

CHAPTER 33

Yet Moses has not done with the children of Israel; he seemed to have taken final leave of them in the close of the foregoing chapter, but still he has something more to say. He had preached them a farewell sermon, a very copious and pathetic discourse. After sermon he had given out a psalm, a long psalm; and now nothing remains but to dismiss them with a blessing; that blessing he pronounces in this chapter in the name of the Lord, and so leaves them.

I. He pronounces them all blessed in what God had done for them already, especially in giving them his law (v. 2-5).

II. He pronounces a blessing upon each tribe, which is both a prayer for and a prophecy of their felicity.

1. Reuben (v. 6).
2. Judah (v. 7).
3. Levi (v. 8-11).
4. Benjamin (v. 42).
5. Joseph (v. 13-17).
6. Zebulun and Issachar (v. 18, 19).
7. Gad (v. 20, 21).
8. Dan (v. 22).
9. Naphtali (v. 23).
10. Asher (v. 24, 25).

III. He pronounces them all in general blessed upon the account of what God would be to them, and do for them if they were obedient (v. 26, etc.).

DEUTERONOMY 33:1-5

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

The first verse is the title of the chapter: it is a blessing. In the foregoing chapter he had thundered out the terrors of the Lord against Israel for their sin; it was a chapter like Ezekiel's roll, full of lamentation, and mourning, and woe. Now to soften that, and that he might not seem to part in anger,

he here subjoins a blessing, and leaves his peace, which should descend and rest upon all those among them that were the sons of peace. Thus Christ's last work on earth was to bless his disciples (^{<42B>}Luke 24:50), like Moses here, in token of parting as friends. Moses blessed them,

1. As a prophet — a *man of God*. Note, It is a very desirable thing to have an interest in the prayers of those that have an interest in heaven; it is a *prophet's reward*. In this blessing Moses not only expresses his good wishes to this people, but by the spirit of prophecy foretels things to come concerning them.

2. As a parent to Israel; for so good princes are to their subjects. Jacob upon his death-bed blessed his sons (^{<44B>}Genesis 49:1), in conformity to whose example Moses here blesses the tribes that were descended from them, to show that though they had been very provoking yet the entail of the blessing was not cut off. The doing of this immediately before his death would not only be the more likely to leave an impression upon them, but would be an indication of the great good-will of Moses to them, that he desired their happiness, though he must die and not share in it.

He begins his blessing with a lofty description of the glorious appearances of God to them in giving them the law, and the great advantage they had by it.

I. There was a visible and illustrious discovery of the divine majesty, enough to convince and for ever silence atheists and infidels, to awaken and affect those that were most stupid and careless, and to put to shame all secret inclinations to other gods, v. 2.

1. His appearance was glorious: he shone forth like the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Even Seir and Paran, two mountains at some distance, were illuminated by the divine glory which appeared on Mount Sinai, and reflected some of the rays of it, so bright was the appearance, and so much taken notice of by the adjacent countries. To this the prophet alludes, to set forth the wonders of the divine providence, ^{<31B>}Habakkuk 3:3, 4; ^{<32B>}Psalms 18:7-9. The Jerusalem Targum has a strange gloss upon this, that, “when God came down to give the law, he offered it on Mount Seir to the Edomites, but they refused it, because they found in it, *Thou shalt not kill*. Then he offered it on Mount Paran to the Ishmaelites, but they also refused it, because they found in it, *Thou shalt not steal*; and then he came to Mount Sinai and offered it to Israel, and they said, *All that*

the Lord shall say we will do.” I would not have transcribed so groundless a conceit but for the antiquity of it.

2. His retinue was glorious; he came with his holy myriads, as Enoch had long since foretold he should come in the last day to judge the world, ^{<4114>}Jude 1:14. These were the angels, those *chariots of God in the midst of which* the Lord was, on *that holy place*, ^{<4187>}Psalms 68:17. They attended the divine majesty, and were employed as his ministers in the solemnities of the day. Hence the law is said to *be given by the disposition of angels*, ^{<4115>}Acts 7:53; ^{<4116>}Hebrews 2:2.

II. He gave them his law, which is,

1. Called *a fiery law*, because it was given them *out of the midst of the fire* (^{<4183>}Deuteronomy 4:33), and because it works like fire; if it be received, it is melting, warming, purifying, and burns up the dross of corruption; if it be rejected, it hardens, sears, torments, and destroys. The Spirit descended in cloven tongues as of fire; for the gospel also is a fiery law.

2. It is said to *go from his right hand*, either because he wrote it on tables of stone, or to denote the power and energy of the law and the divine strength that goes along with it, that it may not return void. Or it came as a gift to them, and a precious gift it was, a right-hand blessing.

3. It was an instance of the special kindness he had for them: *Yea, he loved the people* (v. 32), and therefore, though it was a fiery law, yet it is said to *go for them* (v. 2), that is, in favour to them. Note, The law of God written in the heart is a certain evidence of the love of God shed abroad there: we must reckon God's law one of the gifts of his grace. Yea, he embraced the people, or *laid them in his bosom*; so the word signifies, which denotes not only the dearest love, but the most tender and careful protection. *All his saints are in his hand*. Some understand it particularly of his supporting them and preserving them alive at Mount Sinai, when the terror was so great that Moses himself quaked; they heard the voice of God and lived, ^{<4183>}Deuteronomy 4:33. Or it denotes his forming them into a people by his law; he moulded and fashioned them as a potter does the clay. Or they were in his hand to be covered and protected, used and disposed of, as the seven stars were in the hand of Christ, ^{<4116>}Revelation 1:16. Note, God has all his saints in his hand; and, though there are *ten thousands of his saints* (v. 2), yet his hand, with which he measures the waters, is large enough,

and strong enough, to hold them all, and we may be sure that *none can pluck them out of his hand*, ^{<418>}John 10:28.

III. He disposed them to receive the law which he gave them: *They sat down at thy feet*, as scholars at the feet of their master, in token of reverence, in attendance and humble submission to what is taught; so Israel sat at the foot of Mount Sinai, and promised to hear and do whatever God should say. They were *struck to thy feet*, so some read it; namely, by the terrors of Mount Sinai, which greatly humbled them for the present, ^{<429>}Exodus 20:19. Every one then stood ready to receive God's words, and did so again when the law was publicly read to them, as ^{<483>}Joshua 8:34. It is a great privilege when we have heard the words of God to have opportunity of hearing them again. ^{<476>}John 17:26, *I have declared thy name, and will declare it*. So Israel not only had received the law, but should still receive it by their prayers, and other lively oracles. The people are taught (v. 4, 5), in gratitude for the law of God, always to keep up an honourable remembrance both of the law itself and of Moses by whom it was given. Two of the Chaldee paraphrasts read it, *The children of Israel said, Moses commanded us a law*. And the Jews say that as soon as a child was able to speak his father was obliged to teach him these words: *Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*.

