

CHAPTER 11
TABERNACLES -
THE FEAST OF REST

“Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath” (Lev. 23:39).

THE SABBATH FEAST

All the Feasts of the Lord were observed in connection with sabbath days, for they were a time when Israel (in type) must cease from their own works, and rest in the work of Christ. However, the Feast of Tabernacles is the real Feast of Rest, of which the others were but the earnest and foretaste. In the first place it was in the seventh month, even as God “rested on the seventh day from all his work.” The first day of the Feast was the fifteenth, and it was observed for seven days. The last day of the Feast was therefore the twenty-first day of the seventh month, twenty-one being a triple of seven — Rest in the absolute sense, God’s Rest which “remaineth” for the people of God. Then the next day was likewise a sabbath (the eighth day of the feast) and thought it was connected in some measure with the Feast, it was not one of the seven days of their festivities. The eighth day would speak, no doubt, of the completion of God’s purposes in the Church, and the beginning of a new day.

O child of God, if we only had eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit would say unto the churches. God has “unspeakable” things that He would like to declare unto us by the Spirit, but we cannot receive them now. “Unspeakable,” because there is no earthly language by which He could describe them to us, and therefore we would have to be caught away in the Spirit like the apostle Paul in order to receive them. The plans and purposes of God for the Church are far, infinitely far, beyond our highest imaginations. “That in the ages to come,” said Paul, “He might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). How we need “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” and to have the eyes of our understanding “enlightened” that in some small measure at least we may be able to grasp and understand the secret — which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

THERE REMAINETH A REST

It is noteworthy that as we begin to read the ordinances of the Feasts in Leviticus 23, God reminds the saints of the sabbath — the weekly sabbath — “Six days shall work be done: but the

seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation” (Lev. 23:3). Then immediately He begins to give the order of the Feasts, and the sevenfold events involved in the Feasts (See Lev :23:4-37):

1. The Passover.
2. The Unleavened Bread.
3. The Sheaf of Firstfruits.
4. The Feast of Pentecost.
5. The Blowing of Trumpets.
6. The Day of Atonement.
7. **The Feast of Tabernacles.**

And so, just as the weekly sabbath was the end of Israel’s week of toil and labor — so the Feast of Tabernacles is the end of the Church’s week of strife and turmoil: the Feast of all Feasts, the Sabbath of all Sabbaths. The natural, weekly “sabbath” means nothing now, because the Substance has been revealed. “There remaineth therefore a rest (A Sabbath) to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9).

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

Again, we feel we should exhort the saints concerning the rich heritage that is theirs in the Word of God. So many have denied themselves the joy and glory of the Word because of the myth that has been raised around Paul’s advice to Timothy, when he exhorted this young minister to “rightly divide” the Word of truth. It is commonly taught that Paul was exhorting Timothy to draw a line of demarcation between various dispensations, and not to confuse one with the other. In other words, according to this teaching, the Old Testament is practically all for Israel. and must not be applied to the Church.

In the first place, when Paul gave this exhortation to Timothy, he was not urging him to take a course in theology; but what he said was “**study.**” In other words, “**give diligence ...**”, as he said in another place, “**Study** to be quiet...” Let that be your desire and ambition. And if you want to know what Paul meant by “rightly dividing the Word of truth,” all one has to do is to examine his own epistles and see how he applied the Old Testament. Over and over and over again he takes an Old Testament scripture completely out of its “context” as men would say, and applies it to some glorious Church truth which he is expounding.

We could give many, many examples of this. For instance we read much of the blessing of the nations through Abraham; and until this day Bible expositors will insist that this must apply only to the blessing of natural nations through natural Israel. And yet Paul does not hesitate to quote directly from the book of Genesis, and

apply these Scriptures to this Gospel Day, and to the Gentiles who are to be justified by faith in Christ. “And the Scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed**” (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:3; 18:18). Again, men will insist that the seed of Abraham is natural Israel, and that the promises are for them; whereas Paul tells us, “Now to **Abraham and his seed** were the promises made. **He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ**” (Gal. 3:16). Then again, Isaiah 54, speaking of the fruitfulness of Zion, must only apply to natural Israel; but Paul quotes the first verse and applies it to **men of faith, Jew or Gentile: “Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not ...”** (Gal. 4:27). And then we have Isaiah, speaking of the glory of Jerusalem: “Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; but on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city ...” That means Israel and not the Church, we are told. Strange is it not, that four of the New Testament writers apparently didn’t know this, and actually made as many as twelve references to it, or quotations from it.

