

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 14

This chapter relates that Joab, perceiving David's inclination to bring back Absalom, employed a wise woman of Tekoah to lay before him a feigned case of hers, drawn up by Joab, whereby this point was gained from the king, that murder might be dispensed with in her case, (^{<1040>}2 Samuel 14:1-20); which being applied to the case of Absalom, and the king finding out that the hand of Joab was in this, sent for him, and ordered him to bring Absalom again, though as yet he would not see his face, (^{<1042>}2 Samuel 14:21-24); and after some notice being taken of the beauty of Absalom's person, particularly of his head of hair, and of the number of his children, (^{<1045>}2 Samuel 14:25-27); it is related, that after two full years Absalom was uneasy that he might not see the king's face, and sent for Joab, who refused to come to him, till he found means to oblige him to it, who, with the king's leave, introduced him to him, (^{<1048>}2 Samuel 14:28-33).

Ver. 1. *Now Joab the son of Zeruiah*, etc.] The general of David's army:

perceived that the king's heart [was] towards Absalom; and longed to have him returned, though he knew not how to bring it about with credit to himself, his crime being so foul, and worthy of death. This Joab perceived by some words he now and then dropped, and by his conduct, not seeking by any ways and means to bring him to justice, and being now reconciled to the death of Amnon; wherefore Joab devised a way to make known to him his own mind, and the sense of the people, which would serve to encourage him to restore him; and the rather Joab was inclined to take such a step, as he knew it would establish him in the king's favour, and ingratiate him into the affection of Absalom, the next heir to the crown, as well as please the people, whose darling he was. Though Abarbinel is of opinion that Joab proceeded upon another view of things, not because he saw the heart and affection of David were towards Absalom, but the reverse; that though David restrained himself and his servants from going out after Absalom, yet Joab knew that the heart of the king was against him, and that his heart was to take vengeance on him, though he did not go out to seek him; he perceived there was still enmity and hatred in his heart

to take vengeance on Absalom, and therefore he took the following method to remove it, and reconcile his mind to him; and so the Targum,

“and Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the heart of the king was to go, out against Absalom;”

and it may be observed, that when Joab had so far prevailed upon him as to admit him to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would not suffer him to see his face, nor did he for two years after.

Ver. 2. *And Joab sent to Tekoah*, etc.] Which Kimchi says was a city in the tribe of Asher, and others in the tribe of Benjamin, but it seems rather to be in the tribe, of Judah, (⁴¹¹⁵2 Chronicles 11:5,6); according Jerom ^{f235}, it was twelve miles from Jerusalem, though in another place ^{f236} he says it was but nine; of this place was Amos, and some think ^{f237} the woman after mentioned was his grandmother. It was proper to lay the scene of the affair to be proposed to the king at some distance, that it might not soon and easily be inquired into:

and fetched thence a wise woman; one much advanced in years, as Josephus says ^{f238}, whose years had taught her wisdom by experience; a woman of good sense, and of a good address, apt at expression and reply, and knew how to manage an affair committed to her; and among other things, perhaps, was famous for acting the part of a mourner at funerals, for which sometimes women were hired; however, she was one that was talked of for her wisdom and prudence, and Joab having heard of her, sent for her as one for his purpose. The Jews ^{f239} say, that Tekoah was the first place in the land of Israel for oil, and because the inhabitants were much used to oil, wisdom was found among them:

and said unto her, I pray thee feign thyself to be a mourner; a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and in great distress, and show it by cries and tears:

and put on now mourning apparel; black clothes, such as mourners usually wore:

and anoint not thyself with oil; as used to be done in times of feasting and rejoicing, to make them look smooth, and gay, and cheerful, and of which there might be much use at Tekoah, if so famous for oil:

but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead; her countenance pale and foul with weeping, her mourning clothes almost worn out, etc.

Ver. 3. *And come to the king*, etc.] At his palace, in the above condition and circumstances:

and speak on this manner unto him; something to the following purpose he dictated to her:

so Joab put the words in her mouth; the substance of what she should say; the fable she was to deliver as her own case might be framed by Joab, and which she delivered word for word exactly as he put it, and the application of it; but as he knew not what questions the king would ask her, so he could not dictate to her what to reply, unless he supposed this and the other, and so formed answers; but this he left to her prudence, and for the sake of which he chose a wise woman to manage this affair.