1. They are taught to speak with great respect of the law, and to call it *the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*. They looked upon it,

(1.) As peculiar to them, and that by which they were distinguished from other nations, who neither had the knowledge of it (^{<472>}Psalm 147:20), nor, if they had, were under those obligations to observe it that Israel were under: and therefore (says bishop Patrick), “when the Jews conquered any country, they did not force any to embrace the law of Moses, but only to submit to the seven precepts of Noah.”

(2.) As entailed upon them; for so inheritances are to be transmitted to their posterity. And,

(3.) As their wealth and true treasure. Those that enjoy the word of God and the means of grace have reason to say, We have a goodly heritage. He is indeed a rich man in whom the word of Christ dwells richly. Perhaps the law is called their *inheritance* because it was given them with their inheritance, and we so annexed to it that the forsaking of the law would be a forfeiture of the inheritance. See ^{<4811>}Psalm 119:111.

2. They are taught to speak with great respect of Moses; and they were the more obliged to keep up his name because he had not provided for the keeping of it up in his family; his posterity were never called the *sons of Moses*, as the priests were the *sons of Aaron*.

(1.) They must own Moses a great benefactor to their nation, in that he *commanded them the law*; for, though it came from the hand of God, it went through the hand of Moses.

(2.) *He was king in Jeshurun*. Having commanded them the law, as long as he lived he took care to see it observed and put in execution; and they were very happy in having such a king, who ruled them, and went in and out before them at all times, but did in a special manner look great when the *heads of the people were gathered together* in parliament, as it were, and Moses was president among them. Some understand this of God himself; he did then declare himself their King when he gave them the law, and he continued so long as they were *Jeshurun*, an upright people, and till they rejected him, ~~GEN~~1 Samuel 12:12. But it seems rather to be understood of Moses. A good government is a great blessing to any people, and what they have reason to be very thankful for; and that constitution is very happy which as Israel's, which as ours, divides the power between the king in Jeshurun and the heads of the tribes, when they are gathered together.

~~GEN~~ DEUTERONOMY 33:6-7

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

Here is,

I. The blessing of Reuben. Though Reuben had lost the honour of his birthright, yet Moses begins with him; for we should not insult over those that are disgraced, nor desire to perpetuate marks of infamy upon any, though ever so justly fastened at first, v. 6. Moses desires and foretels,

1. The preserving of this tribe. Though a frontier tribe on the other side Jordan, yet, "*Let it live*, and not be either ruined by its neighbours or lost among them." And perhaps he refers to those chosen men of that tribe who, having had their lot assigned them already, left their families in it,

and were now ready to *go over armed before their brethren*, ^{<0627>}Numbers 32:27. “Let them be protected in this noble expedition, and have their heads covered in the day of battle.”

2. Let it be a numerous tribe; though their other honours be lost, so that they shall not excel, yet let them multiply.” *Let Reuben live and not die, though his men be few*; so bishop Patrick, thinks it may be rendered. “Though he must not expect to flourish (^{<0404>}Genesis 49:4), yet let him not perish.” All the Chaldee paraphrasts refer this to the other world: *Let Reuben live in life eternal, and not die the second death*, so Onkelos. *Let Reuben live in this world, and not die that death which the wicked die in the world to come*, so Jonathan and the Jerusalem Targum.

II. The blessing of Judah, which is put before Levi because our *Loud sprang out of Judah*, and (as Dr. Lightfoot says) because of the dignity of the kingdom above the priesthood. The blessing (v. 7) may refer either,

1. To the whole tribe in general. Moses prays for, and prophesies, the great prosperity of that tribe., That God would hear his prayers (see an instance, ^{<4134>}2 Chronicles 13:14, 15), settle him in his lot, prosper him in all his affairs, and give him victory over his enemies. It is taken for granted that the tribe of Judah would be both a praying tribe and an active tribe. “Lord,” says Moses, “hear his prayers, and give success to all his undertakings: *let his hands be sufficient for him* both in husbandry and in war.” The voice of prayer should always be attended with the hand of endeavour, and then we may expect prosperity. Or,

2. It may refer in particular to David, as a type of Christ, that God *would hear his prayers*, ^{<4101>}Psalms 20:1 (and Christ was *heard always*, ^{<4114>}John 11:42), that he would give him victory over his enemies, and success in his great undertakings. See ^{<4180>}Psalms 89:20 etc. And that prayer that God would *bring him to his people* seems to refer to Jacob's prophecy concerning Shiloh, That *to him should the gathering of the people be*, ^{<4100>}Genesis 49:10. The tribe of Simeon is omitted in the blessing, because Jacob had left it under a brand, and it had never done any thing, as Levi had done, to retrieve its honour. It was lessened in the wilderness more than any other of the tribes; and Zimri, who was so notoriously guilty in the matter of Peor but the other day, was of that tribe. Or, because the lot of Simeon was an appendage to that of Judah, that tribe is included in the

blessing of Judah. Some copies of the Septuagint join Simeon with Reuben: *Let Reuben live and not die; and let Simeon be many in number.*

DEUTERONOMY 33:8-11

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

In blessing the tribe of Levi, Moses expresses himself more at large, not so much because it was his own tribe (for he takes no notice of his relation to it) as because it was God's tribe. The blessing of Levi has reference.

I. To the high priest, here called God's *holy one* (v. 8), because his office was holy, in token of which, *Holiness to the Lord* was written upon his forehead.

