2 Samuel - Commentaries by Henri L. Rossier

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 5:10-25: Victories

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2 Sam. 5:10-25

The first result of the establishment of the throne on mount Zion is that David is acknowledged by the nations. "Hiram king of Tire sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house" (2 Sam. 5:11), for Hiram wanted to contribute as best he could to the splendor of the reign that had begun. Later under Solomon this same Hiram works on the construction of the temple. In this history he plays an important role as representative of the friendly nations who will come willingly to submit to Messiah's reign.

The history of David as a type of Christ continues to unfold in this chapter. Among the nations there are those who do not acknowledge his supremacy and who seek to shake off his yoke. The Philistines come up against David; revolt begins with this internal enemy who occupies the people's inheritance. Later we will see the nations located on Israel's borders—Moab and the children of Ammon, then Syria and Assyria—revolting in their turn. Victory over the nations, just like the submission of the tribes of Israel, takes place gradually. Philistia is subjugated and the Lord will say of her by David's mouth: "Over Philistia will I triumph" (Psa. 108:9 KJV). We must not forget—prophecy is very explicit on this subject—that Israel's ancient enemies which have now in part disappeared will reappear in the end times, whether it be to undergo their final judgment, or whether it be to share in the blessings of the millennium together with the people of God. The Philistines are subjugated and their idols are destroyed.

Simultaneously with the history of David as type of the Messiah the history of David as responsible king continues to unfold also. This history shows us many weaknesses requiring discipline, leading David to judge himself so that once he is restored he again enjoys fellowship with God. It is most profitable to learn to recognize ourselves in this history and to understand the requirements of God's holiness and His ways toward us.

The conclusion of this chapter gives us a special lesson. When Hiram comes to submit to the king something takes place that is both touching and characteristic. A special feature of David's character is the complete absence of self-confidence: he was humble and had retained this character from the time that God had taken him "from the sheepfolds." While he appreciated God's favor in giving him a glorious throne he did not have a high opinion of himself. "David perceived that Jehovah had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom because of His people Israel" (2 Sam. 5:12); not for his own sake—David loses sight of himself—but for the sake of His people Israel. Knowing that this kingdom of which he is head is exalted because God is thinking of His people whose blessing He had in view, David does not set himself above the people as lording it over them by insisting on his rights, but places himself beneath them, having only their welfare in view. He sees the place that Israel occupies in God's heart and recognizes that God has directed all things with His people in view. Our perfect model, the Lord Jesus, through His sufferings has acquired a place in glory, but He has taken this place for us His people, His beloved Church. Thus David's character as a man answers to Christ's character, and so it ought always to be with us.

But now the same thing that took place at Hebron (2 Sam. 3:2-5) again takes place at Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:13-16). We have said above that the traits of independence seen in David resulted from the fact that he was invested with sovereign power. He uses his power for himself and thus acts in opposition to God's thoughts (Deut. 17:17-19). Beside his political and other reasons for taking many wives David may have forgotten God's prohibition. He should not have forgotten: "It shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life." The majority of our disobedient acts stem from not maintaining living daily contact with the Word of God. To follow our own thoughts by neglecting this positive, absolute direction is disobedience.

Two things ought to characterize the walk of every child of God. David's career in First Samuel illustrates the first feature: dependence. But there is a second characteristic which we are not accustomed to regarding as important as the first: that is obedience. Dependence and obedience should never be separated in the child of God.

We have just seen David disobedient; we shall see him dependent without this lack of harmony influencing his spiritual life for the moment. But if David is in the school of God he will learn never to disassociate these two characteristics in the future. At the end of our chapter God obliges him, so to speak, to join one to the other, and when later in the following chapter David fails to meet this obligation and does not follow the will of God expressed in His Word, we see him come under discipline.

The Philistines go up against David (2 Sam. 5:17-21); the king learns of it and goes down to the stronghold. His retreat was the place where God desired to dwell. "David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt Thou give them into my hand?" (2 Sam. 5:19). Here we see him depending on God as was his habit. Is it a question of going up against the enemy? David does not know what to do: God alone knows and David asks Him for direction, saying in effect: "What shall I do?" God answers him immediately: "Go up; for I will certainly give the Philistines into thy hand." David goes up; the bulwark that the enemy attempts to set in his way is breached, and David and his army rush through like an overflowing torrent, swallowing up the Philistines and their idols. In 1 Chron. 14:12 we see what the king did to these idols: "And they left their gods there; and David commanded, and they were burned with fire." In just this way the idols of the nations will be destroyed in the end times (Isa. 2:18).

But all is not over. The enemy renews his attack: the conditions are the same, the people are the same, the methods are the same, the place is the same. David might have said to himself: Since the situation is identical I will do as I did at the first attack. No way! He depends entirely on the Lord's direction. He goes about the matter in the right way, for this time the Lord gives him a completely different answer: "Thou shalt

not go up." The circumstances of this attack were the same as before: why then did God show David a completely different way of fighting? "Turn round behind them and come upon them opposite the mulberry-trees. And it shall be, when thou hearest a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then will Jehovah have gone forth before thee, to smite the army of the Philistines" (2 Sam. 5:23-24). The reason for this change is that God wanted to bring together in His servant's heart the two things that David had more or less tended to separate, as we have seen in the preceding events. David needed not only to depend upon God but also to obey His word, whether or not he understood it. To obtain a new victory he had to obey, to follow out the order that God gave. "And David did so, as Jehovah had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou comest to Gezer."

This is how God in His mercy granted David to experience the blessings that accompany dependence united with obedience. David might have taken some credit for this second victory himself and perhaps he might have become proud, but God does not want this. His servant must understand that he is accountable to obey, and to this end God gives him certain signs to observe. The marching army, the sound of which is heard in the tops of the mulberry trees, is the Lord Himself and His army. When David heard this sound he could set forward from the post assigned to him, for acting on God's word he would take the enemy from behind. Before him were the mulberry trees. He knew that the Lord would attack the enemy head on and that he, David, would rush upon them from behind: their defeat would thus be complete. The main part was the Lord's; David remains humble. He listens, he does what the Lord commands: this is obedience. He wins the victory.

How important this is for us! Our dependence and our obedience are seen not only in major circumstances as here but also in the day by day details of life. If we fail here, we will expose ourselves to chastening, and David is going to be an example of this.

