

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

"Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there will not be room enough to receive them*.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

"And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

We see here portrayed, in the most graphic and striking language, the blessings that God promised unto his people Israel when they observed this law, which he had given them in the beginning; and we can also understand from the statements of Malachi, the curses that would descend upon Israel if they did not observe this law. "Ye are cursed with a curse," says he, "for ye have robbed me, even this whole people." Strange language for God to use to his people, it may be thought, that they should be accused of robbery, that he should look upon them as thieves, as appropriating that which was not theirs, because they did not render unto him that which he had commanded them. They had refused their tithes, they had withheld their offerings, and consequently they were cursed. "But," says he, "bring in your tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house and prove me now, herewith, saith

the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*," etc. What great promises are herein conveyed to God's people!

I have drawn your attention to this law, my brethren and sisters, to show you what it was in the days of Israel, when God communicated his mind and will unto His people. I wish to impress upon you this fact, which you can all realize and understand for yourselves if you will read, that when Israel served God, and were strict in observing this law, he blessed and prospered them, and his favor was shown towards them; but when they neglected this law, his anger and indignation were kindled against them, and one of the most fruitful causes of disaster to Israel was their neglect in this particular. There were two things connected with Israel's disasters: one was neglecting to observe the laws of God, prominent among which was the law of tithing; and the other was their intermarriages with the heathen nations—those who were idolaters. This proved the destruction of the wisest king that ever reigned in Israel. It proved the destruction of the nation itself, for it brought disaster and ruin upon it.

There is something connected with the law of tithing that, when men do not have faith in God, appeals to their selfishness; and for a people to be wholehearted in its observance, they need faith in God. When Israel began to decline in faith in God, their selfishness increased, and their determination became stronger and stronger to grasp everything within their reach and to retain everything they gained possession of; and as this feeling grew, tithing and freewill offerings were withheld from the house of God, and in consequence