

The Nearness of the Glory

by John Gifford Bellett

The nearness of the glory is a reality that we can experience through justifying faith and the blood of Christ, and it brings us boldness in the day of judgment.

Scripture: Genesis 28:10, Jeremiah 32:9, Luke 23:43, John 7:7, John 11:12, 1 John 4:17

Topics: "Separation From World", "End Time Prophecy"

Description

John Gifford Bellett preaches about the present times of advancing evil and the rivalry between ecclesiastical and civil powers, with the expectation of the ecclesiastical power prevailing for a time before yielding to the civil power. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a good conscience toward Christ and the truth, being separate from the world, and looking for the sure and happy days beyond the present corruption and coming judgment. Bellett draws parallels between the prophet Jeremiah's faith, hope for the future, and unwavering conclusions of faith despite temporary circumstances, urging believers to walk by the light of God through darkness that may seem like light.

Transcript

The thought of the nearness of the glory should be deeply cherished by the heart. And we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us richly in the Word. The place of the glory is near us, and the path by which it can either come to us or we go to it is short and simple, and the moment for the taking of the journey may be present in the twinkling of an eye.

"Whom He justifies, them He also glorifies," is a sentence which tells us of the path or title to the glory. We need nothing but the justifying faith of Jesus. When by faith we stand washed and sanctified through the blood, we are at once made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Our persons need no further adorning. We are clean every whit, presentable without fault before the presence of the glory, whether that glory be still hid within its veil, or to be manifested tomorrow.

Nor can we say when it may please the Lord of the glory to appear. But this we know that He is ever near and can show Himself in His high and bright estate in a moment.

The congregation was set at the door of the tabernacle to acquaint themselves with their High Priest. They did so. They took knowledge of the consecration and services of Aaron, and on the accomplishing of these services, the glory appeared. It was waiting at the door, within its proper veil, to do this, and show itself. All it needed was title to take its little journey, in finding an object worthy of its visitation. And as soon as the

congregation stand in the value of the blood of Christ, or appear in the character which the priestly services and sacrifices of Jesus impart to it, then the glory, reading its title to appear in finding an object worthy of its visitation makes it short journey, and shines around the camp. And it shines around to gladden them; not to alarm but to gladden. They were entitled and prepared to be gladdened by it, for they stood in the value and cleansing of Jesus. Its place was theirs; and the atmosphere it brought with it their native air.

But there are other witnesses to the nearness of the glory. A light surprised the persecutor as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus. It was above the brightness of the sun at noonday. And well it might have been, for it was a beam from the land of the glory, and it bore the Lord of glory upon it (see Isa. 24: 23).

Happy to know from such a witness, how near that place of glory is to us. For as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye that glory was here! Jesus' power present, and it came. He commanded and it was here.

But it did not come to display itself. It came for other business, on another errand altogether. It came to make the persecutor of the unoffending flock of Christ a native of that very land where this glory of Christ dwelt.

It begins therefore, by laying the persecutor himself in ruins. It shines around him, and he falls to the earth. It is the light of Gideon's pitchers confounding the armies of the uncircumcised. Saul takes the sentence of death into himself. With a vengeance he knows that he has been kicking against the pricks; madly destroying himself in all his enmity against Jesus, for that Jesus was the Lord of the glory. But the One that wounded can heal, the One that kills can make alive. "Rise and stand upon thy feet," says the Lord of this glory. Life comes from Him who could wield the power of death -- life infallible, and indestructible -- life with inheritance of this very glory. And he is made the witness of the same life and inheritance to all kinds of sinners, kings, Gentiles, and people of Israel.

What a business is this! The glory, and the Lord of the glory come to do it. Never had such points in the furthest distance met before. The persecutor of the flock and the Saviour of the flock are beside each other. The Lord of the glory and the sinner whom the glory was consuming are here.

Can we trust all this and be glad in it? Is it pleasant to us to think that the glory is thus near us; that at the bidding of its Lord, or to carry, like a chariot, its Lord, it could be here in a moment? Stephen saw it thus, as by an upward glance of his closing eye. And when the voice of the Archangel heralds it, and the trump of God summons it, it will be here again to enfold us and bear us up to its native land (1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15).

It visited Saul, but left him as its heir and expectant, to travel and to toil down here for his appointed day. But when it visits us, it will not leave us here any longer as its expectants, for awhile strangers and foreigners in the earth, but takes us home with itself ever to be with the Lord -- the Lord of the glory (1 Cor. 2: 8; James 2: 1).

