

CHAPTER 49

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 49

This chapter contains a prophecy of future things, relating to the twelve sons of Jacob, and to the twelve tribes, as descending from them, and which he delivered to his sons on his death bed, having called them together for that purpose, (^{<0401>}Genesis 49:1,2), he begins with Reuben his firstborn, whose incest he takes notice of, on which account he should not excel, (^{<0403>}Genesis 49:3,4), next Simeon and Levi have a curse denounced on them for their cruelty at Shechem, (^{<0405>}Genesis 49:5,6), but Judah is praised, and good things prophesied of him; and particularly that Shiloh, or the Messiah, should spring from him, the time of whose coming is pointed at, (^{<0407>}Genesis 49:7-12), the predictions concerning Zebulun, Issachar, and Dan, follow, at the close of which Jacob expresses his longing expectation of God's salvation, (^{<0413>}Genesis 49:13-18) and after foretelling what should befall Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, (^{<0419>}Genesis 49:19-21), a large account is given of Joseph, his troubles, his trials, and his blessings, (^{<0422>}Genesis 49:22-26), and Benjamin the youngest son is taken notice of last of all, all the tribes being blessed in their order according to the nature of their blessing, (^{<0427>}Genesis 49:27,28), and the chapter is closed with a charge of Jacob's to his sons to bury him in Canaan, which having delivered, he died, (^{<0429>}Genesis 49:29-33).

Ver. 1. *And Jacob called upon his sons*, etc.] Who either were near at hand, and within call at the time Joseph came to visit him, or if at a distance, and at another time, he sent a messenger or messengers to them to come unto him:

and said, gather yourselves together; his will was, that they should attend him all together at the same time, that he might deliver what he had to say to them in the hearing of them all; for what he after declares was not said to them singly and alone, but when they were all before him:

that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days; not their persons merely, but their posterity chiefly, from that time forward to the coming of the Messiah, who is spoken of in this prophecy, and the time of

his coming; some things are said relating to temporals, others to spirituals; some are blessings or prophecies of good things to them, others curses, or foretell evil, but all are predictions delivered out by Jacob under a spirit of prophecy; some things had their accomplishment when the tribes of Israel were placed in the land of Canaan, others in the times of the judges, and in later times; and some in the times of the Messiah, to which this prophecy reaches, whose coming was in the last days, (~~800E~~ Hebrews 1:1) and Nachmanides says, according to the sense of all their writers, the last days here are the days of the Messiah; and in an ancient writing of the Jews it is said ^{f1865}, that Jacob called his sons, because he had a mind to reveal the end of the Messiah, i.e. the time of his coming; and Abraham Seba ^{f1866} observes, that this section is the seal and key of the whole law, and of all the prophets prophesied of, unto the days of the Messiah.

Ver. 2. *Gather yourselves together*, etc.] This is repeated to hasten them, and to suggest that he had something of importance to make known unto them, which he chose to do, when they were together:

and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father: these words are used and doubled to excite their attention to what he was about to say, and which is urged from the near relation there was between them.

Ver. 3. *Reuben, thou art my firstborn*, etc.] Jacob addressed himself to Reuben first, in the presence of his brethren, owned him as his firstborn, as he was, (~~028E~~ Genesis 29:31,32) did not cashier him from his family, nor disinherit him, though he had greatly disoblged him, for which the birthright, and the privileges of it, were taken from him, (~~130E~~ 1 Chronicles 5:1,2)

my might, and the beginning of my strength; begotten by him when in his full strength ^{f1867}, as well as the first of his family, in which his strength and glory lay; so the Septuagint, “the beginning of my children”; and because he was so, of right the double portion belonged to him, had he not forfeited it, (~~0217E~~ Deuteronomy 21:17 ~~0455E~~ Psalm 105:36). Some versions render the words, “the beginning of my grief”, or “sorrow” ^{f1868}, the word “Oni” sometimes so signifying, as Rachel called her youngest son “Benoni”, the son of my sorrow; but this is not true of Reuben, he was not the beginning of Jacob’s sorrow, for the ravishing of Dinah, and the slaughter and spoil of the Shechemites, by his sons, which gave him great sorrow and grief, were before the affair of Reuben’s lying with Bilhah:

the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power; that is, to him of right belonged excellent dignity, power, and authority in the family, a preeminence over his brethren, a double portion of goods, succession in government, and, as is commonly understood, the exercise of the priesthood; and so the Targums interpret it, that he should, had he not sinned, took three parts or portions above his brethren, the birthright, priesthood, and kingdom. Jacob observes this to him, that he might know what he had lost by sinning, and from what excellency and dignity, grandeur and power, he was fallen.

Ver. 4. *Unstable as water*, etc.] Which is not to be understood of the levity of his mind, and his disposition to hurt, and the impetuous force of that breaking forth like water, and carrying him into the commission of it; but rather of his fall from his excellency and dignity, like the fall of water from an high place; and of his being vile, mean, and contemptible, useless and unprofitable, like water spilled on the ground; and of his weak and strengthless condition and circumstances, being deprived of the prerogatives and privileges of his birthright, and having lost all his honour and grandeur, power and authority. The word in the Arabic language signifies ^{f1869} to be proud and haughty, to lift up one's self, to swell and rise like the turgent and swelling waters: but though he did thus lift himself, yet it follows,

thou shall not excel; not have the excellency of dignity and power which belonged to him as the firstborn; the birthright and the double portion were given to Joseph, who had two tribes descending from him, when Reuben had but one; the kingdom was given to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem observe: as he did not excel his brethren in honour and dignity, so neither in wealth and riches, nor in numbers; (see ^{v1836}Deuteronomy 33:6) where the word "not" is wrongly supplied; nor in his share in the land of Canaan, his posterity being seated on the other side of Jordan, at their request; nor did any persons of note and eminence spring from his tribe: because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defiledst thou it; referring to his incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine wife, (^{v1822}Genesis 35:22) which, though done forty years ago, was now remembered, and left an indelible spot on Reuben's character, and his posterity:

he went up to my couch: turning himself to his other sons, to take notice of the crime, as very abominable and detestable; affirming the truth of it, and

speaking of it with some vehemency, his affections being moved; and it may be could not bear to look at Reuben, but turned himself to his brethren; though he had forgiven the sin, and very probably Reuben had repented of it, and had forgiveness of God, which he might have, though in some sense vengeance was taken on this sinful invention of his, (^{<1998>}Psalm 99:8). There are various senses given of this phrase; some, as Aben Ezra, “my bed departed from me”; that is, he departed from his bed; or, as Kimchi ^{f1870}, “it ceased to be my bed”; he left it, he abstained from the bed of Bilhah upon its being defiled by Reuben: and others separate these words, and read **hl** [, singly, “it went up” ^{f1871}; either the excellency of Reuben went up, vanished and disappeared like smoke; or, as Ben Melech connects it with the beginning of the verse, “unstable as water”, giving the sense, “it”, the inundation of water, “ascended” and prevailed over thee; as waters ascend, meaning his lust ascended, and got the prevalence over him; but the accents will not admit of such a separation of the words; it is best to understand them in the first sense. As to the manner of the expression, of going up to a bed, it may be observed, that not only their beds in those times might be raised higher than ours, but that they were placed in an higher part of the room, and so there was an ascent to them: and Dr. Shaw ^{f1872} says this is the custom of the eastern people to this day,

“at one end of each chamber there is a little gallery, raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise leading up to it, here they place their beds.”

