

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

JACOB BLEST.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 27TH, 1859, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“Blessed be he that blesseth thee.” Genesis xxvii. 29.

We have in our former four discourses upon Jacob and Esau, seen Jacob at Bethel; the revelations the Lord there made to him; we have seen him in his final preservation to glory; we have seen him in the love wherewith God loved him, in contrast to the hatred wherewith God hated Esau; and we shall see him this morning in that blessing with which the Lord hath crowned the whole. And let me, by way of introduction, just observe to you, that we may perhaps discern the possible, and even the probable way in which Esau would have lost his birth-right, and have lost the blessing, even if Jacob had not obtained them in the way that he did. You recollect we proved that Esau's birthright, he being the first-born, was that of consecration to God, according to that dispensation, so that his birth-right was to be priest in the family. But then Esau, seeing nothing spiritual in this birthright, seeing nothing spiritual in these sacrifices, not knowing anything of God's new covenant, not knowing anything of the truth, he looked at it therefore as a mere ceremonial matter, and said, “What good shall this birthright do to me?” So that, being that cast of character he would very naturally turn away from it, and leave Jacob to come fully into possession of that in which Jacob saw something well worth having, and in which Esau saw not anything worth having. And this birthright, this priesthood and the blessing, would stand inseparably connected; for whoever had the birthright must necessarily have the blessing also. We find, then, that Esau, in the 36th chapter of this book, had acquired great possessions in Edom and the mountains of Seir; he had at the same time great possessions in Canaan; and so rich was Esau, and so rich was Jacob also—so great were they both, that they could not dwell together. Now the question is, which of the two men shall leave Canaan, and go to Seir? Well, Esau would be glad to do so; because, he says, if I stop in this Canaan, here is this religion in the way; this religion is everlastingly present; this Jacob is always talking about God; and therefore I shall be very happy to get away from this religion; to get away from Jacob, because of his religion; and so Esau gathered together

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his children, his cattle, and all that he had, and willingly left Canaan, and went to the mountains of Seir; and thus you will see that he would naturally have gone away from his birthright and from the blessing. Now the question arises, What made Jacob so eager for this birthright and for this blessing? for they were neither of them spiritual; though we shall have this morning to take a spiritual view of our text; the birthright was merely ceremonial in itself; but notwithstanding this, Jacob saw that it had a spiritual meaning; and on that account he would prize it; and so this blessing was temporal in itself, but then Jacob saw that this temporal blessing stood connected with the priesthood, and stood a part of the type of that blessedness which would follow upon the work of Christ; and therefore these things would attract Jacob. Now, that Jacob did wrong in buying the birthright there is no doubt; but then what are we to do in this matter? Are we to set to, and speak of him in doing this, as though we ourselves were never subject to unbelief? as though we ourselves were never in a greater hurry to bless ourselves than the Lord is to bless us? never in a greater hurry to get on than the Lord is that we should get on? For my part, so far from abusing Jacob in this matter, I cannot but rejoice and bless the Lord that he has recorded these drawbacks, these errors, these faults of these great men. Jacob was a wonderful man with God; he was the most wonderful man of his age; and he stands all through the Scriptures as one whom the Lord greatly honoured; and yet he was a man whom the Lord followed up all his days more or less with tribulation. God left Esau to swim down to hell in prosperity; but Jacob was checked here, and troubled there, and overturned there; so that he was a man of very many, many troubles, all to dry up his earthly hopes, and bring him to a knowledge of the Lord. He was, I say, a man highly favoured; a man who enjoyed much communion and fellowship with the blessed God; yet there were these drawbacks about him. Let us look for a moment at his buying the birthright. They say that he took advantage of Esau's being faint, coming home weary and hungry from the field, to buy the birthright with the mess of pottage. But then, there was no doubt plenty of other food in the house that Esau might have had; and there may perhaps have been, and there no doubt was, a fault in Jacob in this matter, that Jacob no doubt well knew that Esau held that birthright with a very light hand, and therefore would easily let it go; that, no doubt was the secret of the spring of action with Jacob. And then, as to this blessing, he would have had the blessing if he had left the matter with the Lord, there is no doubt about that; but he could not leave it to the Lord. But then his meddling with it could not alter it; the matter was settled; and if Isaac himself would have altered it, he could not have done so. And then there is another thing; we ought not to judge the ancients by modern customs. Although right is right in all ages and in all nations, and although wrong is wrong in all ages and in all nations, yet at the same time common custom does modify very much the heinousness of faults that may be committed. For instance, we read that Rahab told untruths in relation to the spies. We ought in reading the Scriptures, to see if we can find any law by which she may feel justified in those untruths. There was a law existing, and that law is what our lawyers call the common law; that is, the law of common custom; that is what we should call it, but we must call it there, the law of hospitality; and that law still exists in the East, especially among the Arabs. When therefore, she had received the spies as her guests, she was bound by the law of hospitality to protect them at any price; and therefore, if she were called upon to tell ten thousand lies, that law of hospitality then in operation would have compelled her so to do; and she would not have felt condemned in so doing; she would have felt condemned in violating the law of hospitality,