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 23:8-39: David's Mighty Men

2 Sam. 23:8-39

After David's last words God shows us that He preserves the memory of his mighty men, companions of His anointed until the final establishment of his reign. He had met still other devoted men such as Ittai and Shobi when he fled from Jerusalem, but those who are mentioned here were his associates from the very beginning. So too the twelve disciples were distinguished because they had companied with the Lord "all the time in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out" among them (Luke 22:28-29; Acts 1:21). In like manner those who have followed Him during the time that the world has rejected and disowned Him will be singled out for honor.

In number there are thirty-seven men here (cf. 1 Chron. 11-12).

Joab who had held the top position as the head of the army until the end of David's reign is excluded from his mighty men. Perhaps he had performed more brilliant actions than all the others; much courage and even a certain outward devotedness to the king was found in him, but these qualities in themselves do not give one a place in God's register; otherwise the Word would list nearly all the great heroes of humanity. Psa. 87:4 teaches us what God understands by "mighty men": "I will make mention of Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon among them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tire, with Ethiopia: this man was born there." The glory of these heroes of the nations was past and did not extend beyond their short life spans although they had filled the earth with the fame of their names. "And of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her" (Psa. 87:5). Such was the character of David's mighty men: through their origin they were considered to belong to the city of royal grace. But the Spirit adds: "Jehovah will count, when He inscribeth the peoples, This man was born there" (Psa. 87:6). Despite every "this one" of the past, when the register of the nations shall be opened before the Lord He will find but one, the Man of His right hand, who deserves to have His origin in Zion. The leaders of the nations have had their day, and their glory has vanished in smoke; this Man will rule over all peoples; the start and the center of His kingdom will be at Jerusalem, and "all [the] springs" of those who belong to Him will be found in Himself (Psa. 87:7). But His mighty men, "this one and that one," will be associated with Him in His reign.

What characterized David's mighty men therefore was the association that grace had given them with the Lord's anointed. Joab had never had such a relationship; this book has fully demonstrated this. He sought his personal interest in serving David, and his actions never originated in fellowship with his head. His name is passed over in silence.

Among the mighty men the Word first of all cites three who were more honored than all the others. What was the reason for this honor? These men proven that they had persevering energy in procuring the deliverance of God's people, but in the conflict they did not count upon themselves: the Lord wrought deliverance through them. "Jehovah," 2 Sam. 23:10 and 12 repeat, "wrought a great deliverance."

From where did their perseverance come? Had they been alone they certainly would have weakened, but all three were "with David" and under his eyes during the combat. He inspired them with courage and patience in their efforts. They had taken as their model David who could say: "By Thee I have run through a troop"; "He teacheth my hands to war; and mine arms bend a bow of brass"; and again: "I pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them, and I turned not again till they were consumed" (2 Sam. 22:30, 35, 38).

Who was the enemy against whom these men of valor fought? The Philistines —the enemy within —as we have so often seen in the course of these meditations. No enemy is more dangerous than this one; the Egyptians and the Moabites were less to be feared than these who living within Israel's borders continually stood in the way of their peacefully possessing the land that God had given them as an inheritance.

These three men had not weakened in this struggle. The first, Joseb-Bassebeth, had brandished his spear against eight hundred men;1 he had killed them at one time and had not stopped until there were no opponents left. Hence his pre-eminence, for his name translated means: "He who sits in the first place."

The second, Eleazar the son of Dodo, fought alone in presence of the men of Israel. He expected no help from them, for he did not count on man's strength. Being with David (2 Sam. 23:9) was enough for him to defy the Philistines. He smote them and did not stop until "his hand was weary" (2 Sam. 23:10). There may be limits in the fight of faith, for God uses imperfect instruments subject to reaching limits of their strength; but Eleazar's perseverance was such that "his hand slave to the sword" (2 Sam. 23:10), so that it was impossible to separate him from the weapon he was using. May Eleazar's victory be ours as well! Our weapons are not fleshly; we have the sword of the Spirit which is

the Word of God. Let us use it in such a way that we are, so to speak, one with it even after the battle. May the conflict ever result in our valuing the Word more and more so that it will be impossible to separate us from it.

The third of these men was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. Under Eleazar the people had gone up quite indolently, it seems, since they came after Eleazar "only to spoil" (2 Sam. 23:10). Here, the people "had fled before the Philistines" (2 Sam. 23:11). The object they were contesting was "a plot of ground full of lentils," a very little part of the inheritance that God had given Israel, but one containing food for the people. The enemy was seeking to deprive them of the field and its crop. Shammah2 stood in the middle of the field and preserved it for God's people. This deed speaks to our consciences. Our inheritance and our "plot of ground" are heavenly, and we must defend them as well as our heavenly food, the Word which God has entrusted to us. God's people flee in a cowardly manner from the enemy, acknowledging to their shame the rights of unbelief to set the Word of God at naught. May we be like Shammah; may we fearlessly defend it for sake of the saints, for we are with David. Let us count on God who will work "a great deliverance."

2 Sam. 23:13-17 present a second series of three chiefs. There is reason for their not being named in the deed these verses recount, but they are named subsequently in connection with their acts of valor.3

Why this remarkable omission of their names in the account of their exploit? It is because here it is no longer a matter of energy and perseverance, but one of the devotion of faith. And this devotion flows naturally from the hearts of servants who know and appreciate their Master. By its very nature devotion is something obscure. What man has the right to boast of devotion? Does or does not our rejected David, unseen by the world, have the right to our devotion because of His character's all powerful perfection? To know Him is to love Him. These three visitors to the cave of Adullam were immediately attached to him. A simple desire on part of their king sufficed to prompt them to overcome all obstacles without taking their lives into account, just so that they might satisfy that desire. Their affection, much more so than their energy, was thus put to the test. Danger did not frighten them when it was a matter of going to draw a bit of water from the well at Bethlehem, because the one they loved was thirsty at harvest time here. Had they succumbed after this enterprise, such a price would not have been too high for having had the privilege of offering David something for his satisfaction, even if momentarily. God records this devotion in His book; the king appreciated it, but did not wish to take advantage of it: "Is it not the blood of the men that went at the risk of their lives?" (2 Sam. 23:17). If on the one hand he elicits the devotion of his men, on the other hand his character is to devote himself for them. The water offered to him only passes through his hands to be presented as a drink offering "to Jehovah" (2 Sam. 23:16), for all that is done for Christ is done for God and God accepts it, offered up by Christ, as an excellent sacrifice. A simple cup of water given to "one of these little ones" for Christ's sake passes from His heart to the heart of God Himself.

