

alone, weary in body, and sad in heart, he threw himself down to sleep with nothing but the hard stones for his pillows, a gracious God remembered in mercy Isaac's penitent son, and in the visions of the night, Jehovah favored him with a revelation of himself, which both illumines his mind, and powerfully impresses his heart. Under the hallowed influences of this vision, he vows this remarkable vow, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillow shall be God's house; AND OF ALL THAT THOU SHALT GIVE ME I WILL SURELY GIVE THE TENTH TO THEE." Gen. 28: 20-22.

These passages are short but they are clear and decisive, as to the point under discussion. Bending our minds to their study, instinctively we ask: What means this consecration of substance to that God who is Himself the Great Proprietor of all? Was it a gift intended to propitiate His favor? By no means, for in both instances these men engaged God's favour, and had just received the most signal tokens of his approbation. Abraham was on his way back to his tent after the achievement of a splendid victory. Jacob was still under the ravishing influence of the magnificent vision with which during the preceding night he had been favoured. Not to win the favor of God, then, for that they had already gained, but as a token of their appreciation of His goodness they devoted their substance to His service. Their hearts were glowing with grateful emotions, and the offering which they presented was their visible, as well as audible, answer to the question: What shall we render to the Lord for all His benefits. This joyful consecration of their goods was the outcome of liveliest gratitude. It was the manifestation of truest love. It was the language of deepest devotion. It was an act of purest, sublimest, worship. Let this truth be firmly held, and in the mind of every believer, and it will raise their gifts

entirely out of a commercial, into a purely religious, and spiritual region.

But whence originated the practice which both these godly men so conscientiously followed? Was it the spontaneous suggestion of their own hearts, or were they acting in accordance with an intimation of the Divine Will? This is an important question, for the answer which it receives will embrace in its sweep, both the character of the services which these men rendered and to a certain extent the binding obligation of their practice upon believers in every age.

Two considerations have swayed my mind in arriving at the conclusion that the patriarchal practice of devoting a tenth to God had its origin with Jehovah Himself. As already stated their offering was an act of worship. Now it is a Scriptural principle, that any species of worship to be acceptable to God must be able to plead His authority. As some one has beautifully said, "True worship never sprang from the earth, and ascended with acceptance to heaven; but from heaven she came to earth, and thence went back a welcome visitant to her original home, the bosom of God." We know that praise, prayer, the reading, hearing, and preaching of the word, the offering of sacrifices, the observance of circumcision, and the Passover under the old dispensation, and of Baptism and the Lord's Supper under the new, are all directly and positively authorized by the Great Head of the Church Himself. It follows from all this that analogy requires us to plead a divine origin for the practice of devoting a tenth to Him. Either we must admit this conclusion or shut ourselves up to the preferring of the grave charge of will-worship against those pious men whose reverence for God and His ordinances reclaim so loudly against such a supposition.

Again, history affirms that the practice of tithing was not confined to the patriarchs and their descendants. It were easy to prove from the writings of those who have investigated the subject most fully, that many ancient nations remote from, and unconnected with each other, were in