

THE BEST WINE

A SERMON

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

SUCH is the way in which Isaac sums up his blessing to Jacob. It appears that Esau did not understand one very essential truth, namely, that sacrifice, the sacrifice of Christ, and the blessing of God, go together. Hence Esau was the elder brother, and therefore, by birthright, was the priest of the family, or should have been: he not understanding that priesthood, sold it for a mess of pottage. He did not see that in parting with the priesthood he parted with the blessing. Therefore Jacob, after he had obtained the priesthood, was ever upon the look-out for the blessing. And whatever may be said as to the means adopted, perhaps not altogether justifiable; but as we cannot always judge of ancient doings by modern laws, nor of ancient customs by modern times, I will leave out all censure upon that department. Suffice it to say, then, that the atonement of Christ and the blessing of God go together; and no man can have any one blessing without the sacrifice of Christ. We can have no pardon, no peace, in a word, no fellowship with God, without the sacrifice of Christ. And so, it appears Cain did not understand this truth. Hence, he came with the fruits of the ground; he did not come in the way that Abel did. Abel, being convinced of his state as a sinner, and feeling his need of the promised seed, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head,” Abel, therefore, was a better man than Cain, because he was a believer in God’s truth; and Abel was pleasing in the sight of God, because he received the testimony that God had given of the promised seed, for “without faith it is impossible to please God.” But this great truth of eternal perfection of sacrifice Cain did not believe, and therefore, as he did not believe it, he came before God just as he was, without and apart from sacrifice, and consequently was not accepted of God. It is, therefore, a great thing to retain, or rather to receive, the truths of the gospel as God has joined them together. And not only do the sacrifice of Christ and the blessings of the everlasting gospel go together, but also regeneration and the sacrifice of Christ go together. Hence every man that is born of God is thereby made to know his need of what Christ’s atonement really is, and he is led to receive God’s testimony of that atonement, and consequently is led into the mercy of obtaining in due time the blessings, all the blessings God has bestowed them, in Christ Jesus the Lord. But not only is the sacrifice of Christ essential to the blessing, and that it stands inseparably connected with regeneration, but it also stands inseparably connected with eternal election. Hence at the last day we find that none can enter heaven but those whose names are found in the Lamb’s Book of Life. These are the things which God has joined together, and let no man put that asunder which

He has joined together. Hence men, in severing those things which God has joined together, the consequence is, they join things together that God has put asunder. They put law and gospel together, and make out the works of the law something to help the gospel, whereas the word of God puts the law and the gospel in distinct departments; the one to kill the other to make alive; the one to curse, the other to bless; the one to gender to bondage, the other to set the sinner free; the one to wound, to cut us up, and cut us down, and leave us there as bound hand and foot, and the other to come pouring in oil and wine. So that they stand distinct. Christ is the end of the law, and the believer becomes dead to the law, and the law dead to him. Also, in putting that asunder which God has joined together, men not only join the law and the gospel, but they also join the creature and the Creator. Hence free will sticks to it that there is something for the creature to do in the matter of salvation; duty faith is nothing else but free will in disguise. To tell me that it is my duty to believe savingly in Jesus Christ, you might as well tell me it is my duty to be of the royal household of England instead of being a mere citizen of the country; you might as well tell me it was my duty to exist. No, my hearer, all of us are by nature under sin, and under the law, and we have no responsibility pertaining to salvation matters; we do not belong to those things, and those things do not belong to us; we are altogether shut out. And when the Lord in mercy quickens the soul, and brings us in, then we shall learn in his own time to keep that together which he has joined together, and to put that asunder, rightly dividing the word of truth, which he has put asunder.

I shall take Jacob this morning in the blessings that are here bestowed upon him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ; taking, of course, the people of God in as we go along. And our text will divide itself into two parts, at least there are two thoughts that we shall have chiefly to dwell upon this morning, after I have first observed that the New Testament brings before us several circumstances showing that mere temporal circumstances in the Old Testament had a spiritual and an ultimate meaning. Witness Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4, for instance. And also, when a criminal of old was hanged on a tree, the apostle even makes use of that circumstance to typify Christ becoming sin for us, becoming a curse for us; and "Cursed," he said, "is every one that hangs on a tree." I will, therefore, in the first place, notice *the blessing*; and secondly, *the persons to whom the blessing belongs*.

