

## **THE ROAD TO CHRIST'S TABLE AND CHRIST'S THRONE**

Preached on Lord's Day Evening, August 15, 1841, at Salem Chapel, Landport, Portsmouth

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28, 29, 30

Many persons profess to believe that in theory which they deny in practice. For instance all who call themselves Christians profess that we can only be saved by the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. But when we come to what that salvation is; when we come to explain in what manner that salvation takes effect, we find that the very persons who profess to believe that salvation is only through the blood and obedience of the Lamb, are mixing up human merit and creature exertions with it. So again, few who call themselves Christians would deny that the children of God should walk in the footsteps of Jesus; that he left us "an example" that we should follow his steps; that only so far as we follow him in the regeneration, only so far as we have the mind of Christ, and have his image stamped upon us, are we rightly called by his name. But when we come to define and minutely explain what it is to walk in the footsteps of Christ and what it is to have the mind, the spirit, and the image of Christ, we find that men differ as widely in opinion as to what these solemn realities are, almost as much as they differ from one another in stature, features, and complexion.

But every living soul will be taught sooner or later by the Holy Ghost, each in his measure to walk in Christ's footsteps. Whatever delusions it may be for a time wrapped up in,

whatever gins, traps, or snares it may for a while be entangled with, whatever darkness of mind, unbelief of heart, carnality, worldliness, or confusion it may be for a season perplexed by, every living soul will, sooner or later, be brought to walk as Jesus walked.

The words from which I hope to speak this evening, were addressed by the Lord of life and glory when he was taking his farewell of his mourning disciples. His heart seemed open at this special season to tell them the secrets that were lodged in his bosom—and he dropped most precious words of instruction and counsel, not merely for their benefit but for ours also; not merely for their edification, out for the edification of the whole church of God to whom the Scriptures should ever come. Not seeing fit at this moment to point out Judas especially, he addresses himself to his disciples as the twelve and says: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

We will the Lord enabling us, take up these words in the precise order in which they lie before us, desiring to handle them in such an experimental way as the blessed Spirit may direct us. The Lord of life and glory when he sojourned here below had temptations. We read **and a remarkable passage it is Heb 5:8** that "though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered!" nay, that so violent were his temptations, and so poignant his sufferings, that "in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." The whole of the Lord's life here below from the cradle to the cross was a life of temptation, trial, and

suffering. He came into this world for the express purpose of suffering, it was a part of his mediatorial work; a holy body was prepared for him **Heb 10:5** that it might agonise and die; and a spotless soul, that it might be "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." **Mt 26:38**

1. The word "temptations" in the text applies not only to what is generally understood by the term temptations, that is sufferings from Satan, assaults from the prince of darkness, but the word is sometimes used in the Scripture to signify trials. Thus it is said "God tempted Abraham;" **Ge 22:1** but he could not tempt Abraham in the way of bringing evil before him.—God is not the author of sin God forbid! He cannot tempt his people with evil: he cannot introduce sin into man's heart. The apostle James speaks most decisively on this point. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" **Jas 1:13** It is an awful error—a damnable doctrine, that God is the author of sin; and all the passages brought forward to prove it are misunderstood or perverted. "The evil," which God is said "to create," **Isa 45:7** and "to do" **Am 3:6** is not moral evil, but affliction and chiefly, as is evident from the context, the scourge of war. "I make peace, and create evil." He brings the olive branch, and he brings the sword. "Shall a trumpet" **the trumpet of war** "be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil **in a city, not in a man's heart, but the scourge of war, famine or disease in the streets** and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets." But when and where did he reveal to them that either he created sin in the first instance, or ever now infuses it into man's heart? Such a doctrine could find no place in hell itself. The devils know too well that they were created pure and that the holy Jehovah did not make them what they now are. A

doctrine so insulting to God, so blasphemous a lie, can only lodge in the corrupt understanding of heretics. When he tempted Abraham, he **tried** him, for that is the meaning of the words—put his faith love and obedience to the trial. So the Old Testament saints, of whom the world was not worthy, are said **Heb 11:37**, to have been "tempted," where from the connection it evidently means were "tried." "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were **tempted**, **"tried" by persecutions to abandon their profession** were slain with the sword." And thus the word "temptations" in the text includes, I believe, not merely temptations—properly so called; that is temptations from Satan as the prince of darkness, but also what we understand more particularly by the word, **"trials."**

