

Rev. 21:6-8. the Conqueror's Reward, and the Coward's Doom

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming and inheriting eternal life, while warning against the doom of those who are fearful, unbelieving, and abominable.

Scripture: Revelation 21:6

Topics: "Faith vs. Fear", "The Promise of Salvation"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the stark contrast between the rewards for the conquerors and the doom for the cowards as depicted in Revelation 21:6-8. He highlights that those who thirst for the living water offered by Christ will inherit all things and be called sons of God, while the fearful and unbelieving will face eternal separation from God. Bonar urges listeners to recognize the urgency of accepting Christ's grace before it's too late, warning against the cowardice that leads to spiritual death. He calls for repentance and assurance of salvation, reminding that even those who have sinned can be washed clean through Christ. The sermon serves as both a warning and an invitation to embrace faith and courage in the face of worldly fears.

Transcript

"And He said unto me--It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end--I will give unto him who is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He who overcomes shall inherit all things--and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone--which is the second death."--Revelation 21:6-8.

The speaker here is 'He who sat upon the throne.' He is the author of the new creation--'Behold, I make all things new.' He declares the truth and certainty of what has been, and what is to be spoken in this book--'These words are true and faithful.' For His name is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. He calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending--the all-possessing, all-comprehending, all-communicating One--whose fullness is from eternity.

He was the babe of Bethlehem; he is now the risen and glorified Son of God! He spoke on earth the words of grace; He speaks the same from heaven. There is no change in His heart. As it did not require ages to make Him the gracious One, so the lapse of ages and the glory of heaven cannot make Him less gracious

or alter the feelings of pity with which He yearns over a rebellious world--even as He wept over impenitent Jerusalem when He saw her doom approaching.

For these words refer to the crisis of earth's history--'He said unto me, It is done;' just as He said on the cross, 'It is finished.' The fullness of the times has come; the prophetic word has been fulfilled; the seals are opened; the trumpets are blown; the vials are poured out; the battle of the great day of God Almighty has been fought; Babylon has fallen; Satan is about to be bound; creation about to be delivered from the bondage of corruption; the saints to be raised; the great kingdom to begin! It is just at the crisis; just when the consummation is about to take place; just when the last vengeance is about to descend, and the gate to be closed--that the Lord sends out this last and most urgent summons of grace. Come! Enter! In another hour you will be too late! The door will be shut!

I. The fountain for the sons of men. Each word here deserves special notice.

1. The thirsty--These are those who are seeking rest but finding none; going after pleasure, yet obtaining no happiness; hewing out the ever-breaking cisterns; 'spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which does not satisfy.' They are not those thirsting after righteousness, but after pleasure, saying 'Who will show us any good?' They are the weary, worn-out, empty, sorrowful, broken-hearted sons of sin.

2. The water--That which refreshes, satisfies, fills, makes happy. 'This He spoke of the Spirit' (John 7:39). Frequent are the allusions to this water both in the Old Testament and the New. It is called 'living water,' 'water of life'--it is that which quickens and revives, which fills the soul with heavenly gladness. This Jordan is better than Abana and Pharpar--though the world slights and shuns it. All joy is in it. The life of heaven is in it.

3. The Giver--It is He who gave Himself--Jesus the Christ, who not only has all fullness, but gives it. The Son is the gift of the Father, and the Spirit is the gift of the Son. He is the great Giver of all blessing to a poor and empty world. He gives from the Father's throne. He gives according to His love. He gives of the water of life--no, of its fountain--freely. Undeserved and unpurchased He gives! The wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3) are His, and He lets down His bucket and draws for us--not merely the surface water, but its depths--'creating in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.'

Thirsty spirit, take the living water! Drink and be happy. Deal with Jesus about it. Deal with Him alone, and face to face. Deal with Him as One who desires sincerely that you should drink and be refreshed.

II. The conqueror and his reward. The designation 'he who overcomes' carries us back to the seven epistles, in each of which the expression occurs. As believers we are saved; as conquerors we get the recompense. Seven kinds of reward for seven kinds of victory; and here is the eighth! It says, Fight, for the great Captain leads you on. Fight, for the reward is as great as it is sure. The reward here is threefold:

1. The inheritance of all things--We are heirs of God; joint-heirs with Christ. As such the universe becomes our possession; heaven and earth, and the wide regions of farthest space; all that God possesses, all that Christ has become heir to--all is the portion of the conqueror. A kingdom wide as widest space, large as God's possessions, endless as the eternal ages--such is the overcomer's heritage, the conqueror's recompense!

