

mission, and in other cases, when it is like to do more hurt than good, it is then lawful to retire ourselves from malice.

Direct. x. 'However let the enmity be in them alone: watch your own hearts with a double carefulness, as knowing what your temptation is; and see that you love them, whether they will love you or not.

Direct. xi. 'Do all the good for them that lawfully you can.' For benefits melt and reconcile: and hold on though ingratitude discourage you.

Direct. xii. 'Do them good first in those things that they are most capable of valuing and relishing.' That is (ordinarily) in corporal commodities: or if it be not in your power to do it yourselves, provoke others to do it, (if there be need). And then they will be prepared for greater benefits.

Direct. xiii. 'But stop not in your enemy's corporal good, and in his reconciliation to yourself: for then it will appear to be all but a selfish design which you are about.' But labour to reconcile him to God, and save his soul, and then it will appear to be the love of God, and him that moved you.

Direct. xiv. 'But still remember that you are not bound to love an enemy as a friend, but as a man so qualified as he is; nor to love a wicked man, who is an enemy to godliness, as if he were a godly man; but only as one that is capable of being godly.' This precept of loving enemies was never intended for the levelling all men in our love.

CHAPTER XXX.

Cases and Directions about Works of Charity.

Tit. 1. Cases of Conscience about Works of Charity.

Quest. 1. 'WHAT are the grounds, and reasons, and motives to charitable works?'

Answ. 1. That doing good doth make us most like to God. He is the Universal Father and Benefactor to the world: all

good is in him or from him, and he that is best and doth most good is most like to him.

2. It is an honourable employment therefore: it is more honourable to be the best man in the land, than to be the greatest: greatness is therefore honourable, because it is an ability to do good; and wisdom is honourable because it is the skill of doing good: so that goodness is that end which maketh them honourable, and without respect to which they were as nothing. A power or skill to do mischief is no commendation.

3. Doing good maketh us pleasing and amiable to God, because it maketh us like him, and because it is the fulfilling of his will. God can love nothing but himself, and his own excellencies or image appearing in his works; or his works so far as his attributes appear and are glorified in them.

4. Good works are profitable to men. Our brethren are the better for them: the bodies of the poor are relieved, and men's souls are saved by them.

5. In doing good to others we do good to ourselves: because we are living members of Christ's body, and by love and communion feel their joys, as well as pains. As the hand doth maintain itself by maintaining and comforting the stomach; so doth a loving Christian by good works.

6. There is in every good nature a singular delight in doing good: it is the pleasantest life in all the world. A magistrate, a preacher, a schoolmaster, a tutor, a physician, a judge, a lawyer, hath so much true pleasure as his life and labours are successful in doing good. I know that the conscience of honest endeavours may afford solid comfort to a willing though unsuccessful man; and well-doing may be pleasant though it prove not a doing good to others: but it is a double, yea, a multiplied comfort to be successful. It is much if an honest, unsuccessful man (a preacher, a physician, &c.) can keep up so much peace, as to support him under the grief of his unsuccessfulness: but to see our honest labours prosper, and many to be the better for them, is the pleasantest life that man can here hope for.

7. Good works are a comfortable evidence that faith is sincere, and that the heart dissembleth not with God: when

as a faith that will not prevail for the works of charity, is dead and ineffectual, and the image or carcase of faith indeed, and such as God will not accept^a.

8. We have received so much ourselves from God, as doubleth our obligation to do good to others: obediences and gratitude do both require it.

9. We are not sufficient for ourselves, but need others as well as they need us: and therefore as we expect to receive from others, we must accordingly do to them. If the eye will not see for the body, nor the hand work for the body, nor the feet go for it, the body will not afford them nutriment, and they shall receive as they do.

10. Good works are much to the honour of religion, and consequently of God; and much tend to men's conviction, conversion, and salvation. Most men will judge of the doctrine by the fruits. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven^b."

11. Consider how abundantly they are commanded and commended in the Word of God. Christ himself hath given us the pattern of his own life, which from his first moral actions to his last, was nothing but doing good and bearing evil. He made love the fulfilling of the law, and the works of love the genuine fruits of Christianity, and an acceptable sacrifice to God. "As we have opportunity let us do good to all men, especially to them of the household of faith.—To do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou constantly affirm, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable to men.—For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.—To purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—So labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that

^a James ii.

^b Matt. v. 16.

he may have to give to him that needeth^c." You see poor labourers are not excepted from the command of helping others : insomuch that the first church sold all their possessions, and had all things common ; not to teach levelling and condemn propriety, but to shew all after them that Christian love should use all to relieve their brethren as themselves.

12. Consider that God will in a special manner judge us at the last day according to our works, and especially our works of charity : as in Matt. xxv. Christ hath purposely and plainly shewed ; and so doth many another text of Scripture. These are the motives to works of love.

Quest. 11. ' What is a good work, even such as God hath promised to reward ? '

Ans. 1. The matter must be lawful, and not a sin. 2. It must tend to a good effect, for the benefit of man, and the honour of God. 3. It must have a good end ; even the pleasing and glory of God, and the good of ourselves and others. 4. It must come from a right principle ; even from the love of God, and of man for his sake. 5. It must be pure and unmixed : if any sin be mixed with it, it is sinful so as to need a pardon : and if sin be predominant in it, it is so far sinful as to be unacceptable to God, in respect to the person, and is turned into sin itself. 6. It must be in season ; or else it may sometimes be mixed with sin, and sometimes be evil itself and no good work. 7. It must be comparatively good as well as simply. It must not be a lesser good instead of a greater, or to put off a greater. As to be praying when we should be quenching a fire, or saving a man's life. 8. It must be good in a convenient degree. Some degrees are necessary to the moral being of a good work, and some to the well-being. God must be loved and worshipped as God, and heaven sought as heaven, and men's souls and lives must be highly prized and seriously preserved : some sluggish doing of good is but undoing it. 9. It must be done in confidence of the merits of Christ, and presented to God as by his hands, who is our Mediator and Intercessor with the Father.

Quest. 111. ' What works of charity should one choose

^c Gal. vi. 20. Heb. xiii. 16. Tit. iii. 8. Ephes. ii. 10. Tit. ii. 14. Acts xx. 35. Ephes. iv. 8.

in these times, who would improve his master's talents to his most comfortable account ?'

Ans. The diversity of men's abilities and opportunities make that to be best for one man which is impossible to another^d. But I shall name some that are in themselves most beneficial to mankind, that every man may choose the best which he can reach to.

