judgments, yet we see that God so well governed his Church, that it remained pure and sound, and that which was profane was cut off from it: as if a house should be swept, and the sweepings be cast out of doors. So fell it out that Esau was rejected, and that Jacob remained alone, as also the heritage was appointed to him.

But now let us fall down before the high majesty of our good God, with acknowledging of our faults, and praying him, that he will make us to feel them in such sort, that it may serve to make us continually to mourn before him, and to ask pardon thereof in such sort, that we may labor to resist it, and more and more be withdrawn from it, until we shall be thoroughly clothed with his righteousness. And that he will support us in our weaknesses, so as we leave not off to call upon him as our father, although we fall many ways. So let us all say, O almighty God, heavenly father, etc.

3. Nowe it came to passe when Izaack was very olde, and his eyes began to be darke that hee could not see, that calling Esau his elder sonne, he said vnto him: My sonne, who said vnto him, Loe here I am.

4. Then he said, Behold nowe, I am waxed olde, & I know not the day of my death:

5. Therfore take thy implements vnto thee, I pray thee, thy bowe and quiuer: and goe into the fields, and hunt some venifone for me.

6. And prouiding some delicate dishes for me, even as I love, bring them vnto me, that I may eate, and my soule may bleffe thee before I die.

7. (Nowe Rebecca heard Izaack when hee spake thus vnto Esau) Esau went therefore into the fielde to hunt venifon which he would bring.

8. But Rebecca spake vnto Iacob her sonne, saying: Loe I heard thy father speaking vnto Esau thy brother, saying:

9. Bring mee venison, and prouide mee some daintie dishes which I may eate, afterwardeis I will bleffe thee before Iehoua, before I die.
E SAW YESTERDAY, HOW ESAU by his marriage, showed sufficiently enough, that he had no great care concerning that blessing which had been promised to the house of Abraham his father: For this was the stock which must possess the land of Canaan. It must therefore needs be, that the people which dwelled there then, must be quite rooted out: and this land be wholly dedicated to the people of God. Likewise, it must be purged from all pollutions. Lo how Esau mingleth himself amongst them, whom God had already condemned: this therefore was a sign that he was fallen from God, for otherwise he could not have drawn near to that people. And if he would have been an heir of the promise, he should have always kept himself as one listed [pleased] and chained in, and not have mingled himself, which was no other thing but to stop the course of the grace that was promised. But as we have seen, he took wives from amongst the Hethites. Mark then how he renounced, as much as lay in him the grace of God, through which the whole stock of Abraham must possess the land of Canaan for an inheritance. But there was yet a second fault: For he took two wives, which was contrary to the law of marriage, as we have seen. For the sentence which God had pronounced to rest upon, was, that a man shall have an help, and not two nor three. And further, when Eva was created, and that she was given to Adam, it is said†, that they should be two in one flesh. Mark then the rule which men ought always to keep. So then we see that Esau even brake the bounds of all honesty, yea of nature itself, and that he was as a beastly man in this behalf. It is true that his grandfather Abraham had two wives: but herein he was to be condemned.

And besides it was not his desire that provoked him thereunto: but, his wife through overmuch haste, brought him to it. And when everything shall be well weighed, it was an inconsiderate zeal that he had to enjoy that which God had promised him: that is to say, that his seed should be blessed. Now he had no children. He took therefore a second wife: but this was (as I have said,) to pervert the order that God had established. He committed evil therein: but in Esau what can we allege, but that he was a dissolute man, and had nothing but vice and wickedness in him, so that he could not distinguish between marriage and whoredom? And this is the cause that he took two wives. Now it is very true that in this time, marriage was ill kept amongst the peoples of the East: For they were always much given to their fleshly lusts: in such sort, that beyond that which is called polygamy (that is to say, plurality of wives,) they committed incests also very commonly. And this was a nation very beastly in this point, that they made no accompt [account] to profane marriage: but this custom doth not therefore excuse Esau. And so, let us mark well, that this shall be no excuse before God, when we shall say that every man doeth so, and that we have a great sort of companions: let us not think to be free thereby before him. Notwithstanding when vices do reign in a country, and men make a law against them, if some neglect them, every man flattereth himself, and every man taketh for his warrant

† Genesis 2:24
those which have led him to destruction. And (say they) such and such do it well, and after when men come unto them, and say to them: wherefore do you so? O see such a one did it well. But we shall all be put in a bundle together, and God knoweth very well how to writhe [twist, intertwine] us up altogether like thorns, when we shall make a cloak of their vices, who ought when they do evil to be an example unto us, to make us flee them. But notwithstanding all this, that Isaack is yet blinded with the love of his son Esau: he saw him now too degenerate out of kind, because that he wallowed (as it were) a Swine upon a dunghill, because he made a covenant with those people whom God had rejected: and farther perverted the order and institution of marriage: yet notwithstanding his father beareth all this. It is said, that the wives of Esau did as it were spur him, and that his heart was wounded therewith: but so it is, that the love of his son did always hold him back.

Now there might well be some virtue: but this meaneth not that everything was therefore praiseworthy in him: no he lacked much in that behalf. For he should have had his son, how old soever he had been in detestation, forasmuch as he was so estranged from God, and because as much as lay in him, he had made the promise of salvation of no effect. For what might have become of the Church, if the stock of Abraham had been joined with those people? Isaack therefore ought to have been more touched, to see his son so profane. And seeing he saw this beastliness in him, that he made no matter of it, to have two wives: and he would have had them by dozens, if he had been able to have kept them. When therefore he beareth with these faults in his son, it is very certain that he offended God. For unless fathers use severity and correction when need requireth, when they see their children to be so wicked they are guilty, inasmuch as they fail in doing their duty. Our Lord hath given them authority over their houses and offspring. And wherefore, unless it be to the end to keep them in awe and to restrain them, that they may render an account, when any evil shall be committed in their family? Lo then a fault shameful enough in Isaack: but yet he exceedeth farther in doting so upon his son Esau. It is said, that his eyes began to fail him, forasmuch as his sight was dim: but it is certain that this foolish love which he bare to his eldest son blinded him, much more than his age, or the lack of his bodily senses: For he ought to have marked (as the truth was) that God had preferred Jacob before Esau, and yet nevertheless he resisteth it, as we have seen before, when it was said that he loved Esau, and that Rebecca loved Jacob: and this love of hers was an obedience that she yielded unto that heavenly revelation. For GOD had pronounced this sentence before, That the elder should serve the younger. Rebecca was a great deal better advised than her husband. But he continueth still as we may see in this place, and it seemeth that he would have resisted God. It is very certain that his purpose was not such: But he is in suchwise ravished by his affection, that he forgot himself, and had no discretion and judgment.

