

Heavenly Gifts to Victorious Saints

by J.C. Philpot

The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on God's strength alone to overcome sin and the enemies of the Christian life.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1, Jeremiah 15:16, Luke 10:21, Romans 6:14, Hebrews 12:2, 1 John 5:5, Revelation 1:13, Revelation 2:17

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches on the profound messages to the seven churches in Revelation, emphasizing the importance of overcoming spiritual battles through the strength of Christ alone. He delves into the character of 'him who overcomes,' describing the journey from self-righteousness to reliance on the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony. Philpot highlights the promises given to those who overcome: to eat of the hidden manna, receive a white stone symbolizing acquittal and peace, and be given a new name representing a transformed heart and nature.

Transcript

Preached at Eden Street Chapel, London, on August 30, 1846, by J. C. Philpot

"To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it." Rev. 2:17

I do not know a more striking or more deeply important portion of God's Word than that which is contained in the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation. What a solemn vision was John favored with, when the Lord of life and glory appeared unto him in the manner described in the first chapter! "And standing in the middle of the lampstands was the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow (evidencing his eternity). And his eyes were bright like flames of fire (to show how he looks into the heart, and searches the thoughts). His feet were as bright as bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was as bright as the sun in all its brilliance." Rev. 1:13-16

Though John was the beloved disciple, and had even lain in the Lord's bosom while upon earth, yet this glorious vision took such an effect upon him, that he "fell at his feet as dead." This vision was preparatory to the messages which the Lord gave him to the seven churches of Asia Minor. It is worthy of remark, that

in every message there are three things repeated to each church. To all of them the Lord says, "I know your works;" to all of them he declares, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches;" and to all of them a promise is made, though to each of a different nature, "to him who overcomes."

What do we learn from these three features which are thus stamped upon every message to the churches? We learn, first, that the Redeemer looks into all hearts, and searches all thoughts. We learn, secondly, the deep importance of the message he delivers; and yet that none will hear and attend to it, but those to whom the Lord has given an ear to hear. And we learn, thirdly, what sweet promises the Lord gives to him who overcomes in the spiritual conflict.

I shall this evening, with God's blessing, dwell chiefly upon two features which strike my mind as flowing out of the words before us; and shall endeavor to describe, in the first place, the CHARACTER pointed out under the words "him who overcomes;" and in the second place, as the Lord may enable, to enter more fully into the PROMISE which the Lord gives to him who overcomes, containing three distinct blessings-

1. that he shall "eat of the hidden manna;"
2. that the Lord "will give him a white stone;" and
3. "on the stone a new name written, which no man knows but he that receives it."

The Lord's purpose and object in his dealings with the souls of his people is, to glorify himself. The glory of God must ever be the end of all his works; the glory of man therefore must give way. The glory of God and the glory of man can never stand upon the same pedestal. Man therefore must sink, and be reduced to a sense of his real state and character, that the glory of a Three-One God may shine forth brightly and conspicuously.

I. The Lord in the text speaks of THE CHARACTER THAT BEARS THIS DESIGNATION--"he who overcomes." The promise is therefore limited to that character; it is his alone; and in his case alone will the Lord fulfill it to the uttermost.

But who is this character? Where shall we find the man to whom this promise is made--"him who overcomes?" Let us see if we can find such a one. When the Lord is first pleased to begin a work of grace upon the soul, he convinces a man of his lost state by nature. He sets before him eternal life as an object to be obtained--and without which, he convinces him, he must be of all men the most miserable here, and the most miserable hereafter. But in early days, the veil of ignorance remaining much upon the heart, having imbibed many superstitions and ignorant ideas from our very cradles, and not being illuminated by the Spirit's teaching, to know Jesus to be "the way, the truth, and the life," we make many efforts to win the prize by nature's strength, and to reach the goal by creature righteousness.

Now the Lord's purpose is to make us "overcome;" for the promise is only "to him who overcomes." But he purposes to make us "overcome" in His strength alone, and not in our own--and this for the most part we learn very slowly. We set before us the commandments; and we think if we keep them diligently, we shall at last obtain God's favor, and arrive safely in heaven. But as in this obedience we continually fail, yet not knowing the strictness of God's commandments, the spirituality of the law, nor the breadth of the precept, we think the fault must surely be in ourselves--that we have not watched enough, nor kept a sufficient look-out upon the avenues of our heart, nor done what we really might have done.

