

CHAPTER 19

We left David's army in triumph and yet David himself in tears: now here we have,

- I.** His return to himself, by the persuasion of Joab (v. 1-8).
- II.** His return to his kingdom from his present banishment.
 - 1.** The men of Israel were forward of themselves to bring him back (v. 9, 10).
 - 2.** The men of Judah were dealt with by David's agents to do it (v. 11-14) and did it (v. 15).
- III.** At the king's coming over Jordan, Shimei's treason is pardoned (v. 16-23), Mephibosheth's failure is excused (v. 24-30), and Barzillai's kindness is thankfully owned, and recompensed to his son (v. 31-39).
- IV.** The men of Israel quarrelled with the men of Judah, for not calling them to the ceremony of the king's restoration, which occasioned a new rebellion, an account of which we have in the next chapter (v. 40-43).

1090 2 SAMUEL 19:1-8

JOAB'S REPROOF OF DAVID

Soon after the messengers had brought the news of the defeat and death of Absalom to the court of Mahanaim, Joab and his victorious army followed, to grace the king's triumphs and receive his further orders. Now here we are told,

I. What a damp and disappointment it was to them to find the king in tears for Absalom's death, which they construed as a token of displeasure against them for what they had done, whereas they expected him to have met them with joy and thanks for their good services: *It was told Joab, v. 1* The report of it ran through the army (v. 2), *how the king was grieved for his son*. The people will take particular notice what their princes say and do. The more eyes we have upon us, and the greater our influence is, the more need we have to speak and act wisely and to govern our passions strictly.

When they came to the city they found the king in close mourning, v. 4. He covered his face, and would not so much as look up, nor take any notice of the generals when they attended him. It could not but surprise them to find,

1. How the king proclaimed his passion, of which he ought to have been ashamed, and which he would have striven to smother and conceal if he had consulted either his reputation for courage, which was lessened by his mean submission to the tyranny of so absurd a passion, or his interest in the people, which would be prejudiced by his discountenancing what was done in zeal for his honour and the public safety. Yet see how he avows his grief: *He cries with a loud voice, O my son Absalom!* “My servants have all come home safe, but where is my son? He is dead; and, dying in sin, I fear he is lost for ever. I cannot now say, *I shall go to him*, for my soul shall not be gathered with such sinners; what shall be done for thee, *O Absalom! my son, my son!*”

2. How he prolonged his passion, even till the army had come up to him, which must be some time after he received the first intelligence. If he had contented himself with giving vent to his passion for an hour or two when he first heard the news, it would have been excusable, but to continue it thus for so bad a son as Absalom, like Jacob for so good a son as Joseph, with a resolution to go to the grave mourning and to stain his triumphs with his tears, was very unwise and very unworthy. Now see how ill this was taken by the people. They were loth to blame the king, for *whatever he did used to please them* (~~1016~~ 2 Samuel 3:36), but they took it as a great mortification to them. *Their victory was turned into mourning*, v. 2. *They stole into the city as men ashamed*, v. 3. In compliment to their sovereign, they would not rejoice in that which they perceived so afflictive to him, and yet they could not but be uneasy that they were thus obliged to conceal their joy. Superiors ought not to put such hardships as these on their inferiors.

II. How plainly and vehemently Joab reprov'd David for this indiscreet management of himself in this critical juncture. David never more needed the hearts of his subjects than now, nor was ever more concerned to secure his interest in their affections; and therefore whatever tended to disoblige them now was the most impolitic thing he could do, and the greatest wrong imaginable to his friends that adhered to him. Joab therefore censures him, v. 5-7. He speaks a great deal of reason, but not with the respect and deference which he owed to his prince. *Is it fit to say to a king,*

Thou art wicked? A plain case may be fairly pleaded with those that are above us, and they may be reprov'd for what they do amiss, but it must not be done with rudeness and insolence. David did indeed need to be roused and alarmed; and Joab thought it no time to dally with him. If superiors do that which is foolish, they must neither think it strange nor take it ill if their inferiors tell them of it, perhaps too bluntly.

