

The Manna and the Hidden Manna

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day,



that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” Exodus 16:4.

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The Manna

Exodus 16

The food which God has provided for His people is His own blessed Word. But “the word” is used both of the Scriptures and of the Lord Jesus Christ. The two are most intimately related. “In the volume of the book,” said Christ, “it is written of me” (Psa. 40:7), and again, “Search the scriptures...they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Almost everything that can be postulated of the one can be predicated of the other. But the chief value of the written Word is to set forth the perfections and bring us into communion with the incarnate Word. It is only as we feed upon *Christ* Himself that we truly feed upon the written Word. Therefore, in this article, we shall confine our attention to the manna typifying the person and perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beneath many a figure and behind innumerable shadows and symbols, the anointed eye may discern the glories of our blessed Lord. It should be our chief delight, as we read the Old Testament Scriptures prayerfully, to search for that which foreshadows Him of whom, “Moses and the prophets did write” (John 1:45). All doubt is removed as to whether or not the manna pointed to the incarnate Son by His own words in John 6:32-33. There we find the Saviour saying, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven...For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” May the Spirit of God now condescend to open our sin-blinded eyes as we earnestly desire to behold “wondrous things” (Psa. 119:18) out of His perfect Law.

1. *The glory of the Lord was seen with the giving of the manna.* “And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, *the glory* of the LORD appeared in the

cloud” (Exod. 16:10). This is very striking indeed. It is the *first time* we read of the appearing of “the glory of the LORD,” not only in connection with Israel, but in Scripture. Marvellously accurate is this detail of our type. Not until the Son of God became incarnate was “the glory of the LORD” fully revealed. But when the eternal Word became flesh and tabernacled among men, then, as the beloved apostle declares, “We beheld his *glory, the glory* as of the only-begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). The “glory of God” is seen “*in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:6).

2. *The manna came down from heaven.* “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you” (Exod. 16:4). The manna was not a product of this earth. It grew neither in the wilderness nor in Egypt. It was neither produced by human efforts nor manufactured by human skill. It descended from God. It was a gift from heaven come down to earth. So our Lord Jesus was no native product of this earth. As we read in Ephesians 4:10, “He that *descended* is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens.” The first man (Adam) was of the earth, earthly; but the second Man (Jesus Christ) was “the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:48).

3. *The manna was a free gift from God.* “And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat” (Exod. 16:15). No charge was made for this manna. It was neither a wage to be earned nor a prize to be won, but was a token of God’s grace and love. No payment was demanded for it. It was without money and without price. “For God so loved the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Let us join with the apostle in saying, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

4. *The manna came right down where the Israelites were.* The Israelites were in immediate danger of starving to death, but as we have seen, God graciously made provision to supply their need, and now we would notice that no long journey had to be

taken in order to secure that which would satisfy their hunger—the manna fell all around the camp. “And in the morning the dew lay *round about the host*. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing” (Exod. 16:13-14). Here we have foreshadowed the blessed fact that, to the sinner conscious of his need and anxious to meet the Saviour, God says, “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? [that is to bring Christ down from above]; or, Who shall descend into the deep? [that is to bring Christ again from the dead]. But what saith it? *The word is nigh thee*” (Rom. 10:6-8). And out of this very nearness springs the sinner’s responsibility. All around each tent lay the manna. Something had to be done with it. It must either be gathered or trodden underfoot! Sinner, what are you doing with the Christ of God? Remember His searching words, “He that is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30).

5. *The manna must be gathered by each individual.* “This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it *every man* according to his eating” (Exod. 16:16). It is so spiritually. Receiving Christ (John 1:12) is a personal matter. No one can believe for another. There is no salvation by proxy. The Gospel of Christ is, “The power of God unto salvation to *every one that believeth*” (Rom. 1:16), and “He that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Saving faith is that act whereby each awakened sinner appropriates Christ unto himself. It is true that Christ loved the Church as a whole, and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25), but it is also the happy privilege of each member of that Church to say with the apostle Paul, “Who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*” (Gal. 2:20). Have you, dear reader, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?

