

the same sort as the act of the unforgiving servant in the parable, who, though forgiven his ten thousand talents, came down with unmitigated ferocity on the fellow-servant that owed him an hundred pence.

The act of generosity was his distribution over the cities in the neighbourhood of the spoil which he had taken from the Amalekites. If he had been of a selfish nature he might have kept it all for himself and his people. But it was "the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." It was David's desire to recognise God in connection with this spoil, both to show that he had not made his onslaught on the Amalekites for personal ends, and to acknowledge, in royal style, the goodness which God had shown him. That it was an act of policy as well as a recognition of God may be readily acknowledged. Undoubtedly David was desirous to gain the favourable regard of his neighbours, as a help toward his recognition when the throne of Israel should become empty. But we may surely admit this, and yet recognise in his actions on this occasion the generosity as well as the godliness of his nature. He was one of those men to whom it is more blessed to give than to receive, and who are never so happy themselves as when they are making others happy. The Bethel mentioned in ver. 27 as first among the places benefited can hardly be the place ordinarily known by that name, which was far distant from Ziklag, but some other Bethel much nearer the southern border of the land. The most northerly of the places specified of whose situation we are assured was Hebron, itself well to the south of Judah, and soon to become the capital where David reigned. The large number of places that shared his bounty was a proof of the royal liberality with which it was spread abroad.