And hereby we may see, how we ought always to suspect our affectionate passions. For they rush upon us always to butt against God. As a Bull chased pusheth with his horns, so our appetites and desires drive us, and ravish us, in suchwise, that we make war most notoriously against
god, yea without ever thinking upon it: it never cometh into our memory. This is forbidden me, God hath condemned and rejected it. We have therefore many times our senses so incumbered, that we keep not either the way or the path. And hereof we see an example in Isaack. For all the time of his life, he was as a looking glass of holiness, and led as it were an Angel's life, keeping himself in the fear of god: but herein so faulteth, that god is nothing with him. He treadeth under his foot that which he had understood by his wife: that is, that now the right of the firstborn was given unto Jacob. Nevertheless he passeth beyond that. Now this is a wonderful strange thing for he was notwithstanding the minister of god, and a prophet: and as soon as he had charge to give the blessing to him to whom God had ordained it, yet he dealeth as if he had been the keeper and appointer thereof. God had done him this honor, as if he should have said, I will bless him whom I shall think good: but the testimony shall come out of thy mouth. Thou shalt be a messenger: especially that which thou pronounceth, shall have authority of justice: it shall be authentic, which I will ratify in heaven. God had done him this honor: and yet he leaveth himself to be so snared in ignorance, that he goeth quite contrary, specially from his duty, and from that which his office required. This at the first show should seem a thing intolerable: but God, who by his wonderful counsel directed him in such sort in this matter, that he turned darkness into light, and showed that this was not a thing according to man's fantasy, that the inheritance of salvation should come unto this man or to that man: but that in despite of all men, he must have it to whom it was ordained and established to hold it, and that it must have his effect. But because all things cannot be understood at once, let us follow that order in rehearsing of it, which Moverses useth, and afterwards we will gather in the end, the profit that this History bringeth unto us. It is said that Isaack seeing himself now to draw towards his end, forasmuch as he was transitory. He saith unto his son Esau:

*I know not the day of my death: and therefore go and hunt Venison that thou mayest provide me meat according to my appetite, and which I love, and my soul shall bless thee,*

Isaack in saying that he knew not the day of his death, signifieth, that he saw himself to draw near to the grave already: For there is none that knoweth the day of his death. God would always hold us in suspense and doubt concerning this, to the end we might always be ready. Death (as it is said in the common proverb) is sure to all, but the hour of death is unknown unto us: and this is very profitable for us: for we see how men are given to their pleasures and are merry whiles that they think to have some truces or some release. And what should this be, if we knew certainly of the end of our life? Everyone would bend himself to all kind of evil, and God should be despited even to the end. But when our Lord holdeth us short in such sort, that from the womb of our mother we are still besieged with death: as we see of young infants, who die before they come into the world: so far is it off, that we cannot live even the minute of an hour, but that as soon as we are born we are subject to death, as our frailty declareth. For with what a number of diseases are we compassed? And to how many
dangers and hazards is our life subject? So then, there is neither young nor old that should not say by good right, that he knoweth not when he shall die but the meaning of these words is as I have said: to wit, that Isaack knew well that he could not continue in the world. And indeed, although young people and they which are strong and in the flower of their age, ought to prepare themselves to forsake the world, and every hour to die, while they live: yet do we most fail herein, albeit our nature warneth us to give ourselves no more to the world. So that we have to gather of this drift of Isaack, that as every man seeth himself weak and transitory, so that he draw his legs after him, where he hath lived long, that this (I say) should stir us up so much the more to prepare ourselves to die. Now it is very true that he spake here to no other end, but to bless Esau: but so much this admonition importeth, that when we see death to approach, that we learn freely to yield up ourselves into the hands of God, and to glorify his name in such obedience, that we live no longer to ourselves: and after we shall have disposed of everything in such sort, that there be nothing that hold us or let us, from going cheerfully forwards when we shall be called. But when he speaketh of the blessing, this is not to be understood of common prayer. For there is no doubt, but that Isaack prayed everyday for his children: and it is said here: That I may bless thee before my death. We may then gather that this blessing whereof Isaack speaketh, was had in special regard: and indeed (as I have said) Isaack was as it were the warden and keeper of God's promise: and this treasure was committed into his charge and credit, to bless. And mark why the Apostle saith†, The lesser was blessed of the greater, because it must needs be, that in this case he must have his authority from God. This was declared more plainly in the time of the law: For the priests were ordained, not only to teach the people, and to offer up sacrifices: but also to bless, and the very form thereof was set down unto them. And oftentimes when Moyses speaketh of this office, he setteth the Priests whom God had chosen to bless. But they do this, in respect of their own persons, no otherwise than as figures: but this was to show that it belonged to our Lord Jesus Christ, to be a witness unto us of the blessing of God, and to ratify it towards us: as also he showed when he ascended into Heaven, and that his hands were lifted up, he blessed his disciples. He showeth therefore that the truth and substance of these figures of the law, was fulfilled in him. Now he was so, before the law was written: for God would that Abraham should be the father of the church: and for this cause he blessed Isaack, as if the heritage had been resigned to him, which had been promised to him. Isaack now must do the like: for he received not the blessing for himself, but to the end it should always remain in his house. He must therefore be the minister of the grace of God: as we yet see at this day, that he communicateth his benefits and spiritual gifts amongst us, by the hand of those whom he hath ordained to this purpose. Men therefore cannot forgive us our sins, and yet nevertheless our Lord Jesus Christ useth this figure of speaking: To whomsoever you shall forgive their

† Hebrews 11:20
sins, they shall be forgiven. Now yet for all that he hath reserved this to himself as he protesteth in Esay: O Jacob it is I and none others that take away thine iniquities. Now albeit God alone hath this power to forgive sins, and to purge us from our spots: yet nevertheless, he doth this by the hand of men. We have in Baptism an infallible token that GOD will not lay our offences to our charge: but that we are as righteous and clean before him: and farther we have an earnest, that he will renew us by his holy spirit, to the end we should walk in all purity. Now this cannot be given us of men: but yet GOD maketh them herein as instruments, and all through his favor. Again, Is it in the power of any mortal creature, to make us partakers of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ? And yet nevertheless in the supper when the bread and the wine are distributed, it is certain that this is not a vain and empty figure, but that all is accomplished, and that our Lord Jesus Christ showeth himself faithful in this: For it is he which giveth it: and it were too much to attribute it to those who are and can do nothing, to say, that they have our Lord Jesus Christ to communicate to them which come unto them to receive a morsel of bread, and a drop or two of wine. And indeed this is well showed unto us, when he saith: *My flesh is bread from heaven.* And he giveth it after two sorts: one is, that which he gave, when he offered up himself to his father for the cleansing of sins. *The bread which I will give unto you* (saith he) *is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world.*

Lo then two kinds of giving: for he gave his flesh, when he offered it up for the satisfaction of all our faults, to the end that God might be appeased towards us, and that we might be released to become righteous. Now the second giving is that which he maketh daily. Now if it belong to Jesus Christ to give himself unto the faithful, who receive him by faith, it followeth then that this ought not to be attributed to men, not as though they had this power: but only that Jesus Christ surceaseth not to apply this thereto. And thus it hath been in all times: For God hath evermore reserved to himself the praise of men's salvation: but this letteth not, but that these may be instruments by whom he worketh. Lo then how this maketh for Isacc, to show that he must pronounce the sentence of the blessing whereunto he was ordained. And indeed we see this in the doctrine of the Gospel: for what is the preaching of the Gospel? *It is the power of God to salvation to all believers* (saith Saint Paul: and there he speaketh of that word which proceedeth from our mouth. What, the power of God? Why, it is nothing in itself. It is true: but it pleaseth God to display his power by the means of men, and would that his word should have such effect and power in the working, that it be as it were a key to open unto us the kingdom of heaven: as also he hath compared it to the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.