Ver. 5. *Simeon and Levi are brothers*, etc.] Not because they were so in a natural sense, being brethren both by father and mother’s side, for there were others so besides them; but because they were of like tempers, dispositions, and manners ^{f1873}, bold, wrathful, cruel, revengeful, and deceitful, and joined together in their evil counsels and evil actions, and so are joined together in the evils predicted of them:

instruments of cruelty are in their habitations: or vessels, utensils, household goods gotten by violence and rapine, and through the cruel usage of the Shechemites; these were in their dwellings, their houses were full of such mammon of unrighteousness, or spoil; or, as others, “instruments of cruelty” are “their swords” ^{f1874}; what they should only have used in their own defence, with these they shed the blood of the Shechemites very barbarously, (^{<1825>}Genesis 34:25). Some think the word

here used is the Greek word for a sword; and the Jews say ^{f1875} that Jacob cursed the swords of Simeon and Levi in the Greek tongue; and others say it is Persic, being used by Xenophon for Persian swords; but neither of them seems probable: rather this word was originally Hebrew, and so passed from thence into other languages; but perhaps the sense of it, which Aben Ezra gives, may be most agreeable, if the first sense is not admitted, that it signifies covenants, compacts, agreements ^{f1876}, such as these men made with the Shechemites, even nuptial contracts; for the root of the word, in the Chaldee language, signifies to espouse ^{f1877}; and these they abused to cruelty, bloodshed, and slaughter, in a most deceitful manner: in the Ethiopic language, the word signifies counsels; so De Dieu takes it here.

Ver. 6. *O my soul, come not thou into their secret*, etc.] Their cabinet counsels, combinations and conspiracies; this Jacob said, as abhorring the wicked counsel they had took of slaying the Shechemites; and lest any should think he was concerned in it, or connived at it, he expressed a detestation of the fact on his dying bed: the future tense may be put for the past; and so Onkelos renders it, “my soul was not in their secret”; and so the other two Targums paraphrase it, that when they got and consulted together, his soul was not pleased and delighted with their counsel, but abhorred it; or “my soul shall not come”, which Jarchi thinks propheticall refers to the case of Zimri, the son of Salu, of the tribe of Simeon, as the following clause to the affair of Korah, of the tribe of Levi, as foreseeing and disapproving them, and desiring they might not be called by his name, or his name called upon them, (^{<0254>}Numbers 25:14 16:1)

unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; the same thing expressed in different words; by his “honour or glory” he means his soul, the more honourable part of man, or his tongue, with which man glorifies God; and hereby Jacob intimates, that he did not in thought, and much less in express words, give any consent unto, and approbation of the deed of those two sons of his, and that he never was, nor never desired to be with them in their meetings and consultations:

for in their anger they slew a man; Hamor or Shechem, together with all the males of the city; and so “man” may be put for “men”, the singular for the plural, as is frequent. The Targum of Jonathan is, a king and his governor; and the Targum of Jerusalem, kings with governors:

and in their selfwill they digged down a wall; not the wall of the city of Shechem, which does not appear to be walled, by their easy access into it; and if it was, they do not seem to have had proper instruments for such an undertaking, nor a sufficient number for such work, and which would have required longer time than they used, unless it was a poor wall indeed: rather the wall of Shechem's house, or the court before it, which they dug down, or broke through to get in and slay Hamor and Shechem, and take away their sister; though the word, as here pointed, always signifies an ox; and so the Samaritan and Septuagint versions render it, they hamstrung a bull, or houghed an ox, just in like manner as horses are said to be houghed, (^{<6106>}Joshua 11:6,9 ^{<008>}2 Samuel 8:4) and which some understand ^{f1878} figuratively of a prince or ruler; so great personages are called bulls of Bashan, (^{<0212>}Psalm 22:12) and interpret it either of Hamor or of Shechem, who was a prince among his people, and furious in his lust towards Dinah, and so this clause is much the same with the former: and besides, him they enervated by circumcision, and took the advantage of this his condition at the worst, and slew him, which seems to be the true sense of the text, agreeably to (^{<0325>}Genesis 34:25,26) but the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases it of Joseph, whom his brethren sold, who was like unto an ox; and so Jarchi interprets it of him, whom they designed to slay, (see ^{<0537>}Deuteronomy 33:17) but it is better to take the words in a literal sense, either of the oxen that Simeon and Levi took from the Shechemites, which they plucked or drove away from their mangers, as some render the words ^{f1879}; and some of them they might hough or hamstring, that they might not get away from them, (see ^{<0328>}Genesis 34:28) or rather of Shechem himself, who was רֶץ, "a prince", a word which has some likeness and affinity to this in the text.

Ver. 7. *Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce*, etc.] It was sinful anger in the nature of it, and so criminal and detestable; it was strong, fierce, and furious in its operation and effects, and so justly cursed; not their persons, but their passions:

and their wrath, for it was cruel; it issued in the cruel and barbarous slaughter of the inhabitants of Shechem; the same thing as before in other words repeated, to express his great abhorrence of their wrath and rage. Aben Ezra thinks that the words may be considered either as a prophecy or a prayer, that their anger might cease: what follows is certainly a prophecy,

I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel; which he is said to do, because he foretold it would be done; as Jeremiah is said to root out and pull down kingdoms, because he prophesied thereof, (^{<2010>}Jeremiah 1:10) and this was fulfilled in the tribes of Simeon and Levi; as for the tribe of Simeon, that had not a distinct part by itself in the land of Canaan, but had their inheritance out of the portion, and within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, (^{<1600>}Joshua 19:1-9) and their cities did not join to one another, as Aben Ezra observes, but lay scattered up and down in the tribe of Judah; and when they were increased and straitened for room, many of them went without the land, to the entrance of Gedor, where they of Ham, or the Egyptians, had dwelt, and others to Mount Seir in Edom, (^{<1069>}1 Chronicles 4:39,42) and it is a notion which prevails with the Jews, and which Jarchi takes notice of, that a great many of this tribe were scribes and teachers of the law, and even teachers of children, and by which they lived among the several tribes; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

“I will divide the tribe of Simeon, that they may be scribes and teachers of the law in the congregation of Jacob.”

