

The Overcomer's Reward

Revelation 2; 3

J. G. Bellett

Heaven will be one scene of God's own rest or sabbath; and the saints, in their measure, tasting the same refreshing will dwell in that rest in bodies fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. They shall be like Him in His glory, seeing Him as He is. They shall shine *"as the sun"* in the kingdom of their Father. In mind, body, and estate they will be conformed to the Beloved. And there will be the seeing or understanding of all the precious revelation of God, not as through a glass, darkly, but as face to face, knowing even as we are known. And there will be the white stone; the hidden manna; the morning star; the white robes, wherein to stand before the throne of God; the white garments, wherein to walk with the Lord through the dominions; and the white raiment, wherein to sit on their own thrones. **Rev. ii. iii.** All these will be ours then.

But this leads to a scripture which is very fruitful in notices of heavenly joy and glory. I mean Rev. ii; iii. The promises there made will be found, I believe, to unroll before us in holy and exact order, the things which await the saints of the heavens in those coming days.

EPHESUS - *"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

Those outside shall have the *leaves* of this same tree for healing (**Rev. xxii**), but the saints of the heavens shall have more—the *very fruit* of the tree itself, gathered, as it were, immediately from it, where it grows in the midst of God's own garden; not the fruit brought to them, but gathered by their own hands off the very tree. Strong intimation of the freshness, the constant freshness, of that life which is theirs. As Jesus says (and what can pass beyond such words?), *"Because I live, ye shall live also."* Here, in this promise to Ephesus, is the tree of life partaken of immediately by the heavenly saints; for this is their portion; to receive life from the very fountains and roots themselves, and there also to feed and to nourish it.

SMYRNA - *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."*

This is something beyond what had been said to Ephesus. Life was regarded as *imparted* in its richest form to Ephesus; but here we see it *gained* by Smyrna. For Smyrna was sorely tried. Some were cast into prison, and all of them were in tribulation. They were to suffer many things, but they are promised, on being faithful unto death, a *crown of life*. As James in like manner speaks, "*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.*" Here the crown of life is promised to them who endure trial. And this is beautiful in its season. The Lord delights to own the faith of His saints; and if they have shown that they loved not their life in this world unto death, it shall be as though they had gained it in the world to come. Life shall be a crown to them *there*, as the glorious reward of their not having cared for it *here*.

PERGAMOS - "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

We have another source of joy disclosed here. *Life* is possessed, and that abundantly and honourably, as we saw, at Ephesus and Smyrna; but there is here the promise of another *joy*—*the sense of the Lord's personal favour and affection*; communion with Him of such kind as is known only by hearts closely knit together in those delights and remembrances with which a stranger could not intermeddle. This is here spoken of to the faithful remnant in Pergamos. They had held His faith in the midst of difficulties, and clung to His name, and this should be rewarded with that which is ever most precious—tokens of personal affection, waking the delightful sense and assurance that the heart of the Lord is knit to their heart. He will kiss the saint "*with the kisses of His mouth*;" or, in the midst of it all, give that pledge which shall speak it. It is the *hidden* manna which is here fed upon; and the stone here received has a name on it, which *none know but he who receives it*. This, as another has said, expresses individual affection. It is not public joy, but delight in the conscious possession of the Lord's love. How blessed a

character of joy in the coming days is this! Life possessed in abundance and in honour we have already seen at Ephesus and Smyrna; but here, at Pergamos, we advance to another possession—not *glory* in any form of it as yet, but the blessed certainty and consciousness of the Lord's personal affection.

THYATIRA - "*He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father; and I will give him the morning star.*"

Here we reach *public scenes, scenes of power and glory*. This is not merely life, though enjoyed never so blessedly, nor simple personal affection and individual joy, but here is something displayed in honour and strength abroad; here are power and glory in the first character in which the glories of the saints are destined hereafter to be unfolded; *i.e.*, in their being the companions of the Lord in the clay when He comes forth to make His enemies His footstool; or, according to the decree of the second Psalm, to break them with a rod of iron, to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. This will be His power just as He takes the kingdom. This will be His ridding out all that would have been inconsistent with the kingdom. This will be the girding of the sword upon the thigh, like David, ere the throne be ascended, like Solomon. Psalm xlv. It will be the Rider's action, ere the reign of the thousand years begins. Rev. xix. And in that exercise of power, and display of glory, the saints (*as we are here instructed and promised*) shall be with Him. This is blessed in its place, and given to us in due season; for, *after the life*, and the *personal, hidden joy*, the *public glories* begin to be ushered forth.

SARDIS - "*They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.*"

This is a stage onward in the scenes of glory. The vengeance has been taken, the sword of Him who sits on the white horse has done its righteous service, the vessels of the potter have been broken, and the kingdom has come. Jesus here promises to His faithful ones that He will confess them before His Father and His angels. This is not redeeming them from judgment, or saving their souls (as we speak), but *publicly owning them before the assembled dignities of the kingdom*. He promises them that they shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. That hand which now in grace washes their feet, will then take hold of them in holy, happy intimacy, and own full companionship with them in the realms of glory. They shall *walk* with Him

What a character of joy is this! To be *publicly* owned, as before (as we read of Pergamos) *privately and personally* caressed. In how many ways does the Spirit of God trace the coming joy of the saints! The life, the love, the glory, that are reserved for them; the tree of life, and its crown too; the white stone, carrying to the deepest senses of the heart the pledge of love; and then companionship with the King of glory in His walks abroad through His bright and happy dominions. But even more than this the same Spirit has still to tell.

PHILADELPHIA - "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name."

We have just seen the heir of the kingdom as the companion of the Lord of the kingdom, abroad in the light of the glory, walking there in white with Him, owned before the Father and before the angels. Here the promise is, that the faithful one shall have his place in the system of glory itself, that he shall be of that glorious order of kings and priests who shall then form the character of the scene, each of them being a pillar in the temple, and each enrolled as of the city High and holy

dignities! Each of the faithful ones filling his place in the temple and the city, a needed member of that royal priesthood then established in their holy government in the heavens, where the New Jerusalem abides and shines. What honour is put on them here! Owned abroad in companionship with the Lord, walking through the rich and wide scene of glory; and also owned within, as bearing, each in himself, a part of the glory, every vessel needed to the full expression of the light of the New Jerusalem, and formed as the vital part of the fulness of Him who is to fill all in all! A king and a priest, each of them occupying his several rank and station in the temple and the city, the Salem of the true Melchisedec. What a place of dignity! Surely love delights to show what it can do, and will do. If we had but hearts to prize these things, chiefly because of their telling us of this love which has thus counselled for us! For what higher, happier thought can we have, even of glory itself, than that it is the manner in which love lets us know what it will do for its elect one. Poor, poor heart that moves so little at these things, while the mind stirs the conception of them!

LAODICEA - "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Here the highest point of glory is reached. This is the bright and sunny elevation up to which this passage through the joys and honours of the kingdom has conducted us. Here the faithful one enters into the joy of his Lord, sharing His throne; not only owned by Him abroad, and established with Him within, walking in white with Him, or fixed as a needed and honoured portion of the great system of royal priesthood, but with Him in the supreme place .