So then, let us mark well that Isaack speaketh not here of any common blessing: that is to say of prayer, as when we bless one another and when we pray that God will show mercy to our neighbors, and that he will give them

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*John 6:51

† Romans 1:16
that which he knoweth to be fit for them. And thus much concerning blessings. But Isaack knew that he was ordained the minister of God to dispense that treasure that was committed to his charge. And this is worthy to be noted, to the end that we have not the doctrine that is preached unto us, knowing what it importeth. For there are many fantastical men\(^\dagger\) that refuse all inferior means, and would without wings mount up above the clouds. And is not God, say they, sufficient to teach us? Is it not he that giveth faith? And is the holy Ghost in the hands of men? what need have we to be preached unto? And to what end is it to read so much? All this is superfluous: For God can sufficiently inspire us, without having our ears so battered with the tongue. For he hath all that is needful for our benefit and salvation: and he will bring it to pass. And must men then hold him as it were bound to them? And must the power of his spirit be mashed and mingled with those inferior means as though he were not at liberty? Lo what these fantastical spirits say. Now they consider not that God is not tied and bound to men, when he useth their service: for he doth it as it seemeth good unto him. It is true that faith ordinarily cometh by hearing, as Saint Paul saith: so that we cannot have faith unless it be by men. And cannot God as well do it otherwise? The question here is not of the power of God but of his will, and of that which he hath ordained. And therefore when we shall say, And cannot God do this and that? he can do it: but seeing he will that it be otherwise, we ought to rest there. So then, let us learn to receive this doctrine which is daily taught us, with all reverence, knowing that when we shall have this testimony, that our sins are forgiven us, all is ratified in heaven: as if God himself should speak: For he will not have us to esteem his truth according to men, who are brickle and liars and amongst whom there is nothing but vanity: but he will have his truth esteemed for its own sake, and for its own nature. And in the meantime, let us have this sobriety and modesty therein, to submit ourselves to the order which he hath established. And thus much concerning this word of blessing.

Now here Moyses beginneth to rehearse how Rebecca found out a subtlety and craft to rob Esau of his blessing, and to translate it to Jacob: and after that we have spoken of the vices of Isaack, we see the like in his wife Rebecca: and yet nevertheless they both believed in God: notwithstanding that it was so darkened and bewrapped \[wrapped up\], that it could hardly be discerned. That Isaack had a true faith: and that this proceeded from a true zeal, it appeareth plainly: For if he had not been thoroughly persuaded hereof in himself, that the heritage should be given him which was promised to him, and to his seed concerning this blessing: What had this been? Surely but a crafty part and a thing of nought. Isaack therefore must needs be resolved, howsoever he saw himself as it were already in the grave, his life to be spent, and to have but a day to live: howsoever this were, yet nevertheless he always held this sure which was said unto him: to wit, that his family should be blessed, and that GOD had chosen him, and that this was not in vain, and that albeit he saw not the fulfilling of these promises in this world, yet

\[^\dagger\] These be the Anabaptists that refuse the ministry of the word, and will be taught immediately from God.
notwithstanding that god was in heaven, and that neither he nor his should be deceived: but yet they must wait for this. Wherefore Isaack having sought all the time of his life against all the temptations which might have overthrown him, doeth yet in death persevere in faith and patience, and doth this honor unto God that he doth boldly trust in him. For whosoever trusteth in God shall never be confounded. Isaack had this, and this was a very excellent faith. For see a poor wayfaring man: it is said unto him, thou shalt be the heir of this country, and yet notwithstanding he had no water to drink as we have seen. Now notwithstanding death doth threaten him: yet knoweth he not when it shall be, saving that he is altogether ready for it. And yet for all that he despiseth both Satan and the world, and remaineth steadfast in this, that God will not deceive him: and that it is all one to him whether he die, or whether he molder in the ground: so that the truth of God may yet continue, and have his full virtue and power. Lo Isaack then who seeketh not for the world, but forsaketh all his senses and remaineth steadfast: and doubteth not but that god had mercy on him and on his stock. Herein as I have said we have good cause to praise him: and yet in the meantime he was so blinded with the love of his son, that he fought against God, though he never once thought thereof. This was not a manifest rebellion nor of willful malice: but it was because he was sluggish and knew not his office but in part. He knoweth very well that God would advance him to such a dignity, that he might be the messenger and witness of this blessing: He knoweth this, and notwithstanding on the contrary part he is deceived. He had therefore in this case a particular Faith: he had a good zeal mingled with the affections of the flesh.

But let us come to Rebecca. Rebecca behaved herself here with with foolish rashness: for what an attempt was it, for the blessing of God, to be profaned through craft and lying? yea, (I say) lying so foul as nothing could be more. The matter was here of the salvation of the world, the question was of having Jesus Christ whom GOD should send for a Redeemer. But how proceedeth Rebecca therein? It is certain that a thing of such importance ought to be handled with all fear and lowliness: what a thing is it then that she cometh so foolishly to attempt that which seemeth good unto her, in so excellent a work of GOD and which surmounteth all others? For Rebecca knowing well that the blessing which she sought for he son Jacob imported that he should be head of the Church during his life, and that of him should come our Lord Jesus Christ: doth notwithstanding overthrow it, that she careth not to lie, to falsify, to pervert all: and also it seemeth, that she setteth out the grace of God but in a mockery and contempt: For this was to make it to be basely esteemed, to say, that it should come bewrapped [wrapped up] about the neck of her son, and in the hands of skins, coloring that he is hairy, and seeming to rob Esau of all his ornaments: and again that she maketh her son to lie: and farther Jacob, who went to seek a Kid which she causeth to be fed, and maketh him believe that it is Venison: And after that he had the smell of the garments of Esau: to be short it might be said that she would have overthrown the election of God.

Lo therefore very foul faults, and yet all this proceedeth from an excellent faith, if ever there were any. This is very strange: But we may easily judge it. Whereto
then had Rebecca regard? She loved her Son Jacob, and what should it avail him to have been blessed through deceit? For this was neither to get him riches nor profit in respect of the world: yea which is more she layeth him open to the wrath and curse of his Father: Again she knew Esau who was full of venom, full of fierceness, spite and wrath: and indeed we shall see afterwards, that Jacob was in danger of his life: Rebecca knew all these things, notwithstanding she setteth fire on her house, where she might have kept her darling with her, to have been always with him, to have administered that unto him which he might have needed in the world, without putting him in any such danger. But what did she? she had printed this in her heart that the birthright belonged unto Jacob, as GOD had promised her, and so she would obey God, and esteem this birthright, although it was nothing accounted of amongst men: as we shall afterwards find, that Jacob called Esau his Lord, that he humbled himself before him, yea, even to the bowing of the knee.

Now although that this same birthright were worth nothing in respect of the world, yet doth Rebecca greatly esteem it. See then undoubted and sure testimonies of a great and exquisite faith which was in her, that she would obey God in despite both of her husband and all that he had: so that she might execute that which God had pronounced, she passed not: And that she esteemed these spiritual blessings more than anything which was in the world. Lo then the undoubted marks of her faith, she had so great zeal that she forgot herself and regarded not any whit whatsoever mischief might come upon it. And why so? forasmuch as she conformed herself to the will of God: and forsook her eldest son, and cast off all motherly affection: and knowing that he must be cut off: very well saith she, let him go as a rotten member forasmuch as God hath so ordained. We see here in Rebecca notable virtues mingled with vices.

And hereby we are admonished to walk in fear, albeit that God give us a singular affection to meditate upon him, notwithstanding we shall always be in such sort bewrapped [wrapped up] in darkness, that when we imagine to do the best we can in the world, yet there shall be cause for us to amend when GOD shall call us to a reckoning. And in good sooth [in truth], there is not anyone which doth not prove this to be true: for although that this be our mark, to strive thither whether God hath called us, yet do we make so many false steps that it is great pity to see: and they which run more swiftly to bring themselves in order to God, yet for all that, they go out of the way and have may outlopes and crosspaths, and God suffereth them to the end that we should not have whereof to be proud. For if virtues themselves be faulty before God, alas what shall those vices be which are altogether condemned? Do we labor to do well, do we enforce ourselves thereunto: yet notwithstanding we shall offend GOD. And why so? It is because there is such infirmity in us, and we are wrapped in ignorance: Although that GOD enlighten us, and that we see the way well, notwithstanding, yet such clouds do oftentimes come before our eyes, that instead of keeping of our way, we stray either on the one side or on the other.

