

Rev. 22:4. the Vision of God

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon explores the profound joy and honor of seeing God's face in the eternal city of glory, emphasizing the blessings for His servants.

Scripture: 2 Kings 25:19, Esther 1:14, Psalm 41:12, Matthew 17:2, Luke 19:17, Revelation 2:26, Revelation 22:4

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "The Vision of God"

Description

Horatius Bonar preaches on Revelation 22:4, emphasizing the profound joy and honor of seeing God's face in the new Jerusalem, a place devoid of sin, sorrow, and death. He describes the face of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, highlighting that only His servants, who are also His sons and heirs, will experience this divine vision. Bonar explains that seeing God's face signifies nearness, blessedness, honor, and power, and this eternal vision will remain unchangeable and uninterrupted. He encourages believers to live joyfully, work diligently, and find comfort in trials, as the promise of seeing God's face brings hope and strength. The sermon concludes with the anticipation of the imminent return of Christ and the glory that awaits.

Transcript

"They shall see His face."--Revelation 22:4.

It is the new Jerusalem that John is describing--the city of glory; the home of light; the metropolis of the universe; the palace of Jehovah, where is the throne of God and of the Lamb. No sin there; no curse; no night; no death; no tears; no sorrow. There is the tree of life; the river of the water of life; the never-closed gates; the never-fading beauty; the never-setting sun. But of all the happiness and honor that fill that city of glory, this is the sum, and the center, and the overflow--'They shall see His face.' Let us ask--

I. Whose face? It is the face of God; and that face is Jesus, the Word made flesh; the brightness of His glory, and express image of His person--for we know that the light of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. On the transfiguration 'His face did shine as the sun!' (Matthew 17:2). And that face is at once the face of the Son of man and the face of the Son of God; fairer than the children of men; the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. It is the face of majesty, yet the face of love; the face of a king--no, the face of the King of kings! There is no other face like it in earth or heaven--in all the vast universe of God--so bright, so lovely, so perfect, so glorious, so divine.

II. Who shall see it? His servants. 'This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.' 'Blessed are the pure in heart--for they shall see God.' 'Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' They of whom it is written, 'If any man serves me, let him follow me;' and 'where I am, there shall also my servant be;' 'if any man serves me, him will my Father honor.' It is only those who are admitted within the resplendent walls of that holy city, who shall see His face. From all who are shut out, that face is forever hidden. They are called 'servants' here, yet are they sons, kings, joint-heirs with Christ! As He is a servant, so are they; servants, yet sons and friends; and the name of servant is one of honor and dignity.

III. What is it to see His face? This is explained by Psalm 41:12, 'You set me before Your face forever;' and by Esther 1:14, 'The seven princes which saw the king's face, and which sat first in the kingdom;' and by 2 Kings 25:19, 'Five men of them which were in the king's presence,' lit. 'which saw the king's face.' In this, then, there is implied:

(1.) Nearness--These servants form the inner, no the innermost, circle of heaven. They stand nearest to God, 'always beholding the face of their Father in heaven.' There is no nearness like this; even that of angels is distance when compared with it.

(2.) Blessedness--The nearest of the disciples was the most blessed, the disciple whom Jesus loved. The nearest to Him in heaven will be the most blessed. For nearness is blessedness; and seeing Him face to face is the perfection of joy.

(3.) Honor--To see the king's face was the great earthly honor; so is it the greatest heavenly honor. Those who see it nearest and most often are the most honored; they are those whom the King delights to honor--His nobles, His princes, His sons, more--His bride. Theirs is the place of honor.

(4.) Power--Those who see the King's face are His counselors, His vice-regents, the doers of His will. They are invested with His authority, and go forth to exercise His dominion. 'Power over the nations' (Revelation 2:26); 'Dominion over ten cities' (Luke 19:17). This power belongs to the redeemed. Christ's throne is theirs; His crown, His scepter, His kingdom--all these universal--for 'he who overcomes shall inherit all things.'

This seeing of the face of God and His Christ will be:

(1.) Eternal--It cannot end. It is an everlasting vision; and therefore an everlasting nearness, blessedness, honor, and power. No lapse of ages can cloud the vision, or dim the eye that sees it. The vision and the joy are alike forever.

(2.) Unchangeable--No interruption; no eclipse; no cloud; no darkness; no setting; no dimness of eye; no unbelief; no distance! The glory cannot change. No intervention for the world; no faintness on our part; no veil drawn by Satan; no old age or failing faculties; no distraction from other objects; no discomposure from cares or sorrows; no unsteadiness of sight; none for these can diminish the vision. It is as perpetual as it is perfect and divine.

Learn from this hope such lessons as these:

(1.) Live a joyful life--May not a prospect such as this make a man joyful? Should not the very hope of it make his countenance to shine?

(2.) Be strong for toil--Let this hope nerve us for labor, and animate our zeal. Let it rouse us out of sloth, and make us grudge nothing, either of labor or sacrifice. Toil on; fight on; spend and be spent.

(3.) Be comforted under trial--The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. The vision of the face of God will more than make up for all.

And it may be soon! He will not tarry. The Lord is at hand. The new Jerusalem is coming. The glory will soon be revealed. The time is short. A few years, perhaps less, and we shall see His face--and share His glory!

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