6. *The manna met a daily need.* “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate *every day*” (Exod. 16:4). The manna which they gathered today would not suffice for tomorrow. They needed to obtain a fresh supply each day. It is

just here that so many of the Lord's people fail. We, too, need to feed upon Christ "every day." Just as in the physical realm, the food which I ate yesterday will not nourish me today, so my past experiences and attainments will not meet the exigencies of the present. Christ must be kept constantly before the heart. "Give us day by day our *daily bread*" should be the prayer of every child of God.

7. *The manna was despised by those who were not the Lord's people.* "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing left at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Num. 11:4-6). How these words remind us of the language of Isaiah 53:2—"And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men." The sin-blinded eyes of the natural man are incapable of perceiving the attractiveness of the Lord Jesus, His wondrous perfections, he is unable to discern. So, too, he sees not his deep need and how Christ alone is able to meet that need. Hence, he neither comes to Christ nor desires Him.

8. *The manna fell upon the dew, not upon the dust of the ground.* "And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it" (Num. 11:9). Everything in the Scriptures has a spiritual meaning and application. What, then, is the significance of the above? Genesis 3:19 throws light on this passage—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." These words were spoken to fallen man and called attention to the corruption which sin had worked in him. "Dust," here and onwards, speaks of *fallen humanity*! Now the manna *fell* not upon "the dust" but upon the dew. How clearly this foreshadowed the uniqueness and incorruptibility of our Lord's humanity! The Word became flesh, but in His humanity the Lord Jesus shared not our corrupt nature. He took upon Him the form of a servant,

but the body which was prepared for Him (Heb. 10:5) belonged not to the “dust” of this earth. Before He was born, the angel announced unto His mother “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

9. *The manna was white in colour.* We read in Exodus 16:31, “And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, *white*.” This speaks of the spotless purity of our Lord as manifested outwardly in His daily walk. He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). “He was without sin” (Heb. 4:15). “He did no sin” (1 Pet. 2:22). He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from sinners*” (Heb. 7:26). In 1 Peter 1:19, we are told that He was a lamb “without blemish and without spot,” the former expression referring to the absence of outward pollution, the latter to the absence of inward defect. In His walk through this scene of corruption, He contracted no defilement. He only could touch the leper without becoming contaminated. He was without “spot,” pure white.

10. *The manna was sweet to the taste.* “And the taste of it was like wafers of honey” (verse 31). We need to go to the Song of Solomon for the interpretation of this. There we read, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was *sweet* to my taste” (Song 2:3). And again, “His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as *sweet* flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping *sweet* smelling myrrh....His mouth is *most sweet*: yea, he is altogether lovely” (Song 5:13-16). The Lord grant that *our* “meditation of him shall be sweet” (Psa. 104:34).

11. *The manna was ground and baked.* “And the people went about, and gathered it, and *ground* it in mills, or *beat* it in a mortar, and *baked* it in the pans, and made cakes of it” (Num. 11:8). How this speaks to us of the sufferings of our blessed Lord! Such expressions as, “He groaned for their hardness of

heart” (Mark 3:5). He “sighed” (Mark 8:12) because of their unbelief. He “wept” over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and many others, tell us of the *grinding* of the manna. His treatment at the hands of the Jews and the brutal soldiers in Herod’s judgment-hall show us the *beating* of the manna. On the cross, we behold Him subjected to the fierce fires of God’s wrath. Thus we learn that the manna ground and beaten speaks of Him who was “*bruised* for our iniquities.”

12. *The manna was preserved on the Sabbath.* “And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you *to be kept unto the morning*. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein” (verses 23-24). On the Sabbath day, the manna was preserved, and in this, too, it speaks of our blessed Lord. He is the only one who was preserved through death. He lay in the tomb on the Sabbath day and was “kept,” for God had said, “Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One *to see corruption*” (Psa. 16:10).

13. *The manna was laid up before the Lord.* “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD” (verse 33). Concerning the Antitype, we read, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). The golden pot in which manna was preserved tells us how God is glorified in Him whom it foreshadowed. “Although the Son of man is it that gives it to us, although it is humanity here that we know, and humanity in the form in which we shall not find it when we shall reach Him above, yet it is humanity in which God is glorified now, and so He will be glorified in it for ever. We shall find in the One upon the throne in glory, though no longer ‘with a face marred more than any man’s, and a form more than the sons of men’—the very One whose face was marred—the

very One whose heart put Him into the sorrow in which we, of necessity, there learned to know Him thus” (Mr. Grant).