First, then, *the blessing* as pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ. The first blessing was that of fragrancy, or excellency of character. I think that is the first thing intended. The Scriptures are very clear upon this. "Isaac smelled the smell of Jacob's raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed." Now this appears to me to denote excellency of character. The fragrance of the raiment, it is a figurative form of speech. And we are hereby to go, we are by such a suggestion to go to some other scripture, and see whether it applies to the Savior, and how far it concerns us. For you will at once, I am sure, without my even naming it, observe that there is an entire contrast to our character by nature. As I observed just now in prayer, our righteousness's are spoken of as filthy rags, and our state by nature is spoken of under the figure of loathsome disease, full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, that there is no part sound. You will at once see that our character naturally is every way bad, every way repulsive to the holiness, and justice, and integrity, and excellency of the most high God. Let us, then, see how we get rid of all this, it is by the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there seems in the 45th Psalm a direct reference to this very circumstance. There the Savior is set forth in the excellency of his character, and then the whole summed up in similar language to that here used, "You are fairer than the children of men." There is Christ in his absolute purity said to be

fairer than the children of men. Now, then, let me as I go along show what these things are to us. A grain of faith in the purity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, a grain of faith in him as the Holy One of Israel, in the innocence, and purity, and preciousness of his blood, brings us sanctification: he is our sanctification, and just as we drink in spirit of the testimony of Christ's holiness, or his precious blood cleansing from all sin, just so we progress in sanctification. Yes, said one, do you believe in progressive sanctification? I believe in progressive renewing's of sanctification, I believe that every manifestation of the Lord's mercy to us, every time we drink in the cleansing preciousness of the wine of the kingdom, the blood of Christ, what is that but the progress of sanctification? And it is said of this same Person, that grace was poured into his lips. The grace I take to be the covenant of grace, because it immediately says, "Therefore God has blessed you forever." Let us be careful here; here we are upon ground of infinite concernment: "Grace is poured into your lips therefore God has blessed you forever." It seems to say this, that if Jesus Christ had not received God's new covenant, if he had found any fault with it, if he had not drunk in the testimonies of that covenant, he could not have been blessed. But he was the Mediator of this new covenant; this grace was poured into his lips. He found no fault with election; he was one with the Father in it; he found no fault with the sovereignty of God but was one with the Father in it. He found no fault with the stability of the truth; he was one with the Father in that stability. He found no fault with the hardness of his position, he found no fault with the depths of his sufferings; he found no fault with sin being laid upon him; he was willingly led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers. He therefore drank in, received into his lips, the everlasting covenant, and all the conditions thereof that laid with him; carried the whole out; and he is blessed. Now I am just pointing out by slow degrees what is meant by the words of Isaac, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed." And Christ is that field which God has blessed. Christ is that field where we find that gospel, that wondrous field in which, I was going to say, we shall range and roam forever. Then in that same 45th Psalm, another excellency of his character is his conquering his people. He girds his sword upon his thigh, the sword of the Spirit. "And with your glory." What is his glory but his work, his finished work? He will not go without that; he goes with that; it is on the ground of that, that he rides forth. "And your majesty;" and what is his majesty? The authority that he received from on high to go forth, for he came not of himself, he was sent of God. "And in your majesty ride prosperously because of truth," the truth of the new covenant "and righteousness; and your right hand shall teach you terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under you." This is another feature of the excellency of his character. I look back at the time when he conquered me; but I did not know it was the Lord at the time. A conviction of my state conquered me, but I did not know it was an arrow from the bow of this wondrous warrior, this Captain of eternal salvation. Arrow after arrow stuck fast in me, until all my free will, duty faith, the whole of it was gone, and I was left at the Savior's feet without one word to say in my own favor, without a particle of power to help myself. Then in comes reigning grace. "Your throne, O God;" what throne? Why, it is a throne of grace; that grace raises me up and brings me to see that Jesus Christ has hated wickedness for me and that he has loved righteousness for me; and in these two lay the very texture of his righteousness; and that his hatred to sin is imputed to me. And when I saw this, I no longer either boasted of or rested upon my own hatred to sin, or my own love to righteousness; but I then began to boast of Jesus Christ; and I knew that this scepter was a right scepter, for having atoned for sin, when sin and salvation meet together, the claims of salvation upon the soul rise infinitely superior to the claims of sin. Sin says of the soul, "It is mine;" the gospel says, "It is mine;" the law says, "It is mine;" the gospel says,

