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2SAMUEL 23: 1 Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse says, the man who was raised on high says, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel:

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The last words of David, 2Sam 23:1-7. The names and exploits of his thirty-seven worthies, vv. 8-39.

Verse 1

These be the last words of David - I suppose the last poetical composition is here intended. He might have spoken many words after these in prose, but none in verse. Other meanings are given; this I prefer.

The words of this song contain a glorious prediction of the Messiah's kingdom and conquests, in highly poetic language.

The sweet psalmist of Israel - This character not only belonged to him as the finest poet in Israel, but as the finest and most Divine poet of the whole Christian world. The sweet psalmist of Israel has been the sweet psalmist of every part of the habitable world, where religion and piety have been held in reverence.

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2SAMUEL 23: 2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me. His word was on my tongue.

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Verse 2

The Spirit of the Lord spake by me - Hence the matter of his writing came by direct and immediate inspiration.

His word was in my tongue - Hence the words of this writing were as directly inspired as the matter.

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2SAMUEL 23: 3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'One who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God,

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Verse 3

The Rock of Israel - The Fountain whence Israel was derived.

He that ruleth over men must be just - More literally, מושל באדם צדיק moshel baadam tsaddik, He that ruleth in man is the just one; or, The just one is the ruler among men.

Ruling in the fear of God - It is by God's fear that Jesus Christ rules the hearts of all his followers; and he who has not the fear of God before his eyes, can never be a Christian.

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2SAMUEL 23: 4 shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs out of the earth, through clear shining after rain.'

## Verse 4

He shall be as the light of the morning - This verse is very obscure, for it does not appear from it who the person is of whom the prophet speaks. As the Messiah seems to be the whole subject of these last words of David, he is probably the person intended. One of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. Supplies the word יהוה Yehovah; and he therefore translates, As the light of the morning ariseth Jehovah (see below) He shall be the Sun of righteousness, bringing salvation in his rays, and shining - illuminating the children of men, with increasing splendor, as long as the sun and moon endure.

As the tender grass - The effects of this shining, and of the rays of his grace, shall be like the shining of the sun upon the young grass or corn, after a plentiful shower of rain.

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2SAMUEL 23: 5 Most certainly my house is not so with God, yet he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for it is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he doesn't make it grow.

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## Verse 5

Although my house be not so with God - Instead of כן ken, so, read כן kun, established; and let the whole verse be considered as an interrogation, including a positive assertion; and the sense will be at once clear and consistent: "for is not my house (family) established with God; because he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all, and preserved? For this (He) is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it (or him) not to spring up." All is sure relative to my spiritual successor, though he do not as yet appear; the covenant is firm, and it will spring forth in due time. See the observations at the end of the chapter, 2Sam 23:39note).

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2SAMUEL 23: 6 But all of the ungodly shall be as thorns to be thrust away, because they can't be taken with the hand,

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## Verse 6

But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns - There is no word in the text for sons; it is simply Belial, the good-for-nothing man, and may here refer - first to Saul, and secondly to the enemies of our Lord.

As thorns thrust away - A metaphor taken from hedging; the workman thrusts the thorns aside either with his bill or hand, protected by his impenetrable mitten or glove, till, getting a fair blow at the roots, he cuts them all down. The man is fenced with iron, and the handle of his bill is like the staff of a spear. This is a good representation of the dubbing-bill, with which they slash the thorn hedge on each side before they level the tops by the pruning-shears. The handle is five or six feet long. This is a perfectly natural and intelligible image.

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2SAMUEL 23: 7 But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear. They shall be utterly burned with fire in their place."

2SAMUEL 23: 8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb Basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, against eight hundred slain at one time.

#### Verse 8

These be the names of the mighty men - This chapter should be collated with the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 11:11-47; and see Kennicott's First Dissertation on the printed Hebrew text, pages 64-471.

The Tachmonite that sat in the seat - Literally and properly, Jashobeam the Hachmonite. See 1Chr 11:11.

The same was Adino the Eznite - This is a corruption for he lift up his spear. See 1Chr 11:11.

Eight hundred, whom he slew at one time - Three hundred is the reading in Chronicles, and seems to be the true one. The word חלל chalal, which we translate slain, should probably be translated soldiers, as in the Septuagint, στρατωτας; he withstood three hundred Soldiers at one time. See the note on David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, 2Sam 1:21 (note), and Kennicott's First Dissertation, p. 101. Dr. Kennicott observes: "This one verse contains three great corruptions in the Hebrew text:

1. The proper name of the hero Jashobeam is turned into two common words, rendered, that sat in the seat.
2. The words, he lift up his spear, הוא עורר את חניתו hu orer eth chanitho, are turned into two proper names wholly inadmissible here: הוא עדינו העצני hu Adino haetsni, he was Adino the Eznite; it being nearly as absurd to say that Jashobeam the Hachmonite was the same with Adino the Eznite, as that David the Beth-lehemite was the same with Elijah the Tishbite.
3. The number eight hundred was probably at first three hundred, as in 1Chr 11:11."