Till then like Paul, we may "obtain help of the Lord," and testify of what we are, and of what we shall be. But it is all service in a foreign land, with this cherishing gladdening thought, that the native land is near us, and our translation asks but for a moment, for the twinkling of an eye. The title is simple, the path is short, and the journey soon taken. "Whom He justifies, them He also glorifies."

Bethany.

God is the living God and as such He is acting in this scene of death. He came into the midst of it as the living God. He could not have come otherwise. We may say He has not been here, if He has not been here as the living God. And His victory is in resurrection. If resurrection be denied, then, that the living God has been here, that God has interfered with the condition of this ruined death-stricken world is denied also.

It is blessed to see this, very sure and simple as a truth, and the secret or principle of the divine way in this fallen creation from the beginning. Into Himself as the living God, into Himself or the resources which His own glory or nature provided, God has retreated, apart from the world that has involved itself in death. Again I say, this truth, this mystery, is sure and simple, full of blessedness, and that which, of necessity, has marked His way in this world. If His creature has been untrue, His creature of highest dignity, set by Him over the works of His hand, if Adam had disappointed Him, revolted and brought in death, surely God has to look to Himself, to draw from Himself, and there in His own resources, in the provision which He Himself supplies, He finds the remedy. And this is, in His victory as the living God, which victory is resurrection, His own resource of life in despite of the conquest of sin and death, let those conquests take what form they may.

I am looking only at one, but as I judge, a very vivid sample of this. Bethany in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, a village on the other side of Mount Olivet, in the Scriptures of the Evangelists, shows itself to us as a happy, sacred, and mystic spot. It was happy, for there the Lord Jesus found, if anywhere, a home on the earth. It was sacred, for there He had some of the most intimate communion with His elect, which His spirit ever enjoyed. It was mystic, for there He exhibited this truth or mystery which I am speaking of, His victory as the living God.

Lazarus, His friend in Judea, Lazarus of Bethany, had died. They had buried him -- all they could do -- the service of a fallen creature. The dead can bury the dead -- right it is in them to do so -- but that is all they can do.

The Lord was then absent. But He comes, in due season, to awaken His friend out of sleep, to raise Him whom His friends buried. He reveals Himself in full suited character, the character suited to that moment, and in which He had come into this world. "I am the resurrection and the life," He says. Bethany at that moment afforded Him His proper material to work upon. Sin had there reigned unto death. Man had there just reaped the wages of sin. Lazarus had died. The sentence, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," had not been cancelled. That could not be. And now it had been afresh executed in this elect one of God in the land of Judea. But the Son of God, the living God Himself, comes to do His work, as sin and death had just done theirs.

Bethany thus became a mystic spot. It was now not only a happy place, and a sacred place, it was also a mystic place. It had now exhibited God's great principle, the victory of the living God in this death-stricken world. This is the character it acquires, under John's Gospel: and in this character the Lord enjoys it in the same Gospel -- I mean, in the next chapter. There the Lord sits as in the midst of the risen family. He is at Bethany after it has acquired its mystic character. It has been constituted the expression of God's way in this world where sin is reigning; and now the Lord enjoys it. He is there as with the risen family. In spirit He is in the millennial world, and as the King sitting at the table, the spikenard of His worshippers sendeth forth its goodly smell.

This was the first use to be made of Bethany, or of God's own great and ruling principle, His victory over death, or His glory as the living God. He enjoys it in the bosom of His elect (see John 11: 12).

He has, however, more to do with Bethany than this. If He first enjoys it in the midst of His own, He must also resort to it as His relief from the disappointments which He was suffering from all that He had been trusting, so that He may get an answer as from Himself, and find satisfaction there, let all beside disappoint Him as they may.

This is seen in Matthew 21. Jerusalem had, at that moment disappointed Him. He had sought her as His chosen seat of royalty in the earth, and had offered Himself in all solemnity to her as her King; but Israel would not, and He retires to Bethany. An action simple in itself, but full of significance, telling us that He has in Himself, in His doings and victories as the living God, resources that will never fail Him and never disappoint Him.

This is very full of meaning and of interest. But this is what He has been doing in this world from the beginning. Let death appear, let the judgment of sin be ready to be executed, whether in the garden of Eden, in the earth before the Flood, in the land of Egypt or of Canaan, in the midst of Israel, or wider still, in the whole world itself. We ever see Him acting as the living God, providing atonement for sin, the principle of death, and bringing forth a living people from the midst of the scene of righteous doom and judgment of death. Bethany had already been constituted this to Him, the witness of this; and now when need arises, when fresh disappointment from the creature whom He had trusted, comes, He uses Bethany in this character. And I may say, when He retired to Bethany, He retreated to Himself and His own resources.

