

Love That Intercedes

Key Verse:
*“Jonathan spake
good of David unto
Saul his father,
and said unto him,
Let not the king sin
against his
servant, against
David; because he
hath not sinned
against thee, and
because his works
have been to thee-
ward very good.”*
—I Samuel 19:4

Selected Scripture:
I Samuel 19:1-7

tion of a kingdom under Saul, then later in the transition from the kingship of Saul to David. It was Samuel who told Saul that his kingdom was to be taken from him because of disobedience to God, and that he would be succeeded by a man after God's own heart. (I Sam. 13:13,14) It was also Samuel who anointed David, the youngest son of Jesse, when God commanded him, “Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”—I Sam. 16:12,13

As a result of this anointing, the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David while at the same time departing from Saul. Noticing the king's melancholy, his

ONE OF THE GREATEST friendships recorded in the Bible is that which existed between David and Jonathan. Today's lesson illustrates the importance of giving evidence of our love toward God by exemplifying it in our relationships with fellow human beings.

After being governed for several centuries by judges, Israel desired a king so that they could be like all the other nations around them. God had told Moses this day would come and set forth the requirements of such a king. (Deut. 17:14-20) Samuel was a key figure in the institu-

servants sent for David to play his lyre and bring musical relief to the ailing king. Saul came to value David's service and made him his armor bearer.—vss. 14-23

A significant result of these events was the reaction of Saul's son, Jonathan, to the great service David was rendering to his father and to the nation of Israel. "Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." (I Sam. 18:1,3) Thus we see the formulation of a friendship which was based upon a mutual love of the service of God.

This friendship would soon be put to the test. After David's defeat of the Philistine army, the people proclaimed, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (vs. 7) Saul was furious, and thought to conspire against David. However, as David won battle after battle against Israel's enemies, Saul settled on a more direct way to remove him. He instructed his son Jonathan and his servants to kill David.—I Sam. 19:1

Jonathan loved his father, and as the eldest of four sons stood to be the next king of Israel. His highest allegiance, however, was to the God of Israel. In today's Key Verse Jonathan tells Saul he was committing a great sin to plot against the life of a man who had rendered invaluable services to his country, and whose loyalty had been uniformly steady and devoted. Jonathan's strong pleadings of protest produced a positive effect on the impulsive mind of his father. As he was still disposed to good and honest impressions, Saul bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose. (vss. 6,7) Thus, through the intervention of Jonathan, a temporary reconciliation was effected and David returned to service of the king and the people of Israel.

In the foregoing experiences we find an invaluable lesson in laying a foundation of love for our brethren. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:13 ■