“It is mine.” The Savior’s claims in consequence of what he has done, rise above the claims of sin, the claims of Satan, the claims of law, the claims of death; for Jesus has a name that is above every name, and therefore, when he conquers the soul, he puts down all rule and all authority that has been exercised over that soul, takes the soul under his own government, and thus such an one by Christ Jesus gets rid of his evil character, Christ becomes his sanctification, conquers and gets rid of his unbelief and enmity, is reconciled to God, brought into the liberty of the gospel. And now notice, “All your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made you glad.” Every Christian could understand that. It means two things, the excellency of his character, and the fragrance of his presence. Hence you can distinguish between that sermon that carries a fragrance and savor in it, and you are ready to say that Jesus is to you as the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley; such a religion as this, that has this savor and fragrance in it, is very different from a mere mental, a mere moral, a mere intellectual religion, that delights intensely in the letter of the word, while at the same time there are no wounds to heal, no sin to pardon, no conscience to release, no heart to enlarge, no real soul trouble, and consequently no real fragrance. Thus, then, Jesus Christ becomes unto all such as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed. And now, if Jesus Christ be thus made excellent to you, then I am sure you are included in our text, “Blessed is he that blesses you.” Can you bless Jesus Christ? Can you say, as at the end of the 118th Psalm, where the Lord, repeating those words in the 23rd of Matthew, he says, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, You shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” Have not some of you caught a little of the fragrance, and a little of the fire of the little children, even of old; for if they were little children literally, we are little children spiritually, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that comes in the name the Lord!” In his presence is indeed fragrance. This is the field that the Lord has blessed; here is that field where God and sinners meet; here is that Paradisiacal ground where there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent; here a poor trembling sinner, let his guilt, and wounds, and woe be what they may, let him be brought here, here all is swallowed up and put away, and he shall be made as happy as Christ himself; for they shall enter into the joy of their Lord, the joy of their God. God himself is Christ’s exceeding joy, and God himself by Christ Jesus will be their exceeding joy: God shall be all and in all. There is one thought then. You, perhaps, can get by these hints a clearer view of it than I can state.

Now the second point is abundance of all good things. “Therefore,” said Isaac to Jacob. This word “therefore” stands there as a note of sequence. “Therefore.” What wrath, what bitterness, what wretchedness everlasting, will not the badness of every one’s state and character bring to them if they are left to that? On the other hand, what good, what blessedness, what glory, what advantage, will not the excellency of Christ’s character bring to every one for an eternal possession and enjoyment that is led to believe in him? “See the smell of my son.” God smelled a sweet savor in Noah’s sacrifice, typical of the dear Savior; he smelled a sweet savor in the wondrous name, person, and work of his dear Son. “Therefore”, therefore. Ah, what does not the excellency of Christ’s character bring us! It brings us eternal life, brings us all the wonders of the gospel, brings us a smiling God, brings us a kingdom, an inheritance, a glory, a blessedness, which eternity alone can develop. I have read funeral sermons sometimes, some poor creatures have died, oh dear, dear, dear, dear! they have been painted up, and dressed up, and puffed up, and colored up, and ornamented up, that you could really think that the departed embodied as many excellencies as Jesus Christ pretty well; but little said about Jesus Christ. I believe, if a Christian could think that such stuff would be said after his death, he could be ready to come up out of his grave and denounce

