheerful when we give. If we are, we will have an immediate reward: the Lord will love us. We can never get along without the subjective element; we can never put that splendid saying out of mind. It is subjective philanthropy which is glorified in Lowell's poem of Sir Launfal. This gallant knight starts out from his castle seeking the Holy Grail, and as he rides out of the gate, he sees a beggar sitting by the roadside and flings him a piece of gold; he rides on, and after many years he comes back from a fruitless quest, a broken man, and there, in the same place by the same roadside, sits the same beggar. This time Sir Launfal, who has no piece of gold to fling, whose only possession is a crust, sits down beside this poor man, beggar with beggar, and shares his crust with him. Then there is a shining vision and Sir Launfal is blessed. That is the point of the story, that the giver is blessed.

Subjective philanthropy is also glorified in the miracle of St. Martin. St. Martin is riding along a country road in France, and he sees a beggar without a coat, who, kneeling by the wayside, holds out his hand for alms. Martin's heart is touched. He takes off his own handsome cloak, severs it with his sword and gives half to the beggar. Then in a shining vision St. Martin beholds the Master of the Soul in paradise wearing half of his cloak, and St. Martin is blessed. Again, the point of the story is that the giver is blessed.

OBJECTIVE PHILANTHROPY.

But the new philanthropy in the hearts of the people who began this movement was equally interested in the receiver of the gift.

It began to ask what became of this gift when it left the good hand of the giver. It insisted that the gift should be measured not only by the love that dictated it, but by the actual amount of good that it did; that it should be judged by its practical efficiency.

The motto of objective philanthropy is, "He took him by the hand and lifted him up." The man had been down, but when the Lord passed by and had done His deed of benefaction, that man was on his feet.

The secretary of an Associated Charities once told of a needy family that had been visited by thirty-six different persons, not one of whom knew of the help being given by the others. If these thirty-six people joining together had worked in concert, planning how to rescue this family and putting all their small means together, they would have rescued the family. But when all these thirty-six were through, the family was left in the same condition.

So objective philanthropy adds another canto to the story of Sir Launfal. Sir Launfal's soul is filled with benediction and he makes up his mind that he will get that blessing every day he lives. So he gives out word that anybody who comes to his castle gate shall receive not a crust but a loaf of bread and something to drink along with it. The next day two come and the next day ten or fifteen, until by and by every honest farmer in the countryside has found out that he does not need to work; all he has to do is to go to Sir Launfal's gate and be fed. Sir Launfal's soul is abundantly blessed, but all the honest farmers have turned beggars and the countryside is cursed.

And objective philanthropy adds another chapter to the story of St. Martin. St. Martin rides out the next morning and presently he meets another beggar who has no coat. Remembering the beautiful vision, St. Martin takes off the half of the coat that he has left and bestows it upon this beggar and rides on. But this man, instead of being the disguised Christ, is a disguised rascal who has deserted his wife and six children, and who has no coat because he sold the one he had for drink. He proceeds to take St. Martin's half-of-a-coat and pawn that for more drink, so that St. Martin as a result has done more harm than good.

Now, what objective philanthropy insists on is that the deed shall be estimated by its effects, that the benefaction shall be judged according to the actual benefit which it confers. There is not any true service—no matter how much love there may be in it—there is not any true service unless it serves. That is objective philanthropy; that is efficient philanthropy. The association in this country which stands conspicuously for that sort of benefaction is the Associated Charities.

THE DISTINCTIVE FUNCTION OF THE ASSOCIATED CHARITIES.

The distinctive function of the Associated Charities is to give advice. That may seem a cheap thing to give, but when you come to think about it, good advice is not so cheap after all. The Associated Charities came upon the scene some thirty-five years ago and found that there was need of specialization in charity as well as in other things. The relief side of philanthropy seemed to be fairly well attended to. It was not very efficiently done, though it was very generously done. The situation was similar to that in the old days when there were no professional fire companies, but every gentleman had a leather bucket hanging in his hall at home, with his name elaborately emblazoned upon it. When the fire bells rang, he ran home, got his bucket, and with all the other neighbors went to the fire. They had a beautiful time, and gradually the fire went out. But now there is a system; there is a company of men who are trained to put out fires.

The people who organized the Associated Charities felt that there ought to be a company trained for some kind of service in philanthropy. They felt that the great thing was not so much to give material relief as to give advice. They gave relief still, but instead of accumulating a great store of material that they could hand out to those that were needy, they took the position of showing the needy where to go; thus bringing about a connection between the persons whose needs were unknown on the one hand and the place where those needs could be supplied on the other hand. Under the conditions of disorder and confusion then existing, it was perfectly natural that persons with modest spirits and a great shrinking from asking for anything would be overlooked; that Aquila and Priscilla, excellent and godly persons in poverty, should be anhungered, while Ananias and Sapphira should be abundantly supplied. And accordingly they felt that some system was needed in ministering to the poor, and they decided that the best thing they could offer was skilled advice.