The disciples, as followers of their Lord, had many trials to encounter—such as the scoffing and jeers of a persecuting world, as well as the opposition enmity and hatred of the professing church. The Scribes and Pharisees, who made up the bulk of the professing church in the time of the Lord, treated all who professed themselves his followers much as their descendants in modern times treat the true disciples of Jesus now—they put them out of the synagogue, and loaded their names with contempt and infamy. This heavy trial the disciples endured, and continued with Jesus partaking of his reproach. We read of the stoney ground hearers who receive the word with joy and endure for a while, but when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, immediately they are offended and fall away. The disciples were the reverse of this. But some may go farther than the stoney ground hearers: they may resemble those of whom we read, **Joh 6**, who convinced by his miracles believed him to be the Messiah, and professed to follow him as his disciples, until he told them that unless they eat his flesh and drank his blood, they had no life in them. As long as he

wrought miracles in feeding their bodies and healing their sicknesses, they followed him in spite of reproach and persecution; but when he came to set forth the mysteries of vital godliness, and the necessity of an experimental religion, "from that time they went back, and walked no more with him." **Joh 6:66** But the disciples weathered every storm—persecution without, and infidelity within, the malice of foes, and the treachery of false friends. They continued to stand by their Lord however hated, despised, and persecuted; they continued to hear their share of those outward trials with which he was loaded, their measure of that reproach which was heaped upon him, and to be hated of all men for his name's sake. Thus they continued with him in his temptations, not drawn aside by smiles, not driven aside by frowns, not terrified by the threatenings of the professing church stamping them as madmen, or antinomians, disciples of a glutton and a wine-bibber, not led away by their own self-righteous hearts, not beat back by the difficulties and trials of the way; but taught by that Spirit, which Peter was so blessedly strengthened by when he said, "Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," they cleaved to their Lord in faith and affection, upheld by his power from falling away, **for "those whom the Father gave him he kept,"** Joh 17:12 and endured to the end.

But though the word "temptations" includes outward trials, yet it more specially refers to those of an inward nature.

Satan brought all his artillery to bear upon the Son of God. He was permitted to try him to the utmost. It was the purpose of God, that his well-beloved Son should be tempted like as we are; and if you are God's there has not a single temptation beset you, which did not beset the Lord of life and glory. Are we tempted sometimes to doubt a God of providence? The Lord Jesus was similarly tempted, when

Satan said to him, "Command these stones to be made bread." Are we tempted to vain confidence and presumption? The Lord of life and glory was similarly tempted, when the prince of darkness said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence." Are we often tempted to disbelieve that we are the children of God, and exercised at times with distressing suspicions and fears lest we have only a profession of religion, without its experimental power in our hearts? Satan brought the same temptation against the Lord, when he said. "IF **thou be the Son of God:**" as Hart says. "O what an if was there!" Are we tempted to turn our backs upon the Lord for the sake of what the world offers? The Lord Jesus was similarly tempted when Satan said that he would give him all that he presented before his eyes when he took him upon the mountain top. Are we ever tempted to turn from the true God and worship idols? The Lord of life and glory was similarly tempted when Satan with his infernal pride, and cursed impudence proposed to the Son of God to worship him. The Son of God worship Satan? But some shall say, 'was Jesus tempted like as I am? How can that be? He was pure, spotless and holy; but I am full of corruption from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet. The Lord of life and glory had a perfect, unfallen nature, a holy human body, and a holy human soul, taken into union with Deity; but I have a fallen nature defiled in body and polluted in soul. Can there be a resemblance in our temptations?' I would ask what is it in you that feels the burden of temptation when Satan injects his blasphemies into your mind? Have you not a principle within you which recoils with horror from the temptation, when he seeks to infuse into your mind his own infernal enmity and malice against God? Is there not a something in you which is grieved, **I was going to say** tortured by these fiery darts. Is it not the new nature? and is not that nature spotless and holy? Is it not born of God, and therefore as holy as God is holy? and pure as God is pure?

