Musings on the Apocalypse

by J. G. Bellet

Revelation 6–19

But the day of vengeance is united with the year of the redeemed, Isaiah 63-4, Isaiah 34-8, Isaiah 61-2. And accordingly the redemption of the inheritance is conducted by judgments of vengeance on the enemies of the heir of it, its usurpers and corruptors. As therefore from henceforth in this book, until the inheritance is redeemed, until the kingdom is brought in, it is judgment that is proceeding.

Revelation 6-19. It may be seals that are opened, trumpets blown, or vials emptied, but all is preparing for the inheritance of the lamb of the church. All is action for the redeeming of it, and bringing it into the hand of him into whose hand the title deed of it, as we have seen, has already passed.

And according to this, on his beginning this action, he receives both a bow and a crown, the one signifying that he was now going forth to judge and make war, the other that that warfare was to end in a kingdom, as is said to him in another scripture, Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, and then, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Psalm 45. Thus it is henceforth a book of judgments, as it has been hitherto, only judgments in another end, not of the candlesticks, but of the earth and its corruptors.

Judgment had begun at the house of God, and now ends with those who would not obey the gospel. One enemy may appear after another, the beast and the false prophet, the dragon, the great whore, or the kings of the earth, but it is only that each, in his season, may meet the judgment of the Lord. So there may

be sorrow after sorrow.

The woman may have to fly into the wilderness, the remnant of her seed to feel the rage of the dragon, and those who refuse to take the mark of the beast to know and exercise the patience of the saints, and the two witnesses to lie slain in the street of the great city. But all this sorrow is only leading on to the rest of the kingdom, or to the descent of the golden city. The inheritance is thus redeemed by judgments, out of the hands of its corruptors, and then the righteous nations that have kept the truth enter.

But in all this action, I judge, the church has no place, but that the saints have been taken to meet their Lord in the air before it begins. This scene is one of judgment, and they have been removed, like Enoch, to another altogether, and I would now suggest a few reasons on which I ground this conclusion, as I did before for my conclusions on the character of the sealed book. First, the saints are seen round the throne in heaven, or, as I have already noticed, in Revelation 4 and throughout the book onward from that, they are never seen but there, and this leads me to judge that the church has been removed from the earth at some untold moment, between the time of chapters 3 and 4, as I have already said.

Second, at the opening of this action, Revelation 6, the same signs are given as had before been given by the Lord himself to his Jewish remnant, Matthew 24, respecting the end of the world, and as in all that prophecy the church is not contemplated, so do I judge that she is not contemplated here, but that it is the faithful Jewish election who are engaged in this action, as they only are considered in that prophecy. Third, the judgments begin with Revelation 6, but as Joshua of old did not begin his wars till the redemption and discipline of the people were ended, and they were taken out of the wilderness, so, do I judge, will not the action of chapter 6 begin till the rapture of the saints, which closes the discipline of the church and takes her out of the wilderness, is over?

Fourth, it is a scene of judgment, as I have already noticed, and the calling of the church is that of Enoch, to be taken out of it and not, like Noah, preserved in it, see 1 Thessalonians 4 and 2 Thessalonians 2. From such considerations I do conclude that the church is not mixed up in the scene which now lies before us. They have been taken into their more immediate inheritance, which is in heaven, 1 Peter 1.4, which is to them the passage of the Jordan, before these judgments on the corrupters of the earth, the mystic Amorites of Canaan, begin.

These scenes are the wars of our Joshua. A remnant like Rahab is delivered out of the defiled place after they begin, but the saints have passed into their inheritance, though the whole of it is not yet subdued. And through these chapters, 6-19, they wait in the house of the Father for it.

But I do not particularly notice these chapters. Indeed, I do not believe that we are competent to speak of them with authority. We may draw much warning and exhortation from them, which we should lay deeply to heart as being that which the Lord would continually say to us, in order that we may stand in any evil day that may arise, as arise it may, to try and sift us at any hour.

But of the scenes themselves I would not speak with authority. The Lord in them is clad with zeal as a cloak, the day of vengeance being in his heart, and the year of his redeemed having come. And onward thus he travels in the greatness of his strength, till he couches in his kingdom as the Lion of Judah.

The true day of Jericho, and of Ai, of the valley of Agilon, and of the waters of Merom, are here fought till the earth gets rest from war, and the people of the Lord dwell again in sure and quiet habitation.

> *Note, this book exhibits the same union as Isaiah 63-4, for it gives, as I judge, the day of vengeance, and also the year of the redeemed, or the ransom of the true Israel.*