“There remaineth therefore a rest (**A Sabbath**) to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). We could go through the Old Testament and cite many examples of God’s rest, and show how they typify this heritage of the saints in the Spirit which God has prepared for this hour. But space would not permit a detailed study of them all. We could mention the seventh day of God’s creative work, when He rested from all His work which He had made, and show how this rest was but a type and shadow of this glorious rest of the believer — the one who ceases from his own works and rests in the finished work of Christ. We could mention Noah, whose name signifies “repose” and show how the dove which he sent forth from the ark found no “resting-place” for the sole of her foot; and how God smelled an “odour of rest” when Noah offered up the sacrifice on the top of the mountain. We could mention Ruth, and Boaz her kinsman-redeemer who would not “be in rest” until he had completed the transaction and redeemed Ruth, that she might become his bride. We could deal at length with the ark of the covenant, and show how it typified the presence of God and the Holy Spirit, and how God would direct it on ahead of the children of Israel in the wilderness journeying, searching out a “resting-place” for the people of God. We could mention how David prepared a place for the ark when his kingdom was established, and pitched for it a tent — and how they invited the God of glory to come into their midst. And then later, how the temple succeeded the tent of David, and how Solomon prayed on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles: “Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness” (2 Chron. 6:41). In fact,

from Genesis to Revelation we would discover how God has not only ordained rest for the people of God, but how He has called us to proceed from rest to rest, from glory unto glory, even unto the very fulness of rest itself.

THE UNEXPLORED REALMS OF THE SPIRIT

Man's chief difficulty seems to be simply this: in his limited and finite understanding he does not have the vision of greater and vaster and higher and deeper and broader expanses of God's Truth. He has failed to see that God is both infinite and eternal, and therefore in finding God one must be prepared to go ever onward and upward into the vast expanses of the Spirit of God. If God is infinite, there is **no limit** to the experience which we might have in union with Him by the Spirit. And if God is eternal, there is **no end** to the measure of Truth into which He would lead us by the Spirit. When Columbus began his explorations, it was not sufficient that they should have taken ship and sailed for a day or two. True, they were in the ocean the day they started. But the ocean was vast — and they must sail on, and on, and on, and on, ... even to the shores of America. Nor is it sufficient that a man should drill miles into the earth and discover oil, and then promptly shout, "We've found oil," and proceed to cap its flow. It must flow, and flow, and flow, and flow ... if mankind is to be profited from it.

Now God has invited us to become partakers of His Holy Spirit, and that simply means He has invited us to explore the eternal recesses of the deep things of God and the infinite heights of His glory. For the Spirit of God is given to us for that very purpose: "That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ..." We cannot know these things in the natural; hence the Spirit of God is imparted to search out and explore "all things, yea, the deep things of God" (See 1 Cor. 2:10,12). But those depths of God are unsearchable, for God is both infinite and eternal. Is it not very clear, therefore, that it is going to take all eternity for us to fully explore the immensities of the Divine attributes? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

We are not suggesting that God has not done much for us in the past; but we are confident of this: anything we have had in the past by way of experience has been but the foretaste and the earnest of what God would now lead us into by the Spirit. The solemn exhortations of Hebrews 4 are therefore most applicable to us in this great day of opportunity. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should

seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached (Or, the word of the report) did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:1,2). The reference, of course, is to the first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt, and crossed over the Red Sea and came into the wilderness. It did not take them long to reach the door-step of their inheritance — it was just eleven days journey from Horeb to Kadeshbarnea, the doorway of Canaan. And when they got there Moses sent forth spies to spy out the land and search out the riches of their inheritance. Twelve spies went forth into the land and explored it for forty days. As to its wealth and fruitfulness there was absolutely no question. They knew the people would not believe what they found, so they cut down a branch of grapes in the valley of Eschol, and carried it between two upon a staff; and they also brought of the pomegranates and of the figs. “Surely,” they testified, “It floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.” And they showed them what they had found. (See Num. 13:17-33).

