

THE MINISTRY OF MONEY.—No. II.

THE MOTIVES AND METHODS OF GIVING.

[EDITORIAL.—A. T. P.]

Why and how shall I give? This question is answered at length in 2 Corinthians, 8th and 9th chapters.

The dignity and gravity of the subject of Christian giving may be seen from the space here given to it, two entire chapters in this epistle being devoted to this theme. Giving lies lowest and highest in the structure of Christian life: lowest, for the idea of stewardship toward God and fellowship with man is at the bottom; highest, for the ripest, richest fruit of godliness is unselfish benevolence.

The Levitical system of giving met all needs of church support and church work. The atonement money, Levitical tithes, temple tithes, and poor tithes, with the first things and free-will offerings, left no want unsupplied.

After the dispersion, the Jews and proselytes in foreign lands sent to Jerusalem annually the sacred money, or temple tribute, which was paid as a matter of patriotism and of piety. This usage may have suggested a contribution from the Gentile churches for the Mother Church at Jerusalem during the extreme destitution which came of the social revolution, persecution, an overstocked labor market, and famine. At the first suggestion the matter was taken up eagerly at Corinth, but not being followed up by systematic effort, easily gave place to lukewarmness, if not opposition, until disciples endeavored to hide behind complaints that Paul was too exacting in his demands, or was even seeking private advantage. Confident that the heart of the Corinthian converts would react in favor of what was right, Paul sought to rekindle the spirit of alms-giving. Such is the historic introduction to these two chapters.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the supreme value of this perfect plea for Christian giving; for, in the course of this argument, every *principle* upon which giving is founded is distinctly stated, and every *mot.ve* which could influence Christian giving is directly appealed to; hence, when this argument is thoroughly mastered, nothing remains to be added.

Examining and analyzing both chapters, we shall find fourteen grand divisions in the argument; half of them may represent principles, and the other half motives; though it will be often apparent that motives and principles run into each other. For unity and brevity we disregard the order of verses, and group the seven principles and the seven motives in logical arrangement.

I.—PRINCIPLES OF GIVING.

1. The basis of acceptable giving is self-giving. (See viii: 5.) "They first gave their own selves unto the Lord." Compare Psalm l. where God teaches that the wicked who hate instruction and cast