ORDINARY MEETING.*

COMMANDER G. P. HEATH, R.N., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and the following elections were announced :—

MEMBERS :—Surgeon-General S. B. Partridge, F.R.C.S.E., C.I.E., Kent ; Rev. E. Blakeslee, D.D., United States ; Rev. L. T. Townsend, D.D., LL.D., United States.

LIFE ASSOCIATE :—J. D. Logan, Esq., South Africa.

ASSOCIATES :—W. D. Drake Brockman, Esq., Kent ; T. Garnet, Esq., Kent ; Rev. J. Hall, Doncaster ; H. Hutton, Esq., Rhodesia ; Rev. W. H. Hanham, Natal ; Rev. W. Maxon, D.D., United States ; J. Rutland, Esq., New Zealand ; Rev. M. Rainsford, M.A., London ; Rev. G. R. Thornton, M.A., London ; Miss S. Waller-Lewis, London.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

TITHE-GIVING AMONGST ANCIENT PAGAN NATIONS. By the Reverend HENRY LANSDELL, D.D., M.V.I., M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S.

BY ancient Pagan nations is meant, in this paper, the early Egyptians, the Babylonians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and certain Semitic peoples of Western Asia, together with the Greeks, Romans, and some few other nations of Pagan Europe. The object of our inquiry is to learn, if possible, how far these heathen nations recognised it as a duty to offer a part of their property to their gods, and in what proportion they did so.

We commence then with Egypt, where we read of first-fruits being offered to the gods so far back as the thirteenth dynasty (or say 2,500 years before the Christian era). Dr. Brugsch, speaking of the tomb of the high priest Anubis at Lycopolis, says :

"[Anubis] takes occasion for fixing the kind and number of the sacrifices ; he speaks of the feast-days on which they are to be offered, and gives us evidence, for the first time in an Egyptian inscription, that the ancient inhabitants of the Nile

* December 6th, 1897.

valley, great and small, were accustomed to dedicate the first-fruits of their harvest to the deity."*

The testimony of Erman is to the same effect, who says:

"The worshippers of these (Egyptian) gods were always faithful to them . . . Each brought the firstfruits of his harvest to the servants of his god . . . he made the furthermost room of his house into a little chapel . . . In the court of his granary, or near his wine-press, he erected a little sanctuary to Renenutet, the goddess of the harvest, and placed there a table of offerings with wine and flowers."† These and other evidences of private piety were, however, quite eclipsed by the state offerings of the Pharaohs, during the ninth historical dynasty (1700–1400 B.C.), the enormous lists of which offerings, as given by Rameses II and III, still remain on the outer wall of the temple of Medinet Habu, and in the great Harris papyrus.

During this period the temples were enriched, not only by first-fruits, but by occasional offerings; for the priests enjoyed permanent endowments bestowed alike by king and people. It was incumbent, for instance, on the head of the treasury department personally to endow one of the great temples in Egypt with the precious things he brought from foreign countries.‡

In fact, so vast were these endowments, that Professor Maspero§ informs us that "The domain of the gods formed, at all periods, about one-third of the whole country."

There was yet another source of income by means of which the ancient Egyptians recognised their dependence on the deity in presenting sometimes the whole, but more commonly a portion, of their spoils taken in war.

Professor Maspero says,‖ "The gods of the side which was victorious shared with it in the triumph, and received a tithe of the spoil, as the price of their help."

Again he says,¶ "A revival of military greatness was followed by an age of building activity. Claims of the gods had to be satisfied before those of men, etc. . . . A tenth, therefore, of the slaves, cattle and precious metals was set apart for the service of the gods, and even fields, towns and provinces were allotted to them, the produce of which was

* Brugsch, Heinrich, *History of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, vol. i, p. 225.
† Erman, A., *Life in Ancient Egypt*, tr. by Tirard. Lond. 1894, p. 272.
‡ Erman, p. 96.
§ *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 303.
‖ *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 302. ¶ *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 91.

applied to enhance the importance of their cult, or to repair and enlarge their temples."