Not knowing at this time that the inherent depravity of man is such that he never can keep God's law; not knowing that the Lord intends by these means to teach us our weakness, like a person who falls down, we get up again, and try to run the race anew. But to our surprise we find ourselves continually defeated; that we cannot be what we would. We would be righteous--we would be holy; we would not sin--we would watch our eyes, our ears, our hearts; we would not break out on the right hand, we would not break out on the left. The Lord may allow us for a season to go on in these labor-in-vain paths; but after a time there shall be some outbreak; some temptation may take us unawares, which is so sweet and suitable, that we are entangled in a moment, and down goes all our strength; our resolutions for the future are broken in an instant; and we slowly begin to learn how very weak we are against any one temptation.

But again. We are not at first fully alive to the breadth and spirituality of God's law. But as the Lord begins to show us more and more clearly what we are, makes us to feel more and more our helplessness and weakness against temptation, he also unfolds more and more clearly the breadth and spirituality of his law--he shows how it reaches to the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and not only so, but that it is connected with a curse to every soul which is found under it, and that it genders to bondage.

Who would think that this is the way to "overcome"? When a man is continually being overcome; when sometimes his lusts surprise him; sometimes despair overtakes him; sometimes pride breaks forth; sometimes covetousness and carnality manifest themselves; sometimes one evil displays itself, at other times another, and anon a third monster lifts up its hateful head--who would think that this is the man who is to gain the victory, when he is so continually vanquished and so perpetually defeated?

But there is one portion in God's word which shows us wherein the secret of their overcoming lies--"And they overcame"--How? By their own strength? by their own wisdom? by their own righteousness? by their own resolutions? No. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." So that when a poor sinner, feeling deeply and daily that he has nothing but sin and has entirely given up all hopes whatever of being any better, sinks down at the footstool of mercy as a lost, guilty, condemned wretch; if indulged then with a glimpse of "the blood of the Lamb," which speaks pardon and peace to the guilty conscience, and the "word of God's testimony" comes into his heart with divine power, then he "overcomes," not by his own strength, his own wisdom, or his own righteousness, but by the blood of the Lamb being applied to his conscience, and by the word of God's testimony being applied with divine power to his heart. This is the only way to "overcome."

1. But if we are to "overcome," we must have enemies. Among these the things of time and sense will be one. How many of God's family find the world to be continually entangling them, sometimes with its cares and anxieties, sometimes with its vain company and its pleasures, falsely so called, for really there is no pleasure in them. Thus they are drawn aside by a multitude of vain things that only leave sorrow and vexation behind them. How then are they to overcome the WORLD? Only by faith in the blood of the Lamb; as we read, "Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1Jo 5:5 "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." When the Lamb of God is pleased to manifest himself to the conscience of the sinner, and to raise up in his heart living faith whereby he is looked unto and embraced, this faith will give him the victory over the world which he never could obtain by any strength or resolutions of his own.

2. Again, there is a whole army of DOUBTS AND FEARS rising up against God's family; a whole array of apprehensions whether the work of grace is begun upon their heart; a whole host of alarms whether they are anything more than hypocrites. And this company of doubts and fears wars against every testimony

that God has dropped into their soul. How, then, are they to "overcome" this company of doubts and fears? By arguing against them? Satan laughs at their arguments. By trying to persuade themselves they are children of God? Satan is a better logician than they; he can soon pour contempt upon all their attempts to persuade themselves they are interested in atoning blood and dying love. But when "the blood of the Lamb" is applied to their conscience, and the "word of God's testimony" is spoken by God's own lips to their heart, realizing to them, that they are interested in his eternal favor--then they overcome this company of doubts and fears; not by any arguments they bring from nature or reason, but by the sweet unctuous teachings of the Spirit in the court of conscience, and by that blood of sprinkling "which speaks better things than the blood of Abel."