Mark how faulty the virtues of the faithful are, to the end that we may learn, only to rest ourselves in the mere goodness of God, and to the end it would please him
to pardon our offences, and also to accept that for righteousness which he might justly condemn. How then is it that our works are acceptable unto God? how is it that he calleth sacrifices of a sweet smelling savor, and that they are so acceptable before him, that they shall have a reward? Alas, it is not any merit as the Papists imagine: but it is because that God hath justified that, which he might rightly reject, and account as it were abominable. So let us mark that in the faith of Isaack, we may behold the imperfections which are in us, whiles that we live in this world, albeit that God have renewed us in part by his holy spirit, and again let us know that God worketh in such sort that the evil which is in us, hindreth not him to accomplish his work even by our mean. As for example, If we will search till we find an Angelical perfection in a mortal man, there shall never any be found that hath it, neither was ever any found who was not tainted with some kind of fault: and therefore the Priests which were figures and representations of our Lord Jesus Christ, first of all asked pardon for their offences, although that they made intercession for the people, and were as it were mediators, and that by their sacrifices they abolished sins: yet notwithstanding must they begin at themselves. But now by the way if we will seek ministers of the word, in whom there is no fault it is certain that we cannot find any: and it must needs be that the most excellent men be examples unto us, of the brickleness and weakness of men. But now if we will conclude: and how then shall I find my salvation by their means? For I see yet that they are full of imperfections. But let us learn (as I have said) in the person of Isaack that God leaveth not off to accomplish his work, although there be yet ignorance in them, who out to lead us, who when they distribute unto us spiritual gifts, which they have committed unto them, and whereof GOD hath made them keepers, although they be not altogether such as they ought to be: notwithstanding we leave not off to make our profit of them: for God useth and ordereth them in such sort in this work which he will do, that his grace is no whit hindered, because a man might find things to be bettered in them. This therefore is the thing that we have yet to mark upon this place. But to be short, we see that the faith of the children of God shall oftentimes be weak and entangled, not as the papist have imagined: for they call an entangled faith beastliness, when a man shall say, O, I believe in my mother's god: I know not what the whole Christianity meaneth: But lo it is enough for me to go simply to work: and I believe as our holy mother the Church believeth: and indeed the wiser sort of Priests will say, I believe in the god of my Chambermaid: because she believeth in god who maketh Cabbages to grow after that she hath planted them. See the implicity and folded faith of the Papists, which is a very sorcery of the Devil: but the entangled faith of the children of GOD, is because they be holden in ignorance. But yet notwithstanding there is some light: but what is that faith? It is an understanding which we have of the goodness and favor of GOD, after that he hath illuminated us by his holy spirit and by his word. For faith cannot be without these two things: that is to say, without the word of God: I say as God hath set in order in his church: and after it cannot be without he gift of the spirit: For the word of god should be preached unto us both morning and evening, and we can profit nothing therein, unless God do open our ears
and enlighten us, forasmuch as we are miserable blind ones. The Sun shall always shine upon us: but they that are blind
discern not between the day and the night, to them both are
alike. And even so is it with us: that if GOD illuminate us
not within, when he sendeth his holy word, to show us the
way, we should always remain as poor strays, or lost sheep.

So then, it behooveth that our faith have light in
itself: but yet I say, that this light is compassed and
entangled with great darkness: For we behold not God face
to face, and we are not capable to comprehend his secrets:
and this is sufficient that we know them in part, and that
we have some taste of that which shall be revealed unto us
in perfection, than when we shall put off our flesh, and shall
be translated into that heavenly glory, to be companions of
Angels. Lo then briefly what we have to learn upon this
place, to wit, that our faith, although it be great and
exquisite, yet nevertheless it shall always have some
weakness, and some imperfection and ignorance mingled
with that, which God hath given us to know. Now hereof
we may gather, that when the scripture pronounceth that
we are justified and saved by faith, it meaneth not, that it
is by the desert of faith: For if it were so that our salvation
were founded upon the dignity of faith, then must our faith
be perfect. For if our faith be weak (as I have already said)
and that we have but only a part of it, then should we have
but a part of salvation: and further it should be shaken, and
we should always be wavering and in doubt. But when it is
said that we are saved by faith, it is because we accept the
mercy of god, which we ought to esteem fully sufficient for
our salvation. Our faith is imperfect: yea but when there
shall be never so little a spark, yet nevertheless shall the
goodness of God supply that which is wanting [lacking]:
even as we now bear this corrupt lump, not only in our
bodies, but in our whole nature. But we know that our
souls go unto death, and in the mean season where is our
life? It is in us. How? In that we have received the spirit of
God, saith Saint Paul in the eighth chapter to the Romans'.
And have we the spirit of God in fullness? No not so: There
is as it were but one spark or drop of it: but this saith he is
life: and shall swallow up all whatsoever belongeth to death
in us, and shall make it of no effect. Let us mark then that
although our faith be very little, and that in respect of us we
conceive not the hundredth part of the benefits which God
offereth unto us, yea and that we do not so much as by a
lick, taste his grace, yet nevertheless we must not therefore
despair to be saved through faith. For the matter is not as
I have said, of our estimation, or of our praising and
weighing it in our balance, that is to say, if we have an
excellent faith to obtain the grace of God, and that which is
necessary for our salvation: but the question only is, that
when God hath declared that he will be our father, that we
embrace this promise, and stay ourselves thereupon. And
if there be any doubts or distrusts, that we resist them, and
that we hold this conclusion, O we are yet sure that God
will not disappoint us. Mark then what we have here to
hold, as well by the example of Rebecca, as by the example
of Isaack. But Moyses saith now expressly that Jacob
refused, saying:

\* Romans 8:1-27
And how shall this be? I am not hairy as my brother is, and if my father shall find the deceit, he will curse me.

Here we see as it seemeth, two great vices in Jacob: The one is, that he feared his father more than God. It is true that it might so be judged thereof: but when all shall be well marked, it is certain, that it was the fear of God that moved him thereunto. For concerning the curse of his father, he was no otherwise careful of it, than in this, that it was imprinted in his heart, that his father was established to be as it were a witness of the promise which God had given unto him. Seeing therefore that Jacob had this, it is a sign that he rested not upon anything from man: but that in the person of his father he considered that which God had decreed. The other evil was, that he doubted. Now we know that in our life if we be not well certified, we shall not remove so much as one finger, to the end we sin not, and that God be not offended. And why so? Obedience is more worth than sacrifice. When therefore we shall attempt to do anything, not knowing whether it be lawful for us, and whether God do allow it: this is as much as if we should despite God: so that we should not know how to eat or to drink, or to be short, to do anything: no not so much as to remove a mote, but that all our actions should be condemned, and that God should have them in utter detestation: and Saint Paul also pronounceth it. For by this word of faith he understandeth certainty in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, that we be assured that that which we do is permitted of God, and is agreeable to his word. But see Jacob who saith, how shall this be? I am not hairy as my brother is. He doubteth: that therefore is a sign that after that he hath obeyed his mother, he should commit evil, and that all that he should take in hand, should be nothing but confusion, and that God would detest it. And surely so had it been if he had always remained doubtful, that whatsoever he should have done, being of sin, it should have been to provoke the wrath of God: but we shall see by that which followeth that he was confirmed. But the answer which his mother giveth him, is:

The curse be upon me.