And as for the tribe of Levi, it is well known that they had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, but had forty eight cities assigned them in the several tribes here and there; and thus Jacob’s prophecy had an exact accomplishment.

Ver. 8. *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise*, etc.] His name signifies praise, and was given him by his mother, her heart being filled with praises to God for him, (^{<1028>}Genesis 29:35) and is here confirmed by his father on another account, because his brethren should praise him for many excellent virtues in him; and it appears, by instances already observed, that he had great authority, and was highly esteemed among his brethren, as his posterity would be in future times for their courage, warlike expeditions and success, and being famous for heroes, such as David, and others; and especially his famous seed the Messiah, and of whom he was a type, should be praised by his brethren, who are so through his incarnation, and by divine adoption, and who praise him for the glories and excellencies of his person, and the blessings of his grace:

thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; pressing them down by his superior power, subduing them, and causing them to submit to him, and which was verified in David, who was of this tribe, (^{<1080>}Psalms 18:40) and

especially in the Messiah, in a spiritual sense, who has conquered and subdued all his and his people's enemies, sin, Satan, the world and death:

thy father's children shall bow down before thee; before the kings that should spring from this tribe, and should rule over all the rest, as David and Solomon, to whom civil adoration and respect were given by them; and before the King Messiah, his son and antitype, in a way of religious worship, which is given him by the angels, the sons of God, and by all the saints and people of God, who are his father's children by adoption; these bow before him, and give him religious adoration as a divine Person, and submit to his righteousness as Mediator, and bow to the sceptre of his kingdom, and cast their crowns at his feet, and give him the glory of their whole salvation. This in some Jewish writings ^{f1880} is applied to the time of the Messiah's coming.

Ver. 9. *Judah is a lion's whelp*, etc.] Or as one; the note of similitude being wanting, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech observe; he was comparable to a young lion for his strength, courage, and generosity; and it may refer to the infant state of this tribe in the times of the judges, who first went up against the Canaanites and overcame them, (~~1000~~Judges 1:1-4)

from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; alluding to the lion going up to the mountains, where it chiefly resides, after it has found its prey and satiated itself with it:

he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; one that is grown up, and has arrived to its full strength, such an one is a proper emblem of David king of Israel, of his royalty, courage, valour and conquests; and who having subdued the nations round about him, couched like a lion, and had rest from all his enemies; and especially this was verified in the times of Solomon his son, when he had peace on all sides, and Judah and Israel dwelt safely under their vines and fig trees, (~~1000~~1 Kings 4:24,25)

who shall rouse him up? a lion grown up and in its full strength, or a lioness, as some choose to interpret it, and which is the fiercest, and therefore the most dangerous to rouse up when laid down, either in its den, or with its prey in its paws: so dangerous it was to provoke the tribe of Judah, as its enemies after found, especially in the times of David: all this may be applied to Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; the lion being the king of beasts, and the strongest among them, may denote the kingly

power and authority of Christ, his great strength as the mighty God and mighty Saviour, his courage in engaging with all the powers of darkness, and valour in vanquishing all enemies; his generosity and lenity to those that stoop to him, and his fierceness to his adversaries, who took the prey from the mighty, and then ascended on high, leading captivity captive; where he sat down at the right hand of God at rest and ease, and who will dare to rouse him up, or be able to stand before him when once he is angry? This verse in some ancient ^{f1881}writings of the Jews is interpreted of Messiah the son of David.

Ver. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, etc.] Which some understand of the tribe, that Judah should not cease from being a tribe, or that it should continue a distinct tribe until the coming of the Messiah, who was to be of it, and was, and that it might appear he sprung from it; but this was not peculiar to this tribe, for the tribe of Benjamin continued, and so did the tribe of Levi unto the coming of Christ: besides, by Judah is meant the tribe, and to say a tribe shall not depart from the tribe, is not only a tautology, but scarcely sense; it rather signifies dominion, power, and authority, as the sceptre always does, it being an emblem of it, (see ^{<0217>}Numbers 24:17 ^{<3011>}Zechariah 10:11) and this intends either the government, which was in the heads and princes of the tribe, which commenced as soon as it became a tribe, and lasted as long as it remained one, even unto the times of the Messiah; or kingly power and government, which the sceptre is generally thought to be an emblem of, and which first commenced in David, who was of the tribe of Judah, and continued unto the Babylonish captivity, when another sort of governors and government took place, designed in the next clause:

nor a lawgiver from between his feet; which may be rendered disjunctively, “or a lawgiver”; any ruler or governor, that has jurisdiction over others, though under another, as the word is used, (^{<0714>}Judges 5:14) and the sense is, that till the Messiah came there should be in the tribe of Judah, either a king, a sceptre bearer, as there was unto the captivity; or a governor, though under others, as there were unto the times of Christ under the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans; such as Gedaliah, Zorobabel, etc. and particularly the sanhedrim, a court of judicature, the members of which chiefly consisted of the tribe of Judah, and the *ayçn*, or prince of it, was always of that tribe, and which retained its power to the latter end of Herod’s reign, when Christ was come; and though it was greatly diminished, it had some power remaining, even at the death of

Christ, but quickly after had none at all: and if by the “lawgiver” is meant a scribe or a teacher of the law, as all the Targums, Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and others interpret it, who used to sit at the feet of a ruler, judge, or prince of the sanhedrim; it is notorious there were of these unto, and in the times of the Messiah: in short, it matters not for the fulfilment of this prophecy what sort of governors those were after the captivity, nor of what tribe they were; they were in Judah, and their government was exercised therein, and that was in the hands of Judah, and they and that did not depart from thence till Shiloh came; since those that were of the other tribes, after the return from the captivity all went by the name of Judah:

until Shiloh come; which all the three Targums interpret of the Messiah, as do many of the Jewish writers, ancient and modern ^{f1882}; and is the name of the Messiah in their Talmud ^{f1883}, and in other writings ^{f1884}; and well agrees with him, coming from a root which signifies to be “quiet”, “peaceable”, and “prosperous”; as he was of a quiet and peaceable disposition, came to make peace between God and men, and made it by the blood of his cross, and gives spiritual peace to all his followers, and brings them at length to everlasting peace and happiness; having prospered and succeeded in the great work of their redemption and salvation he undertook:

and unto him shall the gathering of the people be; not of the Jews, though there were great gatherings of them to hear him preach, and see his miracles; as there were of all his people to him at his death, and in him as their head and representative, (^{<4010>}Ephesians 1:10) but of the Gentiles; upon his death, the Gospel being preached to all nations, multitudes among them were converted to Christ, embraced his doctrines, professed his religion, and abode by him, (see ^{<2110>}Isaiah 11:10) some render it, the obedience of the people ^{f1885}, from the use of the word in (^{<2007>}Proverbs 30:17), which sense agrees with the former; for those who are truly gathered by the ministry of the word yield an obedience to his doctrines and ordinances; and others read, “the expectation of the people” ^{f1886}; the Messiah being the desire of all nations, (^{<3006>}Haggai 2:6) this, with what goes before, clearly shows that the Messiah must be come, since government in every sense has departed from Judah for 1900 years or thereabout, and the Gentiles have embraced the Messiah and his Gospel the Jews rejected: the various contradictory senses they put upon this prophecy show the puzzle and confusion they are in about it, and serve to confirm the true sense of it: some apply it to the city Shiloh, others to Moses, others to Saul, others to David; nay, some will have Shiloh to be

Jeroboam, or Ahijah the Shilonite, and even Nebuchadnezzar: there are two senses they put upon it which deserve the most notice, the one is, that “Shebet”, we render “sceptre”, signifies a “rod”; and so it does, but such a rod as is an ensign of government, as it must here, by what follows, (see ²⁵⁹¹Ezekiel 19:11), but they would have it to signify either a rod of correction ^{f1887}, or a staff of support; but what correction or affliction has befallen the tribe of Judah peculiar to it? was it not in a flourishing condition for five hundred years, under the reign of David’s family? and when the rest of the tribes were carried captive and never returned, Judah remained in its own land, and, when carried captive, after seventy years returned again to it; add to which, that this is a prediction, not of affliction and distress, that should abide in the tribe of Judah, but of honour and glory to it: and besides, Judah has had a far greater share of correction since the coming of the true Messiah than ever it had before: and what support have the Jews now, or have had for many hundred years, being out of their land, destitute of their privileges, living among other nations in disgrace, and for the most part in poverty and distress? the other sense is this, “the sceptre and lawgiver shall not depart from Judah for ever, when Shiloh comes ^{f1888}”; but this is contrary to the accents which separate and divide the phrase, “between his feet”, from that, “for ever”, as this version renders the word; though **d[** never signifies “for ever”, absolutely put, without some antecedent noun or particle; nor does **yk** signify “when”, but always “until”, when it is joined with the particle **d[**, as it is here; besides, this sense makes the prophecy to pass over some thousands of years before any notice is taken of Judah’s sceptre, which, according to the Jews, it had thousands of years ago, as well as contradicts a received notion of their own, that the Messiah, when he comes, shall not reign for ever, but for a certain time, and even a small time; some say forty years, some seventy, and others four hundred ^{f1889}.

Ver. 11. *Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine*, etc.] Which may be understood either of the tribe of Judah, and signify that vines should grow in such plenty, and so large and strong, that a man might fasten his ass to one of them, and if it ate and destroyed it, it would give no great concern, since the country abounded with them; or they would be so full of clusters that a man might load an ass from one of them. Some parts of the tribe of Judah were famous for vines, especially Engedi; hence we read of the vineyards of Engedi, (²⁰¹⁴Song of Solomon 1:14) or else of Shiloh the Messiah, which some interpret literally of him,

when the prophecy in (^{<300>}Zechariah 9:9) was fulfilled, as is recorded in (^{<420>}Matthew 21:2,5 ^{<410>}Mark 11:4) but others better, figuratively, of Christ's causing the Gentiles, comparable to an ass's colt, for their impurity, ignorance of, and sluggishness in spiritual things, to cleave to him the true vine, (^{<650>}John 15:1) in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, or to join themselves to his church and people, sometimes compared to a vine or vineyard, (^{<200>}Isaiah 5:1,2 27:2,3)

and he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great abundance of wine in this tribe, of which there was such plenty, that if they would, they might have used it instead of water to wash their clothes in, but not that they did do so, only might if they would; and may denote the great quantity of spiritual blessings flowing from the love of God, which come by Christ; and of his word and ordinances, which are comparable to wine and milk, and are a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees, well refined, (^{<200>}Isaiah 26:6 55:1) and may be applied to Christ, to the garment of his human nature, which, through his sufferings and death, was like a vesture dipped in blood, and he became red in his apparel, (^{<200>}Isaiah 63:1 ^{<600>}Revelation 19:16) or to his church and people, which cleave to him as a garment, and whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, (^{<600>}Revelation 1:5 7:14) these words are interpreted of the Messiah in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and are applied to him and his times in the Talmud ^{f1890}, and in other Jewish writings ^{f1891}: so wine is called the blood of the grape by the son of Sirach in the Apocrypha:

“The principal things for the whole use of man's life are water, fire, iron, and salt, flour of wheat, honey, milk, and the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing.” (Sirach 39:26)

“He stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of the blood of the grape, he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweetsmelling savour unto the most high King of all.” (Sirach 50:15)

Ver. 12. *His eyes shall be red with wine,* etc.] Signifying, not the intemperance of this tribe, and their immoderate use of wine, and the effect of it on them; but the goodness and generosity of their wine, that if drunk plentifully of, and especially to excess, would have such an effect, (see ^{<100>}Proverbs 23:29,30) and, as applied to the Messiah, the antitype of Judah, and who was of this tribe, it may denote not so much the beauty of his eyes, as the Targums paraphrase it; as the joy and pleasure that sparkled

in his eyes when he shed his blood on the cross, enduring that, and despising the shame of it, for the joy of the salvation of his people; or the clearness of his sight in beholding the actions of his enemies, and especially of the fierceness and fury of his wrath against them, whose eyes are said to be an flames of fire, (~~6614~~ Revelation 1:14)

and his teeth white with milk; denoting the fruitfulness of his land, producing fine pastures, on which flocks and herds fed, and gave abundance of milk; and so Onkelos paraphrases the whole verse,

“his mountains shall be red with his vineyards, and his hills shall drop wine, and his valleys shall be white with corn and flocks of sheep;”

and much the same are the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: the mystical sense may respect Christ and his people, and be expressive of the purity of his nature, life, and doctrine, and of the holiness of his members, their faith and conversation; or the clauses may be rendered, redder than wine, whiter than milk; but though whiteness recommends teeth, yet not redness the eyes; wherefore some ^{f1892} by transposing the first letters of the word for “red”, make it to signify black, as it does with the Arabs, and that colour of the eye is reckoned beautiful.