1. He seems to acknowledge that God might justly have displaced Aaron and his seed, for his sin at Meribah, (~~Q17E~~ Exodus 17:7), which might be very remarkable, and which God might have an eye to in conferring the priesthood upon him, though no mention is made of it there. All the Chaldee paraphrasts agree that it was a trial in which he was *found perfect and faithful*, and *stood in the trial*; therefore not that, (~~Q17E~~ Numbers 20:2). He prays that the office of the high priest might ever remain: *Let thy thummim and thy urim be with him*. It was given him for some eminent piece of service, as appears, (~~Q17E~~ Malachi 2:5. "Lord, let it never be taken from him." Notwithstanding this blessing, the urim and thummim were lost in the captivity, and never restored under the second temple. But this prayer has its full accomplishment in Jesus Christ, God's Holy One, and our great high priest, of whom Aaron was a type: with him who had lain in the Father's bosom from eternity the urim and thummim shall remain; for he is the wonderful and everlasting counsellor. Some translate the thummim and urim appellatively, the rather because the usual order is here inverted, and here only. *Thummim* signifies *integrity*, and *Urim illumination*: Let these be with thy holy one, that is, "Lord, let the high priest ever be both an upright man and an understanding man." A good prayer to be put up for the ministers of the gospel, that they may have clear heads and honest hearts; light and sincerity make a complete minister.

II. To the inferior priests and Levites, v. 9-11.

1. He commends the zeal of this tribe for God when they sided with Moses (and so with God) against the worshippers of the golden calf (^{<0326>}Exodus 32:26 etc.), and, being employed in cutting off the ring-leaders in that wickedness, they did it impartially: the best friends they had in the world, though as dear to them as their next relations, they did not spare if they were idolaters. Note, Our regard to God and to his glory ought always to prevail above our regard to any creature whatsoever. And those who not only keep themselves pure from the common iniquities of the times and places in which they live, but, as they are capable, bear testimony against them, and *stand up for God against the evil-doers*, shall have special marks of honour put upon them. Perhaps Moses may have an eye to the sons of Korah, who refused to join with their father in his gain-saying, ^{<0411>}Numbers 26:11. Also to Phinebas, who *executed judgment, and stayed the plague*. And indeed the office of the priests and Levites, which engaged their constant attendance, at least in their turns, at God's altar, laid them under a necessity of being frequently absent from their families, which they could not take such care of, nor make such provision for, as other Israelites might. This was the constant self-denial they submitted to, that they might *observe God's word*, and keep the *covenant of priesthood*. Note, Those that are called to minister in holy things must sit loose to the relations and interests that are dearest to them in this world, and prefer the gratifying of the best friend they have, ^{<0213>}Acts 21:13; 20:24. Our Lord Jesus knew not his mother and his brethren when they would have taken him off from his work, ^{<0128>}Matthew 12:48.

2. He confirms the commission granted to this tribe to minister in holy things, which was the recompence of their zeal and fidelity, v. 10.

(1.) They were to deal for God with the people: "*They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy laws*, both as preachers in thy religious assemblies, reading and expounding the law (^{<0411>}Nehemiah 8:7, 8), and as judges, determining doubtful and difficult cases that were brought before them," ^{<0417>}2 Chronicles 17:8, 9. The priests' lips kept this knowledge for the use of the people, who were to ask the law at their mouth, ^{<0311>}Malachi 2:7. Even Haggai, a prophet, consulted the priests in a case of conscience, ^{<0311>}Haggai 2:11, etc. Note, Preaching is necessary, not only for the first planting of churches, but for the preserving and edifying of churches when they are planted. See ^{<0343>}Ezekiel 44:23, 24.

(2.) They were to deal for the people with God, in burning incense to the praise and glory of God, and offering sacrifices to make atonement for sin and to obtain the divine favour. This was the work of the priests, but the Levites attended and assisted in it. Those that would have benefit by their incense and offerings must diligently and faithfully observe their instructions.

3. He prays for them, v. 11.

(1.) That God would prosper them in their estates, and make that which was allotted them for their maintenance comfortable to them. *Bless, Lord, his substance.* The provision made for them was very plentiful, and came to them easily, and yet they could have no joy of it unless God blessed it to them; and, since God himself was their portion, a particular blessing might be expected to attend this portion. *Bless, Lord, his virtue;* so some read it. “Lord, increase thy graces in them, and make them more and more fit for their work.”

(2.) That he would accept them in their services: “*Accept the work of his hands,* both for himself and for the people for whom he ministers.” Acceptance with God is that which we should all aim at, and be ambitious of, in all our devotions, whether men accept us or no (~~478~~2 Corinthians 5:9), and it is the most valuable blessing we can desire either for ourselves or others.

(3.) That he would take his part against all his enemies: *Smite through the loins of those that rise against him.* He supposes that God's ministers would have many enemies: some would hate their persons for their faithfulness, and would endeavour to do them a mischief; others would envy them their maintenance, and endeavour sacrilegiously to deprive them of it; others would oppose them in the execution of their office and not submit to the sentence of the priests; and some would aim to overthrow the office itself. Now he prays that God would blast all such attempts, and return the mischief upon the heads of the authors. This prayer is a prophecy that God will certainly reckon with those that are enemies to his ministers, and will keep up a ministry in his church to the end of time, in spite of all the designs of the gates of hell against it. Saul rose up against the Lord's priests (~~028~~1 Samuel 22:18), and this filled the measure of his sin.

DEUTERONOMY 33:12-17

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

Here is,

I. The blessing of Benjamin, v. 12. Benjamin is put next to Levi, because the temple, where the priests' work lay, was just upon the edge of the lot of this tribe; and it is put before Joseph because of the dignity of Jerusalem (part of which was in this tribe) above Samaria, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, and because Benjamin adhered to the house of David, and to the temple of the Lord, when the rest of the tribes deserted both with Jeroboam.

1. Benjamin is here called the *beloved of the Lord*, and the father of this tribe was Jacob's beloved son, the *son of his right hand*. Note, Those are blessed indeed that are beloved of the Lord. Saul the first king, and Paul the great apostle, were both of this tribe.

2. He is here assured of the divine protection: he shall *dwell safely*. Note, Those are safe whom God loves, ^{<390>}Psalm 91:1.

3. It is here intimated that the temple in which God would dwell should be built in the borders of this tribe. Jerusalem the holy city was in the lot of this tribe (^{<483>}Joshua 18:28); and though Zion, the city of David, is supposed to belong to Judah, yet Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, was in Benjamin's lot. God is *therefore* said to dwell *between his shoulders*, because the temple stood on that mount, as the head of a man upon his shoulders. And by this means Benjamin was covered all the day long under the protection of the sanctuary (^{<437>}Psalm 125:2), which is often spoken of as a place of refuge, ^{<327>}Psalm 27:4, 5; ^{<460>}Nehemiah 6:10. Benjamin, dwelling by the temple of God, *dwelt in safety by him*. Note, It is a happy thing to be in the neighbourhood of the temple. This situation of Benjamin, it is likely, was the only thing that kept that tribe in adherence with Judah to the divine institutions, when the other ten tribes apostatized. Those have corrupt and wicked hearts indeed who, the nearer they are to the church, are so much the further from God.