Thus just in the same way as your pure and holy nature that is born of God is grieved and distressed by the fiery darts of Satan, so was the holy soul of the Lord of life and glory ten thousand times more grieved and tortured by the temptations of Satan presented before his pure and spotless mind. The disciples did not forsake their Lord, though so sorely buffeted with these temptations, nay more, they, according to the measure of their faith, partook of them individually and personally, suffering as well as sympathising with him, and wounded, though in a far less degree, by arrows from the same bow. And thus disciples now continue with Jesus in his temptations by suffering as members with their covenant head walking the greater part of them in a daily path of trouble and sorrow—daily tempted by Satan, by the world, and by their own evil hearts; day by day tempted to do everything from which their spiritual nature recoils; day by day tempted to do things which are hateful in the eyes of a pure God, and to them too when in their right mind.

But if those only are disciples who are exercised by temptations, and continue to endure them as fellow-sufferers with Christ what a two-edged sword is this to cut off thousands of presumptuous professors! What hundreds of professing people are there who never never groaned beneath temptation in their lives! what hundreds who fight with bitter sarcasm, and "their tongue as an arrow shot out," against the people of God who are exercised with temptations! What hundreds who would strip out of the Bible every line that speaks of temptations as lying in the path to glory! But this text, as a sharp two-edged sword, cuts off every one professing to be a follower of Christ, who knows not temptations, and continues not with Jesus in his temptations.

2. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." For whom is this kingdom appointed? For the presumptuous, the proud, the hypocritical, and the self-righteous? no not for these." "I appoint unto **you** "—you that "have continued with me in my temptations;" you that are tempted and exercised: you that walk in the paths of tribulation; you that follow in the print of the footsteps of a suffering Jesus; you that know the painful exercises of temptation, and yet are strengthened with strength in your inner man, to "resist even unto blood, striving against sin" so as not to be carried away or overwhelmed by it. What kingdom is this? It is the same kingdom that the Father hath given to Jesus. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Now what is the kingdom which God the Father appointed unto his dear Son? Is it to sit upon a throne like an earthly monarch? To wear a diadem, and carry a sceptre? "My kingdom," said Jesus, "is not of this world," **John 18:36** The kingdom of the Lord of life and glory was to make an end of sin, to abolish death, and destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; to reign spiritually in the hearts of his chosen; to be king and Lord in Sion, and to rule over the willing affections of his subjects; a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; a kingdom of grace set up by the Blessed Spirit in the heart; a spiritual kingdom which none can see or enter into but those that are born of the Spirit. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and consists in having a people to see him as he is, a people to glorify him, a people to love him, and a people for him to love. A kingdom cannot be the same to sovereign and subject, when it is of an earthly and temporal nature. Were the earthly monarch to impart his kingdom to his subjects, it would cease to be a kingdom, and become a republic. But not so with a spiritual kingdom. Jesus does not diminish his own grace by imparting it to his people, nor lessen his own joy by shedding it abroad in their hearts, nor