These three men's deeds of valor did not attain to those of the first three. First there is Abishai who like Joseb-Bassebeth brandished his spear against three hundred men whom he slew, but he did not have the same perseverance of faith (2 Sam. 23:18-19).

Next we find Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. He fought the enemies from without, Moab and Egypt. He killed two Moabite heroes.4 Like David he fought a lion all by himself; he killed the Egyptian just as David had struck down Goliath, and just as David had taken the giant's sword to decapitate him, so Benaiah put the Egyptian to death with his own spear. Benaiah walks faithfully in his master's steps and his great affection for David leads him to reproduce his model's traits. Such a walk finds its reward: "David set him in his council" (2 Sam. 23:23), a place of confidence, intimacy, and communion. Benaiah shares his master's secrets, is informed of his projects, and sees the king's face at all times. What a blessed portion! If we love the Lord Jesus and follow Him obediently and serve Him, we will be rewarded with a nearness like that enjoyed by John, the beloved disciple whose place was in the bosom of Jesus.

No special mention is made of Asahel. He might have accomplished some act of valor, but his confidence in himself and in his agility deprived him of his career very early through his encounter with Abner (2 Sam. 2:18-24).

Finally we find the "thirty," less renowned than the six preceding men, although the Lord forgets none of His own. When David looked over the list of His servants, with what sorrow his eyes must have paused at the name of Uriah the Hittite which ends the list. He was among the mighty men and not the least of those hearts devoted to the king and his people. And David had had him put to death to satisfy his own lust! His name remained there in testimony against the one whom he had served. This single name of Uriah reminded David of all his past of shame and chastening; but condemning himself and exalting the grace that had restored him, he would never have dreamed of erasing his name from the book in which it was recorded.

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 23:1-7: David's Last Words

2 Sam. 23:1-7

Now we come to the concluding words of David's career. Just prior to his death he considers the result of his entire life as a king favored by God but yet responsible. This life embraces all his experiences, his fall, and the discipline that followed. Ready now to leave the world he looks backward, forward, and round about him, and his sight is clearer than it had ever been before. He reviews the past, considers the present, and contemplates the future, and we learn his thoughts enlightened by the teaching and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

The first verse is not part of David's last words. It solemnly presents to us as something of greatest importance that which characterized the man who spoke these words. The first point is that in order to speak them he was inspired by God. The twice repeated word "saith" indicates that David spoke in oracles. Thus he was inspired in all four respects in which he is presented in this verse: as "the son of Jesse" in the humble character of his human descent, as "the man who was raised up on high" in the character God gave him in raising him up as a man, as "the anointed of the God of Jacob" in his character as king of Israel, the people who had received the promises, and lastly, as "the sweet psalmist of Israel" in his character as prophet bringing grace to his people.

What now are the words of this man whom God has just described to us? First of all he testifies that it was the Spirit of God who spoke by him: "The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). Next he declares that God had directly communicated His thoughts about His people Israel to him: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me" (2 Sam. 23:3). Here we have solemn divine authority at the same time as clearest affirmation of what inspiration is. Inspiration uses man, all of man, and to express itself inspiration uses

all this human instrument's characteristics. If he says something, it is as an oracle; if he speaks, it is the Lord speaking by him. Man has mixed in nothing that is of himself: "His word was on my tongue." God uses what He wants of man in order to present His thoughts in the absolute integrity of His Word. But if God speaks by David, He also speaks to David: "The Rock of Israel spoke to me." What He told him is part of the treasure of his personal experiences.

What does this word, so marvelously preserved, convey to us? We have already mentioned it, and we shall see it: the past, the present, and the future: The past is me and my history; the present is grace; the future is Christ and glory.

However, the first object that God presents to David and by him is not David himself, that is, his past; but rather Christ, that is, his future and our future with Him. Doubtless David was here announcing the immediate future, Solomon's reign, but in reality Solomon did not answer to the glorious description given us here of the future king of glory. This was as always a prophecy of Christ. The future is the immediate thing in God's thoughts and so it ought to he in our thoughts as well, just as it was in David's thoughts. What a wonderful revelation of the true king's character! "The ruler among men shall be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, like the rising of the sun, a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:3-4). How fresh, new, young, and immaculate everything is in this glory, in this dawning of the sun of righteousness! This will be the beginning of an era of unmixed happiness. Who has not looked upon the rising sun in a sky of perfect purity on a spring morning? Who has not felt his heart expand, overwhelmed with this freshness and this inexpressible peace? The beauty of the scene ravishes us; nothing troubles this joy; there is not a dark spot on the horizon; the possibility of a storm seems to be past forever; we live, we enjoy this spectacle without distraction —a morning without clouds!

But the rising of the sun presents even more than the splendor of this star in a pure heaven: "When from the sunshine, after rain, the green grass springeth from the earth" (2 Sam. 23:4). The renewed earth seems resurrected by its shining. Of Solomon, a type of Christ we read: "He shall come down like rain on the mown grass, as showers that water the earth" (Psa. 72:6).1 Men, His people, are affected by his rays. Grass mowed down by judgment gives way to new grass: the remnant, a willing people. The shining of the sun of righteousness will cause it to sprout up with abundance of blessings after He descends like a refreshing rain on His humbled people. "From the womb of the morning shall come to thee the dew of thy youth" (Psa. 110:3).

Thus the appearance of Christ's glory, their joy and their hope, will surpass every other thought in the hearts of those who know and love Him.

At the sight of this glory David now turns back to himself and his history. It is as though he were saying: This is what I should have been and what another will be; now here is what I am: "Although my house be not so before God" (2 Sam. 23:5). Alas, it takes only a few words to write and to read this story of humiliation and shame. But here we see that in the presence of death David has nothing more to learn. He has no confidence in himself nor in his house and he condemns them both. Is not this like the patriarch's expression: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life"? So much for the past. David had not answered to what God expected of him nor had he shown what the "just ruler over mankind" ought to be.