1. The most eminent work of charity, is the promoting the conversion of the heathen and infidel parts of the world ; to this princes and men of power and wealth might contribute much if they were willing ; especially in those countries in which they have commerce and send ambassadors : they might procure the choicest scholars, to go over with their ambassadors and learn the languages, and set themselves to this service according to opportunity : or they might erect a college for the training of students purposely for that work, in which they might maintain some natives procured from the several infidel countries (as two or three Persians, as many Indians of Indostan, as many Tartarians, Chinese, Siamites, &c.) which might possibly be obtained : and these should teach students their country languages. But till the Christian world be so happy as to have such princes, something may be done by volunteers of lower place and power ; as Mr. Wheelock did in translating the New Testament, and Mr. Pococke by the Honourable Mr. Boyle's procurement and charge, in translating "Grotius de Verit. Christ. Relig." into Arabic, and sending it to Indostan and Persia. And what excellent labour hath good Mr. John Elliot (with some few assistants) bestowed these twenty years and more in New England ; where now he hath translated and printed the whole Scriptures in their American tongue, (with a Catechism and Call to the Unconverted, by the help of a press maintained from hence.

2. The attempt of restoring the Christian churches to their primitive purity and unity, according to men's several opportunities, is a most excellent and desirable work ; which though the ignorance and wickedness of many ; and the implacableness and bloodiness of the carnal, proud, domineering part, and the too great alienation of some others from them, do make it so difficult as to be next to despe-

^d See the Preface to my book, called, "The Crucifying of the World."

rate, at the present, yet is not to be cast off as desperate indeed ; for great things have been done by wise and valiant attempts. Princes might do very much in this, if they were both wise and willing. And who knoweth but an age may come that may be so happy ? The means and methods I would willingly describe, but that this is no fit place or time.

3. The planting of a learned, able, holy, concordant ministry in a particular kingdom, and settling the primitive discipline thereby, is a work also which those princes may very much promote, whose hearts are set upon it, and who set up no contrary interest against it ; but because these lines are never like to be known to princes (unless by way of accusation), it is private men's works which we must speak to.

4. It is a very good work to procure and maintain a worthy minister in any of the most ignorant parishes in these kingdoms, (of which, alas, how many are there) where the skilful preaching of the Gospel is now wanting : or to maintain an assistant in populous parishes, where one is not able to do the work ; or by other just means to promote this service.

5. It is a very good work to set up free-schools in populous and in ignorant places, especially in Wales ; that all may be taught to read, and some may be prepared for the Universities.

6. It is an excellent work to cull out some of the choicest wits, among the poorer sort in the country schools, who otherwise would wither for want of culture ; and to maintain them for learning in order to the ministry, with some able, godly tutor in the University, or some country minister who is fit and vacant enough thereunto.

7. It is an excellent work to give among poor, ignorant people, Bibles and Catechisms, and some plain and godly books which are most fitted to their use. But it were more excellent to leave a settled revenue for this use (naming the books, and choosing meet trustees) that so the rent might every year furnish a several parish, which would in a short time be a very extensive benefit, and go through many countries.

8. It is a very good work to set poor men's children ap-

prentices to honest, religious masters, where they may at once get the blessing to their souls of a godly education, and to their bodies, of an honest way of maintenance.

9. It will not be unacceptable to God, to relieve some of the persons, or poor children, of those very many hundred faithful ministers of Christ, who are now silenced and destitute of maintenance, many having nothing at all, but what charity sendeth them, to maintain themselves and desolate families, who were wont to exercise charity to the bodies and souls of others. Read Matt. xxv. Gal. vi. 5—8.

10. It is a good work of them who give stocks of money, or yearly rents, to be lent for five, or six, or seven years to young tradesmen at their setting up, upon good security, choosing good trustees, who may choose the fittest persons; and if it be a rent, it will still increase the stock, and if any should break, the loss of it may be borne.

11. It would be a very good work for landlords to improve their interest with their tenants, to further at once their bodily comfort, and salvation, to hire them by some abatement at their rent-days, to learn catechisms, and read the Scripture and good books in their families, and give the pastor an account of their proficience. Whether the law will enable them to bind them to any such thing in their leases, I cannot tell.

12. And the present work of charity for every one, is to relieve the most needy which are next at hand. To know what poor families are in greatest want, and to help them as we are able: and to provoke the rich to do that which we cannot do ourselves, and to beg for others; and still to make use of bodily relief, to further the good of their souls, by seconding all with spiritual advice and help.

Quest. iv. 'In what order are works of charity to be done? And whom must we prefer when we are unable to accommodate all?'

Answ. 1. The most public works must be preferred before private. *2.* Works for the soul 'cæteris paribus' before works for the body; and yet bodily benefits in order of time, must oft go first as preparations to the other. *3.* Greatest necessities 'cæteris paribus' must be supplied before lesser: the saving of another's life must be preferred before your own less necessary comforts. *4.* Your own

and families' wants must 'cæteris paribus' be supplied before strangers; even before some that you must love better; because God hath in point of provision and maintenance, given you a nearer charge of yourselves and families than of others. 5. Nature also obligeth you to prefer your kindred before strangers, if there be a parity as to other reasons. 6. And 'cæteris paribus' a good man must be preferred before a bad. 7. And yet that charity which is like to tend to the good of the soul as well as of the body is to be preferred; and in that case oftentimes a bad man is to be preferred, when a greater good is like to be the effect. 8. A friend 'cæteris paribus,' is to be preferred before an enemy; but not when the good is like to be greater which will follow the relieving of an enemy. Many other rules might be given, but they are laid down already, Part i., where I treat of Good Works; whither I refer you.

Quest. v. 'Should I give in my lifetime, or at my death?'

Answ. According as it is like to do most good; but none should needlessly delay: both are best.

Quest. vi. 'Should one devote or set by a certain part of daily incomes?'

Quest. vii. 'What proportion is a man bound to give to the poor?'

Answ. These two questions having answered in a letter to Mr. Thomas Gouge, now printed, and the book being not in many hands, I will here recite that letter as it is published.

Most dear, and very much honoured Brother,

Even the philosopher hath taught me so to esteem you, who said, that "He is likest to God, who needeth fewest things for himself, and doth most good to others." And Christ telleth us, that universal charity, (extending even to them that hate and persecute us) doth make us, as his children, like our heavenly Father^a. As hating and hurting their neighbours is the mark of the children of the devil^b, so loving and doing good, is the mark of the children of God. And it is observable, that no one treateth so copiously and pathetically of love (both of Christ's love to us, and

^a Matt. v. 44. 46. 49.

^b John viii. 44.

ours to him) as the blessed disciple, whom Jesus is said to have eminently loved (as John xiii. 14—17. and 1 John shew).