But she was not so lean and so dry as here she is set forth unto us, but she showed him that he was chosen of God, and that the birthright belonged unto him. And indeed we shall see how he was confirmed, and that he feared no more when he was before his father. Thus then it may easily be gathered that Jacob was confirmed, to resolve himself and to know that the blessing which he sought, could not be disappointed: in the meantime notwithstanding we cannot excuse him, but that he fell foully, even in the very beginning. The matter was here of the building of his house, but Jacob doubteth and sticketh here, not knowing whether it were good or evil. We see then that he had a very evil beginning: and consequently

† Romans 14
that he had nothing in that case but confusion, had not god holpen [helped] therein. To be short, we see as well in Jacob as in Isaack and in Rebecca, that the grace of God came not unto them, nor had any entry unto them by their own wisdom, nor by their good means which they invented. Lo therefore the defaults which are here: but god hath outgone all their faults and offences, and wrought in such sort through his infinite mercy, that we have good occasion to bow down our heads, and to confess that there is none but only he upon whom all our happiness dependeth, and from whom it proceedeth.

But now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, in acknowledging our faults, and beseeching him that he will open our eyes, that we may always more and more know them, to the end we flatter not ourselves in them: but that we may sigh and groan to obtain pardon of him: and in the meanwhile that we may in such sort fight against all our carnal desires, that in the end we may be full framed to his righteousness, from which we are yet so far off. And that he show not this grace only unto us, but also to all peoples and nations of the earth, etc.

But Iacob sayde vnto Rebecca his mother, Beholde my brother Efau is a rough hairie man, but I am glib and of a smooth skinne.

Peraduenture my father will feele mee, and I shalbe vtnto him, as a seducer: and so I shal bring vpon me a curse and not a blessing.

Vnto whom his mother saide, Thy curse be vpon me my sonne: Only hearken vnto my voyce, and goe thy wyues and bring it vnto me.

Therefore departing hee tooke it and brought it vnto his mother: and his mother tooke it and made daintie dishes, euon fuch as his father loued.

Afterwardes Rebecca taking the most precious garments of Efau her eldeste sonne, which were with her at home, shee put them vpon Iacob her yongest sonne:

And putting vpon his handes the skinnes of kiddes from amongst the Goates, and vpon the smooth of his necke:

Shee put the daintie dishes which shee had made, with bread in the hande of her sonne Iacob.

So hee comming vnto his father, said, My father: who saide, Beholde me, who art thou my sonne?

Iacob sayde vnto his father, I am Efau thine eldest
E HAVE HERE TO CONTINUE the purpose which was yesterday begone: that is, that God directed Isaac, Rebecca, and Jacob, in such sort, that notwithstanding the faults that were in them, he leaveth not off to put that in execution which he had determined, concerning the blessing of Jacob and rejecting Esau. And yet this is not to clear Isaac for his part, as though he had not foully faulted, and that the like fault had not been found in Rebecca and in Jacob: but God passed them over. And so, we see that God waiteth not upon men, neither dependeth upon them, when the matter standeth, for the performance of his counsel. It is very true, that he will use them to serve his turn: but he showeth notwithstanding that he worketh all alone and of himself: and when his creatures serve him as instruments, it is no farther than it pleaseth him, and not as though he were bound by any necessity: yea and albeit that things in respect of men go quite backward as it seemeth, yet this showeth that his power is sufficient, so that it needeth no help from others.

Now we have said, that in this matter of Jacob it may be seen how he fell into doubt: and this was contrary to faith. It behooveth therefore that God on the one side supplied this want [lack]. Concerning that, that it is said that he should bear the curse: it is for that he knew that his father was ordained to this, that he must ordain an inheritor, not only for worldly and transitory benefits, but of the promise which belongeth to the spiritual life. He knew this: and therefore he respected not only a mortal man, but the living God. Now touching Rebecca, she saith, the Curse be upon her. We see how she was ravished (as was yesterday handled) in such sort, that she spake, as it were at random: but there is no doubt, that in the meanwhile she wist [knew] not, that this could do no hurt. It is true that she regarded not her fault. For although she had a good ground to obey God, and so to deal that his election might stand in full strength: yet notwithstanding she ought not in the mean season, to have made such a craft to bear sway, wherein there was nothing but deceits and lies. For God (as we have said already) is able enough to accomplish his own work, and to bring his own counsel to an end: he needeth not to borrow anything of us. It is not lawful therefore by a stronger reason, to go about to advance his truth by our lies. But Rebecca doth it: so that in this behalf she cannot be excused. But this example is set before our eyes, to the end that we also should imagine the like: For it will fall out, that at all assays we shall be ready to mingle our fantasies, that our matters may go well: and this is even as much as if we thought not God to be wise enough, or rather as if he were not strong enough, or had not the means in his own hand, to bring matters to a good end and issue. But in so doing, we do (as a man would say) control God: to say, very well, let him work, but after what manner? Not according to his counsel, and according to his power and infinite puissance: but according to some light thing, and we will first of all have
that thing done, which we have imagined and forged in our own brain. For we will say, I find this to be good, this will be a very good and necessary means. But are we so overwise? that we must straightway enterprise this thing, and that we must put our hand to the pie in such sort. But mark, God hath not so ordained by his word. Lo then a rashness not to be born. And yet is this very common, and everyone shall find of this vice in his seed. But so much the rather ought we to learn to add nothing of our own, seeing we have always this corrupt medley which we must either this way or that way drive out of our heads. And when we shall so have wrought after our own guise and fashion, we shall do nothing else, but mat and overthrow all. But if GOD doth not lay such faults to our charge, and doth yet nevertheless accomplish his work: this is not to the end we should boast ourselves therein: as oftentimes they which have overreached themselves, can say, O, it is fallen out well: yea, but this is because GOD hath pardoned this folly, and that nevertheless he leaveth not to support us, albeit we were not worthy thereof. Let us learn therefore in no wise to excuse our presumptions, when God shall make that to prosper which we have naughtily and wickedly attempted: but so much the rather let us magnify his mercy, when we shall see that although we have fought against him, and have gone about as much as lay in us to forslow his work, that he yet hath not left off to give it his course. This is that briefly which we have to bear away concerning this place.

Now it followeth after, that Jacob went to seek two kids, which he brought unto his mother, that she might dress some dainty meat, such as she knew Isaack loved. And after that she clothed Jacob with Esau's garments, and put the skins so upon him, that it seemed he was an hairy and rough man.

But here men might judge, that this was a very childish deed, and a very toy, forasmuch as it was a counterfeit meat, for she took of a kid, instead of some venison: and after that the father had eaten and was well filled, he blessed his son, and that this was as it were a reward for his dinner: and again that Jacob came in a disguised habit, as if he had been upon a stage counterfeiting his brother Esau, under color of his garments, and had his poll, his neck, and his hands: and in all this nothing was seen but matter of laughter. But to the end that we should be kept in reverence, and make our profit of this history, let us learn to look unto God's election whereof mention was made before: For if we have not this foundation, it is certain that in all that Moyses rehearseth, we shall not find anything that may move us, or give us any persuasion, that this was guided and governed form above. But when we shall be resolved, that GOD had given the birthright to Jacob before he was born: notwithstanding we have to note, in seeing these things so sottishly ordered by men of an unadvised zeal, that therefore we cease not to say: Lo God who is always unchangeable, although men through their sturdy boldness, and foolish presumption trouble and turn all upside down, yet nevertheless must his counsel remain entire and perfect. This therefore is that we have to note, to the end we may make our profit of this history. Moreover, when it is said: That Jacob came to his father, and said unto him: I am thy son Esau, eat and drink. Hereby we may see how men harden
themselves, when they have once attempted to do anything of an unadvised zeal, how they wax bolder and bolder. At the first Jacob doubted: If I (saith he) be found as a mocker before my father, he will curse me, but by and by he careth for nothing, he speaketh as boldly and frankly, as if it should have been said, that he was sure to be in Esau’s place. But hereby we have to note, before we begin anything, to think whether we have allowance from GOD, and whether he will guide us: and to see that in all our doing and enterprise, there be nothing but mere obedience. For if we begin once (as they say) to break our bounds, and that we imagine to do this and to do that, howsoever at the beginning we had some scruple and did make great difficulty thereof, in the end we shall shut our eyes and pass further: and when all the objections of the world shall come before our eyes, yet we shall become obstinate.

