

The Nobility of True Friendship

Sermon preached by Rev. Geo. W. Belk to the Knights of Pythias

A sermon preached last Sunday night to the Knights of Pythias, and published by request of the Pythians: REV. G. W. BELK.

1 Sam. 18:1—"And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul."

As we open this chapter, there stands before our fancy a young man, clad in the simple garb of a shepherd, and holding the head of a giant in his hand.

To the inquiry of the King he makes the gentle answer: "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite."

His strong poetic eye flashes the light of triumph, and his handsome face glows with the warmth of the recent conflict. His countenance is fair and ruddy, and about his lips still tarry the traces of innocent childhood.

His form is graceful, athletic, muscular, of medium height, and as straight as an arrow.

Young and strong and modest, with a gravity of person, and a dignity of bearing scarcely consistent with his youthful face.

But young as he is, he stands there a victor and a hero.

A little while ago he came from the pasture-fields, an unknown youth, with the bag and sling of a shepherd.

Now he stands before us, crowned with martial glory, and a fame that will live forever among "the immortal few," and holding the head of the mighty Goliath in his hand.

Among those who stood by, and beheld the young victor, was Jonathan, the son of King Saul.

These indeed were kindred spirits, for Jonathan was himself a hero. He had taken his life in his hand, and tended by his armor-bearer only, had rushed upon the garrison of the Philistines; struck down twenty men, hand to hand, and put the whole army to flight.

Strong, fearless, heroic. As these two young men stood there face to face, there sprang up between them a friendship, strong and fervent and lasting as life itself.

And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

This was the beginning of a friendship which, on account of attending circumstances, still shines with undiminished splendor across the receding centuries.

I. FRIENDSHIP DEFINED. Webster defines a friend as "One who, entertaining for another sentiments of esteem, respect and affection, from personal prediction, seeks his society and welfare."

The Century Dictionary defines Friendship as "The feeling that moves persons, to seek each other's society, or promote each other's welfare." A true friend is a priceless treasure. One in whom we can confide with perfect confidence, and trust with absolute tranquility.

One to whom we can unfold our private plans, and communicate our secret purposes.

One whose devotion and affection are not dependent upon the frowns or favors of a fickle Fortune.

Conscious of the real value and true worth of tried and trusted friendship, Polonius gives this sage counsel to his son Laertes:

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Friendship is a flower indigenous to every country, and flourishing in every clime.

It is often exceedingly rich and fragrant, and sometimes bears the most delicious fruit.

But many, many times, it is only a flower!

Its varieties are almost endless, embracing every pleasing fashion and attractive tint, and often filling the gardens of the soul with heavenly redolence.

Deary indeed and desolate must be that human heart along whose barren borders bloom no flowers of friendship. But was this man so poor and mean that he did not have a friend?

And was there ever a human so destitute of sympathy that it did not respond to friendship's fellow feeling? True, "All that glitters is not gold," and much of the so-called Friendship of this world is "Fast wind" and "Fast lost."

"We have many friends of summer Who are friends while flowers bloom; But in cold and bleak December Desert when hours of danger come."

II. EXAMPLE OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

There is something in true and genuine friendship that is almost Divine. The beautiful Ruth, leaving her native land, toiling in the fields of hardship in poverty and widow-hood in a land of strangers, rather than forsake Naomi.

Homer, in his Epic, tells us how the death of his beloved friend plunged the brave Achilles into the depths of unspeakable anguish. And rising in his wrath, he put the Trojans to flight, struck down the god-like Hector, chained him to his chariot, and dragged his body three times around the walls of Troy, because he slew his friend Patroclus.

We are told that Lord Brooks was so proud of his friendship with Sir Philip Sidney, that he selected these words for his Epitaph: "Here lies Sir Philip Sidney's Friend."

Charles Spurgeon has well said: "There can be no lasting friendship between bad men."

And Dr. Arnot declares that: "Friendship sealed by companionship in sin will not last long. It is not worth the having. It deserves not to be known by that noble name. Friends that are only glued together by the slime of their lust, will be torn asunder soon."

