

VALUE OF THE HEAVENLY MANNA

(Discourse by S. N. Wiley, N.D. 1916 Convention Report, page 112)

All things that have life, whether animal or vegetable, must have food to sustain that life. If for any reason food is not taken in proper quantities or at proper intervals, leanness and weakness will result, and if food is not taken for a considerable length of time, starvation is sure to follow and death.

When God placed our first parents in the garden of Eden He provided them with food adapted to their nature and to their needs. According to God's arrangement it was necessary for Adam and Eve to eat of this food—the fruits of the trees—in order to sustain their lives; and we understand that had they continued obedient to God's commands they might have continued to live indefinitely.

When they disobeyed their Creator He took away from them the privilege of eating of this life-sustaining food; as a consequence they died—starved to death.

When the children of Israel were on their journey through the wilderness, God gave them food—which they called manna. It was furnished to them without any effort on their part—for Moses said: "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." (Exod. 16:15) It was found in the morning in small particles like hoarfrost. It was necessary for them to gather this food daily for six days each week. On the sixth day they were instructed to gather enough to last over the seventh day. All that was gathered on any other than the sixth day was found to be unfit for use on the following day.

Each one was instructed to gather a specified quantity for each member of his household. No one was permitted to gather a quantity for sale to others. Each was obliged to gather for himself. This arrangement prevented anyone from making personal profit out of a God-given blessing intended for the use of all. While the manna was provided without effort on their part, they were obliged to gather it and prepare it for use. Had they neglected to gather the manna so generously provided, or having gathered, had they neglected to properly prepare it and to partake of it, they would have died—starved to death.

So, dear Friends, as God provided food for His first children, Adam and Eve, and as He provided manna for His chosen people, the children of Israel, so has He provided food for us—His children of the new creation—sufficient in quality and quantity for all our needs. He has provided in His Word a vast storehouse filled with food for our spiritual needs.

By God's grace through His chosen servant a splendid arrangement has been made for the Church in this our day. We have provided for our daily use this "Daily Heavenly Manna." As God supplied the manna to the children of Israel in small particles, so has He supplied

our food in small particles—small verses. As they were obliged to gather these small particles and prepare them in certain prescribed ways that they might be eaten and digested and assimilated, so these small verses must be properly treated. They must be properly gathered—and rightly divided. We must not only read, but study God’s Word.

The manna was sweet, like honey to the taste; so the psalmist said: “How sweet are thy words to my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Psa. 119:103

Do we find our daily manna sweet as honey to our taste? The Prophet Jeremiah said: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” (Jer. 15:16) Dear friends, are we eating of this daily manna? Are we appropriating it to our own use? Our Lord Jesus said: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever.” (John 6:51) Jesus again, in speaking of himself, said: “This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.” (John 6:58) Do we find this daily manna the joy and rejoicing of our hearts? If not we should pray earnestly that it may become such. Just as the Israelites had to partake daily of the manna that they might live and be strong, so, dear friends, if we would live and grow and become strong, develop spiritually, we must partake daily of our Heavenly Food.

As the natural body grows and develops by means of the food taken, and as the natural mind grows and develops through the mental food provided, in like manner the new mind, the new creature, grows and develops by the food taken. Brother Streeter has recalled to our minds that when we are begotten to the new nature, become prospective new creatures, we are not given new organs, new brains, with which to think and speak. We are given new things to think about, new things to talk about. We are given a new kind of food.

The apostle tells us, “as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” It is our mind that is being transformed, and we are admonished to think upon the things that are just and pure and true and honest and of good report. We are enjoined to set our affections, our minds, our thoughts, our words, on things above and not on the things that pertain to this old body and this old life.

We all know that when we start out in the morning on a journey, the main thing is to start in the proper direction—start right. If we start wrong we may go wrong all day; or if we do turn about after a time, we have lost valuable time. So is it with our thoughts. If we begin our day with thoughts of worldly things, of human things, thoughts of our temporal affairs, with thoughts of human things uppermost in our minds: if we first read the morning paper just to see how the war is going; the adversary will see to it that our minds will be abundantly supplied along these lines. But if on the other hand we begin our day

with thoughts of God and of our dear Lord, and of heavenly things of spiritual things, we shall have much less difficulty all the day in keeping our affections, our thoughts, our minds, our conversation on things above.

This little book, the “Daily Heavenly Manna,” has been a great help to me, personally. Ever since I have known about it, I have made daily use of it. I would far rather do without my physical breakfast than without the portion of spiritual food that is daily supplied to us here.

When I had access to my file of the WATCH TOWERS, I made it a practice whenever it was possible, to look up and read the article from which the comment was taken. In this way one can keep in close touch with a vast amount of spiritual food.

The plan now employed by many, we hope by all the *ecclesias* everywhere, of using the Thursday Manna text as the topic for the following Wednesday testimony meeting, is a most valuable and helpful arrangement. By using this text as a fixed point about which to cluster the experiences and thoughts of the week is proving a great blessing to many of the Lord’s children. To know that thousands everywhere are thinking on the same text throughout the week; and that on Wednesday evening many of those same thousands are gathered in little groups all over the world thinking about and talking about the same things—what an inspiration it is! Is there anything like it anywhere in the world today? If any of the dear friends are, for any avoidable reason, neglecting these precious privileges, they are neglecting one of the most helpful means of progress along the “narrow way.”

Our dear Pastor has often told us from the platform and through his articles that of all the meetings of the week, the most helpful is the testimony meeting; and all who avail themselves of its privileges have found it so. Thus does the heavenly manna become to us the most precious of spiritual food. This daily manna used properly brings life and health and growth; while if neglected or taken only at long intervals or carelessly, will be followed by spiritual leanness and weakness. If neglected for a longer period, death—spiritual death—is sure to result: starvation of the new creature.