14. *The manna is called angels’ food.* We read in Psalm 78:25, “Man did eat *angels’* food: He sent them meat to the full.” The reference here is to the giving of the manna to Israel in the wilderness. The antitype of this is brought before us in several passages in the last book of Scripture. Christ not only feeds the souls of those of His people who are upon earth, but He also satisfies the hearts of celestial beings. The unfallen angels find their chief delight in feeding upon Christ. They worship Him, they serve Him, and they tell forth His praises.

15. *The manna was given in the night.* It was during the hours of darkness that the manna was sent to the Israelites. It is while they are asleep (picture of man’s helplessness, for men are never so helpless as when asleep) that the bread was given from heaven. So, too, it was when we were in darkness and unbelief, impotent, “without strength” (Rom. 5:6), that Christ came to us. Moreover, it will be at the close of this world’s night, when, “The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people” (Isa. 60:2), that the Bread of God shall return and give life to the world.

16. *The manna is now hidden.* In Revelation 2:17, we read, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.” So, too, Christ, of whom manna continually speaks, is now “hidden.” Unseen by the eye of sense, He remains in heaven till the day when He shall be manifested before all the world. “We shall not only ‘see’ the heavenly manna, but we shall ‘eat’ of it again. Fresher than ever will be our realization of His love and the perfection of His grace which is manifested to us. It is then in fact, when we come to be there, that we shall have the full enjoyment of all the experiences, which though they be experiences of the wilderness, yet wait for the land to which we are hastening to find their full interpretation and blessing. The meat *endures* to everlasting life. The meat still endures. We are

enjoying that which shall be our joy for eternity” (Mr. Grant).

We are conscious that our treatment of this wonderful and precious type is most inadequate and unworthy. But if it leads our fellow believers to a more careful study of the written Word, and to a deeper longing to become better acquainted with the incarnate Word, our feeble efforts will be well repaid.

The Hidden Manna

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna” (Rev. 2:17). This is one of the seven promises in Revelation 2 and 3 made to the overcomers, which is one of the many designations accorded the children of God in the Word of Truth, though probably one of those which most of these are least familiar with. The first time the word occurs in the New Testament, it is used of the Lord Jesus (Luke 11:22), where He is portrayed as the One stronger than Satan, overcoming him and dividing his spoils—a representation of what He does for His elect at their conversion, when He delivered them from the power of Satan. The next time this word is found in the New Testament it is again in connection with Christ: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)—we are to take courage and consolation from that fact, for since He overcame the world for His people, and since they are both legally and vitally one with Him, God has ordained they shall participate in His victory. The word occurs again in connection with Christ as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” where we are told He “hath prevailed [overcome] to open the book” (Rev. 5:5)—perhaps the title-deeds to that Inheritance.

“To him that overcometh”—the enemies of his salvation. The Christian is a warrior, engaged in a life and death fight, and though he receives many wounds in the conflict and is often thrown down by his adversaries, yet he gets up again, renews the struggle, and in the end, comes out victorious. “Him that overcometh” is in contrast from those who are overcome—like the unbelieving Israelites who were overthrown in the wilderness, like the many of John 6:66 who were offended at Christ’s doctrine

and who “went back and walked no more with Him,” like Demas who made a promising start and accompanied Paul for a while, but of whom he had to say, he “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). It is not enough to engage in warfare against sin and Satan, the flesh and the world; we must persevere therein unto the end. The overcomer is the one who cleaves to Christ and adheres to the Truth, who refuses to be deterred by the difficulties of the way, the assaults of his enemies, the allurements of false teachers.

Four things are necessary in order for anyone to be an overcomer. First, he must be supernaturally regenerated, for the task involved is much too arduous for mere nature to succeed in: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:4). It is the new nature, energised by the Holy Spirit, which qualifies for victory. Second, he must be endowed with a supernatural principle, otherwise his native unbelief would make defeat inevitable and certain: “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4)—God’s gift, but our use of it. It is by the exercise of this grace that we obtain strength for the conflict and incentives to persevere. Third, he must have recourse to that which will heal his wounds and prevail before God as his plea: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 12:11). That blood gives the believer the right to claim enablement for his repelling of every attack of Satan’s. Fourth, he must “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb. 3:6).

