

The Bright and Morning Star

Revelation 22: 10.

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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

We find a special warning given in the beginning of this portion (v. 10), an address going forth to a mixed multitude — the unjust, the filthy, and the holy found together. There is also a word put forward to those who in this place professed to be the Lord's people; and there is, when He comes, a reward for those who are really His, and a shutting out of any who, with the profession of His name, are unjust, filthy, etc. (spoken of together with the holy and righteous), a mixed multitude, all bearing His name. We find in verse 15, a further description of those shut out after the blessing pronounced on those who are His. The Lord in the next place sends the testimony to the churches (v. 16), "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." If one looks at what the house of God has become since Pentecost, truly, as Gibbon remarks, "wickedness has never been found like that wrought in the name of the Lord;" but the Lord knows His own, and He sends a word to make all who bear the name of Christian remember that profession is one thing and reality another. Then He puts forth another thing sweeter yet; not only that to which every godly heart could say Amen, but something to satisfy love, to meet the heart's craving.

I know there is the inheritance, and if He is the Root and Offspring of David, there are certain glories; and those who delight in Him know that He will show forth these glories; and if His glory covers the earth as waters cover the sea, they rejoice in the prospect. Still that would be nothing to satisfy the heart; but there is another thing, "I am the bright and morning star." This is for a people who know the secret, not of being connected only with that glory when He comes as Sun of Righteousness, but of being associated with Himself now, a people who have to weather the night, looking out for the harbinger of day. His people see Him up there, and know that they are one with Him, and long for Him to come, because they know there is no rest of heart save in Him. As a beloved brother was saying, for twenty-eight years and more he had known the blessedness of being a worshipper. And in connection with worship in spirit and truth, most blessed it is to be where we are; but more blessed than that even is our connection with Christ Himself — looking for Him, the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come."

People are often astonished when they look back on the darkness prevailing even fifty years ago; and why? Because they look more at man than at God. If they looked more at Him who sent down the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they would see the reason of all revivals. He is always the same. Why did the Holy Ghost begin to work outside the temple? Ah! this Jesus had gone up on high, and the promise of the Father was to be fulfilled to a people outside whom He loved, and the Spirit took up everything for them. And why has there been a revival at the present time? Is the House better than before? Or is evil thickening, and everything growing more dark? Infidelity is on the one hand, and superstition on the other; and what new phase of evil may come next none can know. And how can any count on going through it all and being kept? Ah! because of One who never wearies, One who can never forsake, One who came down to reveal the worthiness of Him with whom His people are linked; and they can count on Him to keep them in spite of all the evil, looking for deliverance out of it — the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come." This is the only passage in which the Spirit is presented with the Bride. There is

something very touching in connection with wilderness circumstances, seeing the Spirit in that character speaking thus, saying, "Come." Is the Bride for the earth? What has she to do with the earth, with the wilderness, save as Rebecca passing through it? It is this which gives her whole character, a certain position recognized by Christ. Many say, "The temple of the Lord are we;" but does Christ recognize them? In what character is the Bride recognized by Him? As without spot or wrinkle, and to be presented to Himself.

It will be a marvellous scene when Christ presents the Church to Himself, when the last Adam takes that Bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that, but the oneness with Himself that characterizes us. What the heart feels is our being looked at as belonging to Himself, taken out of Himself — that the Father sees us, not only in a relationship that links us up with the Son of His love in the glory, but in such a relationship that He could not do without us. He, the Bridegroom, must have the Bride up there.

If you follow His course down here, from the Babe in the manger to the death of the cross, and see Him now in resurrection on the throne of the Father, the circumstances are very different; but, ah! it is the same Lord Jesus, it is Himself; He Himself, the object of our love; and we know we shall be for His own self in the glory. That is the distinctive thing, that is where the heart rests. One may see the earthly side now, but when we see Christ Himself, it will be the heavenly side, it will be in the full, unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost, having hearts responsive to that blessed grace that brought us there. The first Adam was not alone, and the last Adam will not be so. He also will have His Bride. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come," etc.

Remark the testimony to separation (v. 19), not separation from outward wickedness, but from the corruption of truth, a special warning being given to guard it from being tampered with. We are often taken by surprise at seeing outward wickedness, but all must know how infidelity has been put forth, and accepted wholesale by the readers of infidel books, and the Lord says it will go much farther before the end comes. He says, "I have given a book, and I put before the people I love a warning against tampering with this special book; they must be kept, not only unspotted from wickedness, but from the corrupting of this book."

We have to lay a stress on "certainly." Surely *I, I* come quickly. Oh, it is the sweetness of that "I" presented there that so touches the heart! "I come," not "I stand at the door knocking," but the Lord speaks of Himself coming for His Bride. Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our hearts? We have here not alone, "I am the bright and morning star," but, "I come" — presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness of what He is. Have not some of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in our souls? What is all we have learned of Him here when compared with the thought of beholding Himself, looking on His face, seeing the One who died for us, the One that loved and watched over us from infancy — oh, with what tender gentleness watched over us!

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." An important thing comes out here; that not only should we have communion with His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, but there is another sort of communion to be enjoyed — communion responsive to the desire of His heart, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The effect of the bright light shining down has been, that we have found earth would not do for our future course, and we know, because we have it revealed, that He means to come and take us to heaven. This thought has given joy in persecution. But what is the thought of being in heaven compared with the thought of His coming to take us there? At times our hearts are drooping, and we are "hardly bestead;" but what is anything we have to pass through here, if one has the

consciousness of being able to respond to Him, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Thou dost desire, Lord, to take up Thy people, and most blessed it will be to be up there; but ah! it is Thyself my soul craves for. Is the desire of the Lord Jesus to come, which is put forth here, burning in my heart? If I know His desire to come, am I able to say "Even so, come"? It is really having communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father's will, and who has been waiting eighteen hundred years to come, and take up the people given by the Father — He the Bridegroom, they the Bride!