

# THE THIRTEENTH SERMON

## OF JACOB AND ESAU,

### GENESIS 27

- 31** Isaack said, accursed be every one that shall curse thee, and blessed be he that shall bless thee.
- 32** Now as Isaack had made an end of blessing Jacob: it came to pass I say, that Jacob being scarce gone forth from the presence of his father Isaack that Esau returned from his hunting.
- 33** Therefore he also brought unto his father delicates prepared: and he said unto his father, let my father arise and eat of the venison of his son, that thy soul may bless me.
- 34** Now Isaack saith unto him, who art thou? he said, I am thy first begotten son Esau.
- 35** Then Isaack trembled with a wonderful fear and said, who is that which brought unto me venison even now, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and whom have I blessed? also he shall be blessed.
- 36** Now Esau hearing the words of his father, cried out with a wonderful great and bitter cry: and he said unto his father, bless me, my father bless me also.
- 37** Who said, thy brother came through crafty, and hath taken away thy blessing.
- 38** And he said, how rightly is his name called Jacob! for he hath supplanted me now the second time, he had taken my birthright, and lo now he hath taken my blessing also,

YESTERDAY WE STAYED AT THIS WORD concerning the blessing which Isaack gave unto his son Jacob, to wit, that whosoever should bless him, should be blessed: and whosoever should curse him, should be accursed. But it is very certain that this was not in the hand of any mortal man: for it belongeth unto God to punish those which do any wrong to his children: and besides that, it is forbidden us to seek revenge, it is not in our power

to bring to pass that our enemies have their reward. Now therefore it is very certain that Isaack pronounced here the sentence of god, and that he spake not in his own name: but was authorized as a prophet. And indeed we have seen that this was pronounced from the mouth of god to Abraham in the twelfth Chapter

I will bless all those which shall bless thee, and I will curse all those which shall curse thee. (<011202> Genesis 12:2, 3)

God reserved this unto himself. But now how is it that Isaack presumeth to speak after the manner of god, unless because he knew that this inheritance was left unto him, and so he resigneth it unto his son, to the end that after his departure he might be the possessor thereof? We see then briefly that Isaack speaketh not in this point rashly, although that he had many foul faults, yet notwithstanding he was grounded upon that which God had promised him, and he knew that this office was committed unto him. And thus he doubted not to curse all those which should curse his stock.

Now seeing it is so, this was not man's word, but a sentence given by the power of the holy ghost. We have then first of all to learn, that if we be knit together with Jacob by faith, that God taketh us into his custody, upon such condition, that all they which shall hurt us and shall do us any scathe [*harm*], they shall fight against him: for he defendeth us as the apple of his eye, as he hath also spoken thereof. And what a benefit is this, that God taketh all our quarrels, and becometh the enemy of our enemies, that none can lift up so much as a hand against us, to do us wrong or violence, but that he by and by setteth himself against him, as if that were to violate his own majesty? When therefore God cometh so low, that he declareth that we must address ourselves to him and stay upon him, as oftentimes as any wrong is done unto us: what better thing can we desire? Thus therefore let us learn to be patient in all our afflictions: and if we be unjustly persecuted in this world, let us know that nothing shall escape unpunished, but that all our adversaries must come to an account. They may imagine for a time that they have gotten all: but as sure as God dwelleth in heaven, their reward shall light upon their own heads, and they shall know that in imagining to trouble and torment us, they have violated the protection of God, and his safeguard. Thus much then for one point. And further, let us learn also by this place, to do good to all the children of

