Jeremiah - Commentaries by John Gifford Bellett

Short Meditations, Redemption of the Inheritance, The

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WE have four scriptures, in distinct parts of the word, which find connection with this subject, " The Redemption of the Inheritance." I mean Lev. 25:25; Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 4:1-10; Jer. 32:6-15.

The ordinance in Lev. 25 teaches us that an Israelite might redeem or buy the inheritance of an impoverished kinsman, out of the hands of him, whoever he were, to whom it had been sold; and then he might hold it till the year of jubilee, when as we further learn, it was to return to the original owner.

The ordinance in Deut. 25 teaches us, that an Israelite was bound to marry the widow of his brother, if that brother had died childless, and raise up seed to his brother, so that his name and his inheritance might be secured in the firstborn of that marriage. If he refused to do this service to his deceased brother, he was put to public shame, a mark of degradation being affixed to him.

These ordinances are illustrated in Ruth and Jeremiah. In the beautiful history of Ruth, we find Boaz doing this part of a brother or a kinsman in Israel according to the ordinance in Deut. 25, in a very special and admirable way. The inheritance of Mahlon, an Israelite of Bethlehem Judah, had been sold, and his wife, by birth a Moabitess, had been left of him, a childless and penniless widow. She had nothing but her virtue, the unstained excellence of her character and reputation. She was a stranger, who at the cost of her own diligence and labor, supported her mother-in-law, her late husband's mother, for whose sake, in the spirit of a true or adopted daughter of Abraham; she had left home and country and father's house.

Boaz redeems her inheritance, and marries her. He does not fear the marring of his own inheritance, but devotes himself to the interests of his deceased kinsman, and the childless and penniless widow he had left behind him. And by this marriage, and this redemption of the inheritance which accompanied it, the house of Mahlon is revived, and led up to royal honors, the very first and highest estate of wealth and dignity in the land. For David, who sat on the throne of Israel, the most eminent in all the genealogies of Israel, was the fruit of it in the third generation.

This was a great and magnificent illustration of kinsman-virtue.

In the course of the Book of Jeremiah, or in the history of the prophet, we find him (though not in the same way with Boaz in the Book of Ruth) doing a kinsman's part. While he is in prison (as he was in king Zedekiah's reign, for the truth's sake), and while the Chaldean army is seated before Jerusalem, threatening its doom and the captivity of its people, Hananeel, his uncle's son, comes to him, and tells him, as his kinsman, to buy his field that was in Anathoth, the city of their fathers. This was a strange appeal to make at such a time to such a man. But Jeremiah does not hesitate. He knew it was the Lord's will, and he pays down his money, and buys or redeems the field of Hananeel, his uncle's son; though he knew that it might prove, if left at the mercy of circumstances, a fruitless bargain; or at least, that very distant time must, be reached, ere he could acquire actual possession, of his purchase. This was a great acting of faith, and another fine and noble illustration of kinsman-virtue.

The ordinances, I may therefore say, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy prescribe these kinsman-duties; and then, the histories of Boaz and of Jeremiah, in these beautiful and admirable ways, illustrate these duties.

But we have more than this-for these doings of Boaz and of Jeremiah anticipate, as in types and figures, the ways of our Lord Jesus, who, having made Himself our Kinsman, has, in ways that outshine all analogies, done a kinsman's part. Yes, indeed-and I need not say it-these illustrations of kinsman-virtues in the persons of Boaz and Jeremiah are outdone and outshone in the bright and wondrous and perfect ways of the Son of man-for He, surely, like a more self-sacrificing Boaz, at a price that cost Him everything, has relieved not only a childless, penniless kinsman, but one guilty and ruined and sold into dishonorable captivity; and like a better Jeremiah, has waited now for a long season and through an age of sore rejection for the inheritance which He purchased with His own blood in the day of Calvary.

But this I would still further look at. The Lord Jesus is a Redeemer in two respects, a Redeemer by purchase and by power. He is a Redeemer by the price of His blood, purchasing us and our inheritance thereby from the righteous claims of God, so that God is just while justifying and blessing us. He is a Redeemer by the strength of His arm, rescuing us and our inheritance from the hand of the great enemy. So that in " the world to come," where " the redemption of the purchased possession " will be displayed, we shall be able thankfully to look at the blessed God, and know Him to be satisfied by our Redeemer, and boldly look at our great adversary, and see him conquered by our Redeemer. And this will be a high condition indeed. " Purchased " and " rescued," the subjects of a twofold redemption, will be our condition in "the world to come "-and the like of that has never yet been in the creation of God. Neither angels in their dignity, nor Adam in his innocency, ever illustrated it.

One verse, I may just observe, in the Epistle to the Colossians, gives us to learn redemption by blood; one verse in the Epistle to the Philippians gives us to learn redemption by power; one verse in the Epistle to the Ephesians combines the two. (Col. 1:20; Phil. 3:21; Eph. 1:14.)

The story of the purchase which our Redeemer has made is given to us in the Gospels; the story of the rescue which our Redeemer will make, is given to us in the Apocalypse. Accordingly it is simply as " the Lamb," we see Christ in the Gospels-it is as " the Lion of the tribe of Judah " as well as " the Lamb," we see Him in the Apocalypse. (John 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:5, 6.) For it is. by His blood or sacrifice the Lord Jesus purchases us, or answers for us the claims of God upon us; it will be by His arm stretched out in judgments, that He is to rescue our inheritance from the

grasp and captivity of the usurper, who now rules, as its god and prince, the course of this present evil world.

But I may say a little more as to this twofold character of redemption of which we are now speaking. It is intimated in the very first promise. (Gen. 3:15.) There was an exhibition of it in the day of the Exodus; for Israel was then a purchased people, ransomed from the claims of God by the blood on the lintels, and also a rescued people, delivered from the enmity and strength of Pharaoh by the overthrow of Egypt in the Red Sea. (Ex. 12; 14) Then, we have, here and there, along the current of the Old Testament, types, prophecies, and rehearsals of this great mystery, the creation of God in a purchased or rescued condition, or in the enjoyment of this twofold redemption. After all this," the Lord Jesus is introduced to the world and to His own work and commission in it, in this character of a twofold Redeemer, as the prophecies which went before Him tell us. (See Luke 1; 2) And then, His ministry in life illustrated redemption by power, because He was blotting out the traces of the strength of the enemy in the healings and quickenings He wrought; and His ministry in death accomplished redemption by blood, because it paid the ransom for our deliverance from all the claims of God and of righteousness, which were against us.

But even had one grace and light to do it, time would fail to tell out all the glories of the redemption. It is gaining its victories still, and will be gaining them till the day of the resurrection of the saints, and of the kingdom that follows-and when all its victories have been wrought, its honors will be celebrated forever.

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