

ENEMIES AND FRIENDS

A SERMON

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“Blessed be he that blesses you.” Genesis 27:29

IN the closing words of the blessing which Isaac pronounced upon Jacob we have indicated two opposite spirits; the spirit of antipathy against God, indicated in the words, “Cursed be every one that curses you;” and the spirit of love to God, indicated in the words of our text, “Blessed be he that blesses you.” Therefore, in closing our remarks upon this history; and upon these circumstances of Jacob and Esau, I shall this morning show the truth of what I last Lord's-day morning asserted; that that spirit of deadly enmity which Esau conceived against Jacob never left his descendants; and that that spirit of antipathy manifested in his descendants to the truth and to the people of God, is expressive of what we are all by nature; for were there not something practically applicable to us, I am sure our dwelling so long upon this subject could not be profitable; therefore, it is not merely to speculate upon the history, but to try ourselves by both spirits, that we may see of which of the two spirits we are. I know by nature we are all of the spirit of antipathy against God; if, therefore, we are brought out of that enmity, then not unto us, not unto us, but unto the Lord's name, be all the glory. Secondly, I should like, though I must do so very concisely, in concluding, just to contrast the destiny of the two people; those who live and die enemies to the Lord, and those who are brought into the love of the truth as it is in Jesus.

First: I notice then, first, this SPIRIT OF ANTIPATHY. We see it when the Israelites came out of Egypt; they were directed to go on to the western side of the mountains of Seir; low grounds, sands, and serpents, and solitudes, and droughts, and pits; a land which no man passed through, and where no man dwelt. When brought into that position, they wished to pass through Edom, on their way to the promised land; but the Edomites, not recognizing the hand of God, not recognizing the name of the Lord, not recognizing the authority of the Most High God, not recognizing the designs of the great God in reference to them, they refused to allow them to go through the land; they were determined they should not go that way. So that the Edomites were thus put to the test, whether they really loved or really hated the people of God. Perhaps before they were put to the test, they would have certainly thought not only that they loved God, but that they loved his people also. Now, what is indicated in this antipathy? More than may at first sight appear. I would just point out what is indicated, and then show how the Lord dealt with his people in that case, just as he will deal with his people in their difficulties now.

Now the first thing against which their enmity stood, would be the sovereignty of God in choosing the Israelites, in placing them in a kind of isolated position; that, I say, would be one, in fact to speak plainly, it would be enmity against eternal election. God chose that people, and exalted them, and delivered them from Egypt: therefore, it is expressive of enmity against God's sovereignty in choosing them. Now, my hearers, in order to be saved then, we must be brought out of that enmity against God's sovereignty; and we must be brought to feel and know our own nothingness; brought to feel and to know not only the necessity of Christ's dying for us, but the necessity of this great matter of eternal election. May the Lord deliver us from all human authorities, and all human traditions, upon this solemn matter; keep us to his own blessed Word; and whenever we can find any part of God's word that makes light of eternal election, then we may do the same; but while the Word of God speaks solemnly of it, and we through mercy are brought to feel our need of it, and to see somewhat into the excellency and advantages of it; therefore, while we once ignorantly and once blindly hated it, yet now we love it. Here are the two spirits, then; the one hates the truth, the other loves it, receives it in the love of it, and sees and feels that it is the mind of God, who is infinite and accountable to no creature whatever in heaven, or earth, for any of his doings; and it is not for us to dictate to the Most High; it is not for us to speculate on these solemn things; but to read his blessed Word, and pray the Holy Spirit to open up to us the way in which we are saved; and if we are blessed with this spirit we shall be led to see that it is by the Lord choosing us in Christ. This is a truth which will run on with us to all eternity, election will shine with sevenfold perfection in eternity; we shall never to all eternity be able to trace up our interest in Christ, our oneness with Christ, to any other transaction but that of eternal election; and if we love it now, what must be our love to it, when we shall come into full possession of all its divine, of all its eternal advantages?