Ver. 13. *Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea*, etc.] Of the sea of Galilee, sometimes called the sea of Tiberias and of Gennesaret; and of the Mediterranean sea; and accordingly we find that the border of this tribe, when settled in the land of Canaan, was toward the sea, (~~6390~~ Joshua 19:10,11) and this was done, not at the discretion of Joshua, or at the choice of this tribe, but by lot; and which shows that Jacob said this under a spirit of prophecy, and which had its fulfilment two hundred years after; and is a full proof of the prescience and providence of God; and who, as he sets the bounds of the people, or of the nations of the world, and of the tribes of Israel, so the bounds of the habitations of particular persons, (~~4475~~ Acts 17:26) and he shall be for an haven of ships; shall have good ports commodious for ships to station in, and to cover them from storms and tempests; this tribe being situated by the sea shore ^{f1893}:

and his border shall be unto Zidon; not the city Zidon, for the tribe of Zebulun reached no further than Carmel, as Josephus observes;

“the Zebulunites (says he) obtained the land from Carmel, and the sea to the lake of Gennesaret.”

Now Carmel was forty miles at least from Zidon; but Phoenicia is meant, of which Zidon was the chief city; and so the Septuagint in (^{232B}Isaiah 23:2) put Phoenicia instead of Zidon; and whereas Carmel was the border of this tribe that way, it is also said by Jerom ^{f1894} to be the border of Phoenicia; so that Zebulun reaching to Carmel, its border may be truly said to be to Zidon or Phoenicia.

Ver. 14. *Issachar is a strong ass*, etc.] Or as one, the note of similitude being wanting, as Ben Melech observes; “a bony” ^{f1895} one, as the word signifies; not one that is lean, and nothing but skin and bones, as some interpret it, but that is strong and robust, able to carry burdens; and this tribe is compared to an ass, not for stupidity and sluggishness, but for its strength, and its use in husbandry, in which this tribe was chiefly occupied: the Targums of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret this figuratively, of his being strong to bear the yoke of the law: and it is a notion of the Jews, that this tribe were skilful in the doctrines of the law, and the intercalation of years, etc. from (^{432C}1 Chronicles 12:32) couching down between two burdens: one hanging on one side, and another on the other; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of bales of goods; and may as well be understood of sacks of corn, or anything else, carried by these creatures, which, when they come into a good pasture, and for the sake of that and ease, will lie down with their burdens on them, and rise up again with them: the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem paraphrase it, “between two borders” ^{f1896}, or the borders of his brethren, as Jonathan, Zebulun and Dan, between which this tribe lay; and this is the reason Aben Ezra gives why Issachar, who was older than Zebulun, is mentioned after him, and between him and Dan, because his land lay between them; and so it may be observed, that in the division of the land in Joshua’s time, Issachar’s lot came up after Zebulun’s, (^{690D}Joshua 19:10-23) but Doctor Lightfoot thinks ^{f1897} it refers to the two kingdoms, between which it lay, that of Phoenicia on one side, and that of Samaria on the other.

Ver. 15. *And he saw that rest was good*, etc.] Not the house of the sanctuary, and attendance there, and the service of that, as the Targum of Jerusalem; nor the rest of the world to come, the happiness of a future state, as that of Jonathan; but rather, as Onkelos, the part and portion of the good land allotted him; he saw that a quiet industry exercised in a diligent cultivation and manuring his land was preferable to the hurry of a court, or the fatigue of a camp, or the dangers of the seas:

and the land that it was pleasant; a fine delightful country, which, if well looked after and improved, would produce plenty of pleasant fruits; and within this tribe were the rich vale of Esdraelon or Jezreel, and the fruitful mountains of Gilboa: of the former it is agreed by all travellers the like has never been seen by them, being of vast extent and very fertile, and formerly abounded with corn, wine, and oil; (see Gill on “^{<2005>}Hosea 1:5”) and the latter were famous for their fruitfulness, through the dews that descended on them, (^{<1021>}2 Samuel 1:21)

and bowed his shoulders to bear; the fatigues of ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and carrying in the fruits of the earth:

and became a servant unto tribute; which greatly arises from agriculture and the fruits of the earth; and this tribe chose rather to pay more tribute than the rest, that they might abide at home and attend the business of their fields, when others were called to go forth to war.

Ver. 16. *Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.*] There is an elegant paronomasia, or an allusion to the name of Dan in those words, which signifies to judge, and the sense of them is, there should be heads, rulers, and judges of it, as the other tribes had; and this is the rather mentioned of him, because he is the first of the children of concubine wives as yet taken notice of; and what is here said of him is also to be understood of the rest of the sons of the concubines; for the meaning is not, that a judge should arise out of him as out of the other tribes, that should judge all Israel, restraining it to Samson, who was of this tribe, as the Targums and Jarchi; for no such judge did arise out of all the tribes of Israel; nor was Samson such a judge of Israel as David, who, according to Jarchi, is one of the tribes of Israel, namely, of Judah; for David did not judge as Samson, nor Samson as David, their form of government being different.

Ver. 17. *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path,* etc.] Or be like that sort of serpents called the adder; or rather, that which has the name of Cerastes, which lies among sand, and being of the same colour is not easily discerned, and is often trampled upon unawares, and bites at once, unexpected; as Bothart ^{f1898} from various writers has shown; particularly Diodorus Siculus ^{f1899} says, of this kind of serpents, that their bites are deadly, and being of the same colour with the sand, few discern them, so that many ignorantly treading on them fall into danger unawares; and so Onkelos paraphrases it, that lies in wait by the way; and is by

another writer^{f1900} interpreted, a very grievous and hurtful serpent as the adder is:

that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward; for this sort of serpents lying in horse ways and cart ruts, snaps at and bites horses as they pass along, which bites affecting their legs and thighs, cause them to fall and throw their riders: this, by the Jewish writers, who are followed by many Christian interpreters, is applied to Samson, who by craft and policy managed the Philistines, as in the affair of the foxes, and especially in his last enterprise, when he got placed between the two pillars of the house, which answer, as some think, to the horse heels, as the multitude on the roof of the house to the riders: but though this may be illustrated in a particular person in this tribe, as a specimen of the genius and disposition of the whole tribe, yet the prophecy respects the whole tribe, and points at the situation of it, which was “by the way”, at the extreme part of the country; so that they had need of craft and policy as well as power to defend themselves against encroachers and invaders, and describes the general temper and disposition of this tribe, of which an instance may be seen in (~~078E~~Judges 18:1-31) and it may have respect to the stumblingblocks and offences laid in this tribe to the rest of the tribes, by the idol of Micah, and more especially by the golden calf set up in Dan by Jeroboam.

