

in the practice of devoting the tenth of their substance to the purposes of religion. The natural and almost necessary inference from this fact is well stated by Collyer: "From Pagan writers we learn that several nations very far distant from each other, in different parts of the world, and, as it seems, without the least acquaintance or commerce one with another, observed this custom. Now since this proportion of one in ten is certainly indifferently in itself, any more than one in seven or eight, it is reasonable to believe that this custom of paying tithe, like that of sacrificing had some divine direction for it; and that it was derived from Adam to Noah, and from him to his posterity, till, at length, at the dispersion of Babel, it spread over all the world."

That the practice of offering animals in sacrifice, is of Divine appointment is a position held tenaciously by the great body of evangelical Christians. Now it may be safely affirmed that every argument which goes to prove the Divine origin of sacrifice may be urged with equal force in support of the Divine origin of the tithe. Both are acts of worship. Consequently we think both must have been instituted by God. Both were very generally, if not universally, practiced by the ancient nations. Very naturally we reach the conclusion that both must have been introduced by the same authority in the very earliest age. Both rejoice under the smile of the Divine approbation. Surely then, neither can be characterized as will-worship.

Do any of my readers insist upon the citation of a recorded command given to our first parents, or to any of their immediate descendants, as a necessary basis for the theory of the Divine origin of the tithe? I frankly concede that this demand cannot be complied with. No such command is contained in the earlier oracles of Divine truth. In the time of Moses it first appears. Probably however those who would debate this point believe that the origin of sacrifice is Divine. Yet they can find no command to offer sacrifices, till long after sacrifice had become the ordinary and established method of worship. They no doubt hold that the Sabbath is a Divine

institution; but they can produce no positive injunction to observe the seventh day prior to the time of Moses. The truth is that the modes and rites of worship which the godly men of early ages practiced, and which were afterwards introduced into the prescribed ritual of sacred service may fairly be assumed to possess the Divine sanction since no other supposition can satisfactorily account for the place which they occupied, either in the view of the worshippers themselves, or of the glorious Being to whom they rendered their homage. Such I conceive to be an indisputable statement of the patriarchal measure of consecration of substance to God, and of the most reasonable view of its origin. These men both knew and realized their true relation to Jehovah; they saw clearly, and felt keenly that they were the stewards of the great Proprietor whom they so reverently worshipped. Gratefully, joyfully, they devoted the tenth to Him as an expression of their sense of dependence upon Him for all. Did they impoverish themselves by their generosity? Let the inspired record tell: "And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold." When Jacob made a vow to dedicate the tenth of his prospective increase to God, he was an exile from his father's house, and a poor lone way-farer. Twenty years later he returned to Canaan laden with wealth. As he himself puts it when recounting God's gracious dealings with him, "With my staff I passed over Jordan and now I am become two bands."

But, it may be asked, what has all this discussion about the ancient tithe, and its origin to do with a Christian of the present day giving "as God hath prospered him?" I reply, "much every way." It teaches us how those ancient worthies, ever memorable for their faith and piety, acted in this matter. It impresses us profoundly with the truth that they regulated their conduct by the will of God, and thus set us an example that we may tread in their footsteps. Nay, more does it not furnish us with a measure for Christian contribution which carries with it all the authority of law till it has been repealed? Upon those who are