Ver. 4. *And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king*, etc.] Or after she had spoken to him, being introduced by Joab, as is probable; when she had saluted him with God save the king, or May the king live, or some such like expressions:

she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance; to him as her king, in reverence of his majesty:

and said, help, O king; signifying that she was in great distress, and came to him for assistance and deliverance.

Ver. 5. *And the king said unto her, what aileth thee?* etc.] Or what is thy case? What is the condition, and what the circumstances, that thou art in, which require help and assistance? intimating that he was ready to grant it on knowledge thereof; however, he was ready to hear what she had to say:

and she answered, I [am] indeed a widow woman; of a truth a widow, as the Targum; she was really one, a widow indeed, as in (^{518B}1 Timothy 5:3,5); not one that was separated from her husband, he being alive, or divorced from him on any account; and therefore she adds,

and mine husband is dead; and has been a long time; this she said to move the pity and compassion of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate in God's stead, was a Father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow.

Ver. 6. *And thy handmaid had two sons,* etc.] Two are observed, that her case might suit with Amnon and Absalom:

and they two strove together in the field; they quarrelled, and fought in the field, where there were no witnesses of what they did to each other; whereby she would suggest that Amnon was killed in the field, of which there were no witnesses, and therefore Absalom ought not to die; whereas it was in Absalom's house, at his table, and where the rest of the king's sons were present, and witnesses of it:

and [there was] none to part them; which, had there been, might have prevented the sad disaster; this, as Abarbinel thinks, is pointed at David, who when Amnon forced Tamar, did not correct him for it, nor seek to make peace between the brethren, and hence followed what had happened:

but the one smote the other, and slew him; as say the accusers of him that is living; for the fable supposes there was none with them; however, she suggests, as the above writer observes, that one gave the first blow, and so was the aggressor; and that he that was smitten rose up in his own defence, and in his passion slew him that smote him; which is observed to lessen the crime, and to intimate that Amnon was the aggressor, who first began the sin and quarrel, in ravishing Tamar, and so reproaching Absalom; and therefore his blood was upon his own head.

Ver. 7. *And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid,* etc.] Who had sheltered her son, that slew his brother, from the avenger of blood; and not only the next akin, the avenger of blood, but even all the kindred and relations of the deceased, those of her husband's family rose up as one man, demanding justice:

and they said, deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew; pretending great regard to the deceased, and a zeal for justice, when the main thing aimed at was to get the inheritance into their own hands, as appears by what follows:

and we will destroy the heir also; and hereby she would insinuate to the king, that the reason why the rest of the king's sons spake against Absalom to him, and stirred him up to punish him with death, was because he was heir to the crown, and they thought by removing him to make way for themselves:

and so they shall quench my coal that is left; she had but one son, as she represents her case, who was like a coal left among ashes, in the ruins of her family; the only one to support her, keep alive her family, and bear up and continue her husband's name; and, as the Targum,

“they seek to kill the only one that is left;”

and so the family be extinct:

and shall not leave to my husband [neither] name nor remainder upon the earth; should he be delivered up to them and slain; but herein the fable or apologue differed greatly from the case it was intended to represent; for had Absalom been put to death, as the law required, David had sons enough to inherit his throne, and keep up his name.

Ver. 8. *And the king said to the woman, go to thine house*, etc.] Go home and make thyself easy:

and I will give charge concerning thee; intimating that he would inquire into her case; and if it was as she had represented it, he would give orders that she should not be disturbed, or be obliged to deliver up her son, and that he should be safe from those that sought his life.

Ver. 9. *And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, my lord and king*, etc.] With much vehemence, and yet with great respect, fearing an inquisition into her case; which it would not bear, being a fable, and being very desirous of having sentence on it immediately pronounced:

the iniquity [be] on me and on my father's house; let the crime be imputed to me and my family, and punishment inflicted on us for it, if I have misrepresented the case, told lies, and deceived the king:

and the king and his throne [be] guiltless; let neither he nor his kingdom be charged with any sin, or suffer any damage on that account: or else the sense is, supposing that the king through much business should forget and neglect this affair; and her son should be put to death, through the violence and rage of the family; then she wishes that the fault and punishment of such neglect might not fall upon the king and his kingdom, but upon her and her family: in this form she put it, for the honour of the king, and because she would not be thought to wish ill to him and his kingdom; yet tacitly suggests, that should this be the case, he and his kingdom must expect to answer and suffer for it.