sully his own glory by communicating of it to them. The sun has lost no light nor warmth by the countless millions of rays that have issued from it since it was first created. Nor does the glorious Sun of righteousness lose the fulness that is in him by communicating of his grace and glory. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, unexhausted and inexhaustible. Then this kingdom which he appoints to his tried and tempted disciples is the kingdom of grace in the heart; the kingdom of God in the soul; the presence of Jesus Within; the manifestation of that kingdom which is spoken of in Daniel **Da 2:44**, as set up on the ruins of all the other kingdoms, when it has broken them in pieces. Thus temptations prepare the way for the kingdom; temptations are the necessary and indispensable forerunners of the kingdom. Just as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands fell upon the feet of the image, and "brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," "so do temptations, falling upon our standing in self, break to pieces that image of our idolatry, and make our pride, our wisdom, our strength, our holiness, our righteousness, and all our fleshly religion to "become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors." Thus temptations pave the way for the manifestation and "setting up of that internal kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but shall stand for ever and ever." Temptations, like a sharp lancet, let out the life blood of that awful presumption which has so inflated and puffed up the Calvinistic churches. Pressed down by temptations, the soul cries and groans that Jesus would himself say to these winds and waves, "Peace, be still." By these temptations, however, does the Lord of the temple, as with a whip of small cords, drive out the money-changers, and spoil their trafficking, by pouring out their money, and overthrowing their tables in the heart. We read, that we must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"—that is the kingdom of grace as experimentally revealed in the soul. There is no entering

into it, so as to know it, see it, feel it, realise it, and experience the divine effects of it but through tribulation. Temptation and tribulation are not the kingdom, but they so lie in the road that there is no entering into the kingdom without passing through them. The mud and mire that lie in the road cannot be said to be the way, but they so lie in the way that he who travels by it must travel through them. Whatever high-sounding words men may use about the liberty of the gospel, and however confident they may be of their standing in that liberty, their liberty is licentiousness and delusion, unless they have had the kingdom of God set up in their souls by the Holy Ghost. And if they have had the inward manifestation of that kingdom, they are acquainted with temptation. No untried, unexercised professor, then, ever knew anything about this inward kingdom of peace and joy in believing. His peace is that of the strong man armed who keeps the palace, and whose goods are in peace.

But again wherever this kingdom is set up it produces visible effects. Do they know then anything of this kingdom who are slaves to lust? Do they experience the power of this kingdom who are wrapped up in presumption, or engrossed with covetousness, or mixed up with dead professors? If a man has the kingdom of God manifested in him, he is more or less a new creature, It has separated him from a world lying dead in profession, and brought him into some measure of communion with the Lord of life and glory.

The subjects of this kingdom will be continually shot at from every quarter. The devil with all his infernal malice will vex and harass the souls of those who are partakers of this kingdom. Professing churches, having a name to live while dead before God, having a form of godliness whilst they inwardly and outwardly deny the power thereof, will shoot bitter arrows against all who are the subjects of this

kingdom. Heady, notional Calvinists, with liberty on their tongue and bondage in their heart, conscience-seared Antinomians, easy slipshod formalists, all of every grade and class who hate and despise a feeling experimental religion, and every one in a profession who has a secret conviction that he knows nothing of divine teachings and manifestations, will bend their bow openly or secretly against those who continue with Jesus in his temptations, and to whom he appoints an internal kingdom of grace and power. Nay some of the keenest and most envenomed shafts are drawn from the quiver of a man's own infidel, unbelieving nature. But the Son of God has **appointed** his tempted followers a kingdom, and it rests upon eternal decree and covenant faithfulness.

3. But there are two circumstances connected with the experimental possession of this kingdom. The first is an eating and drinking at Christ's table in his kingdom. The table of the Lord's supper is merely typical of this, merely a figure of the table here spoken of. This table seems to point out two things—the foretaste of bliss below, and the full enjoyment of glory above. As the kingdom of Christ begins below, and is consummated above, commences with grace and ends in glory, so the table at which the subjects of his kingdom eat and drink, is spread below and spread above. This table then, viewed as spread on earth, is a feast which he sets out for his friends, according to those words, "Eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly O beloved." And thus he says to his disciples: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what the Lord doeth; but I have called you **friends**, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." **Joh 15:15**. This table is spread with every blessing that a poor, needy, naked soul can desire. There is blood to purge away sin; righteousness to justify us from all things from which we could not be justified by the