There is an old English Proverb which gives this counsel: "Before you make a friend, eat a peck of salt with him."

The heathen world was well-nigh destitute of true Friendship. Its characters forced from the lips of Socrates: "There is no friend."

Yet out of the gloom and darkness of the Pagan World there is a star of the first magnitude.

The friendship of Damon and Pythias shined in beauty and splendor through the mists and shades of centuries.

Damon was doomed to die upon a certain day. He longed to see his wife and children and set his house in order. He besought the King to grant him this single request.

King Dionysius, who had no faith in human friendship, concluded to grant his request upon what seemed to be impossible conditions.

Said the tyrant: "If you will find some one who is willing to wear your chains, and ready to die in your stead, in case you fail to return, then I will grant you permission to visit your home and family."

Pythias heard of the offer, and cheerfully consented to take the place of his friend in the prison.

All Syracuse was startled at this evidence of true Friendship.

Time rolled on, and nearer and nearer came the fatal day. Fearing the consequences, the Tyrant visited him in the prison, and tried to convince him of the folly of his faith in Damon.

His friends won over the keeper, and tried to induce him to make his escape. But no. His word of promise and his faith in Damon were as immovable as the prison walls.

At last and by the King's permission, the fairest maiden in all Syracuse, the beautiful Calanthe, who was soon to be his bride, entered the prison, in all the wealth and loveliness of noble womanhood, and throwing herself at his feet, besought him to break his promise and fly with her beyond the sea.

But he had given his word of honor, and that to him, was more binding than the Tyrant's chains. True, he loved as his own sweet life the beautiful angel that wept and pleaded at his feet.

But Friendship and Honor were dearer than life itself.

And what comfort or compensation could all the wealth of a woman's love bring to the man who failed to keep promise.

They pleaded his own innocence. They pictured before him the perjury of Damon. But all to no effect. Nothing could move him to break his word.

Nothing could shake his faith in the promise of his friend.

Now came the fatal day; but no Damon!

Dionysius, seated upon a moving throne drawn by six white horses, was conveyed to the place of execution.

At the appointed moment, with firm and steady step, Pythias ascends the scaffold. And turning to the multitude of beholders who had gathered to witness the strange scene, he spoke in a voice calm and dignified: "My prayers have been heard. The gods are propitious, for the winds have been contrary until yesterday. Damon could not come. He could not conquer impossibilities. He will be here tomorrow. And the blood which is shed today will ransom the life of my friend."

Oh! could I but erase from your bosoms every mean suspicion of the honor of Damon, I should go to my death as I would to my marriage. My friend will be found noble. His truth unimpeachable. He will speedily prove it. He is now on his way, accusing himself, the winds and the gods. But I hasten to prevent his speech." Then turning to the officer, he said: "Executioner, do your duty."

As he closed his speech, a great silence fell upon the spectators. Just then a voice was heard in the distance: "Stop the execution." The cry was caught up and repeated by the multitude.

A moment more, and a man, riding at full speed, came dashing into the crowd, leaping from his foaming steed, rushed to the scaffold and grasping Pythias in his great strong arms, cried out: "You are safe, my beloved friend, I have nothing now but death to suffer, and am delivered from the reproaches of having endangered a life so much dearer to me than my own."

Pythias looked pained and disappointed, and remonstrated with Damon for his "fatal haste," and added: "But since I cannot die to save you, I will die with you."

The multitude stood amazed. King Dionysius as he heard these things and saw them, was moved to tears, at the sight of such true and loyal friendship.

The jealousy of Saul, his fear, his wrath, his envy--none of these things, nor all of them combined, through all the intervening years, could make or stir the green-eyed monster in the noble, manly heart of Jonathan.

How it stirs our better nature to behold Friendship like that. Spontaneous, unselfish, enduring and almost divine. Perhaps some selfish soul might be tempted to say: "David will be glad to hear of the death of Saul, his deadly enemy, and of Jonathan his possible rival."

But no. His grief was real and intense. And in his sorrow, he poured forth a threnody that has touched and tendered the hearts of millions: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon the big places."

CONCLUSION.

