

see them. *A sign unto us.* Jonathan sought God's guidance making up his mind to see in the Philistines' "Tarry," God's bidding that he and his companion should remain in the valley, and in their "Come up," his direction that they should ascend the cliff on the Philistines' side of the ravine. Beneath this method of ascertaining God's will, there was "the profound conviction that every word and act of men is ordained by the divine governance."

III. A Brilliant Success, 11-13.

V. 11. *The holes.* Travelers say that there are numerous caverns in the limestone rocks of the district.

Vs. 12, 13. *Come up, etc.;* a bantering challenge from the men on the cliff to the pair in the valley. *Come up . . . for the Lord hath delivered them, etc.* Jonathan believed that the victory, in the divine purpose, was already obtained. *Climbed up;* being hidden, while climbing, from the men at the top. *They fell before Jonathan;* taken by surprise and stricken with panic. And so twenty men of the Philistines were slain within a short distance and the whole camp was filled with terror.

The attack of Jonathan and his armor-bearer was followed by a complete rout of the Philistines. The narrative goes on to tell of Saul's curse upon any one who should taste food before sundown and of how Jonathan, having broken the king's com-

mand, was saved from death only by the protests of the people.

Light from the East

HEBREW WEAPONS—An old Hebrew warrior carried only light arms. He had a spear or lance with a wooden shaft and a flint or metal head; sometimes he had a small javelin or dart (1 Sam. 17 : 6, 45); at his girdle he might carry a sword, or a dagger which the Oriental uses so dexterously; he might be armed with bow and arrows; or he might have only sling and pebbles. Slingers were found in all Oriental armies; the left-handed slingers of Benjamin were famous, Judg. 20 : 16. With a sword or dagger, an enemy could be dealt with at close quarters; for an enemy at a distance, as in a siege, you could use bow or sling.

Now, as long as an enemy was not protected by armor, these light weapons were sufficient. But when men began to protect their bodies, heavier weapons of offence became necessary. It seems that the Hebrews learned how to use defensive armor from the Canaanites, but the story of David putting on Saul's armor and putting it off again illustrates the natural Hebrew distrust of it. Of course, in any age, only a small part of any army could be equipped with great shields and breast plates and helmets; the ordinary soldier had no protection but his mantle of heavy cloth and agility of foot and hand.

THE LESSON APPLIED

The Value of Initiative, v. 1. Inaction is difficult for youth. Saul thought it wise delay battle until his warriors could be properly armed, but Jonathan was too impatient to wait. He had no sympathy with counsellors who agree that action is necessary, but "not at the present time," which means never. The responsibility for the official action of the Israelites rested upon Saul, but Jonathan felt a personal responsibility for his fellow-countrymen, and was willing to risk his career in one brave hazard.

There is a marked contrast between two kinds of men, the obedient sort who will do what he is told faithfully, and the creative intellect who can see what ought to be done,

and has initiative to start in to do it. Saul knew the necessity of defeating the Philistines, but Jonathan buckled on his armor to attempt the job. What he did was quite contrary to army discipline. There would be endless confusion if every private tried to win the war on his own. Such a deed as Jonathan's is exceptional, but it was a daring disobedience worthy of a Victoria Cross. And when the Philistines were routed, Jonathan's fellow-countrymen would ask themselves in amazement: "Why didn't we think of that?"

The ability to think out a new method is even more important than the capacity to carry it into effect. Jonathan's plan was