

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. The friendship between Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, and David dates from their first meeting after the victory over Goliath and the Philistines, and continued unbroken until the death of Jonathan. Saul's regard for David soon changed to bitter hatred. Five times he attempted his life as narrated in chapters 18 and 19. At last David appealed to Jonathan to ascertain for him whether his father's conduct was the indication of a fixed purpose against him or merely the insane antipathy of a madman. The plan he proposed was followed and our lesson opens with Jonathan reply to his father's declaration of his reason for seeking to destroy David. "At this feast, surrounded by his friends, and supported by a body of courtiers who had slandered the absent hero, and hoped to reap benefit by his deposition and death, the king had fully intended to carry out his murderous designs. Was he to be frustrated in this way, and that with the privacy or at the instigation of his own son?" Hence the violent and insulting language to Jonathan. (Deane).

LESSON PLAN. I. The Danger. vs. 32-34. II. The Warning. vs. 35-39. III. The Farewell. vs. 40-42.

I. THE DANGER. 32. Jon'a-than—*(the gift of God).* He had sworn friendship with David at the time of the victory over Goliath (18: 1). **Wherefore shall he be slain?**—Saul had just told Jonathan that David would supplant him as heir to the throne if allowed to live, but Jonathan saw in that no reason why he should be murdered. If God chose to place him there, and his life was blameless, he deserved no injury. Jonathan was brave, unselfish and magnanimous. (ch. 19: 5; Matt. 27: 25).

33. Saul cast a javelin—Rather "brandished," lifted it in a threatening manner (18: 11). On a previous occasion Jonathan was able to touch the better feelings of his father (19: 4, 5), but now his ungoverned, violent temper would not be controlled. What a scene to enact before his whole court on a solemn feast day! (Cook), **Whereby Jonathan knew**—He had before been disposed to attribute his father's acts of violence toward David to his madness, and the demon that at times possessed him, but now he is convinced that David's suspicions of his bloody design (verse 3) are well founded, and he arose from the table in a wild tumult of passion, and the next morning, true to his word, went forth to bid David fly. (Terry).

34. Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger—It was the anger of indignant grief, not that his father had addressed vile epithets at him, but because he had called his friend a traitor. The insult to himself had been shameful, but the generous-minded Jonathan feels far more keenly the wrong done to his friend in charging him with treasonable intentions (verse 31).

II. THE WARNING. 35. At the time appointed—R. V. margin, "to the place appointed." (See verses 18-24). A little lad—Who would not suspect the real purpose of Jonathan's shooting; a vivid touch of reality in the narrative. (Kirkpatrick).

36. The arrows—Three were to be shot at a mark, but as he runs to pick them up, Jonathan shoots one beyond the other two so as to give occasion for the preconcerted signal. The exact method of procedure is not easy to determine in this condensed narrative, and it is of little consequence.

37. Is not the arrow beyond thee?—the danger signal to David as agreed upon.

38. Make speed—This was intended for David's ear, to emphasize the great danger in which he stood.

III. THE FAREWELL. 40. His artillery—His bow and quiver. This term was applied to all kinds of weapons for shooting stones, arrows and other projectiles long before the invention of gunpowder. He sent away the lad that he might be alone with David. The interview would have been a fatal one to them if any person had reported it to the king.

41. Towards the south—His hiding place was on the south side of the stone Ezel. The preceding affair occurred on the north side, whence the boy returned to the city, which lay on the north of David's hiding place, so that the latter was completely hid from him. (Erdmann). **Bowed himself three times**—It was, and is, the custom, in approaching a sovereign or prince, to pause and bow at regular intervals. David thus testified his respect to Jonathan's high station, in advancing to meet him; but when they came near, everything but their heart-brotherhood was forgotten. (Kitto). Whatever dignity God might have in store for him, Jonathan was still the son of his king. When an Oriental meets a superior he kneels down and touches the ground with his forehead. With beautiful and touching affection the two friends embraced each other. Both felt it to be, what it really was, save for one stolen interview (23: 16-18), a long and last farewell. Henceforth David was an exile and an outlaw until the death of both his persecutor and his beloved friend opened up for him the way to the throne. David exceeded—broke down, completely mastered by his grief. (Payne Smith). He wept violently aloud. (Erdmann).

"They wept as only strong men weep,
When weep they must, or die.

This is the culminating point in the mutual relations of these two friends, who furnish the eternal type of the perfection of noble friendship. In these last hours before their separation, all the threads of their destinies, henceforth so widely different, are secretly woven together. As Jonathan here foresees, David