Boldness in the Day of Judgment.

1 John 4: 7.

John says, teaching us under the Holy Ghost, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world." A most wondrous and very blessed Scripture (1 John 4: 17).

John himself afterwards experienced the boldness, of which this Scripture speaks, in a very remarkable way. He had his own doctrine made good to his spirit by the same hand that taught him the doctrine.

In the Isle of Patmos he was introduced to a day of judgment. The revelation he got there of the Lord Jesus Christ, was a revelation of Him in judicial glory. He saw the Son of Man standing among the golden candlesticks with white garments, eyes of flame of fire, a voice as of many waters, a countenance as of the sun in his strength, and with feet as though they burnt in a furnace. A solemn, terrible exhibition of Christ in the place of judgment, all this was. John falls to the earth as one dead. But the Lord tells him not to fear, speaking to him as the One who had been dead and was alive again, having the keys of hell and of death. That is, He imparts to the spirit of His saint, then in the presence of judicial glory, all the virtue of His own condition. Jesus was there, through death and resurrection, holding in His grasp all the power of the enemy, for He had the keys of hell and of death. Such an One speaks comfortably to John. He imparts, as I said, the virtue of His own condition to His saint, though in a day of judgment. As He Himself was, so would He have John to be, even in the place of victory, the other side of judgment (Rev. 1).

This was surely wonderful and full of blessing. And John at once feels the power of it, and acquires "boldness" in that "day of judgment." For, though the Son of Man is still before him in the same attire and character as he had already seen Him, in judicial glory, with eyes of flame and feet as though they burnt in a furnace, and a countenance like as the sun shineth in his strength, John has boldness and then he listens to the voice challenging the churches again and again, but he remains unmoved from beginning to end.

This is very beautiful, and has a great character in it. But still more. Another scene of judgment succeeds this of the Son of Man walking among the candlesticks, and John is set in the presence of it. He is carried or summoned by the sound of a trumpet to heaven, preparing itself for the execution of judgment. The thrones were there, thrones of judgment -- for the elders are seen clothed in white raiment, befitting those seated in judgment. Voices, lightnings, and thunders, instruments of wrath or witnesses that the Lord was rising up out of His holy place for judgment, proceeded out of the throne. And from thence, as we proceed through the Book, all that succeeds is in character; trumpets, vials, fire, smoke, earthquakes, and other terrible sights and symbols, enough to make another Moses quake, as in the day of Sinai. But John maintains the "boldness" he had already acquired, and all through is as unmoved as the living creatures and the crowned elders themselves. They were on high, he was still "in this world"; they were glorified, but he still in the body, yet he is as calm as they. As they were so was he. And when the terrible sealed book is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and a loud voice as of a mighty angel challenges all to loose it, instead of dreading the moment when such an awful volume should be opened, he weeps because no one was found equal to do so. He longs to have the secret of the throne disclosed. The day of judgment has no terror for him. He is "as" Christ, and has "boldness."

But this security -- God's own calmness and assurance in the day of judgment -- has had its witness or expression in different forms, again and again, in the course of God's dealing with His elect. As in the time of the flood, in the day of the overthrow of Sodom, at the time of the exodus, and also at the time of the passage of the Jordan.

These were days of judgment; but the security thrown round the elect, on each of them, was divine; it was God's own safety which He then imparted to His people. They were in the world when its judgment was executing; but we may say, as he was then, so were they. His safety was theirs.

The Lord God shut Noah in the ark, with His own hand, ere the waters began to rise. The waters were then the instruments of divine wrath. but the divine hand had shut the door upon Noah. And surely those waters of judgment could no more prevail against the hand of God than they could against his throne. And therefore, as the Lord was, so was Noah. This safety was a common one, wondrous to tell it.

So even such an one as Lot in another day of judgment. He was saved so as by fire -- out of the fire. A salvation in no wise glorious to himself. He suffered loss, for his works were all burnt up. But the angel said, he could do nothing till Lot was fully and clean delivered out of all possible danger from the judgment. The angel could do nothing till then. And I ask, was not this divine security?