God. It is true, that it is not lawful (specially for us) to do any wrong to our enemies, although they were the most wickedest men in the world: but yet we do see that God hath his faithful ones in his tuition, and they cannot be touched the breadth of a finger, but God setteth himself before us to be our buckler: and declareth that he will curse all those that shall curse us. We have therefore the more occasion to abstain from doing all injury, and to take good heed, that they whom he hath so received to himself, be not violated nor offended by us. And contrariwise, when we see the children of God to have need of our aid and help, although we look for no recompense of them, after the manner of the world, and that they have no means to show any, or be unknown unto us: when it is said that God will bless us, let us learn to employ ourselves therein, seeing that our reward is prepared for us in heaven, and that we cannot be made frustrate thereof. This therefore is the sum of that we have to learn out of this place: to wit, that we take good heed, that we do no wrong to those whom god will maintain: for seeing that they are in his keeping, it is certain that we must come to a reckoning, when we shall do them any wrong. And withal let us endeavor always to do good unto those, whom God offereth unto us: and seeing he declareth unto us that he will accept all, as if it were done to his own person, let us not think that we have lost anything, although the men to whom we do good, be not able to requite it: for if they be poor and destitute of all ability, or rather have no occasion to show that they are not unthankful: nevertheless let us know that God doth receive with his own hand, all that which we have done, in supporting those which were destitute and had need. When we have this I say, we shall have enough to content us. But if we desire that god bless us in such sort, let us first take heed, as I have already touched, that we be the true children of Jacob, not of the carnal race but by faith, and that we be regenerate by the same spirit, that we may have the testimony of our adoption imprinted in our hearts, and as it were sealed, to the end we may have full assurance thereof: and that in this trust we may cry out unto God. Now to the end we may do this, we have to praise the head of all, that is to say, our Lord Jesus Christ: who as Saint Paul saith, *is God blessed forever*, (<450905>Romans 9:5) when he spake of his human nature, and that he was descended of the stock of Abraham, and yet he saith nevertheless that he *is God blessed forever*. Now we have to bless or praise him, not after the manner of men, but to glorify him as he deserveth. And moreover when we

pray unto God for the advancement of his kingdom, we say as that prayer is suggested unto us by the holy ghost:

blessed is he that cometh in the name of God: O Lord make thy kingdom to prosper, O Lord increase the kingdom of David. (<411109> Mark 11:9, 20)

So then this is the way to make us partakers of that which is here recited by Moyses: to wit, that God beareth such special favor and singular love towards us, that not only he blesseth us: but if any do us good or evil, he accepteth this as done to his own person, and will recompense them that have pity upon us, and shall help us in our necessity: and again he will revenge our cause: and although we be patient in all the wrongs and outrages that men do against us, yet nevertheless he will keep us and stretch out his arm to chastise all those who shall unjustly oppress us. Lo then the sum of the matter, concerning that word that was left for us. Now it is said:

*That Jacob was even hardly gone forth from his father, and that scarcely he had obtained that he went about, but lo Esau returned from hunting, and brought meat to his father, he brought it unto him being upon his bed.*

If we shall consider that which is here rehearsed by Moyses, according to the outward show, it is certain that Esau was worthy to have been blessed. For he diligently performed that which was enjoined him by his father: and discharged himself of his duty. And wherefore then was he bereft of his birthright? But see wherein we are oftentime deceived: that is, because we regard that which we see with the eye. But God regardeth the right and truth, as Jeremy saith. So then, let us not think that GOD embusieth himself in the outward show, which indeed is nothing: and yet notwithstanding we are wont to be ravished therewith, in that we are sensual men. To be short, that which hath the goodliest glister and show before men, shall oftentimes be rejected before God, as the Painims [*pagans, heathen*], they set great price upon their virtues in the outward show which they had: but we must come further: that is to say, we must know that God soundeth the hearts and secret thoughts. So an act may be highly and greatly praised and esteemed, and yet nevertheless shall displease God: For if the affection shall not be right, there is nothing but hypocrisy and a double courage in it, or else the end shall not be well ordered. For let us put the case that a man giveth himself to virtue, and yet

