

Manna for the Christian

"What is it?"

Israel in the wilderness of Sinai what a striking picture! Egypt behind them. Canaan before them, and the sand of the desert around them. The wilderness afforded not one blade of grass for the Israel of God. Manna: The "bread from heaven" alone was their portion. "Manna" literally means, "what is it?" What was "manna"? How essential was it?

Israel in the wilderness was a graphic illustration of Christians in this wilderness world. They have nothing here. Their life being heavenly can only be sustained by spiritual things. Though "in the world, they are not of it" for Christ has chosen them out of it. Christ can only sustain the new life in the believer. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Christ is the "bread from heaven "

The manna was so pure and delicate that it could not remain for long in contact with the earth. Manna fell with the dew (Numbers 11:9) and had to be gathered before the sun was up. Each Israelite, therefore, had to rise early and seek his daily portion. So it is with the people of God now. The heavenly manna many be gathered fresh every morning. We must feed upon Christ our primary object. We must seek him "early" before other things have had time to take possession of our hearts. Many of us fail in this sorting out of priorities. We give Christ a secondary place, and the consequence is we are left feeble and barren.

Another lesson: With the exception of the Sabbath, the manna would corrupt if an Israelite gathered more than his daily portion. Manna could not be hoarded up for the days ahead. There is a danger of the Christian's intellect outstripping his heart. Paul tells us that "knowledge puffeth up but love buildeth up." We should always remember that Christianity is more than a system of doctrines. Christian theory must become a living reality—a personal, practical, powerful force, revealing itself in all the circumstances of life shedding its influence over the entire character and imparting its love to every relationship which one may be called of God to fill.

From Numbers 11 we learn that Israel grew tired of the manna and longed for the "fleshpots of Egypt." But they seemed to have forgotten the lash of the taskmaster and the toil of the brick kilns.

Unfortunately, this longing for the world can happen to the Christian. When "first love" declines when Christ ceases to be our satisfying portion when the Word of God and prayer lose their thrill and become heavy, dull and mechanical then the eye wanders back to the world and the heart follows the eye. We forget, at such moments, what the world was to us when we were in it and of it. We forget what toil and slavery, what misery and degradation we found in the service of sin and Satan and think only of the gratification and ease, the freedom from those exercises, conflicts and anxieties which attend the wilderness path of God's people.

Some allow the world to determine for them what they will do and what they will be. They conform to the influences about them—they can rise no higher because they have looked no higher. All too often this is the only goal parents want for their children—just a good job and financial well-being. In this pursuit countless people are trampling upon others while they try to claw their way to a "mythical" financial top. How much of the human spirit is being trounced and how many are left wounded and discouraged from the modern oppression of human competition! Are you committed to never-ending toil, to uncomforted mourning, to a meaningless succession of nights and days consumed with just eating, drinking and breathing? Is this what you are seeking?

What Seek Ye?

Jesus once asked one of the most searching of questions: "What seek ye?" (John 1:38) Is it pleasure you are seeking, the desire to be entertained, to have others take care of your mind, to let them fill it with what they want—only to sense inwardly you are shriveling in mind and heart? Most people would not like to think this is true of themselves, but their actions demonstrate this is indeed what they are seeking. But "What seek ye?"

For those seeking faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love, the place to find it is in God and Christ Jesus His Son (II Peter 1:5-11). Here is where our search will begin and end. If we seek these things of God, we must do so with a fixed purpose and determination. The world is not going to assist us here. We must feed on things of the Spirit of God. Like the Israelites who gathered manna (Exodus 16) every day to sustain them, so we must seek to feed upon the Word of the Lord.

Heroes of Faith

Daily, consistent devotion to God has characterized the outstanding men and women of the Bible. Out of their devotion a rich life of faith resulted and out of their faith, the result was evident in their actions. Hebrews 11 presents the record of their faith.

—ABEL offered a sacrifice "which pleased God." (Hebrews 11:4)

—ENOCH had such great faith he could be said to "walk with God."
(Genesis 5:22; Hebrews 11:5)

—"By faith ABRAHAM obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was to go." Abraham believed God, which is considerably different than believing in God. He believed not only for himself, but his faith grew to the point where he was willing to offer his own son in sacrifice at God's request. God acknowledged his faith saying, "For now I know that you fear [reverence] God." (Genesis 22:12)

—"MOSES" refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for

the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward." Hebrews 11:26

The list could go on telling of the devotion of these heroes of faith Both their great and small acts of faith were embedded in a daily walk with God, a daily fellowship with their God.

The Christian must daily gather his "manna." Morning devotions are a must for every Christian. To help you gather the "bread from heaven" early each morning, we recommend the daily devotional entitled, Daily Heavenly Manna. Of the numerous daily devotionals available, many Christians have found this companion to be the most complete and balanced diet for morning meditation.

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