This repeated mention by Professor Maspero of a tenth of the spoils is noteworthy; though he does not say that the people generally, in Egypt, paid tithes to the temples.

Upon my inquiry as to this point from several Egyptologists, Professor Sayce wrote to me, "Though gifts were made to the Egyptian temples on a large scale, there does not seem to have been any tithe."

Professor Flinders Petrie also wrote, "I do not remember any tithing allusions. . . . . The Egyptian system of priestly revenues was by estates, and not by taxes or tithes."

Again, in a short conversation I had on the subject with Dr. Budge, superintendent of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum, he seemed to doubt, concerning Egypt, whether the gifts to the temples represented a definite proportion of income. He thought they amounted to more than a tenth, and seemed convinced that, in constantly and regularly recurring festivals, it was obligatory by custom, if not by law, to make offerings to the priests.

I inquired of Professor Mahaffy, who replied—"in Egypt one-sixth seems to have been the old *ἀπόμοιρα*, or God's portion, levied upon all property not specially exempted." For confirmation of this, in Ptolemaic times, he referred me to the "Revenue laws of Ptolemy," published by Mr. Grenfell, but the Professor adds that he cannot possibly imagine this sixth to have been an invention of the Ptolemies, and therefore believes it to have been an old Egyptian tax.

If, then, it be asked, whether the Egyptians recognised it as a duty to offer a portion of their property to the gods, it would seem that the Pharaoh and his officials, with many, if not all, of the people, annually offered the first-fruits of their crops to the temples, which they permanently endowed for the education and support of the priests, as well as for temple repairs and enlargements, together with the furniture and accessories of worship. They offered also a portion of their spoils taken in war, and on various other occasions made further offerings of the most varied kinds. If it be further asked as to what proportion these offerings bore to the offerers' incomes, it seems to have been not less than a tenth, and in some epochs certainly reached a sixth.

We now pass from the valley of the Nile to that of the Euphrates, and pursue our inquiry among the ancient Babylonians.

Long ago, Josephus told us that Nebuchadnezzar "with the spoils he had taken in war, adorned the temple of Belus and the rest of the temples in a magnificent manner."*

But to us, of the nineteenth century, new sources of information have been unveiled, such as Josephus could not read; and we owe not a little to Assyriologists who have deciphered for us the cuneiform inscriptions on whole libraries of tablets found throughout a large part of Western Asia, many of which tablets have made their way to the museums of Berlin, Paris, and London. These tablets were anciently preserved as records connected with temples; as hymns to the gods; calendars, works of history, and chronology; and also as merchants' accounts and contracts.

Upon my asking Dr. Budge for "chapter and verse," that is, translations from a few original tablets in the British Museum, and their bearing upon tithe-giving, he has been good enough to inform me concerning the meaning of the word *eshru*, or tenth, that:

On one tablet [82, 9, 18, 74ª] Nabonidus [555–538 B.C.] paid to the temple of the sun god on the xxvi^th^ day of the month Sivan, in his accession year, six mana of gold *eshru* [as tithe] the gold being paid in the great gate of the temple.

Another tablet records that Belshazzar (son of Nabonidus) paid 27 shekels of silver as the *eshru*, or tithe, for a daughter of the king, on the fifth day of Ab, year 17 of Nabonidus.

A third tablet states that Nergalnatsir gave an ox to the temple for his tithe.

A fourth tablet says that a governor and another official paid a tithe; besides which other examples of combined tithe-paying occur.

A fifth tablet states that two-thirds of a mana, and five shekels of silver were given to the gods Bel, Nebo, Nergal, and Ishtar as tithe.

I ought to say that Dr. Budge adds a doubt whether *eshru*, though meaning literally a tenth, was an actual tenth of the person's income or property; and there is no evidence, he says, known to him, which shows that the tithe was obligatory. But there is evidence, he says, that the tithe could be annual; that it could be, and was, commonly paid in kind: that two or more individuals could unite in paying a tithe; and that a tithe could be offered to a number of gods

Antiquities, Book x, chap. 11.

collectively; so that, from the foregoing facts, it seemed to him that the *eshru* partook more of the nature of a freewill offering than of a literal tenth part, the payment of which was obligatory.