See Kennicott, ubi supr.

2SAMUEL 23: 9 After him was Eleazar the son of Dodai the son of an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines who were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away.

#### Verse 9

When they defied the Philistines that were there gathered - This is supposed to refer to the war in which David slew Goliath.

2SAMUEL 23: 10 He arose, and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand froze to the sword; and the LORD worked a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to take plunder.

2SAMUEL 23: 11 After him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. The Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils; and the people fled from the Philistines.

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Verse 11

A piece of ground full of lentiles - In 1Chr 11:13 it is a parcel of ground full of barley. There is probably a mistake of עֲדָשִׁים adashim, lentiles, for שְׂעוּרִים seorim, barley, or vice versa. Some think there were both lentiles and barley in the field, and that a marauding party of the Philistines came to destroy or carry them off, and these worthies defeated the whole, and saved the produce of the field. This is not unlikely.

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2SAMUEL 23: 12 But he stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and killed the Philistines; and the LORD worked a great victory.

2SAMUEL 23: 13 Three of the thirty chief men went down, and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

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Verse 13

And three of the thirty - The word שְׁלִישִׁים shalishim, which we translate thirty, probably signifies an office or particular description of men. Of these shalishim we have here thirty-seven, and it can scarcely be said with propriety that we have thirty-seven out of thirty; and besides, in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 11:11-47, there are sixteen added. The captains over Pharaoh's chariots are termed שְׁלִישִׁים shalishim, Exo 14:7.

The Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim - This is the same war which is spoken of 2Sam 5:17, etc.

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2SAMUEL 23: 14 David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.

2SAMUEL 23: 15 David longed, and said, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"

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Verse 15

The water of the well of Bethlehem - This was David's city, and he knew the excellence of the water which was there; and being near the place, and parched with thirst, it was natural for him to wish for a draught of water out of that well. These three heroes having heard it, though they received no command from David, broke through a company of the Philistines, and brought away some of the

water. When brought to David he refused to drink it: for as the men got it at the hazard of their lives, he considered it as their blood, and gave thereby a noble instance of self-denial. There is no evidence that David had requested them to bring it; they had gone for it of their own accord, and without the knowledge of David.

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2SAMUEL 23: 16 The three mighty men broke through the army of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but he would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD.

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#### Verse 16

Poured it out unto the Lord - To make libations, both of water and wine, was a frequent custom among the heathens. We have an almost similar account in Arrian's Life of Alexander: "When his army was greatly oppressed with heat and thirst, a soldier brought him a cup of water; he ordered it to be carried back, saying, I cannot bear to drink alone while so many are in want, and this cup is too small to be divided among the whole." *Tunc poculo pleno sicut oblatum est reddito: Non solus, inquit, bibere sustineo, nec tam exiguum dividere omnibus possum.* - Arrian, lib. vi.

The example was noble in both cases, but David added piety to bravery; he poured it out unto the Lord.

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2SAMUEL 23: 17 He said, "Be it far from me, LORD, that I should do this! Isn't it the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. The three mighty men did these things.

2SAMUEL 23: 18 Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of the three. He lifted up his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name among the three.

2SAMUEL 23: 19 Wasn't he most honourable of the three? therefore he was made their captain: however he didn't attain to the three.

2SAMUEL 23: 20 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab: he went down also and killed a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow.

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#### Verse 20

Two lion-like men of Moab - Some think that two real lions are meant; some that they were two savage gigantic men; others, that two fortresses are meant. The words שני אראל מואב sheney ariel Moab may signify, as the Targum has rendered it, ית תרין רברבי מואב yath terein rabrebey Moab, "The two princes of Moab."

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2SAMUEL 23: 21 He killed an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear.

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 Verse 21

He slew an Egyptian - This man in 1Chr 11:23 is stated to have been five cubits high, about seven feet six inches.

He went down to him with a staff - I have known men who, with a staff only for their defense, could render the sword of the best practiced soldier of no use to him. I have seen even a parallel instance of a man with his staff being attacked by a soldier with his hanger; he soon beat the weapon out of the soldier's hand, and could easily have slain him with his own sword.