And now in closing, let me call your attention to the purest Friendship, and the truest Friend this world has ever beheld. A Friend more devoted than Ruth, more loyal than Pythias, more affectionate than Jonathan.

That Friend that sticketh closer than a father. Jesus, the sinner's Friend. Jesus, the world's Redeemer.

Would you have Him be your Friend? Will you be His? Then accept the conditions set forth in the Manual of Christian Knighthood: "Ye are My Friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you."

As we study the history of this remarkable friendship, we are impressed with the unequal standing of the two young men. Jonathan was a prince.

David was a peasant. Jonathan lived in a palace. David lived in the pasture. Jonathan was a leader of men. David was a leader of sheep.

On the part of David, there was everything to gain, and nothing to lose by this friendship.

On the part of Jonathan there was everything to lose, and nothing to be gained.

And yet, this princely man, this royal hero, preferred to lay aside his birthright claims to the Throne of Israel, rather than break his friendship with David the son of Jesse!

1. IT WAS SPONTANEOUS.

There was no consideration, coercion or constraint. It was the free, spontaneous knitting of two kindred souls.

Not something formed that something might be gained. There was not even a demand for reciprocity.

As natural as the metal to the magnet, as constant as the needles to the pole; as true as gravitation to the sphere; so natural, so constant and so true are the spontaneous forces that bind such kindred souls to each other.

Friendship, like love, cannot be forced or driven.

To be true and trustworthy, it must be free from all restraint. It may be courted and cultivated; but it cannot be compelled. Some natures attract. Others repel, and seemingly without any conscious effort.

The unknown author of this little stanza, doubtless voiced the true feeling and sentiment of his soul: "I do not like thee, Doctor Fell. The reason why I cannot tell. But this I know and know full well, I do not like thee, Doctor Fell."

On the other hand the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David by the national law of spontaneous attraction.

Kindred spirits seem to have eyes that look at once into the very depths of each other's souls.

And true Friendship can be found and maintained only between true men.

2. IT WAS UNSELFISH.

The significance of this statement will appear when the facts in the case are taken into consideration.

First, let us bear in mind that Jonathan was the son of King Saul. By the law of primogeniture, he was heir to the throne and kingdom of his father.

All these things were well known and familiar to young prince.

Second, his father was jealous of David, because the people praised him on every hand.

When the women of Israel came out to meet them on their return from the battle, answering each other in their dances, saying: "Saul hath slain his thousands; but David his tens of thousands." We are told that Saul was very angry, and said: "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me but thousands, and what can he have more but the kingdom. And Saul eyed David from that day forward."

Several times he tried to kill him. And when Jonathan took David's post, and interceded for him, Saul threw his javelin at him. He could not understand how Jonathan could befriend the only man that stood between him and the throne.

Third, David had his eye on the kingdom, and was only abiding his time.

Samuel had anointed him to be King in the room and stead of Saul. All this was well known both to Saul and Jonathan.

Samuel had plainly told Saul that his kingdom would be taken from him. Again when Samuel reproved Saul for his disobedience, and turned to leave him, Saul caught hold of his mantle and tore it. And Samuel said unto him: "The kingdom from thee this day, and hath given to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou."

All these things were known to David, and they rankled in the mind of Saul. But none of these things moved or stirred the jealousy of Jonathan.

Certainly he knew all about it. For when David was a fugitive in the wilderness of Zih, Jonathan made him a visit--1 Sam. 23:16--"And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David, into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him: Fear not, for the hand of Saul, my father shall not find thee. And thou shalt be King over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul, my father knoweth."

All this, and not a single trace of jealousy, or envy, or selfishness! This was friendship indeed.

3. IT WAS ENDURING.

From the day that David stood before Saul, holding in his hand the head of the Philistine champion, the friendship of Jonathan and David had grown stronger. Indeed they were true men and capable of firm and abiding friendship.

The jealousy of Saul, his fear, his wrath, his envy--none of these things, nor all of them combined, through all the intervening years, could make or stir the green-eyed monster in the noble, manly heart of Jonathan.

