

Thomas.—I think, then, you will find it right.

Mr. Sharp.—Very well, we shall see. Now some Christians (for so I suppose you would call them) deny the sacraments; some the divinity of our Lord; and some worship God (as they say) in images and saints. Should you think it right to try and convert any of these?

Thomas.—Why, yes, Sir; because they are in error.

Mr. Sharp.—But they all worship God according to their conscience; and surely you have no right to interfere with them.

Thomas.—I see, sir. When I said every man had a right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, it must be taken with certain limits.

Mr. Sharp.—Ah, now, Thomas, you are speaking sensibly.

Thomas.—But how are these limits to be defined?

Mr. Sharp.—Let us try and see if we can find out. What do you understand by conscience?

Thomas.—A something within us which *approves* when we do right, and *reproves* when we do wrong.

Mr. Sharp.—But we must *first know* what is right or wrong before conscience can approve of the one, or reprove us for the other. Must we not?

Thomas.—Well, I suppose so.

Mr. Sharp.—For example: If a man were to commit a theft, would not conscience reprove him for doing wrong? I am speaking, of course, of conscience generally, not of a hardened conscience.

Thomas.—Yes, I should think so.

Mr. Sharp.—Why?

Thomas.—Because the Bible says we are not to steal; and in the case you mention the man would be stealing.

Mr. Sharp.—Then, before his conscience could reprove him for stealing, he must first know whether stealing be contrary to the law of God or not.

Thomas.—Yes, that seems certain.

Mr. Sharp.—So that you see *conscience* implies a knowledge of the Divine law or rule, which should direct or govern a man's own choice.

Thomas.—You mean, sir, that when a man

does wrong, his conscience reprove him for doing wrong, because it is based upon the Divine law, which forbids him doing wrong.

Mr. Sharp.—You have just hit it, Thomas. And so again, before a man can worship God according to his conscience, he must first ascertain what the law of God is with regard to the worship of God.

Thomas.—Yes, sir, I see now.

Mr. Sharp.—And if a man's conscience tell him to worship God *contrary* to that law, he has no right to follow his conscience.

Thomas.—No; I am bound to confess so.

Mr. Sharp.—So that your principle 'that a man has a right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience,' is not altogether right.

Thomas.—I see it cannot be defended, sir.

Mr. Sharp.—If the Jew had said that he claimed this privilege of worshipping God according to conscience, and had refused to worship in the Temple, the one place appointed, would his worship have been acceptable?

Thomas.—I should say not.

Mr. Sharp.—So you see, a man must worship God (*i.e.* to be acceptable or right worship) in the manner and place, how and where, God has made known to us in the Holy Scriptures, and not according, as he thinks, to the dictates of his conscience.

Thomas.—I see, sir, very well what you mean.

Mr. Sharp.—Well, then, it remains for you to consider whether, by worshipping in places and manner *different to the Church*, you are worshipping God, according to His Divine laws. With this consideration I shall leave you; praying that God may guide you into all truth.

[*Penny Post.*]

Church Matters at Clackington in 1875.

CHAPTER XVIII.

'WELL!' exclaimed Mrs. Slowton interrogatively, sitting up suddenly in bed on her husband entering the room, 'I hope you've settled the affairs of the parish to your satisfaction; you've been long enough about it, at any rate, keeping people out of their beds when they ought to be asleep. I should like to know what all this talking has been about, eh?' And this 'truly pious' lady looked hard and sharp and inquiring to the very frills of her nightcap.