

The Quiet Hour.

Saul Tries to Kill David.

S.S. LESSON.—1 Sam. 18: 5-16. August 16, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ps. 46: 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

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Connecting Links—Saul had apparently not recognized in David the youth who had quieted the evil spirit in him with his music, ch. 16: 19-23. Accordingly, when he went forth against the giant, Saul sent Abner to make enquiries. On the return of David from his great victory, the young hero was brought to the king. At the beginning of ch. 18 we are told of the strong friendship which sprang up between David and Jonathan, vs. 1-4.

I. The Joyful Welcome, 6, 7.

V. 5. David went out; that is, to battle. (See also v. 2.) Wisely. The Hebrew word combines the two ideas of prudence and consequent success. Over the men of war. David's position was equivalent to that of a general in a modern army. Accepted in the sight of all; first, on account of the bravery shown against Goliath, and then, because of his wisdom and prudence in daily life. Also in the sight of Saul's servants; the courtiers of the king, who might naturally have been jealous of his sudden promotion. V. 5 gives a summary, in advance, of the facts mentioned again in their proper place in vs. 13-16.

Vs. 6, 7. And it came to pass; on the return of David from his victory over Goliath. The women came out; to escort the victors with singing and dancing. Dancing, confined as a rule to women, was the usual expression of rejoicing on occasions of national triumph like the present (Ex. 15: 20; Judges 11: 34), and at religious festivals, Ps. 68: 25; 149: 3. Tabrets; a hand drum, still used by the Arabs, made by stretching parchment over a hoop, to which bits of brass were sometimes attached to make a jingle. It resembled our tambourine. With joy; that is, jubilant shouts and songs. Instruments of music; "either triangles or 'three-stringed instruments'" (Cambridge Bible). Answered one another. They sang in alternate choruses. (Compare Ex. 15: 21.) As they played: "that is, performed mimic dances" (Keil). This verse gives us the refrain of a popular song widely known, even the Philistines being acquainted with it, ch. 21: 11; 29: 5. David his ten thousands; for Goliath was more feared than a whole army of ordinary men. (Compare 2 Sam. 18: 3.)

II. The Great Danger, 8-11.

Vs. 8, 9. Saul was very wroth; displeased that David should receive greater praise than himself. But the kingdom. Saul must have felt that, in deciding the victory which he himself had failed to win, David had proved himself more worthy to rule than he. Saul eyed David; "with a suspicious jealousy, which soon ripened into a deadly hatred." There is no reason to believe that Saul had heard of David's anointing, but he knew (ch. 15: 28), that the kingdom was to be given to a man better than himself, and he could hardly fail to recognize in David marks of superiority.

Vs. 10, 11. On the morrow; the day following the celebration of David's victory by the women. The evil spirit; some evil

power under the control of Satan, which drove Saul to madness. (Compare ch. 16: 14.) From God; because God had allowed it to come upon Saul as a punishment. Prophesied. To prophesy signifies to speak under the influence of a supernatural power, which may be good or evil. Here it means wild raving. David played with his hand. Compare ch. 16: 23. A javelin. "Saul seems to have held the javelin in his hand as a sceptre, according to ancient custom." (Keil.) Saul cast the javelin. Probably the meaning is that Saul brandished the weapon without actually throwing it, as he did on a later occasion, ch. 19: 10. Avoided; made his place void, empty: that is, withdrew.

III. The Growing Popularity, 5, 12-16.

Vs. 12-14. Saul was afraid of David. His fear arose from the feeling that the Lord had departed from him. His sin had separated him from God. The Lord was with him. This accounted for his wisdom and prudence, v. 5. And was departed from Saul. In punishment for his wrong doing. God gone, wisdom went too. Remove him; afraid any longer to have one as his armor-bearer who bade fair to be his rival. Made him his captain over a thousand; the same appointment as that referred to in v. 5. Saul sent David away, partly to get rid of his presence, and possibly in the hope that he might be killed in battle. Went out and came in; carrying on military enterprises wisely and prosperously and enjoying the blessing of God. The Lord was with him. Compare the case of Joseph, Gen. 39: 2.