I am indebted further to Mr. Theophilus G. Pinches, also of the Assyrian Department in the British Museum, who tells me that the mention of "tenth parts" (*êšrētu*), with allusion to paying a tenth, occurs on tablets which are undoubtedly copies of Akkadian and Assyrian bi-lingual phrase tablets drawn up 2200 B.C. or earlier, and representing the legal expressions current among the scribes at that time.

I am further informed that when more of the tablets, now in the British Museum, are transcribed and published, it will be clear that tithes were given in Babylonia to the temples of the gods 2100 years B.C., and probably earlier.

Meanwhile Professor Maspero also tells of religious endowments in ancient Chaldea; and, he says, of spoils of war:

"As soon as he [the king] had triumphed by their [the gods'] command, he sought before all else to reward them amply for their assistance. He paid a tithe of the spoil into the coffers of their treasury, he made over a part of the conquered country to their domain, he granted them a tale of the prisoners to cultivate their lands and to work at their buildings."* In his later volume Maspero furnishes some interesting items upon tithe-giving by Tiglath-Pileser, saying that Tiglath-Pileser, after fighting in the country north of the Tigris, consecrated the tenth of the spoil thus received to the use of his god Assur and also to Ramman.† Further examples might be quoted from Maspero, and others of a similar character from that eminent Assyriologist, the late George Smith; but I hasten to quote again from the letter written to me by Professor Sayce.

"The *esrâ*, or tithe," he says, "was a Babylonian institution. The temple and priests were supported by the contributions of the people, partly obligatory and partly voluntary. The most important among them were the tithes paid upon all produce. The tithes were contributed by all classes of population, from the king to the peasant; and lists exist which record the amounts severally due from the tenants of an estate. The tithes were paid for the most part in corn: thus we find a Babylonian paying about eleven bushels of

* *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 706.
† *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 644.

corn to the temple of the sun god [at Sippara] as the tithe required by him for the year. The tithes paid to the same temple by Nabonidus just after his accession [555 B.C.] amounted to as much as six manehs of gold. Voluntary gifts also were common and were often made in pursuance of a vow or in gratitude for recovery from sickness."*

Professor Sayce observes also, in his Patriarchal Palestine,† that Cyrus and Cambyses did not regard their foreign origin as affording any pretext for refusing to pay tithe to the gods of the kingdom they had overthrown.

The mention of Cyrus takes our thoughts to Persia (or Elam), where tithe-giving seems to have been known before the days of Cyrus, for Maspero says:

"These deities [of Elam dwelling near Susa] received a tenth of the spoil after any successful campaign—the offerings comprising statues of the enemies gods, valuable vases, ingots of gold and silver, furniture and stuffs."

Let us now pass to the Phœnicians, or Canaanites, who dwelt on the coast of Southern Syria, and were the manufacturers and merchants of antiquity.

It was a colony of these Phœnicians from Tyre who founded Carthage—say about 900 B.C. They brought with them the custom of tithe-giving; and, from the outset, used to send the tithe of all their profits and increase to Tyre, for Hercules, by one clothed in purple and priestly robes, and so likewise they did with their spoils of war taken in Sicily.

There remain now two other nations to be referred to in connection with tithe-giving, namely, the Arabians and Ethiopians.

Pliny‡ mentions an Arabian law whereby the owner of frankincense had to pay tithe of it to the god Sabis, whose priests received it, not by weight, but by measure. Nor might any sale of it be made till the tenth was paid.

