

## GIVING MADE EASY.

BY REV. JOHN TODD, D.D.

As I have already hinted, those upon whom we most depend for the real charities of the church, are not those who are *naturally* generous. They are the men who naturally love money, and to whom giving is not easy. This desire for property makes them economical, saving, and industrious. Every tendency of their nature and life is to retain and to keep what they acquire. And yet another principle may and does come in, that of love to Christ, and that of conscience, which opens the heart and the purse, and makes it easy to become benevolent. The stronger man comes in and spoils the goods. Let no one think, then, because he is naturally covetous, he can never learn to be "a cheerful giver," and give easy. Now for a few hints.

*Don't feel that you must be sure you are doing for worthy objects—when you give.*

It would be easier to give if we knew that every one whom we benefitted was worthy, or would be thankful, or would make a good use of our benefaction. But it is not on this principle that Christ teaches us to act. Among the five thousand whom he fed with a miracle, were there not probably many who were unworthy? Nay, so far from making a good use of it, they perverted it, and wanted to make him a king, so that they might be fed on miracles, and live without work. And when he says: "the poor ye have always with you," does he mean to teach that these poor will always be worthy—be deserving—be thankful? We are to give as God gives us air, and water, and light, and space—not to the just and the thankful only, but to the evil and unthankful. What if, in some cases, they *do* abuse what you give, it is not *your* property they abuse, it is Christ's. You have given it to him. Did not our Saviour work miracles for the nine who returned not to give thanks, and doubtless for multitudes who would and did scorn him—or certainly never thanked him? Don't worry as to what becomes of your money, after it is gone out of your hands. It may go directly into Bibles, or it may make boxes to put Bibles in. It may feed the missionary who is preaching salvation, and it may go into the coffin that encloses his body. It may be used the most economically possible, and it may be wasted. That is no concern of yours. You are not accountable after you have given to such objects as your conscience approves.

2. *Set apart steadily a certain part of your income for Christ.*

I am not to say how much you must give. The Bible don't say. It says, "give full measure, pressed down, running over," "give without grudging," "God loveth a cheerful giver." "Let every one of you set apart—as God hath prospered him." "Freely ye have received, freely give." "He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully." But after all, it is left to your conscience to say how much each one is to give. But the point I wish to urge is, that every one have a drawer, or a box, devoted solely to charity money. Whenever you have money come in, whether it be from Bank stock, from shipping or from trading, from the farm, or for the eggs you sell, ask at once, conscientiously, how much of that belongs to Christ? Whatever it be, at once, put in his box! There now! It is no longer yours! Don't touch it any more than you would borrow bread from the Communion Table—till the time comes to hand it over to his cause. You will find it easy to give, after you have once put it in the box. This plan I have seen tried with great success. It cultivates the conscience, it cherishes self-denial, and it enables you to give without grudging. And unless you do this, or something like it, you will be surprised, on accurate calculation, to find how little you really give in the course of the year! I once knew a man who wanted and tried to be a good, conscientious Christian, and who came to his minister to remonstrate sharply that "contributions were taken up so frequently." His minister heard him very quietly, and then said, "Mr. Smith, won't you now just put down on paper the sums you have contributed in the last year?"

"Certainly, sir. Please to put down as I call them over."