Now, who would suggest that the spies had taken the land just because they had explored it for forty days, and brought back a little fruit to Kadeshbarnea? And that is just exactly the position the Church of Jesus Christ is in today. We are still in the wilderness. It is true that God has given us of His Spirit; but only as a “foretaste;” only as the means by which we might search out the depths of God, even as the spies explored the land of Canaan. God has even given us a little taste of the realm of the Spirit; for in bestowing upon us the Holy Spirit we receive “the earnest of our inheritance,” or the “firstfruits of the Spirit” (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:23). Moses is careful to inform us: “Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes” (Num. 13:20). Wonderful, indeed, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Wonderful foretaste and earnest of our heritage in Christ Jesus! We have actually made a little raid into Canaan, and have come back with the fruit of the land. And if the first ripe grapes and the figs and the pomegranates are good — what must it be like to literally live in Canaan, to drink refreshing waters from wells which we have not digged, to eat the fruit of vineyards and olive trees which we planted not, and to inhabit houses which we built not. That is the rest that remaineth for the people of God. It is entering into a place that has already been prepared for us by the Spirit. It is the fulness, of which the Pentecostal blessing is but the firstfruits. It is the laying hold of that for which Christ hath laid hold on us, apprehending by the Spirit that for which Christ hath apprehended us. (Phil. 3:12). It is entering into, and appropriating, this resurrection-life by the Spirit.

ISRAEL'S MISTAKE IS THE CHURCH'S MISTAKE

Israel's mistake consisted in disobedience and fear, and hence in unbelief. Had they believed in their God, they could not have feared the enemy and their strongholds. Let us notice these facts about Israel:

They searched out the land for forty days; they knew it was a good land, a land that flowed with milk and honey; they knew that God told them to go in and possess it; but they refused to obey God on the basis that they did not have the power and the authority to take it. It is not difficult for us to draw an exact parallel between this generation of Israel and the generation of the Church in which we live. For some years now God has enabled the saints to reach out by the Spirit and explore the realms of their heritage. The restoration of Pentecost at the beginning of the century opened up a new life in the Spirit, and thousands upon thousands of saints were forced out of the old religious systems because they grew discontented with the manna and the wilderness life and wanted more from God. God was very gracious and gave the grapes of Eschol and the figs and pomegranates — glorious provisions of His Spirit, to all who hungered and thirsted for the things of God. They have proved by experience that it is a good land, and one that floweth with milk and honey. They know, too, that God has commanded them to go in and possess the land. But sad to say, this same generation has refused to believe that they could take it, and God has allowed them to perish in the wilderness like their predecessors in Israel. Israel searched out the land for forty days; and so God said, according to the number of days, a day for a year, would they wander in the wilderness until they were consumed. Likewise has it happened in the Church. For well over forty years this latter day generation of Spirit-filled people have wandered in the wilderness, hundreds and thousands have gone back to the old denominational systems because their blessing did not last — (and how could it last? God just intended that it should be a foretaste), and by and large the whole movement is worse off than before, and has less success in the way of evangelism than many of our fundamental evangelical movements. We are not speaking of any particular sect, but of the whole movement of Spirit-filled people during the last forty or fifty years.

Of course God will bless them; for it is His responsibility to look after them as long as they are in the wilderness. There was daily manna for Israel throughout the whole wilderness journey; there was water out of the flinty rock to quench their thirst. God preserved the very clothes on their back and the shoes on their feet; protected them from the enemy; healed them of their diseases or afflictions when they cried unto Him; and bore them

on eagle's wings throughout that long and arduous and bitter journey in the wilderness. But the fact remains, the generation that refused to take the land died in the wilderness.

How gracious and wise is our God in all His ways! Little did the children of Israel realize that in all they were doing, they were really fulfilling an eternal purpose for the instruction of the Church. These things happened unto them “for ensamples” of us. By their fall, and by their sin, and by their disobedience, God was trying to teach us the path of righteousness and faith and victory. Thank God for the type. It gives us great boldness to enter into the new and living way which God hath now opened up for us through the veil. The wilderness experience has been bitter for those who have hungered and thirsted for God. But God has had a sovereign purpose in it all, that his hungering saints might now be prepared to enter into the land of rest. “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deut. 8:2).