Again, the late Dr. Robertson Smith, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, speaking of sacred tribute in Arabia, says: "The agricultural tribute of first-fruits and tithe is a charge on the produce of the land, paid to the gods as Baalim or landlords."§

Once more, what Pliny says of the Arabians and their

* *Social life among the Assyrians and Babylonians*, p. 121.
† p. 166. ‡ *Hist. Nat.*, lib. 12, cap. 14, § 63.
§ *Lectures on the religion of the Semites*, p. 441.

frankincense, he repeats, in substance, of the Ethiopians and their cinnamon, which they did not eat, but with prayers made first to their gods, and a sacrifice of forty-four goats and rams; then the priest, dividing the cinnamon, took that part belonging to their god Assabinus and left them the rest to make merchandize of.*

If, then, it is asked of the Babylonians and the other peoples just alluded to, whether they recognised it as a duty to offer a part of their property to their gods, and in what proportion they did so, we see Tiglath-Pileser, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, Belshazzar, Cyrus, and other sovereigns, offering their spoils, and often the tithe. But we have mention also of various classes of people in the Euphrates Valley, as well as Phœnician colonists in Carthage, annually offering a tenth of their increase, whether from fruits of the ground or profits by merchandize; whether from spoils of war or other sources of income, whereby the temples were furnished and endowed, the priests supported, and the gods honoured; all this being done, partly as a matter of obligation, and partly voluntarily as in payment of vows or giving of thanks.

We now turn to the Greeks, Romans, and some few other pagan nations of Europe. The earliest allusions to tithe-giving in Greece go back to mythological times, cluster round the oldest writers and lawgivers, and include such legendary names as that of Evander.

Evander, in classical legend, was a son of Hermes, and the leader of an Arcadian colony into Latium sixty years before the Trojan war, or say about 1300 B.C. Cassius (in Aurelius Victor) reports that in Evander's day, one Recaranus, a shepherd of Greek extraction (called Hercules because of his strength) having recovered his oxen that Cacus had stolen, dedicated an altar under the Aventine Mount, *Inventori Patri* (that is, probably, to Jupiter), calling it the greatest, and teaching people to consecrate their tithes there, for it seemed to him more fit that the gods should receive that honour than their kings, whence it came to pass, after the said Hercules was deified, that it grew into a custom to consecrate to him a tithe.†

It is related also by Diodorus Siculus, of the Argives, that

* Pliny, lib. xii, cap. 19, § 89.
† Cassius, *ap. Aurel. Victor, in orig. Gent. Rom.* Comber's *Historical vindication of divine right of tithes*, p. 37.

having subdued the Myceneans, they consecrated a tenth out of their goods to the god. (B.C. 473.)*

Diodorus mentions, too, that the Liparians, or Greeks who colonised the Lipari Islands, having overcome the Etruscans in many sea battles, sent the tithe of the spoil to Delphi.† We may further observe, before passing from this early period to Spartan times, that Ares himself is recorded to have dedicated his tithe to one of the genii who first taught him to be a soldier,‡ which is another indication of the great antiquity of tithe-giving among the Greeks.

Again, Pisistratus writing to Solon, the famous Athenian lawgiver (born about 638 B.C.), touching the tribute of a tenth, which certain former princes had seized for their own use, says that he took tithes of every one of the people, not so much for his own use as for public sacrifice or the use of the gods in general.§

If, next, we ask concerning spoils taken in battle, we have Agesilaus (King of Sparta from 398 to 361 B.C.), who during his wars in Asia Minor, within the space of two years, sent more than 100 talents of tithe to Delphi, as Xenophon testifies.‖

Lysander, another Spartan general (killed 395 B.C.), is mentioned by Maximus Tyrius as offering the tithe of his gains in war to the gods.¶

So, too, we have a similar instance in Cimon, the Athenian general, who, after defeating the Persians at Eurymedon in 466 B.C., took out the tenth of the spoils, and dedicated them generally to the Deity, but did not name Apollo or any other.

About this same period probably we may place the vow of the Crotonians of a tenth of the spoil to Apollo at Delphi, before their war with the Locrians, whilst the Locrians, not to be outdone, vowed a ninth.**

Pausanias, the Spartan general (who died 466 B.C.), gave, after his victory over Mardonius, out of the tithe of the spoil, a tripod of gold to Apollo at Delphi, and two brazen statues, one to Zeus Olympius, the other to the Isthmian Poseidon.††

* Diodorus Siculus, v. 11, c. 65. † Diodorus, v. 9.
‡ Lucian de saltatione. Comber, p. 33; Selden, p. 31.
§ Selden's *History of Tithes*, p. 33. ‖ Herodotus, lib. 9, c. 81.
¶ *Agesilaus*, c. 1, § 34. ** Max. Tyr., *Dissert.*, 14.
†† Trogus Pompeius, *Histor.*, Selden, p. 30.