Ver. 18. *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*]. Jacob finding his spirits faint and flag, stops and breathes awhile before he proceeded any further in blessing the tribes; and as he found he was a dying man, and knew not how soon he should expire, expresses what he had been thoughtful of and concerned about in time past, and still was; that he had been waiting and hoping for, and expecting a state of happiness and bliss in another world, where he should be saved from sin and Satan, and the world, and from all his enemies, and out of all his troubles; and this he firmly believed he should enjoy, and hoped it would not be long ere he did; and especially he may have a regard to the Messiah, the promised Saviour, and salvation by him he had knowledge of, faith in, and expectation of; who may be truly called the salvation of God, because of his contriving, providing, and appointing, whom he had promised and spoken of by all the prophets; and whom in the fulness of time he would send into the world to work out salvation for his people; and to him all the Targums apply the words, which are to this purpose:

“said our father Jacob, not for the salvation of Gideon, the son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation, do I wait; nor for the salvation of Samson the son of Manoah, which is a transitory salvation; but for the salvation of Messiah the son of David, (which is an everlasting one,) who shall bring the children of Israel to himself, and his salvation my soul desireth:”

and though Jacob might be affected with the evils he foresaw would rise up in the tribe of Dan, he had last mentioned, and with the troubles that should come upon all the tribes; and had some pleasing sights of the deliverances and salvations, that should be wrought for them, by judges and saviours that should be raised up; yet his chief view was to the Messiah, and salvation by him.

Ver. 19. *Gad, a troop shall overcome him*, etc.] There is a paronomasia, or an allusion to the name of Gad almost in every word of the verse, which signifies a troop: the whole is a prediction that this tribe would be a warlike one, and have the common fate of war, sometimes be conquered, and at other times conquer, but however should be at last entirely victorious; all the three Targums refer this to this tribe passing over Jordan at the head of the armies of Israel, into the land of Canaan, in Joshua’s time, which, when they had subdued, they returned to their own inheritance on the other side Jordan, (^{<0612>}Joshua 1:12-18 4:12,13 22:1-4) and so Jarchi; but it rather seems to refer to what befell them in their own tribe, which being seated on the other side Jordan was exposed to the incursions and spoils of the Moabites and Amonites; who came upon them like troops of robbers, and seized upon their possessions and retained them for some years; as in the times of the judges, (see ^{<0707>}Judges 10:7,8) and in after times we find the Ammonites in possession of their country, (^{<2401>}Jeremiah 49:1) whereby this part of the prophecy had its accomplishment:

but he shall overcome at the last; as the Gadites with the Reubenites and half tribe of Manasseh did overcome the Hagarites and Arabians, the war being of God, and succeeded, and they dwelt in their stead until the captivity of the ten tribes, (^{<1318>}1 Chronicles 5:18-22) and thus it is with the people of God in their present warfare state, who are often foiled with sin, Satan, and the world, their spiritual enemies; but at last they are more than conquerors over them all through Christ that has loved them.

Ver. 20. *Out of Asher his bread shall be fat*, etc.] Which signifies that this tribe would have a sufficiency of food out of their own land, without being

obliged to others, and that it would be of the best sort; it occupied a tract of land, as Andrichomius^{f1901} says, reaching from great Zidon to Carmel of the sea, a space of twenty miles in length; and in breadth, from the great sea to Asor, and even to Naason, a space of nine miles; the land of this tribe is very fat, he says, and exceeding fruitful in wine and oil, especially in the best wheat: and in this tribe, as the same writer^{f1902} observes, among other very fruitful places was the valley of Asher, called the fat valley, which began five miles from Ptolemais, and reached to the sea of Galilee, and contained more than ten miles in length; the soil of which was exceeding fat and fruitful, and produced the most delicate wine and wheat, and might be truly called the fat valley, (see ~~<1000>~~ Deuteronomy 33:24)

and he shall yield royal dainties; food fit for kings, of all sorts, flesh, fish, and fowl: here King Solomon had one of his purveyors to provide food for him and his household, (~~<1000>~~ 1 Kings 4:16). Asher's country answered to his name, which signifies happy or blessed: in those parts Christ was much in the days of his flesh on earth; in Cana of this tribe he turned water into wine and in this country discoursed concerning the bread of life himself, who is the best of bread and royal dainties.

Ver. 21. *Naphtali is a hind let loose*, etc.] Onkelos applies it to the tribe itself, and to the goodness of its land,

“as for Naphtali, his lot fell in a good land, and his inheritance a fruit bearing one,”

as it was; for in it was the most fruitful country of Gennesaret, which gave name to a sea or lake by it, and which abounded with gardens, with palm trees, fig trees, and olive trees; and which, Josephus says^{f1903} one might call the ambition of nature; and Strabo^{f1904}, an Heathen writer, says of it, that it was an happy blessed country, and bearing all sorts of good things; and Jarchi on the place observes, this is the vale of Gennesaret, which is as quick to bring forth fruit, as a hind is swift to run. Some will have this prophecy to be fulfilled in Barak, as Ben Gersom, Abendana, and others, who was of this tribe, and who at first was fearful like the hind, and backward to go out to war when called, but afterwards readily went out with Deborah, and at last gave goodly words in the song they both sung: but it better describes the genius, disposition, and manners of the tribe, who were kind and loving, swift and expeditious in their affairs; lovers of liberty, well spoken persons, humane, affable, courteous, of a good address and pleasing language, as follows:

he giveth goodly words; to those he converses with; and it may be applied, particularly to Christ and his disciples, and to the inhabitants of this tribe in his time, among whom they much were, (see ^{<4043>}Matthew 4:13 9:1) he himself is compared to the hind of the morning, (^{<4273>}Psalm 22:1) in the title, and to a roe or a young hart, (^{<2189>}Song of Solomon 2:9,17) (^{<2184>}Song of Solomon 8:14) for his amiableness and loveliness in himself, and for his lovingness to his people, and for his swiftness to do the will and work of his father, being sent out ^{f1905}, as the word here used signifies, by him into this world, on the business of man's salvation: and so his disciples, who were Galilaeans, were swift to obey his call, and left all and followed him, and were sent out by him to preach his Gospel; and both he and they may be said to "give goodly words", as the doctrines of the Gospel are, words of grace, truth, and life; wholesome, comfortable, pleasant and delightful; good tidings of good things, of peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation and eternal life by Christ: and the inhabitants of this country in Christ's time were swift to run after him, and hear him; panted after him as the hart after the water brooks, and both received and gave out the goodly words of the Gospel, and were made free thereby, and so like an hind let loose. Bochart gives a different version of these words, which is countenanced by the Septuagint version, Naphtali is a tree full of shoots, or "a tree shot out, sprouting out beautiful branches"; but as this is contrary to the points, and coincides with the next verse, it is rejected by many learned men.

