

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.*

(By Rev. J. W. McMillan, M.A.)

As long as the son of Jesse liveth, etc., v. 31. It is never wise to do wrong. If it ever seems to us wise, it is because our ignorance prevents us seeing the havoc that will result. Some native engineers in Brazil saw that a suspension bridge was sagging in the centre. It seemed to them that there was just one thing to do, to support that sagging centre. So they built a pillar that lifted it up. But they thus outraged the nature of the bridge, destroying all the intricate harmony of strains and stresses. A loaded train now pulled on beams where it should have pushed, and pushed on rods where it should have pulled. No wonder the bridge soon broke down. All the universe is constructed in harmony with right. No matter how convincingly wise, or absolutely necessary a policy may look, if it is morally wrong, it will be destructive in the end.

Wherefore should he be put to death? (Rev. Ver.), v. 32. Robertson of Brighton, the famous preacher of sixty years ago, once had a false charge laid against him. A friend of his heard the accusation, and, through cowardice or carelessness, missed the opportunity of putting his conduct in its true light. Robertson, writing of this in one of his letters, says, "How rare it is to have a friend who will defend you thoroughly and boldly!" That is what Jonathan did for David, even at the risk of his father's wrath; and that is what our friends should be able to count on in us, that we will speak out fearlessly for them if we hear them slandered.

What hath he done? v. 32. A young man started to practise law, while his widowed mother came to keep house for him. He waited weeks for his first case. Then a thief sent for him to defend him in the magistrate's court. The defence was to be an alibi for the prisoner's accomplices were to perjure themselves. The young lawyer refused the case, and his mother said, "Right, my son, right." Then a rich man came to him, asking him to draw up a deceitful agreement, by which the other party was to be cheated. Again he refused, and his mother said, "Right, my son, right." Then a poor woman who had been the victim of a money lender's extortion came to him. It was a case where his fees would be almost nothing, his expenditure considerable, and he would probably make powerful enemies for himself. But he took it, and his mother said, "Right, my son, right." That mother was a conscience to her son, making him ask regarding every proposed step, "Is it right?"

Only Jonathan and David knew, v. 39. Policy is not trickery, but the use of wisdom for good purposes. Cromwell's soldiers once caught the little son of a nobleman whom they were anxious to capture. He was brought before the rough looking captain and asked, "When did you see your father last?" The brave little fellow refused to speak. He was within his rights in keeping silent. Everyone sometimes learns something about somebody, which he ought not to

mention. Let him keep it to himself, and let him remember that a secret, whispered to one or two, is a secret no longer.

David arose, v. 41. How like the friendship of Prince Jonathan towards David was to that of Jesus towards John! How the son of Zebedee must have felt honored yet confounded by the affection of his Master! How familiar it was, without a trace of condescension! How resolute to protect the life of the loved comrade! How devoted in sacrifice, giving up so much for his sake, and pressing on to death in his behalf! There is room in the heart of Jesus for all mankind. He will be to us more than Jonathan was to David.

"The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know."

The Lord shall be between me and thee, v. 42. Affection is insecure till it is riveted by God's hand. People sometimes talk of honor among thieves. In point of fact, the detectives regularly count on breaking up a band of thieves by getting hold of one of them and inducing him to betray his friends. It is just among lawless, godless men that there is no honor. We can expect nothing good of any friendship upon which we cannot ask the blessing of God.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

God sometimes shuts the door and shuts us in,
That He may speak, perchance through grief or pain,
And softly, heart to heart, above the din,
May tell some precious thought to us again.

God sometimes shuts the door and keeps us still,
That so our feverish haste, or deep unrest,
Beneath His gentle touch may quiet, till
He whispers what our weary hearts love best.

God sometimes shuts the door, and though shut in,
If 'tis His hand shall we not wait and see!
If worry lies without, and toil and sin,
God's Word may wait within for you and me. (Unknown.)

THE MINISTRY OF SORROW.

A musician ordered of a violin maker the best instrument he could make. At length the musician was sent for to come and try his instrument. As he drew the bow across the strings his face clouded and he became angry. Lifting the instrument he dashed it to pieces on the table, paid the price he had contracted to pay, and left the shop. But the violin maker gathered up the broken pieces and set to work to remake the instrument. Again the musician was sent for, and drew the bow across the strings as before. The violin was perfect. He asked the price. "Nothing," the violin maker replied. This is the same instrument you broke to pieces. I put it together, and out of the shattered fragments this perfect instrument has been made." This is the way God does oftentimes with men's lives. They are not what they ought to be. Outwardly they may seem very beautiful, but no sweet music comes from them. They are lacking in spirituality, and the likeness of Christ does not appear in them. Then God permits them to be broken in sorrow or suffering, and with the fragments makes a new life which yields praise, honor and blessing.—Dr. J. R. Miller.

BETHANY AND BEYOND.

(By Rev. John B. Appel.)

The cruel execution was accomplished. The friends of Jesus tenderly cared for His mutilated body. He rose in triumph, at the end of three days, accompanied the proofs of His resurrection, and the risen Christ was more laudous and powerful than the living Jesus had ever been. His disciples walked with Him to Emmaus. They sat with Him in the Upper Chamber once again. They ate with Him by the side of Galilee. Then He walked with them to Bethany, blessed them and passed from mortal view. Hence the eyes of the whole world are on this spot. It rivets our attention to Bethany and beyond. Here heaven and earth met. This was the last place ever trodden by the foot of Christ. Here the heavens opened to receive Him. Whither He went we hope to follow. All must tread the same path.

We are interested in the road to Bethany, more interested in the road beyond. We all want to follow Jesus thus far anyway. The object of this article is to impress upon us all that if we would follow Jesus to Bethany and beyond, we must follow Him all the way. It was because He trod the road to Calvary that He ascended into heaven. It was because He was faithful all the way that the last journey was to the desired haven. Jesus in the carpenter shop, working, was Christ preparing for heaven. We are apt to think of our work as something which has nothing to do with our salvation. But it is the work that tells. Jesus performed both sides of His work in life, the mechanical and the spiritual, with faith and zeal, hence His reward.

We cannot be a church-goer and neglect our work and expect to meet with the commendation of the Master. We must follow His example all the way. We must be what He was, in the shop at Nazareth, in the home at Bethany, in the school at Jerusalem, in order to go with Him where He is. We must drink of His cup, bear His cross, suffer and sacrifice as He did, and then heaven will come to us as a true reward. We cannot be a faithful worker in our life's vocation and stay away from church, and expect to be blessed of God. We must live a rounded life. We must treat rightly both body and soul. There is a Christian hand, a Christian mind, a Christian soul. All have their respective interests. All must be faithfully cultivated. We shall not jump into heaven. We shall not be saved by chance. We cannot slip inside the pearly gates. All the long pathway of life we must walk with Jesus, as His disciples did, if we would walk with Him to Bethany and beyond. — Christian Intelligencer.

PRAYER.

The Sabbath is the Lord's; its peace, its foretaste of the eternal rest is His gift to men. O Lord, we thank Thee from the depths of our hearts for the shelter, the abounding sense of calm which we have in this haven of Sabbath. Surrounded by the hills of Thy love, we are shut out from the evils of the world, and for a space have opportunity to meditate upon Thee, upon Thy love for us, and upon that wisdom which Thou hast given us for study in Thy word. Once more we thank and bless Thee for this day. Amen.

*S.S. Lesson, August 23, 1903: 1 Samuel 20:30-42. Commit to memory v. 42. Study 1 Samuel, ch. 20. Read 1 Samuel 18:1-5; 19: 1-7; 23:14-18. Golden Text:—A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.—Proverbs 17:17.