



Golden Hind under sail

When the Children of Israel saw the Manna revealed by the lifting dews, they asked, "What is it?" to which Moses responded, *"This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents."* (Ex 16:16) The Gospel of Christ, too, is given in equal shares to all who will take, and it is always enough; however, all do not consume in equal shares; but there is always sufficient to satisfy completely the hunger of each day.

The Manna came, undeserved, at the precise moment of greatest need. Israel was famishing in the Wilderness of the World when God supplied their need. How does this remind you of Christ? *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."* (Romans 5:6) The Children of Israel had done nothing to deserve mercy from God – in fact, they were murmuring against Him after His miraculous salvation. Does this, too, remind you of the Wilderness of sin in which you found yourself when Christ died for you? *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8)

The Provision of God is sufficient for our needs. *And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.* (Ex 16:17-18) No matter your station in life or level of education, is that grace supplied by our Lord sufficient for you? *And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Cor 12:9) No one is given more grace than another, but we get that grace that we seek. Oftentimes, we seek less than we should have sought.

The Provision of God is Essential and Satisfying: ***"O taste and see that the LORD is good."*** (Psalm 34:8) The Children of Israel could not have survived in the Wilderness without God's physical provision; neither can the Christian survive the Wilderness of this World and Sin without God's spiritual provision. *And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*** (John 6:35) But that Bread, like Manna, must be gathered DAILY!

The Provision of Daily Bread is without cost – it is a GIFT of God. Just as Manna

was given freely to a belligerent people, so is that salvation made available in Jesus Christ. It cannot be earned by good works or character – it must be given AND received freely. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 6:23) There was not a man, woman, or child among Israel that were not hungry before the raining down from Heaven of Manna. The whole world suffered a great hunger for the salvation of Christ, and none had it until it was given. We were all like the distant Prodigal Son in a Far Country before Christ came, and we made the same utterance: *“I perish with hunger!”* (Luke 15:17) he cried as he remembered His father from whom he was separated (not by distance only, but by sin). From Adam to Christ, we were separated from God by sin. Then came the Bread of Heaven! Having Truth alone is not enough for even the devils believe and tremble. We need something that is not abstract – something that we can see and feel to fortify our longings in faith. That something was the Lord Jesus Christ who came in the body of a man, walked among us, taught us, revealed mysteries never before uttered, worked miracles, healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk. This was real! This was absolute. And this is now a matter of established fact.

The marginal believers are quite slovenly in their faith. They are ready and willing to accept the gift offered, but they do not desire to abide by the will of the Giver. *19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.* (Ex 16:19) Do you suppose the greedy heart of man complied with this commandment? *20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.* (Ex 16:20-21) The gift of grace and love cannot be hoarded in barrels. It must be constantly replenished just as the truth of God’s Word must be replenished daily, else it will grow stale. There are times when I may find myself pressed for time in preparing a sermon (I never prepare before Sunday morning – the time of need). This is true especially when I am traveling. If I take up a sermon on the Gospel text for the day that I have previously delivered, for some reason, it seems flat and dead. It is not living as it was the moment that I put it to paper the first time. God desires that we get into His Word daily. And He desires ALL to do so – not just clergy and committee missionaries – but EVERYONE who calls upon His Name. Your soul needs the food of the Gospel DAILY! What you learned yesterday will grow flat and melt unless fortified with a daily study of the Word.

We are lazy by nature. We take shortcuts in life when we would grow stronger going the proper distance. But when the Lord is the Captain of our Souls, there seems no need for shortcuts. In fact, we desire to walk the flower-lined path and to hear the beauty of nature sing in our ears. *22 And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.”* (Ex 16:22-23)

Obedience to God in all things will always reap rewards. It does not make sense to the human rationale that Manna gathered on the sixth day should remain fresh over the Sabbath when not on other days; but faith is not rationale or logic – it is a mystery of God.

Please consider the rank fickleness of the human mind. When God said “do not gather a day ahead”, they attempted to do that very thing. When God said, “Gather a day ahead of the Sabbath”, they did not, but attempted to gather on the Sabbath like any other day. *24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the*

seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Ex 16:24-28) Though we may study diligently the Word of God and know it well, we will find not blessing in it if we do not OBEY it. We will find the fields devoid of Manna.

29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30 So the people rested on the seventh day. 31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. (Ex 16:29-31) God made the Sabbath for the rest and benefit of man, but man does not know what is good for him, so he violates even those Commandments of God that are of greatest obvious benefit to Him. But Moses (their minister) bore down on them with the Word of God and they relented. Too many ministers go along with what the people want instead of what God has spoken.

Here is what Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, says to conclude this chapter: "God would have the Israelites continually dependent on himself for all their supplies; but he would make them, in a certain way, workers with him. He provided the manna; they gathered and ate it. The first was God's work; the latter, their own. They could not produce the manna, and God would not gather it for them. Thus the providence of God appears in such a way as to secure the co-operation of man. Though man should plant and water, yet it is God who giveth the increase. But if man neither plant nor water, God will give no increase. We cannot do God's work, and he will not do ours. Let us, therefore, both in things spiritual and temporal, be workers together with HIM"—Adam Clarke's Commentary

32 And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. 36 Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah. (Ex 16:32-36) This Manna was laid up in the Ark as remembrance of what God had done in blessing Israel while they were yet in the Wilderness of Sin. You will recall the striking similarity of that Bread of Heaven that was laid up in the Garden Tomb that likewise saw no corruption. It is that Bread of His Body that we consume in the Holy Communion, and that Wine of His Blood that we drink in commemoration of His death and sacrifice for us. Forget not the blessings of God.

I am appending a beautiful prayer of Sir Francis Drake given on the day of the English Fleet's engagement of the Spanish 'Invincible' Armada. Nothing is 'Invincible' against the Winds of God:

Prayer of Sir Francis Drake
Logos of St Andrew - Dec 99

On the afternoon of the day that the English fleet sailed forth to meet the Spanish (Invincible) Armada, The Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Francis Drake, offered this prayer up to God for his men and himself. Note the tenor and charity of it:

MOST merciful and loving Father, we beseech thee most humbly, even with all our hearts, to pour out upon our enemies with a bountiful hand whatsoever things thou knowest may do them good; and chiefly a sound and uncorrupt mind, wherethrough they may know thee and seek thee in true charity, with their whole

hearts, and love us thy children, for thy sake. Let not their hating of us turn to their harm, neither let us in any wise hurt them. Seeing that we cannot do them good for want of ability, Lord, we desire their amendment, and not their punishment. Separate them not from us by punishing them, but join and knit them to us by thy favourable dealing with them. And seeing we be all ordained to be citizens of the one everlasting city, let us begin to enter in that way here already by mutual love, which may bring us right forth hither; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Miraculously, the out-gunned and inferior British fleet was victorious over a naval force of unquestioned superiority. The forces of nature (and of nature's God) combined to deal a decisive defeat to the would-be invaders of England. Perhaps the only difference in the outcome was due to the prayer of Sir Francis Drake.

What think ye?