

“I HAVE ENOUGH”

NO. 2739

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, AUGUST 11, 1901
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 9, 1880**

*“Esau said, I have enough....Jacob said, I have enough.”
Genesis 33:9, 11*

IT is a very rare thing to meet with people who say that they have enough, for those who have most generally desire more, and those who have little feel that contentment is a thing which cannot reasonably be expected from them. For any person honestly and truthfully to say, “I have enough,” is so unusual a circumstance that I do not remember having heard it often. I have done so a few times, at long intervals.

This being the case as a rule, it is very remarkable that there should be, in this chapter, a record of two persons, who each said, “I have enough.” It is specially noteworthy that this was said by two brothers, for generally, if one of two brothers is contented, the other is of quite a different disposition. One may be of a very happy and easy-going spirit, but the other possesses enough worry and care to have stocked the two. But here are two brothers, twins, yet each one says, “I have enough.”

It will appear to you as a still more singular fact if you recollect that these brothers differed so greatly from one another in other respects. The one was described by the apostle Paul as a “profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright,” yet he says, “I have enough.” The other was a man who had wrestled with God, and who had power with God and with men as a prince. He also says, “I have enough.” It seems to me as if, on that occasion, the blessing of their father Isaac rested upon them both.

For you remember that, although Esau did not receive the great blessing—the covenant blessing—that having gone to Jacob who secured it by deception, yet Esau did receive a great blessing of a temporal kind, which Isaac pronounced upon him with all the fervor of a father who loved his son most ardently. Esau thus received what he most wanted, for he cared very little for the spiritual blessing—not being a spiritual man—and when he obtained the temporal blessing, that satisfied his heart, and he said, “It is enough.”

The blessing of a gracious father is a blessing indeed; and though it may not always come, as we could wish, in the spiritual fashion, for all sons are not Jacobs, yet, nevertheless, it does come in some fashion or other. And thus, upon Esau there fell the blessing which his father Isaac pronounced upon him when he said, “Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.”

I am going to try to show you that, although these two different people did each say, “I have enough,” and although the meaning of their words was in some sense alike, yet there were great differences as to the innermost meaning of the very same words, when they came out of different mouths.

I. My first observation is, that **HERE IS AN UNGODLY MAN WHO SAYS THAT HE HAS ENOUGH.**

There are some unconverted men who are content with their present possessions. It is not always or often the case, but it is so sometimes. Contentment is not altogether a spiritual gift. It is possessed by some men who make no pretense to spiritual attainments. You must admit that it is so, and it is always unfair and unjust, because it is false, to say that merely moral men have no moral virtues, for they

sometimes have excellences which, for what they are, shine very brightly, and put to shame the defects of professing Christians.

A Bristol stone is not a diamond, and it is not worth anything like the price of a diamond, but if you were to say that it was not like a diamond and that it did not shine, you would do it a gross injustice. Paste gems are not real jewels, but they are made so remarkably like the genuine article that, if you were to say that they have no brilliancy, you would be denying that which is a matter of fact.

And in like manner, there are unconverted men whose natural excellences are bright and shining, and ought not to be denied—and though they are not the people of God, and in the day when God shall make up his jewels they will not be numbered with them, for they are mere counterfeits and imitations, yet there is much to be seen in them which we should admire, and of which we ought to confess the excellence.

There are some men, who have not the grace of God in their hearts, who, nevertheless, are not always fretting and worrying, as certain other people are. It is a comfort for their families that they are contented. And it is well that even an Esau should say, “I have enough.” It is good for Jacob that Esau should say it, and it is good for Esau himself. It is well for a man’s wife and his family that he should be of a happy temperament, and of a contented spirit, instead of being, as some are, perpetually grasping, and grinding, and scraping, and doing everything they can to get more to add to what they already possess.

Well, then, if even unconverted men sometimes say, “We have enough,”—and we do occasionally meet with such persons,—what a shame it will be if those, who have the grace of God within them, should fall short of even that contentment which worldly men have attained and should need such persons as these to set them an example in such a matter as this!