law of Moses; grace sufficient for all our necessities: strength for all our infirmities; power to help us in all our difficulties; glory provided that we may see his glory and be changed into the same image. But we must come to this table poor, hungry, needy, naked and distressed. We read **Lu 14:16** of a certain man who made a great supper and bade many. But who came to this feast? All the rich and possessed of property "with one consent began to make excuse." One had bought a piece of ground and wanted to see it, to examine its present state and capabilities of improvement. He had no mind to come. Another, a wealthy farmer, had just bought five yoke of oxen, and he wished to go and see whether they were worth the money and would suit his purpose. He prayed to be excused. A third had just taken a wife, and he could not leave her to come. Their tastes, desires and dispositions were not that way. Want and hunger had not bitten them nor sharpened their appetite for the feast. And who came in to partake of the supper? The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind?

So it is spiritually. This table is spread for those who have an appetite; but this appetite is only produced by temptations. It is spiritually as it is naturally. Labour sharpens appetite. Thus those only that labour under powerful temptations, that toil and sweat by reason of the difficulties of the way, the straitness of the path, the ruggedness of the road, have an appetite for this heavenly table. It is the way-worn pilgrims only who want to feed upon the blood and love of the Lamb, to feast their souls upon his glorious righteousness, and have their hearts blessedly established in the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Those only who are poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst after heavenly food, and whose longing souls cry out after the living God, really want to sit as excepted guests at the marriage table, clothed in the garments of imputed righteousness. Such as

these who have been brought down to the starving point, cannot be satisfied, like the full-fed, with merely looking at the provisions of the gospel, as set forth in the promises of Scripture, but they want to feast upon them, so as to enjoy their sweetness, and derive solid nutriment and strength from them. The Lord's supper, to receive which many deem to be the turn and substance of all religion and almost a passport to heaven, is but a type and shadow of this spiritual feast. Though when received in faith, it is a blessed ordinance of God, it is but a feeble and imperfect figure of feeding at that table which is spiritually provided for the poor and needy. But there is a table spread above, as well as a table spread below, and the guests at the one are the only admitted guests at the other. The same food is set upon both tables, for the one is but the foretaste of the other. Love is the provision below, and love is the provision above. But here there are only drops and crumbs from the heavenly table, and these rarely and sparingly given; above, the full banquet is spread. Here sickness often spoils the appetite, and unbelief drops the food midway between the table and the mouth; there nothing intervenes to mar eternal and inexhaustible enjoyment. Men may talk about the joys of heaven and awfully delude themselves by thinking they shall have a part in them; but none will sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, but the bride, the Lamb's wife **Re 19:7**, that has endured temptation, and come off more than conqueror, through him who loved her and gave himself for her.

4. But there is another promise annexed to continuing with Christ in his temptations. "And sit on **thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The word throne does not imply anything of an earthly nature, nor point to any temporal dignity. Much has been said, and many passages of Scripture have been brought forward to prove that the saints of Christ

will possess an earthly kingdom, and sit on thrones of temporal power and authority. But what comfort could it give the living soul according to the views of those who thus literally interpret the unfulfilled prophecies, to sit upon an earthly throne? Would the prospect of some future earthly power and dignity satisfy the longing desires of the heart, make Christ precious, and take off the burden of sin, or bear the soul up under the storms and tempests of the present life? No; what the living soul desires is to sit in heavenly places in Christ, to lean his head upon Christ's bosom, and be favoured with sweet and holy communion with the Lord of life and glory.

These thrones, then, are not thrones of earthly dominion. Jesus says **Re 3:21**, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." From this promise of Jesus we learn two things. 1. That to sit on a throne, is not limited to the disciples who followed him whilst on earth. The promise is to him that overcomes. 2. We learn from it that this throne is not of an earthly, temporal nature. Does Jesus sit on such a throne now? Is it not a spiritual throne, a dominion of grace and glory? And as the table begins below, so does the throne begin below. On earth commences the foretaste of dominion, as well as the foretaste of joy.