For the encouragement of the Christian engaged in this fierce conflict the Lord has graciously made known the reward awaiting him, and the more his faith lays hold of the same and his hope anticipatively enjoys it, the more incentive will he have to continue fighting, or (changing the figure) to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). It was thus our great Exemplar nerved Himself: “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). In our judgment, these promises to the overcomer supply an intimation of wherein the blessedness of the heavenly state consists, such as is to be found

nowhere else in the Scriptures. As they draw nearer the end of their pilgrimage the Lord's people should project their thoughts more and more unto what awaits them on High. The worn-out *worldling* seeks satisfaction in living over again in his mind those "pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25) which engaged him in the past, but the veteran saint will rather contemplate those "pleasures for evermore" which are at God's right hand (Psa. 16:11). A part of what those "pleasures" consist of is intimated in Revelation 2:17.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17). Here is a part of the spiritual entertainment which Christ has provided for His friends in glory. It seems to denote three things. First, as the manna was the food which God supplied from Heaven for His people of old, nourishing and sustaining them throughout their wilderness journey, it must be regarded as a figure of the written word which is the Christian's spiritual staff of life. And since the Word of God "liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23), does not the "*hidden manna*" (Rev. 2:17) point to the inexhaustible riches of Divine wisdom, which are stored up in it, and of which we have at present, but a fragmentary knowledge. We cannot think that any of that treasure will be lost to us—rather, do we conclude it will be made known and afford part of our delectation on High. Now we know the marvels of Divine inspiration and revelation "in part," but then shall we know them in full. 2 Corinthians 12:7 shows that Heaven is the place of "the abundance of the revelations." As the risen Christ expounded the Scriptures to His disciples and opened their understandings to understand them (Luke 24:27, 45), will not the glorified Saviour do the same for us (Heb. 13:8)!

Second, the "manna" which God gave to Israel in the wilderness was also a manifest type of the incarnate Son, the "bread of life"—which is given to us, because broken for us (John 6:35, 48). Therefore, the "hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17) refers, we conclude, to "In whom are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3) in Him, of which I now have but the faintest conception, and to the "many things which Jesus did" that

have not been recorded on any earthly scroll (John 21:25), and also to much that was precious about Him—which was never cognised even by His apostles. Nothing of this can be lost—all of it, we believe, will be feasted upon at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when He shall say “eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (Song 5:1). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna” (Rev. 2:17). We shall hear from Christ’s own lips the secrets of His life as He sojourned for thirty-three years in this world of sin, making known to us more fully the depths of humiliation into which He descended for us and the perfections He exercised—hidden from the eyes of men—as He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself.

Third, the historical reference (Exod. 16:33, 34 and compare Heb. 9:4) shows that the literal “hidden manna” consisted of a “pot” of manna which was laid “up before the LORD” to be “kept for your generations.” It was designed as a testimony and memorial of God’s grace unto His people. In its anti-typical fulfilment, this points, we believe, to the unfolding of His secret providences—which the Lord will make to us in Heaven, when we shall be able to *understand* (with amazement, awe, and adoration) what now we only *believe*—namely, that all His dealings with us were ordered by perfect love and unerring wisdom; and also to the blessed workings of His grace in and through us. “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him *for them* that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal. 3:16), and the next verse seems to more than hint that the contents of that book will be made known and enjoyed “in that day” when the Lord of hosts makes up His jewels.

We conceive that each one of the redeemed will be given the holy privilege of making his or her personal contribution to this unfolding of God’s wondrous ways with us in providence and in grace—there will be no Divine restriction, “let your women keep silence in heaven,” for all the consequences of the Fall will be obliterated and the sisters as well as the brethren will then be “as

the angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22:30). This writer believes that each one of the blood-bought company will say, in turn, “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for *my* soul” (Psa. 66:16)—not only in regeneration, but in all that followed. O what a testimony each of them will then bear to God’s amazing grace and patience! What a witness each will give to God’s unfailing faithfulness and goodness in supplying every need as he crossed the Wilderness of Sin! How blessed it will be to hear one and another relate God’s wondrous answers to prayer—then there will be none of the scepticism which we fear there would be now were we to relate some of the miracles God has wrought in response to our feeble petitions. Everything which redounds to the glory of God will then be made known to the whole of His family.

*“He that hath an ear, let him
hear what the Spirit saith unto
the churches;*



*To him that overcometh will I
give to eat of the hidden manna”
Revelation 2:17.*