Again, it was a spirit of antipathy against their deliverance from Egypt, all this is indicated; that is, a spirit of antipathy against God's salvation. God brought the people out of Egypt in that way which should show the work was his own. Just so now, the Lord saves us, and yet in a way that shows salvation is of the Lord; that salvation is complete. Now, I have often said to you, that that dispensation of the Old Testament, a great many parts of it were conditional; but some parts of that dispensation were unconditional; and their deliverance from Egypt was unconditional; there was no conditionality there; nothing there in that department laid with the creature. And is it not worthy of some observation, that not one came short of it; they were all delivered, every one; there was not one that came short, there was not a feeble person among them; they were all strengthened by the presence of God; they were all sheltered, or had been sheltered previously to that; the Lord sheltered them, and they all reached the opposite shore. In a word, the salvation was entire, the victory was complete, the freedom was wrought out to all that perfection which God himself had engaged to, bring about. Just so it is now; the salvation, for this is but the shadow, the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ is entire, it is complete; there is no conditionality about it; it is all of the Lord, from first to last. Are we then brought to feel that there are Egyptian hosts? (if I may, which I may perhaps for a moment take this Egyptian host as a figure of our mighty sins) are there hosts of sins which he alone can defend us from? and have those sins a mighty power at their head, namely, Satan, typified by Pharaoh? for Satan, in allusion to Pharaoh, is called the dragon; the Lord has slain him; are we brought to feel it? and are we brought to see that there was a sea of wrath rolling between us and God, which none but the dear Savior could make a way through? so then, as all the Egyptians were drowned, and therefore, not one could move his tongue against any of the children of Israel, so every one of our sins by what the dear Savior has done are destroyed, all

destroyed; not one remains. The sea divided, the sea lighted up, and we are delivered. Oh, what a state! poor man, needing this very thing, yet has enmity against it! I say, by nature we are all in such a state as to have enmity against the completeness of Christ's salvation. What a strange infatuation, that men will be pleased if you tell them that Jesus Christ has destroyed some sin, and left certain conditions, and certain things for them to do as conditions, of their salvation. What a state we are in, that men will be pleased with this! But if you tell them that Jesus Christ's work is finished, that the warfare is accomplished, that his work is perfect, they immediately call it dangerous doctrine. Yours's, sir, would be the dangerous doctrine, where some of the Egyptians are left alive, and might pursue me again; yours, sir, is the dangerous doctrine, where some of the Egyptians might pursue me and overthrow me in the wilderness, or prevent my coming to the promised land; I think that is the dangerous doctrine. But I have this blessed truth, as, I have often said, that where the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from any sin, it cleanses from all sin.

Then again, their refusal indicated antipathy to the Israelites sustentation. These Israelites, who are they, (say the Edomites) and how do they live? Nobody knows how they live; they neither plough, nor sow, nor reap, nor dig wells, nor buy anywhere; we can't think how they live; why, it's a strange sort of people, we had better have nothing at all to do with them; they shan't come through our land; there's a something about them that nobody understands; they are a strange sort of people. So it is now; the world knows nothing at all of that life of faith which we have in Christ Jesus; they know nothing at all of that bread of life that strengthens our hearts; they know nothing at all of that wine of the everlasting covenant that cheers us and makes us so happy; they know nothing at all of the illuminating presence of the blessed God, nothing at all of the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, nothing at all of the mercy-seat; and therefore, they know not how we live; they look at us, and see us go to chapel, and they see us in our outward circumstances, and they think that is all our religion; and they think, that when we have been to chapel, we think we have done our duty; when we have kept the Sabbath, when we have prayed, we have done our duty; that is just what they think; so that they are altogether strangers to that life that we have in Christ Jesus the Lord. Thus then, the spirit of the Edomite was the spirit of blind antipathy against election, blind antipathy against God's salvation, blind antipathy against that special and immediate sustentation which the Lord granted to his people.