A NEW GENERATION ARISES

The old generation who disbelieved God perished in the wilderness. But God sustained the new generation for forty years, humbled them, proved them, and prepared them for the conquest of Canaan. And so it is that a new generation under new leadership arises out of the wilderness of modern evangelical circles, to succeed a dying generation. “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them...” (Josh. 1:1,2). Moses must give way to Joshua. The Law must give way to Grace; and Grace must be swallowed up in the Kingdom. Joshua is the Hebrew word for Jesus. It signifies “Jah Saves.” His generation is to be a conquering, a delivering generation. The former generation said it was all right to go in and spy out the land — no doubt they enjoyed the grapes and the figs and the pomegranates immensely — but they did not want to go in and **possess** the land. It is all right, they would tell us today, to speak in tongues, or receive gifts of the Spirit, or heal the sick, or perhaps raise the dead occasionally, or prophesy, or sing in the Spirit — these things are all right. But they do not want to hear any of this talk about Christ appearing in the saints, and “being formed within you.” And as for the “manifestation of the sons of God,” that is definitely not for our day and age. True, they will admit, God has it for us; it is part of our heritage; but not for **now**. That will take place at the rapture, or the resurrection. We cannot

possess the land; there are too many obstacles. There are cities with high walls surrounding them, wooded mountains infested with giants, fearful enemies using iron chariots. It is positively ridiculous to suggest that we can take the land. It is all right to be filled with the Spirit, and enjoy the blessing of the Spirit occasionally; but it is impossible to really enter into the realm of the Spirit to such an extent that you live there constantly. You can take some grapes from the valley of Eschol, but you must not attempt to dwell in Eschol. You can receive an anointing on your mind, and receive thoughts from God that are holy, and speak His words occasionally; but you cannot have the “mind of Christ” in any degree of fulness so that you can actually think His thoughts, and say His words, and perform His works, and live His very own life. It is all right to be healed, but not to enjoy real Divine health or Divine life to such an extent that your days will be lengthened excessively, without pain or feebleness or the abatement of your natural faculties. It is all right to get free from this habit or that, or conquer your temper, but not to be so positively free from the sin nature that “sin hath no more dominion” over you. That would be perfection, and you cannot have perfection until you get to Heaven. It is all right to talk in tongues in a language that no man understandeth, but not to go out to the nations speaking their language, with their accent, and understanding exactly what you say, and what they say. It is all right if you preach the Gospel with signs and wonders, and see certain miracles performed occasionally; but we cannot be caught away in the Spirit like Philip or Elijah in this day of modern travel. It is all right to fight Satan here on the earth and cast out a few devils, but you cannot ascend up in the Spirit into “the heavenlies” and literally topple Satan from his throne, and enter into the realm of power and authority “in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” We don’t mind tasting the grapes of Eschol, and the figs and pomegranates which the spies have brought back, **but we refuse to make any attempt at conquering the whole land!**

Perhaps many would not like to admit it, but this is just about the sum and substance of all the turmoil that rages everywhere concerning these great truths. The whole question resolves itself into this: Are we going to remain in the condition of those who have been saved and baptized with the Holy Spirit? Or are we going to arise from the dusty sands of this great and terrible wilderness and follow our Joshua across the Jordan into real, triumphant, overcoming power in the Spirit of God?

Thank God there ariseth a new generation that has caught the vision. A few Calebs and Joshuas have survived the blight and the dearth of the wilderness, and are leading the saints in the power of the Spirit into realms of glorious victory. For God has promised the land is ours if we can only hear His voice and obey: **“Today if**

ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 4:7). There is only one real enemy, and that is Fear. But God has promised: “Be strong and of a good courage ... I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee ...”

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?

