

that He might ask us to give beyond our means, if it were left absolutely to Him; or so much less than former gifts, as to excite the remarks of others on our apparent niggardliness. Hence, to leave the question as to amount in His hands, absolutely, is to be possibly told to give from nothing up to all that we have. It is, then, just here that the whole far-reaching subject of the guidance of the Spirit in our finances meets us in a practical, workable form.

It is one thing, therefore, to sing unctiously with the congregation:

"Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite do I withhold."

and quite another to face the hard, prosaic fact of actual giving, not knowing but that if the sum to be given is left completely to be pronounced on by the Holy Spirit, it may far exceed former notions of giving, or be so small as to compromise us in the eyes of valued friends.

And yet he who shrinks from this practical, decisive, test can only at best prattle about divine guidance—his testimony thereafter becomes "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

But when such tests are met in the Spirit of the Gospel, that is, where such implicit, loving confidence in the character and wisdom of the Godhead exists as to leave it to Him to decide the amount, certain that His guidance in this thing will be the best possible for all concerned, even if it should make such large demands on present resources as to seemingly jeopardize all the future, or forfeit for the present the good opinion of friends; then it is that giving becomes a real means of grace, and the rapture of the act connects it really and truly with the time of consciously accepting the Holy Ghost to walk in Him forever.

Beloved, let us not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us in money matters, as though some strange thing had happened us. But the rather let us take joyfully the spoiling of our goods when He, in whose hands are all the treasures of the universe, calls for sacrifice at our hands.

He who fights to a successful issue this mighty money-battle on the line of the constant presence and guidance of

the Spirit, will have no difficulties about the law of tithing; for him the law of the Spirit will have superseded this legal requirement, not by destroying it, but by enabling him through the Spirit to fulfil its spirit.

If any one can imagine such a follower of Christ falling below the tithing proportion, taking his life as a whole, then may he vaunt legalism as superior to the law of the Spirit; then, too, might he have some grounds for his fears that the example of Christ under the Spirit's teaching is a poorer incentive to beneficence than the Jewish laws, flamed out at Sinai.

But have not many made the law of the Spirit an excuse for stinginess? Certainly, and many more will; and we doubt not but that from time to time some who accept the Spirit in all His offices to walk in Him, when met by the tests and teachings which will be multiplied and become more and more searching in the Association, will be unable to abide them, and thus the hollow nature of their profession being discovered to them, if not willing to stand complete in Christ in this thing, they will be weeded out from among their brethren, even if that weeding process should threaten all forms of trouble.

Paul wrote a grand truth in the words "the love of money is the root of all evil," therefore, unless this selfish love is utterly uprooted by the work of the Spirit, and gives place to a preferential love for God, in vain does one essay to walk in the Spirit.

The great apostle further declares that no covetous man shall inherit the kingdom of God. That is, to be practical, no man who does not yield absolutely to the guidance of the Spirit, after the sort above indicated, can remain in this spiritual kingdom. They may begin well, and show some joyous acts of obedience, but so soon as the thorns and briars which grow from love of money as seed, spring up, they become unfruitful.

But they who yield gladly to every claim of the Spirit, in this as in all other matters, possess the peace and joy of Christ in this world, no matter what the apparent sacrifices through which they may be called to pass.