Ver. 10. *And the king said, whoever saith [ought] unto thee,* etc.] Demanding her to deliver up her son to justice, and reproaching her for not doing it:

bring him to me; give him in charge to a proper officer to be brought before me, and I shall chastise him for it:

and he shall not touch thee any more; give her any further trouble, by words or deeds.

Ver. 11. *Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God,* etc.] Who is a God gracious and merciful, and imitate him in showing mercy to the distressed; pitying their case, having compassion upon them, and relieving them, as she hoped he would commiserate her case, and provide for the safety of her son. Some think she desires not only to give his word, but his oath, for her son's safety: "remember the Lord thy God"; i.e. make mention of him, as men do when they swear by him; swear to me by the Lord thy God:

that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son, or, "from multiplying the avenger of blood"^{f240}; that there might not rise one after another to destroy her son: her meaning is, that the king would swear to her, and give out a general prohibition, an universal edict, that no one should slay her son; otherwise if only the avenger of blood that was next of kin was forbidden, others would rise up one after another, so that he would never be in safety:

and he said, [as] the Lord liveth; if she desired an oath, he granted her request, and swore by the living God:

there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth; so far shall his life be from being touched, or taken away, that the least hurt shall not be done him, as this proverbial expression signifies.

Ver. 12. *Then the woman said, let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak [one] word unto my Lord the king,* etc.] Having gained her point, and gotten a decree from him confirmed by an oath, that her son though he had killed his brother should not die; she proceeds to accommodate the parable, and apply it to the case of Absalom, and improve it in his favour:

and he said, say on; gave her leave to say what she had further to observe to him; (see ^{<474>}Luke 7:40).

Ver. 13. *Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?* etc.] That they would be so wicked as to slay my son, or that they are the people of God that would slay Absalom; people so cruel could not be reckoned such, as the king's sons; so Abarbinel; who gives it as the sense of Ephodaeus, that by the people of God are meant Absalom, and his men; or Absalom only, one man being sometimes called people, (^{<1218>}Exodus 21:8); and she expostulates with the king how he could entertain such a thought, as to seek to take away his life, when he had so fully expressed himself in her case on behalf of her son, who had slain his brother; or rather the meaning is, why he should think of doing such a thing as this, so contrary to the will of the people of Israel, the people of God, who would be greatly offended and grieved at it; so contrary to their wishes, which were to see him fetched back from an Heathenish court and country, where he was in danger of being corrupted, and to be restored to his father's favour and to his country, that he might be upon the spot at his death, to succeed in the throne and kingdom; for the provocation that Absalom had to kill Amnon had greatly lessened the evil in the esteem of the people:

for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty: he contradicts and condemns himself, in swearing that her son who had killed his brother should not die, nor an hair of his head be hurt, but should be in the utmost safety; and yet he sought to put his own son to death for a like crime, as the next clause explains it:

in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished; meaning Absalom, who was in a foreign country, an exile, (^{<1034>}2 Samuel 13:34), and in danger of falling into idolatry; not daring to come home, lest his father should order him to be put to death; and which he might justly fear he would, should he return without leave, since he sought not by any means to fetch him back.

Ver. 14. *For we must needs die,* etc.] As all must, herself, the king, and his sons, and indeed all men; this is the common case and lot of men; particularly she insinuates that David must die, and that there must be a successor named, and perhaps a dispute would arise about one; which might be fatal, if Absalom was not recalled in his lifetime; and that Amnon must have died in a little time if he had not been killed by his brother; and Absalom, he must die also quickly, and therefore what signifies taking

away his life? he may as well live a little longer; this, however plausible, was but bad reasoning in the case of a malefactor:

and [are] as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; which sinks into the earth, and cannot be got out of it again; so men, when they die, are buried in the earth, and cannot be gathered or restored to life again, until the resurrection of the dead; and since Amnon is dead, and he cannot be brought to life again, it is best to be easy, and not seek to take away the life of another; which is to bring him into the same irrecoverable state and condition:

neither doth God respect [any] person; the words in the original are, “God doth not take away the soul or life”^{f241}; of every offender, but spares them notwithstanding the crimes they have committed; and therefore it became the king to be sparing and merciful to offenders, and particularly to his own son; and perhaps she any tacitly have respect to David himself who had been guilty both of murder and adultery, either of which deserved death; and yet God had not taken away his life, but in his great mercy had spared him; and therefore, since he had received mercy, he should show it: or “God hath not taken away [his] soul or life”; the life of Absalom; he had not cut him off himself by his immediate hand, nor suffered the king’s sons to take away his life, nor any other to seize upon him, and bring him to justice, whom David might have employed; but had by his providence protected and preserved him; so that it seemed to be his will and pleasure that he should not be put to death:

yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him; from his word, worship, and ordinances, as Absalom was; and by protecting him by his providence, it looked as if it was his will, and he would find out ways and means for bringing him back to his country, his father’s court, and the sanctuary of the Lord; even as, by the law concerning the cities of refuge for the manslayer, provision was made that at the death of the high priest the exiled person might return to his country.