What then? Are there no limitations to the measure of power which the saints may appropriate? Yes, indeed; but they are the limitations that they themselves erect in unbelief. With God all things are possible; we know that is true. But Jesus adds, “All things are possible to him that believeth.” When a certain man brought his lunatic son to Christ, and the son wallowed on the ground in torment, the father said to the Lord in anguish of soul, **“If thou canst do anything**, have compassion on us, and help us.” But Jesus turned the whole responsibility back upon the father, and said, **“If thou canst believe**, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk. 9:22,23). The if-thou-canst is a condition which must be directed at your faith and mine; it is not a question as to God’s ability or His willingness to do the things of which we speak. But the glory of it all is this: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” And therefore if we, in this the greatest hour of Church history, will but hear the Word of God — that is, give it a place in our heart and life, then faith will spring up, overcoming faith, faith that will enable us to take possession of our heritage in Christ Jesus.

The extent to which we might reach out in the Spirit, and the limitations of our heritage, are very clearly taught in the Word. God said to Joshua, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said unto Moses” (Josh. 1:3). It is not a case of “How much will God give,” for He has already given us “All things,” — even accounting to us a heritage with Christ “in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). Henceforth the question remains, “How much can I appropriate?” God says, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you...” And lest there be some fearful saints, who think the measure of our heritage must be confined within certain limits, then God tells us exactly what those limitations are:

“...And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, **according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places** ... “(Eph. 1:19,20). There is the measure of the power that is available to the saints! Not the power that Moses exercised in Egypt, or at the Red Sea; not the power that Elijah had when he locked the heavens for three and a half years, and then opened them again; or when he called fire down from heaven; or opened the Jordan river that he might pass over. Not the power that Elisha

exercised when he caused the iron to swim, the waters to be healed, the hungry to be fed, the dead to be raised. Not the power that David had over wild beasts, to slay the lion and the bear single-handedly. And not even the power that Christ exercised in His earthly ministry when He healed the sick, cast out devils, walked on the sea, called the dead back — even from corruption. But even the **“working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places ...”** And still we could go on — for Paul continues to enlarge upon the immensity of this power which Christ has, and which is ours: power and authority over all principalities and powers, both in this world and the next, power to put all things “under his feet,” — and his feet are in His Church, for He is the Head, and we are the Body.

O the immensity of these words! And what is more, Christ is going to remain right where He is at God’s right hand until there shall arise a group of overcomers who shall conquer over all God’s enemies. “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1). And yet the majority of Christians are looking for a rapture any moment, when Christ is supposed to catch away a miserable, defeated, disease-ridden Church. God says Christ is going to stay right where He is until all His enemies are under His feet. And His enemies include the “last enemy,” which is Death. There must arise a group of overcomers who shall conquer and become absolutely victorious over all the opposing forces of the world, the flesh, and the Devil — before this dispensation draws to a close.

HE BROUGHT US OUT, TO BRING US IN

“And he **brought us out** from thence, that he might **bring us in** ...” (Deut. 6:23). God’s purpose in delivering us from our sins and from wrath is that He should bring us into our heritage in Christ. The one is not complete without the other. He died that we might be delivered from death and live in the realm of the more abundant life. We thank God for what He has done for us in virtue of His Cross: nailed our sins to the tree; delivered us from sin’s wrath and punishment; accounted to us a perfect righteousness, and made us to be the very righteousness of God in Christ. Such is justification: that blessed and happy state of the man who believes in Christ, whereby God’s own life and righteousness is placed to his account. In consequence, therefore, of this blessed condition, the believer in Christ has a standing in Grace, before God and all the celestial hosts, as one who has never sinned; and he is held to be as righteous as God Himself is righteous. All this is very wonderful.

One question remains: Is this righteousness and life to avail us anything now, or are we to wait till death or resurrection in order

to appropriate it? Says Paul, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” What a blessed condition! But can we appropriate it? Let Paul continue: “...By whom also we have access by faith **into this grace wherein we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1.2). **Access into our standing!** Is that not what it says? That is **possessing our possessions**; and that is exactly what God expects us to do. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours. God wants us to receive that Divine ennoblement whereby we shall be “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to **know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge**, that ye might be **filled with all the fulness of God**” (Eph. 3:18,19).