Notice, next, that it is sometimes the case that ungodly men are contented, as Esau was when he said, “I have enough.” This may be because they are persons of easy disposition, who are readily pleased. There are some of whom we say that “they are easy as an old shoe,” and generally, such people are not worth much more than an old shoe.

These very easy-going people never do much in the world, but still, for all that, they are happy in their easy mode of life. They are naturally satisfied with less than contents others. They look on the bright side of things. They are cheerful from their bodily constitution, being endowed with good health, and their mental conformation, which is not quite so brisk as that of some others, but more calm and quiet—possibly more stupid, too—enables them to say more readily than others do, “We have enough.”

I have no doubt that, sometimes, ignorance is a help to contentment. Hence the common saying, “If ignorance is bliss, ’tis folly to be wise,” which I will not stay to pull to pieces, though it is open to criticism, for a great mistake lies at the bottom of it. But there are some men, who are contented with what they have, because they do not know of anything better. They are perfectly satisfied with their present sphere in life, for they were never out of it. They have always lived on the old farm where their father lived before them, and where their ancestors have lived for many generations, and they do not know of anything better than that. I should not like to transplant the tree that grows so well where it is, and I should be the last to wish to inject cares, and anxieties, and ambitions into the heart of a man who is naturally contented with his lot.

I do not say that this was Esau’s case, however. I think he was contented, and said, “I have enough,” for quite another reason. Some are contented because they are utterly reckless and only consider present pleasure. They live from hand to mouth, and never calculate what may happen to-morrow. Laying by for a rainy day seems to them to be preposterous. If they have just sufficient for the passing hour, it is quite enough for them.

In some respects, how like this vice is to the virtue which the Christian ought to seek after! Yet it is a vice as we see it in the ungodly, for they are careless, heedless, reckless, as was this man Esau, who, coming in hungry and faint from the chase, sells his birthright for one mess of red pottage, not knowing and not caring what the spiritual value of that birthright might be, but selling it straight away that he

might satisfy his hunger. There are some who are contented for this reason, that they do not exercise thought, they do not give due consideration to their true condition, and they say, "We have enough," because they have just sufficient for the time present. Such contentment as that, I do not commend. If any of us have it, may God deliver us from it!

Yet let me notice, next, that in the contentment of unconverted men, there are some good points. For, first, it may prevent greed in them. When a man says, "I have enough," you do not expect him to be one of those who grind the faces of the poor, and who must compass sea and land to get more wealth to themselves. Now, in Esau's case, he declined his brother's present until he was pressed to accept it, and I have no doubt that he honestly declined it, on the ground that he had enough. His brother had planned this gift to propitiate his favor, but he tells him that he does not need it, that he loves him without the present, and he has enough, so does not require it.

It is a good thing for a man, even if he has not the grace of God, to be so contented with the things which he has, as not to be covetous of the things of others, for covetousness is a great sin, and is condemned in that commandment which says, "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's." So far, contentment is a good thing, if a man is so satisfied with what he has that he does not covet that which belongs to another.

It is also right and proper that he should not have any envious ill-feeling towards others. If others are better off than they are, some people straightway find fault with providence, and are envious and jealous of the person who appears to be more favored than they are. Esau was not of that mind, for he said to Jacob, "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself."

There is another sense implied in the Hebrew, "Be that to thee that is thine; may it do thee good; mayest thou use and enjoy it thyself!" I like to hear a man say, "My motto is, 'Live, and let live.' I have enough, and I wish others to have enough, too. And if another man's 'enough' is larger than mine, I am glad he has it. If he is capable of more enjoyment than I am, let him have it. Why should not I rejoice in his joy, and thus suck out of the sweets that belong to him some sweetness for myself by being glad that another is not so poor as I am, or so sick as I am, or so feeble as I am, or being glad that there are some who can excel myself, even in the point of earthly happiness?" So far so good, Esau, that you should say, "I have enough."