And then, of course, it would be an antipathy against their destiny. They would not let them come to the promised land if they could help it. And look at the gospels of the present day; then look at the promised land, and the way to it; and see if they would let us come to the promised land in the way that the Lord describes it, if they could help it. Look at the land, and the way to it. It is "An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away." The spirit of the religions of the present day does not object to this, this is not the part, that these religions object to; it is the way to it that they object to; the way to it is this; "It is reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." That is the way to it. "Kept by the power of God through faith;" so faith is the evidence, of being kept. Where am I kept? Kept in the confidence of electing grace, kept in the confidence of eternal mercy, kept in the confidence of the all-sufficiency of Christ, kept in the confidence of God's truth. Now then, are we reconciled to these points that I have named? If so, then the Lord has delivered us from the spirit of the world; and we have not received that spirit which hates election, but that spirit which receives it in the love of it; we have not received that spirit which turns its back upon God's salvation, but that spirit that gladly acknowledges that salvation; and prays to be by that salvation

lifted up; as the Israelites by that salvation were lifted up from their slavery, so we pray to be lifted up from all our bondage by that salvation; and so far from receiving the spirit of antipathy against the way to heaven, that it is simply by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, we love the way, and bless the Lord for the way, especially as summed up by the Lord himself "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" and again, touched upon by the apostle, when he says, "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil that is to say, his flesh." Then again, so far from objecting to the inheritance itself, why, we are the most comfortable when we are in the spirit described by the apostle, when he says, "We look not at the things which are seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen, are eternal." Well now, let us look for a moment at this. Am I delivered from the spirit of antipathy to this order of things? and is this electing grace my hope? is this salvation my hope? is this sustentation my hope? is this ultimate rest my hope? and do I love the Lord in this revelation he has made of himself? I cannot love him elsewhere, I cannot love him in his hatred to Esau; there is no love to him there; I bow to him there; I acknowledge there is a deep there that is unfathomable; that he should thus sovereignly, without any cause in Esau whatever, that he should thus sovereignly and eternally hate him. But so, he says, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Men say he did not hate Esau without a cause in Esau; but God has simply declared that he hated Esau, without assigning any reason; and if you choose to add to his words, if you choose to step in and make that perfect which you believe to be imperfect; if you choose to step in and state a cause where God has not; then you yourselves must abide by the consequences. I rest on God's own testimony. It is not in the fall that he is loved; it is not in hell that he is loved. No; we consent to all this, and believe that the Most High God can do as he pleases, and that he gives no account to any: to whom is he to give an account? Therefore, we submit to that; we are silent, and thus we are solemnized, and tremble, and think. Ah, the same God that has been pleased to open our eyes, the same God that has overcome our enmity, and brought us to know something of his electing grace, something of his salvation, something of his sustaining mercy, and something of the glory yet to be revealed, the same God might have left us, had it been his will, he might have left us were others are. Ah, my hearers, every one of you that know a little something of the truth, look back to your own personal history; and what but the hand of Omnipotent sovereignty could have picked you up out of the state in which you were; and yet to pass by so many of your fellow creatures, that seemed circumstantially to bid fairer for heaven than you did; and yet they are passed by; grace reached you. You, I am sure, may well sing with the poet,

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to you."

For all our springs are in you, the Lord.

Again, does a man that pretends to be a friend to Israel, does a man that pretends to be a lover of the God of the Hebrews, have an Edomitish deacon? I will put it in that form. Do I like this Edomite deacon? Yes, I do, says Saul; he is not shut up with narrow-mindedness; he sympathizes with the nations around; his sympathies are not shut up with those few people, these Israelites; he admires my generosity, says king Saul, in sparing Agag; I like this Edomite deacon very much. No doubt