hath this foolish arrogance in himself, to get reputation, and that men should clap their hands at him in the judgment of the world: he hath now already received his reward, and because he is led with ambition, it must needs be that all that he doth and taketh in hand, must be rejected of God. And why so? Humility is the foundation and root of all virtues. As long therefore as men do seek to merit by their own virtue, it is certain, that if they were Angels in outward appearance, yet all that proceedeth from them, is nothing else but baggage and very filth. So let us learn, that when we see how Esau behaved himself so to the eye, and that he failed in nothing, and yet notwithstanding that he was cast underfoot, and that God made no reckoning of him, let us learn (I say) not to give ourselves to foolish ambition to be seen of men, and to be well thought of: but let us walk in simplicity and uprightness before God, let us know that if the heart go not before, that all the service that we can do unto him, shall be justly rejected. Mark shortly that which we have to hold, concerning that which Moyses hath rehearsed here, touching the obedience which Esau rendered unto his father. Now there is also to be noted further, when we shall make comparison of him with Jacob, we shall find that which was showed before, to wit, that Jacob was not preferred, but by the free goodness of god of which thing there appeareth no reason unto us, for lo Esau which went to hunt, who lied not, who deceived not his father, and did not thrust in himself craftily, neither by any deceit or indirectly: he had none of all this. But what doth Jacob? he deceiveth, he lieth, and dealeth dissemblingly, and presenteth himself as it were his brother Esau: there was nothing in him but craft and theft concerning this matter, and further, he doth greatly dishonor his father, to make him believe one thing for another. We might well say then, that Jacob deserved to be rejected and cut off: but nevertheless GOD would that he should have the birthright. And whereupon is this founded unless it be upon his everlasting counsel which we cannot comprehend? And so let us learn to humble ourselves: notwithstanding that the reason be not declared unto us why god should rather accept Jacob than Esau, and take the birthright from the greater to give it to the lesser. Albeit then that we know not what moved and induced God to this, yet notwithstanding let us hold for most certain, that he doth nothing but most justly, because his will is the rule of all righteousness: he is subject to no law, and much less to our fantasy, to do those things that seem good unto us: but so far off is it, that though we were able to dispute and to allege all the reasons that possibly we could conceive, yet the only

will of GOD, shall overcome all the reasons in the world: and all that which shall enter into our brain, must of necessity be overthrown: as it is said, that he shall always be justified, yea albeit men condemn him. For they rather have this devilish pride to murmur against that which he doth, and to find somewhat to say against it, and to bring forth their reasons: but when they shall have prattled peddlers french as long as they can, yet shall the justice of God remain untouched, and they which have durst rather to slander it and bark against it, they shall remain ashamed and confounded. Lo therefore yet another principal point that we have to hold in this place.

Now it is said, that Isaack asked first, *Who art thou?* And hearing that it is Esau, he was astonished, yea Moyses further addeth more, with a wonderful fear. If Isaack had not known how much worth that blessing had been, and that it should be confirmed by God, if he had not known, that he being called to the dignity and office of a Patriarch, must be a witness of the inheritance of salvation, he had not been so astonished: For he had done as other men used to do. I have been deceived by my son. He had stormed and chaffed against Jacob, yea and he would have cursed him: and he would nevertheless have concluded, O, I will keep my right, howsoever it be, this shall no whit prejudice me therein, and I have my authority frank and free. Lo then how Isaack might have used himself therein, after the common manner. But he knew that God had ordained him the minister, to cause that the inheritance of salvation should rest in his house: and he knew that he was but an instrument therein, and that this was not because God had resigned his office to him, albeit he had communicated it unto him. For if God communicate his authority to those, whom he hath established in the ministry of his word, this is not meant that he depriveth himself of it therefore, neither that he giveth over his right therein, in any sort whatsoever. Isaack knew then, that forasmuch as he was but an instrument of the holy ghost, that that which he had pronounced must stand: and there is no doubt also but that it was revealed unto him. For before he was as it were, restrained: the love which he bare to his eldest son had so besotted him, that he had quite lost the remembrance of that which we have seen before: For he was not ignorant of that which God had determined, *That the greater should serve the lesser*. And yet nevertheless, he is a man as it were altogether senseless and devoid of reason, always addicted to his son Esau, and thought not to yield himself to be governed by God. Now this was not of any deliberate and set rebellion, (as we have

