

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE..... Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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For the Colonial Churchman.

THE ORIGIN OF TITHES IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Essay 6.

That Tithes, or the tenth part of the produce of the soil, were contributed towards the support of religion under the Jewish dispensation, must be well known to every reader of the Bible. Nor is there less evidence to be found in the New Testament, that the same salutary custom prevailed in the days of our Saviour's sojourn on earth. The self-righteous Pharisee said, "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all I possess," Luke xviii. 12. And in Matthew, xxiii. 23. it is declared: "for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." The apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews—chap. vii. 5. &c.—traces the distinction between the tithes that were paid to the tribe of Levi, and those which Abraham gave to Melchisedec, and thence proves the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron.

Hence it is agreed that the custom of contributing tithes towards the support of religion is of Divine origin. It prevailed in the days of Abraham,—was sanctioned by a specific enactment under the mosaic economy, and under different modifications continued in use until the time of Messiah. In this way it clearly formed a part of the moral law of the former dispensation, and could not of course be considered among the various ceremonial enactments of the Jewish ritual, which virtually ceased as soon as the Great Sacrifice was offered on the cross. But the Jewish moral law is of perpetual obligation, and is in full force at the present day in the christian church. Therefore the payment of Tithes is not only of a divine origin, but has even been rendered obligatory in the Church by Scriptural sanction.

But it may be asked—if tithes are thus of Divine origin and perpetual obligation in the Church, why were they not exacted by the Apostles and their immediate successors in the ministry? Bishop Carleton in his *Divine right of Tithes*—cap. iv. p 31.—has given the following answer to this question:—

1. "Tithes were not paid to the apostles: because the Synagogue must first be buried before these things could be orderly brought into use in the Church."
2. "In the times of the New Testament, and somewhat after, there was an extraordinary maintenance by a community of all things, which supplied the want of tithes: but this community was extraordinary and not to last always."

3. "The use of paying tithes, as the church then stood, was so incommodious and cumbersome that it could not well be practised. And therefore as circumcision was laid aside for a time whilst Israel travelled through the wilderness, even so the use of Tithes in the times of Christ and his Apostles was laid aside: not because it ought not, but because it could not without great incumbrance be done."

This subject is discussed at large in Selden's history of Tithes, and in Bishop Montague's answer to him. Dr. Richard Tillesly, Archdeacon of Rochester, wrote a work on the same subject. All these learned men flourished in the reign of James I.

With regard to the precise time at which Tithes were introduced into the christian church after the interval just noticed, there is now no certainty. The common opinion is, that they began to be settled upon the Church in the fourth century when Magistrates were first disposed to favour christianity. The year is not specified. But Selden proves from various authors that Tithes were paid to the church before the end of the 4th century. St. Austin, who lived in that age, says that tithes were paid before his time, and much better and more regularly than in his own days. "Our forefathers," he continues, "abounded in all things, because they gave tithes to God and tribute to Cæsar. But now because our devotion to God is sunk, the taxes of the state are raised upon us. We would not

give God his part in the tithes, and therefore the whole is taken away from us. The exchequer devours what we would not give to Christ." St. Chrysostom and others, who mention tithes, speak of them as then actually settled upon the church. Hence it is concluded that some law of the Empire had passed, either in the reign of Constantine or in that of some of his immediate successors, authorizing the payment of tithes for the support of religion. At all events we have, I think, sufficient reason for believing that an enactment of the kind just mentioned must have been made previously to the year 400: most likely in the reign of the Emperor Jovian, who ascended the throne in 363.

The tithe system was introduced into England shortly after christianity had been preached there by Augustine. His mission to the English nation took place about or before the year 600; and in a number of questions which he proposed for solution to Gregory who filled the pontifical chair, the first which stands on the list refers to the division of church revenues. He does not mention from what source this income was derived: although there is reason to believe that it proceeded from the tithes and other oblations of believers. King Ina or Ine, who flourished nearly a century after the period above specified, passed a Law regarding what is called "the Church Scot," which enacted that those, who refused payment, "should be amerced forty Shillings and pay the Church Scot twelve fold." Upon this enactment an acute writer observes: "there is hence reason to believe that tithes were paid freely and fully, or else this king, who made so severe a law for paying the church scot, would have made a severer for paying tithes, as some kings did after this, when the people's first fervours abated. The Church-Scot was a new taxation and therefore not readily paid: tithes were from the beginning, and therefore paid without repining."—Johnson's Canons vol: I. sub anno 693. No 4.

