

SAVING BY GIVING.

BY REV. T. EDWARDS, D. D.

"Some months since," said a gentleman a day or two ago, "some months since I was solicited to give — thousand dollars to a very important object. I had the money and almost made up my mind to give it, but on the whole concluded to think over the matter a little longer. So I deposited the sum in the banking house of — and now they have failed; if I ever get even part of it, it will be after waiting a long time; and I may lose it altogether. If I had given it to the object proposed, I should have saved it all!"

It reminds one of the epitaph on the old tombstone in Italy; what I spent, I had what I gave I saved; what I kept, I lost." Or as Mark Anthony said, when in distress and at the ebb of fortune, "I have lost everything except what I have given away." Good old John Bunyan writes:

"A man there was, and they called him mad,
The more he gave the more he had."

"And giving to the Lord," says another, "is but transporting our goods to a higher floor." And says Dr. Barrow, "In defiance of all the torture and malice and might of the world, the truly liberal will ever be rich, for God's providence is his estate; God's wisdom his counsellor; God's power his defence; God's favour his reward; and God's promise his security." And of the Spaniards in Mexico, Lord Bacon tells us, that "when pursued by their Indian enemies, those that cast away their gold were able to swim the rivers, and so escaped; while those who covetously clung to it, were either drowned by its weight, or so encumbered as to be overtaken and slain. And so," he adds, "It is with those who never part with their gold in charity, that it is often their ruin."

In a similar spirit Richard Baxter writes, "I never prospered more in my small estate than when I gave away most. My rule has been to study to need as little as possible for myself; to lay out nothing on need-nots; to live frugally on little; to serve God on what he allowed me, so that what I took for self might be

as good work for the common good as that which I gave for others; and then to do all the good I could with the rest. And the more I have done this, the more I have had to do it with (for, to the glory of God's grace, he will be no man's debtor); and when I gave away almost all, the more came in, I scarce know how, when unexpected and unplanned for and when, by improvidence I was led on to use too much on myself, or on things of little importance, then I prospered less than when I did otherwise. If I had planned to give only after my death, then all might have been lost; whereas, when I gave away at present, and trusted to God for the future, then I wanted nothing and lost nothing."

A liberal Christian merchant, when asked how he could give so liberally to every good object replied, "Before I was converted I spent liberally for self and the world, and at my conversion I solemnly promised to give a fixed proportion of all my income to doing good; and every year since I made and have acted on that promise my business has steadily increased, so that now I can steadily give more and more to Him who gives me all." And another who suffered great losses and to whom his pastor said, "You have lost so much this year that I did not think of calling on you," replied, "Yes, I have suffered great losses and must begin to retrench, but retrenchment must not begin at the house of God." And Thornton, the rich and liberal friend of Cowper and John Newton, in similar circumstances, said, "The wealth is not mine but the Lord's, and it may be he is going to take it out of my hands and give it to another who will be more faithful; and if so I ought to be making good use of what is left." And he doubled his usual subscription.

When a poor heathen came to one of our missionaries, giving first for himself and then for his wife and then for each of his children, on being asked if he was not giving too much, his touching and memorable reply was "God's work must be done and I may be dead!" The lesson is one that all may well remember; and in giving as well as doing, God's providence, as well as his word,