

ordinance forever. And there is this remarkable fact connected with this law—whenever it was strictly observed, the blessings of God rested upon the people, and when it was neglected the anger of God was kindled against them; and a careful perusal of the Bible reveals to us that neglect on the part of the children of Israel to pay tithing was one of the most fruitful causes of unbelief, darkness of mind, departure from the ways of God, and falling into idolatrous practices.

I may be asked, why was this the case? Had the Lord need of the fruits of the earth? Had he need of the cattle? Had he need of the firstborn children? Had he need of a tenth of their gold and silver? Was there any necessity for these things to be devoted to him because of any want on his part? Of course not. The fruits of the earth are his, the cattle on a thousand hills are his and the gold and silver are his, he created them, and he can cover or uncover them at his will. The heaven of heavens is his dwelling place, and he has no need of a temple built with hands; yet in the economy of heaven, in the dealings of God with his children, he reveals unto them laws, ordinances and institutions which he requires them to observe, and which, when observed, bring blessings, but a disregard of which brings down his anger and indignation upon them. There is nothing plainer in Scripture than this.

God commands his children to believe in him, and to render obedience to his laws; he commands them to call upon his Son Jesus Christ, or rather, to call upon him in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. He commands them to pray unto him; he commands them to repent of their sins and to be baptized for their remission, to have hands laid upon

them for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and to observe other ordinances that he has revealed. What for? Does prayer to him advance him? Does belief in him contribute particularly to his happiness? Does repentance of sin on the part of the creature add anything particularly to God's glory? Does baptism for the remission of sins have any saving effect upon him? Does the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost have the effect to increase his light, knowledge, wisdom or power? We all recognize the fact that these commandments are given for man's benefit, to increase his happiness, and to prepare him for salvation and exaltation in God's kingdom. So also with the law of tithing: it does not, when obeyed by man, add to God's comfort, contribute to his wealth, increase his happiness, or furnish him with that of which he would be destitute if it were not obeyed; but it is given to man and he is required to obey it that he may receive the reward, and that he may acknowledge by this act—by this payment of the tenth of his increase—that all he obtains is the gift, and comes from the beneficent hand of God, and that he is dependent upon God. Hence Abraham, after returning from the conquest of the kings, when he was met by Melchizedek, paid to him the tithes of all, acknowledging by this act the divinity of the law, and the necessity of obedience thereunto. So strict was the Lord upon this point in his dealings with the children of Israel in the wilderness, that he gave very strict commandment unto Moses and Aaron, and to those who presided over and officiated among the people that they were to be very careful to collect, and the people were to be very careful to pay their tithing.

One object of enforcing this law