THE VALUE OF TRAINED SERVICE.

When we say that the distinctive function of the Associated Charities is to give advice, we clear away, I think, a very general misunderstanding. When people look at the reports of the Associated Charities, they see that a considerable amount of money is expended every year for office expenses and salaries, and that only a small amount of money goes for relief. Then they say, "Well, I don't propose to give my money to any such organization as that. I am not going to give my money to support people at the office of the

Associated Charities. What I want is to help the poor." But the truth is that judicious and timely advice is the most helpful thing you can give, and that the art of helping is intimately akin to the art of healing.

The difference between the Associated Charities and the Relief Association is like that between the doctor's office and the drug store. You do not expect to carry away from the doctor's office something in a basket or in a brown paper parcel: you expect to get counsel and advice, and perhaps a prescription that you may take to the drug store. But the experienced doctor in making that prescription takes pains to prescribe as few drugs as he can. He is afraid of getting people into the drug habit. And the wise philanthropist is just as afraid of getting people into the alms habit, which is closely akin to the morphine habit in that it deprives people of self-respect.

Now, in order to give advice, we must have persons who are competent to give that advice, and we must ask two things of them—training and time. We ask them to undergo an extensive preparation in order that they may be of service to us, may give us advice that is worth something. And then we ask them to give all their time and their work to the community. That is the reason for the salaries. If you want to, you can get any amount of free advice, such as it is. If you are sick, any kind-hearted old woman will come in and look after you in that fashion. If you want to be nursed properly, you will have to get a trained nurse, and pay $21 a week for her services. You can get advice on your legal affairs from any one you please, but if you are wise you search for somebody who is trained. And the thing for which you pay the lawyer is nothing material at all. It is solely for his counsel, for showing you how to get out of hard places or how to get other people into them. I think that lawyer was quite within the limits of his proper charge who set down in his bill this, that and the other thing, and then added, "for lying awake at night thinking about your case, one hundred dollars." And the bill was paid. So when you see these figures for the office expenses of the Associated Charities, you understand that you are paying for economic physicians; you are paying for good advice; you are paying for the most expensive and at the same time the most necessary thing that any community can have.

FIRST NECESSITY, KNOWLEDGE.

In order to give economic advice, three things are necessary. The first is knowledge, the second is judgment, and the third is sympathy. First you must have knowledge, and the beginning of knowledge is the acquirement of facts. Accordingly, the physician begins his treatment of the case by asking questions so that he may know what is the matter and be able to deal not with the superficial

symptoms, but with the disease. And the social worker begins in the same way with questions to find out what is the matter. These are not the questions of a detective trying to find out who is worthy and who is unworthy. In the eyes of a charity worker, there is no unworthy person, not one, nobody who is unworthy of being helped; just as in the eyes of the physician there is no one who is unworthy of being cured.

But the question is how to deal with the case, and the only answer to that question is, by acquiring facts concerning that case. Then those facts are recorded. Some people think those records are dreadful things. They say, "If the family of a friend of mine should get their names on the charity list, they would be set down in the roll of paupers." This is no more true than that the presence of your name on some doctor's book enrolls you in his list of invalids. And these records in the office of the Associated Charities are as sacred as the records in the office of the doctor. The first thing the doctor does when he comes back from your sick chamber is to put down in a book the facts about your case, so that he may refresh his mind when he goes again. There they are in his book, and there in *his* book are the economic facts about persons who are brought to the attention of the economic doctor, for the same purpose and under the same sacred secrecy. The initial thing is to find out what the people need. Without knowing the needs of the people, one is in the same condition of hopeless confusion as the man who maintains that the light of the moon is really stronger than the light of the sun, because the moon shines in the night when it is dark and the sun shines in the day-time when it is light anyhow.

The beginning, then, of knowledge is the accumulation of facts. And next comes the arrangement of facts, for unless the facts are set down in their logical places they may not tell a true story. They may be like the placard on the breast of the lame soldier, on which was inscribed, "One leg, four wounds, five children. Total ten."

The facts, then, must be arranged so that they may be consulted; so that others who are concerned with a certain family may know what ought to be known about that family before they begin to help them. The doctors do not need to do this because when anybody is sick he is not likely to send for more than one doctor unless he is very rich. But when people are very poor, the number of the economic doctors for whom they may send knows no limit. For this reason it is desirable when a needy family comes to our attention to find out what has already been done. Accordingly the office of the Associated Charities is described as a clearing house of facts, so that whenever need in a family arises, it may be intelligently met, and so that we may avoid the ills that come when many people ignorant of each others' existence try to deal with the same case.

