

David's Last Words.

NOVEMBER 17. B.C. 1016. 2 SAM. 23 : 1-7.
Golden Text, 2 Sam. 23 : 5.

AFTER the battle of Mahanaim, David returned to Jerusalem. The tribe of Judah welcomed him. Several victories over the Philistines completely restored his popularity, ch. 21 : 15-22. A Psalm of thanksgiving was written by him at this time, ch. 22, for all these blessings. V. 1. *Last words*—the last Psalm he ever wrote, containing a prophecy of the Messiah and a description of some features of his reign. In the introduction he describes himself as the "*Son of Jesse*," the youngest child of a poor farmer of Bethlehem, now a great King. It is well to look unto the rock whence we are hewn, Deut. 26 : 5, Is. 51 : 1. It keeps us humble. *The man—raised up*—the contrast between his high station and his former lowly one, revived his love to God, Comp. Col. 1 : 12, 13. *The anointed of God*—This is still better. The only true greatness is that which God giveth, Comp. Eph. 2 : 4-6. *Sweet Psalmist*—It is matter for thanksgiving when God gifts us with talents and opportunities to use them in his service. For nearly three thousand years the Psalms of David have been sung by godly men, and they are still the highest expression of God's noblest praise, Col. 3 : 16. V. 2. *The Spirit spoke*—Here David claims divine inspiration, Heb. 1 : 1 ; 2 Pet. 1 : 21. V. 3. *The God—the Rock of Israel*—Some have seen in these expressions an allusion to the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the God of Israel being the Father, the Rock, the Son, and the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. V. 4. *He that ruleth*—This is true of human rulers. Kings must be just and govern in the fear of God, but from what follows in v. 5, it is evident that the "Just Ruler" is Christ, Comp. Ps. 72 : 2. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Ps. 97 : 2. *As the light*—Jesus is the light of the world, John 8 : 12. *Tender grass*—the branch of the Lord, Is. 4 : 2. *After rain*—fresh and beautiful. V. 5. *My house be not so*—There were too many blemishes and sins in it to apply to it the words of the Spirit, yet David recalls the "everlasting covenant," Ps. 132 : 11, 12, which evidently pointed to that "Son of David" who would sit on his throne for evermore. It is *sure*—the sure mercies of David, Is. 55 : 3. He rested his salvation on God's promises, Titus 3 : 5. Our rests on the same foundation. V. 6. *Men of Belial*—Hebrew idiom for "wicked men." They shall be dealt with as men deal with thorns, Heb. 6 : 8. V. 7. *Fenced with iron*—It is said of Christ that he shall break the wicked with a rod of iron, Ps. 2 : 1-9. *Burned with fire*—Comp. Luke 19 : 27 ; Mark 9 : 43-45 ; Heb. 10 : 28-31.

Solomon's Wise Choice.

NOVEMBER 24. B.C. 1015. 1 KINGS 3 : 5-15.
Golden Text, Prov. 8 : 11.

DAVID had died after reigning forty years, but before his death, he had Solomon anointed King, to prevent the usurpation of Adonijah, ch. 1 : 34. The beginning of the young King's reign proved the firmness of his character. He had Adonijah and his fellow-conspirators put to death. He also punished Shimei, who had cursed David when he fled from Jerusalem, ch. 2 : 25-34-46. This insured the peace of the Kingdom. He then married an Egyptian princess, and, going to Gibeon, offered many burnt-offerings to the Lord. V. 5. *In a dream*—This agreed with what God promised in Num. 12 : 6. Many instances of revelations in dreams are found in Scripture, Gen. 20 : 3 ; Matt. 1 : 20, etc. That this is exceptional, however, is proved by Deut. 18 : 1, and Eccl. 5 : 7. *Ask*—God knew that Solomon loved him, v. 3, or he would not have said this to him. A wicked man would have asked some wicked thing, Comp. Mark 6 : 22. If we love Jesus, we have the same privilege, John 14 : 13, but we must ask according to His will, 1 John 3 : 22. V. 6. *Great Mercy*—In a spirit of humility, Solomon recalled the fact that he owed his exalted position not to his own merits, but to the kindness of God to his father. Blessed indeed is the child who has a good father, for the promise is to us and to our children, Acts 2 : 29. The children of Christian parents are, like Solomon, children of the covenant, 2 Sam. 7 : 12-15. V. 7. *A little child*—Comp. Matt. 18 : 3, 4. V. 8. *Chosen*—Christians also glory in the grace that makes them "a chosen generation," 1 Pet. 2 : 9. God's people is also a great multitude, Rev. 7 : 9. V. 9. *An understanding heart*—The highest proof of wisdom is found in the consciousness of our lack of it. It will lead a humble mind to ask for it, and to obtain it, if asked for in faith, Jas. 1 : 5. V. 11. *Long life—riches—vengeance*—these are still the chief objects of worldly men's thoughts, and they deem their possession the height of happiness. But Divine wisdom will make us prefer eternal life, the riches of God's grace, and a humble trust in His justice. V. 13. *Riches and honour*—This was over and above what Solomon had asked. God still does for His people "exceedingly abundantly above all they can ask or think," Eph. 3 : 20. We ask for pardon, and with it He gives eternal happiness. V. 14. *Lengthen thy days*—This promise was given conditionally, as in Exod. 20 : 12. Wickedness shortens life, Eccl. 8 : 13. Solomon awaking, returned to Jerusalem, where, before the Ark of the Lord, he offered solemn sacrifices. V. 15. *Burnt offerings*—purely expressive of adoration, Lev. 1 : 1-10, and *peace-offerings*—that had regard to God, as a benefactor to His creatures, Lev. 3 : 1-5.