It hath often pleased me to hear how dearly you were beloved, by that exceeding great and populous parish, where lately you were preacher, for your eminent charity to their souls and bodies; and to see that still you take it for your work and calling, to be a provoker of others to love and to good works^c, whilst many that are taken for good Christians, do deal in such works as rarities or recreations, only a little now and then upon the bye, and whilst satan's ministers are provoking others to hatred and to hurtfulness.

Your labour is so amiable to me, that it would contribute to my comforts, if I were able to contribute any thing to your assistance.

You desire me to give you my judgment of the 'quota pars;' 'What proportion it is meet for most men to devote to charitable uses; whether the tenth part of their increase be not ordinarily a fit proportion?'

The reason why I use not to answer such questions without much distinguishing (when lazy, impatient readers would have them answered in a word) is, because the real difference of particular cases is so great, as maketh it necessary; unless we will deceive men, or leave the matter as dark and unresolved as we found it.

I. Before I answer your question, I shall premise, that I much approve of the way which you insist upon, of setting so much constantly apart as is fit for us to give, that it may be taken by us, to be a devoted or consecrated thing. And methinks that there is much of a Divine direction for the time in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2., together with the ancient church, "That upon the first day of the week, every one lay by him in store, as God had prospered him." And it will do much to cure Pharisaiical sabbatizing, when the Lord's day is stately used in this, with holy works; and will teach hypocrites to know what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice^d." And that works of charity are an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice^e. . . And that works of charity are an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God, who of the riches of his glory in Christ, will supply all the need of such, as bring forth such fruit to abound unto

^c Heb. x. 24.

^d Matt. ix. 13. xii. 7.

^e Matt. ix. 13. xii. 7.

their account^f. So it be done without any ensnaring vows, or rash engagements to unnecessary things; this constant setting apart a certain proportion for pious and charitable uses, will have these advantages.

1. Our distribution will be made deliberately and prudently, when beforehand we study a due proportion, and determine accordingly; whereas they that give only occasionally as some object suddenly inviteth them, will do it at random, without due respect to their own accounts, whether the proportion given be answerable to their own estate and duty.

2. This stated way will make men's charity much more extensive: when objects of charity are not in their sight, they will inquire after them, and they will seek for the needy, if the needy seek not unto them; because they have so much by them to dispose of, which is devoted to God. But those who give but as occasional objects draw it from them, will give to none but those that crave, or will pass by many as needy, whom they see not, while they relieve only these few that they happen to see.

3. And it will make men's charity also to be more constant, and done obediently as a Christian's daily work and duty; when occasional charity will be more rarely and inconstantly exercised. In a word, as the observation of the Lord's day, which is a stated proportion of time, secureth the holy improvement of our time, much better than if God be served but occasionally, without a stated time; and as a constant, stated course of preaching excelleth mere occasional exhortations; even so a constant course of giving, wisely stated, will find out objects, and overcome temptations, and discharge our duty with much more integrity and success. And if we can easily perceive that occasional praying will not so well discharge the duty of prayer, as a constant, stated course will do; why should we not think the same of occasional giving, if men did but perceive that giving according to our ability, is as sure and great a duty as praying. Now to your question of the proportion of our gifts.

II. We must distinguish,

1. Between them that have no more than will supply

^f Phil. iv. 17—19.

their own, and their families' true necessities, and those that have more.

2. Between them that have a stock of money which yieldeth them no increase, and those that have more increase by their labour, but little stock.

3. Between them whose increase is like to be constant, and theirs that is uncertain, sometimes more, and sometimes less.

4. Between them that have many children, or near kindred, that nature casteth upon them for relief; and those that have few or no children, or have a competent provision for them, and have few needy kindred that they are especially obliged to relieve.

5. Between those that live in times and places where the necessities of the poor are very great, or some great works of piety are in hand; and those that live where the poor are in no great necessity, and no considerable opportunity for any great work of piety or charity doth appear. These distinctions premised, I answer as followeth.

1. It is certain that every true sanctified Christian hath devoted himself and all that he hath to God, to be used in obedience to his will, and for his glory^a. The question therefore is not, Whether the tenth part of our estate should be devoted to, and employed in the service of God, one way or other, as he directeth us; for it is out of question that all is his, and we are but his stewards; and must give account of our stewardship, and of all our receivings^b. But the question is only what proportion is best pleasing to God to our giving to others.

2. A Christian being unfeignedly thus resolved in the general, to lay out that he hath or shall have, as God would have him, and to his glory (as near as he can); his next inquiry must be (for finding out the will of God) to know in the ordinary course of his distribution, where God hath gone before him by any particular prescript, and tied him to one certain way of giving, and where God hath only given him some general direction, and left him to discern his duty in particulars, by that general rule, and the further

^a 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Cor. x. 31. Luke xviii. 33

^b Matt. xxv.

direction of objects and providence. And in this inquiry he will find,

1. That God hath first prescribed to him in nature, the necessary sustenance of his own life. And,

2. The necessary maintenance of his children and family.

3. The necessary maintenance of the preachers of the Gospel, for the worship of God, and the salvation of men^l.

4. The necessary maintenance of the commonwealth, and paying tribute to the higher powers, who are the ministers of God to us for good; attending continually upon this very thing^k.

5. The saving of the lives of those that are in apparent danger of famine or perishing, within our sight or reach^l. Thus far God hath prescribed to us, how he would have us use our estates in an ordinary way. In many other things he hath left us to more general directions.

3. To know among good works, which is to be preferred, it principally concerneth us next to know, what works do most contribute to our chiefest ends; which God is most honoured by; which tend to the greatest good; and here we shall find that, 'cæteris paribus,'

1. The souls of men are to be preferred before their bodies, in estimation and intention; but in time, the body is oft to be preferred before the soul, because if the body be suffered to perish, the helping of the soul will be past our power.

2. And so the church is finally and estimatively to be preferred before the commonwealth; but the commonwealth must be first served in time, when it is necessary to the church's support and welfare; for the church will else perish with the commonwealth.

3. The good of many is to be preferred before the good of a few, and public good to be valued above private^m.

4. A continued good is greater than a short and transitory good. And so necessary is it to have chief respect in all our works to our chiefest end (the greatest good), that even when God seemeth to have prescribed to us the way

^l 1 Cor. ix. Phil. iv. 10, 11. 14. 17, 18. Luke x. 7. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

^k Rom. xiii. 4. 6.

^l 1 John iii. 17. Luke x. 33.