declared before:) but it was love that blinded him, and for that he marked not that he should simply have rested in the will of God. Lo how he overhastily forgot himself. So then, let us note that this great fear whereof Moyses speaketh, was as if a man should suddenly come to awaken a man making some alarm about him, and as if he had been seized with some astonishment, and thought this had been some message of death, and that his enemies had been even come to his bed. Lo in what case Isaack was. But here we have to note in the first place that it is good that God awaken us very roughly, when we shall be so sluggish, and that he come unto us everyday. It is true that we will think ourselves watchful enough, when we shall hear the word of God, and will be zealous, and it will seem that we are very wary therein: but all that we have heard is quickly fled from us, and specially when we have contrary things before us. If we have been exhorted to patience, and it seem that we have been therein so well appointed, that there wanted [*lacked*] nothing: let one come to trouble us, let us receive but some little blow, incontinent we will be so enflamed with wrath and displeasure, that we forget that which was spoken unto us.

Again, when we are exhorted to despise the riches and honors of this world, if we be allured thereunto by our adversary the Devil, we will be (as it were) asleep in them, and all our senses will be wholly occupied therewith. Now if our Lord used any simple admonition, it is certain that it is as if it were spoken to a man that were asleep. And what shall men profit thereby? It behooveth therefore that God awaken us oftentimes by force. And so as often as God shall scourge us, and that some shall be chastised after one sort, some after another: Let us examine that which was in us, and so we shall know that we were for a time blockish and senseless, that we have known nothing of that which we ought, or else that we were not so attentive therein, and let us learn by the example of our father Isaack, that seeing our Lord doth stir us up and would that we should deeply and in good earnest think upon him, and that we should gather up all our senses, which before were wandering: let us learn I say to make our profit thereof: Lo this for one lesson. But let us mark how Isaack willingly submitteth himself to the will of God. I have already said, that they that will maintain their reputation, will be willful: although they had done the greatest evil in the world, yet they will always maintain it. And lo this is the cause that so many people plunge themselves so deeply, even unto the depth of the bottomless pits: that is, they are ashamed to be reclaimed:

they would have the renown of constancy, and they think that if they should change, that it should be cast in their teeth, as a great lightness and inconstancy. Lo the cause why men harden themselves in obstinacy with boldness and presumption, to follow a thing, howsoever it be, and take the bit in their teeth and will in no case bow, neither to the one side, nor to the other. Now this is a vice very common, and so much the rather we shall be subject unto it, unless we come to that which is rehearsed here. Lo Isaack who might have been greatly ashamed, for that he was so deceived and abused: a man might say, look upon this drunkard, when he is well whittled [*worn out with fretting*], and that he hath eaten and drunk, he taketh one for another: and farther, a man might have said, this was a glutton, when he could not discern between kid and venison: and again, it might have been said: What? when he blessed his youngest son instead of his eldest: being so deceived, and because he did this through error and theft: weeneth [*thinketh*] he that this shall be available before God? Isaack therefore might have had many respects to have been obstinate in his fact. But he forgetteth all, and knoweth that forasmuch as it was so ordained of God, that Jacob should be blessed, that it must remain, and no change must be made therein. We are then briefly taught that as often as we shall do any act unadvisedly, which pleaseth not God, or else if we shall exceed our bounds, and go beyond our calling, howsoever it be, that we always turn the bridle, as soon as we shall be warned, and that we follow not the matter, because this is manifestly to despise GOD. But especially we have to consider, although Isaack were carried with an evil affection, and although he forgot that which had been pronounced by GOD, that faith was not utterly quenched in him, albeit it was choked. This argument was handled yesterday more at large: yet ought it by the way to be further thought upon. For what moved Isaack to say, I have blessed thy brother, albeit he obtained it by deceit, shall he remain blessed yet? What lesson learneth he? It must needs be that he knew this before. Now he knew it: but as I have said already, the light of his faith was as a coal of fire that had been raked under the ashes: one should have seen nothing thereof, but let them remove a few of the ashes, and then lo the sparks appear by and by, and afterwards the fire showeth itself. Even so was it in Isaack: and this is not written only for his person, but to the end we should gather a general doctrine thereof: For oftentimes the like shall fall out and come to pass with us, to wit, that when we shall much loose the bridle to our vanities, that one shall be ravished with ambition, another shall be kindled to