In the night of Egypt, He who carried the sword had already appointed the blood. He to whom the vengeance belonged, the Judge who was conducting the judgment, had ordained and pledged the deliverance. "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Was not this imparting His own security to His people again? The Lord must deny Himself -- and this He cannot do -- or Israel must be safe. Israel may have the same "boldness" in that "day of judgment," as the Lord Himself, though Israel was in the land through

which the sword was going.

And so in the passage of the Jordan. The waters were there as in the day of Noah, ready to overflow their banks, as in the time of barley harvest. But the priests were in the midst of them, and the ark or presence of God. And there they stood, the ministers of God and the presence of God, till all the people had crossed the river. Jesus was in the vessel, and He must sink, if the disciples did. The safety of the ark was the safety of the camp. As it was, so were they. Nothing less than divine security was that of Israel amid the swelling of the Jordan. The judgment of Canaan was about to begin, but Israel was in God's sanctuary.

All this surely witnesses how the Lord imparts Himself, or shares His condition with His elect -- and that too in the day of their most solemn necessity, so to speak. He is beyond judgment, above it, the Executor of it, but the value of His own place He communicated to these elect ones of old in days of judgment.

But this boldness of ours has a new character in it. It flows from "perfect love." God has put the value of the Son of the bosom upon us; and it is not possible for love to take any higher counsels or do any more wondrous work than that. The love that has set the value of the Son upon us is a perfect love. And our boldness, therefore, is confirmed not merely by the hand or by the ordinance of God, but by His heart. Noah or Israel or even Lot, in their several days of judgment, might have said "as He is, so are we." God's safety was theirs. But we resolve our security now into the love of God, as they did into the hand or ordinance of God. The security is equal but ours is the witness of a nearer, more affecting title. Ours is personal. Noah was in the ark, we are in God. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." And in a new sense we say, "as He is, so are we." We are loved as He is, not merely secured as He is. We have an element of full personal affection investing our spirits as well as an element of boldness.

Jacob.

Genesis 28: 10 - 20: 32.

Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, listening to the counsel of unbelief and thus departing from his path and his call as a saint of God. He is therefore put under discipline -- for he has to learn the bitterness of his own way.

His place, that very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed, therefore, the hand of the Lord who still loved him. It was, no doubt, the fruit and ways of his own transgression, but it told also that God was his God, for that He was visiting him in fatherly chastening. It is, accordingly, such a place as God may own. It was not sin but discipline that marked it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast, God could not have owned it -- for deceit and fraud were practised there. But at Luz, where Jacob is under chastening, the Lord can be -- and He does come and manifest Himself there.

He comes to make glory a great reality to this poor solitary, disciplined saint. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, or to send him back to the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves the present fruit of Jacob's naughtiness just as bitter as he found it. But He does come to make glory and heaven a great reality to him.

Onwards, therefore, Jacob goes, and as the story tells us, he served twenty years under a certain hard taskmaster in Padan-aram. But the Lord blesses him there, and he conducts himself in the fear of the Lord there, and all is well.

In due time he is on his way back to Canaan. But indeed it is a different Jacob as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel, he is a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds and servants and wives and children tell of his prosperity. He had been on that road twenty years before, unfriended and alone, with a staff in his hand, but now we see him thus accompanied and surrounded. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, and may be a prey to others, as he surely must be an object with them.

He hears of Esau coming and four hundred men with him. He trembles. He fears for his cattle, his people and his life. He manages as well as he can, and religiously commits all to the Lord -- but unbelief has mastered his heart and he is in fear of Esau.

The Lord comes to him, therefore, His second time -- now on his journey homeward, as He had been with him on his journey out. But it is in a new character. He was only under discipline then, he is in the power of unbelief now: and the Lord comes, not to comfort, but to rebuke and restore him.

"There wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day." This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob. His unbelieving fears touching Esau and his four hundred men had provoked the Lord to jealousy and He withstands him.

But what is the issue of all this? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob here, as glory had been at Bethel. The wrestling Stranger, in abounding grace, allows Himself to be prevailed over by the weak and timid Jacob, and the Spirit works revival of faith in his soul. "I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me" says he. He comes "boldly to the throne of grace." Faith is decided, and a blessing must be imparted. And Jacob becomes Israel. Grace is now made a great reality to him as before glory had been. It is now the unbelieving Jacob restored, as then it had been the chastened Jacob comforted. The Gospel is pressed on his soul here, heaved had been opened to his eye there. There he walked as at the gate of heaven and in the house of God, here he walks under the shinings of the presence of God. There Christ was making him promises, here Christ is giving him fresh embraces of love.