such insults upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to the excellency of Christ's character, there you are safe; there is no danger of making him out more holy than he is, no danger of making him out more righteous than he is; there is no danger of making him out more loving than he is, or more powerful than he is, or more perfect than he is, or more triumphant than he is, or more suited than he is; there is no danger there. Why, there is not one of you, much as I love you, and pray for you, and my whole existence swallowed up in your welfare, there is not one of you all whose excellencies I could not tell out in about a quarter of an hour. Well, say some, don't go to say that, I could. And if I were to preach a funeral sermon upon one of the Lord's people, I should simply say, He was a sinner saved by grace; that is what he was. I should say, He was one that knew himself, and that knew the truth, and that stuck to it all his days; he loved the cause of God, and the ministers of God, and the truth of God, about a quarter of an hour would do it all; yes. But he from whom you derive all your excellency, and who is your excellency, why, I had almost said eternity will not suffice to tell out the excellencies of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a mercy, when his good character and our bad character came together, that our bad character could not swallow up his good character, but his good swallowed up our bad! And so, there is nothing but the good left; bless the Lord for that! not an adversary, not a spot, not a wrinkle, not a blemish; "look forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." "Therefore," note of sequence, and a very nice note it is, "Therefore God give you of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." "Plenty of corn and wine." What does the dew of heaven mean? It means the gentle, soothing, comfortable blessing of the Lord. in the 110th Psalm it is said of Jesus Christ, "From the womb of the morning," meaning the morning of the resurrection. "you have the dew of your youth." Here is the blessing then; as the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, where the Lord has commanded the blessing, even life for ever-more. And Jesus shared largely, personally in this dew of heaven. The Holy Spirit in all the gentleness of the dove rested upon him. And how suited was the Holy Spirit in this character to Christ, coming in all the gentleness of dew, the gentleness of the dove; how suited! for Jesus himself was meek and lowly in heart. Jesus himself, while he could crush ten thousand worlds by a movement of his omnipotence, was nevertheless so gentle as not to break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. How suited this gentle way of being blessed! And does not this same dew descend upon his people? Is it not written, "my doctrine shall drop as the rain"? has it not done so, and refreshed us? "my speech shall distil as the dew," has it not done so? "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass," has it not done so? So, he had the dew of heaven, "and the fatness of the earth." The fatness of the earth means the richness of the earth. What earth? Well, certainly not this earth, because he had nowhere to lay his head; but he had the fatness of the new earth, the gospel earth. "Master, eat." "I have meat to eat that you know not of." "Has any man brought him anything to eat then?" Ah, the disciples, like the rest of us, you see, looking to the things that were seen, not to the things that were not seen. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me;" that is where the fatness is; that is where the riches are. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." Eternal honor to his dear name! If he had not finished it, no one else could. He therefore would not leave the cross until the crown was safe; he would not leave the cross till the throne was based upon a foundation that could never be shaken; his righteousness is an everlasting foundation. "And plenty of corn and wine." He it is. It will not be with him as it was with Joseph. Joseph toward the last had to «ay, Now, when you first came I could fill your sacks; but we are all getting short together; and I will give you half a gallon, therefore; it is as much as you must expect, and you must make the most of it; we are ail getting short together. But shall the gospel garners of the dear Savior ever