1. Joab magnifies the services of David's soldiers: "*This day they have saved thy life*, and therefore deserve to be taken notice of, and have reason to resent it if they be not." It is implied that Absalom, whom he honoured with his tears, sought his ruin and the ruin of his family, while those whom by his tears he puts a slight upon were such as preserved from ruin him and all that was dear to him. Great mischiefs have arisen to princes from the contempt of great merits.

2. He aggravates the discouragement David had given them: "*Thou hast shamed their faces*; for, while they have shown such a value for thy life, thou hast shown no value for theirs, but preferrest a spoiled wicked youth, a false traitor to his king and country, whom we are happily rid of, before all thy wise counsellors, brave commanders, and loyal subjects. What can be more absurd than to love thy enemies and hate thy friends?"

3. He advises him to present himself immediately at the head of his troops, to smile upon them, welcome them home, congratulate their success, and return them thanks for their services. Even those that may be commanded yet expect to be thanked when they do well, and ought to be.

4. He threatens him with another rebellion if he would not do this, intimating that rather than serve so ungrateful a prince he himself would head a revolt from him, and then (so confident is Joab of his own interest in the people) "*there will not tarry with thee one man*. If I go, they will go. Thou hast now nothing to mourn for: but, if thou persist, I will give thee something to mourn for (as Josephus expresses it) with a true and more bitter mourning."

III. How prudently and mildly David took the reproof and counsel given him, v. 8. He shook off his grief, anointed his head, and washed his face, that he might not appear unto men to mourn, and then made his appearance in public in the gate, which was as the guild-hall of the city. Hither the people flocked to him to congratulate his and their safety, and all was well. Note, When we are convinced of a fault, we must amend,

though we are told of it by our inferiors, and indecently, or in heat and passion.

~~1099~~ 2 SAMUEL 19:9-15

DAVID'S RETURN TO THE JORDAN

It is strange that David did not immediately upon the defeat and dispersion of Absalom's forces march with all expedition back to Jerusalem, to regain the possession of his capital city, while the rebels were in confusion and before they could rally again. What occasion was there to bring him back? Could not he himself go back with the victorious army he had with him in Gilead? He could, no doubt; but,

- 1.** He would go back as a prince, with the consent and unanimous approbation of the people, and not as a conqueror forcing his way: he would restore their liberties, and not take occasion to seize them, or encroach upon them.
 - 2.** He would go back in peace and safety, and be sure that he should meet with no difficulty or opposition in his return, and therefore would be satisfied that the people were well-affected to have him before he would stir.
 - 3.** He would go back in honour, and like himself, and therefore would go back, not at the head of his forces, but in the arms of his subjects; for the prince that has wisdom and goodness enough to make himself his people's darling, without doubt, looks greater and makes a much better figure than the prince that has strength enough to make himself his people's terror. It is resolved therefore that David must be brought back to Jerusalem his own city, and his own house there, with some ceremony, and here we have that matter concerted.
- I.** The men of Israel (that is, the ten tribes) were the first that talked of it, v. 9, 10. The people were at strife about it; it was the great subject of discourse and dispute throughout all the country. Some perhaps opposed it: "Let him either come back himself or stay where he is;" others appeared zealous for it, and reasoned as follows here, to further the design,

1. That David had formerly helped them, had fought their battles, subdued their enemies, and done them much service, and therefore it was a shame that he should continue banished from their country who had been so great a benefactor to it. Note, Good services done to the public, though they may be forgotten for a while, yet will be remembered again when men come to their right minds.

2. That Absalom had now disappointed them. “We were foolishly sick of the cedar, and chose the branch to reign over us; but we have had enough of him: he is consumed, and we narrowly escaped being consumed with him. Let us therefore return to our allegiance, and think of bringing the king back.” Perhaps this was all the strife among them, not a dispute whether the king should be brought back or no (all agreed it was to be done), but whose fault it was that it was not done. As is usual in such cases, every one justified himself and blamed his neighbour. The people laid the fault on the elders, and the elders on the people, and one tribe upon another. Mutual excitements to the doing of a good work are laudable, but not mutual accusations for the not doing of it; for usually when public services are neglected all sides must share in the blame; every one might do more than he does, in the reformation of manners, the healing of divisions, and the like.