II. The blessing of Joseph, including both Manasseh and Ephraim. In Jacob's blessing (Genesis 49) that of Joseph is the largest, and so it is here;

and thence Moses here borrows the title he gives to Joseph (v. 16), that he was *separated from his brethren*, or, as it might be read, *a Nazarite among them*, both in regard of his piety, wherein it appears, by many instances, he excelled them all, and of his dignity in Egypt, where he was both their ruler and benefactor. His brethren separated him from them by making him a slave, but God distinguished him from them by making him a prince. Now the blessings here prayed for, and prophesied of, for this tribe, are great plenty and great power.

1. Great plenty, v. 13-16. In general: *Blessed of the Lord be his land*. Those were very fruitful countries that fell into the lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, yet Moses prays they might be watered with the blessing of God, which makes rich, and on which all fruitfulness depends. Now,

(1.) He enumerates many particulars which he prays may contribute to the wealth and abundance of those two tribes, looking up to the Creator for the benefit and serviceableness of all the inferior creatures, for they are all that to us which he makes them to be. He prays,

[1.] For seasonable rains and dews, *the precious things of heaven*; and so precious they are, though but pure water, that without them the fruits of the earth would all fail and be cut off.

[2.] For plentiful springs, which help to make the earth fruitful, called here *the deep that coucheth beneath*; both are the *rivers of God* (³⁵⁹Psalm 65:9), and he made particularly the *fountains of waters*, ⁶⁴⁷Revelation 14:7.

[3.] For the benign influences of the heavenly bodies (v. 14), *for the precious fruits* (the word signifies that which is most excellent, and the best in its kind) put forth by the quickening heat of the sun, and the cooling moisture of the moon. “Let them have the yearly fruits in their several months, according to the course of nature, in one month olives, in another dates,” etc. So some understand it.

[4.] For the fruitfulness even of their hills and mountains, which in other countries used to be barren (v. 15): Let them have *the chief things of the ancient mountains*; and, if the mountains be fruitful, the fruits on them will be first and best ripened. They are called ancient mountains, not because prior in time to other mountains, but because, like the first-born, they were superior in worth and excellency; and lasting hills, not only

because as other mountains they were immovable (~~3816~~Habakkuk 3:6), but because the fruitfulness of them should continue.

[5.] For the productions of the lower grounds (v. 16): *For the precious things of the earth*. Though the earth itself seems a useless worthless lump of matter, yet there are precious things produced out of it, for the support and comfort of human life. ~~3818~~Job 28:5. *Out of it cometh bread*, because out of it came our bodies, and to it they must return. But what are the *precious things of the earth* to a soul that came from God and must return to him? Or what is its fulness to the fulness that is in Christ, whence we receive grace for grace? Some make these precious things here prayed for to be figures of *spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ*, the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit.

(2.) He crowns all with the good-will, or favourable acceptance, of him that *dwelt in the bush* (v. 16), that is, of God, that God who appeared to Moses in the bush that burned and was not consumed (~~4012~~Exodus 3:2), to give him his commission for the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Though God's glory appeared there but for a while, yet it is said to dwell there, because it continued as long as there was occasion for it: *the good-will of the shechinah in the bush*; so it might be read, for *shechinah* signifies *that which dwelleth*; and, though it was but a little while a dweller in the bush, yet it continued to dwell with the people of Israel. *My dweller in the bush*; so it should be rendered; that was an appearance of the divine Majesty to Moses only, in token of the particular interest he had in God, which he desires to improve for the good of this tribe. Many a time God has appeared to Moses, but now that he is just dying he seems to have the most pleasing remembrance of that which was the first time, when his acquaintance with the visions of the Almighty first began, and his correspondence with heaven was first settled: that was a time of love never to be forgotten. It was at the bush that God declared himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and so confirmed the promise made to the fathers, that promise which reached as far as the resurrection of the body and eternal life, as appears by our Saviour's argument from it, ~~4215~~Luke 20:37. So that, when he prays for the good-will of him that *dwelt in the bush*, he has an eye to the covenant then and there renewed, on which all our hopes of God's favour must be bottomed. Now he concludes this large blessing with a prayer for the favour or good-will of God,

[1.] Because that is the fountain and spring-head of all these blessings; they are gifts of God's good-will; they are so to his own people, whatever they are to others. Indeed when Ephraim (a descendant from Joseph) slid back from God, *as a backsliding heifer*, those fruits of his country were so far from being the gifts of God's good-will that they were intended but to fatten him for the slaughter, *as a lamb in a large place*, ^{<3046>}Hosea 4:16, 17.

[2.] Because that is the comfort and sweetness of all these blessings; then we have joy of them when we taste God's good-will in them.

[3.] Because that is better than all these, infinitely better; for if we have but the favour and good-will of God we are happy, and may be easy in the want of all these things, and may rejoice in the God of our salvation *though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine*, ^{<3117>}Habakkuk 3:17, 18.

2. Great power Joseph is here blessed with, v. 17. Here are three instances of his power foretold:

(1.) His authority among his brethren: *His glory is like the firstling of his bullock*, or young bull, which is a stately creature, and therefore was formerly used as an emblem of royal majesty. Joshua, who was to succeed Moses, was of the tribe of Ephraim the son of Joseph, and his glory was indeed illustrious, and he was an honour to his tribe. In Ephraim was the royal city of the ten tribes afterwards. And of Manasseh were Gideon, Jephthah, and Jair, who were all ornaments and blessings to their country. Some think he is compared to the firstling of the bullock because the birthright which Reuben lost devolved upon Joseph (^{<3331>}1 Chronicles 5:1, 2), and to the firstling of *his* bullock, because Bashan, which was in the lot of Manasseh, was famous for bulls and cows, ^{<3212>}Psalm 22:12; ^{<3041>}Amos 4:1.

