



## LESSON VIII.—AUGUST 23.

I. Samuel xx., 12-23.

## Golden Text.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. xviii., 24.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Aug. 17.—I. Sam. xx., 12-23.  
 Tuesday, Aug. 18.—I. Sam. xviii., 1-5.  
 Wednesday, Aug. 19.—I. Sam. xx., 1-11.  
 Thursday, Aug. 20.—I. Sam. xx., 24-42.  
 Friday, Aug. 21.—Ps. xxvii., 1-14.  
 Saturday, Aug. 22.—Ps. xci., 1-16.  
 Sunday, Aug. 23.—John xv., 1-17.

12. And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow, any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee;

13. The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14. And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not:

15. But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David everyone from the face of the earth.

16. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18. Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19. And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thy self when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20. And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

21. And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt, as the Lord liveth.

22. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away.

23. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord be between thee and me forever.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

In our Old Testament studies we come upon much that has to do with war, with disobedience, and with its punishment. This week, however, we study a subject that is beautiful in itself, and that was beautifully illustrated in the relations of David and Jonathan.

Jonathan was Saul's son and thus was a royal prince. It might have been supposed that he would share his father's hatred of a young man who was growing into popular favor, and who was to be the next king. But just the reverse was true. Read the whole story of David and Jonathan one of the most beautiful in the Old Testament.

Saul was continually plotting to kill David, while Jonathan was doing his best to save his friend's life. In chapter nineteen we learn that David was aided in escaping Saul's murderous plans by two

of Saul's own children, Jonathan and Michal, the latter having become David's wife. These facts are an indication of David's great popularity and ability to win the friendship of those about him. Even Saul had liked him, until David's increasing favor with the people made the king jealous.

Read chapter xix., as a preparation to the present lesson, also the opening verses of chapter xx. The scene of this lesson is Gibeath of Saul, about four miles north of Jerusalem.

Teachers will find that this lesson and the Scripture connected with it contain excellent material for the special study of friendship. A very profitable side lesson might be made out of it.

We may divide this account of the scene between David and Jonathan thus:

1. Jonathan's Promise to David. 12, 13.

2. Jonathan's Appeal to David. 14, 15.

3. The Covenant, 16, 17.

4. A Signal Code, 18-23.

If we read verse 12 in the Revised Version we get the meaning more clearly, 'And Jonathan said unto David, The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness; when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be any good toward David, shall I not send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee?' David had been compelled to leave King Saul's court on account of the king's attempts upon his life, but it was near the time of the feast at the beginning of the month, and during this ceremony he would be expected to be in his place at the king's table. What shall he do?

But David has 'a friend at court,' in the person of Jonathan, his friend and the king's son. To him David appeals, and Jonathan promises to find out the feeling of Saul towards David. It would appear from Jonathan's reference to the 'third day,' that this monthly ceremony closed with a royal banquet on the third day.

Jonathan solemnly calls upon God to witness that, after having learned his father's intentions towards David, he will surely let David know how matters stand.

There is something very pathetic in the verses we are now to consider. Jonathan seems to have been assured of the fact that David was to be king after his father, Saul, and now makes an appeal to the future king for kindness and mercy. It was a strange situation, this royal prince appealing to the poor young shepherd, in hiding for his life, as though to his sovereign. It sometimes occurred in the Orient that, when a king of a new family came to the throne, he at once put to death all members of the preceding dynasty, in order to avoid any trouble from their claims to the throne.

Jonathan has just promised most solemnly to warn David if Saul still intends to do him harm, and now throws himself upon the mercy of his friend as a future king. Not only for himself does he plead, but for his family. David might spare Jonathan for the sake of their friendship, but would he and his descendants spare Jonathan's house?

This request of David, described in the earlier part of this chapter, and Jonathan's promise of aid and prayer for mercy are followed now by a solemn covenant of friendship. So David swore friendship to the house of Jonathan. The last clause of verse 16 is taken as probably spoken by Jonathan, meaning that the Lord was asked to punish David by means of the latter's enemies, if David failed to keep his promise.