Forasmuch then as men are so hardened in their foolish and rash counsels, and that we see such a notable example thereof in our father Jacob, so much the rather (as I have said already) must we take heed that we move not a finger breadth, till we know whether GOD will allow that which we do, and that we have taken counsel of his word: For then we cannot be too bold, when we shall be subject unto him, and when there shall be no foolish overweening [high opinion] in us to follow our own fantasy. But we can do nothing of ourselves, how small soever it be, which is not too much. And therefore (as I have said,) let us learn to begin well, to the end, such an end may follow as we should desire. But in this which is here contained in Moyses, we may have a figure which shall not be unfit: and that is, that although Isaack was deceived, that Esau was not there, and that Jacob through his slights obtained his blessing, yet for all this, we have here an image of that blessing which is given unto us of GOD: For it is said in the first Chapter of the Ephesians’, That we are blessed with all heavenly graces and spiritual gifts. And after what sort? Saint Paul addeth, in Jesus Christ: For if GOD should look upon our persons, we must be his enemies, and he must needs detest us by reason of sin. Seeing therefore it is so, it behooveth us to be blessed without ourselves: that is to say, in the person of our head.

And moreover, we must be clothed with the robe of our Lord Jesus Christ. For what can we bring, but altogether filthiness and pollution? We are wholly made in iniquity: therefore we must be as stink before GOD: but when we are clad with the obedience of his only Son, O then, Lo a sweet savor, wherein we are acceptable unto him. And moreover, we must be clothed with the robe of our Lord Jesus Christ. For what can we bring, but altogether filthiness and pollution? We are wholly made in iniquity: therefore we must be as stink before GOD: but when we are clad with the obedience of his only Son, O then, Lo a sweet savor, wherein we are acceptable unto him. So that although (as I have said already) in respect of men, there was nothing but confusion, (and as they say) all was jumbled together, yet nevertheless we may apply this to our profit. Jacob was a looking glass of the whole Church: and yet were we blessed in his person, as he was blessed in the person of his elder brother. For the question is not here, of finding it altogether like. If a man say that Esau resembled not Jesus Christ: it is very true: but yet in comparison, it needeth not that every part and parcel agree together: it is sufficient, that we see some agreement and likeness in part: as it is said, that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be as a thief in the night. And what? will he steal? It were

† Ephesians 1:3
a foolish thing to think thus: but it is enough that we see, that they which are asleep in the world shall be taken upon the sudden. So now when he speaketh of the birthright of Esau, and that Isaack represented the person of God, and that Jacob was blessed under the robe and countenance of his brother: herein we see, that that was accomplished which we alleged even now: to wit, that we shall be put back if we come in our own name, and in our own person, to get favor before God: but when we shall come there under the shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn amongst all the Children of God. See how we are received. But notwithstanding it is said:

That Isaack demanded, who art thou my son? I am thy son Esau?

But herein he trusteth not himself, and though it may appear, that there was some fraud: For he saith unto him:

Come near unto me, that I may feel, whether thou be my son Esau or no.

We see here that Isaack doubted, and yet nevertheless, the blessing ceased not in respect of god, to have his virtue and effect: as also it is said that he blessed him in the presence of God. But it is very true that if we have our eyes fastened upon Isaack, we shall say that this act was ill guided, and that he deserved not to be accounted in any degree of perfection: but that God wrought it, (as I have said) and not only when the inferior means failed, but when they were contrary, and that it seemed, that this had been utterly to abolish that, which was determined. But so much the rather it behooveth us well to note, that howsoever God use men in his work, and doth them this honor to serve therein as instruments, yet is there nothing on their part: and we may say: He that planteth, and he that watereth is nothing1. But here Isaack instead of planting and watering, did rather pluck up, and cut off the blessing of God to make it barren and without fruit. But howsoever it was, yet was God therein served. For whether he had planted or watered, he had done it but in part: but he did it not wholly and as he ought: and yet in the mean season (as I have said) the goodness of God surmounted, whatsoever was faulty and vicious in his creatures. Howsoever it were, we may well say that Isaack in doubting deserved to be deprived from that state and office which was given him, that is to say, that he had lost the grace of God, wherein the salvation of the whole world was included. Lo the treasure which was committed unto him: but he by his unbelief deserved to be stripped of it. But God would not so have it. And to whom shall we attribute this? It must needs be that his mercy be here magnified, seeing that in man there is not only not any help thereto, nor anything that answereth unto it, but quite against it. And yet let us note, that none was more dulled of God than he was. It is true that we saw before, that he had dim eyes, and that he was so weak with age, that he was as a man half dead: but yet this came not to pass naturally, that hearing the voice of Jacob, he was so

† 1 Corinthians 3:7
foully deceived that he once thought not. There is some fraud in the matter. He doubteth thereof, and yet nevertheless goeth on, and albeit it were against his will, yet he blessed Jacob instead of Esau. It must needs be therefore that God dulled him, so that it was not of age only. And this is that which I have said, that God guided his work so, that although men hinder and let it and it seemeth to have been, as if they should draw quite contrary, nevertheless the end and issue was such, that it appeareth that God executed that which he had pronounced, following his secret election, which was made before the creation of the world. And so we know in all that Isaack did, there was nothing but a kind of sottishness [stupidity, foolishness], that he was so dull: he had no understanding, he discerned nothing, nor had any judgment, and yet notwithstanding God maketh this to prevail. After what manner? How is it that he maketh the bread which we eat to be of strength to nourish us? when we shall have well eaten and drunk and shall be refreshed and satisfied, so as he which neither can bow his arm nor his legs, shall have new strength to travel. Shal we say that this is because the bread hath any power, any life, or any moving? But when we see that the bread giveth us that which it hath not, and the corn and wine and other meats: this is to show us that God useth not his creatures in such sort, in any work that we should occupy ourselves in that which we see with our eye: but that we should always bend to this, that as he disposeth the order of nature, and likewise guideth and governeth us, yea and that against nature: that many times he will work quite contrary to that, that is accustomed unto us, in such sort that we shall be astonished thereat: and chiefly when the question is of our salvation. And yet must not we imagine that we bring anything thither for our part: but that it is God that must accomplish all, who began it and will perform it. And moreover if he work after a strange and unwonted manner, and that there be nothing but an outward show of folly: let us know (as Saint Paul saith') that the folly of God is greater wisdom, than all the wisdoms of the world.

Now he calleth it the foolishness of God, after our opinion: because he worketh in a contemptible manner, that we might be ravished therein thinking, What is this that God will say? It seemeth that he jesteth and mocketh. We will conclude thereof even so. And this is the cause why Saint Paul saith, that it is folly, because men rest themselves upon their outward senses. But howsoever it be, this surpasseth all the wisdom of the world. Mark then what we have to bear away. And when we shall well remember this lesson here, we shall not be as a great sort of giddy heads, who take all these facts at adventure, and thereupon mock themselves, as though all that were here rehearsed by Moyses, were nothing else as a man would say, but foolish trifling.