Ver. 15. *Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king,* etc.] Of the case of Absalom, under a feigned one of hers:

[it is] because the people have made me afraid; having heard of their whisperings, murmurings, and uneasiness among them, because Absalom was not sent for home, fearing there would be an insurrection in the nation, or an invasion of it by Absalom at the request of his friends; in which he

might be supported by the king of Geshur; or however that disputes would arise about the succession, at the death of David; on these accounts she determined to speak to the king, and him them to him in the manner she had done; though some understand this of the discouragement the people laid her under, telling her the king would not hear her; nevertheless she was resolved to make trial:

and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be the king will perform the request of his handmaid; not only with respect to her own son, as feigned; but with respect to Absalom, the grand thing in view.

Ver. 16. *For the king will hear,* etc.] She was fully persuaded of it, as now he had heard her:

to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man [that would] destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God; he had given his word and his oath that he would deliver her son from the avenger of blood, that neither he nor any other should destroy him; which would have been the destruction of her and her whole family out of the land of Israel, the land which God had chosen for his inheritance, and had given to the of Israel to be theirs; and since the king had heard her, and granted her this favour, she doubted not but that he would deliver his own son from death, and restore him to the inheritance of the land, where he might worship the Lord God of his fathers, of which he was now deprived.

Ver. 17. *Then thine handmaid said, the word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable,* etc.] Or, “for rest”^{f242}; what will give ease and satisfaction not only to her, but to all the people of Israel, when they shall hear of the king’s intention and resolution to bring back Absalom:

for as an angel of God, so [is] my lord the king; as they are very wise, knowing, and understanding creatures, so was David:

to discern good and bad; to hear both the one and the other, and to discern the difference between them, and choose and pursue what is right, as in all other things, so in the present case:

therefore the Lord thy God shall be with thee; as to counsel and advise, so to assist in performance, and to prosper and succeed; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord thy God shall be for thine help.”

Ver. 18. *Then the king answered and said unto the woman, etc.]*

Understanding plainly what she meant by all this, that the case she brought was a feigned one, and that the intention of it was to let him know the sense of the people with respect to Absalom, and the recall of him:

hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee; he suspected that this was not a scheme of her own, but some considerable person had formed it, and made use of her to execute it, which was what he desired to know:

and the woman said, let my lord the king now speak; ask what question he pleases, I am ready to answer.

Ver. 19. *And the king said, [is not] the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* etc.] That is, is not this done by the advice, assistance, and direction of Joab? did not he form this scheme for thee, and direct thee to this method, and put thee upon prosecuting it?

and the woman answered and said, [as] thy soul liveth, my lord the king; what I am about to say is as sure as thou art alive; though this may be only a wish that he might long live and be happy; nothing is more desirable than thy valuable life:

none can turn to the right hand or the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken; he has hit upon the truth of the matter; there is no dissimulation or prevarication to be used; the thing cannot be denied; for thy servant Joab he bade me, and put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: he sent for me, and laid his commands on me, and directed me what to say to the king, and how to conduct this affair.

Ver. 20. *To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing, etc.]* Feigned a story in such form and manner as had been delivered to the king, that it might be accommodated and applied to the case of Absalom, and to transfer it in a figure to the king, to use the apostle's phrase, (~~4008~~ 1 Corinthians 4:8);

and my lord [is] wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God; as not only to understand the design of this fable or parable, but of such sagacity and penetration as to find out the author of it; and even

to know all [things] that [are] in the earth; either in the whole world, or rather in the land of Israel; and it is to be understood not of all actions

natural and moral done by men in it, which would be to ascribe omniscience to him; but of all political things, all things respecting civil government; that he had such a spirit of discerning of men and things, that nothing could be said or done, or scheme formed, but he got intelligence of it, and insight into it; and which was carrying the compliment to a great height.