II. The men of Judah, by David's contrivance, were the first that did it. It is strange that they, being David's own tribe, were not so forward as the rest. David had intelligence of the good disposition of all the rest towards him, but nothing from Judah, though he had always been particularly careful of them. But we do not always find the most kindness from those from whom we have most reason to expect it. Yet David would not return till he knew the sense of his own tribe. *Judah was his lawgiver,* ^{<3410>}Psalm 60:7. That his way home might be the more clear,

1. He employed Zadok and Abiathar, the two chief priests, to treat with the elders of Judah, and to excite them to give the king an invitation back to his house, even to his house, which was the glory of their tribe, v. 11, 12. No men more proper to negotiate this affair than the two priests, who were firm to David's interest, were prudent men, and had great influence with the people. Perhaps the men of Judah were remiss and careless, and did it not, because nobody put them on to do it, and then it was proper to stir them up to it. Many will follow in a good work who will not lead: it is a pity that they should continue idle for want of being spoken to. Or

perhaps they were so sensible of the greatness of the provocation they had given to David, by joining with Absalom, that they were afraid to bring him back, despairing of his favour; he therefore warrants his agents to assure them of it, with this reason: “*You are my brethren, my bone and my flesh,* and therefore I cannot be severe with you.” The Son of David has been pleased to call us *brethren, his bone and his flesh*, which encourages us to hope that we shall find favour with him. Or perhaps they were willing to see what the rest of the tribes would do before they stirred, with which they are here upbraided: “The speech of all Israel has come to the king to invite him back, and shall Judah be the last, that should have been the first? Where is now the celebrated bravery of that royal tribe? Where is its loyalty?” Note, We should be stirred up to that which is great and good by the examples both of our ancestors and of our neighbours, and by the consideration of our rank. Let not the first in dignity be last in duty.

2. He particularly courted into his interest Amasa, who had been Absalom's general, but was his own nephew as well as Joab, v. 13. He owns him for his kinsman, and promises him that, if he will appear for him now, he will make him captain-general of all his forces in the room of Joab, will not only pardon him (which, it may be, Amasa questioned), but prefer him. Sometimes there is nothing lost in purchasing the friendship of one that has been an enemy. Amasa's interest might do David good service at this juncture. But, if David did wisely for himself in designating Amasa for this post (Joab having now grown intolerably haughty), he did not do kindly by Amasa in letting his design be known, for it occasioned his death by Joab's hand, ~~2~~ 2 Samuel 20:10.

3. The point was hereby gained. He bowed the heart of the men of Judah to pass a vote, *nemine contradicente* — *unanimously*, for the recall of the king, v. 14. God's providence, by the priests' persuasions and Amasa's interest, brought them to this resolve. David stirred not till he received this invitation, and then he came as far back as Jordan, at which river they were to meet him, v. 15. Our Lord Jesus will rule in those that invite him to the throne in their hearts and not till he be invited. He first bows the heart and makes it willing in the day of his power, and then *rules in the midst of his enemies*, ~~3~~ Psalm 110:2, 3.

~~1096~~ 2 SAMUEL 19:16-23

DAVID PARDONS SHIMEI

Perhaps Jordan was never passed with so much solemnity, nor with so many remarkable occurrences, as it was now, since Israel passed it under Joshua. David, in his afflictive flight, remembered God particularly *from the land of Jordan* (~~1906~~ Psalm 42:6), and now that land, more than any other, was graced with the glories of his return. David's soldiers furnished themselves with accommodations for their passage over this river, but, for his own family, *a ferry-boat* was sent on purpose, v. 18. *A fleet of boats*, say some; *a bridge of boats was made*, say others; the best convenience they had to serve him with. Two remarkable persons met him on the banks of Jordan, both of whom had abused him wretchedly when he was in his flight.