But when we shall have learned this which is here showed us, by Saint Paul, it is certain that we shall have another manner of sobriety, and that we shall not give over to adore the secret of God, although at the first show he glorify not himself: but we shall always look to the beginning and to the end, and not to those means which may give us occasion, and engender [beget] in us some
offence, or which may swallow us up. To be short, we see that God directed Isaack in such sort that he was altogether blind: we will not say therefore that God gave Isaack here any fight to the end he might do that which appertained to his office, knowing well the cause why, and knowing all the proceeding of the matter: but he was blinded, and yet he held him as it were by the hand, and led him as a blind man which seeth nothing. And indeed we see in the Church, something that answereth to this, or else comes very near it: for (as it was said yesterday) The preaching of the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to all believers. When therefore we preach the grace of God whereby we are reconciled, inasmuch as our faults are pardoned us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the blood which he shed for us, is the true purgation thereof, to cleanse us: Lo then God who openeth the Heavens, and calleth us unto himself, albeit the word proceed from the mouth of a man. But in the mean season, I know not to whom this shall be available: For everyone shall be a witness of his own faith: and when I speak and have not received my part therein, woe be upon me: and I should be more than blind: as also they have been who shall have preached the Gospel, and shall be witnesses of the grace of God, and shall draw poor sinners to salvation, notwithstanding there is nothing remaining for them but condemnation. And why so? For they are as Players in whom there is no affection nor zeal. So then, God will be served oftentimes of a people who are worth nothing, who are as dogs, and the very offscouring: and yet notwithstanding they are as the ministers of his power, to draw those to salvation, that are in the way of destruction. Moreover there are mercenaries that preach for their belly, and have no other regard but to themselves, or else would make themselves to be very well esteemed: and yet are these nevertheless the instruments of God for the salvation of all believers. And oftentimes the best, they I say, that acquit themselves most faithfully to do their duty, to call poor sinners to salvation, to be guides and examples to all others: these shall not yet find what God will do. And why so? They sow the Seed and know not how God will make it profit: and oftentimes they ween [think] to bless, and they curse. And wherefore? Because it must needs be that the vengeance of God be prepared for all contemners. The Gospel is preached, to the end we might find God merciful to us all: but there are many that through their contempt and ingratitude heap upon themselves their own damnation: For the gospel shall be unto them a savor of death unto death, as Saint Paul saith: that is to say, a deadly savor, that only the breath shall be enough to swallow them up: as we see yet at this day: that God worketh by the ministers of his word, that some are altogether blind, other are blind in part: For the hirelings of whom we have spoken, they are altogether blockish and know nothing: But the good and faithful Ministers, although it so be that they know that they have their eyes dim, yet they are ignorant how God will make their labor to profit, or in what sort: and oftentimes their purpose is quite overthrown. This then is

† Romans 1:16

† 2 Corinthians 2:16
that we have to learn. And in the meantime, seeing god hath declared unto us that his word is the open way to the heavenly life, and that he will ratify all that which shall be pronounced hereby men in his name: let us keep us to that and not doubt (whatsoever want [lack] shall be in us, as well concerning him that speaketh as him that heareth): that yet nevertheless when we shall receive this word by faith, and it shall be faithfully and in truth handled unto us, we shall be partakers of this blessing. And herein we may see the beastliness of all those false wretches of the papacy: for mark whereupon they have founded that Idol which they have, to make a god of a morsel of bread: they say if a Priest have no intention to consecrate, it is nothing, and in that the bread is turned into god, it is by the intention of him which consecrateth: so as they must be Idolaters in all their Masses (I speak of their own doctrine) if they make not this condition. For what know we (say they) whether the Priest which consecrateth, doth his business as he ought, and whether his mind be upon his kitchen or chambermaid: for in so doing the bread remaineth bread: there is no GOD: and why so? For say they, if his intention be not there it is nothing. But it is very true that they show very well how one error draweth another: for because it seemeth to them that there is a change made of the bread into the substance of our Lord Jesus Christ, for which they have invented that same charm: they add straightway the intention: but notwithstanding we see that they know nothing of the nature of the Sacraments. I leave now to speak of this conversion which they imagine, and call transubstantiation: but if he that ministereth the sacrament: and hath this charge and calling, hold the people bound to his intention: what shall this be? A wicked man that shall baptize, he may mock God, and by this means quite make frustrate the sacrament, and after when he shall minister the sacrament of the Supper, the poor people shall therein be mocked, who come thither to seek a pledge of their salvation: he therein manifestly despiteth God. To be short, they must hold the power of God, (which he most notably setteth forth in the sacraments) shut up in their fist. And what a blasphemy is this, and how detestable? But see how far they are come. For it is certain that in the Mass, if they had an Angel there, yet it should never cease to be a devilish thing: but contrariwise if there were a devil in the supper which is ministered, yet it could not let God from accomplishing his work. We must not look to the worthiness of him which giveth the bread or the wine in the supper: But God hath so instructed us therein, that he hath given power to the visible sign: It is he that worketh by his holy spirit, so as we be not deceived when we come thither, but shall be truly united and joined unto him. Lo then what we have to bear away upon this place, to make our profit thereof. But now let us come to the blessing which Isaack gave. After he had kissed his son he saith:

Lo the savor of my son is as the savor of a field which God hath blessed.

Albeit we see that he was deceived: yet under the savor of this borrowed garment, he accepteth Jacob his son, as if he had been his firstborn. Lo then how the savor whereby we are accepted unto God, proceedeth from him which is the firstborn in the house, to wit, from our Lord
Jesus Christ. Moreover he addeth:

*The Lord give thee, the dew of Heaven, and the fatness of the earth, abundance of wheat and wine.*

Here at the first show a man would judge, that this blessing imported nothing but that Jacob should be fat and well nourished: For Isaack mentioneth not here any spiritual gifts, as we have showed before, that it was not for any earthly commodities, nor for riches, profit or pleasures that Jacob must be blessed: How shall these things therefore be reconciled? But we have to hold this rule that is given us in the holy Scriptures: to wit, that the grace of God was always clothed as it were with some figures, until that our Lord Jesus Christ came. For when the fathers would obtain pardon of their sins, they had some beast slain, and the blood was shed: sometimes the fat was burned, and the blood was sprinkled. And could a brute beast blot out our sins whereof we are guilty before God? How could blood do it, that had nothing in it but corruption? And again, when fat is burned it so stinketh, as it cannot be abidden [endured], and what shall this make for the pacifying of GOD towards men? What? but should a man say in all these, that GOD would keep his people in earthly things? but we must always come to that pattern which Moyses saw in the mountain, according to which he hath spoken, and mark also whither we are sent by Saint Paul and by Saint Stephen. So then as the sacrifices imported more, than they showed: so let us note, that in all the rest God hath in such sort guided the people therein, that always some obscurity was mingled among: For it must needs be that this should be kept till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that we should simply and clearly see the grace of GOD and the spiritual life. It is said that our Lord Jesus Christ is the first fruits of those that rise again: And why so? we cannot attain unto that resurrection which is promised unto us, and to that heavenly life, unless we see him to march on before us. Our bodies returning into dust, what can they promise us? The end of all men is nothing but despair: it seemeth that all shall be abolished: and (as Solomon saith) the death of a dog and of a man, as touching the body shall be all one. So then if we look not up to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is certain that all here shall be as it were confused: but when we shall know that he hath overcome death, and is ascended into heaven, then we have an easy access. But it was not so neither under nor before the law: for the fathers had not the sight of our Lord Jesus Christ, but in a shadow. It is true that they attained to that heavenly life as well as we: they had one and the same spirit of adoption, they called upon God for their father: but for all that this was afar off, and these things were dark unto them. And thus, let us note for this cause that they had no such revelation, as we have in the gospel: For it behooved God to draw them by such means as were fit for them. And this is that which Saint Paul saith in Galatians four† that they were governed as young infants, and that the law was like unto a tutor. For although an infant be already the heir of his father, yet he hath not the occupying of the substance, forasmuch as he is
not able to take it in hand: but he is under the direction of his tutor: and though he do it, yet hath he no liberty to do it. Thus then although the fathers under the law were heirs of the kingdom of heaven as we are, yet so it is that they had this servile subjection unto it, under which they were kept as under a tutor. And wherefore? Because this honor as I have said must rather be kept until the coming of our lord Jesus Christ. If the ancient fathers had not been advanced by little and little, and as it were by degrees, to come to everlasting life, seeing these things were yet so dark unto them, and our lord Jesus Christ was so far off: what had this been? had they attained their purpose? Thus it behooved god to help them, and to reach out his hand unto them.