2. The divine portion--'I will be his God'--a repetition of Abraham's blessing (Genesis 17:7). Jehovah is our God! Does not this include everything? If God be not my God, I have nothing. If God be my God, I lack nothing; nor should I be poor though stripped of everything, and though not an atom of the universe were mine (1 Corinthians 3:21, 23).

3. The divine adoption--The conqueror becomes a son, and all that is contained in sonship is his--all the paternal love--all the divine patrimony--all the endless glory. He our Father, we His sons (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18). Noble paternity, blessed sonship! 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God!' (1 John 3:1). This glory, this new and peculiar relation to Godhead, we shall owe entirely to the free love of Him who gave His Son for us!

III. The coward's doom (verse 8)--Though the 'fearful' or coward is specially singled out here, yet there are others associated with him in his awful doom. The 'coward' is the first in the roll; but the whole roll is dark. They are all of earth, sons of Adam, men--not devils. Let us take them as they are set down here.

1. The fearful--This does not mean those who are full of fears--

timid, doubting Christians--those 'who are of a fearful heart' (Isaiah 35:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:14). It means the cowards who refused to come out from the world and join Christ, though their consciences urged them; who shrunk from confessing Christ; who, through fear of men, of the world, of their good name, of earthly honor and gain, either kept their religion to themselves or threw it away. Of this class was the young man in the Gospel and Demas; those who 'drew back,' in Hebrews 10:38--the opposite of the 'overcomers.'

Of this class are those who tell you they keep their religion to themselves, and would not in company name the name of Christ; would blush if caught upon their knees, and apologize if a Bible were seen upon their tables. They are those whom our Lord denounces--'Whoever shall refuse to confess me before men.' Beware of cowardice in the things of God, of being ashamed of Christ!

2. The unbelieving--These are the rejecters of Christ. The fearful do not actually go so far, though virtually they do. The (the fearful) shrink from owning Christ--but the unbeliever refuses Him. It is this disowning of the cross, this rejection of the testimony, this turning the back on Christ, that is here condemned. It is 'the evil heart of unbelief' which is held up to view as fit only for 'the second death'. 'He who believes not shall be damned.' Oh the hatefulness of unbelief! For there is no place but the ever burning alike for it! What must it be to refuse God's testimony to His Son! To refuse that Son Himself!

3. The abominable--Those who were partakers of the abominations and filthiness mentioned before (17:4)--revelings, banquetings, riots, blasphemies. These are open sinners, swearers, lewd talkers, gluttons, drunkards, and the like--fetid, ill-odored, emitting the stench of hell. They do 'the abominable thing' which God hates.

4. Murderers--Whose hands are red with blood; whose heart is full of angry passions, envy, malice, revenge, grudging; whose lips give vent to irritating and angry words; all who either in heart or by hand defy the sixth commandment--'You shall not kill.'

5. Immoral--All who give way to their lusts, who live in uncleanness; those whose eyes are full of adultery, and who cannot cease from this sin. What a warning to our young men and women, who make light of this abomination, and forget the doom of the immoral!

6. Sorcerers--Those who have taken part in Babylon's sorceries and witchcrafts; who consult with the evil one; all spiritists and allies of the evil one, and workers of the lying wonders of the last days.

7. Idolaters--Not only the heathen worshipers of engraved images--but all who have chosen another god--who love the creature more than the creator--who bow before crosses or crucifixes--who worship mammon, pleasure, art, splendor, or gold, for 'covetousness is idolatry.'

8. All liars--All who speak falsely in any way--who practice dishonesty--who care not for truth. Not Cretans only, who were pre-eminently liars, but every false tongue, every dishonest lip--hypocrites, pretenders, formalists; all the untrue and unreal; who vow to serve Christ at His table--but give the lie to their vow every day of their life; who vow at baptism to teach and pray for their children--yet never do; who come to the sanctuary--yet go away and serve the world; who are at the prayer meeting one day--and at the ball the next. These are the liars! How much of lying is there in the life of every man! How little of the real, the open, the sincere, the true!

The doom of all these is sure! They cannot deceive God! He will not be mocked. He will bear long--but not always. Hell is waiting. Its gates are open. Its fires are kindled. Its tormentors are ready. The sentence is coming--'Depart, you cursed ones,' for their judgment lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not.

Yet remember the apostle's words to Corinthian sinners, 'And such were some of you--but you are washed!' O man of earth--come and be washed! Fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable--come! Murderers, immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, liars--come! Come, let us reason together, says the Lord--your scarlet sins shall be as white as snow--your crimson sins as white as wool!

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