covetousness, to heap up goods, another shall have some foolish appetite: to be short, another shall be drawn away and estranged from GOD, by some manner of means: then lo our faith which is (as it were) dead. Now God suffereth it not to be altogether abolished: For when the word taketh lively root in us, it is an incorruptible seed. It cannot then be quite rooted out: but howsoever it be, it cannot be said that there was not one spark or drop of faith, in such sort that we be so cold, that we think no more of GOD, that the world hath quite overcome us. When therefore any do so wander, that they think only but on their lusts, a man would say that faith were quite dead. Now this may well be in appearance: but notwithstanding God yet reserveth some hidden seed: as we have said, that the fire may well be choked, and yet not altogether quenched, when it shall be raked up under the ashes. For all our affections, the riches, honors and pleasures of the world, are as ashes to choke up this light of God, which ought to guide and lead us. But our Lord having pity upon us, bringeth to pass, that a little after we acknowledge our faults: and whereas we were so cold, yea as it were altogether frozen, we begin to wax warm, in a good zeal, and to return unto him.

Lo then, how GOD accomplisheth that in his faithful, which we read here of our father Isaack. But this is not spoken to the end we should therefore tempt God, as though it were permitted unto us to suffer ourselves in such sort to be carried astray by the Devil, that our faith might be (as it were) asleep in our hearts and souls: For it will not always fall out, that God will awake those which are asleep, and call them again which are estranged from him. Let us learn therefore to walk in fear and carefulness: and specially when we shall find men so dull, that they shall be as it were altogether blockish, and that their faith shall be as it were dead in them: let us learn to fear so much the more. What holiness was there in David? And yet nevertheless we see that he was for a time, as a man quite desperate. Afterwards, having committed such an abominable fault, to have ravished the wife of another, and to have caused her husband wickedly to be slain with such villainous treachery, that he deserved to be thrown out from amongst men: after all this, we may see, what manner of Prophet soever he had been, what fear of God soever he had in him before: to be short, albeit he were a mirror of Angelical perfection, we see that he was as an Ox or an Hog, he knew nothing, he had no remorse, it seemeth that God had given him up into a reprobate sense, and had stricken him with a spirit of

blockishness: yea and when the Prophet cometh unto him alleging this comparison, and speaking unto him of a neighbor, that through violence had oppressed a poor man: O he knew well to condemn others, and in the meanwhile thought nothing of himself, till that the Prophet (<sup><101207></sup>2 Samuel 12:7) said unto him: It is of thee, it is of thee that I do speak. Until that the Prophet Nathan said unto him. It is thou murderer that hast done such a deed: until that he came to give him a blow with a club, as it were a chafed Bull, he continueth blockish in it: and forasmuch as the Devil had won him so far that he was as it were drunken yea altogether bewitched, it must needs be that God even thunder against him.