How it stirs our better nature to behold Friendship like that. Spontaneous, unselfish, enduring and almost divine. Perhaps some selfish soul might be tempted to say: "David will be glad to hear of the death of Saul, his deadly enemy, and of Jonathan his possible rival."

But no. His grief was real and intense. And in his sorrow, he poured forth a threnody that has touched and tendered the hearts of millions: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon the big places."

CONCLUSION.

And now in closing, let me call your attention to the purest Friendship, and the truest Friend this world has ever beheld. A Friend more devoted than Ruth, more loyal than Pythias, more affectionate than Jonathan.

That Friend that sticketh closer than a father. Jesus, the sinner's Friend. Jesus, the world's Redeemer.

Would you have Him be your Friend? Will you be His? Then accept the conditions set forth in the Manual of Christian Knighthood: "Ye are My Friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you."

As we study the history of this remarkable friendship, we are impressed with the unequal standing of the two young men. Jonathan was a prince.

WE SELL NEW and Second hand Typewriters--All Makes--and Typewriter Supplies. Southern Typewriter Exchange, 225 South Elm Street, Greensboro, N. C.

BUTT IN If y'd succeed, what'er the cost. Why, butt in, boy, butt in; The man who hesitates is lost, So butt in, boy, butt in. Do not show an overflow of gall, For that will seldom work at all, But don't, my boy, get down and crawl, But butt in, boy, butt in.

Politeness must be always used, But butt in, boy, butt in; You may be snubbed and perhaps abused, But butt in, boy, butt in; Be gently independent and Remember that in all the land Your 'trade' 's grandest of the grand, And butt in, boy, butt in.

Wheeler & Runge, ARCHITECTS, Charlotte, N. C. Second Floor 4C's Building.

O. A. Robbins & Co., Mill Engineers and Architects, 201 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, N. C.

Cook with GAS THE COOK. Prettiest Store in City.

Nice New Goods. If you want a nice HAMMOCK now is the time. The weather is hot, they are going rapidly and unless you call at once you may be too late.

C. B. FLOURNOY & CO., 20 East Trade Street, 5, 10, 15 and 25c. Store.

LIVERY SALE, BOARDING AND DRAYAGE STABLES C. A. Black CORNER STONEWALL AND COLLEGE STS.

DENTIST CROWN BRIDGE WORK ETC.

"THE LATCH STRING IS ALWAYS OUT." We are always at "home, always ready to relieve your toothaches, racking tooth nerves, to extract teeth, in a hurry if need be; to make you new sets or partial sets; to meet your dental requirements in every particular, promptly, cheaply, well. At your service all the time. DR. NEWELL & McLAUGHLIN, Dentists.

TONIGHT! "East Lynne" Latta Park Auditorium

Specialties Between the Acts. Remember me when replenishing your wardrobe, I have the largest and best stock of Suitings in the State and give you the best workmanship. We want you to examine our line.

PROFESSIONAL CARDS. Thos. G. McMichael, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW. Practice in All Courts. Room 203, 2d Floor, Trust Building, Charlotte, N. C.

TEETH EXTRACTED WITHOUT PAIN Safe Method. No Bad After Effects. 25c. PER TOOTH. DR. ZICKLER, DENTIST, 27 South Tryon Street.

Wheeler & Runge, ARCHITECTS, Charlotte, N. C. Second Floor 4C's Building.

O. A. Robbins & Co., Mill Engineers and Architects, 201 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, N. C.

SEA TRIP OF THE Old Dominion Line. Makes a most attractive route to NEW YORK AND NORTHERN AND EASTERN SUMMER RESORTS.

C. B. FLOURNOY & CO., 20 East Trade Street, 5, 10, 15 and 25c. Store.

Baltimore Md. PHOTO ENGRAVING & DESIGNERS. WE DO ONLY FIRST CLASS WORK AND DELIVER WHEN PROMISED.

ENGRAVERS DESIGNERS ILLUSTRATORS. BALTIMORE, MD.

HALF TONES, LINE ENGRAVINGS, SKETCHES, ORIGINAL DESIGNS, AND BUSINESS BRUNING. ADVERTISING IDEAS OF THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE.

