

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

"How do we know when a spirit not ours, but greater, is acting upon our souls?"

When we feel conscious, not so much of *possessing a life, as of a life possessing us.*

To make this distinction clear, let us observe that it holds through all the higher forms of human life. You will find just that distinction between a true and a false teacher.

The man who proclaims the truth he thinks, as his own, is never the highest kind of preacher; he who speaks because the truth *possesses* him, leaves an impress on the ages.

The true artist is not the man who paints to depict his own ideas, but he who is filled by a mighty inspiration which compels him to paint the forms of beauty and brightness which he sees glowing around him.

Passing to the moral life, we find the same distinction there. He who does right because it may give pleasure, and fears to do wrong because it is painful, is never, in the highest sense, a moral man at all, but he only is such who does right because filled with a life higher and grander than his own—who recognises in conscience the monitions of the Eternal Spirit of God.

So in spiritual life. When we are led by a spirit of life greater than our own, we know that the Divine Spirit is acting upon us—that is a witness of sonship founded on the rock of God's eternal truthfulness. Emotions may vary; life may darken; yet because we feel a power greater than our own taking hold of this nature and turning it heavenwards; because we feel the hand of God sweeping over the

chorus of our natures and tuning them to immortal melodies; because He is changeless as the old eternities, we know that He is bearing witness to our spirits that we are His children: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—*The late E. L. Hall.*

## FREE-WILL OFFERINGS.

THE Church will mourn over an empty treasury until she teaches her children that offerings to God are among the highest privileges and duties of a Christian. No human expedients will cure the evil. The tithes are the Lord's. When we bring, as a free-will offering, these gifts to Him, there will be no lack of means for His work. It may be impossible to realize this at once; we can teach the duty, we can offer men the opportunity, we can promise them the blessing of God, we can place His service before them, not as a grudging duty, but as the privilege of a loving, thankful heart, done not unto men but unto God.—*Bishop Whipple.*

## SPEAK TO YOUR CLERGYMAN.

THE Pastor would be greatly aided in his work if his people would be more ready to confide in him their religious difficulties, and doubts, and troubles. If they would speak more freely of their peculiar trials and perplexities, and would go to him for help and instruction in the many little and great matters that arise as questions in their minds—suggested perhaps by the objection of some critical or skeptical neighbor, or may be in