

Chapter 27

Jacob by his mothers counfaiI getteth his fathers bleffing in place of Efau. 42. And by her is aduifed (for auoiding Efaus wrath, who threatned to kil him) to flie to his vnclē Laban, in Haran of Mefopotamia.

And Ifaac was old, and his eyes were dimme, and he could not fee: and he called Efau his elder fonne, and faid to him: My fonne? Who answered: Here I am. ² To whom his father: Thou feeft, quoth he, that I am old, and know not the day of my death. ³ Take thy infruments, thy quiver, and bowe, and goe abrode: and when thou haft taken any thing by hunting, ⁴ make me broth therof, as thou knoweft I like, and bring that I may eate: and my foule may bleffe thee before I dye. ⁵ Which when Rebecca had heard, and he was gone into the field to fulfil his fathers commandement, ⁶ ſhe faid to her fonne Iacob: I heard thy father talking with Efau thy brother, and faying to him: ⁷ Bring me of thy hunting, and make me meates that I may eate, and bleffe thee in the fight of our Lord before I dye. ⁸ Now therefore my fonne, affent to my counfel: ⁹ and go thy way to the flocke, bring me two kiddes of the beft, that I may make of them meat for thy father, ſuch as he gladly eateth: ¹⁰ which when thou haft brought in, and he hath eaten, he may bleffe thee before he dye. ¹¹ To whom he answered: Thou knoweft that Efau my brother is an hearie man, and I am ſmooth: ¹² if my father ſhal feele me, and perceauē it, ^aI feare left he wil thinke I would haue deluded him, and I ſhal bring vpon me a curſe for a bleffing. ¹³ To whom his mother faid: This curſe, my fonne, light vpon me: only heare thou my voice, and go, fetch me the things which I haue faid. ¹⁴ He went, and brought, and gaue them to his mother. She dreſſed meats, euen as ſhe knew his father liked. ¹⁵ And ſhe did on him the garments of

^a Iacob ſecure in confcience that the right of firſt-birth belonged to him, yet feared to geue occaſiō of offence to his father.

Efau verie good, which ſhe had at home with her: ¹⁶ and the litle ſkinnes of the kidds ſhe put about his hands, and couered the bare of his necke. ¹⁷ And ſhe gaue him the broth, and deliuered him bread that ſhe had baked. ¹⁸ Which when he had caried in, he ſaid: My father? But he answered: I heare. Who art thou my ſonne? ¹⁹ And Iacob ſaid: ^aI am thy firſt begotten Efau: I haue done as thou dideſt command me: ariſe, ſit, and eate of my hunting, that thy ſoule may bleſſe me. ²⁰ And againe Iſaac to his ſonne: How couldeſt thou, ſaid he, find it ſo quickly, my ſonne? Who answered: ^a)It was the wil of God that that which I would came quickly in my way. ²¹ And Iſaac ſaid: Come hither, that I may feele thee my ſonne, and may proue whether thou be my ſonne Efau, or no. ²² He came nere to his father, and when he had felt him, Iſaac ſaid: The voice verely, is the voice of Iacob: but the hands, are the hands of Efau. ²³ And he ^aknew him not, becauſe his hearie hands had made him like vnto the elder. Bleſſing him therfore, ²⁴ he ſaid: Art thou my ſonne Efau? He answered: I am. ²⁵ But he ſaid: Bring me the meats of thy hunting, my ſonne, that my ſoule may bleſſe thee. Which when they were brought and he had eaten, he offered him wine alſo, which after he had drunke, ²⁶ he ſaid to him: Come nere me, and geue me a kiſſe, my ſonne. ²⁷ He came nere, and kiſſed him. And immediatly as he felt the fragrant fauoure of his garments, bleſſing him, he ſaid: Behold the fauoure of my ſonne is as the fauoure of a plentiful field, which our Lord hath bleſſed. ²⁸ God geue thee of the deaw of heauen, and of the fatnes of the earth abundance of corne and wine. ²⁹ And let peoples ſerue thee, and tribes adore thee: be thou lord of thy brethren, and thy mothers children bowe they before thee. He that ſhal curſe thee, be he curſed: and he that ſhal bleſſe thee, be he replenished with bleſſings. ³⁰ Iſaac had ſcarce ended his wordes, and Iacob now gone forth abroad, but Efau came, ³¹ and brought in to his father meates made of his hunting, ſaying: Ariſe my father, and eate of thy ſonnes

^a It was truly Gods wil, but not in that ſeſe as Iſaac vnderſtood it.