The Excerptions of Eggbriht, Archbishop of York which were published in 740, contain a canon to the following effect: "that every priest teach all that belong to him to know how they are to offer the tithes of all their substance in a due manner, to the Churches of God." Item sub an: 740—No 4.

At the period during which tithes were established by law as the legitimate mode of supporting the church, the Ecclesiastical revenues were divided in a manner very different from that which prevails at the present day. In the western church the division was usually into three or four parts; of which one fell to the Bishop; a second to the rest of the clergy; a third to the poor; and the fourth was applied to the maintenance of the fabric and other necessary uses of the church. This was the general rule: but in each diocese there appear to have been regulations and by laws to meet its own peculiar exigencies, or to effect some particular object according to the wish or desire of its ordinary. For instance St. Austin tells us—Ser. 50—"that all his clergy laid themselves voluntarily under an obligation to have all things in common: and therefore none of them could have any property, or any thing to dispose of by will; or if they had they were liable to be turned out, and have their names expunged out of the roll of the clergy." This happened, let it be observed, before the division of the Dioceses into parishes, when all the clergy lived at or near the cathedral church of their Bishop, and performed missionary excursions to different parts of the country, as circumstances seemed to demand.

CRITO.

Christianity is very particularly to be considered as a trust, deposited with us on behalf of others, on behalf of mankind, as well as for our own instruction.—*Bishop Butler.*

Men of narrow minds have a peculiar talent at objection; being never at a loss for something to say against whatever is not of their own proposing.—*Bishop Berkeley.*

From the Dublin Record.

DR. HAMPDEN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

Oxford, May 5.

The statute in censure of Dr. Hampden's principles was carried this day in Convocation by a large majority. It was understood that great exertions had been privately made by his party, with a view to securing such a minority as would render the judgment of the University questionable; and it might have been apprehended that Dr. Arnold's article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the "Oxford Malignants," together with the misrepresentations and calumnies so copiously indulged in by several publications on Dr. Hampden's side, might have shaken the resolution or confused the judgment of many members of Convocation. It was reported, indeed, that 300 voters were expected to make their appearance against the statute.

This morning a fresh source of uneasiness arose in the production of a legal opinion by Dr. Lushington, which pronounced the proposed statute to be *illegal*, and which was now brought forward at the eleventh hour in hopes of embarrassing the Vice-Chancellor, and intimidating the Convocation from proceeding. Had this artifice succeeded, incalculable mischief would have been done; but it is understood that the Vice-Chancellor at once put it aside with a promptitude and good sense which reflect the highest credit on him. The convocation assembled in the Theatre at two o'clock, and almost immediately afterwards the Heads of Houses entered (the venerable Dr. Routh, President of Magdalen, as before, leading the procession), and after the usual forms, the statute was read aloud by the Registrar of the University. A debate of considerable length ensued.

At the close, the numbers stood as follows:—

For the statute	484
Against it	94

Majority..... 390

Thus has Oxford done her duty once more, in spite of all the threats, artifices, promises, calumny, ridicule, and misrepresentation to which she has been subjected; and if she has earned the immortal and bitter hatred of the enemies of the Church of England, it will be a matter of glory to her children in future years, that, in times of danger, perhaps, of destruction, she remained the uncompromising and undaunted defender of the Established Faith of the Church.

Wedding Mistake—The following embarrassing state of things occurred a few days since to a young couple about to be united at the altar of one of the Marylebone churches in the New-road:—At the appointed hour the bride and her friends arrived in one or more carriages at Marylebone Church. The clergyman, who was in attendance for other marriages, received them with great courtesy, but expressed his surprise at not being previously aware that any such marriage as this was to take place; but concluding that the bridegroom would, on his arrival, produce the licence, the lady and her friends were allowed to remain in the vestry. Considerably more than an hour elapsed of breathless expectation, but no gentleman appeared. At length the lady exclaimed, "Why, this is Trinity Church, Marylebone, is it not?" which was immediately replied to in the negative; when she found to her dismay that the coachman had driven to the wrong church. Away the party immediately drove to the right one, where they found the bridegroom in a not less agonising state of suspense. Happily there was still time to "tie the happy knot" within the canonical hours; and the mistake was therefore of no other consequence than a source of the mutual temporary embarrassment we have described.

Reason can never show itself more reasonable than in ceasing to reason about things which are above reason.