Thus, when temptations have pressed hard upon the soul, when these temptations have whetted his appetite for spiritual food, when the Holy Ghost has brought him as a guest to the spiritual banquet, and he sits at Christ's table eating and drinking spiritually of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, then he sits upon a throne, inheriting a measure of the glory which is hereafter to be revealed. He that conquers sin, denies self, overcomes the world, and resists Satan, sits spiritually on a throne, and, as he can only thus

conquer in Christ's strength, he may be said to sit with Christ on his throne. Christ conquered through suffering, destroyed death by dying, abolished the law by undergoing its last penalty, dethroned Satan by being made a little lower than the angels, put an end to sin by bearing it in his own body on the tree, and overcame the world by being crucified by its princes and rulers. He conquered by weakness, and overcame by suffering. And thus his disciples by suffering with him reign with him, and sit upon his throne of grace here and glory hereafter, by continuing with him in his temptations, and by being delivered by his power out of them.

But they are said, in the text, to sit on a throne for a specific purpose—to judge the "twelve tribes of Israel."

This cannot be literally true. The genealogies of the twelve tribes are lost; their very names are now unknown. The ten tribes were carried away into captivity by Shalmaneser King of Assyria, **2Ki 17:23**, and never returned; and the two remaining tribes were dispersed, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, all over the world; so that the twelve tribes no longer exist literally and nationally. As, then, the table at which the disciples are fed is a spiritual feast, and the throne on which they sit is a spiritual throne, so must the persons whom they judge, and the judgment which they exercise be taken spiritually also.

And therefore these "twelve tribes of Israel" must signify the spiritual family of God; or the professing church of Christ here below. The twelve tribes of Israel seem to have some spiritual reference to the different experience of the people of God. All the children of God are not led in precisely the same path: and though there is a family resemblance in all, yet the features of the countenance differ in each. Some are plunged

at first into deep convictions and soul distress; others learn the evil of sin and their own state as sinners more slowly and gradually. Some have to wade through many sore temporal afflictions and troubles; others pass through life with a smaller measure of temporal trials. Some have a deep acquaintance with their own hearts, a sound judgment in truth, and a keen discernment of men and things, whilst others of the living family seem to know little of themselves, and less of others. Some are sweetly delivered by a blessed revelation of the Son of God, so as to bring them out fully into the blessedness of the gospel. Others are delivered less powerfully and clearly, and have much difficulty to make their calling and election sure. Some are blessed with strong faith and a large measure of filial confidence! others are well nigh consumed by doubts and fears all their lives. Some are pardoned at first, and their earliest days are their best; others receive their pardon late, and their last days are their brightest. Some are much preserved in a consistent walk all their days; and others so totter and reel, as to distress their own souls, and wound the cause of God. Some hear and receive the truth from their first outset; and others are brought to see and believe it only toward the close of their days. Some breathe forth their happy souls in the full triumph of faith; and others, who have seen the Sun of righteousness, die with a cloud resting upon their minds.

Thus, the people of God seem to be divided into tribes, for we do not find every individual in the church of God to have an experience peculiar to himself, but that there are classes into which the whole family may be divided; the experience of the individual being in its leading features the experience of the class. It is, then, these tribes of the spiritual Israel, these classes of the one great school, these families of the holy nation, these divisions of the grand army of the church militant, that the disciples of Christ were to judge. That is,



those who have continued with Christ in his temptations, and have been raised from the dunghill to sit upon the throne, possess thereby a secret court of judgment, whereby they are able to pass a decision upon the experience of God's people. They have weights and scales into which they put all professors, and thus sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. We must hear in mind that "all are not Israel which are of Israel;" and therefore, in judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they will distinguish between the spiritual seed of Abraham, and those that merely call themselves by his name. Their judgment is not final nor infallible, and consists more in discernment than in passing sentence, according to those words, "He that is spiritual judgeth **or discerneth**, margin, all things;" **1Co 2:15**. But in our day of universal philanthropy, every minister that stands up to distinguish between the living and the dead in Jerusalem, is wondered at for his singularity, and cried down for his bad and bitter spirit. But I believe that the work of a spiritually taught, and divinely commissioned minister is to do what the spirit here describes: "To sit judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" so to enter into the experience of the living family, and so to detect and lay bare all imitations and counterfeits, as to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But this spirit of discernment, whereby he sits judging the twelve tribes of Israel, will bring with it a heavy reproach. If he will class together professors and living souls; if he will take into the arms of universal charity all who say they believe in Jesus Christ, and receive as brethren, without any doubt or scruple, all that hold the same doctrines, and are of "the same faith and order," he is praised and admired. But if he comes with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and thrusts it up to the hilt in rotten hearts, if he speaks to a man's conscience, if he traces out the work of grace upon the soul, if he pulls down rotten props and vain expectations, he must endure what his master bore before him, to be called a devil,