This brings us to the period of the Greco-Persian wars, in the early years of which flourished Herodotus. He travelled widely and records the customs of many nations. Of the Phocians he relates that out of the tithe of money gained by their victory over the Thessalians they made four statues to Apollo.*

The same writer tells of a small people, on the Island of Samos, in the Ægean Sea, that they yielded at one time six talents for the tithe of their gain gotten by merchandize.

A case still more extraordinary, and which may be regarded perhaps as the working of a heathen conscience, is related by Herodotus of a woman of Thracia, a courtesan named Rhodophis, who sent a tenth of her gains, in the form of spits for sacrifices, to the temple of Apollo at Delphi.† That this was not unusual seems to be suggested by the case of another of the same class, who, in an old Greek poem, vowed to offer the tenth of all her gains to Aphrodite.‡

Herodotus§ tells, too, of the Siphnians, who paid tithes of their gold and silver mines. It is worthy of note also that Pausanias, who lived in the second century A.D., said of these Siphnians that "when through greediness they failed to pay their due, the sea overflowing hid their mines from sight."‖

But perhaps the most noteworthy instance of tithe-paying in this period was that of Xenophon, who, after his return with the ten thousand Greeks, having first given a part of the tithe of his portion of the spoil to Apollo at Delphi, with another part purchased land and built a temple and altar to the goddess Artemis; after which he consecrated the tithe of the fruits of the fields for sacrifices, and instituted a feast, wherein Artemis, out of this land and these tithes, furnished all that came there with meal, bread, wine, junkets, money, and with her part of the cattle fed in the sacred pastures, or taken in hunting.¶

And near the temple, Xenophon set up a pillar with this inscription, "Ground sacred to Artemis. Whosoever pos-

* Herodotus, lib. 8, c. 27. † Herodotus, lib. 2 : 135.
‡ *Antholog.*, lib. 6; Comber, p. 31. § iii, 57.
‖ Pausanias. *Descriptio Græciæ*, x. 11, § 2, Spelman, *Larger Treatise concerning tithes*, p. 124.
¶ Xenophon, *Anabasis*, lib. 5, c. 3, § 4–13.

sesseth it, let him pay the tithe of his yearly increase; and, out of the remainder, maintain the temple. If he neglect this, the goddess will require it."

So here was a temple, fully endowed with tithes for the benefit of priests, people, and repairs!

Nor must we forget how Pliny records of Alexander the Great, that, having conquered the countries of sweet odours and frankincense, Alexander sent a whole shipload thereof to Leonidas, in Greece, that he might burn it bountifully unto the gods *

Let us now advance to the next Grecian period, the hegemony having passed from Sparta to Athens, and during which Greece produced some of its greatest men.

Thucydides (born about 471 B.C.) tells us that when the Athenians had divided the island of Lesbos into 3,000 parts, they consecrated 300, that is the tenth, generally, to the gods.†

Reference has already been made to what Pisistratus wrote to Solon, which seems to show that the Athenians usually paid tithe of their goods at home alike in peace and in war. Even a tenth of the meat killed in Athens was given by the cooks to the magistrates, and this was spent, in the case of Pisistratus at all ,events at the festivals of the gods.‡

We may see, too, another confirmation that the general tithing of all gains was usual in Athens, from the jeering comedy of Aristophanes (450–380 B.C.), for he represents Cleon complaining of Agoracritus. for detaining the tithe of his sausages belonging to the gods.§

A century later, Demosthenes calls it sacrilege in Androtion and Timocrates to retain the tenths due to Pallas; and, if this be taken in connection with the complaint, or threatening of Cleon just referred to in Aristophanes, it would almost suggest that defaulters might be complained of, and perhaps punished in Athens for not paying tithes.‖

We now pass from the Greeks to the Romans, amongst whom we trace the practice of tithe giving to their earliest or legendary history.