hunting: that thy foule may bleffe me. ³² And Ifaac faid to him: Why! who art thou? Who answered: I am thy firft begotten fonne Efau. ³³ Ifaac was amazed and aftonied exceedingly: and marueling more then a man can beleue, faid: Who is he then that euen now brought me venifon that he had taken, and I did eate of al thinges before thou cameft? and I haue bleffed him, ^{a)}and he fhall be bleffed. ³⁴ Efau hauing heard his fathers wordes, roared out with a great crye: and being difmaied, faid: Bleffe me alfo, my father. ³⁵ Who faid: Thy brother came deceitfully and tooke thy bleffing. ³⁶ But he faid again: Rightly is his name called Iacob: for he hath fupplanted me loe the fecond time: my firft-birth-right he tooke before, and now the fecond time he hath ftolen my bleffing. And againe to his father he faid: Haft thou not referued me alfo a bleffing? ³⁷ Ifaac answered: I haue appointed him thy Lord, and al his brethren I haue made fubiect to his feruice: with corne and wine I haue eftablifhed him, and for thee, my fonne, what fhall I doe more after this? ³⁸ To whom Efau faid: Haft thou one only bleffing, father? I befech thee bleffe me alfo. And when he wept that he howled againe, ³⁹ Ifaac being moued, faid to him: In ^{b)}the fat of the earth, and in the deaw of heauen from aboue ⁴⁰ fhall thy bleffing be. Thou fhalt liue by the fworde, and fhalt ferue thy brother: and ^{c)}the time fhall come, when thou fhalt shake of, and loofe his yoake from thy necke. ⁴¹ Efau therefore alwaies hated Iacob for the bleffing wherwith his father had bleffed him: and he faid in his hart: The daies wil come of the mourning of my father, and I wil kil Iacob my brother. ⁴² Thefe things were told to Rebecca: who fending & calling Iacob her fonne, faid to him: Behold

^a Ifaac now knowing it to be Gods wil, ratified that he had done.

^b Worldlings bleffing confifteth in tranfitorie welth.

^c The Idumeans being fubdued by king Dauid (*2. Reg. 8.*) reuolted from king Ioram, and had a king of their owne (*4. Reg. 8.*) they were againe fubdued by Hircanus (*tefte Iofepho. li. 13. Antiq.*) but againe Herod an Idumean raigned in Iewrie. *Math. 2. Luc. 1.*

Efau thy brother threatneth to kil thee. ⁴³ Now therefore, my fonne, heare my voice, and get thee vp and flye to Laban my brother into Haran: ⁴⁴ and thou fhalt dwel with him a few daies, til the furie of thy brother be affwaged, ⁴⁵ and his indignation ceafe, and he forget thofe things, which thou haft done to him: afterward I wil fend, and bring thee from thence hither. Why fhall I be deprived of both fonnes in one day? ⁴⁶ And Rebecca faid to Ifaac: I am wearie of my life for the daughters of Heth: If Iacob take a wife of the ftocke of this land, I lift not liue.

ANNOTATIONS

19 I am thy firft begotten Efau.) Iacob was not by nature the firft begotten; but by Gods ordinance, & by couenant made with Efau, had right to the preeminence, and priuilegies belonging to the firft borne. So he did not lie, but fpake a truth, meaning that he was that fonne, to whom by diuine election the firft-birth-right was dew, which his father fupposed to pertaine to Efau.

But becaufe fome fcorners of Chriftian doctrin (like to the old Manichees) vfe to fay, that Catholique Doctors, and Schoolmen excufe, and condemne whom they lift by fuch gloffes, let fuch reprobours vnderftand, that both moderne and ancient Catholique writers auow this defence of the holie Patriarch Iacob, not by priuate fpirite, but by the moft true and proper fenfe of holie Scripture itfelfe. VVhere it may appeare, if they wil examine the text, that Iacob in al this procurement of his fathers bleffing, neither did anie thing vniuftly, nor faid anie thing fallly. Firft it was reueled to his mother (*chap. 25. v. 23.*) *That the elder* (of her twinnes) *should ferue the younger.* Secondly, holie Scripture teftifieth in the fame chapter (*v. 27.*) *That Iacob vvas a plaine* (or fincere) *Man*, void of vniuft dealing. Thirdly, for more quiet enioying that right, which God had ordained for him, he procured his brothers confent and confirmation (*v. 33.*) Fourthly though he was fecure in confcience that the bleffing was dew to him, yet he feared (*v. 12.*) left he might geue occafion of offence to his father, to whom this myfterie was not yet reueled. Fifthly Ifaac perceiuing at laft Gods wil, that Iacob fhould be preferred, was neither offended with him, nor reuoked his bleffing, as vnlawfully furprifed, but condefcending therto, ratified that he had done, faying (*v. 33.*) *I haue bleffed him, and he fhall be bleffed.* Sixthly, God himfelfe from this time forwards often appeared to Iacob, and with great promifes, and manie temporal and fpiritual benefites, declared his fingular loue to him. Seuently, thefe three Patriarches Abraham, Ifaac, and

Iacob did not lie, nor finne in faying he was Efau &c.

