

Millennial Glory

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Mark 9: 15.

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The mind of Peter on the hill was very much that of Jacob at Bethel. In one sense it was delight to him beyond expression, so that he might have said, "There was no more spirit in him." "Master, it is good for us to be here," tells the unforced necessary joy and satisfaction which the spot and occasion inspired. But then the occasion was a little too much for him. He feared, just as Jacob at Bethel, feeling that he was at the gate of heaven, and yet saying, "How dreadful is this place!" This may imply a serious state of soul in some sense; but it is a necessary state, while man is as he is. Even John in Patmos was overreached by the glory, though that was rather the *judicial* glory of Christ. This on the hill was the *millennial*, and in that a difference of experience may be accounted for. But still glory has ever proved itself too much for man, and a freeness was needed to give him ease in the presence of it, as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others show us.

Paul in the third heavens had no alarms. He had visions and audiences which he could not communicate to others; but they did not alarm or overpower him at all. And this distinction is simple as well as manifest; for Paul was not as Peter. Peter on the hill was still flesh and blood. Paul in Paradise was simply "a man in Christ," whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell; the body may have been no help to him, neither was it any hindrance to him. If he enjoyed all these blessed communications both in seeing and hearing, he did so without the sense of his being like Peter in the body, and therefore is he the more sure witness of the state of a spirit having enjoyment incommunicable to others, but unalloyed with any fear or other exception to himself. Thus, however, it was with Peter and his brethren on the hill. The place was glorious, and they could have remained there for ever; but still they were not altogether prepared for it. The joy of the place itself spake in them and through them when they said, "It is good for us to be here." The necessary unpreparedness of flesh and blood for the vision told of itself in the fear that accompanied this.

But mark the operation of this glory further. When the Lord reached the foot of the hill, the multitudes on seeing Him "were greatly amazed, and" — some of them at least — "running to Him saluted Him." This is very remarkable; but, meditated on a little, it is full of beautiful and interesting meaning. I have no doubt that the Lord bore on His person the reflection or shine of the glory unto which He had just been transfigured on the top of the hill. The word "amazed" here is the same as "affrighted" in Mark 16: 5; and there it distinctly expresses that sentiment of the soul which is awakened by the vision of a glorious heavenly emotion. So that I doubt not the Lord was here seen under some shine or reflection of the glory.

But what does all this tell us? I believe it is designed to bear us on to the day when the glorified family in heaven will visit the earth, and be recognized and enjoyed in their peculiar heavenly persons. They will be known by the people in the footstool that they belong to a scene above, and surpassing their own. "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." They will be recognized in such a character. The throne will be known to be theirs, while the footstool is the place of those whom they occasionally visit. But this sentiment of the soul, while felt and owned, and in its beautiful and perfect measure acted on, will not be overwhelming. They *salute* Jesus, though *amazed*. J. G. B.