Ver. 21. *And the king said unto Joab*, etc.] Who was present, or but at a little distance, waiting the issue of this affair:

behold now I have done this thing; have agreed to recall Absalom, at the suit of this woman, which thou hast put her upon; or, according to the textual reading, “thou hast done this thing” ^{f243}; contrived this scheme, to let me know the mind of the people with respect to Absalom, or to represent to me the propriety of sending for him home:

go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom again; I give my consent to it, and you may send for him, or fetch him as soon as you please; it is thought he calls him a young man, to extenuate his crime, that it was done in youthful heat and passion, and therefore he should pass it over.

Ver. 22. *And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself*, etc.] Or bowed so low as to the ground, in reverence of the king:

and thanked the king; for giving him leave to fetch Absalom home, as if it was a favour done to himself: or “blessed” ^{f244} him; wished all happiness and prosperity might attend him, in consequence of this grant, which he knew would be acceptable to the people:

and Joab said, today thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant; he might presume upon this, that as the king had given orders at his request to recall Absalom, who had murdered his brother, which was tacitly giving him a pardon; so he would forgive him the murder of Abner, (~~1030~~ 2 Samuel 3:30), and think no more of it; since he perceived now, which he had not so clearly perceived before from that time, that he found grace in his sight, or shared in his favour and good will, as now he saw he did.

Ver. 23. *So Joab arose and went to Geshur*, etc.] Where Absalom was with his grandfather, the king of the place; (see ~~1035~~ 2 Samuel 13:37,38);

and brought Absalom to Jerusalem; from thence, which, according to Bunting^{f245}, was the distance of eighty eight miles from it.

Ver. 24. *And the king said*, etc.] Very probably to Joab, when he informed him of Absalom's being come to Jerusalem:

let him turn to his own house; depart from the king's palace, where Joab had brought him, and go to his own house, which was in Jerusalem; for here he had one before he fled to Geshur; (see ~~10:33~~ 2 Samuel 13:20);

and let him not see my face; which he ordered, partly to show his detestation of the crime he had been guilty of, and some remaining resentment in his mind at him on account of it; and partly for his credit among some of the people at least, who might think it was a crime so great as not to go unpunished, though others were of a different mind; and also for the greater humiliation of Absalom, who, the king might think, had not been sufficiently humbled for his sin, or had not truly repented of it:

so Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face; in obedience to his father's orders.

Ver. 25. *But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty*, etc.] Which is observed to account in some measure for the interest he had in the affections of the people, both now and hereafter:

from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him; not any spot, freckle, wart, scurf, or scab; nothing deficient or superfluous in him; no disproportion of parts, nor any disagreeable feature; but an entire symmetry, and perfect comeliness, which made him very respectable. The Talmudists^{f246} make him to be of a gigantic stature.

Ver. 26. *And when he polled his head*, etc.] Or cut off the hair of it; for that was one thing, a good head of hair which he had, that made him look very comely and beautiful:

for it was at every year's end that he polled [it]; or cut it off once a year; but the Jews say^{f247} he was a perpetual Nazarite:

because [the hair] was heavy upon him, and therefore he polled it; it grew so very thick and long in one year's time, that he was obliged to cut it; and what might add to the weight of it, its being oiled and powdered; and, as some say, with the dust of gold, to make it look yellow and glistening:

he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight; and a shekel being the weight of half an ounce of avoirdupois weight, as Bishop Cumberland^{f248} has shown from various writers, the weight of his hair must be an hundred ounces; which was a very great weight indeed on his head. Some think that the price it was sold at, and not the weight of it, is meant; which they suppose was sold to women for ornament about their temples, and the money given either to the poor, or for the use of the sanctuary; and reckoning a shekel at two shillings and sixpence, as some do, the value of it came to twenty five pounds of our money; but the above mentioned writer^{f249} reduces it to about two shillings and four pence farthing; which makes the value somewhat less; but inasmuch as it is not so probable that a person of such rank should sell his hair, nor does it appear that any, such use was made of hair in those times as suggested; and this being said to be according to the king's weight or stone, by which all weights were to be regulated, it is best to understand this of the weight, and not of the price of his hair; which, according to Josephus^{f250}, was five pounds; but, according to the above account, it must be six pounds and a quarter. The Jews say^{f251} this weight was according to what the inhabitants of Tiberias and Zippore used, but do not tell us what it was.