you do, sir; no doubt you do; because your heart is not with God's David's; your heart is not with God's sovereignty; your heart is not with God's counsels; you can sympathize with Agag, sympathize with enemies and foes, but no sympathy for David. Well, the Lord sympathized with David, and when the Lord appeared for David, and the priest gave him the shewbread, enquired of God, and gave him the shewbread, Doeg said, (it's a very ugly name, dreadfully so,) this Doeg said, Now here is a chance to get rid of these high doctrine men; I will find a way to get them thrust out, and get the place to myself. So, he came to king Saul; and king Saul was mightily pleased. Just call these priests to account; and he said to the officers, (I was going to say the deacons,) slay these priests, these narrow-minded priests; why, they are friends of David, they have been enquiring of God for him. But they were afraid to kill the priests of the Lord. What do you say, Doeg? Oh, I will pretty soon slay them; and he arose, and killed eighty-five venerable men, priests of the Lord. So much, for your spirit of charity. Saul liked Doeg, because of the expansiveness of his heart, because of the meekness of his piety, because of his philanthropic spirit, extending to earth's remotest bounds; that's the man. But this same great minded man, this generous man, where will his generosity be when he has an opportunity to show his enmity, without any danger to his own life, or his own reputation, or his own exaltation? Where will the people of God be then? He arose, and killed them, there and then, and glad of the opportunity. Let us then examine ourselves; are we among the people of God? do we profess to love them? and yet can you everlastingly stab them in the dark, if not in the light? Can you make it your delight to be doing by them as you would not like to be done by? If so, there is a secret current in your heart, at the bottom, that will by and bye, gain the mastery, open up your hypocrisy; and after all your professed attachment to the people of God, to the Israel of God, and the God of Israel, if the heart be not honest, if there be not an experimental acquaintance with your own heart, and your need of the truth, these very people are the people that you will by and bye turn round against, become their enemy, and that to your own destruction. But though you slay them after the flesh, or slay them in other respects, yet after this there is nothing you can do; but God can cast your soul and body into hell forever.

This is the spirit of antipathy then. How different from the spirit of love is this! But I ought to have said just now, that when the Israelites were on the low ground, on the western side of Edom, the Edomites refused, as we have seen, to give them a passage through their territories. And what did the Lord do with them? Why, he brought them out of that low ground on to the east side of Edom, on to high ground, the high table lands on the eastern side of Edom; and there the Edomites were afraid of them, there the Edomites could not touch them; there the Edomites were glad to let them pass. Just so now; if they get you down in the world, they will find fault enough with you, there to exult over you; they will look at you here, and look at you there, especially if you happen to be in adverse circumstances, cannot, perhaps always keep your way clear, or keep things as you could wish; you are on low ground then; you are on their strong side then; they think they have you then. But there are some high grounds somewhere; and when God brings you up on to the high ground of mediation, on to the high ground of eternal mercy, on to the high ground of his everlasting covenant, on to the high ground of his eternal salvation; ah, there you can defy them all; there they are afraid of you, there they cannot reach you, there they cannot touch you. It is in the world, the low ground, that you have tribulation; it is on the high ground, raised up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, that we have peace on the high ground that we have eternal salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a remarkable circumstance that, the Edomites could exult over the Israelites all the time they were on the low ground; but when the Lord caused them to round the southern points of the mountains of Seir, to stand on the eastern side, the high grounds, then the

Edomites were afraid. So, it is now, all the time we are kept in these blessed truths, what sweet freedom we enjoy. Why, the blessed truths I have advanced today, if I am half as comfortable today in advancing them as I was yesterday in the realizing of their life, and their sweetness, and their power, I shall have a good day. I felt last night that the Lord could easily kill me with the joy of his presence. Oh, it is wonderful when the Lord comes in with the light of his countenance, unfolds beauty after beauty, tells out wonder after wonder, and mercy after mercy, the soul becomes illuminated; and it feels as though mortality is in the way, that it could leap out of its confined state into a state where its powers may be expanded, and it may drink, as the poet expresses it,

“Full draughts of bliss”

Bless the Lord for the high ground then, for this heavenly land; when we can rise up into that, there it is,

“We tread the world beneath our feet,
And all that earth calls good or great.”

Get me up on to the mount of Transfiguration, get me up on to the mount of Olivet, on to the mount of Calvary, on to the mountain of Beatitudes, but not on Sinai, on to the mountain of Beatitudes; all these mountains give me a nice view of mount Sion; sometimes for a moment I seem to be there.