but she would not feel condemned in telling untruths to protect her guests' according to the then, and now too, existing law of hospitality. Try Rahab, therefore, in that matter by the custom of her own times; and you will see at once in what way it was she felt justified; and that the Holy Ghost no where reproaches her for what she did. Now, I think this is the fair way to look at the matter. Then, again, the Orientals from the very first of their coming before our notice, were noted for low-cunning; there was a great deal of low-cunning in Jacob, what we should call low-cunning, in his buying the birthright; no doubt about it; and a great deal of low-cunning too in getting the blessing in the way he did; and it was quite common in that day; it was not reckoned disreputable in that day; and if you had lived in that day, if you had lived then, and by some of your schemes in trade, had supplanted another ever so cleverly, and had worked by your craft, so as to work another man completely out of his estate, that would not have been reckoned disreputable; you would have been looked up to as a skilful and clever man; you would have been everywhere praised and admired. Now that is a bad principle, I admit; but still, that is the principle that did exist; and they did not see that harm in these proceedings which we should see. But what rather amazes me is, that people now-a-days pretend to be so shocked with the crafty movements of Jacob; and yet, they themselves are not only as crafty, but some of them ten times worse. I really believe, and I can't help saying so, I really believe there never was an age of the world in which trade was managed with more cunning than it is in the day in which we live.

After these few remarks, to shew the different positions in which we have seen Jacob, and how Esau would in all probability have lost his birthright and his blessing, without Jacob obtaining them in that way that he did; the blessing which Isaac bestowed was temporal; and this birthright was temporal. We are not to suppose that Jacob thought he could buy spiritual things or spiritual blessings; he knew better than that.

But nevertheless, though the blessing with which our text stands connected is a literal blessing, yet I shall this morning take it spiritually. I will therefore take up our subject under two main ideas:—first, *the nature of the blessing*; and secondly, *its contrast with the curse which rested upon Edom, and still rests upon Edom*, as the sign and symbol of the destiny of all those that live and die without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world. And what is a remarkable thing—though perhaps this is hardly the proper place to name it, is that the murderous spirit which Esau on the present occasion, conceived and received into his mind against Jacob, never left his descendants. It comes before us in the most striking manner even in the days both of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. But I notice

I. THE NATURE OF THE BLESSING. "Blessed be he that blesseth thee," is all the same as saying, "Blessed are they that are one with you;" blessed are they that are included in the spiritual, the antitypical meaning of this temporal blessing. Now, this temporal blessing comes before us in a five-fold form. The first is expressive of an inheritance where there is blessing without any curse. "He smelled his son's raiment, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." This field which the Lord hath blessed evidently has reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to the 45th Psalm; "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." And the field, therefore, which the Lord hath blessed, I take to be that inheritance, where there is blessing without any curse; and we see that set before us very clearly and beautifully; for when I come to the field that is blessed, the inheritance where there is blessing and no curse, and the smell of the raiment as the smell of a

