

discover to us that amongst others the cases of Abram and Jacob are in point, and highly instructive. In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis we have an account of the Battle of the Kings. Lot is taken prisoner, and all his goods taken with him. Abram, hearing of Lot's captivity, arms his trained servants, we are told only 318 in number; small in comparison with those against whom they went. He defeats them, and rescues Lot and all the persons and goods that had been carried off. It was to God that he owed this victory, and he acknowledges it as such, for on his return he meets Melchizedek, God's high priest, and gave him a tenth of all the spoils. Abram's claim to these goods lay in his having recovered them in battle, and this claim the King of Sodom was willing to acknowledge, but Abram would not profit by it for himself. "I will not take," he said, "anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

Abram's gift is accepted by Melchizedek as his right. As God's High Priest he blesses Abram, and as God's Priest he receives tithes from him. One appears just as much a part of his office as the other, and this gift of a tenth was on the part of Abram an act of religion. It was not required by Melchizedek because he was poor and needed it, for he was a king as well as a priest, and was no doubt a richer man than Abram. It was purely an act of religion, as I think St. Paul teaches in the seventh chapter of the Hebrews. So we conclude that every child of God should regard himself as bound to offer unto the Lord at least one-tenth of all that God has bestowed upon him. Let us now for a few moments turn our attention to Jacob; to escape the fury of his provoked and injured brother Esau, he leaves his father's home and takes his journey towards Bethel. Up to this time we have reason to believe that he was in every sense a worldling of a grasping spirit, and did not hesitate to stoop to plans of deceitfulness and acts of injustice. His love of the world led him into sin, and that sin drove him from his father's house, an outcast in the world.

He wished to deprive his brother of his birthright and to get all his father's property; and by that very means he

was driven from it all. He little thought how soon a retributive Providence would overtake him. When the shadows of night came down around him, he felt his desolate and lonely situation, and no doubt he looked to God that night as he had never looked before. He laid himself down to sleep, feeling that God was his only refuge, and resolving to seek Him for his guide and help. He feels now that he has need of protection from an eye that never sleeps and a hand that never grows weary. The God of Abram and Isaac was not unmindful of their penitent son. He sought the Lord and He heard him and delivered him from all his fears. The Holy Spirit visited him with His converting grace, and God reveals Himself to him in a wonderful manner, and he hears from Heaven the assuring promise of provision for the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. Jacob's mind was enlightened by the Holy Spirit and his heart was touched, and from that day he was a changed man—changed from selfishness to generosity, and so entered upon a new course of life. And although his human nature often asserted its power, still it was overcome by grace. And now Jacob makes a promise to God. "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the 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 pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee." Here we see a glorious change, such as we should expect to see in every converted man and woman. Before, all he wanted was the world, and, like too many now, all the world would hardly satisfy him. But now he only asks for food and raiment for himself, and is willing to promise God a tenth of all He sees fit in His providence to give him. Oh! what a connection there is between the conversion of the soul and liberality to the cause of God! It is often very marked. In genuine revivals of religion the churches find it easier to raise money than they do when they are cold and negligent.

Jacob first gave himself to God, and then promised that as long as he lived