We also bring the facts together in order that by assembling them we may acquaint ourselves with the whole situation. No wise commander will go to war without a map; and no social worker will undertake any serious work in a community without some wide knowledge of the community. Otherwise, he is working in the dark.

You cannot carry on any large concern, even in philanthropy, without organization. And in many cities what we call the Associated Charities was begun with the name "Charity Organization Society," that it might introduce the element of order into the situation.

AFTER KNOWLEDGE, JUDGMENT.

The second need is judgment. Judgment means interpretation of the facts and knowledge of what to do with them after you have them interpreted. To some persons that knowledge, that judgment, come by intuition. They perceive by a kind of instinct how to deal with the troubles of the needy; but those persons are few. For most people, the only way to deal intelligently, and therefore efficiently, with a case of need is to go through a course of preparation whereby, in the first place, they shall gain a clear understanding of certain great, proved principles, and then a knowledge of the way in which those principles are to be brought into practice.

Great confusion is brought into the whole field of philanthropy by the alacrity with which inexperienced and incompetent persons attack the most complicated economic cases. There are in all communities very simple cases. There are persons whom you have known for many years, with all of whose circumstances you are familiar, whose children you can call by their Christian names and to whom you can minister as a friend, without doing them any very serious harm. But when you find an unknown person standing on your front steps, you have there a complicated, economic case. The only thing to do under these circumstances is to send that person where he will get competent treatment. Of course, I know that there are sentences of the Bible which seem to contradict that apparently hard-hearted proceeding: "Give, and it shall be given unto you." But we do not apply that to the cases of our children, nor to the cases of sick persons who are hungry for something they ought not to have. "I was anhungered and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink." Yes, we may be afraid of being confronted by those voices at the last great day, but there is another line of persons who may point their fingers at us, bringing more terror to our souls, and say, "I was very hungry and ye gave me meat which I ought not to have had. I was thirsty, and ye gave me money to buy drink." For you will remember in the

story of the prodigal son that the point at which the prodigal son comes to himself and returns to his father, is where no man gave unto him. If there had been some soft-hearted person with a basket of gold pieces at that moment, the prodigal son would never have gone back to his father.

Now, no matter who the man is who appears as an unknown applicant for alms at your door, he is a complicated case, and you are in the same position in relation to him that you would be if some miserable person should knock at your door and say, "I am very sorry to say that I am in great need. I am suffering from a severe case of pneumonia." You are very sorry for the poor man and you say, "My good man, come in the house;" you bring him in and make him sit down in the hall; you sit down beside him and you say, "Now tell me all about it." After he has told his story, to which you listen with a heart full of compassion, you go upstairs and bring down a little bottle of sugared pellets, and pouring eight of them into his extended palm, you say, "There, my friend, is some aconite," and then you send the man upon his way. That is inconsiderate philanthropy. You have satisfied, after a fashion, the impulses of a compassionate nature, but you haven't done a thing for the man. You have a rainbow in your soul, and he has a pain in his lungs just as he had before. What we want is considerate philanthropy, in which we shall not be looking for rainbows in our own souls so much as for practical results of a good kind in the lives of our neighbors.

CONSIDERATE PHILANTHROPY.

The thing to do is to say to this man, "My good man, you need a doctor; that is what you need. I can't do anything for you because I don't know enough, but you'll find a doctor at such and such a number. You go there and he'll give you what you need." That is all very plain. Now, there is another knock at the door and another man on the step; he tells a more familiar story, and you proceed to minister to him after either a wise or a foolish fashion. This man who stands upon your step telling a tale of poverty is a very difficult case; just as difficult economically as the man with pneumonia is difficult medically. If he were not a difficult case he would not be there. Again you must say, "My friend, I can't do anything for you because I don't know enough, but you need to go where you can get a doctor, an economic doctor, who can look up your case and give you the two things that you need: care and continued interest. Go where your case can be looked into and somebody can find out what is really the matter with you. Then when the difficulty is found, you can be followed up and dealt with until you can be made a new man and you won't have to go begging in this fashion." Now that is not impulsive philanthropy, but it is consider-

ate philanthropy. It is considerate philanthropy because you are not thinking about yourself. It takes a good deal of nerve, but that is the plain, sensible and efficient thing to do.

SYMPATHY.

The next thing needed in order to give good, economic advice, after knowledge and after judgment, is sympathy. Some people think that the last place to go for sympathy is the office of the Associated Charities. They have an idea that the office of the Associated Charities is a place for the distribution of the milk of human kindness sterilized. But whenever anyone has a just complaint of this kind to make against the Charities office, there are two things to be said. One is that objective philanthropy is a reaction from the old sentimental kind. The trouble with reactions is that they are always in danger of going too far, and you will find some people who will be conscientiously over-severe in order to avoid being over-tender-hearted. The other trouble with the Associated Charities is just the trouble with the ministry, the source of supply. People talk about the ministry and its shortcomings without remembering that the only source from which to get ministers is the ranks of the laymen. They have to come out of the community. If we could make them out of angels and archangels, that would be splendid, but we have to take plain people and make them into ministers. The same thing is true of the secretaries of the Associated Charities. They come right out of the community, which means that they are all liable to make mistakes, the same as we. When they do, let us remember the everlasting human fact that mistakes must be made, and may be made by those who have the best intentions.

