

## DAVID AND JONATHAN.

down the evil side of that foolish proverb, "Nothing succeeds like success." Beared success in its own den; fight the most popular evils; espouse the poorest and the weakest causes, if you believe that they are inspired by one element of right. It takes a strong man to stand alone. It is only a man here and there that can raise a tune; almost everybody tries to have a mumble after it is raised. But stand alone, young friend; stand alone, poor man; stand with the right. Do not stand with it presumptuously and self-displaying, with self-idolatrous demonstrativeness; but stand beside it, because it is right, with all meekness and self-control and purity and honesty. We are in the minority; but we are in the minority of God. You know that I do not believe in majorities, properly so called. I believe that men should be weighed as well as numbered. I would rather have the support of one man of a certain kind than the support of ten thousand men of a kind directly opposite. If I could not have them both, I say, "give me that one man. If God be for us, who can be against us?" At one time Jonathan was up and David was down. Now David is up and Jonathan's family is down. And David remembers the old covenant, which Jonathan "caused him to swear again, because he loved him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul." As you have often heard of two soldiers before going into battle making a covenant that if one is shot the survivor will take charge of the body, the watch, the mementoes, and perhaps of the bereft family of the one that dies, so David and Jonathan had made a covenant, and now that Jonathan is dead, David is inquiring about his family, that he may show kindness unto them for their father Jonathan's sake. "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" There are many topics which the text suggests.

I. It supplies us with an illustration of the nature and power of true friendship. — No one can read the First Book of Samuel without being struck with the pure and faithful love which David and Jonathan bore to each other. Commencing on Jonathan's part with admiration of David's bravery and prowess, there were doubtless points of resemblance between them, in temperament, intelligence and character, and, when once brought together, their souls were "knit to each other" as the soul of one man. Both were generous and upright men, brave and courageous. Their friendship was formed in youth, when, if ever, the heart is tender

and guileless, and for purposes of mutual benefit, counsel, and sympathy. Two kindly hearts swore fealty to each other, and their loyal affection survived all the varieties and reverses of fortune. In the battle, it is not the blade of Jewelled hilt, but of truest temper, that is proof against the blows which fall with lightning force. And in the day of adversity it is only the true heart that remains firm. The sternest of all tests were applied to Jonathan's love, but it was neither transmuted by the fire nor broken by the sword. It was "wonderfull, passing the love of woman." Thus sang David when lamenting the death of his friend "the beauty of Israel," in words the noblest and most pathetic ever uttered by genius consecrated by a pious and beautiful friendship. Foremost among the influences which tend to form our character, and which make the hues in which our after years are coloured, are the friendships that we make in early life. A false step then may lead us in the downward path forever, and a wrong association throw a shadow on our life which may deepen and darken till it rest upon our grave.

It is impossible to say how much David was indebted to the brave, gentle, and self-sacrificing Jonathan. Amid the tumult and strife, the treachery and tribulation, the perpetual waving of the red hand of war, events that went on careering amid blood and dust, and the thousand influences which pervade the camp and the court, and which tend to harden or to enervate the heart of man, the memory of Jonathan must have been to him a saving presence, an inspiring motive to work out for himself a true and noble character by grand and heroic deeds, in the midst of so much that was hollow and false in the daily life of the men that surrounded him. Most men have had their Jonathan. We can all point to some among the living or the dead whose wisdom, sympathy, and love responded to the yearning of our heart in some critical juncture of life; whose daily acts, or measured words, or broken hints, were to us as a new revelation, a motive or an impulse; whose influence is present with us still, and will survive the last analysis of life.

II. It suggests the sacredness of a promise. — When David's life was in imminent peril from the deadly hatred of Saul, Jonathan interposed and determined to achieve his deliverance. The risk was great; but he had justice on his side. His love dared all—his father's displeasure, his own reputation, the ruin of his house—to do what was right for his friend. They made a covenant—swore by their own great love—on Jonathan's part