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## A PORTION OF THYSELF

We have tried in this column some time ago to explore the art of giving. The approach of the festive season has made the subject most timely again and as this is of deep significance in human life and personal relations, we quote:

“Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself”, says Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Almost anything in the world can be bought for money except the warm impulses of the human heart. They have to be given. And they are priceless in their power to purchase happiness for two people, the recipient and the giver.

While you may not think of what you have to offer as being of any particular value, it may fill a need in someone's life. And if it does that, even for a fraction of a minute, it will add that much to the world's happiness. And happiness is one of the greatest gifts within the power of any of us to bestow, particularly in these troubled days when the world is full of fear and suspicion and men's minds and hearts are anxious.

A gift of ourself “in kind” — something we can make or do — is often more acceptable to people than anything we might buy for them. We are inclined to value too lightly the gifts “in kind” which we have to offer our friends, neighbours and fellow workers. We take our talents too much for granted.

Within each of us is a great store of giveable riches. It may be in the form of skill of hand, or of some special proficiency or training. It may be the ability to entertain, to organise, to teach. It may be a talent that we have never taken seriously, but which might be cultivated for the pleasure of others. Or it might be a surplus of Time.

Failing any of these, what we have to give may be just warmth of heart — and if we think of our hearts rather than of our purses as the reservoir of our giving, we shall find it full all the time.

[Condensed from David Dunn's book,  
“Try Giving Yourself Away”.]

—W.R.