But one thing remained, established for the present and for eternity: "Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in every way and sure" (2 Sam. 23:5). The present is grace: that which God had done for David despite what David had been. "At this time it shall be said... What hath God wrought!" (Num. 23:23). God's covenant is eternal and secure. It is a new covenant, for the old covenant was indeed ordered but it was neither secure nor eternal because of man's responsibility. God sought a ground for the new covenant in Himself; man does not enter into this covenant as a contracting party. This is why it can endure and never end. David rests upon that which God has done: "For this is all my salvation, and every desire, although He make it not to grow" (2 Sam. 23:5). This covenant is not growing at present; it will spring up in relation to a new people (2 Sam. 23:4). For it to grow and for full blessing to be introduced, judgment must first be executed: "The sons of Belial are all of them as thorns thrust away... and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place" (2 Sam. 23:6-7). But David can firmly rely on this covenant and on God's promises.

We always find the three things we have just spoken of with a soul that is in the Lord's presence. Did they not shine in all their splendor even in the thief on the cross? This man judged himself by acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgment: "Dost thou too not fear God, thou that art under the same judgment? and we indeed justly, for we receive the just recompense of what we have done." His standard was what Christ had been: "But this Man has done nothing amiss." He counted on His grace: "Remember me," and looking forward to His future glory he added: "Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom" (Luke 23:39-43).

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 21:15-22: The Sons of the Giant

2 Sam. 21:15-22

The end of David's history has the same character as its beginning. Goliath seems to come to life again. So it was for the Lord also: after the temptation in the wilderness Satan left Him for a time and reappeared at Gethsemane, seeking to terrify Him so that He would abandon His work. His efforts were in vain and at Gethsemane as well as in the wilderness Jesus won the victory.

After Christ's victory, even though the "children of Raphah" (i.e., of the giant) attack His redeemed, thinking to overcome them more easily than their Master, their fate is the same; they come out of the strife defeated. This conflict is repeated four times with the Philistines. It is from these internal enemies that the sons of the giant proceed, these "ravening wolves" who seek to ravish the flock by frightening their leaders.

The first time David personally is involved (2 Sam. 21:15-17). He had gone down with his servants, taking neither his age nor his strength into account: "David was exhausted" (2 Sam. 21:15). Ishbibenob who was of the children of the giant, formidable with his weapon —"the weight of his lance was three hundred shekels of bronze" —invulnerable because of the "new armor" he was wearing, thinks to take advantage of the king's apparent weakness. But "Abishai the son of Zeruiah succored him, and smote the Philistine and killed him" (2 Sam. 21:17). Thus this servant of David is put to the test; he does not abandon his master in danger and has the honor of saving David. Is it not likewise with us? The Lord has fought for us and delivered us; do we not in a sense have the duty of helping Him? His name, His person, and His glory are threatened by the enemy's agents. This enemy attacks our David in order to destroy all remembrance of Him, and he knows that his time is short, for already the dawn of our Lord's glorious reign is about to break in the person of Solomon. Will the enemy succeed? We are

responsible for his victory or his defeat. It is up to us now in the power of the Spirit of God to smite the giant's son, to conquer Christ's attackers, to keep His name and His word intact in face of the enemy who would destroy them.

And even if we are not "David's mighty men," should we not swear to Him as all David's servants did: "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel" (2 Sam. 21:17)? And so each one's faith is put to the test. They realize that they themselves must fight, each in his rank, so that the light of God's people might not go out but continue to shine in all its splendor. No doubt our David is never weary like the David of this history: "The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not nor tireth" (Isa. 40:28). But in order to test and strengthen our faith, to encourage our hearts in conflict and cheer them with victory and reward, He loves to place Himself in a position in relation to His own where He, the victor over Satan, seems to need our help. What a privilege to fight for Him! The time is solemn; Christ is being attacked on every hand; the enemy's effort seems formidable and surpasses our feeble resources by far. Those who ought to be with Him and defend the integrity of His Word and His Person, more often than not, alas, make common cause with the sons of the giant. Let us not be disturbed about this.

It does not matter if our David is absent as in the two battles at Gob (2 Sam. 21:18-19); the same Spirit that urged Him on is still with us. Perhaps we may be alone as Sibbechai the Hushathite was alone against Saph—for the stricken giant is always reappearing in another form. What does that matter? Perhaps — discouraging situation—Gob, the place where he was defeated, will become a battlefield for us a second time. What does it matter if we must retrace the same steps when we thought that we had finished with a treacherous struggle?

Look now! Goliath, that ancient enemy, reappears on this ground. "And there was again a battle at Gob with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, smote Goliath the Gittite; now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam" (2 Sam. 21:19). Was not Goliath defeated by David? Be not troubled, be not afraid, Elhanan, hero of "the grace of God"!1 This Goliath, this Gittite, is a false Goliath bearing a deceptive name, a lying name. He is only Lahmi, Goliath's brother (cf. 1 Chron. 20:5). Yes, but he has the same spear, like a weaver's beam, doesn't he (cf. 1 Sam. 17:7)? Ask him, Elhanan, where his sword is. His sword is in David's hands and it will remain there forever. Victory is assured you, Elhanan! To win this victory there is no need even of a slingstone which you surely could never wield as deftly as your king anyway. It is confidence, the humble dependence you saw in David, that will overcome him. Yes, at any rate the victory is yours; it is ours, because it is His!

The last enemy, a monstrous intimidating man, is not named but he also was born to the giant, "a man of great stature, that had on each hand six fingers, and on each foot six toes, four and twenty in number" (2 Sam. 21:20-22). As once Goliath did, so he defies Israel (2 Sam. 21:21; 1 Sam. 17:10). In Christ's absence we must fight for Him as well as for His people. To defy the one is to defy the other. We have brothers who are captives of the enemy, like Lot, sadly linked up with the world as he was, who must be saved "with fear, snatching them out of the fire" (Jude 23). Let us stand in the breach like Jonathan the son of Shimeah and let us demonstrate that like him by grace we bear the name "David's brothers" (cf. 2 Sam. 21:21). Like him may we have the interests of His people at heart.