be thus partly empty? No. It will always be true of them that they are full, affording all manner of store. "They shall not hunger, nor thirst, nor any heat light upon them; but the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, lead them to fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "Plenty of corn." I can bear testimony of that. He has kept me now a long time, feeding my soul; and I like his treatment more than ever, and I like the provision more than ever, I like the wine more than ever, and I like the wheat more than ever; I like the wine more than ever, and I am more at home than ever in the Lord's house, where I get plenty to eat. Ah, say some, that is the life you like to live, that lazy life of eating and drinking. Well, you may call it what you like, but I like to live that life described in Joel. And what is that? "You shall eat in plenty;" and that is what I like, that is what I like; "and be satisfied." Some people are never satisfied, but the Lord's people shall be satisfied: "and praise the name of the Lord your God." Some people, the more they have literally or temporally, the more they complain. Not so spiritually. If the Lord feeds us spiritually, it is sure to endear his name and lead us to praise him. "My people shall never be ashamed." Thus, then, this dew, and this fatness of the earth, and this plenty of corn, follows the excellency of Christ's character; and you are to live not by your own excellency, for you have none, but by his excellency; you are to live not by your own righteousness, but by his; not at your own expense, but at his; not upon the leeks and onions of Egypt, but upon the manna that comes down from heaven. Well, but here is plenty of wine too. Yes. How do you water-drinkers get over that? We are the best in the world to get over it; we are the only men that can give a right interpretation to such scriptures. Now, for instance, the Savior says, "If you put new wine into old bottles, the bottles will break, and the wine be lost; but if you put new wine into new bottles, both are preserved." Now, then, how will you explain that, sir? Very easily. If you put new wine into old bottles, what is the consequence? The old particles in the skin (for these are skin bottles) will set the new wine fermenting; the consequence is, the wine becomes intoxicating, the bottle bursts, and it is all gone together. So, a mere professor, that is, not a regenerated man, you put the truth into that man's head; why, presently he becomes intoxicated with his own supposed knowledge. Secondly, it undergone acetous fermentation; the man becomes sour; then he becomes an apostate, and thus bottle and wine go together. But if you put new wine into new bottles, the bottle does not set it fermenting, and the wine does not ferment; it is the pure blood of the grape, and it will strengthen, heal, nourish you, make you as merry as a cricket, and it will not make you stupid. As I said on Friday night, that which people call wine, the doctored stuff got up by chemical preparations, is sure to make people stupid, quarrelsome, murderous, and the rest of it; whereas the pure blood of the grape will never do that, just so, gospel wine is that which cheers, never followed by any intoxication, no headache, no heartache, no quarrelling with wife, or neighbor, or friend, no, make you as good tempered as possible. I declare, when I get a drop of this heavenly wine, I am so good tempered that nothing can offend me; I could bear anything; but if I do not get a drop, I am miserable. So, you see, I like a drop. Yes, the pure blood of the grape; it is that, which cheers but not inebriates. There is a distinction between intoxicating murderous stuff and that which is gentle, exhilarating, refreshing, healing, comfortable and nice. That is what Adam and Eve had before the fall; they had the pure juice of the grape. And I know the glorious gospel of God, then, is set forth by this very simile, the pure blood of the grape. "Plenty of corn and wine, denoting the ample sustenance and the suited support.

But I must not dwell upon this; I must leave it, and go to the next part. I suppose, not losing sight of the little note "therefore." "Therefore," seeing you are of such excellent character, seeing Jesus is so excellent, you shall have the dew of heaven in consequence, plenty of corn and wine in

