

presence there whenever His worshipers were near the spot. No iron instrument was to be used upon the pillar, because it was holy like the enclosure in which it stood.

TENTH—The chief of the primitive tribe was expected to exercise unlimited hospitality, to provide for the tribal worship and to do many things involving expense, which was met by voluntary gifts or authoritative assessments from the members of the tribe. When

the priest became a separate person from the chief, part of the assessment was transferred to the support of religion. When the spoils of war were divided, one tenth was given to the temple or the priest. The Deity had a right to a certain part of the crop, generally a tenth, but the term was used where the rate was different, as among the Moslems where the tithe is one-twentieth or one-fortieth of the income.

THE LESSON APPLIED

Heathen legends record the story of the gods abandoning the earth. One by one they went, some of them casting sad and lonely backward looks as they withdrew. At last only one lingered in compassion, "loath to desert the once happy world." But the day of farewell came for that one, too, and the world was left godless.

Jacob's Bethel experience contradicts that dreary description of the departure of the gods.

"Around your lifetime golden ladders rise ;
And up and down the skies,
With winged sandals shod,
The angels come and go, the messengers of
God."

1. God is near you when your human friends are far away. Jacob went from his early home, leaving all to whom he had been tied by acquaintance and love and kinship there. Behind him, in Beer-sheba, was the known ; before him, as he went toward Haran, was the unknown. Beyond the green vales of home, and removed from his former life, he seems to have had the feeling that he had left God behind. Under the starry sky, on the slopes of Bethel, he lay down to rest, the second or third evening of his flight. The hard pillow upon which he laid his head, made his sleep a dream-filled one.

Before his eyes had closed, he recalled the appearance of the way he traveled. Ahead of him, he had seen in the evening light, hill-sides that presented an exact resemblance to the steps of a stair. Upon his closing eyes, this phenomenon had impressed itself, and as he slept there came a dream in which the hill-sides were a staircase for God's messengers to come and go.

As his eyes were filled with evidence of God's nearness to him, he hears the divine voice confirming the blessing he had received and assuring him that he is not alone in his exile, that he will be attended in all his way, aided in all his work and brought home again at last.

Jacob needed to know that God is not confined to place nor time. The patriarchs believed that Jehovah was "God of heaven and earth," but they also believed that in certain places He was more accessible than in other places. Here, far from home and kin, Jacob learns that heaven is all about him.

Happy are they who learn this and live in the radiance of the knowledge. "God is near me," is a word that will cheer us in loneliness, correct us in wrong, call out our best in endeavor and make us courageous in times of temptation.

2. God's nearness is not conditioned by our righteousness or unrighteousness. Jacob was a sinner. He had worked a bold deceit upon his aged and feeble father ; he had acted fraudulently towards his brother ; his conscience was accusing him so sharply that fear was his close companion ; he went

"Like one who on a lonely road
Walks on in fear and dread ;
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

But this consciousness of his sin did not drive God away from Jacob. Jacob avoided man, but he could not escape from God. The psalmist tells how he tried to evade God and how he utterly failed (Ps. 139 : 7-12). Jonah tried to escape from God with no more success. Sin-sick souls have God near to