

afterwards obtains the kingdom; and, in accordance with his oath to his friend, he afterwards, when a powerful king, always spares the descendants of Jonathan, in grateful remembrance of his dearly loved friend, and never loses an opportunity of shewing them kindness. We may well believe that when, in after years, David drew to his court the posterity of Jonathan, he often told them *himself* of these last events before their separation with which no one but the two friends could be acquainted, and that our present narrative springs ultimately from this source. (Ewald).

42. Go in peace The usual word of farewell. **Forasmuch**—The sentence is broken and incomplete, as if Jonathan's voice choked while he was speaking, and he could not finish the sentence he began. **In the name of the Lord**—It was, therefore, not a friendship which rested merely on mutual good feeling, but was based on a recognized common union of heart with the living God. Jonathan's heart clung in firm faith and trust to the Lord; this was the root of his heroic courage and his victorious prowess (14: 6); this fresh power of faith, which elevated and

sanctified his whole being, won him David's regard and love. David's whole life-course shewed Jonathan the direct wonderful gracious leading of the Lord, to which he humbly submitted himself. The two hearts were one in looking to and hoping in the living God, in humble obedience to his holy will. This was the foundation of their communion of love and life in the Lord. (Erdmann). **My seed and thy seed**—David remembered this to Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan. (2 Sam. 9). David went forth into exile, and Jonathan returned to his post of filial duty and patriotism. "The scenes in this chapter are some of the most affecting presented to us in history, whether in old or modern times, and we may well wonder at the delicacy of feeling and the gentleness of the sentiments which these two men in those old rough times entertained for one another. No ancient writer has set before us so noble an example of a heartfelt, unselfish and thoroughly humane state of feeling, and none has described friendship with such entire truth in all its relations, and with such profound knowledge of the human heart." (Phillipson).

PPRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *A true friend is unselfish.* Both David and Jonathan manifested this in the highest degree, but owing to the position of the king's son his magnanimity is the more conspicuous. All David's worldly interests seemed at Jonathan's mercy. To have secured his death or banishment would have been counted wisdom by the politicians of the day. Yet never once does a thought seem to cross his mind that was unkind to David. He risks his life in defending him against his father's charge, and visits him when hunted as an outlaw. Fair-weather friends are no friends at all. When interests clash then the worth of honeyed words is tested.

2. *We should choose only the good and true as friends.* Every real friendship must be based upon mutual respect for real worth. We shall find no perfect friend but One, our elder Brother, Jesus, and in so far as others manifest his character, though imperfectly, do they merit our love and esteem. We cannot be too careful in guarding ourselves against close intimacy with those whose friendship will not help us to be more Christ-like. "Choose friends, not for their usefulness, but for their goodness; not for their worth to us, but for their worth to themselves, and choose, if possible, people superior to ourselves."

3. *A true friend will not forsake us in adversity.* To the very last Jonathan was true to David, and David shewed, in his kindness to Jonathan's son, that he never forgot the bosom friend of his youth. Their souls were "knit" together. When David was a fugitive, Jonathan left his father's camp in order to have a stolen interview with his friend. The desire of friendship is to help

and serve, not to advance selfish ends. Adversity furnishes the occasion that true friendship seeks. Its joy is to stand by the object of its love when others forsake it. The professed regard which readily entertains suspicions, jealousy or envy, is only veiled selfishness.

4. *Our friendships should be "in the Lord"—religion should sanctify them.* It is not to be denied that there have been true friendships where neither were Christians. But every one who is loyal to the Best Friend will not be satisfied until he has brought his human friends to love him too. We should guard against contracting intimate acquaintance with any who are careless, worldly, pleasure-seeking or irreligious. If we cannot talk with another about what lies nearest our hearts we cannot have with him the unreserved confidence of friendship. In mutual love to Christ all human love finds its highest and purest type.

5. *Jesus is the best Friend.* "In alliance with him you are in alliance with all that is pure and bright, all that is transforming and beautifying; all that can give peace to your conscience, joy to your heart, lustre to your spirit, and beauty to your life; all that can make your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; all that can bless you and make you a blessing. And once you are truly his, the bond can never be severed; David had to tear himself from Jonathan, but you will never have to tear yourself from Christ. Your union is cemented by the blood of the everlasting covenant; and by the eternal efficacy of the prayer, 'Father I will that they also whom Thou has given me be with me where I am.'" (Blaikie).