I. Ziba, who had abused him with his fair tongue, and by accusing his master, had obtained from the king a grant of his estate, ~~1066~~ 2 Samuel 16:4. A greater abuse he could not have done him, than, by imposing upon his credulity, to draw him in to do a thing so unkind to the son of his friend Jonathan. He comes now, with a retinue of sons and servants, to meet the king (v. 17), that he may obtain the king's favour, and so come off the better when Mephibosheth shall shortly undeceive him, and clear himself, v. 26.

II. Shimei, who had abused him with his foul tongue, railed at him, and cursed him, ~~1065~~ 2 Samuel 16:5. If David had been defeated, no doubt he would have continued to trample upon him, and have gloried in what he had done; but now that he sees him coming home in triumph, and returning to his throne, he thinks it his interest to make his peace with him. Those who now slight and abuse the Son of David would be glad to make their peace too when he shall come in his glory; but it will be too late. Shimei, to recommend himself to the king,

1. Came with good company, with the men of Judah, as one in their interest.

2. He brought a regiment of the men of Benjamin with him, 1000, of which perhaps he was chiliarch, or commander-in-chief, offering his own and their service to the king; or perhaps they were volunteers, whom by his

interest he had got together to meet the king, which was the more obliging because of all the tribes of Israel there were none, except these and Judah, that appeared to pay him this respect.

3. What he did he hastened to do; he lost no time. *Agree with thy adversary quickly, while thou art in the way.* Here is,

(1.) The criminal's submission (v. 18-20): *He fell down before the king*, as a penitent, as a supplicant; and, that he might be thought sincere, he did it publicly before all David's servants, and his friends the men of Judah, yea, and before his own thousand. The offence was public, therefore the submission ought to be so. He owns his crime: *Thy servant doth know that I have sinned.* He aggravates it: *I did perversely.* He begs the king's pardon: *Let not the king impute iniquity to thy servant*, that is, deal with me as I deserve. He intimates that it was below the king's great and generous mind to *take it to his heart*; and pleads his early return to his allegiance, that he was *the first of all the house of Joseph* (that is, of Israel, who in the beginning of David's reign had distinguished themselves from Judah by their adherence to Ishbosheth, ^{<1020>}2 Samuel 2:10) that came *to meet the king*. He came first, that by his example of duty the rest might be induced, and by his experience of the king's clemency the rest might be encouraged to follow.

(2.) A motion made for judgment against him (v. 21): *“Shall not Shimei be put to death as a traitor? Let him, of all men, be made an example.”* This motion was made by Abishai, who would have ventured his life to have been the death of Shimei when he was cursing, ch 16:9. David did not think fit to have it done then, because his judicial power was cut short; but, now that it was restored, why should not the law have its course? Abishai herein consulted what he supposed to be David's feelings more than his true interest. Princes have need to arm themselves against temptations to severity.

(3.) His discharge by the king's order, v. 22, 23. He rejected Abishai's motion with displeasure: *What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?* The less we have to do with those who are of an angry revengeful spirit, and who put us upon doing what is harsh and rigorous, the better. He looks upon these prosecutors as adversaries to him, though they pretended friendship and zeal for his honour. Those who advise us to what is wrong are really *Satans*, adversaries to us.

[1.] They were adversaries to his inclination, which was to clemency. He knew that he was *this day king in Israel*, restored to, and re-established in, his kingdom, and therefore his honour inclined him to forgive. It is the glory of kings to forgive those that humble and surrender themselves: *Satis est prostrasse leoni — it suffices the lion that he has laid his victim prostrate*. His joy inclined him to forgive. The pleasantness of his spirit on this great occasion forbade the entrance of any thing that was sour and peevish: joyful days should be forgiving days. Yet this was not all; his experience of God's mercy in restoring him to his kingdom, his exclusion from which he attributed to his sin, inclined him to show mercy to Shimei. Those that are forgiven must forgive. David had severely revenged the abuses done to his ambassadors by the Ammonites (~~1023~~ 2 Samuel 12:31), but easily passes by the abuse done to himself by an Israelite. That was an affront to Israel in general, and touched the honour of his crown and kingdom; this was purely personal, and therefore (according to the usual disposition of good men) he could the more easily forgive it.