Such was "Bethel" on his way out, such is "Peniel on his way home. Such is God to him according to his need and condition. Heaven in its bright enriching glory was shown to him in the day of his sorrow, Christ in His precious restoring grace is given to him in the day of his failure. And these things are what we want -- to have both grace and glory realized to our souls -- to walk along by Bethel and by Peniel. They sweetly vary the journey, but it is the one unchanging God that opens His house to us, and sheds the light of His face upon us.

"Then gladly sing, and sound abroad

The great Redeemer's praise,

The glories of the living God,

The riches of His grace."

Notices of Coming Glories.

Were we, if I may so speak, to go in upon the fields of the New Testament scriptures, and gather up fragments of the glories of coming days, we should find them, I do not say, lying there profusely, but still we should find them there, and we should at least have a handful to feed upon.

There is no one writing that digests this subject but coming glories shine out here and there in the midst of other thoughts, when different subjects of present interest to the saints are under consideration.

We know that in the coming days of the Kingdom, there will be both the earthly and the heavenly departments, and also connection and intercourse between them. We see notices of each of these in different parts of the four Gospels. Thus the Lord entered the city of the daughter of Zion, as her King. All that was needed to set Him forth in that glory, for a moment waited on Him. The ass and its owner, the whole material and mind of the scene, aided in giving us a sample of the days of the King of Israel.

The Greeks are presented as coming up to this King of Israel then in His beauty. And in this we get another sight of His further glories.

All this, however, was simply and entirely earthly. No glimpse of heaven appears. It is Messiah in His place on earth, King of Zion accepting the homage of the nations.

On the holy mount glories shine again. But it is another glory -- not earthly, but heavenly. It is the light of bodies of glory that shines there, samples of the transfigured, translated, saints of God, in company with their Lord in heavenly places.

But, as I may say, on either side of them another place is seen; the earth in the persons of Peter, James and John, the higher heavens or, as it is called, "the exalted glory," in the voice that breaks forth upon the scene.

This is something very fine and very comprehensive. We have coming Millennial days finely and largely anticipated here. We have notices of the heavens and of the earth in their separate places; and their connections and mediums and intercourse which is to be established between them; that, while there will be a higher heaven, an excellent glory, a Father's house, unrevealed to sight there will be also a people in flesh and blood on the earth. A display of heavenly glory in the sight of the earthly people and intercourse maintained between the translated saints and them. The throne and the footstool shall be but different parts of one great system. This is a fine anticipation of coming days. The Lord again intimates "the excellent glory" under the title of "the Father's house," in John 14, letting us know that it is a wealthy place, a many-mansioned house, the dwelling of the family, the homestead in the realms of highest glory.

Thus we are gathering fragments. But further. There are distant scenes. There are nearer scenes also thrown open to our sight in these same scriptures of the New Testament.

We have the spirit of the Lord Himself before resurrection taken to and by the Father in Luke 23 -- and then we have the glorified body of the Lord, after resurrection, translated to heaven, in Luke 24.

We have instruction as to ourselves in each of these things. We are taught to know, that should we die, as Jesus did, before the day of resurrection, our spirits will be received of Him in paradise or heaven. Luke 23, Acts 7; 2 Cor. 5, Philippians 1, teach us this. And should we live till the day of resurrection, we are taught to know that we shall then be glorified and translated in company with those saints who have already died and gone, in spirit, to Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15, witnesses this, as also 1 Thessalonians 4.

But further still. After this translation, certain and divers scenes are disclosed to us. The heaven that is set for the execution of judgment in this present evil, revolted world is opened to our sight in Revelation 4. And actions which take their course, while the heavens continue, are presented to us in the progress of the same book. But in time, judgment is all executed, and there succeeds the heavens set for the ministration

of government of the world to come, or the millennial earth. This is opened to our sight in Revelation 20, 21, 22.

But even further still. The world that is to be the scene of righteousness under the heavenly sceptre of the glorified Lord and His saints, will have its end. The heaven set for the ministration of government will have fulfilled its course, as well as the heaven set for the execution of judgment. And then we get another scene of glory opened to our view. There is the Great White Throne trying everything. And then the new heavens and the new earth introduced by the judgment of this Great White Throne -- as the Millennial heavens and earth have been introduced by the judgment executed under the heavens, of Revelation 4.