(2.) His force against his enemies and victory over them: *His horns are like the horn of a unicorn*, that is, "The forces he shall bring into the field shall be very strong and formidable, and *with them he shall push the people*," that is, "He shall overcome all that stand in his way." It appears from the Ephraimites' contests, both with Gideon (^{<3111>}Judges 8:1) and with Jephthah (^{<3111>}Judges 12:1), that they were a warlike tribe and fierce. Yet we find the children of Ephraim, when they had forsaken the covenant of God, though they were *armed, turning back in the day of battle* (^{<3339>}Psalm

78:9, 10); for, though here pronounced *strong and bold as unicorns*, when God had departed from them they became as weak as other men.

(3.) The numbers of his people, in which Ephraim, though the younger house, exceeded, Jacob having, in the foresight of the same thing, crossed hands, ^{<189>}Genesis 48:19. *They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh.* Jonathan's Targum applies it to the ten thousands of Canaanites conquered by Joshua, who was of the tribe of Manasseh. And the gloss of the Jerusalem Targum upon the former part of this verse is observable, that “as the firstlings of the bullock were never to be worked, nor could the unicorn ever be tamed, so Joseph should continue free; and they would have continued free if they had not by sin sold themselves.”

~~<538>~~ DEUTERONOMY 33:18-21

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

Here we have,

I. The blessings of Zebulun and Issachar put together, for they were both the sons of Jacob by Leah, and by their lot in Canaan they were neighbours; it is foretold,

1. That they should both have a comfortable settlement and employment, v. 18. Zebulun must rejoice, for he shall have cause to rejoice; and Moses prays that he may have cause in his going out, either to war (for *Zebulun jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field*, ^{<188>}Judges 5:18), or rather to sea, for Zebulun was a *haven of ships*, ^{<143>}Genesis 49:13. And Issachar must rejoice in his tents, that is, in his business at home, his husbandry, to which the men of that tribe generally confined themselves, because they saw that rest was good, and when the sea was rough the land was pleasant, ^{<144>}Genesis 49:14, 15. Observe here,

(1.) That the providence of God, as it variously appoints the bounds of men's habitation, some in the city and some in the country, some in the seaports and some in the inland towns, so it wisely disposes men's inclinations to different employments for the good of the public, as each member of the body is situated and qualified for the service of the whole.

The genius of some men leads them to a book, of others to the sea, of others to the sword; some are inclined to rural affairs, others to trade, and some have a turn for mechanics; and it is well it is so. *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?* ⁴¹²⁷1 Corinthians 12:17. It was for the common good of Israel that the men of Zebulun were merchants and that the men of Issachar were husbandmen.

(2.) That whatever our place and business are it is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to them, and it is a great happiness to be well pleased with them. Let Zebulun rejoice in his going out; let him thank God for the gains and make the best of the losses and inconveniences of his merchandise, and not despise the meanness, nor envy the quietness, of Issachar's tents. Let *Issachar rejoice in his tents*, let him be well pleased with the retirements and content with the small profits of his country seats, and not grudge that he has not Zebulun's pleasure of travelling and profit of trading. Every business has both its conveniences and inconveniences, and therefore whatever Providence has made our business we ought to bring our minds to it; and it is really a great happiness, whatever our lot is, to be easy with it. *This is the gift of God,* ⁴¹⁸⁹Ecclesiastes 5:19.

2. That they should both be serviceable in their places to the honour of God and the interests of religion in the nation (v. 19): *They shall call the people to the mountain*, that is, to the *temple*, which Moses foresaw should be built upon a mountain. I see not why this should be confined (as it is by most interpreters) to Zebulun; if both Zebulun and Issachar received the comforts of their respective employments, why may we not suppose that they both took care to give God the glory of them? Two things they shall do for God: —

(1.) They shall invite others to his service. *Call the people to the mountain.*

[1.] Zebulun shall improve his acquaintance and commerce with the neighbouring nations, to whom he goes out, for this noble purpose, to propagate religion among them, and to invite them into the service of the God of Israel. Note, Men of great business, or large conversation, should wisely and zealously endeavour to recommend the practice of serious godliness to those with whom they converse and among whom their business lies. Such are blessed, for they are blessings. It were well if the enlargement of trade with foreign countries might be made to contribute to the spreading of the gospel. This prophecy concerning Zebulun perhaps

looks as far as the preaching of Christ and his apostles, which began in the land of Zebulun (^{<4044>}Matthew 4:14, 15); then they *called the people to the mountain*, that is, to the kingdom of the Messiah, which is called the *mountain of the Lord's house*, ^{<311>}Isaiah 2:2.

[2.] Issachar that tarries at home, and dwells in tents, shall call upon his neighbours to go up to the sanctuary at the times appointed for their solemn feasts, either because they should be more zealous and forward than their neighbours (and it has been often observed that though those that with Zebulun dwell in the haven of ships, which are places of concourse, have commonly more of the *light* of religion, those that with Issachar dwell in tents in the country have more of the *life* and *heat* of it), and may therefore with their zeal provoke those to a holy emulation that have more knowledge (^{<411>}Psalm 122:1); or because they were more observant of the times appointed for their feasts than others were. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts reads the foregoing verse, *Rejoice, Issachar, in the tents of thy schools*, supposing they would many of them be scholars, and would use their learning for that purpose, according to the revolutions of the year, to give notice of the times of the feasts; for almanacs were not then so common as they are now. And Onkelos more particularly, *Rejoice, Issachar, when thou goest to compute the times of the solemnities at Jerusalem; for then the tribes of Israel shall be gathered to the mountain of the house of the sanctuary*. So he reads the beginning of this verse; and many think this is the meaning of that character of the men of Issachar in David's time, That *they had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*, ^{<412>}1 Chronicles 12:32. And the character which follows (v. 33) of the men of Zebulun, that they were such as *went forth to battle, expert in war*, perhaps may explain the blessing of that tribe here. Note, Those that have not opportunity as Zebulun had of bringing into the church those that are without may yet be very serviceable to its interest by helping to quicken, encourage, and build up, those that are within. And it is good work to call people to God's ordinances, to put those in remembrance that are forgetful, and to stir up those that are slothful, who will follow, but care not to lead.

(2.) They shall not only invite others to the service of God, but they shall abound in it themselves: *There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness*. They shall not send others to the temple and stay at home themselves, under pretence that they cannot leave their business; but, when they stir up others to *go speedily to pray before the Lord*, they shall say, *We will go*

also, as it is ^{<382>}Zechariah 8:21. Note, The good we exhort others to we should ourselves be examples of. And, when they come to the temple, they shall not appear before the Lord empty, but shall bring for the honour and service of God according as he has prospered them, ^{<440>}1 Corinthians 16:2.