THE SPIRIT OF ORGANIZED CHARITY.

Then, coming to the heart of the matter, organized charity is tender-hearted and fraternal and sympathetic and compassionate and considerate, as I said, but mainly considerate, with the consideration of the physician who is caring for the best interests of his patient. The doctor hurts because he has to. The hungry patient looks up and asks for food, and the doctor says he cannot have it because he knows he ought not to have it. The doctor has a considerate philanthropy, and that is the kind of philanthropy the Associated Charities has. We cannot expect all people to appreciate this. I wish we all did like the things that are for our good; the world would be a great deal better if we did, but we do not. And so long as this is true you are bound to find people who have been dealt with out of consideration for their best interests, and who have not appreciated it; we cannot expect them to appreciate it. Back of it all, however, is the fact that the great

principle of the Associated Charities is expressed in the motto, "Not alms, but a friend." "Not alms"—that is, not giving little doles at doors or other places, because those simple gifts are not enough to produce any real effect. If you give doles, the result is the same as if a doctor were to help his patients along so that they would all be just about so sick, and none of them would be getting well. The test of your own philanthropy is its result measured by that standard. If the people whom you are helping are just about as poor at the end of the year as they are at the beginning, then you are failing.

The purpose of true almsgiving is to follow the Great Word, "He took him by the hand and lifted him up."

The giving of alms in these small doles not only accomplishes no true effect, but also has a very bad negative effect because it takes people away from honest work and undermines their self-respect. A man in Brooklyn dropped his cap on the pavement, and before he had time to pick it up somebody dropped a dime in it. That man found that he didn't need to work; the people would pay his board and lodging. A family in Philadelphia had turkeys sent to them on Thanksgiving day, and the two able-bodied men quit working. Somebody says, "These poor little children you see shivering at the street corners—you should give them something." Yes, if you want to keep these children shivering at the corners, give them something, because their parents will find out that the colder the weather and the more they shiver, the better for the family treasury. But if, for a week, the whole population passes by and does not give the children a cent, there is an end of that kind of martyrdom on the part of those children. "Not alms, but a friend." The ideal is that every needy family shall have its own friend who has been trained to do good by experienced persons in the office of the Associated Charities.

Following out this process of giving wise advice, the Associated Charities accomplishes results; results in the large social betterment of the community. Every catastrophe like an earthquake or a fire or flood brings to the attention of us all the fact that you cannot minister to such conditions without system. That is perfectly plain, but the conditions disclosed by the catastrophe exist in city after city every day we live, and call with the same imperative demand for order, system, organization, and the application of common sense in dealing with them. That is what the Associated Charities gives to the community at large and to the needy individual. It acts as a guide to the sources of relief, of care, of protection, of employment. To the citizen who desires to use the means at his disposal for the good of others, the Associated Charities tells how he can use that money without putting it to waste; how he can place it where it will do the most good. And if the Associated Charities should follow the example of the patent-medicine doctors of an early date and show results labeled "Before and After"—a family before they undertook

the treatment, and the family afterwards standing on their feet—everybody would be convinced of the necessity of this effective service. Such things the Associated Charities cannot tell because they are sacredly confidential; but work like that is being done every day, and the result is the slow but steady abolition of poverty.

Peter and John in the old story go up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and find a beggar lying at the gate. At once they proceed to help the man. He has been lying there by the gate week after week and kind-hearted persons who come by have given him their dole, but still he lies there. Peter and John go straight to the cause of the man's poverty. He is lame, and they say, "Stand up and walk," and that they say in the name of the Supreme Friend. They took hold of the man and lifted him up, and from that day he begged no more; that is, their philanthropy went to the heart of the matter. They sought out the cause of the man's poverty and cured that. That is what organized charity is organized to do, to go to the root of things, to help men, as Benjamin Franklin said, "not so much in their poverty as out of their poverty;" to make it so that they should beg no more.

That is efficient philanthropy. It considers the receiver as well as the giver. What the Associated Charities asks of the people of the city is, first, financial support, in order that you may have increasingly in the midst of this community a body of trained persons able to give sound economic advice. They will give material assistance, too, where it is needed, and immediately when it is needed, but mainly, they will help people to help themselves. The other thing needed is the personal voluntary services of friendly visitors, going out under the direction of the society and ministering to those who are in peculiar need. By these two means—by material support and by personal service—you will be bringing the city so much nearer to the Kingdom of God.