JONATHAN’S HONEY SHOWER

There was a time during the reign of Saul, when the Philistines were massed in great strength against Israel, that Jonathan, Saul’s son, was impressed to make a single-handed raid against the enemy. So he and his armour-bearer went over to the Philistines’ garrison, climbed up the sharp rocks which were in the passes, and contacted the enemy. He did not tell his father anything about it, because he knew what would happen. Just imagine what a stupid idea he had! He and his armour-bearer going over to fight a whole garrison of the Philistines — when the whole army of Israel was in utter fear, having scarcely a weapon in the whole nation because of the terrible servitude to which they had been subjected. But Jonathan knew what faith could do. “It may be that the LORD will work for us,” he said. “For there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.” (1 Sam. 14:6). And so Saul tarried at home under the pomegranate tree, and Ichabod’s nephew was wearing the ephod. He was Saul’s priest. What a picture of a powerless, defeated Church, resting at ease and self-complacency, with a priesthood that is devoid of the glory, and their people in complete bondage and servitude to the enemy. They even had to go down to the Philistines to get their axe or sickle sharpened, for there was no smith in Israel. Complete dependence upon the world and its systems!

But Jonathan’s faith led him into a great place of victory and fruitfulness. All he did was to start chasing the enemy, and his armour-bearer followed. One by one the enemy fell before Jonathan, and the armour-bearer did the slaying. Thank God for the Holy Spirit who stands by our side, confirming every Word of God with the sharp Sword of His mouth. Then a great fear gripped the Philistines, and there was a trembling in the host and amongst all the people, and the earth quaked. And Saul looked on in amazement, for the Philistines were melting away. There seemed to be no reason for all this: so he numbered the host to see if any

were missing. Sure enough, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there.

First of all, of course, Saul had to know whether this thing was of God or not. If it wasn't then he would not have anything to do with it. So he called forth the ark of God and Ichabod's nephew to see if they could help him. While they argued, the Philistines continued to melt away in utter confusion, even beating down one another. Finally he could stand it no longer, and he ordered the priest to withdraw his hand. He saw that he was going to miss out on the victory if he did not get into the battle at once. So he mustered his men and started the pursuit. There was the shout of victory; the Philistines were in utter confusion; and every man's sword was against his fellow's. Whenever there is a shout of victory there are a lot of people who will join the battle. They may not know what is going on, and how the move of the Spirit started, and the purpose of it all — but there is a shout of victory, and that is about all that matters. And so Saul wanted everything God had for him, and joined the battle. It was a great victory; and of course Saul was king, so it was his victory. He was right there in the thick of battle.

The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this day and hour is completely lost and obscured amidst the shout of victory, and most of the saints do not know what it is all about. They can see healings, miracles, prophecy, laying on of hands for the bestowal of gifts, singing in the Spirit ... and so forth; and they do not understand that it is God in mercy preparing His people to enter into the very heritage of Canaan. They do not realize that this is but the foretaste and earnest of their heritage, and that God would now lead them in to possess the land. And so King Saul — for he was king, and this was his battle, and his victory — he charged the people with a strange oath, forbidding them to eat any food until he was avenged of his enemies. (Just that very morning he was resting under a pomegranate tree with no thought of pursuing the enemy at all. But he must maintain his kingdom and show his authority and keep the people under his rule and sway.)

The battle continued with ever-increasing momentum, the people pursuing the enemy, and the backslidden Hebrews coming out of their hiding places and joining the battle along with their comrades. But it was a hard struggle, and the people became faint as the battle wore on. How hungry they were! But they could taste nothing, because Saul had charged the people with a strange oath. This was no time to eat; this was a day of battle. This is no time to talk about Divine life, and freedom from sin and the carnal nature, and appropriation of resurrection blessings; those things belong to the rapture!

And so they fought; and as they pursued the enemy they came into a wood. The trees were literally flowing with honey, but they could not touch it. A curse was pronounced upon any man who would taste any food until victory was complete. Is it not strange how men in high places are constantly charging the people with strange oaths as to what they shall accept and what they shall not accept? And the people are hungry for the heritage of Canaan, but they fear the oath. Saul has made the decree, and that is enough. "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening." This is the hour of the Church's struggle, we are told, and it is no time to be talking about our heavenly heritage and trying to enter into it.