Still, there is an evil side to this contentment, as you must have seen in many who have possessed it. In some people, it has led to boasting. They are so satisfied with everything they have that they are quite sure that nobody else owns anything half so good as what they have. If they have a horse, there is never another horse within a hundred miles that can trot like theirs. If one should go faster, it is because their animal was a little out of condition that day. They think there is no such a farm as theirs, or no such a trade as theirs, or nothing in the world that can be compared with what they have, and they are even foolish enough to tell you so. This very contentment that they have breeds glorying in the flesh, and glorying in their own possessions, all which is evil and obnoxious in the sight of God.

We have also seen it lead to a contempt of divine things and this is even worse. Esau says, "I have enough," yet he had lost his birthright, he had lost all the blessings of the covenant, he had lost all part and lot in God and goodness. It is an awful contentment when man can be satisfied without God. What a terrible peace is that when a man is in a peaceful state of mind, although he is unsaved!

It is like that dreadful calm, in the tropics, of which we have sometimes read, where there has been no wind for many a day, and the very deep is rotting, and everything seems stagnant and full of death. There are some men who have reached that kind of contentment in which their conscience is seared as with a hot iron. They want no heaven—earth is their heaven. They desire not to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom—to fare sumptuously every day here is enough bliss for them. They are content not to have the children's portion, and to be scourged because God loves them. They wish to have the lot of the bastard, who is without chastisement, and who is not owned as a son. They have their portion in this life, and that is the worst thing about this kind of contentment, for it argues that God is giving them here all the joy that they will ever have.

Looked at from that standpoint, there was something very dreadful in Esau’s saying, “I have enough.” If you could have put Jacob in Esau’s place, with Jacob’s convictions, with Jacob’s knowledge of God, with Jacob’s desire to be on good terms with God, do you think that he would have said, “I have enough, for I have these camels, and cattle, and sheep, though I have not God”? Oh, no! Jacob would have said, “Enough, my Lord? All this is nothing without Yourself. I promised You, if You would give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and bring me again to my father’s house in peace, I would be Yours, but I cannot be content without You.”

So he grasps the angel of the covenant, and he says to him, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,” for he felt that, until God blessed him, he could not say, “I have enough.” There is no real contentment to a truly-awakened man until he is at peace with God, and it is a horrible thing for any man to be perfectly satisfied while he is under God’s wrath, and in danger of eternal destruction, as he certainly is unless he has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to put a few very sharp thorns into the pillow of any easy-going people here who are content out of Christ. I would even wound you that you may come to Christ for healing, and smite you that you may resort to the great Physician for the cure which He alone can work, for it is a dreadful thing that you should be at ease when you have such grave cause for disquietude. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

II. Now I must pass on to the better part of my subject. **HERE IS A GODLY MAN WHO SAYS THAT HE HAS ENOUGH**—this is Jacob.

I will begin by remarking that it is a pity that this is not true of every Christian man. It is a sad thing when a man is godly, and yet does not say, “I have enough.” The apostle does not say that contentment in itself is great gain, but he says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain,” so that it is not the contentment without the godliness that is the gain.

And on the other hand, any form of godliness that does not bring contentment with it, should be gravely questioned. A godly man, who does not yield ready assent to all God’s will, ought to pray to be made a godlier man. That man who says, “I am a Christian,” and then murmurs, ought to pray to God to forgive his murmuring, and to make him more of a Christian.

It should be a distinguishing mark of a child of God that, even when he is in the greatest agony, and his prayer has the most of disturbance in it, it should never go beyond the line laid down by Christ Himself, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Your heart is breaking, you say, with your troubles. It needs more breaking—for if it was broken, the trouble would not break it. Where our selfishness and our self-will come in, there our sorrows begin. What is wanted is not the removal of trouble, but the conquest of self. When the grace of God has brought us to sing from our hearts the verse we sang just now, all will be well with us,—

*“Father, I wait Thy daily will:
Thou shalt divide my portion still:
Give me on earth what seems Thee best,
Till death and heaven reveal the rest.”*

When God’s will and our will are contrary to one another, we may be sure that there is something amiss with us. We are never right till God’s will becomes our will, and we can honestly say, “The will of the Lord be done.” Therefore it is a sad thing when a Christian man cannot say, “I have enough,” but it is a very sweet thing when he can truthfully say it.