Fine Tailor-Made SUITS. Remember me when replenishing your wardrobe, I have the largest and best stock of Suitings in the State and give you the best workmanship.

J. S. PHILLIPS Merchant Tailoring, First National Bank Building, 12 S. Tryon Street.

"Whitin, Kitson and Woonsocket" COTTON MILL MACHINERY. Plans and Specifications for Cotton Mills. Complete Equipment for Cotton Mills. STUART W. CRAMER, Engineer and Contractor, Charlotte, N. C., Atlanta, Ga.

Summer Excursion Rates on or via The Seaboard Air Line Railway.

Table of Summer Excursion Rates on or via The Seaboard Air Line Railway. Effective June 1st, the Seaboard Air Line Railway will sell round trip tickets from Charlotte to the following points at rates and under conditions named below, viz: Farmville, Va. \$12.45; Blowing Rock, N. C. 8.40; Hickory, N. C. 4.40; Lenoir, N. C. 4.40; Linville, N. C. 12.40; Newton, N. C. 2.65; Cross Hill, S. C. 6.05; Lakeview, N. C. 5.50; Lincolnton, N. C. 1.75; Littleton, N. C. 10.25; Niagara, N. C. 5.40; Pine Bluff, N. C. 5.00; Pittsboro, N. C. 6.90; Rutherfordton, N. C. 4.00; Shelby, N. C. 2.70; Southern Pines, N. C. 5.25; Red Springs, N. C. 5.60; Chimney Rock, N. C. 7.05; Jackson Springs, N. C. 6.25; Morehead City, N. C. 12.90.

Effective at once the Seaboard Air Line will sell round trip tickets to the points named at the following low rates, and under conditions named: Jackson Springs, N. C. \$8.55; Monroe, N. C. .80; Wilmington, N. C. .400; Mt. Holly, N. C. .50; Stanley Creek, N. C. .75; Iron, N. C. .100; Lincolnton, N. C. .105; Cherryville, N. C. .135; Chimney Rock, N. C. .515; Waco, N. C. .140; Stubbs, N. C. .140; Shelby, N. C. .140; Rutherfordton, N. C. .165; Hickory, N. C. 2.15; Cliffs, N. C. 2.90; Lenoir, N. C. 2.90; Blowing Rock, N. C. 6.20; Cross Hill, S. C. 2.55. Tickets on sale every Saturday and for Sunday morning trains good to return until Monday evening.

Through connections for Blowing Rock, Hickory and Lenoir made by Seaboard Air Line morning train leaving Charlotte at 10:15 a. m. Inauguration of Sleeping Car Service Between Wilmington and Hamlet. Effective July 2d, the Seaboard Air Line Ry. will inaugurate tri-weekly sleeping car service between Wilmington and Hamlet. First car will leave Hamlet on train No. 14 at 10:45 p. m. July 2d, returning leaving Wilmington, train No. 15, at 9:00 p. m. July 3d, and thereafter to be operated tri-weekly, car to leave Hamlet Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, returning leave Wilmington Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Reservations made at No. 23 South Tryon Street.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY. In Effect June 21, 1903.

This condensed schedule is published as information and is subject to change without notice to the public. 4:30 a. m. No. 8 daily, for Richmond and local points, connects at Greensboro for Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Goldsboro, Newbern and Morehead City, at Danville for Norfolk. 7:10 a. m. No. 16 daily except Sunday, for Statesville and local stations, connects at Mooresville for Winston-Salem, at Statesville for Asheville, Hickory, Lenoir and Blowing Rock. 7:45 a. m. No. 39 daily, Atlanta Express, Pullman sleeper and day coaches to Atlanta. Close connections at Spartanburg for Hendersonville and Asheville. 9:45 a. m. No. 33 daily, Florida Express for Rock Hill, Chester, Wintonsboro, Columbia and Savannah; Pullman sleepers to Augusta; first-class coach, Washington and Savannah. 10:25 a. m. No. 36 daily, U. S. Fast Mail, for Washington and all points North; Pullman drawing room, sleepers to New York and Richmond, day coaches New Orleans to Washington; dining car service. Connects at Greensboro for Winston-Salem, Raleigh and Goldsboro. 9:30 a. m. No. 37 daily, Washington and Southwestern Limited, Pullman drawing room sleepers, New York to New Orleans and Memphis; Pullman observation car, New York to Macon; dining car service; solid Pullman train.

