

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

SAUL AND JONATHAN SLAIN IN BATTLE.*

Saul became the King of Israel under the most auspicious circumstances. He had a rich kingdom, a powerful army and a numerous family. In the space of a few years, however, what marked changes occur in his career! He forsakes God, becomes a curse instead of a blessing to the people, troubles multiply about him, envy rankles in his heart until, forsaken of God, surrounded by hostile forces and racked by torturing passions, he takes his own life on the field of battle, when the flower of the army of Israel lay dead on the slopes of Gilboa, three of his own sons among them, and the Philistines whom he had once so gloriously conquered, again hold the territory over which he had reigned. A reign which opened so brightly closed thus in dishonor and ruin; and, in the short space of sixteen years, only one member of the royal family of Saul could be found, and this sole survivor was a poor cripple. Sad commentary on the mutability of worldly glory and grandeur! Yet how eager is the race after earthly distinctions! The greatest of all dramatists put the true conception in the familiar lines:

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely
players.
They have their exits and their en-
trances,
And one man in his time plays many
parts."

On the bloody field of Gilboa it is not easy to recognize in this defeated and despairing man the brave soldier by whom at Jabesh-Gilead "the Lord had wrought salvation in Israel" (chapter 11th). However, the valiant deeds on that day of his victory are not forgotten now in this day of his shame, but are gratefully remembered. The wear of time sometimes effaces from the memory the record of benefits bestowed. But true and loyal hearts never forget, and are ever ready to show their appreciation of favors received by grateful returns, even at the hazard of life. We have an illustration of this in the valiant men of Jabesh. Saul had delivered them when they were in great trouble. Many years had passed since then, and Saul's later life had been of a character to efface rather than perpetuate the recollection of his acts of bravery when he completely vanquished the Ammonites, yet their gratitude and courage were equal to the occasion, and made the only bright spot in this dark picture. They rescued from dishonor Saul's dead body, which the Philistines had "fastened to the wall of Bethshan."

This calamity, as many another, involved both the innocent and the guilty, the good and the bad. One man, at least, who fell at Gilboa, was innocent of the sin which brought the dreadful judge. Whatever may have been the character of the others who fell on that bloody field, Jonathan's fate was not the result of his personal transgression, but of his father's iniquity. In this world this is often the case. The innocent suffer because of the sin and guilt of others. While Jonathan's death is a sad illustration of this truth, he is at the same time a cheering demonstration of the fact that though a son may suffer on account of his father's character, he need not walk in his father's

footsteps. He can, by the help of God, order his life in righteousness. This Jonathan did, hence David's great love for him.

We have in this history a beautiful example of true friendship—that rare creation which has been defined "one soul in two bodies." It never existed in greater purity and ardor than between David and Jonathan. If there ever was friendship in this world, pure unalloyed, disinterested, free from envy, with no trace of selfishness, incapable of harboring a suspicious thought, and capable of rejoicing in another's gain, even to his own loss, it glowed in the bosoms of these two men. Man never could boast a friend such as Jonathan had in David, and such as David had in Jonathan, and lost when Jonathan fell in battle and lay cold on Gilboa's mountain. It is not to be wondered at, when David's thought turns to Jonathan in composing his song of lamentation, that his tones should quiver with touching pathos: "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of woman." Thus the stricken heart of David bewailed the death of his dearest friend.

Though the JOYS of this deep, pure, noble friendship ceased with the death of Jonathan, yet the FRIENDSHIP itself was not buried in Jonathan's grave; it did not die with his death. For we find David, so soon as he becomes established on his throne, inquiring: "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" True friendship is everlasting.

NEW LIFE.

A fire swept the forest growth away—
All the green thicket deeds of tender
Earth;
And every sapling Hope had given
birth
Burned red, then white, and crumbled
to decay;
While blackened trees stood stark in
mute dismay.

So, like our lives, consumed by some
distress,
When trusting hearts, blithe in the
spring of youth,
Are blasted by the flames of Sorrow's
truth
And withered in Pain's fire of faithless
ness—
Until where Beauty bloomed no man
can guess.

Yet, lo! a miracle when time is told:—
As trees and flowers shall bless that
sod again
And lift their fervent lips to sum-
mer's rain,
So may our hearts arise from ashes cold,
To give new growth to God a thousand-
fold.
—Edith Livingston Smith, in The Out-
look.

Calm soul of all things; make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of Thine
Man did not make, and cannot mar.
The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others, give!
Calm, calm me more; nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.
—Matthew Arnold.

Be charitable. What you think to be
tares may be God's wheat.—H. H. Jes-
sup, D.D.

"GREAT JOY IN THAT CITY."

Luke tells us that when Philip went to Samaria, preaching and healing, "there was great joy in that city." So there has always been "great joy" where the gospel of Christ has gone. To appreciate our blessings we should not compare our condition with that of those in heathen lands, for then our eyes rest upon the incidental. The abolition of slavery, the elevation of woman, the growth of a true philanthropy, the purification of family life—these are not the essence of Christianity, but incidental, though not accidental. The essence of Christianity is rather its message of forgiveness and salvation to dying souls. The essence of the gospel is what it brings to us individually as sinners needing salvation. Hence the true comparison is not with those far away, but it is nigh us, in our home town, perhaps our own family. It is with those who are without Christ, who have no true source of strength, and what a wondrous strength it is for us.

It is a strength in illness and when troubled with bodily weakness. There were in Judea and Galilee blind men to whom Christ gave sight, deaf to whom He gave hearing, dumb to whom He gave speech, and lepers to whom He gave soundness of body. Christ is not now present upon earth to perform such miracles of healing, but He performs among us even yet as great wonders of healing. Is not he blind who is sensible to the world of truth and beauty around him? Is not he deaf who cannot hear the voice of conscience and the call of duty. Is not he dumb who cannot speak any message of comfort to a troubled world? Is not he living in a leprosy worse than physical who lives in the living death of sin? For each Christ has His message of good cheer. Each He heals of his disease. He helps us bear our ailments, which are merely physical, because we know that health is not all of this life.

It is a strength in trial and sorrow. No sorrow is too great to be borne in His strength. It may be, when our friends leave us, that we have not the grace to rejoice in this that they are in greater glory with Christ; but this much we do owe to Him, though we cannot rejoice in their separation, we know they are with Him. We have seen many young lives cut off seemingly before their time; but there has been a triumph in their translation. It has seemed not so much the blighting of the hopes and promise of a glorious victory as the unexpectedly early coming of the victory itself in all its glory. Only because of Christ's message can we write upon the tombstones of our departed: "Thou livest in Him." Among those who are "without hope and without God in the world" there are only rebellion and despair. It was only when Christ came that men could call the day of the death of their friends their "birthday"—into a higher, freer and more gladsome life.

It is a strength in joy and in success, Not trial but success is after all the truest test of character. In trial and failure men feel their own weakness, and wish to rest upon something stronger. But in success there is the temptation to self-trust and self-confidence. Their character is severely tried. In our sorrows we keep them to ourselves as long as possible, and when the heart is overflowing with the burden we go to our friends at length for comfort. But our pleasures we wish to share at once with our friends—the more intense the joy the great this desire to share it with our best friends. With strangers we share only the trivial things of life. Yet

*S. S. Lesson, Sept. 6, 1 Sam. 31:1-13.
Golden Text—Pregare to Meet Thy God.
Amos 4:12.