

place as the preliminary to any religious exercise.

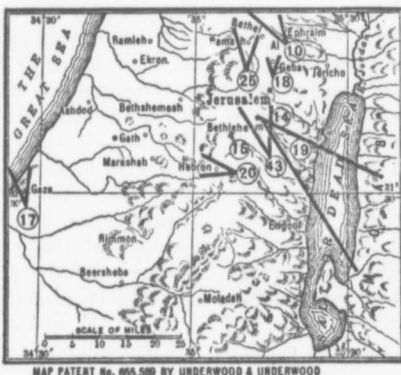
When the Hebrews settled in the land, their simple religious practice was soon infected with Canaanite superstition. Jehovah came to be worshiped at the sanctuaries and with the customs of the Canaanites. If a Hebrew wanted to find Jehovah, to appear before Him for any purpose, he thought he must repair to Bethel or Shechem or Hebron or some other holy place. The connection

of the patriarchs with certain of these places marks them out as especially sacred. After Bethel perhaps Beersheba was the most sought sanctuary.

"To seek Bethel," "to enter into Gilgal," "to pass to Beersheba," meant therefore to engage in the outward exercises of religion. Amos contended that such service was an offence to God, Amos 5 : 21-24. True service to him was not ritual ; but righteous dealing between man and man.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Consult our map of Southern Palestine and notice how the number 43 marks a position for us to take in the wilderness a few miles south of Bethlehem. The point of the V shows us where to stand. The arms of the V show between them the precise extent of country over which we may look when facing north. It is a wilderness indeed that we find spread out before us. Wandering folk have come and pitched their low, black tents in a sheltered hollow only a few rods away, down in front of where we are standing. An old man, a middle-aged man and a boy have come up from the camp, approaching so near that we can plainly see their coarse homespun



clothing and the kerchiefs which they wear over their heads, held in place by twisted ropes of goats' and camels' hair. Amos wore just such rough homespun garb as this. Sometimes he slept in the shelter of a tent like those yonder. Often he lay on the ground, covered only by his own cloak, looking up at this same sky after the day had been made "dark

with night." He had watched some of the same constellations that we ourselves know (Pleiades and Orion) as they sparkled from the solemn night-blue overhead.

Use a stereograph entitled, Arabs and Their Tents in the Wilderness of Tekoa ; Outlook North to Bethlehem.

THE LESSON APPLIED

Beware of falling through sin. The virgin of Israel is fallen, cried the faithful prophet. It may be that, outwardly, "all went merrily as a marriage bell," but there was an inward collapse. So must we be forever on our guard against the falling down of manhood. An ancient king built a strong wall about his palace for his own security. In the nighttime he heard a voice crying to him : "Oh, Emperor, though thou build thy wall as high as the clouds, yet, if sin be within, it will overthrow all."

All calamity is a call to repentance. Quite often calamity comes about as the conse-

quence of sin. In any case we do well to make such occasions a time of heart-searching. "Except ye repent," said the master, "ye shall all likewise perish." The very decimating war which the prophet foresaw is made the basis of an appeal. Can we not hear the voice of God above the clamor of these awfully destructive days : "Return unto Me and I will return unto you, O house of Canada."

Our God is a consuming fire. Israel was God's chosen people, nevertheless there was a danger that he should break out like fire in the house of Joseph. If we love, we shall hate all that threatens what we love. Where