

"As the grand reason—namely, the honouring of God—still exists in all its force for the gift of a tenth, as well as the uses to which he would have it applied, so the New Testament everywhere requires a portion of his substance. This portion was to be greater or less, according as God had prospered each individual. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) True, a tenth is not named in the New Testament; but that was not required, because that proportion was already fixed in the Old. This is quite a sufficient reason. . . . Already laid down, there was no occasion for its repetition."

Here we cannot but remark that to the Apostolic Church the Old Testament was the only Bible; and to it Christians, especially Jewish Christians, clung with holy tenacity; hence there was no danger of their forgetting such clear moral precepts as the law of tithe.

Besides, as our author continues,—

"From what we know of the liberality of the early Christians,—in some instances giving away their all, in others, 'out of deep poverty abounding in liberality, to their power, yea and beyond their power, being willing of themselves,'—we should not expect that the proportion of a tenth would be urged upon them as a duty, when, in all probability, few of them were satisfied with that portion, but gave much more. This same silence has been observed in the New Testament on another most important point."

He refers to Infant Baptism, for the *direct* proof of which we must, as in the law of tithe, go to the Old Testament, though for both there is abundant *inferential* evidence in the New. He also points, as another instance in which the Old Testament is to a remarkable degree the almost sole guide of Christendom, namely, to "the degrees within which marriage is permitted. Now this case," says our author, "we contend, is far more difficult of proof than the obligation of the tenth."

But we must for the present stay our extracts from these able essays, trusting that what we have now given will be duly pondered; and hoping to resume them in a future number.

Worshipping God according to Conscience.

"Well, Thomas," observed Mr. Sharp to his parishioner Thomas Prollstone, when accidentally meeting him one morning; "Well, Thomas, I am sorry to hear that you have left the Church, and have joined the new sect lately sprung up among the Methodists."

Thomas.—Why yes, sir: to speak plain truth, I have left the Church and have joined the body

you mentioned. But I don't see why you should be sorry at that.

Mr. Sharp.—I am sorry; because you have left the Church, and have become guilty of the sin of schism.

Thomas.—Schism, sir! Surely every man has a *right* to worship God according to the *dictates* of his conscience.

Mr. Sharp.—That all depends, Thomas, whether his conscience be a right or a wrong conscience.

Thomas.—But how can a man's conscience be wrong, sir?

Mr. Sharp.—If a man pretend that it was *against* his conscience to pay his debts, would you say that he acted *rightly*?

Thomas.—No, of course not.

Mr. Sharp.—Why not? He *says* he is acting according to conscience.

Thomas.—Because, sir, he is breaking a common law of honesty, which he certainly has no right to do.

Mr. Sharp.—Then you think that his conscience is *bound by certain laws*: and if it teach him to act contrary to those laws, then it is a wrong conscience.

Thomas.—That's it, sir.

Mr. Sharp.—Very well; I quite agree with you. But let us apply this principle in the matter of man's religion. You say every man has a right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

Thomas.—I do, sir, and maintain it.

Mr. Sharp.—Don't be too severe, Thomas. A heathen worships God according to the dictates of his conscience; so does a Mahometan; so does a Jew; and of course since they possess *this right*, their religion (as far as they are concerned) *must also be right*. Why, then, do we try to convert them?

Thomas.—Oh, but I don't mean that, sir. Of course, I meant *Christians* have this right, and no one else.

Mr. Sharp.—But since a heathen, Jew, or Mahometan has a *conscience* as well as a *Christian*, who gave you the power or liberty to make this distinction?

Thomas.—But you don't think they are right, sir?

Mr. Sharp.—Ah, that is another question, Thomas. But let us look at your rule with this limit, that it must be applied to Christians.