Then does he really enjoy life—when he thanks God for what he is and for what he is not—when he thanks God for health and also for sickness—when he thanks God for gains and also for losses—when he sings a song in the night, as the nightingale does, as well as a song in the day, as the lark does. He proves then that he does not follow God for what he gets out of Him, as stray dogs will follow a man in the street who feeds them. But that he follows God out of sincere love to Him, because God is his

Master, and he belongs to Him. It is true blessedness, a little heaven begun below, when the Christian, looking all round, can say of all temporal things, “I have enough.”

It is a still better thing when the Christian has more than enough. Jacob was in that condition, for he felt that he could give Esau all those goats, and sheep, and camels, and kine, and bulls, and asses, and yet be able to say, “I have enough.” It is a blessing when a godly man feels, “I have more than enough for my own needs, so I am glad that I can help my fellow-Christians. I have great joy and delight in aiding the poor and succouring the needy.”

When you can sing, with the psalmist, “My cup runneth over,” mind that you call somebody to come and catch the spillings. For if you let it run to waste, it may be said of you, “That man cannot be trusted with a full cup.” So let it run over where those with empty cups may come and catch it, to moisten their parched lips. It is a good thing when the Christian, even though he has but little, can say, “I have not only enough, but I have a little to spare for others who have less than I have.”

The charm of Jacob’s “enough” was, that God had given it to him. Esau says nothing about God, but Jacob says, “God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough.” That is indeed a blessing, which we can see comes to us from God, when on every mercy there is the mark of our Father’s hand. What are bursting barns if the wheat comes not from God? What are the overflowing wine-vats if the juice of the clusters be not from God?

What is the good of your gold and silver if God has cursed it? But what a blessing it is when God has smiled upon it all, and says to you, “My child, I give you this because you are My child. I make you My steward, and I entrust these earthly things to your keeping, because I believe that you will use them for My glory, and for the good of your fellow-creatures.” This puts a sweetness into the cup which, otherwise, would not have been there—so that it is a very different thing to be a child of God and to have enough, and to be a child of the devil and to have enough. May God grant that we may each one know what it is to say with Jacob, “The LORD hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough”!

The correct rendering of our second text—as you may see, by the marginal reading of your Bibles—is that Jacob said, “I have all things.” Esau said, “I have enough,” but Jacob said, “I have all things,” and as Matthew Henry says, “Esau’s enough was much, but Jacob’s enough was all. He that has much, would have more, but he that thinks he has all, is sure he has enough.”

Well, he who believes in Christ has all things, for what saith the apostle? “All things are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” They are all yours in this sense—that all that will be good for you God must give to you, He has pledged Himself to this. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” He will therefore not withhold any good thing from you, so that all that is good for you, you are sure to get. All things are yours in the promises and in the covenant. For that God, who took you to be His portion, has given Himself to be your portion, and He is “God all-sufficient.” All things are in Him, and in possessing Him, you have all things.

Oh, what privileges are yours, for, listen! God Himself is yours. “I will be their God,” saith He. And that is more than anything else that we can say. Even though all things are yours, you get beyond that when you can say that God is yours. The Eternal Father gives Himself to you, with all His glorious attributes, with everything that belongs to Him. He gives His very heart to you, “for the Father himself loveth you.”

The Son of God has loved you, and given Himself for you, and He gives Himself to you. All the merit of His atoning sacrifice, all the love of His heart, all the wisdom of His head, all the power of His arm, all is yours. His very life is yours, for He says to you, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” What an inheritance you have, then, in the Christ of God and in the God of Christ!

But then you have also the Holy Spirit to be yours. “He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,” as in a temple. All light He will bring to you. All life He will maintain in you. All comfort He will bestow upon you. All guidance and all quickening He will give to you. There is nothing which the Spirit of God can work which He will not work in you, according as you may have need of His divine operations.

Thus, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all being ours, what a blessed portion we have! I do not wonder that Jacob said, “I have enough,” or that he said, “I have all things,” Blessed be the name of the Lord who has made it possible for any son of man to say as much as this!