How painful it is to hear: Why are you meddling? We are all right where we are. You are making war against us—for they identify themselves with the enemy enslaving them and prefer their slavery to the liberty which is offered to them. But what of it? Let us fight for them, let us smite this terrible power that defies God's people. Another blow, this one will be the last. Just one more victory and the Lord will deliver us from the hand of all our enemies, and we shall in peace be able to raise the words of our song to Him, as did David!

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 1:17-27: The Song of the Bow

2 Sam. 1:17-27

"And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan." In this lament he expresses his grief over the disasters of Israel's leaders and their army, but this song of the bow is to be learned by the children of Judah (2 Sam. 1:18). It is an instruction for them. As witnesses of Israel's disaster they must know how to avoid such disaster in the future. Saul had been overcome by the archers (1 Sam. 31:3) when he himself had been deprived of archers. Indeed, from 1 Chron. 12:1-7 we learn that before Saul's defeat the band of archers belonging to the tribe of Benjamin and in large part to the family of Kish had rallied around David and had joined him at Ziklag. This is why Saul "was much terrified" (1 Sam. 31:3) by the archers.

This Song of the Bow has a poignant refrain: "How are the mighty fallen!" (v. 19). "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" (v. 25). "How are the mighty fallen, and the instruments of war perished!" (v. 27). What did they lack? The bow which had overcome Saul!

Throughout Scripture the bow is the symbol of strength to conquer the enemy. The sword is used in hand-to-hand combat; the bow is used to attack from a distance, opposing the enemy's approach. The archer sees the enemy approaching in the distance, takes account of his movements and his plans, and levels him to the ground before he has opportunity to attack. The bow is a weapon requiring greater skill than the sword, but it is above all the symbol of strength, for it takes powerful arms and hands to draw a bow and make proper use of it.

Israel's mighty men with Saul at their head had met the bow of an enemy stronger than they. The error that led to their ruin was esteeming their own strength to be sufficient. But there is no strength without dependence, for strength is not to be found in us, but rather in Him whose strength is infallible on our behalf. The Man Jesus Christ is the example of this. He did not seek strength except in God nor would He otherwise have been the Perfect Man. Smitten by the archers (Gen. 49:23-24), His strength did not leave Him. When His weakness appeared to succumb to the enemy's power His bow remained strong—His strength was full. This strength existed only in dependence: "The arms of His hands are supple by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob."

Had He not already manifested God's power in His life through complete dependence on Him? All His acts were proof of this. Thus at the tomb of Lazarus He demonstrates His might by the resurrection of one who was dead and adds, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me" (John 11:41).

In His death, although crucified in weakness, He was nevertheless the power of God. Before the cross all the strength of man and of Satan was reduced to nothing. Through death He overcame him who had the power of death. It is especially there that His bow remained firm and that

His hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

His resurrection is the public demonstration of this power of God in whom He trusted. God declared Him to be the Son of God in power by raising Him from among the dead. He had the power to take up His life again as He also had the power to lay down His life, but even when it came to His resurrection, His soul dependently waited on the power of God: "Thou wilt not leave My soul to Sheol, neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:10). "From the horns of the buffaloes hast Thou answered Me" (Psa. 22:21). "He brought Me up out of the horrible pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock" (Psa. 40:2). "Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). "The surpassing greatness of [God's] power...in which He wrought in the Christ in raising Him from among the dead" (Eph. 1:19-20).

This is not all. His bow will remain firm; His strength will be full forever. When the Son of Man comes to judge the nations the bow of brass that will strike down sinners will be in His hand. There again, it is His God who will gird Him with strength, who will teach His hands to war (Psa. 18:32,34). In this dependence He will pierce His enemies so that they cannot rise (Psa. 18:38). His arrows will be sharp and will strike the heart of the king's enemies (Psa. 45:5).

Yes, His bow remains firm and the arms of His hands are made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob until He comes to sit on the throne of His power forever.

Man may have a bow, but in his hands it fails when he uses it. "The sons of Ephraim, armed bowmen, turned back in the day of battle" (Psa. 78:9), and as for the Lord's enemies, "the bow of the mighty is broken" (1 Sam. 2:4; Psa. 46:9; Jer. 49:35; Hos. 1:5;2:18).

As for ourselves, fellow Christians, our bow will remain whole on condition that we place our confidence in God who communicates His strength to us. "Go in this thy might," the Lord says to Gideon (Judg. 6:14), and the apostle himself experienced that when he was weak, then he was strong (2 Cor. 12:10). Nothing is weaker than a Christian who has given up Christ as his strength. We need to know how to use our bow and then, like Christ, the arms of our hands will be strong through the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob. Let us learn the song of the bow by exercising ourselves in drawing it, by aiming the arrow toward its mark. The more we use it, the stronger we will be against the enemy.

The archers of Benjamin who found refuge with the son of Jesse-his faithful followers at the eleventh hour just prior to Israel's defeat-showed by this action that they did not trust in their bows, with Saul as their master, but rather trusted in the strength of the despised David. Let us do the same; let us gather around the rejected King. Let us not weep over our weakness, as though we were resourceless: this would not be faith, nor confidence in Christ. In very humble dependence let us count on His strength to make our hands firm to war for Him until the day when, the conflict ended, we shall enter His eternal rest.

David's lament is the touching expression of the affections of this man of God. A heart full of love has no room for resentment or complaints. If in the past David had wept at unjust accusations and hatred, he has now forgotten everything. There is no word of reproach against the man whose bones now lay under the tamarisk at Jabesh. But it is not enough for this noble heart to merely forget. He loves to remember. He recalls that Saul had been the Lord's anointed, the bearer of His testimony, that he had led His people to victory. He recognizes the natural gifts that had made him pleasant during his life and had attracted Israel's love to him. He sees him magnificently dressing the daughters of his people. His song expresses respect for and grief over the man who had always hated and persecuted him. His lament is Israel's lament-Israel against whom in a day of weakness he had thought to fight by joining himself to the Philistines. David now identifies himself with Israel and shares in its tears. Joy may be the portion of the daughters of the uncircumcised, but never will David share in it. Let the mountains of Gilboa, the witnesses of God's people's defeat, be accursed!