^m Rom. ix. 3.

of our expenses, yet that is but as to our ordinary course : for if in an extraordinary case it fall out, that another way is more to God's glory and the common good, it must then be preferred ; for all means are to be judged of by the end, and chosen, and used for it. For example, if the good of church and commonwealth, or of the souls of many do stand up against our corporal provision of our children or families, it is to be preferred ; which is easily proved ' a fortiore,' because it is to be preferred before our own good, even the saving of our lives. A good subject will lose his life to save the life of his king ; and a good soldier will die to save his general or the army ; and a useless member of the church should be content to die, if it be necessary to save the life of a pastor that is greatly useful. If a poor, ordinary Christian then had been so put to it, that either Paul or he must famish, no doubt but his ultimate end would have commanded him to prefer the apostle before himself ; so that in extraordinary cases, the end and greatest good must be our guide.

4. Though I may ordinarily prefer my own life before another's, yet I must not prefer my mere delight or health, before another's life : and though men must provide for the lives of their children, before the lives of others, yet the life of a poor neighbour (' cæteris paribus') must be preferred and provided for, before the portions of your own children, and before the supply of their tolerable wants : so that as long as there are poor about you, that are in necessity of food to save their lives, the portions or comeliest clothing of your children must rather be neglected, than the poor be suffered to perish. How else do I love my neighbour as myself, if I make so great a difference between myself and him ?

5. Even the food and raiment, and other necessaries, which a Christian useth himself, he must use for God, and not for his carnal self at all ; not taking it as his own, which he may use at and for his own 'pleasure, but as part of his master's goods, which are all to be used only for his service. As a steward, that when he giveth every servant his part, and taketh his own part, it is not as if it were primarily his own, but as a servant on the same account with the rest : so when I devote all that I have to God, I am so

far from excepting my own part, even my food and raiment, that I do more confidently intend the serving of God with that, than with the rest, because it is more in my power, and there is in it more of my duty. The same I may say of that which is given to our children and other relations.

6. Therefore when more of the service and interest of God, lieth upon your own, or your children's using of his talents, than upon other men's, you are bound (for God, and not for selves), to retain so much the more for yourselves and children. It is a fond conceit that a man is bound to give all to others, rather than to himself or children, when it is most probable, that those others would do God less service with it, than himself or his children would do : as suppose such a man as Mr. Elliot of New England (that devoteth himself to the conversion of the Indians) had riches, when some neighbour ministers were poor, that are engaged in no such work ; he that knoweth that God hath given him a heart and an opportunity to do him more service with it than another would do, is not bound to put it out of his own hands into another's, that is less like to be a faithful improver of it. If you have a son of your own that is a preacher of the Gospel, and is more able and serviceable than other ministers in equal want, no doubt you have then a double obligation to relieve your own son before another ; as he is your son, and as he is more serviceable to God. If other men are bound to supply your want for the work and interest of the Gospel, you are not bound to give away your own supplies, to the disabling you from your work, unless when you see a greater work, or the present absolute necessity of others, doth require it.

7. It is imprudent and unsafe, and therefore unlawful, ordinarily, to tie yourself unchangeably for continuance, to any one particular way of using your estates for God ; as to vow that you will give it to ministers, or to the poor, or to schools, &c., because the changes may be such which God will make, as shall make that way to be one year necessary, which before was not, and so change your duty. We cannot prescribe to God what way he shall appoint us for the future, to use his talents in. His Word bids us prefer the greatest good ; but which is the greatest, his providence must tell us.

8. He that hath no more than is necessary to the very preservation of his own life and his family's, is not bound to give to others (unless in some extraordinary case, which calleth him to prefer a greater and more public good): and he that hath no more than is needful, to the comfortable support of himself and family, is not bound to relieve those that have no greater wants than himself. And his own necessity is not to be measured merely by what he hath, but by the use he hath for it; for a magistrate, or one that is engaged in public works, may have need of as many hundreds a year, as a private man of pounds.

9. Those that have many children to provide for, or poor kindred that nature casteth on them, cannot give so much (proportionably) to other poor, as those are bound to do that have few or none; for these are bound to give all, except their personal necessaries, to public, pious or charitable works, because God calleth not for it any other way.

10. To pamper the flesh, is a sin as well in the rich, as in the poor: the rich therefore are bound not only to give all that the flesh can spare, when its own inordinate desires are satisfied, but deny themselves, and mortify the flesh, and be good husbands for God, and studious to retrench all unnecessary expenses, and to live laboriously and thriftily, that they may have the more to do good with. It is a great extenuation of the largest gifts, as to God's esteem, when they are but the leavings of the flesh, and are given out of men's abundance, and when we offer that to God that costeth us nothing: as Christ doth purposely determine the case; comparing the rich man's gifts with the widow's two mites, he said, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury, hath cast in all the living that she had^{*}:" that is, all the stock she had beforehand, though she had need of it herself. It is a very considerable thing in our charity, how much mortification and self-denial is expressed in it, and how much it costeth our own flesh, to give to others. And therefore they that think they are excused from doing good to others, as long as they have any need of it themselves, and will give nothing but what they have no

* Luke xxi. 1—4.

need of (it being not of absolute necessity to their lives) do offer a sacrifice of no great value in the eyes of God. What then shall we say of them, that will not give even out of their abundance, and that which without any suffering they may spare ?

11. The first and principal thing to be done by one that would give as God would have him, is, to get a truly charitable heart, which containeth all these parts.

1. That we see God in his needy creatures, and in his cause or work that needs our help.

2. That we be sensible of his abundant love in Christ to us, in giving pardon and eternal life, and that from the sense of this our thankful hearts are moved to do good to others.

3. That therefore we do it ultimately, as to Christ himself; who taketh that which is done for his cause and servants, as done to him, *Matt. xxv. 40.*

4. That we conquer the cursed sin of selfishness, which makes men little regard any but themselves.

5. That we love our neighbours as ourselves, and love most where there is most of God and goodness, and not according to self-interest: and that as members of the same body, we take our brethren's wants and sufferings as our own; and then we should be as ready to help them as ourselves.

6. That we know the vanity of worldly riches, and be not earthly-minded, but regard the interest of God and our souls, above all the treasures of the world.

7. That we unfeignedly believe the promises of God, who hath engaged himself to provide for us, and everlastingly to reward us in glory with himself. If these seven qualifications be wrought upon the heart, good works will plentifully follow. Make but the tree good, and the fruit will be good. But when the heart is void of the root and life which should produce them, the judgment will not be persuaded that so much is necessary, and required of us; and the will itself will still hang back, and be delaying to do good, and doing all pinchingly and hypocritically, with unwillingness and distrust.

