

CHAPTER IX. -Crome yellow

In Chapter IX of "Crome Yellow," we're introduced to Mr. Bodiham, the rector ensconced in his study, enveloped in an atmosphere steeped in shades of brown, from the varnished furniture to the theological tomes that populate his bookshelves. The light struggles to penetrate the room, mirroring the gloom pervading Mr. Bodiham's spirit. As a figure marked by an iron-like sternness and gravity, he embodies the devout preacher, his metallic features suggesting a rigidity of belief and demeanor that seems almost inhuman.

Returning from a sermon that felt as futile as yelling into a void, Mr. Bodiham is disillusioned. His congregation at Crome, accustomed to his fervor, remains unaffected, their hearts likened to india-rubber, impervious to his metaphorical flail. On this day, his sermon sought to instill a dread of God's wrath—an attempt to shake his parishioners from their complacency and make them contemplate the severe mercies of an almighty God.

Haunted by the apparent futility of his years-long endeavor to prepare his flock for the Second Coming—a theme he previously expounded upon through the lens of war, pestilence, and the decay of moral society—Mr. Bodiham reflects bitterly on the lack of visible signs from heaven. Despite his rigorous analysis and the painstaking connections he draws between current events and biblical prophecy, the world remains unchanged, indifferent to the portents he perceives. His 1914 sermon, which he revisits with a mix of hope and desperation, positions the war as a precursor to the end times, with each detail of his interpretation drawn sharply against the backdrop of continued global unrest.

The sudden entry of Mrs. Bodiham, almost ghost-like in her paleness, interrupts his brooding. She hands him an envelope containing a catalogue from "The House of

Sheeny, Clerical Outfitters," a stark, almost jarring contrast to the apocalyptic content of his thoughts. The catalogue, with its ornate and ecclesiastical flourishes, seems an anachronism, a trivial matter in the face of the profound spiritual crisis Mr. Bodiham is experiencing.

This chapter offers a vivid portrait of Mr. Bodiham: a man caught between the unyielding grip of his convictions and the disheartening reality of indifference that greets his impassioned pleas. Through the somber setting of his study, his sermon loaded with dire warnings, and the abrupt shift to the mundane interruption, we're shown a character wrestling with the weight of his belief in the imminence of divine judgment and the seeming imperviousness of the world around him to this impending reckoning.