But again, these Edomites were always ready to take part with the enemies of the Israelites, as you see by the prophecies of Obadiah. I wonder some people are not afraid to speak against Jacob, for it says in Obadiah, “For your violence against your brother Jacob shame shall cover you.” And whenever the enemies of the Israelites came against them, the Edomites were always ready to help them. There have always been plenty of people to help to put down the truth; plenty. There were plenty of people to help crucify our Lord Jesus Christ; plenty. But not one to help to raise him from the dead. No! If he had never risen without human help, he would not have risen at all. Plenty of people to persecute the Apostles. Satan has always had plenty of help against the truth. But then, the help against the truth is only the help of man; and therefore, “Greater is he that is for us than all that can be against us.” Thus then, this spirit manifested by the Edomites, manifested in Doeg, and manifested generation after generation, is expressive, I say, of the spirit under which we are all by nature.

But let us go on a little further. The spirit of antipathy manifested itself in the Savior’s day in a similar manner. Now I think there is not much difference of opinion among the learned, upon the fact that the Herod’s you read of in the New Testament were Edomites. Antipater, father of Herod the Great, was an Idumean; that is, a native of Edom. Look at the spirit in which Herod appears; the longer that spirit remained the worse it got; you see him slay the little children, and he would have slain the Savior himself if he could. Such was Herod the Great; he was a great monster of iniquity. Then Herod, the Tetrarch, who, with his soldiers, set the Savior at naught, and then Herod the king that put James, the brother of John, to death. All this is the same spirit. It is astonishing when a spirit is once received by a people, how that spirit will travel on. Look at the spirit of Mahometanism; it’s the same now as it was many hundreds of years ago. Look at the spirit of

Popery; it's the same now as it was many hundreds of years ago. Look at the spirit of free-will, it's the same now as when Pelagius preached it, though modified in form, the substance is the same. Look at the spirit of duty-faith, it's just the same as it was in Galatia, when the Judaizing teachers taught it; the form may be somewhat modified, but the substance is just the same. So, you see, if we are united to an apostate church, we have an additional spirit of enmity. Something like this, is the meaning of the Savior when he says, "You compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Well, then, to be delivered from this spirit of enmity, for I cannot help dwelling upon it; there are so many scriptures that can be understood upon no other principle than this contrastive principle of enmity and of love. Take the 3rd chapter of 1st John, love and hatred are the two opposite characteristics there; he that works the righteousness that John there speaks of, is he that has faith in Christ, the faith that works by love; he that commits sin is he that has enmity against the truth, and all his works are acts of enmity against that truth; that man's religion, then, is nothing but unrighteousness. "In this," says John, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; he that does righteousness is of God;" but it must be the righteousness of faith; "and he that does not righteousness," and that cannot mean legal righteousness; there is no such thing; for "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified;" therefore, the righteousness there spoken of is the righteousness of faith, "Whosoever does not righteousness is not of God." So, John illustrates this contrastive spirit by Cain and Abel, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and killed his brother; And wherefore killed he him?" Why, because Cain's religion was evil; so that Cain had not only a native spirit of enmity, but in addition to that he had a religious spirit of enmity. And, therefore, the man that makes a flaming profession of religion, if that religion be false, his enmity against God is doubled; he is an enemy by nature, and now he has received in addition to that another spirit of enmity; so that he is two-fold more the child of hell now, than he was before. "Wherefore killed he him? Because his own works were evil." In what did his evil works consist? In setting aside, the atonement, and thinking he could go to God, without an atonement; the same as men now either set it aside or pervert it. And wherein was Abel's work righteous? In bringing the sacrifice, in believing in the truth, and he obtained witness that he was righteous, not by his own doings, but by the doings of the Great Mediator, prefigured by the offering which Abel brought. Here then are the two spirits. Do not forget that whatever distinction is within the power of the creature does not constitute that distinction from the world which the power of God alone can make. And therefore, it is something more than a mere moral separation from the world; it is a spiritual separation, from the spiritual blindness and spiritual enmity of the world, and a union to God's truth.