When therefore we see such like examples as this which is here rehearsed unto us by Moyses, that Isaack the chief of the Church, is as it were blind herein, until that God had revealed it by force: so much the more (as I have said) it behooveth us to take good heed to walk in fear and carefulness: and in the meanwhile let us learn when GOD giveth us such pushes and spurs, to make us return unto him, whereas we were before as it were insensible, and have gotten through long custom such a strong savor: When god giveth us the grace (I say) to call back ourselves unto him, that we be moved as becometh us, and that it be not to wipe our mouth after we have said in one word, that we have faulted, as there are many: but that we follow that which is here taught us by Moyses that Isaack was afraid. And how? very greatly, yea wonderfully. For it is impossible, that we should come to repentance, unless we have a heaviness that must torment us and we be as it were in hell, to feel our wretchedness, and be therein confounded. Until so much be wrought in us, that we be come thither, it is certain that there shall be no repentance in us. This teacheth how we must practice this doctrine: to wit, That when our Lord shall have touched us, that on our parts we be as it were wounded to the bottom of our heart, and that we be so astonished, that we return no more to our slothfulness and negligence, wherewith we were for a time overwhelmed.

Now Isaack yet showeth his faith better in saying, *He shall be blessed*: For he knew that God had ordained him to this office, and that he spake not in his own name: For the sentence of God cannot be called back: it behooveth therefore that he kept him there. So we have farther to gather of this place that we have already touched: that Isaack here passed not his bound, although he had failed through ignorance, and been deceived in the person, yet he always kept a good principle: to wit, that he had executed that

which GOD had committed to his charge: and that therefore this must remain concluded, and have his effect. Now this is said for our instruction: For we know that at this day our Lord would have the remission of our sins to be showed forth by the mouth of men, he would assure us of the inheritance of everlasting salvation, and also would have his adoption to be declared unto us. Now we must needs have whereupon to resolve ourselves: For if we have not full assurance of our salvation, and if we cannot call upon GOD, it is as much as to shut the gate of Paradise against us. But in the meanwhile, Lo a man which speaketh and saith, that he will pardon our sins, and yet he is a sinner himself. Again, he promiseth us the Heavenly Life: and this is so poor a creature so brickle as nothing more, that is nothing but smoke: and yet will he open Heaven unto us, and is not worthy to dwell in the earth: for who is he amongst us that is worthy to be nourished here below at God's charges? So then, when we shall cast our eyes upon them, that preach unto us the word of God, by which they protest unto us that God holdeth and avoweth us for his Children, that he forgiveth our sins, that he receiveth us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as righteous and innocent, it behooveth us indeed to look more high: For if we stay ourselves upon the men, it is certain that we shall always go out too far: and besides we see that there are faults mingled in them, and this shall be to shake us, and to lessen the authority of God, and in the end quite to overthrow our faith. So much the more therefore must we take heed unto this place, the which is written for us: that is, that when we shall be blessed, it behooveth that this hold and be made assured, as we have before alleged the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ

That which ye loose in earth shall be loosed in Heaven, and that  
which you bind in earth shall be bound in heaven.

(<401818> Matthew 18:18)

The Pope to ratify his tyranny hath falsely corrupted this place. For he will have a man to be bound to him, and to all that he hath invented: and again, to believe that he can do all, although he quite overthrow the authority of God, he would be feared and obeyed, and no man must gainsay him in anything whatsoever it were. Now this is too detestable a blasphemy. But we know that our Lord Jesus Christ would not advance men's persons, so far as to make Idols of them, what then? he would give that certainty unto his word which it deserveth: For without this, what were it? As I have said, we should always be in doubt thereof, and never in