field, is, I think, a beautiful figure of our conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ; and by a type and figure of speech expressive of the robes of immortality, in contrast to the robes of mortality; expressive of the robes of incorruptibility, in contrast to that robe of corruption with which we are now clothed; a robe, shall I say, a living robe, a robe of eternal life, in contrast to that robe of death which now marks everything, and marks us, and must bring us to dust; a robe expressive of that righteousness, in contrast to the unrighteousness with which we are naturally clothed; and a robe expressive of that holiness with which we are to be clothed by Jesus Christ, in contrast to that unholiness that marks every man by nature. Therefore, it is expressive not only of an inheritance wherein there is no curse; but of the incorruptibility, the immortality, the holiness, the righteousness, into which they shall be brought. Let us hear the apostle Peter open up this whole matter, "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God;" he begins you see with election. "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit;" and it is the blessed Spirit's work to convince the sinner, strip him, humble him to the very dust; and when the Lord has done that, what is the next thing the Holy Spirit does? Why, he reveals Christ. Then mark that: "Through sanctification," not of the flesh, but, "of the spirit, unto obedience." Obedience to what? Why, to what he had previously said, "Election;" "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father; and therefore there must be obedience to that; the obedience of faith; that truth must be received in the love of it. The sanctification of the Spirit; the sanctification means elective sanctification; it means that eternal election takes hold of you, and brings you into the spirit of electing grace, brings you into the confidence of electing grace, brings you into that oneness with God which we have by it; therefore it is "Through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Then comes the way in which we are brought into this electing grace; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Then the apostle, lest he should not be clear upon this matter, gives us another version; he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." First, you see he chooses us; and then in pursuance of that eternal election, brings us into the sanctification of the Spirit; and the Spirit, consecrating us by electing grace, unites us to the blessed God by electing grace; and then the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ to assure us of this blessed truth, that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and thus takes away every reason why the Lord, having once chosen us, should ever again reject us; that election is sealed and confirmed by the blessed truth that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. We see therefore from what the apostle Peter says upon this matter, that election brought us freely, took us up freely; irrespective of good or evil; then comes abundant mercy—"Which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" so that Christ having conquered death becomes the lively hope of the soul, "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." This then is what I understand spiritually by the words of Isaac, "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." Ah, my hearer, in electing grace there is all blessing, there is no curse; in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit it is all blessing, there is no curse; in the mediation of the dear Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, it is all blessing, there is no curse; the throne of God and the Lamb is established; there is no more curse in the

abundance of God's eternal mercy, it is all blessing: and in the lively hope we have by the resurrection of Jesus Christ it is all blessing, there is no curse; and in the inheritance provided for us there is no curse: no sin can enter into it. We thus have, then, the inheritance, and a people divinely conformed to it. You observe that the very characteristics which are given to the people of God, are given to the inheritance. The inheritance is incorruptible, so are the people; the inheritance fadeth not away, nor can the people; the inheritance is reserved, so are the people; the inheritance is in heaven, so must be the people. And they are kept by the power of God, so also is the inheritance; for it stands in his power; whereas Eden stood in Adam's power; Canaan stood in the Jews' power; and consequently, both are lost; but this eternal inheritance stands in God's power, and therefore it is a kingdom that cannot be moved, but ruleth over all. Such is one part of the blessing. Now what say we to this;—"Blessed be he that blesseth thee?" Can we bless the Lord in this matter, in exchanging us from the first to the second Adam? in taking us from what we were in the first Adam, and constituting us all that is acceptable in his sight, in Christ Jesus? in taking us from our direful destiny, that properly belonged to us as sinners, that of condemnation, that of damnation, and everlasting woe, and giving us a lively hope in this sweet inheritance? Oh, what is there worth seeking or caring for in comparison of this deliverance? In comparison of this hope? In comparison of that blessing which "Maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow?" So then, the first part is blessing without curse. Now you cannot find such a thing in the world; there is a drawback everywhere. We have some good ministers, but there are drawbacks about them all; we have some good Christians, and good deacons,—and I must be careful what I say about these,—but even they are not without their drawbacks at times; and, indeed, whatever you get in this world, there are some drawbacks somewhere. The prophets were wonderful men, but they had their faults; the apostles were wonderful men, but they had their faults; there never was, since the fall, and there never will be but one faultless man; and that faultless man is the Man Christ Jesus. There never was since the fall, and there never will be, unmixed blessedness anywhere but in that eternal inheritance which I am this morning trying, though very feebly, to point out to you.