While I was studying this subject, I met with a sweet poem by that choice daughter of song, Miss Havergal. Each verse is upon this subject—“Enough.” I will read the verses one by one, and add only brief remarks, hoping that you may drink in the fullness of their meaning, and say with Jacob, if you are indeed a child of God, “I have enough.” The poem begins thus,—

*“I am so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand
One moment without Thee!
But oh! the tenderness of Thine enfolding!
And oh! the faithfulness of Thine upholding!
And oh! the strength of Thy right hand!
That strength is enough for me!”*

There is to be none of your own strength, you see, and none that you can borrow from your neighbors. You may have many trials, long pilgrimages, great burdens, but God’s tenderness will enfold you, God’s faithfulness will uphold you, and God’s strength will indeed be enough for you. As I wrote that last line, I felt as if I could fall on my face, and laugh as Abraham did. Omnipotence enough for me? I should think it is! It is enough to uphold this great globe which God has hung upon nothing. It is enough to sustain yon unpillared arch of heaven, which stands firm by the divine might. It is enough for you sun, that has burned on through all these ages, and whose light has never failed.

It is enough for the universe which is almost illimitable. It is enough for every living thing that breathes. It is enough for cherubim, and seraphim, and all the angelic host. Then, of course, it is enough for me—a little midge dancing up and down in the evening sunlight. Suppose a giant should lend me his strength, and say to me, “It will be enough for you.” I should think it would, but that would be little indeed compared with the Almighty God saying to me, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Yes, my Lord, “Thy strength is enough for me.”

The next verse of the poem is,—

*“I am so needy, Lord, and yet I know
All fullness dwells in Thee;
And hour by hour that never-failing treasure
Supplies and fills, in overflowing measure,
My least and greatest need; and so
Thy grace is enough for me;”*

You remember how Paul says the Lord spoke to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Think what grace there is in Christ Jesus our Lord—electing grace, calling grace, forgiving grace, renewing grace, preserving grace, sanctifying grace, perfecting grace, grace upon grace, grace that leads to glory. O beloved, all this grace is yours, and surely there is grace enough for you. Why do you fear that you will fail? Will God’s grace fail you? Will God’s grace forsake you and permit you to perish by the hand of the enemy? Nay, verily, then let each believer say to him, “Thy grace is enough for me.”

Miss Havergal next writes,—

*“It is so sweet to trust thy Word alone:
I do not ask to see
The unveiling of Thy purpose, or the shining*

*Of future light on mysteries untwining:
Thy promise-roll is all my own—
Thy Word is enough for me!”*

It is very sweet to be able to say of the Lord’s promise, “That is enough for me, even if I do not see the fulfillment of it for many a day, the promise itself is enough for me. If the Lord seem to do nothing at all for my help, yet, since He has said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,’ His Word is enough for me.” Why, beloved, you sometimes make a man’s word enough for you, the word of a man whom you can trust, and you say, “His word is his bond.” But God’s Word is backed by His oath—is not that Word enough for you? If so, why do you fret and worry? Rather, you should say to the Lord, “Your Word is enough for me.”

Then the gracious poetess continues,—

*“The human heart asks love; but now I know
That my heart hath from Thee,
All real, and full, and marvellous affection,
So near, so human; yet divine perfection
Thrills gloriously the mighty glow!
Thy love is enough for me!”*

Can you say that—you who have loss some dear one, you who are widowed, you who are childless, you who have been deceived and forsaken—”a woman of a sorrowful spirit”—a man cast down and lonely? Is God’s love enough for you? It ought to be, for if all the loves of husbands, wives, lovers, mothers, fathers, children, were distilled, and the quintessence taken out, it would be but water as compared with the generous wine of God’s love.

Does God love me? Then, if all the world shall hate me, it matters no more to me than if a single drop of gall should fall into an Atlantic full of sweetness and bliss. This light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the exceeding glory of being loved of God. Yes, my Lord, “Your love is enough for me.” It is a great heart that God’s love cannot fill, nay, I must correct myself, and say that it is a base heart—a wicked heart—an unrenewed heart, that could not be filled with God’s love. It is not a broken heart, but a divided heart, and when the heart is divided, it does not retain the love of God. Oh, for a heart united to the heart of God! Then shall I say to Him, “Your love is enough for me.”