Ver. 22. *Joseph is a fruitful bough*, etc.] Or as one, like the bough or branch of a tree laden with fruit, as he was with children; one of which he called Ephraim from his fruitfulness, and both his sons became numerous, and the heads of two tribes in Israel; and with other temporal fruits and blessings, as riches, honour, etc. and especially with the fruits of grace and righteousness:

[even] a fruitful bough by a well; those are the most fruitful that are near a well or fountain of water, as such trees are which are planted by rivers of water, (see ^{<4003>}Psalm 1:3) this being repeated may have respect to the two boughs or branches of Joseph's family, or the two fruitful and numerous tribes that sprung from him:

whose branches run over the wall; as such trees that are set against one, and by the reflected heat of the sun grow the more, and become more fruitful. The word for "branches" is "daughters", which some refer to the daughters of Manasseh and Zelophehad, who received their inheritance on

both sides of Jordan; and others interpret it of the cities of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, as cities are sometimes called.

Ver. 23. *The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.*] His brethren who grieved him with their ill usage, shot out bitter words against him, and hated him for his dreams, and because his father loved him; and they could not speak peaceably to him, they mocked at him, conspired to kill him, stripped him of his clothes, cast him into a pit, and then sold him; in all which he was a type of Christ, as used by the Jews. His mistress also, and Satan by her, grieved him with her temptations and solicitations to sin, which were as fiery darts shot at him; but being resisted, her impure love was turned into hatred to him, and she shot her lies, calumnies, and reproaches, as so many darts at him; and, as the Targum of Jonathan, the magicians of Egypt, who envied him for his superior knowledge, and perhaps many others in Pharaoh's court, who were displeased at his preferments, might bring accusations to Pharaoh against him, out of hatred to him; and Satan and his principalities and powers, whose temptations are compared to fiery darts, are not to be exempted, which they shoot at and grieve the people of God, who are hated by them. Perhaps reference may be had to the wars of the posterity of Joseph under Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, with the Canaanites.

Ver. 24. *But his bow abode in strength,* etc.] For as his enemies were archers, and had bows and arrows, so had he, and repelled force by force; but then his bow and arrows were of a different sort, the virtues and graces that he was possessed of, as innocence and integrity, chastity, fortitude, wisdom, prudence and patience, faith, hope, and the like, which remained unmoved, and in their full exercise, notwithstanding the powerful attacks made upon them; and so his posterity were unmoved and unshaken, and stood firm and undaunted, notwithstanding the powerful enemies they had to deal with, until they were wholly subdued:

and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; so that he held his bow, and drew it with great strength against his enemies, as an archer being used to the bow, his nerves become strong, and he is not weakened by drawing it, nor weary of using it; but Joseph had not his strength of himself, but from the Lord, the mighty One, that had strengthened his father Jacob, and supported him under all his trouble: saints, like Joseph, have their strength, as well as their

righteousness, in and from Christ; and when they are weak in themselves, they are strong in him, to exercise grace and perform duty:

from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel; from Jacob descended Joseph; or from the God of Jacob it was that Joseph through divine Providence was sent into Egypt to be as a shepherd, to feed his father's family, and as a stone to uphold and support it; in which he was a type of Christ, the great and good Shepherd of the flock, and the stone that is laid in Zion, on which the whole spiritual Israel of God is built; the foundation stone on which they are laid, and are safe, and the corner stone which knits them together. And some think that Christ is principally meant, who in his office capacity was from the mighty God of Jacob, a Shepherd of his providing and appointing, and a stone of his laying; and so Nachmahides says, the stone here made mention of is the same as in (⁴⁸²Psalm 118:22).

Ver. 25. *Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee,* etc.] The same with the mighty God of Jacob, by whom his hands had been made strong, and he would be still helped, protected, and defended against his powerful enemies; and by whom Christ, the antitype, was helped as man and Mediator against his enemies, and to do all the work he engaged in; and by whom all the Lord's people are helped to fight his battles with their spiritual enemies, to withstand temptations, exercise every grace, and do the will and work of God:

and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above; with those blessings which may be ascribed to the sun, moon, and stars, and their influences as means, and to the rain and dew which descend from thence; and as with such temporal blessings, so with spiritual ones in heavenly things in Christ:

blessings of the deep that lieth under; of rivers, fountains and springs that rise out of the earth from below, which water and make fruitful:

blessings of the breasts, and of the womb an increase of children, and of cattle, and those healthy, thriving, and prosperous, which are great temporal mercies; as are the word and ordinances spiritual ones, those breasts of consolation, which such that are born again partake of, and grow thereby.

Ver. 26. *The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors,* etc.] Jacob's blessings were greater and more numerous, both those which he himself had, and bestowed upon his offspring, than

those that Abraham and Isaac had, he having more children than they, and blessings for everyone of them; whereas they each of them had but two, and one of these two were excluded the blessing: and besides, though these blessings were the same in substance bestowed on his progenitors, and by them on him, yet these were more clearly and distinctly given out by him to his posterity, and were nearer their accomplishment:

unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, they shall be on the head of Joseph: that is, continue on him as long as the everlasting hills continue, particularly those of a spiritual kind, for they endure for ever. The word for “bounds” signifies “desire”; and Onkelos paraphrases the words,

“which the princes that were of old desired:”

meaning either the angels who desire to look into heavenly things, or the patriarchs, who were desirous of the coming of the Messiah, and salvation by him; and so the Vulgate Latin version is, “until the desire of the everlasting hills should come”; that is, Christ, who is the desire of all nations, in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed, and therefore desirable; blessings of all kinds are upon the head of the just, as they were on Joseph, (^{<3006>}Proverbs 10:6)

and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren; who shunned company and conversation with him, and at length sold him into Egypt, where he was parted from them, and remained separate for many years; and when they came to dwell in the land of Egypt, they lived in Goshen, and he at Pharaoh’s court, where he was distinguished with peculiar honours, and advanced above them. Of Christ his antitype, (see ^{<3026>}Hebrews 7:26).