His anguish over Jonathan is unbounded. Oh! how the tender heart of the son of Jesse valued the affection of his friend! "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant wast thou unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing women's love" (2 Sam. 1:26); his was a completely selfless affection, something that affection for one of the opposite sex can only with difficulty be. Jonathan had indeed stripped himself of his dignities and glory and the bow of his strength to give them to David in the day of his victory over Goliath. Then with all the warmth of his convictions he had pleaded the cause of his friend. Lastly, his admiration for the son of Jesse had not diminished during David's time of shame and exile-he had visited him then, although it is true he had lacked the courage to follow him. David says nothing about this last point. He covers the memory of his friend with inexpressible tenderness. He does not speak of his own love for him, but gives proof of it by exalting Jonathan's love.

Oh, how these words all bear the odor and fragrance of the heart of Christ! Only David had to be molded through discipline to produce such outpourings; Christ's heart had no such need. His entire life was only love and grace. "I have called you friends," He says to those who were at the point of either denying Him or of fleeing and leaving Him alone. "Ye are they who have persevered with Me in my temptations," He says in Luke 22:28 to those who shortly afterward could not even watch one hour with Him! Let us follow the example of this perfect Model!

The Kingdom Established Over Judah.—2 Sam. 2-4

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 1:1-16: The Amalekite

2 Sam. 1:1-16

Two events mark the dawn of David's reign: the judgment of Israel and of Israel's prince on the mountains of Gilboa, and the victory over Amalek won by the man who will soon be king. Christ's reign will bear the same characteristics. His reign cannot be established except by judgment of the Antichrist and the apostate Jews, and by a victory rendering powerless the great enemy of God and of His Anointed and of men. Indeed, Satan will be bound for this very purpose: for the introduction of Christ's millennial reign (Rev. 19:19-20:3).

Scarcely is Amalek conquered than a messenger comes from Saul's camp "with his garments rent, and earth upon his head." He bore the outward marks of sympathy, mourning, and grief, and was bringing homage to the one he presumed was king. "And as soon as he came to David, he fell to the earth and did obeisance" (2 Sam. 1:2). Anyone but the man of God would have been influenced by these marks of

deference, but simple communion with the Lord, along with the prudence of a serpent (Matt. 10:16) in matters of relations with the world, prevent him from falling into this snare. In a similar situation we ourselves might perhaps have had difficulty in deciphering the intentions of the enemy—but let us always guard against making hasty decisions. This is what David did. "Whence comest thou?" "Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped." "What has taken place? I pray thee, tell me." "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" It is only at David's third question that the liar is unmasked. David, a spiritual man, already suspects the unlikelihood of this story: "I happened by chance to be upon mount Gilboa." What? by chance? —in the thick of battle? "Behold, Saul leaned on his spear; and, behold, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him." Here the Word itself convicts this man of lying. Saul had leaned upon his sword and it was not the horsemen but the archers who had threatened him (1 Sam. 31:3-4). The remainder of his account is a bare-faced lie. Saul could not have asked the Amalekite to end his life, for the king's armorbearer did not kill himself until he had seen that Saul was dead (1 Sam. 31:5). "So I stood over him and put him to death" (2 Sam. 1:10).

This lying spirit emanates from that great enemy who could not understand the heart of Jesse's son. How could Satan, the wicked one, imagine that David was full of grace and love toward his enemies, that their defeat would fill his heart with unfeigned sorrow? But he was seeking above all to seduce David into receiving Saul's crown, the sign of his investiture with the kingdom, from his hand. His plot is foiled. Later, he will transport the Messiah, David's Son, to the top of a very high mountain, and there offer Him all the kingdoms of the world on condition that He render homage to him, and in this will suffer a new and supreme defeat.

When he learns of the fall of the royal family and of Israel, David immediately mourns. How touching is his attitude! "Then David took hold of his garments and rent them; and all the men that were with him did likewise. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of Jehovah, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword" (2 Sam. 1:11-12). The man of God has forgotten everything: hatred, ambushes, persecutions, and the continual danger threatening his life; he remembers only one thing: that the Lord had entrusted His testimony to Saul and had anointed him, and that he had formerly led Israel to victory. He also mourns for Jonathan. And guilty as the people of God might be, he does not set himself apart from them as though he were not part of them, but weeps over their calamities.

What a solemn lesson for us! Judgment has already been pronounced and is ready to fall on Christendom which hates, despises, and often persecutes Christ's true witnesses. Do we have David's true feelings toward Christendom and her leaders? Do we mourn rather than rejoice? Are we distressed rather than condemnatory? Are our hearts afflicted at the thought that Satan is getting what he is expecting in the overthrow of that which bears Christ's name or professes to belong to Him? Such should always be the case. Tears shed over the ruin, and grace and pity toward those gone astray speak more to the hearts of the Lord's sheep who are mixed up in this state of things than do the most righteous criticisms. They also open the Lord's people's eyes to the necessity of seeking refuge with the Shepherd of Israel when the sword is already being raised for destruction.

The messenger silently witnesses this scene of affliction without understanding its meaning. He does not suspect the fate hanging over his head. Only then does David ask him his last question: "Whence art thou?" When Satan who can disguise himself as an angel of light seeks to tempt us, we must compel him to tell his origin and confess his real name. If we are with God, he will always in the end betray himself. This liar who had probably come to Gilboa only to spoil the dead had already let the name of his people slip from his mouth when he had reported Saul's supposed talk with himself. Now he cannot contradict himself. "I am the son of an Amalekite stranger" (2 Sam. 1:13). "How wast thou not afraid," David says to him, "to stretch forth thy hand to destroy Jehovah's anointed?...Thy mouth has testified against thee" (2 Sam. 1:14, 16).

No, there can be nothing in common between David and Amalek, and David will never accept the crown from this Amalekite's hand. If indeed our hearts must he full of mercy with regard to the necessities and tribulations of God's faithless people and of those who, rejected like Saul, still bear His testimony, they must, however, be without mercy for the instruments sent by Satan to tempt us; they must without any hesitation whatsoever call evil, evil and the enemy the enemy.

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 19:41-20:26: Conflict Between Brothers

2 Sam. 19:41-20:26

Just as David so Israel's remnant will rediscover a path to again enter Canaan in reality, as the people once did in figure. The Jordan, the river of death, is this path. Death with Christ is necessary in order to enter into the inheritance and blessings of the promises. Then comes Gilgal (2 Sam. 19:40), the place of circumcision where Egypt's shame was rolled away from the people. For the first time these end time believers will in fact know what is the true circumcision of Christ, "the putting off of the body of the flesh." They will enter the kingdom of God as those who have been born anew.