David was asked to repeat this oath to Jonathan, for Jonathan loved David 'as his own soul,' and was devoting his very life to David, and risking the lives of his family in trusting them to David's mercy.

There was no doubt considerable danger to David in his meeting with Jonathan, for their friendship was known and Jonathan might be watched in order to discover David's whereabouts. So a simple code of signals was agreed upon in order to let David know the result of Jonathan's interview with his father. As a matter of fact, they did meet when Jona-

than had shot his arrow beyond the lad, but such a meeting seems not to have been planned, and was simply a farewell.

It is not necessary to describe the simple plan agreed upon as the text makes it very plain.

There is a great difference between mere acquaintance and friendship. We often hear one refer to another as 'My friend, so-and-so,' when, as a matter of fact, they are only acquaintances. True friendship is deep and lasting, and able to bear the strain of other's weaknesses and faults. It is a solemn, yet beautiful thing, to make a worthy, high minded person your friend for life. Read how Jesus honored his disciples by calling them his friends. John xv., 14, 15.

David was not, at this time, having an easy time, yet perhaps this very adversity was saving him from the snares of a too great popularity. Very few of us know how to value hard experience, yet Providence graciously sends such experience to develop our powers, as the eagle stirs up its nest and pushes the young out, that they may be taught to fly. Deuteronomy xxxii., 10, 11. Again, adversity comes as a saving agency, it is often the 'way of escape' from some temptation that we, in our human wisdom, have not foreseen. I Corinthians x., 13. Make adversity your chance to become strong and do a real service in the world.

Read the beautiful and impressive lament of David over the death of Jonathan, II. Samuel i., 17-27.

Next week the lesson is 'David Spares Saul,' I. Samuel xxvi., 5-12, 21-25.

## C. E. Topic

Sunday, Aug. 23.—Topic—Lessons from Paul: how to make our lives count like his. II. Tim. i., 6-8; II. Cor. xi., 23-28.

## Junior C. E. Topic

## DAILY WORKING.

Monday, Aug. 17.—God commands it. Gen. ii., 15.

Tuesday, Aug. 18.—Paul commands it. I. Thess. iv., 11, 12.

Wednesday, Aug. 19.—Good for health. Eccl. v., 12.

Thursday, Aug. 20.—Gives us homes. Prov. xxiv., 27.

Friday, Aug. 21.—Gives us bread. Prov. xii., 11.

Saturday, Aug. 22.—Gives us honor. Prov. xxii., 29.

Sunday, Aug. 23.—Topic—What the Carpenter, the fisherman, the tent-maker teach me about work. Matt. iv., 18-22; Acts xviii., 3; II. Thess. iii., 10.

## The Power of the Word.

('Watchman.')

There is a converting power in the truths of the Bible, and in the very words expressing those truths. A minister who passed through the great revival in Ireland a few years ago, afterwards wrote in relation to those who were brought under conviction of sin in his sphere of labor, saying: 'When in agony of mind, I have invariably found that whatever might be said to them, nothing brought relief but the pure Word of God quoted verbatim.' Very significantly did a Hindoo convert say: 'I read the Bible; I cannot help it; there I find something that catches me in a way which I cannot explain. The progress of conviction and conversion through the agency of the Word of God, is set forth in what is related of a man who sat down to read the Bible an hour each evening with his wife. In the course of a few evenings he stopped in the midst of his reading and said, 'Wife, if this book is true, we are wrong.' He read on; in a few days he said, 'Wife, if this book is true, we are lost.' Riveted to the marvellous pages, he still read, and in about a week joyfully exclaimed, 'Wife, if this book is true, we may be saved!'

In this light the gospel ministry and the Sabbath-school have surpassing claims. They are vitally connected with the application of God's revealed truth to the souls of men so that they may be converted.