Ver. 27. *And unto Absalom there were born three sons*, etc.] Who very probably died young; and the rather it may be thought so, since their names are not given, and more especially since it is said that Absalom had no sons, and therefore erected a pillar to keep up the remembrance of his name; unless it can be thought that that was set up before he had any sons, which is not so likely; (see ~~10818~~ 2 Samuel 18:18);

and one daughter, whose name [was] Tamar; and whom he named after his sister Tamar, who was ravished by Amnon; the Septuagint version in some copies adds,

“and she became the wife of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and bore to him Abia;”

and so says Josephus^{f252}; (see ~~11152~~ 1 Kings 15:22 ~~44111~~ 2 Chronicles 11:20);

she was a woman of a fair countenance; as was her aunt, after whom she was named, (~~10030~~ 2 Samuel 13:1); by this it appears that she lived to a woman's estate, though the sons of Absalom died young.

Ver. 28. *So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem*, etc.] After his return from Geshur:

and saw not the king's face; all that time; which was owing either to the king's resentment of the fact committed by him, or to state policy.

Ver. 29. *Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king*, etc.] To introduce him into his presence, being uneasy to be thus confined at his own house, and not suffered to come to court:

but he would not come to him; knowing the king's mind, and being unwilling to disoblige him by a troublesome solicitation:

and when he sent again the second time, he would not come; knowing his business with him; and perhaps between the first time of his sending and this he had sounded the king about it, and found it was not agreeable to him to admit him to access to him as yet.

Ver. 30. *Therefore he said unto his servants*, etc.] That did his business for him in the field, in keeping his flocks, and tilling his ground:

see Joab's field is near mine: for great personages in those days attended to husbandry:

and he hath barley there, go and set it on fire; it being ripe, and so capable of being fired, and therefore must be some time in March or April, when barley harvest began; he served Joab as Samson did the Philistines, (~~4750b~~ Judges 15:4); which shows him to be a bold, and revengeful, and ungrateful man, to use his friend, and the general of the king's army, after this manner:

and Absalom's servants set the field on fire; as their master had bid them, and which is no wonder; for as they murdered Ammon at his command, they would not stop at burning Joab's field, when he bid them do it; (see ~~4013b~~ 2 Samuel 13:28,29).

Ver. 31. *Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto [his] house*, etc.] Provoked at what he had done, and to know the reason of it; and which was answering Absalom's end:

and said unto him, wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? which was not only injurious to his property, but a malicious action.

Ver. 32. *And Absalom answered Joab*, etc.] Neither denying the fact, nor being ashamed of it, nor asking pardon for it; but endeavouring to vindicate it, by giving a reason as he thought sufficient for it:

behold, I sent unto thee, saying, come hither, that I may send thee to the king; which was assuming great authority over a person in such an high office as Joab was; had he been king, he could not have used more, to send for him, and command his attendance, and send him on what errand he thought fit, as here:

to say, wherefore am I come from Geshur? why did the king send for me? why did not he let me alone where I was? to what purpose am I brought hither, since I am not admitted to court?

[it had been] good for me [to have been] there still; and better, where he lived in a king's court, and had honour and respect shown him, suitable to his rank; and where he had his liberty, and could go where he pleased; and where this mark of his father's displeasure, not suffering him to see his face, would not be so manifest as here, and so less disgraceful to him:

now therefore let me see the king's face; that is, speak to the king, and intercede for me, that I may see his face; which he was so importunate for, not from affection to the king; but that being at court, he might be able to ingratiate himself among the courtiers and others, and carry the point which his ambition prompted him to, supplant the king, and seize the crown:

and if there be [any] iniquity in me, let him kill me; signifying he chose to die, rather than to live such a life he did: but of being put to death he was not much afraid; presuming partly upon his innocence, thinking that the killing of his brother was no crime, because he was the aggressor, had ravished his sister, and for it ought to die; and since justice was delayed, and not done him, he had committed no iniquity in putting him to death; and partly on his father's affection to him, which he was sensible of; at least he had reason to believe he would not now put him to death; for had he designed that, he would have ordered it before now, since he had had him so long in his hands.

Ver. 33. *So Joab came to the king, and told him*, etc.] What Absalom had said to him:

and when he had called for Absalom; sent messengers to his house to order him to come to him:

he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; made a very reverend bow to him, according to the custom of those times, throwing himself at his feet in great submission to him:

and the king kissed Absalom; in token of his reconciliation to him; which laid the foundation of his after troubles from him, related in the following chapters.