We have a good elucidation of this in a duel between Dioxippus the Athenian and Horratas a Macedonian, before Alexander: "The Macedonian, proud of his military skill, treated the naked Athenian with contempt, and then challenged him to fight with him the ensuing day. The Macedonian came armed cap-a-pie to the place; on his left arm he had a brazen shield, and in the same hand a spear called sarissa; he had a javelin in his right hand, and a sword girded on his side; in short, he appeared armed as though he were going to contend with a host. Dioxippus came into the field with a chaplet on his head, a purple sash on his left arm, his body naked, smeared over with oil, and in his right hand a strong knotty club, (*dextra validum nodosumque stipitem praeferebat*). Horratas, supposing he could easily kill his antagonist while at a distance, threw his javelin, which Dioxippus, suddenly stooping, dexterously avoided, and, before Horratas could transfer the spear from his left to his right hand, sprang forward, and with one blow of his club, broke it in two. The Macedonian being deprived of both his spears, began to draw his sword; but before he could draw it out Dioxippus seized him, tripped up his heels, and threw him with great violence on the ground, (*pedibus repente subductis arietavit in terram*). He then put his foot on his neck, drew out his sword, and lifting up his club, was about to dash out the brains of the overthrown champion, had he not been prevented by the king." - Q. Curt. lib. ix., cap. 7.

How similar are the two cases! He went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hands, and slew him with his own spear. Benaiah appears to have been just such another clubsman as Dioxippus.

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2SAMUEL 23: 22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did these things, and had a name among the three mighty men.

2SAMUEL 23: 23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he didn't attain to the three. David set him over his guard.

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 Verse 23

David set him over his guard - The Vulgate renders this, *Fecitque eun sibi David auricularium a secreto*, "David made him his privy counsellor;" or, according to the Hebrew, He put him to his ears, i.e., confided his secrets to him. Some think he made him a spy over the rest. It is supposed that the meaning of the fable which attributes to Midas very long ears, is, that this king carried the system of espionage to a great length; that he had a multitude of spies in different places.

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2SAMUEL 23: 24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,

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Verse 24

Asahel - was one of the thirty - Asahel was one of those officers, or troops, called the shalishim. This Asahel, brother of Joab, was the same that was killed by Abner, 2Sam 2:23.

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2SAMUEL 23: 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite,

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Verse 25

Shammah the Harodite - There are several varieties in the names of the following shalishim; which may be seen by comparing these verses with 1Chr 11:27.

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2SAMUEL 23: 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikesh the Tekoite,

2SAMUEL 23: 27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,

2SAMUEL 23: 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,

2SAMUEL 23: 29 Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,

2SAMUEL 23: 30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash.

2SAMUEL 23: 31 Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,

2SAMUEL 23: 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,

2SAMUEL 23: 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite,

2SAMUEL 23: 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

2SAMUEL 23: 35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

2SAMUEL 23: 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,

2SAMUEL 23: 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour bearers to Joab the son of Zeruiah,

2SAMUEL 23: 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,

2SAMUEL 23: 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

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Verse 39

Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all - To these the author of 1Chr 11:41 adds Zabad son of Ahlai. 1Chr 11:42 - Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him. 1Chr 11:43 - Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, 1Chr 11:44 - Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite, 1Chr 11:45 - Jedaiel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 1Chr 11:46 - Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 1Chr 11:47 - Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

The 4th and 5th verses are very obscure; L. De Dieu gives them a good meaning, if not the true one: - "The perpetuity of his kingdom David amplifies by a comparison to three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not constant and stable. For the sun arises and goes down again; the morning may be clear, but clouds afterwards arise; and the tender grass springs up, but afterwards withers. Not so, said he, is my kingdom before God; it is flourishing like all these, but perpetual, for he has made an everlasting covenant with me, though some afflictions have befallen me; and he has not made all my salvation and desire to grow."

De Dieu repeats  $\text{D ke}$ , the note of similitude, thrice; and the following is his version: - "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake unto me, (or concerning me): The just man ruleth among men; he ruleth in the fear of God. And, as the sun ariseth with a shining light; as the morning is without clouds by reason of its splendor; as, from rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth; truly so is not my house with God: because he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; disposed in all things, and well kept and preserved in that order. Although he doth not make all my deliverance and desire to grow, i.e., though some adversities happen to me and my family; yet, that always remains, which, in the covenant of God made with me, is in all things orderly, disposed, and preserved."

See Bishop Patrick on the place.

Once more I must beg the reader to refer to the First Dissertation of Dr. Kennicott, on the present state of the printed Hebrew text; in which there is not only great light cast on this subject, several corruptions in the Hebrew text being demonstrated, but also many valuable criticisms on different texts in the sacred writings. There are two Dissertations, 2 vols. 8 vo.; and both very valuable.