consequence. "Therefore, let people serve you, and nations bow down to you." And has it not been so? Oh, in that wondrous age which I suppose we shall never have a repetition of, I see no authority in the New Testament for it; I should like to see it: some hold we shall; I do not happen to hold it, I cannot see it; in that wondrous age, the age of the apostles, a few simple minded but divinely armed and taught men, went forth, east, west, north, and south; nations fell before them, fell down at the Mediator's feet, so that the peoples did serve him. and nations bowed down before him. And hence, many monarchs have been glad to submit their scepters to him since that, and, I trust, will do. I wish our neighbor across the water, the Emperor, he is half a Protestant, the same as some Protestant monarchs are half Catholics, I should like to see him a thorough Protestant, he does give all the liberty he can; I do believe he would be glad if he could see France become Protestant; but he has some tough articles there to convert. I recollect, a time ago, in the newspaper, there were two articles followed one upon the other. The one was the purification of the river, the dreadfully, miserably dirty river: and the next was the consecration of a Roman Catholic priest; and I thought, which was the greater task of the two? He has some tough articles to deal with, you know. I cannot help my thoughts, and, as the boy said, "I have a right to my thoughts." See, I say, how many monarchs that have been sensible of the blessings and advantages which pure Christianity brings, have been glad to lay their scepters down at the Saviors feet, and to be guided by his authority, and to feel that they and their kingdom, their people, and their throne, are so safe nowhere as under the protection of that God who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that people have served him; nations have bowed down before him. "Be lord over your brethren." And the Savior says to his brethren, "You call me Lord and Master." Ah, we do, Lord; we cannot have a name good enough for you; we do call you Lord; we can find no name good enough for you; you are Lord; you are Lord of all. "And so, I am." Yes. Lord, you are such a Lord as never was besides; the Lord of light, the Lord of glory, the Lord of salvation, the Lord of every blessing that we can ever realize. "Be Lord over your brethren." Oh, how we delight in his dominion over us; we glory in sitting at his dear feet; we not only bow to his authority, we advocate his authority, we stand out for his authority; yes, grace enabling us, we feel we would rather, die a thousand mortal deaths than give up the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He is the Lord your God; worship you him;" which our souls most gladly do. And the substance of our prayer, in coming to a place of worship, is, 'come Lord Jesus' come quickly. "Come at the beginning of the hymn. Lord, and come at the beginning of the prayer; come at the beginning of the sermon, and be with us all the time;" for if the Lord of all be present, then Satan must flee.

"Devils at your presence flee;
Blest is the man that trusts in you."

"And let your mother's children bow down to you." Who is the mother? Well, Rebekah was Jacob's mother, and Rebekah, like Sarah, stands a figure of the new covenant. Christ's mystic mother was the new covenant. Christ was made under the law; but he was a new covenant child; he was the child of promise. Well, say you, of course he was, or else there is no promise at all. Well, he was made under the law because you were there; but he was not a law child, but a new covenant child. Christ was not an old covenant child. No; he did not come to mediate for temporal things, such as were under the old covenant, but for eternal things pertaining to the new covenant; so that the new covenant was his mother. And his mother's children are those that are brought to bow to the same covenant, to acknowledge the same covenant; brought into the same order of things; here is their mystic mother. So, then, "look unto Abraham your father," as a pattern of the Lord being with you:

“and unto Sarah that bare you.” And as Isaac was a child of promise, by the sworn promise of God, so is every sinner brought to believe in Jesus Christ by the same rule, God's promise and God's purpose. Now God's promises and God's purposes go together. I suppose yours do not always, do they? Don't you make a promise sometimes, and the purpose stops somewhere? the promise goes on, but the purpose stops. But God makes a promise, and throws eternal purpose into that promise; his hand is stretched out to perform what he has promised, and who shall turn him back? Your mother's children. So, then, the people of God are children, not of Sinai, but of Zion, where the Lamb is; children of Jerusalem, children of Jacob, children of God. “Cursed be every one that curses you, and blessed be he that blesses you.” Now what is meant by cursing him, then? I think we ought to take the word “curse” there to mean “anathematize,” “exclude.” And so, if I exclude the true Christ of God in what he really is, then I am cursed, because I thereby exclude the only way in which I can be blessed. If I exclude the truth of God, his sworn truth, then I exclude that which alone can bless me; so, I must be cursed. If I exclude the people of God, set my affection upon Hagar's children, and become a lover of the bond children and a hater of those that are free, then I exclude the people God has blessed, and so I must be cursed. If I exclude the sovereignty of God in order to make room for human sovereignty of some sort, or shape, or form, or size, or make, then I exclude that which alone can override everything, and bless me in spite of all, and I must be cursed. But, on the other hand, if I receive the Christ of God, then I am blessed; the truth of God, then I am blessed; and the people of God, then I am blessed; the ways of God, then I am blessed; God in his own sworn covenant and eternal counsel, then I am blessed. I had intended to have given nine or ten illustrations from the Bible to show how those who thus receive the Lord will be blessed; but your time is gone, and you must say the rest yourselves.