[2.] They were adversaries to his interest. If he should put to death Shimei, who cursed him, those would expect the same fate who had taken up arms and actually levied war against him, which would drive them from him, while he was endeavouring to draw them to him. Acts of severity are seldom acts of policy. *The throne is established by mercy*. Shimei, hereupon, had his pardon signed and sealed with an oath, yet being bound, no doubt, to his good behaviour, and liable to be prosecuted if he afterwards misbehaved; and thus he was reserved to be, in due time, as much a monument of the justice of the government as he was now of its clemency, and in both of its prudence.

~~1023~~ 2 SAMUEL 19:24-30

MEPHIBOSHETH MEETS DAVID

The day of David's return was a day of bringing to remembrance, a day of account, in which what had passed in his flight was called over again; among other things, after the case of Shimei, that of Mephibosheth comes to be enquired into, and he himself brings it on.

I. He went down in the crowd *to meet the king* (v. 24), and as a proof of the sincerity of his joy in the king's return, we are here told what a true

mourner he was for the king's banishment. During that melancholy time, when one of the greatest glories of Israel had departed, Mephibosheth continued in a very melancholy state. He was never trimmed, nor put on clean linen, but wholly neglected himself, as one abandoned to grief for the king's affliction and the kingdom's misery. In times of public calamity we ought to abridge our enjoyments in the delights of sense, in conformity to the season. There are times when God calls to weeping and mourning, and we must comply with the call.

II. When the king came to Jerusalem (since he could not sooner have an opportunity) he made his appearance before him (v. 25); and when the king asked him why he, being one of his family, had staid behind, and not accompanied him in his exile, he opened his case fully to the king.

1. He complained of Ziba, his servant who should have been his friend, but had been in two ways his enemy; for, first, he had hindered him from going along with the king, by taking the ass himself which he was ordered to make ready for his master (v. 26), basely taking advantage of his lameness and his inability to help himself; and, secondly, he had accused him to David of a design to usurp the government, v. 27. How much mischief is it in the power of a wicked servant to do to the best master!

2. He gratefully acknowledged the king's great kindness to him when he and all his father's house lay at the king's mercy, v. 28. When he might justly have been dealt with as a rebel, he was treated as a friend, as a child: *Thou didst set thy servant among those that did eat at thy own table.* This shows that Ziba's suggestion was improbable; for could Mephibosheth be so foolish as to aim higher when he lived so easily, so happily as he did? And could he be so very disingenuous as to design any harm to David, of whose great kindness to him he was thus sensible?

3. He referred his cause to the king's pleasure (*Do what is good in thy eyes with me and my estate*), depending on the king's wisdom, and his ability to discern between truth and falsehood (*My lord the king is as an angel from God*), and disclaiming all pretensions of his own merit: "So much kindness I have received above what I deserved, and *what right have I to cry any more unto the king?* Why should I trouble the king with my complaints when I have already been so troublesome to him? Why should I think any thing hard that is put upon me when I hitherto been so kindly treated?" We were all *as dead men before God*; yet he has not only spared us, *but taken*

us to sit at his table. How little reason then have we to complain of any trouble we are in, and how much reason to take all well that God does!

III. David hereupon recalls the sequestration of Mephibosheth's estate; being deceived in his grant, he revokes it, and confirms his former settlement of it: "*I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land* (v. 29), that is, Let it be as I first ordered it (~~1090~~ 2 Samuel 9:10); the property shall still be vested in thee, but Ziba shall have occupancy: he shall till the land, paying thee a rent." Thus Mephibosheth is where he was; no harm is done, only Ziba goes away unpunished for his false and malicious information against his master. David either feared him too much, or loved him too well, to do justice upon him according to that law, ~~15918~~ Deuteronomy 19:18, 19; and he was now in the humour of forgiving and resolved to make every body easy.

IV. Mephibosheth drowns all he cares about his estate in his joy for the king's return (v. 30): "*Yea, let him take all, the presence and favour of the king shall be to me instead of all.*" A good man can contentedly bear his own private losses and disappointments, while he see Israel in peace, and the throne of the Son of David exalted and established. Let Ziba take all, so that David may be in peace.