* Pliny, lib. xii, cap. 14, Spelman, p. 120.
† Selden, p. 33.
‡ Aristoph., *Equites*, v. 283; Selden, p. 33.
§ Comber, p. 33.
‖ Comber, p. 33.

Hercules is the god most frequently mentioned among them as the receiver of tithes. He was one of their chief and most ancient deities, his rites, as Livy testifies,* having been first taken into use by Romulus, who founded Rome B.C. 753.

Soon afterwards we come to the King, Tarquinius Superbus (616–578 B.C.), who, upon taking Suessa, is said to have paid a tithe of at least 400 talents of silver to the gods in general.†

Next in order of time, perhaps, should be mentioned an incident, as recorded by Plutarch and Livy, which speaks volumes for the reverence and sacredness with which the payment of tithes was regarded by early Romans and Grecians alike.

It happened after the conquest by Camillus of the City of Veii (396 B.C.), that the augurs, or temple prognosticators, made report that the gods were greatly offended, though they knew not for what, but the fact they professed to have discovered by the marks and observation of their sacrifices.

Camillus having informed the senate that, in the sacking of Veii, the soldiers had taken the spoil without giving the tenth to the gods, and that the soldiers had, most of them, spent or disposed of what they had taken, the senate ordered every man to give in, upon oath, how much he had received of the booty, and to pay a tenth of it, or the value of this tenth, if it was spent, to the gods.

Towards this the women brought in jewels and gold of their own free will so readily, that the senate gave them the privilege of having orations in their praise made at their funerals, which honour formerly had been allowed only to great and eminent men. And they appointed three, of the first quality in Rome, to carry this present with the tithe, in a triumphal manner to Delphi.

On the way they were taken, and made a prize by the Liparians, or Greeks who colonized the Lipari Islands, north of Sicily. But, when brought to their city, and when the Liparian governor understood that so great a booty consisted of tithes due to the gods, he not only restored it all, and sent them away with it, but gave them a convoy of his

* *Hist.*, lib. 1.
† Dionysius of Halicarnassus, lib. 4.

own ships to secure them on their voyage, although he was then at war with Rome.*

After the early Kings of Rome we have instances of tithes being offered by more than one of the Dictators, as well as by Roman Consuls and Generals. In fact, Servius says it was a Roman custom, when they made war, to promise some of the spoils to the gods; and therefore there was a temple at Rome dedicated *Jovi Prædatori*, not that he presided over the spoils, but because some of the prey was due to him.†

Nor was it military people only among the Romans who paid their tithe; for Plautus, the Roman dramatist (who died 184 B.C.), refers to Roman merchants, who from very early times, it would seem, used to pay a tenth of their gains.‡

The same custom obtained, presumably, among Roman farmers; for Varro (116–27 B.C.), in his great work upon agriculture, advises every man to pay tithe diligently of the fruits of his ground.§

Also Pliny the elder (23–79 A.D.), who calls the tithes sent to Delphi "first-fruits," says the Romans never tasted their new fruits or wines till the priests had taken the first-fruits of them.‖

And, as if nothing might go untithed, it would seem, according to Papinius, that the Romans paid a tithe of the very beasts they killed in hunting, namely, the skins, to Diana.¶

Nor was the fulfilment, or non-fulfilment, of a vow to pay tithe, treated as a light matter even in Roman law; for Ulpian, the celebrated Roman jurist of the third century, is quoted by Justinian to the effect that if after having made a vow to pay tithe, a man died, his heir, or executor, was bound to pay what had been vowed.**

Having collected these testimonies concerning tithe-giving by Greek and Roman sovereigns, generals, merchants, farmers, and people in general, let us inquire what traces of the custom are to be found among other ancient pagan nations of Europe.

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* Leslie, *Divine Right of Tithes*, Toronto edition, p. 43.
† Servius. Æn. 3 Com. 21, Comber, *Historical Vindication*, &c., p. 40.
‡ Plaut. *Stich.*, Selden, p. 26.
§ Varro. *De re rustica*, Spelman, p. 120.
‖ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, lib. 4, cap. 12.
¶ Spelman, p. 121.
** Selden, p. 28 ff.; *Tit. de Policit.*, lib. 2, Sect. 2.