No wonder if good works are so rare, when it is evident that to do them sincerely and heartily as our trade and business, it is necessary that the whole soul be thus renewed

by faith, and love, and self-denial, and mortification, and by a heavenly hope and mind. They are the fruits and works of the new creature (which is, alas, too rare in the world): "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Therefore our first and chiefest labour should be to be sure that we are furnished with such hearts, and then if we have wherewith to do good, such hearts will be sure to do it; such hearts will best discern the time and measure, as a healthful man's appetite will in eating: for they will take it for a mercy and happiness to do good, and know, that it is they that give, that are the great receivers. It is but a little money or alms, that the poor receive of us, but it is God's acceptance, and favour, and reward that we receive, which is in "this life a hundred fold (in value), and in the world to come eternal life." But if we have little or nothing to give, such a heart is accepted, as if we had given as much as we desire to give; so that if you have a heart that would give thousands if you had it, God will set down upon your account, so many thousands given (in desire). Your two mites shall be valued above all the superfluities of sensual worldlings: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." But God taketh not that for a willing mind, which only saith, 'I would give if I should suffer nothing by it myself, or were sure I should not want;' but that which saith, 'I will serve God as well as I can with my estate while I have it, and deny my flesh, that I may have to do good with, and trust God for my provision and reward; for if there be a readiness to will, there will be a performance also out of that which you have'.

12. Such a holy self-denying charitable heart, with the help of prudence, is the best judge of the due proportion which we should give: for this willing readiness being supposed, prudence will discern the fittest objects, and the fittest time, and the fittest measure, and will suit the means unto the end: when once a man's heart is set upon doing good, it will not be very hard to perceive how much ourselves, our families, the poor, and religious uses should have; for if such a person be prudent himself, he hath always with

° Ephes. ii. 10.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. viii. 11.

him a constant counsellor, with a general rule, and directing providence: if he want prudence sufficient to be his own director, he will take direction from the prudence of others.

13. Such a truly willing mind, will not be much wanting in the general, of doing good, but one way or other, will serve God with his estate; and then if in any particulars he should come short, it will comparatively be a very small sin, when it is not for want of willingness, but of skill. The will is the chief seat of all moral good and evil: there is no more virtue than there is will, nor any more sin or vice, than there is will. He that knoweth not how much he should give, because he is not willing to give it, and therefore not willing to know it, is indeed the miser and sinfully ignorant; but if it be not for want of a willing mind that we mistake the proportion, it will be a very pardonable mistake.

14. Your proportion of the tenth part is too much for some, and much too little for others, but for the most, I think it as likely a proportion as it is fit for another to prescribe in particular, with these following explications.

1. He that hath a full stock of money, and no increase by it, must give proportionably out of his stock; when he that hath little or no stock, but the fruits of his daily industry and labour, may possibly be bound to give less than the other.

2. It is not the tenth of our increase, deducting first all our families' provision, that you mean when you direct to give the tenth (for it is far more, if not all, that after such provision must be given); but it is the tenth without deduction that you mean; therefore when family necessaries cannot spare the tenth, it may be too much (else even the receivers must all be givers): but when family necessities can spare much more than the tenth, then the tenth is not enough.

3. In those places where church, and state, and poor are all to be maintained by free gift, there the tenth of our increase is far too little, for those that have any thing considerable to spare, to give to all these uses.

This is apparent in that the tenths alone were not thought enough even in the time of the law, to give towards the public

worship of God : for beside the tenths, there were the first fruits, and oblations, and many sorts of sacrifices ; and yet at the same time, the poor were to be maintained by liberal gifts beside the tenths ; and though we read not of much given to the maintenance of their rulers and magistrates, before they chose to have a king, yet afterwards we read of much ; and before, the charges of wars and public works lay upon all.

In most places with us, the public ministry is maintained by glebe and tithes, which are none of the people's gifts at all, for he that sold or leased them their lands, did suppose that tithes were to be payed out of it, and therefore they paid a tenth part less for it, in purchase, fines, or rents, than otherwise they should have done ; so that I reckon, that most of them give little or nothing to the minister at all. Therefore they may the better give so much the more to the needy, and to other charitable uses. But where minister, and poor, and all are maintained by the people's contribution, there the tenths are too little for the whole work ; but yet to most, or very many, the tenths to the poor alone, besides the maintenance of the ministry and state, may possibly be more than they are able to give. The tenths even among the heathens, were given in many places to their sacrifices, priests, and to religious, public, civil works, besides all their private charity to the poor.

I find in Diog. Laertius, lib. i. (mihi) 32. that Pisistratus the Athenian tyrant, proving to Solon (in his epistle to him) that he had nothing against God or man to blame him for, but for taking the crown ; telling him, that he caused them to keep the same laws which Solon gave them, and that better than the popular government could have done, doth instance thus : ' Atheniensium singuli decimas frugum suarum separant, non in usus nostros consumendas, verum sacrificiis publicis, commodisque communibus, et si quando bellum contra nos ingruerit, in sumptus deputandas : ' that is, ' Every one of the Athenians do separate the tithes of their fruits, not to be consumed to our uses, but to defray the charge in public sacrifices, and in the common profits, and if war at any time invade us.' And Plautus saith, ' Ut decimam solveret Herculi.' Indeed as among the heathens the tithes were conjunctly given for religious and civil uses,

so it seems that at first the Christian emperors settled them on the bishops for the use of the poor, as well as for the ministers', and church service, and utensils. For to all these they were to be divided, and the bishop was as the guardian of the poor: and the glebe or farms that were given to the church, were all employed to the same uses; and the canons required that the tithe should be thus disposed of by the clergy; '*non tanquam propriæ, sed domino oblatæ:*' and the emperor Justinian commanded the bishops, '*Ne ea quæ ecclesiis relicta sunt sibi adscribant sed in necessarios ecclesiæ usus impendant;* lib. xliii. cap. de Episc. et Cler. vid. Albert. Ranzt. Metrop. lib. i. cap. 2. et sax. lib. vi. cap. 52. And Hierom (ad Damasc.) saith, '*Quoniam quicquid habent clerici pauperum est; et domus illorum omnibus debent esse communes; susceptioni peregrinarum et hospitem invigilare debent: maxime curandum est illis, ut de decimis et oblationibus, cœnobiis et Xenodochiis qualem voluerint et potuerint sustentationem impendant.*'

Yet then the paying of tithes did not excuse the people from all other charity to the poor: Austin saith, '*Qui sibi aut præmium comparat, aut peccatorum desiderat indulgentiam promereri, reddat decimam, etiam de novem partibus studeat eleemosynam dare pauperibus.*' And in our times there is less reason that tithes should excuse the people from their works of charity, both because the tithes are now more appropriate to the maintenance of the clergy, and because (as is aforesaid) the people give them not of their own. I confess, if we consider how decimation was used before the law by Abraham and Jacob, and established by the law unto the Jews, and how commonly it was used among the Gentiles, and last of all by the church of Christ, it will make a considerate man imagine, that as there is still a Divine direction for one day in seven, as a necessary proportion of time to be ordinarily consecrated to God, besides what we can spare from our other days; so that there is something of a Divine canon, or direction for the tenth of our revenues or increase to be ordinarily consecrated to God, besides what may be spared from the rest. And whether those tithes, that are none of your own, and cost you nothing, be now to be reckoned to private men, as any of their tenths, which they themselves should give, I leave to

your consideration. Amongst Augustine's works we find an opinion that the devils were the tenth part of the angels, and that man is now to be the tenth order among the angels, the saints filling up the place that the devils fell from, and there being nine orders of angels to be above us, and that in this there is some ground of our paying tenths; and therefore he saith, that 'Hæc est Domini justissima consuetudo; ut si tu illi decimam non dederis, tu ad decimam revocaberis, id est, dæmonibus, qui sunt decima pars angelorum, associaberis.' Though I know not whence he had this opinion, it seemeth that the devoting of a tenth part ordinarily to God, is a matter that we have more than a human direction for.

