

to, and teaching them to approach Him with reverence and godly fear. It further reminded the worshipper that God was deserving of the best gifts and the highest honours he could render Him. The expenditure necessarily connected with such an establishment served also to bring the liberality of the Jews into healthy exercise. It afforded them an opportunity of showing what was the value in which they held One who was not merely the author of their being, but the source of their every mercy.

To meet the immense expenditure necessary for the maintenance of the Jewish worship, there were, in addition to the sums liberally contributed for the building and furnishing of the temple, in addition to the sacrifices voluntarily offered, in addition to the first-fruits dedicated to the Almighty, in addition to the forty-eight cities throughout Palestine, with their adjoining suburbs, set apart for the use of the tribe of Levi, the tithes or tenth part of all the produce of their fields and their cattle. From the earliest times, it would seem, men were accustomed to give up the tenth part of all they possessed to the service of the Deity. Various ancient nations were in the practice of doing so, and in the patriarchal age we find Abraham dedicating the tenth part of the spoils which he had taken from the ten kings, to God. Jacob also promised to tithe to God the tenth of all the substance He might bestow on him. The custom probably had its origin in the use which the ancients seem to have made of the number ten. In the habit, as they were, of counting with their ten fingers, ten became a kind of leading number to which all other numbers, greater or lesser, were referred. A good exemplification we have of this both in the Arabic and Roman numerals. They counted to ten, and then began again. And so the substance of the Jews was represented by the complete number ten, and out of the ten digits or parts one was set apart for the service of the Almighty. There were often taxes imposed on them for religious purposes, but this seems to have been the principal one, and it was about as small an exaction as could be well made. Out of the whole, God took only one part, leaving the other nine to them. And considering that they were indebted to God for all they possessed, and that they were unspeakably privileged beyond all other nations: yea, that the very object of this taxation was to preserve these privileges among them, we may well wonder that they should ever have grudged the small pittance that was demanded of them. Yet God complains in the context that they held back what was required of them by express enactments; and before God would complain in such strong terms, their payments must have become very faulty indeed. "Will a man rob God?" says the prophet. "Yet have ye 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." It seems a dreadful thing for a man to rob God. One would think that in regard to whatever other duties men might be defective, they would not be defective in regard to this.

But let us apply this subject to ourselves.

The worship of God, thanks to His name! pre-ails among us as it did among the Jews, but in a much more perfect form. No less deplorable would be the consequences to society, to man's present and everlasting welfare, were the worship of God to cease among us. We may sometimes imagine, my hearers, that we derive very little benefit from it, but we have only to contrast the condition of that community where there is no stated ministry with one where it has long existed; we have only to think how tedious and ill-spent is that Sabbath where there are no public services; we have only to reflect how much we need to be roused from our lethargy to attend to the one thing needful by every means at our disposal, to see how fatal would be the effects resulting from the want of the regular ministration of ordinances for any length of time. But if we would enjoy this most inestimable blessing,—if we would secure this blessing for ourselves and our children,—adequate provision, we know, must be made