the aim of Christians.

**perfect**] **complete**, in your love of others; not one-sided, or exclusive, as these just mentioned,  
but all-embracing, and God-like, = “*merciful*” Luke vi. 36.

**ye** is emphatic.  
No countenance is given by this verse to  
the ancient Pelagian or the modern heresy  
of perfectibility in this life. Such a sense  
of the words would be utterly at variance  
with the whole of the discourse. See especially vv. 22, 29, 32, in which the imperfections and conflicts of the Christian are  
fully recognized. Nor, if we consider this  
verse as a solemn conclusion of the second  
part of the Sermon, does it any the more  
admit of this view, asserting as it does that  
likeness to God in inward purity, love, and  
holiness, must be the continual aim and  
end of the Christian in all the departments of his moral life. But how far  
from having attained this likeness we are,  
St. Paul shews us (Phil. iii, 12); and  
every Christian feels, just *in the proportion in which he has striven after  
it*.

**CHAP. VI. 1–18.**] *The* THIRD DIVISION OF the SERMON, *in which the disciples of Christ are warned against hypocritical display of their good deeds, by  
the examples of abuses of the duties of  
almsgiving* (ver. 2), *praying* (ver. 5), *and  
fasting* (ver. 16).

**1.**] The discourse  
of our Lord now passes *from actions to  
motives*; not that He has not spoken to  
the heart before, but then it was only by  
inference, now directly.

**righteousness**] not *‘benevolence*,’ or *‘alms*,’ as  
in rabbinical usage,—for this meaning is  
never found in the N.T., and here we  
have **doing alms** treated of as a distinct head below. It is best then to  
understand **righteousness** as in ch. v.  
20, as a general term, including the  
three duties afterwards treated of.

The words **to be seen of** (by) **them**clearly define the course of action objected to:—not the open benevolence of  
the Christian who lets his light shine  
that men may glorify God, but the ostentation of him whose *object* is the praise  
and glory coming from man. “For,” says  
Chrysostom, “a man may do his good  
deeds before men, but not in order to be  
seen by them; and a man may do them  
not before men, but in order to be seen by  
them.”

**2–4,**] FIRST EXAMPLE. *Almsgiving*.

**2. sound a trumpet**] A proverbial  
expression, not implying any such custom  
of the hypocrites of that day, -but the  
habit of self-laudation, and display of  
good works in general. Many Commentators, among whom are Calvin and Bengel, think that the words are to be taken  
literally: and Euthymins mentions this  
view. But Lightfoot says, that he finds  
no trace of such a practice among the  
customs in almsgiving.

**before thee**]  
According to the way in which the former  
verse is taken, these words are variously  
understood to apply to the trumpet being  
*held up before the mouth in blowing, or to  
another person going before*.

**synagogues**] If this bears the ordinary meaning of places of worship, the literal meaning of the previous words cannot well be  
maintained. The synagogues, as afterwards the Christian churches, were the  
regular places for the collection of alms.

**have**] literally, **have in full,—  
exhaust**: not *have* their *due reward*.

**3.**] thy, emphatic: see ch. v. 48. This  
is another popular saying, not to be  
pressed so as to require a literal interpretation of it in the act of almsgiving, but implying simplicity, both of  
intention and act. Equally out of place  
are all attempts to explain the right and  
left hand symbolically, as was once the  
practice. The sound sense of Chrysostom  
preserves the right interpretation, where  
even Augustine strays into symbolism.