quiet: but when we know that by hearing the promises of the forgiveness of our sins and of the free adoption of God, we hear that he inviteth us to him, that he openeth the door unto us, to the end we might have familiar access to call upon him: although it be a mortal man that speaketh unto us, yet in that we doubt not, it is as much as if Angels came down from Heaven, yea and more too: For Saint Paul (<sup><480108></sup>Galatians 1:8) durst well to say, that if an Angel came down from Heaven and preached any other doctrine than that he had preached, that they should hold him for a devil: For he knew of whom he held his doctrine, to wit, that it was of God. So then let us learn to magnify that reverence which we owe unto the word of God, when it is preached to us, and highly to esteem that inestimable treasure albeit it be in earthen vessels: For who are we that we should preach the word of God? If a man would regard what is our condition, it is certain that all that we shall preach, shall come to nothing: but the treasure (as I have already said) ought always to be esteemed according to the dignity thereof, although GOD have put it in us, and we be but as broken pots, that have nothing but brittleness. Lo then that which we have to learn upon these words, *He that hath been blessed shall be blessed*. And how so? Had Isaack that Privilege therein, to say that that which he had pronounced should stand? After he had eaten and drunk, and further being a poor blind man, being so blockish that he knew not what he did: being so dull that hearing the voice of his son Jacob, he suffereth himself to be led as a poor beast: and yet nevertheless saith, It shall stand? Yea but acknowledging his fault, he is confounded, and nevertheless he continueth: For he knew whereto God had established him, and thereupon he giveth glory to God, and quite casteth down himself from his own understanding, knowing well that he had nothing of his own. And so, let us learn that Isaack so ordered himself, and in such sort rested upon the word of God, that he altogether renounced his affections wherewith he was beforetime carried away. In the mean season we have here a good rule concerning ourselves, whereby we are warned that when we shall be taught, although this be done by the means of mortal men who are sent unto us, that God doth accept us and account us for his own, that this ought to suffice us, and that we may despise Satan and all temptations, and all things that may come in our brain to shake our faith. And thereupon it is said, *That Esau cried out, yea by yelling and roaring, and that he howled as it were a wild beast*, and that he desired notwithstanding to be blessed: and that his father said unto him: Lo it must needs be that the first blessing hold: and that

then he despiteth his brother Jacob, and said: It was right that he was so named. For we have declared before that Jacob's name was drawn from a heel, as if a man should have called him *Heelholder*: and this was forasmuch as he held the heel of his brother, when he should come forth of the womb. Now saith he, he hath given me a blow with his heel. As if a man should say, when a beast rusheth upon him, that he hath stricken him with his heel. Now Esau applieth this to his brother: He hath supplanted me twice now (saith he). And this word also cometh of *Tripping*, when a man giveth one secretly a blow with his foot, and maketh one to fall. He saith then, that he hath already tripped him twice with his heel. The first time when he took away his birthright, and now when he took away his blessing. Now here we have to note in the first place, that which the Apostle showeth (<sup><581217></sup> Hebrews 12:17) us, to wit that albeit Esau wept and mourned, notwithstanding he obtained no place of repentance: for he came thereto overlate. And this is according to the exhortation which we have made heretofore. It is said that we must not be profane as Esau was, that we must not given to the earth, nor to all that which concerneth our bodies and this transitory life, in such sort that we should forget the heavenly life. And why so? for (saith he) they which profane themselves, and defile themselves in their filthy desires they may cry: but they shall find no place of repentance, forasmuch as the gate shall be shut against them. Now it is true that this at the first show might be thought strange: For it is said, As often, and at what time soever a sinner shall mourn and ask pardon, that GOD will be ready always to receive him to mercy, which return unto him. Lo the promise is general.

So then, how is it that the Apostle saith, that we shall not find place of repentance, if we come too late: For there needs nothing but to mourn? But this shall be easily to be understood, when we shall have distinguished between the cries of the faithful and of the unbelievers. Both the one and the other shall indeed cry unto God: but in diverse sorts, for the faithful shall be touched with true repentance, when they cry and when they mourn: It is said likewise that David roared, and that his throat was as it were hoarse. Lo then the cries which the children of God throw forth: as it is said that he himself brayed like a Lion. And a little after we hear what Ezechias saith, that his speech failed him, and that he groaned in himself as swallows, and that he could speak no more: that he was so hoarse, that he

knew not how to speak one word, distinctly pronounced: that he was as it were altogether thrown down.