[1.] It is here foretold that both these tribes should grow rich. Zebulun that goes abroad shall *suck of the abundance of the seas*, which are full breasts to the merchants, while Issachar, that tarries at home, shall enrich himself with *treasures hid in the sands*, either the fruits of the earth or the underground treasures of metals and minerals, or (because the word for sand here signifies properly the sand of the sea) the rich things thrown up by the sea, for the lot of Issachar reached to the sea-side. Perhaps their success in *calling the people to the mount* is intimated by their *sucking of the abundance of the seas*, for we have a like phrase used for the bringing in of the nations to the church (^{<2415>}Isaiah 60:5), *The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee*, and (v. 16), *Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles*. It is foretold,

[2.] That these tribes, being thus enriched, should *consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth*, ^{<3043>}Micah 4:13. The *merchandise* of Zebulun, and the *hire* of Issachar, shall be *holiness to the Lord* (^{<2288>}Isaiah 23:18), for thereof they shall *offer sacrifices of righteousness*, that is, sacrifices according to the law. Note, We must serve and honour God with what we have; and where he sows plentifully he expects to reap accordingly. Those that *suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand*, ought to offer sacrifices of righteousness proportionable.

II. The blessing of the tribe of Gad comes next, v. 20, 21. This was one of the tribes that was already seated on that side Jordan where Moses now was. Now,

1. He foretels what this tribe would be, v. 20.

(1.) That it would be enlarged, as at present it had a spacious allotment; and he gives God the glory both of its present and of its future extent: *Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad*. We find how this tribe was enlarged by their success in a war which it seems they carried on very religiously against the Hagarites, ^{<1589>}1 Chronicles 5:19, 20, 22. Note, God is to have the glory of all our enlargements.

(2.) That it would be a valiant and victorious tribe, would, if let alone, dwell secure and fearless as a lion; but, if provoked, would, like a lion, *tear the arm with the crown of the head*; that is, would pull in pieces all that stood in his way, both the arm (that is, the strength) and the crown of the head (that is, the policy and authority) of his enemies. In David's time there were Gadites whose faces were *as the faces of lions*, ^{<3108>}1 Chronicles 12:8. Some reckon Jehu to be of this tribe, because the first mention we have of him is at Ramoth Gilead, which belonged to Gad, and they think this may refer to his valiant acts.

2. He commends this tribe for what they had done and were now doing, v. 21.

(1.) They had done very wisely for themselves, when they chose their lot with the first, in a country already conquered: *He provided the first part for himself*; though he had a concern for his brethren, yet his charity began at home, and he was willing to see himself first served, first settled. The Gadites were the first and most active movers for an allotment on that side Jordan, and therefore are still mentioned before the Reubenites in the history of that affair, ^{<0612>}Numbers 32:2. And thus, while the other tribes had their portion assigned them by Joshua the conqueror, Gad and his companions had theirs from Moses the law-giver, and in it they were seated by law; or (as the word is) *covered* or protected by a special providence which watched over those that were left behind, while the men of war went forward with their brethren. Note, *Men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself* (when thou providest first for thyself, as Gad did), ^{<0908>}Psalms 49:18. And God will praise thee when thou doest well for thy soul, which is indeed thyself, and providest the first part for that in a portion from the law-giver.

(2.) They were now doing honestly and bravely for their brethren; for they *came with the heads of the people*, before whom they went armed over Jordan, to *execute the justice of the Lord* upon the Canaanites, under the conduct of Joshua, to whom we afterwards find they solemnly vowed obedience, ^{<0612>}Joshua 1:12, 16. This was what they undertook to do when they had their lot assigned them, ^{<0627>}Numbers 32:27. This they did, ^{<0612>}Joshua 4:12. And, when the wars of Canaan were ended, Joshua dismissed them with a blessing, ^{<0627>}Joshua 22:7. Note, It is a blessed and honourable thing to be helpful to our brethren in their affairs, and particularly to assist in executing the justice of the Lord by suppressing

that which is provoking to him: it was this that was counted to Phinehas for righteousness.

DEUTERONOMY 33:22-25

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

Here is,

I. The blessing of Dan, v. 22. Jacob in his blessing had compared him to a serpent for subtlety; Moses compares him to a lion for courage and resolution: and what could stand before those that had the head of a serpent and the heart of a lion? He is compared to the lions that leaped from Bashan, a mountain noted for fierce lions, whence they came down to leap upon their prey in the plains. This may refer either,

1. To the particular victories obtained by Samson (who was of this tribe) over the Philistines. *The Spirit of the Lord began to move him in the camp of Dan* when he was very young, as *a lion's whelp*, so that in his attacks upon the Philistines he surprised them, and overpowered them by main strength, as a lion does his prey; and one of his first exploits was the rending of a lion. Or,

2. To a more general achievement of that tribe, when a party of them, upon information brought them of the security of Laish, which lay in the furthest part of the land of Canaan from them, surprised it, and soon made themselves masters of it. See ^{<1782>}Judges 18:27. And, the mountains of Bashan lying not far from that city, probably thence they made their descent upon it; and therefore are here said to *leap from Bashan*.

II. The blessing of Naphtali, v. 23. He looks upon this tribe with wonder, and applauds it: "O Naphtali, thou art happy, thou shalt be so, mayest thou be ever so!" Three things make up the happiness of this tribe: —

1. Be thou *satisfied with favour*. Some understand it of the favour of men, their good-will and good word. Jacob had described this tribe to be, generally, courteous obliging people, giving goodly words, as the loving hind, ^{<142>}Genesis 49:21. Now what should they get by being so? Moses here tells them they should have an interest in the affections of their neighbours, and be satisfied with favour. Those that are loving shall be

beloved. But others understand it of the favour of God, and with good reason; for that only is the favour that is satisfying to the soul and puts true gladness into the heart. Those are happy indeed that have the favour of God; and those shall have it that place their satisfaction in it, and reckon that, in having that, they have enough and desire no more.

