

Child Friendship, how Durable

D.L. Moody:

I heard some time ago of a little book upon a passage of Scripture, I didn't know there was such a passage; which occurred in the story of David and Mephibosheth. You know, one day Jonathan and David were together, and Jonathan said, "David, I want you to make a vow." I suppose it had been revealed to Jonathan that he was to take his place. Instead of his heart being filled with jealousy, he loved him as a brother. "Now, I want you to make a vow that when you get my father's throne, if any of my father's house are alive, you will show them kindness." "Why, yes, Jonathan," replies David; "I will. I would do it for your sake alone." Well, time went on. You know how Saul persecuted David, and drove him into the cave of Adullam, and if he could have caught him, you know how he would have slain him. News came to him that the Israelites were routed, and that Saul and Jonathan were slain, and David came up to Hebron, and reigned for seven and a half years, and came after this up to Jerusalem. I can see him in his palace in the height of his power, and the recollection of the old vow he made to Jonathan suddenly comes upon him. His conscience tells him he has made a vow to his old friend Jonathan which he has not kept. I can see him order in one of his servants, "Do you know if there are any of Saul's house alive?" "Well, I don't know, but there is an old servant of Saul's, Ziba." David orders him in, and asks, "Are any of Saul's house alive, because if there are I want to show kindness to them." I can imagine the expression of his face. The idea of David showing kindness to any of Saul's house; to Saul, who wanted to slay him, and who persecuted him. "Well, yes," the servant answers; "there is a son of Jonathan living." "What!" he cries; "a son of my old friend Jonathan; where is he?" "He was at Lo-debar the last I heard of him." Now, you may have been a great traveler, and yet you have never heard of Lo-debar. You may have been all around the world, and still you have not heard of Lo-debar. You may work in the post office, and you have never heard of Lo-debar; never saw a letter directed to that place. Still, that is the place where every one of Adam's son has been. Every one has been in Lo-debar. Every backslider is there. When David heard where he was, he sent down to bring up Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. See that chariot sweeping through the town. "Why, the king's chariot is here," the people say; "what does it mean?" We are told that this poor prince was lame, and I can see the poor, lame prince as he comes out to meet the servant. "What is it?" he inquires. "King David has sent for you," the servant replies. I can see the prince trembling from head to foot when he hears this. He thinks King David wants to slay him; he thinks he is just going to cut off his head. That's the way with sinners. They think that God stands behind them with a double-whetted sword ready to annihilate them. The servant says, "I want you to come down and see the king." "But," replies the prince, "I tell you that means death to me." Just as a good many sinners think. "But," continues the servant, "he has sent me, and wants you to come;" and he gets him into the carriage and onto the highway, through the streets and unto the palace of the king. The king looks upon him, and sees upon his brow the image of Jonathan, and says to Mephibosheth, "I will show thee kindness for thy father's sake, and I will restore unto you all of Saul's possessions, and you shall sit at the king's table." He restores to the lame prince the inheritance he lost, and then gives him a place at the king's table. That is the gospel. God wants you to come up from Lo-debar to Jerusalem, and take your inheritance. The moment you come from your Lo-debar to the city of peace, that moment you will learn the glad tidings.