

DAVID'S KINDNESS.

– AUGUST 2. – 2 Sam. 9:1-13. –

Golden Text – "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." – Rom. 12:10.

IN considering the incident of this lesson we are reminded of the words of the Apostle James (5:10) – "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example." What examples they present – of faith, humility, meekness, obedience, patience, endurance, brotherly kindness, love. We call to mind Moses' devotion to God and his cause, his tireless zeal and loving ministry through long years of extreme trial; we mark also the obedient faith of Abraham, of Jacob, of Samuel, of David, and of all the noble list of ancient worthies who fought the good fight of faith with unabated energy to the end of their course. While we consider these worthy examples of loyalty and faithfulness to God and to his truth and righteousness, we remember that these characters were developed under only the moonlight of the law-dispensation; and, in this view of the matter, reason suggests what the Apostle Peter also calls attention to, – "What manner of persons ought *we* to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Pet. 3:11) – we who are the recipients of the much more abundant grace of this gospel dispensation?

The kindness of David, to which attention is directed in this lesson, is another mark of a noble character. David was now well established and prosperous in his kingdom. The way to it since his anointing had been a rough and stormy one; and in one of the seasons of severest trial the remarkable friendship between himself and Jonathan, Saul's son, was thoroughly proved and strongly cemented. And while Jonathan freely submitted to the will of God which intercepted his own succession to the throne of Israel and gave it to David, he desired and received of David the assurance that when he

should be thus established in his kingdom he should always show kindness to him and his posterity. See 1 Sam. 20:14-17.

When the days of his prosperity came at length, years after Jonathan had gone to his rest, David, remembering his covenant, began to inquire if there were yet any left of the house of Saul to whom he might show the kindness of God. He found but one, the only surviving son of his friend Jonathan, and upon him he lavished the affection and kindness which it would have been his pleasure to bestow upon Jonathan himself, had he survived. Gratefully he remembered the love of his friend, and lovingly he endeavored to requite it to the extent of his ability.

There is really no more worthy trait to adorn a righteous character than that of gratitude. It is gratitude that returns to God that filial affection which is due from the creature to the Creator. It is gratitude that encourages and sweetens the cup of loyal devotion between friend and friend. It is always the due reward of loving service and especially of self-sacrificing service, though it is not always the reward rendered. The spirit of the world is, alas! so far removed from this that even loving and self-sacrificing service is more frequently rewarded with cold, thankless indifference, and not seldom with reproachfulness or persecution. Those therefore who will live godly and cultivate the graces of a godly character must not be disappointed in failing of their reward here, and in meeting the rebuffs that are sure to come to them in the line of duty. Let them duly appreciate their opportunity of proving their devotion **[R2011 : page 171]** to righteousness and truth by taking patiently and bearing with humble fortitude whatever of reproach **[R2011 : page 172]** or ingratitude may be the present reward, content to await God's time and God's way for giving to righteousness its due reward. Such overcomers who count not their lives dear unto them are of the David (beloved) class.

The golden text of this lesson needs no comment except the exhortation that we should each more and more endeavor to put it in

practice, and to see that with each passing year we are able to note some degree of advancement in this element of godlikeness, not overlooking that sure proof of brotherly love mentioned in the last clause – "in honor preferring one another;" remembering also the similar counsel of the same apostle on another occasion – "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3.) If we merely say that we love one another and yet pursue a steady course of self-seeking, wherein is the love manifest? Let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. – 1 John 3:18.