We see then that the faithful have had this affection: but in the meantime they had repentance, which touched them to the quick for their faults: as it must needs be that they displease themselves therein, and humble themselves before GOD: and after this they conceived some hope to obtain pardon. Now the unbelievers they will bray enough, but in the meanwhile they leave not off to have their hearts hardened: tears trickle down from their eyes, but in the meanwhile they leave not off to be proud and rebellious against God: they have indeed some horror of his judgments, but this is but to set themselves in despite against him: for they never go so far as to hate their offenses, and to be displeased with them: Low how it was with Esau. And therefore we have to gather that without repentance, these cries shall be rejected of GOD, and shall never come unto him. And when the Apostle speaketh of repentance, it is not that he meaneth that Esau had repentance: but he meaneth, that he obtained not mercy, and that God was not merciful to him.

And so let us take good heed unto ourselves, and let us detest this blasphemy which the Devil soweth in the world, That there needs no more but one good sigh. For lo those merry Greeks, when they shall be exhorted to return from their wickednesses: O I must yet a good while use it: and God is a good fellow: Lo yet another blasphemy as detestable, whereat even the very stones should cleave. And further, God is merciful. It seemeth to them that under the name of mercy they should hold God bound unto them: but it shall be dearly sold them. Yea lo they come so far that they say, O there needs nothing in the end but one good bulk, and one good sigh. Yea but who is that which shall give it? have we it in our fist? must not God work therein? when a man shall fall, albeit he have hurt himself, he may well recover himself: but if he have broken his neck, can he recover himself afterward? Now before GOD all our faults are deadly: and which is more, it is to put us and deliver us into the hands of Satan. And can a man rise up, when his neck shall be broken? as I have already said.

Now it is certain, that as often as we offend GOD, it is as if we break our neck, as much as lieth in us. And so, can we restore life to ourselves after we have lost it? Lo then, what ought to stir us up to walk in carefulness, and not to tarry till the gate be shut against us: but let us hearken to all the

warnings that have been given us: and when God shall knock, let us open unto him. And moreover we have to hold that which is spoken unto us by the Prophet Isaie:

Seek the Lord whilst he may be found: Call upon him when he is ready to hear. (<235506> Isaiah 55:6)

It is true that the time maketh no great matter, that we should take any great advantage of it: but yet we must understand for conclusion, that this place of Isaye was fulfilled when the Gospel was preached, as Saint Paul declareth in the second to the Corinthians,

Lo the acceptable days, lo the time of salvation.  
(<460602> 1 Corinthians 6:2)

And likewise we must well mark the similitude, which is alleged unto us by our Lord Jesus Christ that we let not the occasion slip: but when God biddeth us that we come unto him, let us come unto him, yea hasting ourselves, and let us not draw our legs to come slowly, lest our unthankfulness in the end seclude us, and that the gate be shut against us. Let us take good heed, I say to all these exhortations, and so let us make our profit of them, that having found place of repentance before God, we may, after we have bewailed our faults, have our mouth open to rejoice in him, and to praise his holy name, for that he shall have been merciful unto us.

But now let us throw down ourselves before the majesty of our good GOD, in acknowledging our faults, praying him that he will in such sort make us to feel them, that it be not to keep us long in them, nor to slug or flatter ourselves in them: but in such sort to return unto our judge, that asking mercy in him we may there find it in him and that it be not only to the end that he enter not into accompt [*account*] with us, to impute unto us our iniquities and offenses: but that by his holy spirit he will purge us and that we may be more and more reformed: and that he awaken us, that we be not obstinate in our faults: but that we think upon all the corrections whereby he would draw us from the evil way, wherein we have strayed, and that we make such profit of all the advertisements which he giveth us, that we be not ashamed to be condemned of him, to the end to obtain mercy. That not only he will show this favor unto us, but to all peoples and nations of the earth, etc.

**THE END OF THESE THIRTEEN. SERMONS  
CONCERNING JACOB AND ESAU.**