

## CLAIMS OF THE TREASURY OF THE LORD

"And of all that thou givest me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."—Genesi. xxviii. 22

It would seem from this that the duty of giving a certain portion of income to the Lord was felt to be obligatory, by pious men, long before any positive law was revealed on the subject. And, it is probable, that by some means it was ascertained that the proportion devoted to the service of the Lord, ought to be, at least, a tithe of all that by industry, in a lawful calling, man could gain.

Afterwards it was established by law, that every person should not only give a tenth of his property to support the worship of God, but he was required, also, to offer the first-born of his flocks and herds, and the first-fruits of his harvest. On every third year, also, their seems to have been a separate tithing, the proceeds of which were to be distributed among the poor. Besides those prescribed offerings, the people were accustomed to make free-will offerings, and especially, thank-offerings, after the reception of some signal favour, or the experience of some remarkable deliverance.

It is a question of real and practical interest, how far these ancient customs and laws of the people of God may serve to guide us in our duty in regard to this matter. One thing is certain, namely, that the obligations of those living under the Christian dispensation, to give to the treasury of the Lord, cannot be less than that of the ancient servants of God, who lived under a darker dispensation. As to the proportion to be given, it should not be less than that formerly prescribed. The only thing which could be alleged in favour of a smaller proportion is, that the ritual service of the Jews was much more expensive than the spiritual service of the Christian Church. But it should be considered that while goats, and bullocks, and sheep, and lambs, are not now required for the worship of God, the Christian Church has imposed on it, by its Head, the propagation of the gospel through the whole world; a duty not imposed on the ancient Church, and the fulfilment of this duty will require much greater funds than were necessary to keep up the worship of the temple. Certainly, then, the proportion of our income, devoted to the service of the Lord, should in no case be less than one-tenth. Some, whose hearts devise liberal things, will not be contented with this, but will feel the obligation of gratitude constraining them to give the double of the proportion mentioned. God has thought proper not to lay down a rigid rule on this subject, but to make it matter of trial of the principles by which his professing people are actuated. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." What is done spontaneously is more acceptable than what is done by constraint. And all persons are not in the same circumstances; for while some, who have large incomes, have few or no children to support and educate, others have large families, or need their money to carry on their business. But we have no right to appropriate to our own use what properly belongs to the treasury of the Lord. Who are they who in the Bible are charged with robbing God? Such as withhold the tithes and sacrifices, which, by the law, were due. And what shall be said of those who now keep back that proportion of their weekly or yearly gains, which belongs to the treasury of the Lord.

Many have recommended system in dispensing our charities. All the system which is requisite is, a determination to give a certain portion of our income. Let it be one-tenth, for example.—Those who receive the fruit of their labours weekly, should follow the rule given to the Churches by the apostle Paul; and on the first day of the week lay aside, in a separate drawer or purse, that which has been consecrated to the service of God. And let no sacrilegious hand dare to take from this sacred treasure for other purposes—except it be in the way of borrowing—

and then that which has been received on loan, should be carefully and promptly restored. If the person's income is received monthly, quarterly, or annually let the same rule be followed at the end of either of these periods. In this case, the spirit of the apostolic recommendation is better than the letter. If you have a fund belonging to the Lord, when an application is made for a contribution, consider first, whether the object is one to which you ought to contribute; and secondly, how much you ought to give to this object, bringing into view all the other objects to which you should give. Giving on this system, will always be done cheerfully.—In fact, the money is already given, and you are the steward to dispense it.

