

asleep. Now I cannot certainly say that he repented of his wickedness previous to this time: but I judge it was so; for as he slept that night upon his hard bed, the angels of the Lord came down to him, and the Lord God himself looked down in kindness upon him, and graciously promised to guide and keep him in all the way he should go, to bless and prosper him, and to bring him safely to the land he was then leaving.

I do not wonder that the young man said when he awoke, "The Lord is in this place; it is the gate of heaven."—He felt that God was present there, and he named the place Bethel. In the house of God, when we see the gate of heaven opened, and in faith behold the Lord smiling graciously upon us, it is indeed a Bethel to our souls. His soul filled with love and gratitude, he determined here to leave a monument for himself and for others, of the gracious appearance of God to him; and he took that very stone on which his head lay, when the heavenly vision appeared to him, and he sat it up for a memorial, and poured oil upon it, thus consecrating it as a holy altar unto the Lord Jehovah; and then in this place, this house of God, with this monument to remind him of his obligations, he vowed a vow unto the Lord. "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on—of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give a tenth unto thee."

I shall not now inquire how the Lord would use the tenth that Jacob promised to give him; nor shall I inquire why the Lord, who owns the cattle upon a

thousand hills, should want one-tenth of Jacob's flocks; neither will we waste our time to enquire whether Jacob could find use, in the service of God, for one tenth of all the great possessions which afterwards came into his hands. But I would enquire of you—all ye whom God hath blessed, and who live upon the fruits of his bounty—have you followed his example? Look at him, I pray you, a poor wanderer from his father's house. See what he asks of God when he makes his vow. He does not say, if thou wilt give me a thousand rams and ten thousand sheep, and flocks and herds, such as my father has; but, if thou wilt give me food and raiment, then I will give one tenth of all unto thee. Jacob made a vow when he was poor; and I have often thought, perhaps if he had waited till he had come out of Laban's house, with all his camels, his he goats, flocks, and men servants, he would have thought as some wealthy Christians, I fear, now think, one tenth would be too much—more than the Lord requires. I believe it is easier to form good principles on this subject before the deceitfulness of riches choke the path of duty.

Let me say a word to all. Are you poor?—just beginning life—just entering upon its active duties for yourself? The field is all before you. In the smile of Providence only will you prosper.—Do you wish to do all your duty? The Bible gives here an example in benevolence. Are you rich? Has God already blessed your basket and your store? Surely you can well and truly give back a tithe of what he has so freely given. Are you neither rich nor poor?