~~10981~~ 2 SAMUEL 19:31-39

MEPHIBOSHETH MEETS DAVID

David had already graced the triumphs of his restoration with the generous remission of the injuries that had been done to him; we have him here gracing them with a no less generous reward of the kindnesses that had been shown to him. Barzillai, the Gileadite, who had a noble seat at Rogelim, not far from Mahanaim, was the man who, of all the nobility and gentry of that country, had been most kind to David in his distress. If Absalom had prevailed, it is likely he would have suffered for his loyalty; but now he and his shall be no losers by it. Here is,

I. Barzillai's great respect to David, not only as a good man, but as his righteous sovereign: He *provided him with much sustenance*, for himself and his family, *while he lay at Mahanaim*, v. 32. God had given him a large estate, *for he was a very great man*, and, it seems, he had a large heart to

do good with it: what else but that is a large estate good for? To reduced greatness generosity obliges us, and to oppressed goodness piety obliges us, to be in a particular manner kind, to the utmost of our power. Barzillai, to show that he was not weary of David, though he was so great a charge to him, attended him to Jordan, and went over with him, v. 31. Let subjects learn hence to render *tribute to whom tribute is due* and *honour to whom honour*, ^{<6137>}Romans 13:7.

II. The kind invitation David gave to him to court (v. 33): *Come thou over with me*. He invited him,

1. That he might have the pleasure of his company and the benefit of his counsel; for we may suppose that he was very wise and good, as well as very rich, otherwise he would not have been called here *a very great man*; for it is what a man is, more than what he has, that renders him truly great.
2. That he might have an opportunity of returning his kindness: *“I will feed thee with me; thou shalt fare as sumptuously as I fare, and this at Jerusalem, the royal and holy city.”* David did not take Barzillai's kindness to him as a debt (he was not one of those arbitrary princes who think that whatever their subjects have is theirs when they please), but accepted it and rewarded it as a favour. We must always study to be grateful to our friends, especially to those who have helped us in distress.

III. Barzillai's reply to this invitation, wherein,

1. He admires the king's generosity in making him this offer, lessening his service, and magnifying the king's return for it: *Why should the king recompense it with such a reward?* v. 36. Will the master thank that servant who only does what was his duty to do? He though he had done himself honour enough in doing the king any service. Thus, when the saints shall be called to inherit the kingdom in consideration of what they have done for Christ in this world, they will be amazed at the disproportion between the service and the recompence. ^{<4257>}Matthew 25:37, *Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee?*

2. He declines accepting the invitation. He begs his majesty's pardon for refusing so generous an offer: he should think himself very happy in being near the king, but,

(1.) He is old, and unfit to remove at all, especially to court. He is old, and unfit for the *business* of the court: *“Why should I go up with the king to*

Jerusalem? I can do him no service there, in the council, the camp, the treasury, or the courts of justice; for *how long have I to live?* v. 34. Shall I think of going into business, now that I am going out of this world?" He is old and unfit for the *diversions* of the court, which will be ill-bestowed, and even thrown away, upon one that can relish them so little, v. 35. As it was in Moses's time, so it was in Barzillai's and it is not worse now, that, *if men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, their strength then is labour and sorrow*, ^{<900>}Psalm 90:10. These were then, and are still, years of which men say they *have no pleasure in them*, ^{<2121>}Ecclesiastes 12:1. Dainties are insipid when desire fails, and songs to the aged ear are little better than those sung to a heavy heart, very disagreeable: how should they be otherwise when the daughters of music are brought low? Let those that are old learn of Barzillai to be dead to the delights of sense; let grace second nature, and make a virtue of the necessity. Nay, Barzillai, being old, thinks he shall be *a burden to the king*, rather than any credit to him; and a good man would not go any where to be burdensome, or, if he must be so, will rather be so to his own house than to another's.