The sweet poem closes thus,—

*“There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast, and broad,
Unfathomed as the sea;
An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;
But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling!
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,
Thou, Thou art enough for me!”*

So may it be with each of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 32 AND 33:1-12

Genesis 32:1-2. *And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

Jacob was about to enter upon a great trial, and therefore he received a great comfort in preparation for it. God knows when to send angels to His servants. And when they come, it is often as the forerunners of a trial which is to follow them.

3-5. *And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.*

It has been judged by some that Jacob, in sending such a message to Esau, acted unworthily and unbelievably, but I think we are not called upon to censure the servants of God in points wherein they are not condemned in Scripture. The elder brother, according to all Eastern customs, was the lord of the family, and Jacob had so grossly injured Esau that it well became him to walk very humbly and to abound in courtesy towards him.

Besides, I hope we shall never imagine that the highest faith is inconsistent with the greatest prudence, and that we shall never forget that there is such a book in the Bible as the Book of Proverbs, which contains counsels of wisdom for daily life. That Book of Proverbs is placed not far from the Song of Solomon, which treats of high spiritual communion, as if to teach us that the next-door neighbor to the wisdom that cometh from above which walks with God, is that prudence which God gives to His servants for their dealings with men. He that walks with God will not be a fool, for God is the source of all wisdom, and the man who walks with Him will learn wisdom from Him.

6-8. *And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.*

This fear and distress were sad proofs of want of faith on Jacob's part, for where there is strong faith, there may be a measure of human fear, but it will not go to the length of being “greatly afraid and distressed,” as he was. In this respect he falls short of his grandfather Abraham—yet, nevertheless, he acts wisely, first with common prudence and next with uncommon prayerfulness.

9-12. *And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.*

Note the humility of Jacob's prayer. We cannot expect our supplications to speed with God unless we put them upon the footing of free grace by acknowledging that we have no merit of our own which we can plead before Him.

Yet notice also how Jacob reminds God of His promise, “Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.” That is the very pith and marrow of prayer when we can quote the Lord's promise, and say to Him, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.” You have a strong plea to urge with God when you can say to Him, “Thou saidst,” for He is a God who cannot lie.

13-16. *And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; two hundred she goats, twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.*

That also was a very sensible arrangement on Jacob’s part, so that his brother might have time to think how he should act, for angry men often do in a hurry what they would not do if they had a little time given them for consideration. Jacob knows this, so he lets Esau’s anger have an opportunity to cool down while he watches drove following drove.

17-21. *And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob’s; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face: peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.*

But in the middle of the night, he was in such deep anxiety concerning his meeting with his brother, and probably still more concerning his position towards his God, that he felt that he must get away alone to pray.

22-24. *And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*

It does not say that he wrestled with the man, but “there wrestled a man with him.” We call him “wrestling Jacob,” and so he was, but we must not forget the wrestling man—or rather, the wrestling Christ—the wrestling angel of the covenant, who had come to wrestle out of him much of his own strength and wisdom, which, though it was commendable in a measure, and we have commended it, was an evil because it kept him from relying on the strength and wisdom of God.

25. *And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.*

So that he fell, or began to fall, but still he gripped the angel, and would not let him go.

26. *And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

That was grandly spoken.

27. *And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.*

“The supplanter.”

28. *And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel:*

“A prince of God.”

28-29. *For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.*

He received what he sought for his necessity, but not what he merely asked out of curiosity.

30-32. *And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew that shrank.*

Genesis 33:1-2. *And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.*

He placed them in the order of his affection for them, the best-beloved in the rear.

3-4. *And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.*

God had been very gracious to him, and all his fears were gone, so he met Esau as a brother, not as an enemy, and the four hundred men were willing to become his protectors.

5. *And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.*

There was a considerable number of them altogether, more than enough, I expect most of you would think if you had them, but Jacob did not speak of them disparagingly, but he described them as “the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.”

6-10. *Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand:*

For, among Orientals, it is such a common custom to offer and receive presents, that, if they are not accepted, it is regarded as an affront.

10-12. *For therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it. And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.