10:05 a. m. No. 30 daily, for Washington and all points North. Pullman sleepers to New York; first-class coach to Washington. Close connection at Danville for Richmond, Va. Dining car service. 11:00 a. m. No. 28 daily, for Davidson, Mooresville, Barber Junction, Cooleemee, Mocksville, Winston-Salem and Roanoke, Va., and local stations. 12:35 p. m. No. 11 daily, for Atlanta and local stations; connects at Spartanburg for Hendersonville and Asheville. 6:25 p. m. No. 25, Freight and Passenger, for Chester, S. C., and local points. 7:10 p. m. No. 12 daily, for Richmond and local stations, connects at Greensboro for Raleigh and Goldsboro; Pullman sleeper Greensboro to Raleigh, Charlotte to Richmond. 7:15 p. m. No. 24 daily, except Sunday, for Statesville and local stations, connects at Statesville for Asheville, Knoxville, Chattanooga and Memphis. 8:18 p. m. No. 38 daily, Washington and Southwestern Limited, for Washington and all points North. Pullman sleepers and Pullman observation car to New York. Dining car service. Solid Pullman train. 9:50 p. m. No. 29 daily, for Columbia, Augusta, Savannah, Charleston and local stations beyond Chester, Pullman sleepers to Jacksonville; first-class coach, Washington to Jacksonville.

10:20 p. m. No. 35 U. S. Fast Mail for Atlanta and all points South and Southwest. Pullman drawing room sleepers to New Orleans and Birmingham; day coaches Washington to New Orleans. Dining car service. 10:15 p. m. No. 40 daily, for Washington and points North. Pullman sleeper for Washington. First-class coach Atlanta to Washington. C. H. ACKERT, Gen. Mgr. S. H. HARDWICK, Gen. Pass. Agt. Washington, D. C. R. L. VERNON, Traveling Pass. Agt. T. J. WITHERSPOON, City Ticket Agent. 11 S. Tryon Street, Charlotte, N. C. Baggage called for and checked from hotel and residence by Wadsworth's Transfer Co. on orders left at City Ticket Office.

Seaboard Air Line Railway. DOUBLE DAILY SERVICE. Between New York, Tampa, Atlanta, New Orleans and Points South and West. IN EFFECT APRIL 12TH, 1903. Trains arrive as follows: 33, from Atlanta, New York, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Raleigh, Atlanta, 10:05 a. m. 39, from Atlanta, New York, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Raleigh, Wilmington, 10:45 p. m. Rutherfordton, Shelby and Lincolnton, 7:25 p. m. Trains leave as follows: 40, for Atlanta, Wilmington, Raleigh, Norfolk, Richmond, Washington, New York, 5:01 a. m. 32, for Atlanta, Raleigh, Norfolk, Richmond, Washington, New York, 7:15 p. m. Train 32, from Rutherfordton, Norfolk and Lincolnton, 7:25 p. m. Nos. 39 and 40 run solid to and from Wilmington. lotte to Portsmouth, connecting at Monroe with through sleeper to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York.

R. M. COFFEY, Passenger and Ticket Agent. Up-Town Ticket Office, 23 S. Tryon Street, Baggage checked from residence and hotels without extra charge.

WIRE RAILING & ORNAMENTAL WIREWORK. DUFUR & CO., 311 N. Howard St. Baltimore.

Wire Railing for Cemeteries, Lawns, Gardens, Offices and Balconies. Wire down Guards, Tree Guards, Wire Cloth Sieves, Fenders, Cages, Sand and Coal Screens, Chairs, Settes, etc. Elevator Enclosures a Specialty.

Goodyear Rubber Vehicle Tires. G. A. PAGE, Baggy and Wagon Repairing, Trimming and Painting, Horseshoeing and General Blacksmithing, Corner Fourth and Church Streets.