Vs. 15, 16. Saul... was afraid of him; Rev. Ver. "stood in awe of him," a stronger expression, than that in v. 12, and including the idea of the avoidance of the person feared. All Israel and Judah loved David; a result very different from that for which Saul had hoped. Israel and Judah afterwards became separate kingdoms, but from Saul to Solomon they were under one ruler.

David and Jonathan.

S. S. LESSON.—1 Sam. 20: 12-23. August 23, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Prov. 18: 24. There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

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Connecting Links—In ch. 18: 17-30 we have two plots laid by Saul to bring David into danger and death, one in connection with the deceitful offer of Merab, Saul's daughter, in marriage (vs. 17-19); the other on the occasion of David's seeking Michal, another of the king's daughters, as his wife, vs. 20-30. Ch. 15: 1-7 relates a temporary reconciliation between Saul and David, brought about by Jonathan, but in ch. 19: 8-10 Saul attempts to kill David with his own hand. The siege of David in his house and his escape are described in ch. 19: 11-17. Ch. 19 closes with an account of David's flight to Ramah and his miraculous protection there, first from the messengers of Saul, on whom the Spirit of God came, so that they could do nothing but prophesy; and then from the king himself, who was affected in the same manner. David then returned from Ramah to the neighborhood of Gibeah to take counsel with Jonathan, v. 1. The lesson is part of the interview between the two friends, vs. 1-23.

I. A Solemn Covenant, 12-17.

Vs. 12, 13. The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness (Rev. Ver.). God is called upon as a witness to Jonathan's faithfulness in giving David the help asked in vs. 5-8. Sounded my father; discovered his purpose regarding David. About to morrow. That day being "the New Moon, or first day of the lunar month, was celebrated with special sacrifices and blowing of trumpets (see Num. 28: 11-15; 10: 1, 2; Ps. 81: 3); it was observed as a day of rest (Amos 8: 5), and apparently used as an opportunity for religious instruction." 2 Kings 4: 23 (Cambridge Bible). If there be good toward David. This is one alternative. The other is, if it please my father to do thee evil. Jonathan evidently felt the latter was the one his father would take. The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan. (Compare ch. 3: 17.) The words are a prayer, that if Jonathan proved unfaithful to David, the Lord would give to himself worse treatment. I will shew it thee; a pledge to tell David just how matters stand, whatever the result may be. Be with thee, as he hath been with my father. The words express Jonathan's assurance that David would one day occupy the throne then held by Saul.

Vs. 14, 15. While yet I live shew me the kindness of the Lord. Convinced that his friend is to be king, Jonathan requests for himself such kindness as David was to receive from the Lord. Not cut off thy kindness from my house forever. "House" signifies family, descendants. Fearing that David would follow the barbarous Eastern custom, according to which the first king of a new dynasty slew the family of his predecessor, Jonathan sought a promise that he would show mercy to his race. (Compare 1 Kgs. 15: 29; 2 Kgs. 10: 16; 11: 1.) When the Lord hath cut off. He was sure that the Lord would give David the victory over his enemies. David remembered and fulfilled his pledge to Jonathan, when he had become king, by seeking out Mephibosheth and making him an inmate of the royal household and treating him as his own son, 2 Sam. chs. 9 and 21: 7.

Vs. 16, 17. Made a covenant; David promising kindness to his family forever. The house of David. David's promise was to bind his descendants as well as himself. Let the Lord even require it. The meaning is, "Let the Lord exact vengeance from David by the hand of his enemies, if he fails to fulfil the covenant." Caused David to swear again. Jonathan obtained from David a second oath in addition to that implied in v. 16. Because he loved him. Love reveals in repetitions. The bond between himself and David, Jonathan felt, could not be made too close. Loved him as his own soul. Compare ch. 18: 1-3. This "is the first Biblical instance of romantic friendship." It "has been imitated, but never surpassed in modern works of fiction."

II. A Prudent Man, 18-22.

V. 18. The new moon. See on v. 12. They now lay a plan for David's safety. Thou shalt be missed; from the king's table, for every member of the royal household would be expected at the royal feast. (Compare vs. 5, 25.) "There was little privacy in the daily life of Eastern princes. Generally, and always on special occasions, the whole of the attendants and officers of the court dined at the same table with, but below the king, or rather, sat before the dishes, which were placed on the floor."

V. 19. When thou hast stayed three days; probably at Bethlehem (v. 6), or else in some place of hiding. Go down quickly.