2. Be thou *full with the blessing of the Lord*, that is, not only with those good things that are the fruits of the blessing (corn, and wine, and oil), but with the blessing itself; that is, the grace of God, according to his promise and covenant. Those who have that blessing may well reckon themselves full: they need nothing else to make them happy. “The portion of the tribe of Naphtali” (the Jews say) “was so fruitful, and the productions so forward, though it lay north, that those of that tribe were generally the first that brought their first-fruits to the temple; and so they had first the blessing from the priest, which was the blessing of the Lord.” Capernaum, in which Christ chiefly resided, lay in this tribe.

3. Be thou *in possession of the sea and the south*; so it may be read, that is, of that sea which shall lie south of thy lot, that was the sea of Galilee, which we so often read of in the gospels, directly north of which the lot of this tribe lay, and which was of great advantage to this tribe, witness the wealth of Capernaum and Bethsaida, which lay within this tribe, and upon the shore of that sea. See how Moses was guided by a spirit of prophesy in these blessings; for before the lot was cast into the lap he foresaw and foretold how the disposal of it would be.

III. The blessing of Asher, v. 24, 25. Four things he prays for and prophecies concerning this tribe, which carries blessedness in its name; for Leah called the father of it *Asher*, saying *Happy am I*, [†]Genesis 30:13.

1. The increase of their numbers. They were now a numerous tribe, [†]Numbers 26:47. “Let it be more so: *Let Asher be blessed with children.*” Note, Children, especially children of the covenant, are blessings, not burdens.

2. Their interest in their neighbours: *Let him be acceptable to his brethren.* Note, It is a very desirable thing to have the love and good-will of those we live among: it is what we should pray to God for, who has all hearts in his hand; and what we should endeavour to gain by meekness and humility, and a readiness, as we have ability and opportunity, to do good to all men.

3. The richness of their land.

(1.) Above ground: *Let him dip his foot in oil*, that is, “Let him have such plenty of it in his lot that he may not only anoint his head with it, but, if he please, wash his feet in it,” which was not commonly done; yet we find our blessed Saviour so acceptable to his brethren that his feet were anointed with the most precious ointment, ~~☞~~ Luke 7:46.

(2.) Under ground: *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass*, that is, “Thou shalt have great plenty of these metals (mines of them) in thy own ground, which by an uncommon blessing shall have both its surface and its bowels rich:” or, if they had them not as the productions of their own country, they should have them imported from abroad; for the lot of this tribe lay on the sea-coast. The Chaldee paraphrasts understand this figuratively: “Thou shalt be strong and bright, as iron and brass.”

4. The continuance of their strength and vigour: *As thy days, so shall thy strength be*. Many paraphrase it thus, “The strength of thy old age shall be like that of thy youth; thou shalt not feel a decay, nor be the worse for the wearing, but shalt renew thy youth; as if not thy shoes only, but thy bones, were iron and brass.” The day is often in scripture put for the events of the day; and, taking it so here, it is a promise that God would graciously support them under their trials and troubles, whatever they were. And so it is a promise sure to all the spiritual seed of Abraham, that God will wisely proportion their graces and comforts to the services and sufferings he calls them out to. Have they work appointed them? They shall have strength to do it. Have they burdens appointed them? They shall have strength to bear them; and never be *tempted above that they are able*. Faithful is he that has thus promised, and hath caused us to hope in this promise.

~~☞~~ DEUTERONOMY 33:26-29

MOSES'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

These are the last words of all that ever Moses, that great writer, that great dictator, either wrote himself or had written from his dictation; they are therefore very remarkable, and no doubt we shall find them very improving. Moses, the man of God (who had as much reason as ever any mere man had to know both), with his last breath magnifies both the God

of Israel and the Israel of God. They are both incomparable in his eye; and we are sure that in this his judgment of both his eye did not wax dim.

I. No God like the God of Israel. None of the gods of the nations were capable of doing that for their worshippers which Jehovah did for his: *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun*, v. 26. Note, When we are expecting that God should bless us in doing well for us we must bless him by speaking well of him: and one of the most solemn ways of praising God is by acknowledging that there is none like him. Now,

1. This was the honour of Israel. Every nation boasted of its god; but none had such a God to boast of as Israel had.

2. It was their happiness that they were taken into covenant with such a God. Two things he takes notice of as proofs of the incontestable pre-eminence of the God of Jeshurun above all other gods:

(1.) His sovereign power and authority: *He rides upon the heavens*, and with the greatest state and magnificence on the skies. Riding on the heavens denotes his greatness and glory, in which he manifests himself to the upper world, and the use he makes of the influences of heaven, and the productions of the clouds, in bringing to pass his own counsels in this lower world: he manages and directs them as a man does the horse he rides on. When he has any thing to do for his people he *rides upon the heavens* to do it; for he does it swiftly and strongly: no enemy can either anticipate or obstruct the progress of him that rides on the heavens.

(2.) His boundless eternity; he is the eternal God, and his arms are *everlasting*, v. 27. The gods of the heathen were but lately invented, and would shortly perish; but the God of Jeshurun is eternal: he was before all worlds, and will be when time and days shall be no more. See ~~3012~~ Habakkuk 1:12.

II. No people like the Israel of God. Having pronounced each tribe happy, in the close he pronounces all together very happy, so happy in all respects that there was no nation under the sun comparable to them (v. 29): *Happy art thou, O Israel*, a people whose God is the Lord, on that account truly happy, and *none like unto thee*. If Israel honour God as a non-such God, he will favour them so as to make them a non-such people, the envy of all their neighbours and the joy of all their well-wishers. *Who is like unto thee, O people? Behold, thou art fair, my love*, says Christ of his spouse.

To which she presently returns, *Behold thou art fair, my beloved. What one nation* (no, not all the nations together) *is like thy people Israel?* ^{<1023>}2 Samuel 7:23. What is here said of the church of Israel and the honours and privileges of it is certainly to be applied to *the church of the first-born*, that are written in heaven. The Christian church is the Israel of God, as the apostle calls it (^{<806>}Galatians 6:16), on which there shall be peace, and which is dignified above all societies in the world, as Israel was.

1. Never were people so well seated and sheltered (v. 27): *The eternal God is thy refuge*. Or, as the word signifies, “*thy habitation, or mansion-house, in which thou art safe, and easy, and at rest, as a man in his own house.*” Every Israelite indeed is at home in God; the soul returns to him, and reposes in him as its resting-place (^{<807>}Psalm 116:7), its hiding-place, ^{<807>}Psalm 32:7. And those that make him their habitation shall have all the comforts and benefits of a habitation in him, ^{<801>}Psalm 91:1. Moses had an eye to God as the habitation of Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness (^{<801>}Psalm 90:1): *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations*. And now that they were going to settle in Canaan they must not change their habitation; still they will need, and still they shall have, the eternal God for their dwelling-place; without him Canaan itself would be a wilderness, and a land of darkness.

