

Rev. 2:8-17. the Divine Food of Our Heavenly Life

by Horatius Bonar

The hidden manna is Christ Himself, the glorified Immanuel, who will supply eternal nourishment to the multitude of believers.

Topics: "Overcoming Faith", "Divine Sustenance"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the significance of the 'hidden manna' promised to those who overcome, as mentioned in Revelation 2:8-17. He discusses the Church in Pergamos, which, despite its flaws, is encouraged with the promise of divine sustenance and rewards for perseverance in faith. The hidden manna symbolizes Christ Himself, representing the eternal nourishment and glory awaiting believers, contrasting with the temporary sustenance of the wilderness. Bonar highlights that true faith involves struggle and conflict, and the hidden manna serves as a reminder of the spiritual food that sustains the redeemed in their journey towards eternal life. Ultimately, this hidden manna is a promise of Christ's glorified presence, offering everlasting nourishment to the faithful.

Transcript

"To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna." --Revelation 2:8-17.

The angel of the Church in Pergamos is both commended and reprov'd. Not a little of evil, of laxity, of unsound doctrine, was found in that Church; yet not a little of steadfastness and martyr-boldness for Christ. She is rebuked, she is warned, she is encouraged; and she gets a glorious promise--of the hidden manna, of the white stone, and of the new name. It is to the first of these that we would now look--the manna 'hidden,' or 'treasured up'--as the reward of the conqueror; for these seven rewards are specially to 'him who overcomes.' As believers, we get eternal life; as warriors and conquerors, we get special rewards--the rewards of victory from our mighty Captain. For true religion is not a thing of ease, and luxury, and comfort; but of conflict, and effort, and wrestling. He who knows it only as the former, and not as the latter, ought to conclude that he does not know it at all. It is not for parade, or show, or a name, that Christ enlists His soldiers, but for stern battle, for hard toil, for wounds and pain, and continual facing of the enemy.

I. The MANNA. The manna was wilderness-food--in connection with tent-life, water from the rock, and the journeyings of pilgrimage. Israel had not known it previously--they asked what it was. It was connected

with the desert, but it did not grow there. It came down from heaven; it was 'angels' food;' the 'bread of the mighty.' It sustained Israel, but did not make them immortal; it was simply food for the body given them daily by God--until they reached Canaan. Let us keep these things in mind, for the manna of which our text speaks is in several aspects a contrast to all these.

II. The HIDDEN manna. The word 'hidden' does not so much refer to a thing secreted or concealed, as to a thing carefully treasured up and preserved, like a precious gem--as when it is said, 'Your life is hidden with Christ in God.'

This hidden manna is evidently Christ Himself, or something directly coming from Him, and connected with Him. Christ, as the heavenly food of our glorified being, may be said to be the hidden manna--just as He is the tree of life, and the morning star. Christ, as risen and glorified--Christ in certain peculiar aspects and relations connected with the future glory--is the hidden manna. Not simply Christ--for even here we feed on Him as the bread of life; we eat His flesh, and drink His blood; our daily hunger is satisfied with Him--but Christ, as connected with the holy of holies--the immediate presence and bosom of the Father.

The word 'hidden' refers to the golden pot of manna which was preserved in the ark, under the mercy-seat, along with Aaron's rod and the tables of the covenant. The manna was taken from off the sands of the desert, put into an urn, and placed, for all ages, in the holy of holies, in remembrance of the desert food, and as a type of something better yet to be revealed.

This 'hidden manna' was both like and unlike the manna of the wilderness--it was connected with it, yet also separate. It was of heaven originally (John 6:31); it came down to earth; it was taken into the holiest of all, the emblem of the heaven of heavens; and thus was both of earth and heaven. It was of the wilderness, yet not in it. It was originally corruptible, yet made incorruptible; once a daily gift, spread over all the sand of the desert, now gathered into one small vessel, and laid up there once for all. It was in the ark, covered with the blood, beneath the cherubim and the glory; food that could only be reached through blood, and could only be for those whom blood had redeemed. Man had eaten 'angels food'--but now this had become the food of men--not only of men here, in weakness and wandering--but of the glorified in the New Jerusalem.

This hidden manna is (in conjunction with the tree of life) the special food of the redeemed; the nourishment of the new and glorified life, both of body and soul. It is set down on the great banquet table, in the high banquet hall. As in the upper-room in Jerusalem Jesus said, 'Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you,' so in like manner will He take the hidden manna, and present it to His own as their special food; and if the 'Take, eat,' from His lips below be so loving and precious, what will it be in the Jerusalem above--'Take, eat, this is my glorified self!' And if that which symbolizes His death be so sweet and nourishing, what will that be which symbolizes His endless life! Then we shall fully know what the apostle meant when he said, 'We are saved by His life' (Romans 5:10). The bread of the Lord's Supper speaks of death, speaks of death--the hidden manna of life only. The one speaks of shame and humiliation--the other of glory and immortality.

This hidden manna is food for the kingdom--the kingdom of the risen and the glorified. It is Christ's resurrection-life, for those who are partakers of His resurrection. It is the food of the royal priesthood--the food of the conquerors--food that reminds them of their desert weariness, and hunger, and warfare, yet food which assures them that they shall hunger no more, but shall feed on that which is immortal, incorruptible, and divine.

It is food for eternity--everlasting nourishment. And all out of the one golden pot, the one Christ--the glorified Immanuel. That one golden pot is like the widow's cruse and barrel--it fails not. It will suffice for that multitude which no man can number, and it will suffice forever! Like the one tree of life, so this one pot of manna will supply millions eternally. Out of it we shall feed--out of Christ's glorified fullness we shall be nourished. Our life is hidden with Him in God; for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. 'The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them'--and feed them on Himself.

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