

Musings on the Apocalypse

by J. G. Bellet

Conclusion (Revelation 22:6–21)

Such is the end of the second part of this book of judgment.

Through the terrible troubles of seals, trumpets, and vials, we have been led to the blessing of the earth, under the life and light that were in the golden city, where the throne of God and the Lamb is. And as we had a preface to the book in its place, so now we have a conclusion. Revelation 22, verses 6 through 21.

Here we first listen to the angel who had attended St. John, attesting the full truth of all that had passed, and then we listen to the Lord pledging his speedy coming and blessing, as in the preface, on those who should righteously use the book. We then find that the hearing and seeing of these excellent things so wrought for a moment on the mind of St. John that he falls down and worships the angel, as indeed he had done before. Revelation 19, 10.

But on both these occasions, he had been receiving some overwhelming visions. In chapter 19, he had just seen the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, and now the golden city in her glory and beauty. And his engaged and overpowered affections, awakened by such visions, must account to us for these worshipings of the angel.

But the angel rebukes him, as Peter did Cornelius in such a case, and then instructs him in one particular touching this book, which is strikingly different from the instructions given to the Jewish prophet on a like occasion. Daniel 8, 26. Daniel 12, 4 through 9. Daniel had seen and heard wonders, but was told to seal them till the time of the end, because the vision was yet to be for many

days.

But here our prophet is told to publish these things which he had seen and heard, because the time did not now wait, but was at hand. This marks the mind of the Spirit so differently in the Jewish prophet, and the prophet who was standing in our dispensation addressing the saints in St. John. For though the events might have to pass in the thoughts of Israel before the kingdom could come, the church may look for her Lord at all times, and accordingly the Lord at once again breaks in here with an announcement of his speedy coming, and that too with the rewards of righteousness, and revealing himself again, as he had done in the beginning, in his supreme place as the Alpha and the Omega.

After this, the attending angel returns to his own proper theme, promising a blessing in righteousness on those who obey, and setting aside all the workers of evil. For this is the theme of the book, a book which does not say, Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, but pronounces blessing on the righteous, and doom on all evildoers. For it is not a book of ministering grace, but of exceeding righteousness.

It is not sympathies or consolations that we find in it, but judgments. It is the place of Ezekiel which the Lord fills here, as it was that of Jeremiah which he had before occupied in the gospel. In the gospel, or in his ministry through the cities and villages of the land, he was the sorrowing, sympathizing prophet, so that some said, It is Jeremiah's, but here he stands the son of man, like Ezekiel in the place of judgment, in spirit, saying, He that heareth, let him hear, and he that forbear, let him forbear.

He that is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still. There was no tear in the eye of Ezekiel, though rivers of water ran down the cheeks of Jeremiah. All is so perfect in its time.

The Lord knew the sympathies of the one as he walked in the land, and saw the moral ruins of Zion. And he can now know the righteousness of the other, as he stands above all that defiled ruin, and apart from it all in judgment. But still, after all this, Jesus himself again comes forward, and having set his seal to these revelations and words of the angel, he shows himself to his saints.

He glances at them in all the majesty of the root and offspring of David, and in the beauty of the morning star, and the moment he thus looks out upon them, all the desire of the church is awakened, and, led by the Spirit, whose office is always to point to Jesus, she is moved to invite him to come. But once thus, with her desire set in motion, she sweetly goes out in grace towards others, as in desire towards him, and after inviting him, the bright and morning star, to come, she invites others who would hear to join her in this, and then those who were athirst, having some affection towards her Lord just stirred, to come up to the full measure of her desire, and lastly, through the largeness of her heart, whosoever would, in whatsoever mind or state they may be, to come and drink of the living waters with her. Thus was her soul divinely moved upwards and around her.

But this was an interruption of the more orderly progress of the book, like Revelation 1, 5, and 6, on Jesus being revealed. But we should be prepared for such interruptions. We should not expect that the Lord could be revealed without the church being moved as in these places.

Praise must fill her if his grace be revealed as there, Revelation 1, 6. Desire must move her if his person or glory be revealed as here, Revelation 22. And we should all, beloved, be cultivating that longing of heart after him that will lead us to take a ready part in such raptures of the Spirit in the bride as these. But this was interruption, and therefore when it passes, the Lord resumes the more proper theme of the book, and threatens plagues to him who unrighteously adds to it, and loss of life and glory to him who unrighteously

takes from it.

Editors note, this should more properly be rendered from the tree, not book, of life.

This, however, must not be allowed to close all. Surely I come quickly is heard again, words which had now broken forth from the Lord three times during this conclusion. For his heart was fuller of that than any other thought, and he would fill ours with it also. All was either to yield to that or issue in it. Judgment must be executed, but judgment is his strange work.

Affliction of the righteous must be gone through, but he never willingly afflicts. All is imperfect till Jesus appear. His own heart is upon this, and this is the last thought that he would leave upon ours.

And the saint does respond, Come, Lord Jesus, that the Lord may thus know that this is his people's desire and point of hope as it is his. Here Jesus the Lord and his ministering angel close their testimony. The apostle then, in his turn, takes leave of the saints, saying, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

In the love of the Spirit he commends them to that which is their only provision in the way till their journey is ended. Till he comes, come when he may. Bringing his glory with him, they must stand in his grace.

For the Lord gives both, and grace leads to glory. The wilderness is now proving that he has riches and stores of the one for us, and Canaan will by and by prove that he has riches and stores of the other for all who love him in this thankless and evil world. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!