PIOUS WORKS AND THEIR PRACTICE, 6:1-18

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to he seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

The Christian who has been taught the principles which are included in the preceding chapter 5 is ready to serve the Will of God toward his fellow man. The Christian is confronted with the difficulty of choosing the proper way to help his fellow man. Jesus admonishes the Christian that everything should be done "not before men to be seen of them". The Christian is urged to put to work his faith. His good works should not be done before men to gain him recognition, but in such a kind and gentle way as to make more steadfast their hope in the providence of God. The Christian should not practice good works for the sake of good works, but in the name of Jesus Christ; he is His steward of the riches and blessings of God. Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are included in the good works which apply, respectively, to one's neighbor, to God and to one's self.

Almsgiving, 6:2-4

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

The practice of giving alms was mentioned to guide the intentions of the giver and to sanctify his offering in the name of God. Secrecy in giving alms is imperative to eliminate the arrogance of the giver and to make him only God's steward and servant. The true meaning of the art of almsgiving is not the anonymous gift, but the humble gesture of the donor through the deep feeling of serving God's will. The Christian donor should not advertise his generosity to immortalize his name, but should pray for God's blessing to be in a position to further contribute to a good cause in God's name.