

But there was a wise man in David's kingdom, even if not over-scrupulous as to righteousness. This was Joab. Joab knew how the king's heart was toward his guilty son. And he knew, too, of "a wise woman" at Tekoa, for whom he sent, and into whose mouth he put a parable, and sent her to the king. The parable of this widow and her two sons who had striven together, one of whom was slain in the struggle, was in substance the case of the king and his two sons, Amnon and Absalom, but in the case of the widow's son who remained alive, he was the heir, and her whole family had risen up against her, demanding his life, and thus her "coal" was about to be "quenched" and her dead husband left without a "name" or "remainder on the earth." It was an appeal to the king's heart, an appeal for help, an appeal to exercise his royal prerogative of extending pardon to the guilty, and delivering a helpless widow and her son from distress and impending ruin. To the tender, gracious heart of David the king, this appeal was irresistible, the point was gained. "As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth" (chap. xiv. 11). Such was the king's gracious decision, but in giving such a decision he had done so as one that was "faulty." Why did not the king "fetch home again his banished"? "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again; and God has not taken away his life, but devises means that the banished one be not expelled from him" (verse 14.