Let us look at the next part. The next part of the blessing is *the dew of heaven*: "Therefore, God give thee of the "Dew of heaven." What is this dew of heaven? Oh, say some, I know how you will make it out; you will be off to your high doctrines again. Well, I cannot be off to what there is not; I must deal with what there is; and bless the Lord for what there is. Now, what then is this dew of heaven? I make no hesitation in saying that these dews of heaven are the refreshing truths of the gospel. "My doctrine (saith Moses,) "shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." What is his doctrine? What is his speech? Why, it will mean the new covenant name of the Lord; it will mean the greatness of the Lord's mercy in that name; it will mean the perfection of the Mediator. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord." There is the dew. "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God." Greatness in that great and eternal mercy by which we are saved. "He is a rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." That is the dew. It will mean, then, this new covenant name of the Lord; it will mean the stability of the dear Saviour; it will mean the perfection of his work as there declared; and it will mean the justice of God in this case as well as his mercy. "Just and right is he," saith the New Testament, "Just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." God grant me the dew of heaven! Oh, I do pray for this. I can

pray most sincerely to God that his name may be as dew upon my soul, refreshing; I can pray that the greatness of his mercy may swallow up my sins; I can pray that Christ may be my Rock; I can pray that I may be enabled to rejoice that "God is just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; that just and right is he, without iniquity." Christ took our iniquity, but he hath put it away; he has not got it now. Moses saw Christ in possession of iniquity, but he preferred going on to see him without it, having put it away. Our sins were laid on Christ; Moses knew that the sacrifices that were accepted, and that ceremonially took away sin, were a type of that great Melchizedek, Christ Jesus; and therefore, he says, "he is without iniquity." He never had any of his own, but he had his peoples sin. Moses saw that Christ put it away; God took it away from them; Christ hath put it away. It is thus gone and gone for ever. That is the dew. Well, say some, that's an isolated scripture; give us another, and we will believe you. Very well, I can give you another, "Thy dead men shall live." That is very similar. Then comes the Saviour's answer,—*"With my dead body shall they arise."* There is the declaration of the Father, "They shall live." There is the answer of the Saviour, the order of that life, "With my dead body shall they arise." Then comes in the Holy Ghost in his eternal majesty, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs;" as the herb is refreshed and revived with the dew of heaven, so these blessed truths shall be as the dew of herbs to you, and you shall live and shall rejoice: that is the dew. I should weary you if I were to name one half of the Scriptures where spiritual things are presented under the idea of dew. Ah, but, say some, what I want is this; I see what you are at here; you're trying to make out that these must be free-grace Scriptures, savour of election, and savour of mediation; you seem to speak as though there could be no dew except in that way; I want to see you get into a little difficulty here. Oh, bless you, I shall not; its very seldom I get into difficulties in the pulpit; its when I get down among you, when I get into the world, that I get into difficulties. However, we will keep to our point of the dew. Let us have another thorough high-doctrine Scripture,—Psalm cx.—*"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth."* A morning supposes a preceding night; and that preceding night will mean the Saviour's humiliation, the Saviour's solemn and all atoning death. Oh, it is midnight with the soul that is born of God, till it reach the perfection of a Saviour's work. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the day began to dawn; just a few hours more, the Sun of Righteousness arose to go down no more; and thus from the womb of the morning, the morning of the resurrection, Christ has the dew of his youth; he remains young; and I, brought to life by that life, shall be young to all eternity; never grow old, nor decrepit. Poor Job says, "Thou hast filled me with wrinkles;" but here Job loses all his wrinkles and troubles; and is presented before God "Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." What is the dew here? "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." There is the dew; Jesus Christ is the dew of heaven. I cannot forbear bringing one more Scripture; the last chapter of Hosea; "I will be as the dew unto Israel;" *I will be*; closer still. Oh, then there is no dew without God; no dew without the Spirit of God, no dew without the Christ of God. Oh, my hearers, I cannot forbear saying, what a solemn contrast is that to the great God being a consuming fire; what a delightful contrast is that to the great God being a God of thunder, a God of tempest, and blackness, and darkness, as shewn at Sinai. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." What can be more gentle, what can be more tender, what can be more kind, what can be more harmless, what