3. SIN, again, is an enemy. How many of the Lord's people are continually under bondage to evil! What power the lusts of the flesh have over some! How perpetually they are entangled with everything sensual and carnal! What power the pride of the heart has over another! and what strength covetousness exercises over a third! What power the love of the world and the things of time and sense exercise over a fourth! How then are they to overcome sin? By making resolutions? by endeavoring to overcome it in their own strength? No; sin will always break through man's strength; it will ever be stronger than any resolution we can make not to be overcome by it.

But when the blood of the Lamb is applied to the sinner's conscience, and the word of God's testimony comes with power into his soul, it gives him the victory over those lusts with which he was before entangled, it brings him out of the world that had so allured him, and breaks to pieces the dominion of sin under which he had been so long laboring. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace" Ro 6:14

"To him who overcomes." A man must be overcome, then, in this battle before he can shout victory; and therefore the Lord allows his people to be so long and often entangled, perplexed, exercised, and distressed, that they may learn this secret, which is hidden from all but God's living family--that the strength of Christ is made perfect in their weakness. Have not some of you had to learn this lesson very painfully? There was a time when you thought you would get better and better, holier and holier; that you would not only not walk in open sin as before, but would not be entangled by temptation, overcome by besetting lusts, or cast down by hidden snares. There was a time when you thought you were going forward, attaining some more strength, some better wisdom than you believed you once possessed. How has it been with you? Have these expectations ever been realized? Have you ever attained these fond hopes? Has sin become weaker? Has the world become less alluring? Have your lusts become tamer? Has your temper become milder? Have the corruptions of your heart become feebler and feebler? No!

If I can read the heart of some poor tried, tempted soul here present, he would say, "No; to my shame and sorrow be it spoken, I find on the contrary that sin is stronger and stronger, that the evils of my heart are more and more powerful than ever I knew them in my life; and as to my own endeavors to overcome them, I find indeed that they are fainter and fainter, and weaker and weaker. This it is," says the soul, "that casts me down. If I could have more strength against sin; if I could stand more boldly against Satan; if I could overcome my besetting lusts; live more to God's glory, and be holier and holier, then, then," says some poor distressed child of God, "I could have some comfort; but to feel myself so continually baffled, so perpetually disconcerted, so incessantly cast down by the workings of my corrupt nature, it is this, it is this that cuts so keenly; it is this, it is this that tries me so deeply."

My friend, you are on the high road to victory. This is the very way by which you are to overcome.

If you, on the other hand, were sailing upon this tack--getting better and better, sin weaker and weaker, and your heart holier and holier, by and by you would look forward to a complete victory. But depend upon it, you would be then sailing upon the wrong tack altogether. But, on the other hand, when you feel weaker and weaker, poorer and poorer, guiltier and guiltier, viler and viler, so that really through painful experience you are compelled to call yourself, not in the language of mock humility, but in the language of self-abhorrence, the chief of sinners, then you are on the high road to victory. Thus when the Lord is pleased to bring a sense of his atoning blood with power into his conscience, and to speak a word with his own lips to the poor child of God, then he overcomes, not by his own strength, his own wisdom, or his own righteousness, but by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony, revealed to his heart by the power of God himself. Be certain, if we overcome in any way but this, we do not overcome so as to gain a real and spiritual victory.

II. Now to such the Lord gives three distinct SPECIAL PROMISES. "To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no man knows but he that receives it."

1. The first promise is, "I will give to him to eat of the hidden manna." What is this hidden manna? Is it not God's word applied with power to the heart? What says Jeremiah? "Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" Jer 15:16 When the Lord is pleased to drop a word into the heart from his own lips; to apply some promise; to open up some precious portion of his word; to whisper softly some blessed Scripture into the heart--is not this manna? Whence did the manna flow? Was it cultivated by the hand of man? Was it gathered, as infidels tell us, from the ash trees that grew in the wilderness? No; it fell from heaven. And is not this true of the word of the Lord applied with power to the heart? It is not our searching the Scriptures, though it is good to search the Scriptures; it is not our comparing passage with passage; but it is the Lord himself being pleased to apply some precious portion of truth to our hearts; and when this takes place, it is "manna;" it is sweet, refreshing, strengthening, comforting, encouraging--yes, it is angels' food; the very flesh and blood of the Lamb with which the Lord is pleased from time to time to feed and favor hungry souls.