This passage that applies to the remnant also applies to us, although in another way. No doubt we are now dead with Christ; we have been circumcised once for all with a circumcision not done by hand, which is the circumcision of Christ (Col. 2:11). We cannot be driven out of the heavenlies which are our inheritance; but the necessary consequence of our unfaithfulness is the Lord's discipline. Thus we can and must lose the joy of heavenly things after a fall, and if we are not driven out of Canaan as with David or the remnant, at least we become strangers to it, being thrown back into the world from which the grace of God had separated us.

In order for this to be it is enough that we forget for an instant by returning to those things from which the cross has separated us that Christ's death, like the Jordan and Gilgal, separates us from the world and from the flesh. Then in order to recover the power of that which our foolishness has despised we must in a practical way begin again the path already followed, renewing our familiarity with our Jordan and with our Gilgal and by repentance rediscovering the purpose of the cross and power of death with Christ, by which means we have been crucified to sin and the world. May God grant us to make these experiences through His Word and not by actual falls. David's history teaches us the immense loss that a fall brought to his soul despite the perfection of the grace that was glorified in his restoration.

From 2 Sam. 19:41 to 2 Sam. 20:2 we see discord between Israel and Judah. Indeed, neither side was fully right. Israel as a whole had betrayed David but was the first to return after Absalom's death (2 Sam. 19:8-10); Judah had been slow and slothful at first, but had made up for this lack of alacrity by answering the call of grace while Israel was still deliberating (2 Sam. 19:11-15).

Jealous of Judah's decision, the ten tribes complain to the king. Judah answers by asserting their close ties with the son of Jesse and by suggesting that when they brought back the king, they did not have—as did others—motives of self-interest (2 Sam. 19:42). Israel replies: "I have ten parts in the king and I have also more right in David than thou: and why didst thou slight me? and was not my advice the first, to bring back my king?" (2 Sam. 19:43). All these exchanges are of the flesh. Ambition for playing a role in the things of God, jealousy as we view our brethren's activities, wounded self-love, and preoccupation with ourselves is certainly not the fruit of the Spirit and of divine affections. Despite their superior position Judah was no better than the ten tribes. "The words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 19:43). Those who are right act without love and division is the inevitable result. This division is realized in 2 Sam. 20:1-2. At the instigation of Satan (who uses Sheba, the son of Bichri, for this work), Israel, who had just said: "I have ten parts in the king," now cries: "We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" (2 Sam. 20:1). Thus all Israel separate themselves from him over a selfish question; this is exactly what the enemy desires. At the beginning it is often difficult to guess his intentions, but the time always comes when he unmasks himself and draws poor blind saints after himself. What folly to prefer a "man of Belial," a Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite, to David! Such is always the case in the internal conflicts of God's people. Satan's object is to turn souls aside from Christ. It matters little to him if after this Judah is still attached to the Lord's anointed. Hasn't this little group been discredited by their having spoken more harshly than Israel? It is humiliating for Judah to have failed in this struggle, but one thing remains to them: David's grace had anticipated them. "Ye are my bone and my flesh." He it was who had inclined their hearts like one man by reawakening the sense of their intimate unity with himself (2 Sam. 19:14). All merit must accrue to David. By grace "the men of Judah clave to their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 20:2). Thus Judah finds blessing despite their fault, for they remained there where David was.

Having retaken his place in the midst of the remnant of his people, David purifies his house of the corruption which had come into it. He does not drive out his defiled wives to rebuild it on a new footing, for he himself was responsible for all this ruin. Evil, vessels to dishonor, and defilement are there. David bears the pain and humiliation of this while personally purifying himself from these things in order to be a vessel to honor for the Lord. In no wise does he link himself with the evil which, however, he had provoked. To the contrary, his separation is public. He understands that from this time on he must be a "vessel to honor, sanctified, serviceable to the Master, prepared for every good work."

These things apply to us also, dear reader. We live in the time of ruin announced in the Second Epistle to Timothy. We can neither rebuild God's house nor break the vessels to dishonor, but we can separate ourselves from iniquity, thus bearing the seal of the "firm foundation of God" (2 Tim. 2:19-21).

David, who has decided to dismiss Joab, attempts to fulfill the promise made to his nephew Amasa by making him head of the army (cf. 2 Sam. 19:13); he charges him with gathering together the men of Judah to pursue the son of Bichri. Amasa delays in accomplishing his mission. Perhaps David was impatient, for Amasa was not a traitor and had already come to Gibeon, not far from Jerusalem, when the company led by Abishai and the mighty men went out of the capital (2 Sam. 20:8). The fact is that through fear of the evil that Sheba might do David once again falls into Joab's hands through Abishai's instrumentality. Could not David have inquired of the Lord at this renewing of his reign? God had once before inclined Israel's heart; could He not do so a second time?

Joab, who is ambitious and has no scruples, for whom every act advancing his personal interests is legitimate, becomes a murderer for the third time in order to regain his position.

There before the city of Abel a woman's wisdom brings an end to the shedding of blood. This fratricidal war comes to an end through the death of Sheba, the real culprit. Joab himself speaks a word of wisdom here. He accuses Sheba of having "lifted up his hand against the king, against David" (2 Sam. 20:21). This was in fact getting to the heart of the matter, for Sheba's attack was directed against the king. The woman of Abel realizes that the only way of restoring peace is by judging the guilty one: "Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall" (2 Sam. 20:21). It is not as is often said, a matter of everyone admitting his wrongs and humbling himself; this does not remove the evil; rather, the one who had lifted up his hand against David must be cut off.

Is not this what should always take place in conflicts between brethren about doctrine? Some judge a heretic, others accept him, and peace cannot be re-established except by cutting off the wicked person.

This chapter ends like 2 Sam. 8:15-18 by listing the restored order of the administration of the kingdom. What follows is a sort of epilogue to the book.