We begin with that very old people the Pelasgi, who spread about the Mediterranean in early times, of whom we read that they gave a tenth of their gains by merchandize, and sent their tithe to Phœbus at Delphi. A branch of these people, settled in Umbria in Italy, in a dearth and great scarcity of all things, vowed upon plenty being sent to them, to give a tenth of all unto Jupiter, Apollo, and the Cabiri (that is, the deities of Samothracia), supposing that this misery and scarcity came upon them for their former neglect and contempt. Upon this vow of amendment, they had their desire, as plenty was sent to them; and then setting aside the dedicated portion, the tenth of all their increase, they offered it to those deities.

After this, we may pass from the Mediterranean, and notice the testimony of Julius Cæsar,* who seems to say of the ancient Gauls, that their custom was to sacrifice the cattle and to give, in effect, not only tithe, but all they took in war, to the gods.

The same custom, probably, extended to the ancient Britons and German Saxons, for Sidonius Apollinaris (born about 430) mentions that the German Saxons were wont to sacrifice to the god of the sea the tenth of all captives taken in these piracies and incursions made by sea, especially upon the Gauls.

Once more, we are told of Cædvalla, last of the British Kings of North Wales, and slain 634, that, during the period of his life when he was a heathen, he was wont to tithe all his spoils of war to the deity. So, at least, says the Monk of Malmesbury.†

If, then, we summarize our testimonies concerning early tithe-giving in Europe, we see that, so far back as 1300 years before the Christian era (if such a date can be trusted); and, afterwards, among the earliest peoples and persons known to us in Europe; we have the Argives, the Pelasgi and the kings of Rome offering tenths of their warlike spoils or of their gains by merchandize.

When, moreover, we reach the period of authentic history, we read of Greek generals; Roman dictators, lawyers, and farmers; herdsmen, sailors, merchants, miners, cooks, nay, even the dissolute, thinking it right and religious to offer a tenth of their increase to the gods. This practice of

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* *De bell. Gal.*, lib. 6, p. 132.
† Selden, p. 269.

tithe-giving was known and observed also among other European nations such as the Samothracians, Liparians, Gauls, and even Britons and Saxons.

And these facts are witnessed to by the most famous authors of antiquity, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristophanes, Plutarch, and Demosthenes among the Greeks; and, among the Romans, by Varro, Julius Cæsar, Pliny and others; their testimony as a whole tending to show that the Greeks, Romans, and all other principal civilized but heathen nations of early Europe recognized it as a religious duty to offer a part of their property to the gods, the proportion offered being to the whole, rarely less, but in some cases more, than a tenth.

What, then, is suggested by this array of facts, from early Europe, Eastern Africa, and Western Asia, concerning tithe-giving?

When philologists and grammarians observe that many words of a class (belonging, for instance, to agriculture) linger in use among peoples now widely separated, and having no visible connection with one another, these students of comparative tongues infer that at some time, in the remote past, the ancestors of such peoples must have lived together and spoken such words in a common language. And such philological observations, comparisons, and inferences are called "scientific." Let us then be similarly scientific with the facts we have had under review.

We have traced the practice of tithe-giving into almost every known country of importance in what we call the ancient western world. But when did the practice begin? Roman history takes us back only to the day when two boys were suckled by a she-wolf, nor does Grecian lore go far behind the Trojan war.

Egyptian hieroglyphics conduct us further back, and the cuneiform inscriptions of Western Asia, perhaps, further still. But, though the earliest historical records seem to bear witness to the existence of the practice of tithe-giving from the remotest times, yet have we found no secular inscription that tells us when, or where, tithe-giving began, or who issued the law for its observance. Yet here are the facts before us, and they have to be accounted for. If it was originally left to every man to give for religious purposes according to his own inclination as much or as little as he pleased, then how should so many peoples have hit upon a tenth for God's portion, rather than a fifth, or a fifteenth, or any other

proportion? Does not the universality of this proportion among early Pagan nations point to a time when the ancestors of those nations lived together, and so derived the custom from a common source?