## THE FREENESS AND FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

"The reason why we so often find the awakened sinner so slow in apprehending the simple gospel of the grace of God, is, that he cannot understand its freeness or fullness. He confounds it with thoughts about righteousness, and therefore is set upon searching for a reason for it. He wants to find something in himself, which, in some way, may distinguish him from other sinners, and thus make him, as he thinks, a fit object of this grace. And when he cannot find this in his works, he would vain search for it in his feelings. He wants to find a certain state of mind and feeling in himself, before he can think himself entitled to lay hold upon the blessing which the gospel of the grace of God presents. But this is absurd; since to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Now such grace as is here found is the most difficult thing for a man to perceive and apprehend; and this just because of the darkness which is in him, and of its exceeding fullness. It is the outflowing of the gracious mind of God. It is according to the infinite greatness of God's own mind; and, therefore, the manner in which it meets and deals with the sinner, is of necessity quite contrary to all the thoughts and ideas of man's heart. It is only quite natural, of course, that man should seek to measure the character of God's dealing by his own; and although in doing this, he cannot but allow, it to be far more perfect and excellent than his, inasmuch as he knows God is above himself, yet still he makes his own carnal apprehension of what favour is, the basis of his judgment about God, and therefore his judgment about it, of necessity, goes wrong. God's gracious way of meeting the sinner is the out-flowing of His own mind; and therefore far above the highest range of man's thoughts. He meets the sinner just in his own position as a sinner. Like Saul, he may be a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; but God, without requiring any exercise of mind, any course of humiliation for sin, or any predisposing qualification of any sort, meets him just as he is—a sinner, with all the free abounding blessing of the gospel of His grace. Be assured you will never find in yourself any title to believe; the grace which I perceive in Jesus, and not the sorrow I may have felt for my sin, is my ground for my believing and resting upon him. I believe, not because I have passed through any previous state of feeling about my sin, but because I can perceive something of the fullness of the love and grace of God in Christ. O that men should bind the riches of God's free grace by their own poor thoughts of that scanty favour which is practised among men! Your case, poor sinner, is really a desperate one. It may, or it may not, appear so to you, but it is before God. Nothing can meet it but free grace; and this in all its characteristic fullness is to be found in Jesus. His own words are—Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—Anonymous.

THE FOOT.—The man of learning without piety is a fool, because he knows every thing in heaven and earth but himself.

GIVING A NAME IN BAPTISM.—In administering the rite of circumcision it was customary to give a name to the child. This is evident from the circumstances attending the circumcision of John the Baptist, as related in the Gospel according to Luke, i. 59-64; and also those attending the circumcision of our blessed Saviour, as recorded in the next chapter of the same gospel.—The same practice probably existed, from the earliest period of the New Testament church, in the administration of baptism. It makes, however, no necessary or important part of the rite. A baptism administered without a name, would, of course be just as valid as if one were announced. And there is nothing in the essential nature of the case, which would forbid a name given to a child in baptism to be reconsidered and altered afterwards. Yet, inasmuch as a child, when baptised, is announced to the church as a new member, subject to its maternal watch and care, it is, in common, for obvious reasons, to be introduced and known under some name, so that each child may be distinguished, and may receive its appropriate treatment. To introduce a nameless member into any society, would be both unreasonable and inconvenient. Moreover, it is of great consequence, both to civil and religious society, that the birth and baptism of every child be recorded in regular church books. The formation of this record, requires, it is evident, the use of a name, and after the name is adopted and recorded in this public register, it is plain that frequent alterations of the name, and tampering, in a corresponding manner, with the public register, would lead to endless confusion and mischief. Thus we are conducted by a very obvious train of reasoning, to the conclusion that the name announced in baptism, ought, in general, to be carefully retained without subtraction or addition. Sometimes, indeed, the civil law requires such registers to be made and preserved, in regard to every birth and baptism. Where this is the case, there is evidently an additional reason for adhering strictly to the name announced in baptism, recorded in the appropriate register, and thus brought under official notice, and recorded as the property of the state.—Dr. Miller.

The evangelization of the world demands the best, the greatest ministers amongst us. To say "shall we part with a first-rate man to go to foreign climes?" Look at what the Bible says.—First rate men! Was there ever such a first-rate man as Paul, or a second-rate man like Barnabas, and yet while they were labouring with acceptance among their people, their converts, and while their presence among them seemed essential to the well being of the Church? What said the Spirit. "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work wherunto I have called them." If the best of our ministers or theological professors were to go to foreign climates, the work would be entirely worthy of them, provided they were found worthy of it.—Dr. Duff.

BOOKS.—Books are the seeds of things. They are the preserved essences of the minds that have lived before us. They are the armory of the human mind, containing at once the trophies of its past, and the weapons for its future conquests. As the Dutch Shakspeare has said of *Voorleser*, so we may say of all the books that we read; "Whatever is anchored in them, floats about in our brains." It is of vast importance, then, what we read. No one that values the purity of his heart should ever touch a bad book.

SUGGESTIVE.—The profane dogma of Romanism, that the consecrated wafer is truly and without a figure of speech, the body, soul, and divinity of Christ, becomes more revolting when viewed in connexion with the fact, that recently at Rome some thieves broke into one of the churches of that city, and stole a silver vase containing three hundred consecrated wafers which had been prepared for the communion of the following day.—