15. In times of extraordinary necessities of the church, or state, or poor, there must be extraordinary bounty in our contributions: as if an enemy be ready to invade the land, or if some extraordinary work of God (as the conversion of some heathen nations) do require it, or some extraordinary persecution and distress befall the pastors, or in a year of famine, plague, or war, when the necessities of the poor are extraordinary: the tenths in such cases will not suffice, from those that have more to give: therefore in such times, the primitive Christians sold their possessions, and laid down the price at the feet of the apostles.

In one word, an honest, charitable heart being presupposed as the root or fountain, and prudence being the discerner of our duty, the apostle's general rule may much satisfy a Christian for the proportion, "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him"; and "according to that a man hath"; though there be many intimations, that ordinarily a tenth part at least is requisite.

III. Having thus resolved the question of the 'quota pars,' or proportion to be given, I shall say a little to the question, 'Whether a man should give most in his lifetime, or at his death?'

Answ. 1. It is certain that the best work is that which is like to do most good.

2. But to make it best to us, it is necessary that we do it with the most self-denying, holy, charitable mind.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

3. That 'cæteris paribus,' all things else being equal, the present doing of a good work, is better than to defer it.

4. That to do good only when you die, because then you can keep your wealth no longer, and because then it costeth you nothing to part with it, and because then you hope that this shall serve instead of true repentance and godliness; this is but to deceive yourselves, and will do nothing to save your souls, though it do never so much good to others.

5. That he that sinfully neglecteth in his lifetime to do good, if he do it at his death, from true repentance and conversion, it is then accepted of God; though the sin of his delay must be lamented.

6. That he that delayeth it till death, not out of any selfishness, backwardness, or unwillingness, but that the work may be better, and do more good, doth better than if he hastened a lesser good. As if a man have a desire to set up a free-school for perpetuity, and the money which he hath is not sufficient; if he stay till his death, that so the improvement of the money may increase it, and make it enough for his intended work; that is to do a greater good with greater self-denial: for,

(1.) He receiveth none of the increase of the money for himself.

(2.) And he receiveth in his lifetime none of the praise or thanks of the work. So also, if a man that hath no children, have so much land only as will maintain him, and desireth to give it all to charitable uses when he dieth, this delay is not at all to be blamed, because he could not sooner give it; and if it be not in vain-glory, but in love to God and to good works that he leaveth it, it is truly acceptable at last. So that all good works that are done at death, are not therefore to be undervalued, nor are they rejected of God; but sometimes it falleth out that they are so much the greater and better works, though he that can do the same in his lifetime, ought to do it.

IV. But though I have spent all these words in answering these questions, I am fully satisfied that it is very few that are kept from doing good by any such doubt or difficulty, in the case which stalls their judgments; but by the power of sin and want of grace, which leave an unwilling-

ness and backwardness on their hearts. Could we tell how to remove the impediments in men's wills, it would do more than the clearest resolving all the cases of conscience, which their judgments seem to be unsatisfied in. I will tell you what are the impediments in your way, that are harder to be removed than all these difficulties, and yet must be overcome before you can bring men to be like true Christians, "rich in good works."

1. Most men are so sensual and selfish, that their own flesh is an insatiable gulf that devoureth all, and they have little or nothing to spare from it to good uses. It is better cheaply maintaining a family of temperate, sober persons, than one fleshly person that hath a whole litter of vices and lusts to be maintained: so much a year seemeth necessary to maintain their pride in needless curiosity and bravery, and so much a year to maintain their sensual sports and pleasures; and so much to please their throats and appetites, and to lay in provision for fevers, and dropsies, and coughs, and consumptions, and an hundred such diseases, which are the natural progeny of gluttony, drunkenness, and excess; and so much a year to maintain their idleness, and so of many other vices. But if one of these persons have the pride, and idleness, and gluttony, and sportfulness of wife, and children, and family also to maintain, as well as their own, many thousand pounds a year perhaps may be too little. Many a conquering army hath been maintained at as cheap a rate, as such an army of lusts (or garrison at least) as keep possession of some such families, when all their luxury goeth for the honour of their family, and they glory in wearing the livery of the devil, the world, and the flesh, (which they once renounced, and pretended to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ;) and when they take care in the education of their children, that this entailed honour be not cut off from their families: no wonder if God's part be little from these men, when the flesh must have so much, and when God must stand to the courtesy of his enemies, and have but their leavings. I hope the nobility and gentry of England that are innocent herein, will not be offended with me, if I tell them that are guilty, that when I foresee their counts, I think them to be the most miserable persons upon earth, that rob God, and rob the king of that

which should defray the charges of government, and rob the church, and rob the poor, and rob their souls of all the benefits of good works, and all to please the devouring flesh. It is a dreadful thing to foresee with what horror they will give up their reckoning, when instead of so much in feeding and clothing the poor, and promoting the Gospel, and the saving of men's souls, there will be found upon their account, so much in vain curiosities and pride, and so much in costly sports and pleasures, and so much in fleshpleasing luxury and excess. The trick that they have got of late, to free themselves from the fears of this account, by believing that there will be no such day, will prove a short and lamentable remedy: and when that day shall come upon them unawares, their unbelief and pleasures will die together, and deliver them up to never-dying horror and despair. I have heard it often mentioned as the dishonour of France, that the third part of the revenues of so rich a kingdom should be devoted and paid to the maintaining of superstition: but if there be not many (and most) kingdoms in the world, where one half of their wealth is devoted to the flesh, and so to the devil, I should be glad to find myself herein mistaken: and judge you which is more disgraceful, to have half your estates given in sensuality to the devil, or a third part too ignorantly devoted to God! If men laid out no more than needs upon the flesh, they might have the more for the service of God and of their souls. You cannot live under so much a year, as would maintain twice as many frugal, temperate, industrious persons, because your flesh must needs be pleased, and you are strangers to mortification and self-denial. Laertius tells that Crates Thebanus put all his money into the banker's or usurer's hands, with this direction, 'That if his sons proved idiots it should all be paid to them, but if they proved philosophers, it should be given to the poor; because philosophers can live upon a little, and therefore need little. So if we could make men mortified Christians, they would need so little for themselves, that they would have the more to give to others, and to do good with.