Here the series of glories end. Various scenes and regions have thus unfolded themselves to us in their different characters. But we are to see them, and learn what they severally are by taking up notices of them here and there throughout the New Testament scriptures, from beginning to end -- to glean in that fruitful field to gather up fragments which lie there -- left by the hand of Him who is preparing for the feast days of eternity.

And had we but a heart for the feast itself, we should occupy ourselves more diligently and joyfully, in this gathering up, a kind of gleaning that goes before the harvest. But we fail in affection. We are wanting in desire. Present pleasures and interests divert the heart -- and do not allow the eye and the thought and the hope to tarry where notices of coming glories shine.

Jeremiah and the Times.

Feel very much the character of this present time through which we are passing. The great powers that are destined to fill out the actions of Christendom's closing day are practising themselves, each in its several sphere, with great earnestness and skill. These powers are the civil and ecclesiastical.

I do not doubt but that, for a season, the ecclesiastical will prevail. The woman is to ride for awhile -- and that is the symbol, as I surely judge, which signifies the supremacy of that which takes the place of the Church. And this present moment is marked by her efforts to mount the saddle.. And she is so adroitly directing these efforts that I doubt not success will soon attend them: and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The civil power, however, is not idle. The wondrous advance that is making every day in the cultivation of the world is the proof of great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting and showing what it can do, and pledging what further it means to do.

At this moment each of these powers is abroad in the scene of action, and men's minds are divided between them. They are in some sense, rivals and opposed. There is the commercial energy, and there is the religious energy -- the one erecting its railroads and exhibitions and such like, the other its bishoprics, churches, ordinances, etc. The attention of the children of man is divided between them -- but the saints, who know the Cross of Christ as the relief of their conscience and the ground of their separation from the world are apart from both equally.

I doubt not but the civil power will have to yield the supremacy for a time; and the woman will ride again; though her state and greatness will be but short for the civil power will take offence and remove her.

For between these powers there is at times confederacy, and then at times there is enmity.

If we, in God's grace, keep a good conscience toward Christ and the truth, we may count upon it that no inheritance or portion on the earth is worth us, as men speak, many years purchase. If we will consent to become whatever the times would make us, of course we shall go on. But I speak this in the recollection that at any moment we maybe carried up to meet the Lord. I follow simply what I judge the progress of things on the earth is to be.

I have been sensible lately how much the language and spirit of Jeremiah suit these times. He lived in the daily observation of evil and iniquity abounding and advancing in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a den of thieves. He knew likewise that the judgment of God was awaiting it all; but withal, he looked for sure and happy days in the distance which lay beyond the present corruption and the coming judgment.

He mourned about it, but he also testified against it. And like his Master, he was hated for his testimony (John 7: 7).

He was, however, full of faith and hope touching the future; and therefore he laid out his money in the purchase of Hanameel's field (Jer. 32). All this was beautiful -- the present sorrow, the certainty of approaching judgment, and the hope of closing, crowning glory. This is a pattern for our spirit.

And I observe another feature of character or of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the conclusions of faith by occasional circumstances, or fair promising appearances. This is seen in chapter 32. The Chaldean army had broken up their camp at the walls of Jerusalem, because of the arrival of the Egyptian allies. But Jeremiah left the city, for he could not but hold the conclusions of faith, that Jerusalem was doomed of God by the flattering appearances of a moment like that.

This is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God not only through darkness, but through darkness that seemed to be light. And with all this he was a suffering witness.

All seems quiet around us at present, and even more than that, things are advancing and progressing as far as the accommodations of social life go. But the moral of the scene in the eye of faith is more serious than ever. The apostate powers of man are ripening themselves into their most abundant exhibition. There is somewhat of rivalry between them just for the present. The secular and the religious are apart as yet. Each has its respective votaries and worshippers. But confederacy is to succeed to rivalry ere long I believe. The world must, even for its own ends, for a season adopt religion, and then for that season the woman will ride the beast again, that man's system may grow solid as well as extended, and propose itself as the thing that has earned for itself a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling, church separation, separation because of heavenly citizenship and oneness with an already risen Christ. Abraham's was a very complete separation. It was twofold: he was separated from the natural associations of Mesopotamia, "country, kindred, and father's house," and from the moral associations of Canaan, or its iniquities and idols.

May the Lord in the thought of these solemn truths, be more real and near to us! May the prospect of His presence be more familiarly before us, and the hope of His glory be found lying more surely and certainly in the very midst of the affections and stirrings of our hearts!

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