Meditations on 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel 19:1-40: Grace

2 Sam. 19:1-40

Joab reproaches David for his weakness; Joab is exhorting David! But who other than he alone had brought on this evil and had so wrung the bowels of this father's affections? No doubt, it was according to the ways of God who was giving free course to the chastening that had been announced (2 Sam. 12:10-11), and David must acknowledge His hand in all this. But woe to the unrighteous instrument by whom these ways were carried out. Only, the time of retribution had not yet come. God does not even permit that Joab be replaced by Amasa as David, offended, meant to do (2 Sam. 19:13). David complies with Joab's counsel. I do not doubt that this is because he knows the justice of God's ways toward himself. When he later delegates Joab's judgment to Solomon, it is not actually Absalom's death of which he accuses him, but above all of the murder of Abner and Amasa during a time of peace (1 Kings 2:5). David then sits at the gate of the city where all the people present themselves before him.

The discipline is now ended. Discipline was exercised in 1 Samuel to keep David in the path of dependence. There was no bitterness then, but rather the happy consciousness of divine favor. In the Second Book discipline is bitter for it is accompanied by the consciousness of having

dishonored a holy God. But what fruit it bears too! God fills the broken heart as He alone is able to do, and outwardly the life of Jesus is manifested. We enter upon a scene of grace, forgiveness, and peace, the expression of what now occupies the king's heart.

In 2 Sam. 19:9-15 we see grace. The ten tribes had betrayed and abandoned David in order to follow unrighteous Absalom; they are the first to return and speak of bringing back the king. David knows of this and opens his arms to Judah, so slow, so slothful until now to acknowledge the throne of their king, and who ought to have horn the penalty for this. "Ye are my hone and my flesh," he tells them (2 Sam. 19:12). Amasa had been the head of the army that had pursued David, and he was all the more guilty in that he like Joab was the king's nephew. "Art thou not my bone, and my flesh?" David sends to say to Amasa (2 Sam. 19:13). His grace demands nothing; much rather it delights in doing good to his enemies.

In 2 Sam. 19:16- 23 we find forgiveness. The king forgives Shimei who in order to avoid the fate awaiting him comes to submit himself: "Let not my lord impute iniquity to me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely... for thy servant knows that I have sinned" (2 Sam. 19:19-20). Abishai, still the same (cf. 2 Sam. 16:9), would like to take revenge against Shimei. David stops him: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries to me? Should there any man be put to death this day in Israel?" No, this is the day of grace and forgiveness. Whether or not the feelings Shimei expresses are sincere David does not stop to consider; he is not judging them now; Shimei will have to give account for them later when his conduct will reveal their reality (1 Kings 2:36-46). "Thou shalt not die," David tells this guilty man.

In 2 Sam. 19:24-30 we have a scene of peace. Mephibosheth comes down to meet his benefactor; he had been in mourning ever since David's departure. Ziha had deceived him and slandered him. Here we discover a new feature of Ziba's character. It was in wicked Shimei's company that Ziha had crossed the Jordan to meet the king (2 Sam. 19:16-17). David's silence as to Ziba is characteristic. Why, it appears that he is reproaching Mephibosheth. Perhaps his infirmity was not as great an obstacle as he had thought for following a fleeing David. Perhaps like Jonathan his father he lacked a certain moral courage to associate himself with the dangers facing his benefactor. This is not revealed to us and we can only guess. But what is certain is that in the king's absence his life had been a life of affliction, mourning, prayers and ardent longing for his return (2 Sam. 19:24). How then can David treat him so rudely? "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?" (2 Sam. 19:29). These words remind us a little of those, seemingly so hard, that Jesus spoke to the Syrophenician woman. The Lord spoke them to put this woman's faith to the test. When an engineer builds a bridge he has very heavy loads go across it in order to test it. David's words do the same. Mephibosheth's precious faith is put to the test and what comes forth is only the perfume of dependence and self-denial. This faith has three characteristics: Mephibosheth accepts David's will as being the will of God: "My lord the king is as an angel of God; do therefore what is good in thy sight" (2 Sam. 19:27). This will, whatever it may be, is good in Mephibosheth's eyes because it is good in David's eyes (cf. Rom. 12:2). Secondly, he recognizes that he has no right to the king's favor based on his ancestry or personal worth: "For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; and thou didst set thy servant among them that eat at thine own table. What further right therefore have I? and for what should I cry any more to the king?" (2 Sam. 19:28). Finally when David replies, saying, "I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land,"1 Mephibosheth answers: "Let him even take all, since my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house" (2 Sam. 19:30). He renounces all his temporal advantages; for Mephibosheth it is enough that his lord has recovered the place due him.

Oh! may our faith when put to the test ever produce fruit like this!

In contrast to Mephibosheth, Barzillai (2 Sam. 19:31-40) is tested by the offer of temporal blessings. He was very rich but very different from the young man whom "Jesus loved," and he had placed his fortune at the king's disposition during his stay at Manahaim (2 Sam. 19:32). His great age had not hindered him from giving himself, body and goods, in service to David. David offers him a reward proportionate to his devotion: "Pass thou over with me, and I will maintain thee with me in Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 19:33). But Barzillai had not labored for a reward, and judging himself unworthy of it, he refuses. "How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day eighty years old: can I discern between good and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat and what I drink?... why should thy servant be yet a burden to my lord the king?" (2 Sam. 19:34-35). Let his son Chimham profit from the fruit of his labor: far from opposing this, Barzillai rejoices in it (2 Sam. 19:37-38). Later, like Mephibosheth at David's table, Barzillai's sons eat at Solomon's table (1 Kings 2:7).

Three things suffice this man of God beyond the happiness of once more seeing the king's rights acknowledged beyond the Jordan and seeing him established in his kingdom again. The first is the lovely promise of 2 Sam. 19:38: "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which seems good to thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee." The second is that when leaving him David gives him a token of his love: "The king kissed Barzillai." Through this kiss he, like Enoch, receives the testimony of having pleased God in the person of His anointed. The third is that the king "blessed him" (2 Sam. 19:39). Jesus also when leaving His beloved disciples lifted His hands to bless them and today maintains the same attitude with regard to us. His hands although invisible remain lifted up over us, leaving in our hearts the certainty of the full efficacy of His work. Barzillai returns to his place with the warmth of love, the joy of blessings, and with David's promise: "Whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee," and that other glorious promise that his son, yes, even his sons should pass over with the king, never to leave him, and to be seated forever at the king of glory's table!