

Rev. 22:3,5. the Serving and the Reigning

by Horatius Bonar

The redeemed are servants of God and kings, with an eternity of service and dominion.

Scripture: John 12:26, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 2:12, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 1:12, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 22:3, Revelation 22:5

Topics: "Service to God", "Eternal Reign"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the dual role of the redeemed as both servants and kings, based on Revelation 22:3, 5. He explains that service to God begins at conversion and is a lifelong commitment, while the future reign signifies the ultimate victory and dominion believers will have in eternity. Bonar encourages believers to embrace their identity as servants of Christ, highlighting that true freedom and joy come from serving Him. He contrasts the current state of the Church with the glorious future awaiting the faithful, urging them to remain steadfast in their faith and service. The sermon concludes with a call to live in anticipation of the eternal reign that awaits those who overcome.

Transcript

"His servants shall serve Him." "They shall reign forever."

--Revelation 22:3, 5.

Setting these two passages together, we get these two truths, that the redeemed are servants, and that they are also kings! Their eternity is to be an eternity of service--and an eternity of dominion. For both of these they have been redeemed. It is not mere deliverance from the wrath to come, but glory, honor, dominion, and power that are their portion. The new Jerusalem is to be specially the place of service--and the center of dominion.

I. SERVICE. His servants shall serve Him. They are the servants of God, and the servants of the Lamb. Once servants of self, of the world, of Satan--now servants of God. As Christ was the Father's servant, so do we become servants. Let us ask--

(1.) When this service begins? It begins at conversion. For conversion is (1) a change of service, (2) a change of masters, (3) a change of motive, (4) a change of work.

(2.) How it begins? Christ answers this--'If any man serve me, let him follow me.' It begins by taking His yoke; by taking the cross; by denying self; or, as the apostle expresses it, by 'obeying from the heart that

form of doctrine which was delivered unto us.' Yes, we must be made free that we may serve.

(3.) How it is carried on? By a life of devotedness to God and His Christ; by doing His will, working His work, carrying out His plans, running His errands, looking after His interest. We are, as it were, His domestic servants, His public servants, His agents and instruments--in all things waiting on Him and carrying out His will daily, not our own.

(4.) Where it is carried on? First here on earth, and afterwards in the new Jerusalem before the throne. It is carried on everywhere; in the closet, in the family, at the table, round the hearth, in the market, in the shop, in the field, on the highway--everywhere. We are to be the servants always, less than the servants never; always able to say--Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business? How it is to be carried on hereafter we know not. In the city and out of it; at the throne and away from it; all over space; from star to star; doing every kind of work, and going on every kind of errand--such shall be the service hereafter.

(5.) How long it shall last? Forever. It has beginning, but not an end. It is an eternal service. It is not the service of the hireling, who earnestly desires the end of the day; it is not limited by days and nights; it knows no end. Nor would any one engaged in it wish it to terminate; it is so blessed and so glorious; it wins us so many smiles from the Master; it is rewarded so bountifully; and it is itself so unspeakable joyful!

Who then would not serve? Who would not engage himself to this heavenly Master? All other services are bondage, this is liberty; all others are drudgery, this is blessedness throughout. Who would not serve now? Who would not serve hereafter? The Master now waits to hire you--will you not be hired?

II. The DOMINION. They shall reign forever. This is wholly future. The dominion is not now. The kingdom is not yet set up. We are indeed kings, but the crown and throne are yet in reserve. The name and the title we get just now; the reality we enter on when the Lord returns. Then we shall reign; all things shall be put under our feet as under His.

(1.) Who are these reigners? They are men--not angels. They sing, 'You have redeemed us.' They are from this earth of ours--not natives of heaven.

(2.) Where did they come from? They came out of sin, out of weakness, and persecution, and tribulation. They once were not what they are to be forever. From the lowest pit they came, and from the miry clay.

(3.) How did they become what they are? They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They sought and found the Lord. They obtained mercy. They were forgiven. They believed and became sons of God.

(4.) What raised them to this dignity? Grace! God's free love. It was His love, His sovereign love alone, that made them what they are and shall be. They did not raise themselves, nor obtain it by inheritance, or merit, or purchase. Free love did it all--the free sovereign love of God!

(5.) In what way did they reach the throne? They fought their way to it. For the crown and kingdom are to the overcomers. 'To him who overcomes will I grant to sit with me on my throne.' It was through much toil and warfare that they won the crown.

(6.) How extensive is this dominion to be? He who overcomes shall inherit all things. It is the universe that is to be their dominion. Heaven and earth are theirs. For they are 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

(7.) How long is it to last? Forever! It is an everlasting dominion, a kingdom that shall not be destroyed. The throne, and crown, and glory are all eternal.

How great the contrast between the present and the future! The Church--few, trodden down, afflicted now--then reigning! Now the lowest--then the uppermost! Now like Joseph in the pit--then upon the throne!

What a hope! How quickening, purifying, comforting! Let us keep gazing on it. Let nothing of earth come between, nether sorrow nor joy, life nor death. It may soon be realized. Let us live as men who believe it!

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