But, in the text it is called "hidden." Why "hidden"? Because hidden from the eyes of the wise and prudent, as the Lord says, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight." Lu 10:21 Hidden from the eyes of self-righteous pharisees; hidden from those that fight in their own strength, and seek to gain the victory by their own brawny arm; hidden from all but God's tried and tempted family; hidden from all but those who know the plague of their own hearts; hidden from all but those who have learned the secret of overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his testimony.

Say, that you have been entangled in some snare; say, you have been cast down by some of Satan's temptations; was there not some hidden manna for you? Did not the Lord apply some portion of his word to your heart with sweetness? There was conviction indeed, cutting conviction; there was guilt, deep, black guilt; there was shame, for you were covered with it; there was confusion, for your heart could say, "I am full of confusion." But was there not some sweet promise? Was there not a portion of Scripture opened up with divine power to your soul? Was there not some testimony of the Spirit of God to your spirit that you were one of his people? Was there no word, like hidden manna, dropped with power and sweetness into your heart?

There was no manna, and never will be, while guilt remains upon the conscience, while sin has dominion, while we are entangled in and cast down by Satan's snares, while we are overcome with the lusts of the flesh, while pride and covetousness and every evil bear the sway.

But when the Lord leads us into this path--to sink down into weakness, and in weakness to find his strength made perfect; to fall down all guilt, and then to feel the application of atoning blood; to tremble under the weight of doubts and fears, and then to have the precious word of his testimony dropped into the heart--this is manna. The children of Israel had to endure hunger in the wilderness before manna fell; and thus the Lord's people learn the value of the hidden manna, the sweet communications from above, by hungering and thirsting in a waste howling wilderness.

But there is something more implied by the word "manna" than this. The Lord Jesus Christ himself tells us that he is "the true bread that came from heaven;" and that the manna represented his flesh which he gave for the life of the (elect) world. Now, when we are in bondage to sin, when our lusts and passions get the victory over us, when guilt lies hard and heavy upon the conscience, when little is experienced but darkness and confusion--then there is no feeding upon the flesh of Jesus, no tasting how sweet and precious he is, no embracing him in the arms of faith, no enjoying glimpses and glances of his surpassing beauty.

But, on the other hand, when the Lord is pleased to give power to the soul to overcome by "the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony," then his flesh and blood become sweet to him who thus overcomes. When do I value a discovery to my heart of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ? When I am strong? When I am wise? When I am holy? When I am righteous? These things set me far from Jesus. But when I am bowed down with guilt, cut up by temptations, tried and exercised with a whole company of doubts and fears--then if the Lord be pleased to draw me to his footstool; then if he opens up what he has done and suffered upon the cross; then if he raises up faith in my soul to look to him, believe in his name, and receive him as the crucified Son of God--then there is a feeding upon the manna; his flesh becomes food indeed, and his blood becomes drink indeed. But this is hidden from all eyes except those that are anointed by the Spirit to see it, and hidden from all hearts except those that are prepared to receive and feed upon it.

2. The next promise is, "And I will give him a white stone." In ancient times, they used to decide cases by white and black stones. The judges (for they were rather judges than jury) did not give their verdict upon the prisoner by oral testimony, "Guilty," or "Not Guilty," as in our country, but by dropping into a urn a white stone to express their opinion that the prisoner was innocent, or a black stone to declare their judgment that the prisoner was guilty. The Lord has made use of this figure. He says, "To him who overcomes I will give a white stone;" that is--I will give into his conscience a sentence of acquittal. As the white stone was dropped into the urn, so peace and pardon are dropped into the sinner's bosom; and just as the judge, when he deposited the white stone in the urn, declared thereby the prisoner's innocence; so when the Lord is pleased to speak peace to the soul, he drops into the heart a white stone, to proclaim him discharged from the law's accusations, and interested in his love and blood.

But how is this figure applicable? Why, he that overcomes treads the same path whereby the poor guilty criminal came to receive the white stone. The promise is made to him who overcomes. Should not we think that this is setting a TASK before him which he is to perform? that he has to fast, to pray, to attend sacraments, to offer up so many prayers, and thus by degrees overcome sin and gain the prize? Would not that be fallen human nature's interpretation? But it is not grace's interpretation. This is grace's blessed

interpretation, consistent with the experience of the saints and with divine teaching in their souls--that he overcomes by being overcome, for this opens a way for the Lord to bring a sense of his blood into the conscience, and speak a word of testimony to his heart. Then he receives "a white stone," deposited by the Lord himself in his bosom, whereby he declares that all his sins are forgiven--peace is sealed upon his conscience, and he goes free, walking in that liberty which the gospel proclaims to those that are in the prison-house.