2. Never were people so well supported and borne up: *Underneath are the everlasting arms*; that is, the almighty power of God is engaged for the protection and consolation of all that trust in him, in their greatest straits and distresses, and under the heaviest burdens. The everlasting arms shall support,

(1.) The interests of the church in general, that they shall not sink, or be run down; underneath the church is that rock of ages on which it is built, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, ^{<408>}Matthew 16:18.

(2.) The spirits or particular believers, so that, though they may be oppressed, they shall not be overwhelmed by any trouble. How low soever the people of God are at any time brought, everlasting arms are underneath them to keep the spirit from sinking, from fainting, and the faith from failing, even when they are pressed above measure. The everlasting covenant, and the everlasting consolations that flow from it, are indeed everlasting arms, with which believers have been wonderfully sustained, and kept cheerful in the worst of times; divine grace is sufficient for them, ^{<410>}2 Corinthians 12:9.

3. Never were people so well commanded and led on to battle: “*He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee* by his almighty power, which will make room for thee; and by a commission which will bear thee out he shall say, *Destroy them.*” They were now entering upon a land that was in the full possession of a strong and formidable people, and who, being its first planters, looked upon themselves as its rightful owners; how shall Israel justify, and how shall they accomplish, the expulsion of them?

(1.) God will give them a commission to destroy the Canaanites, and that will justify them, and bear them out in it, against all the world. He that is sovereign Lord of all lives and all lands not only allowed and permitted, but expressly commanded and appointed the children of Israel both to take possession of the land of Canaan and to put the sword to the people of Canaan, which, being thus authorized, they might not only lawfully but honourably do, without incurring the least stain or imputation of theft by the one or murder by the other.

(2.) God will give them power and ability to destroy them; nay, he will in effect do it to their hands: he will *thrust out the enemy from before them*; for the very fear of Israel shall put them to flight. God *drive out the heathen to plant his people*, ^{394E}Psalm 44:2. Thus believers are more than conquerors over their spiritual enemies, through Christ that loved them. The captain of our salvation *thrust out the enemy from before us* when he overcame the world and spoiled principalities and powers on the cross; and the word of command to us is, “*Destroy them*; pursue the victory, and you shall divide the spoil.”

4. Never were people so well secured and protected (v. 28): *Israel shall then dwell in safety alone*. Those that dwell in God, and make his name their strong tower, *dwell in safety*; the *place of their defence is the munitions of rocks*, ^{233G}Isaiah 33:16. They shall dwell in safety alone.

(1.) Though alone. Though they contract no alliances with their neighbours, nor have any reason to expect help or succour from any of them, yet they shall dwell in safety; they shall really be safe, and they shall think themselves so.

(2.) Because alone. They shall dwell in safety as long as they continue pure, and unmixed with the heathen, a singular and peculiar people. Their distinction from other nations, though it made them *like a speckled bird* (^{241B}Jeremiah 12:9), and exposed them to the ill-will of those about them,

yet was really their preservation from the mischief their neighbours wished them, as it kept them under the divine protection. All that keep close to God shall be kept safely by him. It is promised that in the kingdom of Christ *Israel shall dwell safely*, ^{<2016>}Jeremiah 23:6.

5. Never were people so well provided for: *The fountain of Jacob* (that is, the present generation of that people, which is as the fountain to all the streams that shall hereafter descend and be derived from it) shall now presently be fixed upon a good land. *The eye of Jacob* (so it might be read, for the same word signifies a fountain and an eye) *is upon the land of corn and wine*, that is, where they now lay encamped they had Canaan in their eye, it was just before their faces, on the other side the river, and they would have it in their hands and under their feet quickly. This land upon which they had set their eye was blessed both with the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven; it was a *land of corn and wine*, substantial and useful productions: also his heavens (as if the heavens were particularly designed to be blessings to that land) *shall drop down dew*, without which, though the soil were ever so good, the corn and wine would soon fail. Every Israelite indeed has his eye, the eye of faith, upon the better country, the heavenly Canaan, which is richly replenished with better things than corn and wine.

6. Never were people so well helped. If they were in any strait, God himself rode upon the heavens for *their help*, v. 26. And they were *a people saved by the Lord*, v. 29. If they were in danger of any harm, or in want of any good, they had an eternal God to go to, an almighty power to trust to; nothing could hurt those whom God helped, nor was it possible that the people should perish which *was saved by the Lord*. Those that are added to the gospel Israel are *such as shall be saved*, ^{<4015>}Acts 2:47.

7. Never were people so well armed. God himself was the shield of their help by whom they were armed defensively, and sufficiently guarded against all assailants: and he was the *sword of their excellency*, by whom they were armed offensively, and made both formidable and successful in all their wars. God is called the *sword of their excellency* because, in fighting for them, he made them to excel other people, or because in all he did for them he had an eye to his sanctuary among them, which is called the *excellency of Jacob*, ^{<1970>}Psalm 47:4; ^{<1221>}Ezekiel 24:21; ^{<1068>}Amos 6:8. Those in whose hearts is the excellency of holiness have God himself for

their shield and sword — are defended by the whole armour of God; his word is their sword, and faith in it is their shield, ^{<406>}Ephesians 6:16, 17.

8. Never were people so well assured of victory over their enemies: *They shall be found liars unto thee*; That is, “shall be forced to submit to thee sorely against their will, so that it will be but a counterfeit submission; yet the point shall be gained, for thou shalt *tread upon their necks*” (so the Septuagint), which we find done, ^{<612>}Joshua 10:24. “Thou shalt tread down their strong-holds, be they ever so high, and trample upon their palaces and temples, though esteemed ever so sacred. *If thy enemies be found liars to thee*” (so some read it), “*thou shalt tread upon their high places*; if they will not be held by the bonds of leagues and treaties, they shall be broken by the force of war.” Thus shall the God of peace tread Satan under the feet of all believers, and shall *do it shortly*, ^{<561>}Romans 16:20.

Now lay all this together, and then you will say, *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people!* Thrice happy the people whose God is the Lord.