He is proued innocent by the text.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Iacob are special renowned Sainctes of the old Testament: yea the Lord and Creator of al would peculiarly be called (*Exodi. 3.*) the God of Abraham, Ifaac, and Iacob. Moyfes praying instantly for Gods mercie and clemencie towards the people (*Exodi. 32.*) befought him to remember Abraham, Ifaac, and Iacob his feruants: and fo in both old and new Testament thefe three are often mentioned as chiefe Princes in the Kingdom of Heauen. Al which flew the great vertues and holines of them al.

And touching this fact of Iacob, where (if euer aniewhere) might feme to be fome great finne, S. Auguftin at large proueth that he did not herein finne at al: *That vvchich Iacob did* (faith he, *li. cont. mendacium c. 10.*) *By his mothers infruction to deceiue his father, if it be diligently confidered, vvas no lie, but a myfterie, and therefore for the familiar counfail of the Holie Ghoft, vvchich his mother had receiued, he is excufed from finne.* The fame he confirmeth. *q. 74. in Gen. li. 16. c. 37. de ciuit. & li. 22. c. 34. cont. Fauft.* The fame alfo teach S. Chrifoftom *ho. 53. in Gen. S. Hierom Epift. 125.* S. Theodoret *q. 79. & 80. in Gen. S. Gregorie, ho. 6. in Ezechielem.* S. Bede, Ifidorus, Innocentius 3, Rupertus and others vpon this place, al agreing abfolutely that euerie lie is a finne, declare that Iacob lied not, but ftill fpake the truth, confirming their expofition by other like places of Scripture. As when our Sauour faid of S. Iohn Baptift (*Math. 11.*) *He is Elias* meaning that he was Elias in fpirite not in perfon. So Iacob faid truly that he was Efau, not meaning in perfon but in right of the firft borne, by Gods ordinance: Efau alfo hauing condescended therto by couenant and oath. In that alfo he deceiued his father, was no finne. For it was a lawful and good deceit, fuch a one (faith S. Chrifoftom) as Hieremie fpeaketh of, *Lord thou haft deceiued me, and I am deceiued,* fo Ifaac was deceiued, not as we commonly cal deceit, but to his owne and others good, by Gods difpofition.

Ho. 6. ad Col.

Hier. 20.
Epift. 125.

23 Knevv him not.) S. Damafus demanding of S. Hierom, what might be the reafon why God would fuffer his holie feruant Ifaac not to know Iacob, but to be deceiued, and through ignorance to bleffe whom he would not, declareth that it happened not only to Ifaac, but alfo to manie other like holie men, to be ignorant of manie things, and to be deceiued in error of opinion:

and that this error was profitable to Ifaac and his houfe. For if he had geuen this bleffing (which was a fpiritual Iurifdiction) to Efau, as he purpofed, he had committed a noxious error in dede, by preferring a bloudie man, one that was readie, if he could, to haue killed his brother (*v. 41.*) omitting him, that was fincere and very vertuous, and had done his owne wil, not Gods wil therein.

But why would not God reuel his wil to Ifaac (as he had commanded a farre greater thing to Abraham to facrifice the fame Ifaac) that he might wittingly haue bleffed Iacob by Gods commandment? The Fathers do probably alleage this for one reafon,

The Fathers proue his innocencie in this fact.

Euerie lie is a finne.

Some deceit good.

It was good that Ifaac knew not Iacob when he bleffed him.

Good in respect of Efau.

Ho. 53.
q. 79. in Gen.

that if Esau, being a fierce and cruel man, had perceived that his father had willingly preferred Iacob, he would haue bene incensed against his father, conceived and attempted euil against him. An other reason S. Chriftom and Theodoret do yeld, that by this strange maner of imparting this blessing, it might more manifestly appeare to be Gods wil and ordinance, and not to procede from mans affection, that Iacob should be preferred.

More to Gods glorie, and Iacobs commendation.