But we may say, that every testimony from the Lord is "a white stone." Every token that the Lord ever bestowed upon you that you are a child of his, every promise that has ever come into your heart, every answer to prayer that you have ever received from his lips, every deliverance that you have ever experienced from his hand, is "a white stone."

Every application of truth with divine savor and unction to your soul, every reviving or refreshing season, every sweet manifestation, every breaking down or softening of heart, every melting of spirit at the Redeemer's footstool, is "a white stone." Every time that you felt Jesus precious to your heart--every time that you washed his feet with your tears, and wiped them with the hairs of your head--every time that you embraced him in the arms of faith and affection, and could say, "Dear Lord, how precious you are to my soul!"--was "a white stone." The Lord has given you "a white stone" with every visit of his gracious presence, with every communication of his eternal and never-ceasing love. And what a mercy it is for the child of God to have even one white stone!

Suppose to revert to the custom from which the figure is borrowed, there was any doubt as to whether a prisoner had been acquitted, could he not point to the white stones that were in the urn? And if he could produce them in his hand, and say to the judges, "Here are the white stones that you have put into the urn; you yourselves have acquitted me;" would not the production of them declare him vindicated from the charges brought against him? And what a mercy it is for a child of God to have a white stone that he can present before a throne of mercy! to have some testimony, some token for good, some promise brought into his heart with power, some sweet visit from the Lord! to have realized his presence, to have had faith in his blood, to have known his love! so that when doubts and fears, difficulties and perplexities beset him, he can, as the Lord the Spirit enables, look back to those times when "a white stone" was given as a proof on the Lord's part of his soul's entire acquittal from law charges, and a sure testimony that his name is in the book of life.

And how many doubts and fears, dark seasons, distressing moments, what sharp convictions, heavy burdens, hard bondage the soul must labor under from the lack of "a white stone!" To be accused, accused, accused, and not to find one "white stone!"--does not this try you sometimes? Perhaps some illness seizes you; or you feel some symptoms of disease; you are afraid that fever or cholera will lay hold of you, or that you are going into a decline, and your tabernacle is about to be taken down. You have been a professor some years; but doubts and fears now arise in your mind, convictions of guilt seize you, and you begin to quake and tremble--to fear that you never had pardon proclaimed or peace manifested, never had a visit from the Lord, never had an answer to prayer, never had a manifestation of God's presence, never felt his dying love, never had his word applied with power to your heart. If you have a tender conscience, made alive in God's fear, it must bring bondage and distress into your soul to have all these doubts and fears working in your mind, and not have one "white stone" to produce, not one testimony, not one clear evidence that the Lord has visited your soul, and begotten you unto eternal life. But does that prove you are not a quickened soul? No, no--it is a proof that you are a quickened soul. If you were a 'rotten professor', you would not desire "a white stone;" but it is because you are a poor guilty, trembling

sinner that you feel you need "a white stone."

Suppose we were in some ancient court, where cases were decided by these black and white stones dropped into the urn. Would the bystanders want them? No; only one would want them--the guilty criminal trembling at the bar. He would anxiously watch the hands of the judges, to see whether they dropped the white or the black stones into the urn. So you, who doubt and fear, who are distressed in your minds, cut up in your feelings, and harassed by convictions--all for the lack of a sweet manifestation, all for the lack of a clear testimony, all for the lack of pardon and peace being sealed upon your heart; these very exercises, these very trials of mind, all prove that you have the life of God in your soul--for having the life of God, you are anxious after manifestations from the Lord; and nothing else can satisfy you. Now you are upon the high road to victory. Your doubts and fears, your cutting convictions, your sharp exercises, your numerous temptations, your many perplexities--what is their effect? To beat you down, to defeat, to overcome you, to prove stronger than all your attempts to master them.

