The Sunday-School.

THIRD QUARTER, LESSON VIII.—Aug. 23.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.

1 SAMUEL 20: 12-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* Prov. 18: 24.

THE LESSON.—1 Sam. 18: 1-4; 19: 1-7; 20: 1-42; 2 Sam. 9: 1-13.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.* B. C. 1062 (Ussher's chron.) or 1042 (the chronology modified by the Assyrian Eponym Canon).

Place.—Gibeah of Saul, four miles north of Jerusalem,—the Royal Palace and the neighboring country.

Saul.—Now about 53 years old, having been king thirty-three years, according to the common chronology, or thirteen years, according to others.

David.—Aged 21 to 23 years. His home for a year had been in the royal court of Saul. He became a captain in the army, with one thousand soldiers under his command, and married Saul's daughter Michal, becoming son-in-law to the king.

A NOTABLE FRIENDSHIP.—The lesson for today is a most interesting section of David's history, in which we can trace the workings of God's guiding providence, as he leads a young man upward toward his life's work. The friendship of Jonathan and David was one of the most perfect and beautiful ever known.

THREE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF FRIENDSHIP.—*Mutual Worth.* There must be something strong and noble in each partner to the friendship. It is only great-hearted men who can be true friends; mean and cowardly men can never know what friendship means. *An essential similiarity ,with minor differences,* not identity, but harmony. "Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed." There must be large similarity of sympathy and principles, together with such personal differences as make one friend the complement of the other. *The Spirit of Self-sacrifice.* Friendship always implies the willingness to sacrifice self for the sake of the one loved. The first condition of all really great moral excellence is a spirit of genuine self-sacrifice and self-renunciation.

HOW DAVID AND JONATHAN FULFILLED THESE CONDITIONS.—David was attractive in person; he was accomplished in music and song; he was a courtier; he was faithful; he was courageous even to heroism; he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways;" he had great common sense and tact; he was large-hearted and generous; and, above all, he had a sublime faith in the Lord. He was a good general, and had in him the elements of a great statesman. Jonathan was one of the finest and most beautiful characters in the Old Testament. He had not quite the genius, self-reliance, masterfulness, and vital force of David, nor his versatility, and power of leadership; but his was a great soul. He was a brave and noble soldier, and had accomplished some daring feats of arms. In Jonathan unselfishness was more prominent than in any other Old Testament character. He was almost a model son.

HOW JONATHAN EXPRESSED HIS FRIENDSHIP.—1 Sam. 18: 1-4. Jonathan, the prince, took off his royal soldier garments, and gave them to David, together with his sword and "his famous bow, which was his special weapon" (2 Sam. 1: 22), and his princely girdle. That an Eastern prince should give any ornament or robe from his own person is a mark of favor shown only very rarely.

THE TEST OF FRIENDSHIP.—Vs. 12-23. A court, and especially an Eastern court, is a perilous place for a young and untried man. David was safe because God was with him, and he kept close to God. The army had not returned from the great victory begun by the fall of Goliath, when Saul's jealousy and every evil, selfish passion were inflamed by the sight of the women and maidens, who had gone forth to meet the victorious soldiers. 'Saul,' they sang, 'has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.' David sought to soothe him with his music, but he hated David, and tried in various ways to kill him. Five separate attacks are mentioned in 1 Sam. 18 and 19. David was compelled to escape from the court. David asked Jonathan to make an excuse for his absence, to note Saul's feelings toward David, and report. They went out into the country where they could make their plans without being discovered. *Jonathan said . . . . . O Lord God of Israel.* Better as R.V., "The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness." *The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan.* A prayer that God should treat him as he treated David, and even more severely. *As he hath been with my father.* Raising him from an humble station to the throne. Jonathan was convinced that David would be the successor of Saul as king of Israel, and therefore asked as a favor, *while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord,* and thus preserve his life, although it was the usual plan in those days to destroy all rival claimants to the throne. *Not cut off thy kindness from my house* (his family, his descendants) *for ever.* David fulfilled his promise by showing kindness to Mephibosheth. *Jonathan caused David to swear again.* The intensity of his love led him to want the sweet words rrepeated again and again, as in v. 42. *Tomorrow is the new moon.* Jonathan proceeds to unfold his plan of making known to his friend the state of the king's feeling toward him. *When thou hast stayed three days,* in Bethlehem (v. 6), or in any place of hiding, *thou shalt go down* into the valley, and *remain,* await Jonathan's coming, *by the stone Ezel,* some well-known landmark. Near this, in some cave, David was to await the signal of Jonathan. The signal was ingeniously arranged so that no one but David in hiding could understand. The "this side" to the boy meant that David should come to Jonathan; "beyond thee" meant that he must go away. Jonathan went out into the country to give his signal to David. He not only bade the boy to go beyond where he was, but he shouted to him, "Make speed, haste, stay not," intended for David's ears. After the boy had gone Jonathan went to David's hiding-place, and the friends kissed one another in the Oriental fashion, and wept. Then they renewed their covenant. *The Lord be between thee and me.* As a witness and avenger, if we keep not the covenant we have made of perpetual friendship. Then they parted, never to meet again, save once, a year or two later, in the wilderness of Ziph, when David was pursued by Saul. Then Jonathan went out into the wilderness to comfort his friend, and "strengthened his hand in God."

