

STORING FOR GOD, AND GIVING TO GOD.

BY REV. JOHN ROSS.

The process of Storing God's portion is of divine origin—"Lay by in store," 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Can any one deny this the force and value of a divine suggestion? But love lifts a suggestion to a prized law of action. If any deny the perpetuated authority on them, of injunctions given to Galatian and Corinthian Christians, what have they remaining at all, either of privilege or obligation? seeing that there is no epistle inscribed to any churches now existing. The Scripture method of storing for God, appears to be necessary for the doing of God's work, in sustaining worship, evangelising mankind, and succouring the needy satisfactorily. Many Christians present weekly offerings at the sanctuary, not storing God's portion, the true Scriptural method. Weekly offering is good, as a convenient way of applying a suitable part of the sacred store to its first claim—divine worship; but without the "storing," the offering proves fitful and insufficient. The whole question rests upon the admission or rejection of God's claim on a part of every one's possessions; and on the employment of a divinely discovered way of securing that this claim shall be met certainly and first—by instantly laying apart that portion, that it may without fail be devoted judiciously to sacred and benevolent purposes. The practice of weekly offering in churches may introduce the thin end of the wedge of storing personally. It is, however, human and unsatisfactory, apart from storing God's portion.

Storing for God—is a divine method, with a view to giving easily, pleasantly, and liberally, according to means, whenever needy objects arise. The *storing* is *private* with God alone, in view of His goodness, and of sacred obligation providing for coming demands. The *giving* is *public* in the sight of men; meeting demands according to provision already made for them. "Storing" is a wholesale process of laying in a stock—for the retail process of responding promptly to the wants advanced. "Storing" is accumulating a fund for wise application against times of need—sinking a well for the constant retention of a home supply, instantly available for required use—replenishing a reservoir for a regular system of distribution, and for possible contingencies. "Storing" is of God, insuring and constraining to self-prompted, liberal, cheerful, blissful "giving." "Giving" without "storing" is of man, and while generally small, tardy, and distasteful at best, requires strong and frequent stimulant for even such exercise. "Storing" in contrast to *spending*.—Spending all we have is an animal process—present self-enjoyment. The lowest grades of creatures do that. Sparing, saving some of what we have, is rational. Retention of it for the future is good and noble, being an act of self-denial rather than of self-indulgence. "Storing" for God, in contrast to storing for *ourselves and dependents*.—To "store," to save for ourselves and friends alone, nurtures covetousness and avarice under the cover of a virtue—suitable providence. To "store" for God, as well as for ourselves, cherishes *justice to God*. Providing first for him who is first and essential, and subordinating all other claims to his. It further cherishes *love to God and man*, and presents *undeniable proof* of the same in the constant devotion of the first and best, to a far grander object than the gratification of our poor puny selves.

Giving to God.—*Giving* in contrast to *paying*.—Much of even Christian offering soon degenerates into paying. What commences a gift, often goes on as a mere payment of a subscription or a rent. *Paying* and *giving* are opposites. Paying is getting as much commodity for as little cost as practicable. *Giving* is of heart purpose and loving contrivance—providing the fullest offering that ability and prudence allow. As we can never render an equivalent to God for His infinite benefactions to us, let our offerings ever be, at least, the joyfully devoted gifts of love. "*Giving*" to God, in contrast to receiving from Him.—Receiving is an essential act of creature life, and a mark of creature nature. Man receives even