

GLAD TIDINGS.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth glad tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.—ISAIAH LII. 7.

THE GREAT GIVER TEACHING TO GIVE.

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"MEMOIR OF M'CHEYNE."

Believing men are to be not merely cisterns, but springs. "He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) One of these rivers which the Master declared should not fail to flow from his believing ones is delight in giving, or the gladsome habit of using all we possess as being stewards for the Lord, and not as proprietors of the same. When an Israelite had offered the sacrifice of atonement at the altar, he must forthwith bring MINCHA, or meat-offering, an offering in which he symbolically gave up to the Lord the possession of all his property. But we should not have said, "he must bring;" for it was all privilege—he was PERMITTED to bring his property, to give vent to his gratitude, to exhibit practically, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" So did Zaccheus at Jericho; so did the Pentecostal Church at Jerusalem.

Many do not seem to notice how often the Lord Jesus inculcated truth regarding this matter. His sayings on the point are very many; nor do we wonder that it should be so, considering that selfishness is in us a root of bitterness ever springing up to trouble us.

I. HE STATED THE DUTY.

And when He did so, it was done in startling terms. We read in Luke vi. 30: "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE." Have we read the words aright? Yes, the words are plain. Is there no other translation possible? No, they are too plain and downright to admit of any doubt. Is there no various reading, then? No, none; the words stare you in the face, "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE!"

Disciple of Christ, you are to be a light, ever dispensing its rays; you are to be a well, affording something to all who come. As you are to "Pray WITHOUT CEASING," and to "Give thanks IN EVERY THING," (1 Thess. v. 17, 18), so you are to have an always-giving heart and hand—a reali-

zation of that well over which was written:—

"Christian reader view in me,
An emblem of true charity,
Who freely what I have bestow,
Though neither heard nor seen to flow.
And I have full returns from heaven,
For every cup of water given."

While another, who is not a disciple, may be grumbling, "So many calls!" you are to reply, "Yes, very many; but they are all calls in providence to teach and cultivate in me a giving disposition." The Master had "many calls" upon Him for healing all disease, and helping all want, and "GAVE TO EVERY ONE."

Let us understand the context of this passage, Luke vi. 30. In the preceding verses, Christ inculcates, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you," (Luke vi. 27-28). This is the very mind that was in Him; this was what the Cross exhibited to the full; this is the heart of the Gospel, telling us the manifestation of God's love to enemies in the Beloved Son, who was made a curse for them that He might bless them. And surely this is the holy mind that disciples are expected to copy from their Master. Then in ver. 29, we see the meekness and calmness of Christ; "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." We, his disciples, are expected to possess a meekness of spirit and a self-control that would carry us this length, whenever circumstances required. And so ver. 30 comes in; "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE;" followed by the clause: "And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." Surely, these are words that call for a GIVING MIND, and a readiness to let go the things that are lawfully ours! Can less than this be the meaning?

If then, we turn to Matthew v. 39-42, we have the same subject treated of in very similar terms. It bids us not revenge, but be prepared "if one smite us on one cheek, to offer also the other"—not revenge, but rather, "if compelled to go a mile, to go two," should that be the alternative,—not revenge, but if unjustly dealt

with so that "one sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"—far better this alternative than exhibit the spirit of the world. Even so, "GIVE TO HIM THAT ASKETH OF THEE, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away," calls upon us to be ever ready to give, instead of being annoyed, as some are, by "so many calls." When asked, or when providence puts a case in our way, there must be no harsh denial, but an entire willingness to give, if the case of need be apparent.

In all this, who can fail to discern the spirit and tone of the Lord Jesus, whose charity sought not its own, but laid out even glory itself on us the undeserving?—Such a tone of character, therefore, must be essential to real holiness and the want of it a deformity, in as much as such a want is unlikeness to the Lord.

"Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give
Give love, give tears, and give thyself; [pelf,
Give, give—be always giving,
Who gives not, is not living.
The more we give,
The more we live."

II. HE STATED THE MANNER.

We are to give with a happy, cheerful feeling, as being privileged to do a blessed thing. "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE" (Acts xx. 35), are words of the Lord Jesus—words preserved and embalmed in the Church, words so well known that Paul could refer to them as in a manner proverbial, words that bear the peculiar and unmistakable characteristics of the soul and heart of Him from whose lips they fell. They are words that tell us not simply that "GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER" (2 Cor. ix. 7), but that God has implanted blessedness in right giving, so that the giver's face cannot fail to shine, if he knows what he is doing.—Yes, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE," as Mary did at Bethany, "THAN TO RECEIVE," as Solomon did when his ships returned laden with gold of Ophir, and every rare and precious thing.

Giving, it appears, is not to be reckoned self-denial at all. It would have been no wonder though the Lord had made this call on us for giving, even if every act of giving had been sore self-denial, a wrench-