But like Jonathan there are some that "heard not" when this curse was laid upon the people. And like Jonathan they have discovered that the fruit of Canaan is to be their strength and sustenance even while they fight the Devil, and not after they go to Heaven. In fact, it is part of the spoils of victory; it is right in our pathway as we pursue the enemy and throw his ranks into utter confusion. And so Jonathan simply put forth his rod and took a little honey (for the trees "dropped" or literally "flowed" with honey), and put the honey to his mouth, and "his eyes were enlightened." Just as simple as that! The people argued with him that he was doing wrong, because the king had said so. They themselves were really hungry for the same thing, but that did not matter either. If the king said so, that was enough. Jonathan was under the curse.

God's people everywhere should know this; and all our religious leaders should know it; that if the saints are barred from their heritage in Christ and forbidden to eat of the good things of Father's table, sooner or later they are going to eat of the flesh-pots of the world. The people, we are told, became so ravenously hungry that they "flew upon the spoil." They took sheep and oxen and calves and slew them, and ate the flesh with the blood. This was a great sin, so far as Israel was concerned, for it was contrary to Mosaic law. But the truth of the matter is this: if we do not go on to appropriate and enjoy the honey of Canaan, sooner or later we will return to the ways of the flesh. After all, why should Jonathan not have partaken of the honey of the land? It was in Canaan, was it not? And had God not given Israel the whole land of Canaan for their heritage, even 'the land that floweth with milk and honey'?

There is a Jonathan group in the Church that has believed their God, and they are determined to pursue Satan and his hosts unto the end. Perhaps they are no match for mighty Lucifer and his hosts, but they are not trusting in their own natural weapons; they are not relying upon their wisdom, their knowledge, their theology. Their trust is in God alone. For them God will cause the earth to quake, the evil hosts to tremble, and confusion to grip

their ranks. It really doesn't matter what our resources are in the natural. In the wisdom of God, Satan and his hosts are going to become such fools that they will flee in utter confusion and will even destroy each other. If men will believe their God, God will send a great trembling into the ranks of the enemy; and then the victory is ours. Furthermore, these men know that their victory was through faith, and not by the arm of flesh. And therefore they do not hesitate to stop and taste "a little honey" along the way, while others labour feverishly in the power of the flesh to defeat the enemy before sundown. Certainly the need is great; Jonathan knows all about that. But he knows also that God gave him the victory through quietness and confidence and through much waiting on God. And he can afford, therefore, to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of Saul's battle, and take time off to enjoy some of the spoils of victory.

For many years the saints have been singing about what they are going to do after the battle is over. They are going to be with Christ, in Heaven, enjoying the peace and rest of the lands of their inheritance. They are going to drink at the eternal fountains, and eat of the tree of life. But the fact of the matter is simply this: the fruits of victory are to be appropriated here and now while the battle rages. The woods are literally "flowing" with honey; and you don't have to go out of your way to find it either; it is right in your very pathway as you pursue the enemy.

But what about the curse? Well, God must have turned the curse into a blessing, as He is accustomed to do on behalf of those who love Him. It never did Jonathan any harm. Saul even insisted on killing him, because — according to all the signs, Jonathan was to blame for the Lord's displeasure in Israel. Prayers were not answered any more. Saul inquired of God concerning a matter, and God refused to hear him. So he cast lots to see who was at fault, and Jonathan was taken. We may be sure that when Saul takes the pathway of disobedience, and walks in his own way, he is left open to great deception. Those who have refused to go on with God in the pathway which He has chosen, and choose the way of the flesh rather than the heritage of the Spirit, they will receive many sure signs and tokens to prove that Jonathan is in the wrong. Once a man enters the path of disobedience, and closes the door to revealed truth, he has thrown himself open to greater deception; and the most conclusive signs and evidences that he receives will be utterly false and unreliable.

Here is Jonathan's simple explanation of his "sin": "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die." At best all the saints have yet done in their attempt to appropriate the heritage of Canaan, is to "taste" a little honey. But the whole land is before us. May God help us to press in by

the Spirit and possess our possession even now in the day of battle. By His grace we are well able to overcome.