"Blessed be he that blesses you." So, then the contrast between the two, the enmity between the two seeds, as we see from numerous Scriptures, is that one loves the truth, the other hates it. Take Judas and Peter; the one betrayed Christ, the other began to deny him; and used awful oaths on the occasion; the one acted from actual hypocrisy, covetousness, hatred to Christ himself; the other from no enmity to Christ, but simply from the weakness of the flesh and the fear of man. Now, Simeon, love you me? Yes, Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you." Then you are right, your love to me is a test and proof that your sins are gone; they are blotted out, and if you have not felt it so, it is so. Little children, you love the truth and I have no greater joy than to hear you walk in the truth; you have not yet, as though John would say, experienced the pardon of sin; you have not yet entered into that peace that passes all understanding; but, "I write unto you, little

children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." Look at the two spirits, then, the one hates the truth, the other loves the truth.

Second: Now as here are two opposite spirits, the one hating the truth, the other loving it. We may expect *a contrastive destiny*. Take Isaiah 34; and there you have the destiny not of Edom merely, but of every one that lives and dies in enmity against the truth. It is described in this way, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch;" what a change; all the fleshly comforts and religions of this world shall be turned into pitch; and the dust thereof into brimstone; that's what their religion will crumble to, come to dust and brimstone; and the land thereof shall become burning pitch; all their doctrines, all their traditions, will be turned into an everlasting curse; "it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through for ever and ever." Now all this language there is applied to Edom literally; but it unquestionably has a typical meaning, alluding to the awful doom of those that shall be lost! those unhappy men who live and die in enmity against the truth. But you, whom the Lord has brought to love the truth, hear your destiny; look at the contrast between the two. Look back again at these words in Isaiah 34, and then go to the next chapter, and there see what is said of the lovers of the truth, "An highway shall be there," or a lifting up out of Egypt; "and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness;" and there can be no way that gets rid of sin but by Christ Jesus; "He has finished transgression, and made an end of sin; made reconciliation for iniquity." Ah, poor sinner, with sin and guilt oppressed, if the blessed Spirit reveal Christ to you, as the way of holiness, bring your heart to feel the need of it; a moment will come, when your guilt, and terror, and fear, will fly from you, as quickly as the leprosy flew from the leper, when the Lord said, "Be you clean;" as quickly as the palsy fled from the man, when the Lord commanded him to be whole; as quickly as the eyes of the blind were opened, when the Lord said, "Be opened;" as quickly, and quicker too, than when the Lord said to Lazarus, "Come forth;" it is the way of holiness, Christ Jesus. They want to put us off now-a-days, with another way; do our duty, sir, and that's the way of holiness. Ah, I want something more than that; I want a way that will get rid of my unholiness, and there is but one way, and that is Christ Jesus; he is the way of holiness: "The unclean shall not pass over it;" he cannot find it out; the unclean is the man that is demoniacally unclean; it does not mean physically unclean, or ceremonially unclean, but demoniacally, unclean; that is, that man's spirit is the lying and murderous spirit of the devil; it is that way of holiness that he cannot pass over, he does not know anything of it; but it shall be for those, "the wayfaring-men," that are bona-fide travelers, that have set out, as John Bunyan expresses it, from the city of destruction, to the celestial city, "Shall not err therein", Christ is the way. "No lion shall be there." Why the Pope himself cannot find it out, and how should he? He is all holiness himself; he is called "His Holiness," you know, and he is quite welcome to it all; "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast;" we are safe there, for it is high ground, or a highway. Then who shall be there? "The ransomed" shall walk there; the ransomed; the poor, enthralled, captive, guilty, lost sinner; the Lord is gracious unto him, and says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." "By the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water;" that poor sinner walks there. The ransomed shall walk there; "And they shall come to Zion with songs; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Here then are the two spirits; the spirit of enmity, and the spirit of love; here are the two destinies; the one eternally lost, the other triumphantly, gloriously, and everlastingly saved.