2. Men do not seriously believe God's promises; that he will recompense them in this life (with better things) an

hundred fold, and in the world to come with life eternal !” And that “by receiving a prophet, or righteous man, may have a prophet’s or righteous man’s reward.” And that “a cup of cold water (when you have no better) given to one of Christ’s little ones in the name of a disciple, shall not be unrewarded.” They believe not that heaven will pay for all, and that there is a life to come in which God will see that they be no losers. They think there is nothing certain but what they have in hand, and therefore they lay up a treasure upon earth, and rather trust to their estates than God : whereas if they verily believed that there is another life, and that judgment will pass on them on the terms described Matt. xxv. they would more industriously lay up a treasure in heaven ², and “make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,” and study how to be rich in good works, and send their wealth to heaven before them, and “lay up a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold upon eternal life,” and then they would be “ready to distribute, and willing to communicate.” They would then know how much they are beholden to God, that will not only honour them to be his stewards, but reward them for distributing his maintenance to his children, as if they had given so much of their own : they would then see that it is they that are the receivers, and that giving is the surest way to be rich, when for transitory things (sincerely given) they may receive the everlasting riches. Then they would see that he that saveth his riches loseth them, and he that loseth them for Christ doth save them, and lay them up in heaven ; and that it is more blessed to give than to receive ; and that we should ourselves be laborious that we may have wherewith to support the weak, and to give unto the needy. Read Acts xx. 35. Eph. iv. 28. Prov. xxxi. 20., &c. Then they would not be weary of well-doing, if they believed that, “in due season, they shall reap if they faint not ; but as they have opportunity, would do good to all men ; but especially to them that are of the household of faith.” They would not “forget to do good, and communicate, as knowing that with such sacrifices God is well

¹ Matt. xix. 29.

² Matt. x. 42.

³ Matt. vi. 20.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. Luke xvi. 9.

⁵ Gal. vi. 9, 10.

pleased ^a." A true belief of the reward, would make men strive who should do most.

3. Another great hindrance is the want of love to God and our neighbours, to Christ and his disciples. If men loved Christ, they would not deal so niggardly with his disciples, when he has told them that he taketh all that they do to the least of them, (whom he calleth his brethren,) as done to himself^b.

If men loved their neighbours as themselves, I leave you to judge in what proportion and manner they would relieve them! Whether they would find money to lay out on dice and cards, and gluttonous feastings, on plays, and games, and pomp, and pride, while so many round about them are in pinching want.

The destruction of charity or Christian love is the cause that works of charity are destroyed. Who can look that the seed of the serpent, that hath an enmity against the holy seed, should liberally relieve them? Or that the fleshly mind, which is enmity against God, should be ready to do good to the spiritual and holy servants of God^c? Or that a selfish man should much care for any body but himself and his own? When love is turned into the hatred of each other, upon the account of our partial interests and opinions; and when we are like men in war, that think he is the bravest, most deserving man that hath killed most; when men have bitter, hateful thoughts of one another, and set themselves to make each other odious, and to ruin them, that they may stand the faster, and think that destroying them is good service to God; who can look for the fruits of love from damnable uncharitableness and hatred; or that the devil's tree should bring forth holy fruit to God?

4. And then (when love is well spoken of by all, even its deadly enemies) lest men should see their wickedness and misery, (and is it not admirable that they see it not?) the devil hath taught them to play the hypocrite, and make themselves a religion which costs them nothing, without true Christian love and good works, that they may have something to quiet and cheat their consciences with. One man drops now and then an inconsiderable gift, and another op-

^a Heb. xiii. 16.

^b Matt. xxv. x. 39, 40.

^c Gen. xv. Rom. viii. 6—8.

presseth, and hateth, and destroyeth, (and slandereth and censureth, that he may not be thought to hate and ruin without cause;) and when they have done, they wipe their mouths with a few hypocritical prayers or good words, and think they are good Christians, and God will not be avenged on them. One thinks that God will save him because he is of this church, and another because he is of another church. One thinks to be saved because he is of this opinion and party in religion, and another because he is of that. One thinks he is religious because he saith his prayers this way, and another because he prayeth another way. And thus dead hypocrites, whose hearts were never quickened with the powerful love of God, to love his servants, their neighbours, and enemies, do persuade themselves that God will save them for mocking and flattering him with the service of their deceitful lips; while they want the love of God, which is the root of all good, and are possessed with the love of money which is the root of all evil^d, and are "lovers of pleasure more than of God^e."

They will join themselves forwardly to the cheap and outside actions of religion: but when they hear much less than "One thing thou yet wantest: sell all that thou hast and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven:—they are very sorrowful, because they are very rich^f." Such a fruitless love as they had to others^g, such a fruitless religion they have as to themselves. For "pure religion and undefiled before God, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world^h." "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" There are three texts that describe the case of sensual, uncharitable gentlemen.

1. Luke xvi. "A rich man clothed in purple and silk, (for so, as Dr. Hammond noteth, it should rather be translated,) and fared sumptuously every day," you know the end of him.

2. Ezek. xvi. 49. "Sodom's sin was pride, fulness of

^d 1 Tim. vi. 10.

^e James ii.

^f 2 Tim. iii. 4.

^g James i. 27. Sec 1 John ii. 15. iii. 17.

bread, and abundance of idleness, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

3. James v. 1—7. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you.—Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts, as in (or for) the day of slaughter.—Ye have condemned and killed the just and he doth not resist you—." And remember Prov. xxi. 13. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself and shall not be heard." And James ii. 13. "He shall have judgment without mercy that shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Yea, in this life it is oft observable that "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty¹."

Tit. 2. Directions for Works of Charity.

Direct. i. 'Love God, and be renewed to his image;' and then it will be natural to you to do good; and his love will be in you a fountain of good works.

Direct. ii. 'Love your neighbours,' and it will be easy to you to do them all the good you can: as it is to do good to yourselves, or children, or dearest friends.

Direct. iii. 'Learn self-denial,' that selfishness may not cause you to be all for yourselves, and be satan's law of nature in you, forbidding you to do good to others.