LESSONS TAUGHT BY THIS FRIENDSHIP.—1. Every man may learn from this story of Jonathan how to choose friends. Choose friends, not for their usefulness, but for their goodness; not for their worth to us, but for their worth in themselves.

2. One great advantage of friendship is its tendency to make a person like the one he loves. A good book uplifts the character; how much more a good friend!

3. Friendship cheers, refreshes, and encourages us.

4. Friendship is kept and cherished by little acts of love, by mutual helpfulness, by dwelling on the virtues rather than the faults of friends, by mutual service in some noble cause, by love of God.

5. What gross errors and extreme absurdities many commit for want of a friend to tell them of them."

6. It is of the utmost importance to avoid false friendships and companionship with the bad.

THE TEACHER'S STORY.

I was teaching a country school and "boarding round." One week I was in a lovely Christian home. Few children are loved as fondly as was the little boy who was the only child at that house. His father worked and sacrificed that he might be educated and have a start in life, and his mother provided good, wholesome food, kept him clean and comfortable and taught him good manners.

Yet at my first meal in that home I was made heartsick by the untruths which were told to the child by both parents, without a suspicion, seemingly, that they were doing wrong. When the fond mother tied on the little boy's bib I heard her say, "Now you must be good or God won't love you." Lie number one. Under this awful threat the boy became nervous. He spilled a little milk.

Then it was the father's turn. "Now the lady will go away and tell all the people that our little boy spills his milk." Lie number two.

Presently the father said to me, "Don't you want a boy? I will trade you this one for a hen." Nnmber three.

The boy sought his mother's eye anxiously, to see whether this were really meant, but she did not meet his gaze. As I could not say to him "your father is not speaking the truth," I smiled reassuringly at him. Papa went on: "Or, I'll trade him for a pig—he eats like a little pig. You could put him in the pen with your pigs at home." Lie four.

The boy was slow about eating and had not finished when we left the table. Papa said, "If you eat so much you will turn into a little pig." Lie number five. "You are almost fat enough to sell now. When you get fat enough to kill you could be killed, like the other little pigs." Lie number six.

The father went out, laughing. By the shades of livid color that passed over the face of the tortured child, I knew that he had, unfortunately, seen pigs slaughtered. In his dilated, horror-stricken eyes I saw that his imagination pictured the frightful scene, and placed himself in the place of the victim. He ate no more. All the digestive fluids were turned to poison. I helped him down from his high chair, took him in my arms, and gave him my watch to hold, while I told him about my brother's pet squirrel. But in the midst of the most engaging part of the story he looked up earnestly into my eyes and said, "I hope when my papa does sell me I can go to you." I told him that his father was only in fun, that papas never sold their little boys, that it was against the law and therefore could not be done.

Just then his mother came to put him to bed early so that she and I could chat without interruption.

We visited late, and just as I entered the guest chamber the house rang with agonized screams, and I found both the parents bending over the child's bed, while he, sound asleep, with wide-open, unseeing eyes, was hoarsely screaming, "I ain't a pig! I ain't a pig. Don't kill me!"

At last, after having water dashed in his face, he seemed to recognize his mother's voice, and clutched her with a death-like grip, which could not easily b eunclasped—nightmare amounting to delirium tremens caused by untruths, indigestion, and an excited imagination! It might easily have proved fatal.

I learned, then and there, that it is not enough to earn and cook food for a child—he must be permitted to eat undisturbed. I also learned that the processes of digestion and assimilation cannot be carried on at all while the mind is controlled by fear, anger, jealousy, or grief.—*Mrs. McVean-Adams, in Union Signal.*

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