But these things are to bring you to the foot of the cross. They are to cut up 'creature righteousness' root and branch; they are to strip you of every rag of fleshly holiness, and bring you to that safe spot where you will one day "overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony"--the blood of the Lamb applied to your conscience, and the word of God's testimony spoken with sweet delivering power to your heart.

But only the Lord's family want these white stones. They want the Lord to give something to them, and to do something in them--to speak something to them and in them. It is not what this man may say, or the other man may say, that satisfies a conscience made tender in God's fear. It is what the Lord does in, and speaks to him. This, and this alone, can satisfy one that has the life of God ebbing and flowing in his heart.

3. "And on the stone a new name written, which no man knows but he who receives it." Here is another custom alluded to. In ancient times it was customary to write upon a stone the name of the candidate for whom they intended to vote. If there were two, three, four, or ten candidates for an office, when a person would express his opinion that such a candidate should be chosen; in other words, when he would give a vote for a particular candidate, he wrote the name of the candidate upon a stone, and put that stone into a urn; and he whose name appeared most frequent was considered chosen by the majority of the people. The Lord alludes to this in the text, where he says, "On the stone a new name written, which no man knows but he that receives it."

What is this new name? Is it not a new heart, a new nature--Christ in the soul the hope of glory? This is the "new name which no man knows but he that receives it." New affections flowing towards the precious Lord, new breathings of a heart made tender in his fear, new enjoyments of his manifested presence, new sensations from the work of the Spirit upon the soul; in other words, a new heart, a new nature, made new by him who sits upon the throne. When the Lord's people are exercised with doubts and fears, and cast down by many temptations, what are their two greatest trials? The workings of the old man of sin, and the few communications that they have of power from the Lord. Does not this sometimes trouble your mind? There is a sad darkness in your soul. You go to a throne of grace; you plead with the Lord; you ask him to give you a word. But there is no answer, no manifestation, no sweet whisper, no discovery of Jesus to your soul. You go away worse than you came. Or, you are tempted with some sin; some snare is spread for your feet; some besetment holds you fast--you are cut up with guilt, and distressed in your mind. "O wretched man that I am!" is your constant cry. But you cannot break the snare, cannot deliver your own soul, cannot overcome the besetment that works so powerfully in your carnal mind. Under these feelings

you have no communication from God, no sweet testimony, no answer to prayer, no divine light nor liberty, nothing to strengthen, nothing to comfort, nothing to encourage your soul; darkness, guilt, bondage, lay hold of you, and press you down into the deep and dark dungeon.

Now, at this time there is no new name. When you pray, it is with sighs and groans; if you read, you can find nothing but what condemns you; if you hear, your conscience fastens upon everything that describes hypocrites in a profession, but can take nothing that seems to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. At this time there is the old man of sin, an accusing guilty conscience, a troubled mind, a tempting devil, but alas! no "white stone," no "new name."

But after a time, when the Lord brings you a weeping sinner to the cross, a poor guilty criminal to his feet, and then begins to open up in your soul salvation through the blood of the Lamb, and to apply the word of his testimony with power in your heart, then no sooner is the "white stone" given, than the "new name" is given with it, "which no man knows except he that receives it." There are new sensations, new feelings, new affections, new thoughts, new desires, and everything is made new in a man's soul.

But "no man knows this, except he that receives it." New thoughts of Jesus; new openings up of Scripture, new meltings of heart, new softenings of spirit, everything made new by Him who renews us "in the renewing of our mind"--no man knows these things except he who receives them. It is all between the Lord and the soul--it is all between a pardoning God and a pardoned sinner; it is all mercy, all grace, all love, from first to last. Grace began, grace carries on, and grace finishes it; grace must have all the glory, and grace must crown the work with eternal victory.

But what says the Lord in the context? "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Have you an ear? Do you hear these things? I do not mean with the outward ear; we all have that. But do you hear with the ear of the heart? with the ears of a conscience that falls under the power of truth? with an ear that receives God's truth into it, "mixed with faith in those who hear it"?--sometimes trembling, sometimes hoping, sometimes sinking, sometimes rising. You cannot put away these things, and say, 'It is all lies.' There is that inward voice, that living witness in your conscience that knows it is the solemn truth of God. You have ears to hear. The Lord has unstopped the deaf ears; he has given you a conscience to feel, and has raised up faith in your heart, which mixes with the word which comes from his own mouth to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, to hear what the Spirit says to those who fear his name, to hear the promises that drop from his gracious lips--these have ears to hear.

