

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 wrenching off a right hand. But it turns out that there is no self-denial in it to a soul fully imbued with the mind of God. To such a soul, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." We do no one a favour by giving; we bless ourselves, that is, we, in the very act, break open the alabaster box which pours on us its own fragrance and refreshing.

The grand illustration of this blessedness is to be found in the Godhead. Man likes to GET, God lives to GIVE; and it is God that is "blessed for ever." In the plan of Redemption, we find THE FATHER counting it "more blessed to give than to receive." He developes (so to speak) His own bliss by giving that immense, that infinite gift, His own Son. This is the rate at which He who is blessed in giving, delights to give. Here is a gratification of his giving heart; He bestows on man the unspeakable gift, the Beloved Son, and to Him He grants the gift of a multitude that no man can number, a countless flock of ransomed souls for their Shepherd's glory, while to each of the flock He gives not only the Beloved Son, but also the Holy Spirit with all His train of graces and joys. Then, also we find the Son's rate of giving to be in no respect less liberal. He gives Himself, "God manifest in flesh" for us, Himself with all His obedience, all His suffering and death, all His merit, and all that all these purchase and make sure. The price of the purchased blessings must not be forgotten; for He gave not only service, but anguish, woe, death, in short whatever justice sought—all in order to present us with grace and glory, without money or price on our part. O what giving is this! O my soul what giving is here! And the HOLY GHOST also (who in Psa. li. 12, is called "THE FREE," i.e. the princely, or generous, or liberal Spirit), He comes in the name of Jesus, and makes a gift of HIMSELF! and thus in one sum we are made to receive, "Love, joy, peace, goodness," in short, all