Direct. iv. 'Mortify the flesh, and the vices of sensuality:' Pride and curiosity, gluttony and drunkenness, are insatiable gulfs, and will devour all, and leave but little for the poor: though there be never so many poor families which want bread and clothing, the proud person must first have the other silk gown, or the other ornaments which may set them out with the forwardest in the mode and fashion: and this house must first be more handsomely built, and these rooms must first be more neatly furnished; and these children must first have finer clothes: let Lazarus lie never so miserable at the door, the sensualist must be clothed in purple and silk, and fare deliciously and sumptuously daily. The glutton must have the dish and cup which pleaseth his

¹ Prov. xi. 24.

appetite, and must keep a full table for the entertainment of his companions that have no need. These insatiable vices are like swine and dogs, that devour all the children's bread. Even vain recreations and gaming shall have more bestowed on them, than church or poor (as to any voluntary gift). Kill your greedy vices once, and then a little will serve your turns, and you may have wherewith to relieve the needy, and do that which will be better to you at your reckoning day.

Direct. v. ' Let not selfishness make your children the inordinate objects of your charity and provision, to take up that which should be otherwise employed.' Carnal and worldly persons would perpetuate their vice, and when they can live no longer themselves, they seem to be half alive in their posterity, and what they can no longer keep themselves, they think is best laid up for their children, to feed them as full, and make them as sensual and unhappy as themselves. So that just and moderate provisions will not satisfy them; but their children's portions must be as much as they can get, and almost all their estates are 'sibi et suis,' 'for themselves and theirs:' and this pernicious vice is as destructive to good works, as almost any in the world. That God who hath said that he is worse than an infidel who provideth not for his own family, will judge many thousands to be worse than Christians, and than any that will be saved must be, who make their families the devourers of all which should be expended upon other works of charity.

Direct. vi. ' Take it as the chiefest extrinsical part of your religion to do good; and make it the trade or business of your lives, and not as a matter to be done on the by.' " Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world ^k." " If we are created for good works ^l:" " and redeemed and purified to be zealous of good works ^m:" and must be judged according to such works ⁿ: then certainly it should be our chiefest daily care and diligence, to do them with all our hearts and abilities. And as we keep a daily account of our own and our servant's business in our particular callings, so

^k James i. 27.

^m Tit. ii. 14.

^l Ephes. ii. 10.

ⁿ Matt. xxv.

should we much more of our employment of our master's talents in his service : and if a heathen prince could say with lamentation, ' Alas, I have lost a day ! ' if a day had passed in which he had done no one good, how much more should a Christian, who is better instructed to know the comforts and rewards of doing good.

Direct. VII. ' Give not only out of your superfluities, when the flesh is glutted with as much as it desireth ; but labour hard in your callings, and be thrifty and saving from all unnecessary expenses, and deny the desires of ease and fulness, and pride and curiosity that you may have the more to do good with.' Thriftiness for works of charity is a great and necessary duty, though covetous thriftiness for the love of riches be a great sin. He that wasteth one half his master's goods through slothfulness or excesses, and then is charitable with the other half, will make but a bad account of his stewardship. Much more he that glutteth his own and his family's and retainer's fleshly desires first, and then giveth to the poor only the leavings of luxury, and so much as their fleshly lusts can spare. It is a dearer, a laborious and a thrifty charity, that God doth expect of faithful stewards.

Direct. VIII. ' Delay not any good work which you have present ability and opportunity to perform.' Delay signifieth unwillingness or negligence. Love and zeal are active and expeditious : and delay doth frequently frustrate good intentions. The persons may die that you intend to do good to ; or you may die, or your ability or opportunities may cease : that may be done to day which cannot be done to-morrow. The devil is not ignorant of your good intentions, and he will do all that possibly he can to make them of no effect : and the more time you give him, the more you enable him to hinder you. You little foresee what abundance of impediments he may cast before you ; and so make that impossible which once you might have done with ease. " Say not to thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee." " Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth °."

Direct. IX. ' Distrust not Gods providence for thy own

° Prov. iii. 28. xxvii. 1.

provision.' An unbelieving man will needs be a God to himself, and trust himself only for his provisions, because indeed he cannot trust God. But you will find that your labour and care are vain, or worse than vain without God's blessing. Say not distrustfully, 'What shall I have myself when I am old?' Though I am not persuading you to make no provision, or to give away all; yet I must tell you, that it is exceeding folly to put off any present duty, upon distrust of God, or expectation of living to be old. He that over-night said, "I have enough laid up for many years," did quickly hear, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: and whose then shall the things be which thou hast provided?" Rather obey that, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest^o." Do you think there is not an hundred thousand whose estates are now consumed in the flames of London, who could wish that all that had been given to pious or charitable uses? Do but believe from the bottom of your hearts, that "he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he layeth out he will pay him again^q." And that, "he that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me: he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward: and whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only (i. e. when he hath no better) in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward^r." I say, believe this, and you will make haste to give while you may, lest your opportunity should overslip you.

Direct. x. 'What you cannot do yourselves, provoke others to do who are more able: "Provoke one another to love and to good works." Modesty doth not so much forbid you to beg for others as for yourselves. Some want but information to draw them to good works: and some that are unwilling, may be urged to it, to avoid the shame of uncharitableness: and though such giving do little good to

^o Luke xii. 20.
^q Prov. xix. 17.

^r Eccles. ix. 10.
^r Matt. x. 40—42.

themselves, it may do good to others. Thus you may have the reward when the cost is another's, as long as the charity is yours.

Direct. xi. 'Hearken to no doctrine which is an enemy to charity or good works; nor yet which teacheth you to trust in them for more than their proper part. He that ascribeth to any of his own works, that which is proper to Christ, doth turn them into heinous sin. And he that ascribeth not to them all that which Christ ascribeth to them, is a sinner also. And whatever ignorant men may prate, the time is coming, when neither Christ without our charity, nor our charity without Christ (but in subordination to him) will either comfort or save our souls.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

Cases and Directions about Confessing Sins and Injuries to others.

Tit. 1. *Cases about Confessing Sins and Injuries to others.*

Quest. 1. 'IN what cases is it a duty to confess wrongs to those that we have wronged?'

Ans. 1. When in real injuries you are unable to make any restitution, and therefore must desire forgiveness, you cannot well do it without confession. 2. When you have wronged a man by a lie, or by false witness, or that he cannot be righted, till you confess the truth. 3. When you have wronged a man in his honour or fame, where the natural remedy is to speak the contrary, and confess the wrong. 4. When it is necessary to cure the revengeful inclination of him whom you have wronged, or to keep up his charity, and so to enable him to love you, and forgive you. 5. Therefore all known wrongs to another, must be confessed, except when impossibility, or some ill effect which is greater than the good be like to follow. Because all men are apt to abate their love to those that injure them, and therefore all have need of this remedy. And we must do our part to be forgiven by all whom we have wronged.