The Lord fulfill these things in your experience. Did you ever eat of the hidden manna? Was Christ ever precious to your soul? Have you ever had "a white stone" given you that you could look upon, and believe the Lord had dropped a testimony into your heart? With that "white stone" was there given you "a new name," a new heart, a new nature, new affections, new feelings, new desires; in a word, all things new? 'Yes,' says one, 'I have through mercy experienced all this.' Well, to whom is the promise made? "To him who overcomes."

Are you that character? And if you are, how did you overcome? Was it according to the Scripture description, by "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony"? There is no other way. It is not because you have embraced certain tenets, or are a sound Calvinist, or 'approve of these things' when you hear them with the ear. A man may do all that, and yet know nothing feelingly of the work of grace upon the conscience. But this is the question, whether you have overcome, or are in the way to overcome? If you have never overcome, nor are striving to do so, all your knowledge of these things is but

in the brain; it is not vital, it is not spiritual, it is not experimentally wrought in your heart by the power of God.

But perhaps there are some here whose conscience bears a secret testimony--"I know I have never eaten of the hidden manna, never had a white stone, never had a new name." Well, where are you? "O," say they, "if I could tell you my heart, I would say, it was full of doubts and fears whether I ever should get to heaven; I would tell you, it was full of carnality, wickedness, and sin; overcome by Satan, easily mastered by temptation, weak and worthless, poor and needy, filthy and polluted--such is a faint description of my heart!"

But what is the effect of all these feelings that are passing in the chambers within? Are they emptying you of creature strength? Are they stripping you of creature righteousness? In a word, are they bringing you to the footstool of mercy, to the cross of Jesus, to the throne of grace, as a poor guilty sinner, that there you may receive the sweet communications of his love and blood to your soul?

Mercy is in store for you. The Lord is leading you to overcome. You are learning a great lesson by doubts and fears. You are getting very salutary instructions by knowing the corruptions of your heart, and the snares of the flesh, the world, and the devil. Your guilty conscience, often plunged in seas of guilt, is thus being prepared for the sweet reception of the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel. The voice of conscience in your bosom, continually crying, 'Guilty, guilty!' is but the prelude and harbinger of another voice that will one day speak to your inward heart, and be as marrow and oil to your bones--"Son, or daughter, your sins are forgiven; go in peace." Then you will know something of the "hidden manna," of the "white stone," and of the "new name" written in the white stone, "which no man knows except he that receives it."

These are solemn realities. This is a religion which no man can get for himself, and which no man can communicate to another. This is a religion wholly dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit--and no other religion is worth a straw. All other teachings but God's teachings will leave our souls needy, naked, and undone. All other coverings but the covering of God's Spirit will leave the soul under the wrath of an avenging Jehovah. All other knowledge, except spiritual experimental knowledge, wrought in our heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, will leave us in the hands of Him who "is a consuming fire." I would not drop a word to cast down any of God's poor family, to disquiet the troubled, to burden the sinking, to add weights to those whose feet are in the stocks, or stumbling in the mire. But I would not hold out any encouragement to those who think to gain the victory by their own strength, wisdom, or righteousness. I know that such are not under the teachings of the Spirit, such are not in the high road to victory.

But you that are really the people of God, you that doubt and fear, you that are exercised in your souls, and that sharply and strongly--grace and truth are yours. These trials and temptations are to empty you, strip you, and lay you low. They are meant to bring you to the footstool of mercy, there to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his testimony; there to have hidden manna dropped into your heart; there to have a white stone lodged in your conscience; there to experience the sweetness and blessedness of the new name, "which no man knows except he who receives it."

Do you approve of this religion? Are you sure in your souls it will stand the trying hour? And is this the feeling of your heart?--"Lord, let me have your grace, mercy, and truth experienced in my soul!" Depend upon it, those whom the Lord thus leads, he will enable to overcome in his strength; and He who has given the promise will fulfill it in their hearts and consciences, to his own glory and their unspeakable joy.

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