And in this respect was the land of Canaan as a pledge and gage unto them, that God had appointed a better inheritance for them, than in this world. For they might have returned to the country where they were born, which was more fertile than this of Judea, as may appear. Mark Abraham and Isaack pinched with famine and if they had looked to nothing but to have been nourished here upon earth, they would have forsaken that land of promise. But they rested there. And wherefore? to enjoy it after their death? Of necessity therefore, must they think of a more high thing than this visible earth, and they must take it in another respect, than to say, we have here all that we can desire. But they took the land of Canaan as a pledge that God gave them, until they should come into the possession of that heavenly life.

So then, when we see in this blessing of Jacob, that he speaketh of the dew of heaven, and of the fat of the earth, of abundance of corn and wine, it meaneth not that Isaack would only pray for this, that his son might be fed as an Hog in a sty, and that he should be fat and full here beneath: but he followed the order that God had appointed at that time: to wit, that he did give unto them pledges of a thing that was much more excellent. And that so it is, Isaack addeth a little after:

That his son should rule over his enemies, and that all nations should bow their knees before him.

And by what right giveth he him this? Lo Isaack a poor stranger that must hire the land where he setteth up his pavilion, and must live as it were by the favor of another: and yet nevertheless he maketh his son here a King of kings, and all the world to come and do him homage, and that he shall bring the whole earth into subjection. We see then very well that he troubleth not himself with earthly things: but he joineth both together, to wit, he taketh earthly blessings as pledges, to the end to bring his son further off: and in the meanwhile he hath his path right that might lead him to the kingdom of heaven, as was promised him. Now we know that things are offered to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, that may make us forget both honors, and all highnesses, dignities, and nobilities of the world. This therefore is the thing we have to mark upon this place. It is true that even at this day it must needs be that those temporal blessings which we receive from the hand of God, should be unto us as it were pledges of his goodness: but they are sometimes more, sometimes less. For in respect that the ancient fathers had not the like light as we have,
and were in shadows and figures: this is the cause why God would not so well testify his favor unto them, as he hath done unto us at this day. For in the gospel we have our Lord Jesus Christ: and it is said that we must be fashioned after his image. Now we know that he had nothing in this world, but all kind of miseries and confusions: for we see how he was crucified, so as it seemed that he had been utterly forsaken of god his father: he was in extreme distresses and anguishes. Thus then we must be fashioned to him after another fashion than they were, who were so led by figures. Furthermore, when we shall compare Jacob with Esau, we shall yet better know (as we shall find afterward) that when Isaack blessed Esau, that the blessing which he will use, will be a great deal more large and rich, than that which he useth here towards Jacob his son: and yet nevertheless, this was not to bless him to that heavenly life: but he saith unto him: My friend there be not two blessings, seeing that is taken from me, it must stand, and God hath blessed him whom I have blessed, forasmuch as he hath appointed me the minister thereof, it must needs be that it even so stand, as it hath been done, I have no more right in it: I must hold myself contented to have blessed once: and yet afterwards he blesseth Esau notwithstanding. And how? What, is there any contradiction? no not so: but this is to show us, that there was not any other heavenly blessing, to say, that he whom he blessed should be the head of the church, and that Jesus Christ should come of his race: this was no longer in the hand of Isaack, as he confesseth. But concerning the benefits of this world, and that which might satisfy the creatures, he gave him more abundantly, than he did to Jacob. Now then we may easily see, that Isaack speaking here of the dew of Heaven, of the fat of the earth, and of great quantity of corn and wine, he meaneth not that his son should trouble himself therein: but he simply setteth these figures before him, which were pledges (as I have said) to draw him further of: This therefore is the thing that we have to mark. And withal let us note, that when it is said that Isaack had declared:

_The voice is the voice of my son Jacob: but the hand is as the hand of Esau._

That God had yet purchased this for him. It is true that all this was done through error: but yet besides this error he had some certain knowledge: and the Lord did in such sort advertise him of it, to the end to show that the blessing belonged to Jacob: as also in truth in must be reserved for him, although this had not come to pass: that is to say, albeit Rebecca had not used this ill deceit, yet God know full well how to hold Isaack's mouth, as also he held the mouth of Balaam. Behold Balaam who was a liar, who was hired, and came also the curse the people of God, if it had been possible for him, to the end to get gifts of Balak. But nevertheless God did so turn his tongue that when he thought to curse, (maugre his beard) he blessed them. But Isaack was not as Balaam: For his purpose was not to resist GOD, nor to abolish his election: but he was blinded with a foolish love which he bare unto his Son, (as we have said): and our Lord could well enough govern his tongue when he would, to cause him to bless Jacob: but now when he imagined to bless his son Esau, yet nevertheless doth GOD draw this from his mouth, _The voice is the voice of my son Jacob._
Now this was the principal and chief of the blessing, even the voice: For Isaack gave nothing of his own: but he was a witness of the favor of God, and as it were an Harrault to publish it. So then, forasmuch as he found nothing of Esau but the apparel and the touching, he must not rest himself thereupon, forasmuch as he found the voice in Jacob. By this we may see that God would even now already allow it, although that Isaack knew not what he did, nevertheless the blessing must be turned to Jacob. Thus much concerning this word. Moreover for the conclusion let us mark well when it is said, that all people shall be subject to Jacob: that this is not to the end that he should have any earthly Empire or dominion in this world, either he or his. It is true, that they ruled in the land of Canaan: but howsoever it was, yet did not they bring into subjection all nations. In the time of Solomon, it is true that God exalted his people far and wide: but this was in a figure: for it must come unto our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head both of men and angels. So then that which Moyses here rehearseth of the sovereign dominion, it is certain that it cannot agree, neither to Jacob nor to his Children, nor to all their posterity, until that we come to our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the cause why it is expressly said, that he should be the head of his Brethren, and that his mother's sons should bow down before him. This was not in respect of Jacob's person: he had but one only brother, who bowed not himself before him: but rather made him afraid, as we shall see after: but we see the accomplishment of all in our Lord Jesus Christ: and this was not for himself, but it was for our good and for our salvation, that he received all power from God his father, to the end that every knee should bow down before him: In him also it is altogether that we are a priestly kingdom, so that we acknowledge him as our king and our head to worship him.

But now let us cast down ourselves before the majesty of our good God, in acknowledging of our faults, and praying him that he will make us in such sort to feel them, that it may be to humble us before him, and for to make us to ask pardon of him, and also for to hate ourselves, and to be displeased with ourselves in our own vices: and pray him that it would please him in such sort to reform us, that we may grow up more and more in all holiness and obedience of his righteousness. And that he would support us in our weaknesses, in such sort, that he leave not to accomplish the promises that he hath made unto us, although that on our part we do not only slack them, but seem also utterly to thrust them from us, that notwithstanding he will not leave, to stretch out unto us a strong hand, until that we be come unto the mark which he hath set before us: that is, till we be partakers of that glory which he hath purchased unto us through our Lord Jesus Christ. And that he will not only show this grace unto us, but unto all peoples and nations of the earth, etc.