I have purposely confined my inquiries to what we understood by heathen testimony, from which we have seen that the practice of tithe-giving was usually, or at all events frequently, connected with the payment of first-fruits; with a priesthood; and with the presenting of sacrifice to a Divine being; all which things point to a religious or divine rather than a human origin.

If then we are disposed to allow that sacrifice was not a human invention devised by the wit of man, but rather of divine origin, is it not reasonable to argue that when the Deity appointed, as acceptable to Himself, certain things that were clean, and others not so, He also appointed the quantity or proportion in which such things should be offered, the overwhelming probability being, in the face of the facts before us, that the proportion so appointed was a tenth?

The Chairman (Commander Heath, R.N.).—I am sure all will join in according their thanks for this paper.

Mr. T. W. E. Higgens.—The author speaks of payment of tithes in connection (amongst other things) with the priesthood. I notice that Dr. Robertson Smith in his work on the *Religion of the Semites*, says that the "payment of tithes" was rather a modern than an ancient custom; but it appears to me, from this paper, that tithes were not entirely connected with the priesthood.

Dr. Robertson Smith's idea appears to be that tithes only grew up where priesthood originated, and that it was only where the latter had magnificent temples that they were paid. But all the facts of this paper seem to bear the other way. The question, in Babylonia, is treated in detail, and this appears to be a powerful argument; for, as the author says, all these people hit on one-tenth. There must have been some reason for it, for it is clear they would not have hit on that particular proportion merely by accident.

The AUTHOR.—I am much obliged to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the audience, for the appreciation you have expressed of my paper. Of course you will see that in quoting my authorities I have kept strictly to sources outside the Bible. I have purposely done so, for it gives a far stronger vantage ground if one can show that tithes were paid in Babylonia 2100 years before Christ, and if you can show that before Abraham was born tithes were in vogue. We know that Abraham paid tithes, and if we can show that from secular sources, you next open up the question of patriarchal tithe-giving, which is enough for a paper of itself.

We have among the Jews, under the Mosaic Law, the tithe-giving of the Old Testament, and then, if you go on, you find it in the Apocryphal and Talmudic records. Then you may pass on to the New Testament and the early Church, and you find there the custom was practised to a very large extent all through the centuries from the remotest period of history.

The Meeting was then adjourned.

NOTE.

On the last page of his paper the author refers to a time when the evidence collected tends to show that the ancestors of the nations lived together (p. 137). It is interesting to find the fact of the original unity of the human race thus contended for,* urged on other grounds by the Right Hon. F. Max Müller, M.A., D.C.L.

* Again,—"From the most widely separated nationalities of the old world we find proofs of the existence of primeval doctrines, theories of cosmical, religious, political, and even social character, so similar in detail that the hypothesis of their common origin in some region that had been historically and geographically the centre of all their peoples, seems to be completely established." Article on "Prehistoric civilization," *Biblia*, vol. xi, p. 195.—ED.

In the inaugural Address of the Congress of Orientalists held in London in 1895, arguing on philological grounds, he said:—

"It is the study of words, it is the science of language that has withdrawn the curtain which formerly concealed these ancient times and their intellectual struggles from the sight of historians. Even now, when scholars speak of languages, and families of languages, they often forget that languages mean speakers of languages, and families of speech presuppose real families, or classes or powerful confederacies which have struggled for their existence and held their ground against all enemies. Languages, as we read in the Book of Daniel, are the same as nations that dwell on all the earth. If, therefore, Greeks and Romans, Celts, Germans, Slavs, Persians, and Indians, speaking different languages, and each forming a separate nationality, constitute, as long as we know them, a real historical fact, there is another fact equally real and historical, though we may refer it to a prehistoric period, namely, that there was a time when the ancestors of all these nations and languages formed one compact body, speaking one and the same language, a language so real, so truly historical, that without it there would never have been a real Greek, a real Latin language, never a Greek Republic, never a Roman Empire; there would have been no Sanscrit, no Vedas, no Avesta, no Plato, no Greek New Testament."—ED.