more inoffensive, what more chaste, more pure, more lovely?—"I will be as the dew unto Israel;" and therefore, "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon;" take a firm hold of the truth; "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." Well, now, I must have a word with you little ones; you, brought to feel that you are so cursed as sinners, so lost as sinners, so helpless as sinners, that nothing but grace could put you into the number of the Saviour's family; you, brought to see that there is only one way in which there can be an inheritance which is all blessing without any curse; you, brought to long for this dew of heaven, to thirst for it as a thirsty land; you brought thus far, and yet be lost? Oh, no! oh, no, never! Remember that the soul's oneness with the truth of God is a better evidence, apart from full assurance of faith, than any evidence you can have; because that is something that never gives way. There are times when you feel no will to serve God, when the will seems dead within you; times when you feel no power to pray; times when the savour of the blessed Redeemer's name seems gone; and his name reduced to something as it were common; that is, it does not produce what you want it to produce; and you are almost ready to say, Oh, can it be worse with those who never heard his name? And yet with it all you feel a oneness with God's truth; you have but one thing left; and that is a reconciliation with his truth, every thing else seems gone, the heavens appear as brass, and the earth as iron; but you still have a oneness with the truth, and you cannot give it up. It is true some good people have at such a time been tempted to go somewhere where duty-faith is preached; but then that is those that have never known what duty-faith is; therefore they say, I don't seem to get any good where the truth is preached; so I'll go where they say it is not preached; and if the preacher is in one of his duty-faith fits, they get enough to last them all their life; and therefore they say, I will return to my own home, where the truth is, and there I will wait; for I do read in the Scripture that "She that tarried at home, divided the spoil;" and the old proverb says that "a rolling stone never gathers moss;" and perhaps as the Lord has appeared to me in times past, he will appear to me again; and if he does not appear to me by his own truth, he will not appear to me by the devil's lies; let me wait at wisdom's gates, and not at folly's gates, for blessed are all they that thus wait; depend upon it they shall not wait in vain. Oh, you will never be lost. How very much might be said upon this one thing, (this oneness with the truth) how much it does: it often brings the child of God to the house of God when he would not come otherwise. I do not expect, he says, to get any thing, but still I will go; I know the minister will preach the truth; he cannot preach anything else, for he has got nothing else for his own soul; and, therefore, I will go; and it may be that the truths of the gospel will again be as dew to my soul. "Blessed is he that blesseth thee." But we must have another word on the blessing. We have taken only two steps yet; the first is, *the blessing unmingled with curse*; the second is, *the dew of heaven*.

Now the next part of the blessing is that of *corn*. The dew of heaven, and plenty of corn and wine. That means freedom from famine. Now it is really useless to deny that we are all concerned to get bread; we are all concerned that the Lord will appear for us in his providence, and find us a home and a little bread; we are all concerned for that; we ought not to deny it; it is a matter of necessity, and of course a matter of anxiety; and it is a matter of great encouragement to think that the Lord will help us. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things," (that is, all needful things, not what you may think to be needful, but what the Lord sees needful,) "shall be added unto you." Most of the Lord's people are poor

people; not absolutely so, but comparatively so; most of them have to struggle hard for the things of this life; but whatever privations you may undergo in this life, though like Lazarus you may seek to be fed from the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; whatever you may be subjected to by way of trial, when you come to look at eternity, there you find plenty of bread, plenty of corn; there is the bread of eternal life; there is enough and to spare; he that shall eat of that bread has plenty. This made David say, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." There is no such bread to be had anywhere on earth if they wanted it; the thing is impossible; because nothing will suit them but the bread of heaven, the bread of eternal life. Well now, Peter, will you leave your father's house and turn beggar? Well, Lord, we want the bread of eternal life; and we know it is to be had nowhere else; and therefore "to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." So that David never saw the seed of the righteous spiritually turn beggars. He had seen himself beg, literally beg the high priest for bread; Lazarus begged literally, but not spiritually. Ah, says some one, all Christians beg spiritually, for all pray. But praying is not begging. No. You would not like me to come to your house, and find one of your children asking you for something you wouldn't like me to say, Oh, there is your child begging; and if it happened to be a little boy, the mother would throw all her black looks at me and say, "Don't call my child a beggar, sir; I thought you knew better than that, sir;" if it was a boy, the mother would be down upon me directly; she would feel her boy was degraded. So, my hearers, when you pray, saying, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread," it is not begging; it is asking, but not begging in the mean sense of the word. If then you want this "plenty of corn," if you want the bread of eternal life, you cannot go to beg this; there is nowhere to go; it is not to be found at Rome; and you know it is not to be found in any human system; it is not to be found in duty faith; it is to be found nowhere but in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Let us, in conclusion, just look for a moment at the words of the Psalmist upon this matter.—"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house." There it is, where the bread of life is, where the pure blood of the grape is; where the presence of the Lord is; "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

I must leave until next Lord's day morning, the other part of our subject, namely, the *contrast* of the blessing with the curse.