(2.) He is dying, and must begin to think of his long journey, his removal out of the world, v. 37. It is good for us all, but it especially becomes old people to think and speak much of dying. "Talk of going to court!" says Barzillai; "Let me go home and *die in my own city*, the place of my father's sepulchre; let me die *by the grave of my father*, that my bones may be quietly carried to the place of their rest. The grave is ready for me, let me go and get ready for it, go and die in my nest."

3. He desires the king to be kind to his son Chimham: *Let him go over with my lord the king*, and have preferment at court. What favour is done to him Barzillai will take as done to himself. Those that are old must not grudge young people those delights which they themselves are past the enjoyment of, nor confine them to their retirements. Barzillai will go back himself, but he will not make Chimham go back with him; though he could ill spare Chimham, yet, thinking it would gratify and advance him, he is willing to do it.

IV. David's farewell to Barzillai.

1. He sends him back into his country with a kiss and a blessing (v. 39), signifying that in gratitude for his kindnesses he would love him and pray for him, and with a promise that whatever request he should at any time

make to him he would be ready to oblige him (v. 38): *Whatsoever thou shalt think of*, when thou comest home, to *ask of me*, that *will I do for thee*. What is the chief excellency of power but this, that it gives men a capacity of doing the more good?

2. He takes Chimham forward with him, and leaves it to Barzillai to choose him his preferment. I will *do to him what shall seem good to thee*, v. 38. And, it should seem, Barzillai, who had experienced the innocency and safety of retirement, begged a country seat for him near Jerusalem, but not in it; for, long after, we read of a place near Beth-lehem, David's city, which is called *the habitation of Chimham*, allotted to him, probably, not out of the crown-lands or the forfeited estates, but out of David's paternal estate.

2 SAMUEL 19:40-43

QUARREL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JUDAH

David came over Jordan attended and assisted only by the men of Judah; but when he had advanced as far as Gilgal, the first stage on this side Jordan, *half the people of Israel* (that is, of their elders and great men) had come to wait upon him, to kiss his hand, and congratulate him on his return, but found they came too late to witness the solemnity of his first entrance. This put them out of humour, and occasioned a quarrel between them and the men of Judah, which was a damp to the joy of the day, and the beginning of further mischief. Here is,

1. The complaint which the men of Israel brought to the king against the men of Judah (v. 41), that they had performed the ceremony of bringing the king over Jordan, and not given them notice, that they might have come to join in it. This reflected upon them, as if they were not so well affected to the king and his restoration as the men of Judah were, whereas the king himself knew that they had spoken of it before the men of Judah thought of it, v. 11. It seemed likewise as if they intended to monopolize the king's favours when he had come back, and to be looked upon as his only friends. See what mischief comes from pride and jealousy.

2. The excuse which the men of Judah made for themselves, v. 42.

(1.) They plead relations to the king: “*He is near of kin to us, and therefore in a matter of mere ceremony, as this was, we may claim precedence. It was into our country that he was to be brought, and therefore who so fit as we to bring him?*”

(2.) They deny the insinuated charge of self-seeking in what they had done: “*Have we eaten at all of the king's cost? No, we have all borne our own charges. Hath he given us any gift? No, we have no design to engross the advantages of his return; you have come time enough to share in them.*” Too many that attend princes do so only for what they can get.

3. The men of Israel's vindication of their charge, v. 43. They pleaded, “*We have ten parts in the king*” (Judah having Simeon only, whose lot lay within his, to join with him), “and therefore it is a slight upon us that our advice was not asked about *bringing back the king.*” See how uncertain the multitude is. They were lately striving against the king, to drive him out; now they are striving about him, which shall honour him most. A good man and a good cause will thus recover their credit and interest, though, for a time, they may seem to have lost them. See what is commonly the origin of strife, nothing so much as impatience of contempt or the least seeming slight. The men of Judah would have done better if they had taken their brethren's advice and assistance; but, since they did not, why should the men of Israel be so grievously offended? If a good work be done, and well done, let us not be displeased, nor the work disparaged, though we had no hand in it.

4. The scripture takes notice, by way of blame, which of the contending parties managed the cause with most passion: *The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than those of the men of Israel.* Though we have right and reason on our side, yet, if we express ourselves with fierceness, God takes notice of it and is much displeased with it.