

Right of Tithes," says a seventh part of our time having, from the beginning of the world, been consecrated by God Himself to His public worship, from that time there was a necessity of consecrating also a part of our substance for the support thereof. I doubt not, from the beginning such a part was, by the first parents of mankind, consecrated to this purpose. And if we consider of how general a practice the payment of tithes anciently was amongst most nations of the earth, for the support of the worship of those gods they adored, and the many instances we have of this usage among the Syrians, Phœnicians, Arabians, Ethiopians, Greeks, Romans and other nations, there is no other rational account to be given how so many different people of various languages and various customs from each other, and who also worshipped various deities, should all come to agree so exactly in this one matter, but that it had been an ancient institution, sacredly observed by the first fathers of mankind, and after the flood transmitted by them in a lasting tradition to the nations descended from them.

Dr. Barrow, an eminent divine who flourished in the 17th century, in his sermon on Thanksgiving, says: "Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord," was a statute to the Jews, qualified and moderated by certain measures: The first fruits of their lands, the first born of the cattle and of themselves, the tenths of their annual increase, and a certain allotment from the spoils acquired in wars, did God challenge to himself as fitting recompenses due for his bounty to and care over them.

Neither did the Gentiles conceive themselves exempted from the like obligation. For the *acrothimia*, the top or chief of their corn heaps, they were wont to consecrate unto him who had blessed their fields with increase, and the *acroleia*, the first and best of the prey, they dedicated to the adornment of his temple, by whose favourable disposal they had obtained the victory. So the testimony of Prideaux and Barrow, and the practice of Jew and Gentile emphasizes the duty of systematic and proportionate giving.

GIVING AND CHURCH GOING.

MET a parishioner to-day, a poor man with a large family, and remarking that I had not seen him at church for a good while, asked him the reason. "Well, sir," said he, "I will tell you the plain truth. I haven't been to church because I can't pay my dues." How many persons stay away from the house of God from this reason, and are not wrong ideas of giving responsible to a large extent? If all gave freely, as a matter of privilege as well as of duty, and according to their means, the poor would not be ashamed who give of their penury.

W. C. A.

Books and Periodicals Dept.

Darkness and Dawn or Scenes in the Days of Nero. An Historic Tale, by Frederic W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1891.

The reign of Nero forms, perhaps, the darkest page of human history, and this is fully and vividly described by this excellent book of Archdeacon Farrar's. The characters in the book are nearly all historical and embrace the leading men and women of the period. The hero of the tale appears to be Onesimus, whose career is built upon that outlined by Bishop Lightfoot in his *Colossians and Philemon*, only the terrible sufferings of the unfortunate runaway slave seem greater almost than humanity could endure. The infamous traffic in human life, practised in the palace of the Cæsars, by the cruelty of Agrippina, and the brutality of Nero—chiefly through the poisoning powers of the inhuman Locusta, form a picture shockingly degrading, and this is all the worse when we know that the author had to suppress much of his brilliant knowledge and learning as to the practices of the times, as being unfit for publication. Any tale or history at the present time. The book indeed seems too terrible; the horrors of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* being as nothing compared with the scenes described in it. Yet the work is no great novel like that of the distinguished Frenchman—it does not profess to be such—its scenes are most harrowing when the author is but relating pure history. The full and exhaustive knowledge amassed by the author in his preparations for the *Life and Work of St. Paul and Early Christianity*, is well displayed in this interesting work. So much for the *Darkness*. And the *Dawn* is shewn in the rise of the Christian religion, for there were saints even in Cæsar's household; and the early Christians of Rome, their bitter trials and fiery tribulations are pictured with a master hand. The book is beautifully printed and bound by Longmans, Green & Co.

A Practical Hebrew Grammar. By Edwin Cone Bissell, Professor in Hartford Theological Seminary.

These are days of practical methods of learning many languages. The book just published by Professor Bissell forms an excellent introductory Hebrew Grammar. All words used in the Hebrew Bible over fifty times, the most of those used between twenty-five and fifty times, and not a few of those of connected roots, used less than twenty-five times, are here found, and they are the only Hebrew words employed in this book. The learner thus becomes possessed of a choice Hebrew vocabulary. Hebrew is by no means a difficult language to get "a smattering of," sufficient, for instance, to enable one to read the Bible, fortified as he always is by his knowledge of the English translation. But to follow it in all its ramifications, and to gain a critical knowledge of all its difficulties, requires much study. Professor Bissell gives a very concise and easy method of gaining a useful knowledge of the language.

THE S.P.C.K., London, England, are out this year with a superb list of new publications and new editions. *A Life of Love and Duty*, being a memoir of Commodore Goodenough, R.N., a noble life which was surrendered in the cause of Christian duty, edited by his widow; *To the West*, by George Manville Fenn, a tale of gold seekers in British Columbia, with five full page wood cuts, a grand story for boys; *A Local Lion*, the story of a local genius who goes out into the world to seek his fortune, by Austin Clare, with four wood cuts; *Moor End Farm*, by Mrs. Isla Sitwell; *Hatherley's Homespuns*, by Annette Lister, an interesting story of duty accomplished; *The Doll's Dressmaker*, by Alice F. Jackson; *By the North Sea*