Ver. 27. *Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf,* etc.] All the three Targums apply this prophecy to the priests offering the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, in the temple, which stood in the lot of Benjamin, and dividing what was left, and eating it. But it respects the tribe itself, compared to a wolf for its fortitude, courage, and valour, as well as for its rapaciousness, it being a warlike tribe; and the Jewish writers ^{f1906} say, that it is compared to a wolf, because of its strength. Wolves, said to be devoted to Mars, are called “martial” wolves by Virgil ^{f1907} and Horace ^{f1908}; and we have an early instance of the valour and success of this tribe in a war waged with all the other tribes, and in two pitched battles, in one with 26,000 men it beat 400,000, (^{<0715>}Judges 20:15-25), and if this tribe is compared to a wolf for

rapaciousness, this may be illustrated by the remainder of those, after the loss of a third battle, catching and carrying away the daughters of Shiloh, and making them their wives, (^{<0723>}Judges 21:23). Some apply this to particular persons of this tribe, as to Saul the first king of Israel, who was of Benjamin; and who as soon as he took the kingdom of Israel, in the morning, in the beginning of that state, fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, and the Amalekites, (^{<0947>}1 Samuel 14:47,48) and to Mordecai and Esther, who were of the same tribe, who after the captivity, and in the evening of that state, divided the spoil of Haman, (^{<1701>}Esther 8:1) this is observed by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom. Some of the Christian fathers have applied the prophecy to the Apostle Paul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin; who in the morning of his youth was a fierce and ravenous persecutor, and made havoc of the church of God: and in the evening, or latter part of his life, spent his days in dividing the spoil of Satan among the Gentiles, taking the prey out of his hands, turning men from the power of Satan unto God, and distributed food to the souls of men. In a spiritual sense he was a warlike man, a good soldier of Christ, and accounted as such, had a warfare to accomplish, and enemies to fight with; and did fight the good fight of faith, conquered, and was more than a conqueror through Christ, and is now crowned: and why may it not be applied to Christ himself, seeing the blessing of Benjamin by Moses, (^{<0592>}Deuteronomy 33:12) seems to belong to him? he is God's Benjamin, the son and man of his right hand, as dear to him as his right hand, in whom his power has been displayed, and who is exalted at his right hand; and may as well be compared to a wolf as to a lion, as he is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and as God himself is compared to a lion and bear, (^{<2837>}Hosea 13:7,8) and who is expressly said to divide the spoil with the strong, (^{<2592>}Isaiah 53:12) spoiled principalities and powers, delivered his people as a prey out of the hands of the mighty, and will make an utter destruction of all his and their enemies. Some of these things were done in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, and others will be done in the evening of it, (^{<5025>}Colossians 2:15 ^{<6691>}Revelation 19:11,15).

Ver. 28. *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel*, etc.] The twelve sons of Jacob before mentioned were heads of twelve tribes, who were afterwards seated, and had their part in the land of Canaan; there were indeed thirteen tribes, two springing from Joseph; but then the tribe of Levi had no part in the land of Canaan, which was divided into twelve parts; this shows that

the above predictions respect not the persons of the patriarchs, but their tribes:

and this [is it] that their father spake unto them, and blessed them: the above is the sum and substance of what he had delivered in his patriarchal benediction of them, a little before his death; and though some of them, as Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, may seem rather to be cursed than blessed, yet the greater part of them were clearly and manifestly blessed; and what he said by way of correction and rebuke to the others, might be blessed to them for their good; nor is it improbable, that after he had delivered out the above predictions, he might wish for and implore a blessing on them all; and certain it is, that they all had a part in the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as it related to the land of Canaan:

everyone according to his blessing he blessed them; according to the blessing which was appointed to them of God, and was in later times bestowed on them, Jacob under a spirit of prophecy was directed to bless them with, or to foretell what blessings should come upon them, and which accordingly did.

Ver. 29. *And he charged them, and said unto them,* etc.] The same charge he had given to Joseph he here renews, and lays it upon his sons, who were everyone of them to go along with Joseph to bury him in Canaan:

I [am] to be gathered unto my people; the people of God, the spirits of just men made perfect, the souls of all the saints who before this time had departed this life, and were in a state of happiness and bliss; called his people, because he and they were of the same mystical body the church, belonged to the same general assembly, and church of the firstborn; the company of God's elect, who were in the same covenant of grace, and partakers of the same blessings and promises of grace: this shows that the souls of men are immortal; that there is a future state after death, which is a state of happiness, and into which saints immediately enter as soon as they die, and where Jacob expected to be in a short time:

bury me with my fathers; the other part of himself, his body, which should not be gathered to his people, as his soul would be, he orders to be interred with his fathers Abraham and Isaac:

in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; which is more particularly described in the following verse, being the place of his father's sepulchre.

Ver. 30. *In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan,* etc.] This is so exactly described, that there might be no mistake about the place, (see ^{<012317>}Genesis 23:17,19):

which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying place; this is observed if any of the successors of Ephron, or any of the Hittites, should lay any claim unto it, or dispute the right of Jacob's sons to bury him there.

Ver. 31. *There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife,* etc.] Abraham buried Sarah there himself, and his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him there:

there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; we have no other account of the death of Rebekah, and her burial, but here; it is probable she died before Isaac, and that Isaac buried her in this cave; and here Esau and Jacob buried him:

and there I buried Leah; of whose death and burial we also read nowhere else but here; it is probable she died before Isaac, and that Isaac buried her in this cave; and here Esau and Jacob buried him:

Ver. 32. *The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is there, was from the children of Heth.*] Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of, that both the field and cave were bought by Abraham of Ephron the Hittite, and that the children of Heth were witnesses of the bargain, and of the payment of the money, and by whom the estate was made sure to Abraham; all which might be urged, if any controversy should arise about it; (see ^{<012316>}Genesis 23:16-20)

Ver. 33. *And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons,* etc.] Had given all the proper directions and instructions concerning his interment in the land of Canaan: he gathered up his feet into the bed; on which he sat while he blessed his sons, and gave orders to them about his burial; but now he gathered up his feet into the bed, laid himself along, and composed himself in a proper posture to die. What authority the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on (^{<01421>}Genesis 49:21) had for saying this bed was a bed of gold, I know not:

and he yielded up the ghost; he expired, he died an easy death, without any pain or sickness: which Ben Melech says this phrase is expressive of. He died in the year of his age one hundred and forty seven, and not one

hundred and forty four, as a Jewish chronologer^{f1909} wrongly puts it, and in the year of the world 2315, and before Christ 1689, according to Bishop Usher^{f1910}: and was gathered unto his people: (see Gill on “~~4429~~ Genesis 49:29”).