and **mad**, and suffer the reproach of men, and the scorn of the professing church.

It is not the tribes of the spiritual Israel, but the tribes of the professing Israel whose enmity and spleen is excited by the judgment he passes on them. He having passed through temptation, having continued with the Lord in his temptations, having received a measure of Christ's kingdom in his heart, being exalted to sit in some feeble measure with Christ on his throne, is enabled to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, by bringing men up to the standard of experience, and to the teachings of the Holy Ghost in the heart. And therefore an experimental ministry will always bring with it a cross, will always be hated and opposed in every town and village into which it comes.

When a man once begins in the strength of the Lord to pull down the lofty professor, and exalt the humble and meek, to feed the hungry with good things, and send the rich empty away, when he boldly contends against all creature religion, and declares that he who dies without being taught by the Holy Ghost to know sin and salvation will die under the wrath of God, he will immediately be set down as a man of a bitter and censorious spirit. A thousand tongues and pens will rise up against him, and false rumours and reproaches will be launched against him from every side. But let him do the work of the Lord faithfully, and he will bring him safely through them all.

Now, friends, can we bear to be put up in the scale? If you have the right religion you need not fear to be weighed up. What tradesman is it that trembles when he sees the surveyors of weights and measures going round the town? Is it he who has honest weights upon his counter, or he whose measures are short and whose weights are light? Who fears

the revenue cutter but the smuggler? who shrinks from the police but the thief? who trembles at the judge but the felon? So the dishonest in religion, whose own consciences, when not seared as with a hot iron, testify against them, may well tremble under a heart-searching ministry; may well turn away saying—'This man is too bitter and uncharitable in spirit for me to hear.' It is not his spirit that gives offence, but it is his discerning and firm finger pressing upon a rotten spot in your heart that makes you wince. But if God has made you honest and sincere before him, you are saying—Let my religion be weighed up; I know that one day I shall be put in the balance, and stand before the Judge of quick and dead. All things are naked and open before the eyes of him with whom I have to do. O let me be tried in this life, and not cast in the life to come. Let me have righteousness laid to the line and equity to the plummet here, that "the trial of my faith may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

I will just recapitulate and run over a few particulars of the work which I have been endeavouring to trace out from the text. Let us bear in mind that the disciples at this period were very weak in faith. They had received a measure of divine teaching; they had experienced a measure of the Spirit's work in their hearts; but they had not been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. That was reserved for the day of Pentecost. They knew, however temptation; they knew what it was to be hated by the world, to be cast out by the professing church, to be shot at by Satan, to be exercised and distressed in their own souls. They knew also what it was to receive some measure of Christ's kingdom into their hearts, for it was the grace and beauty of Christ which attracted their affections. "Lord to whom shall we go," said Peter for them all, "thou hast the words of eternal life."

We see here the path in which the redeemed walk. Let us try our standing by it. Has your religion then, friends, ever yet entailed upon you the hatred of the world? the scorn of the professing church? the malace of Satan? and the enmity of those who have a name to live while they are dead? Are you a people separate from the world? Is your name a butt for malace to shoot at? If not, you are not followers of the persecuted and despised Nazarene. If not, you know nothing of following in the footsteps of him who was despised and rejected of men, and whose name was a by-word among the people. But what know you of distressing temptations? Have you ever been tempted to infidelity,—to despair—to presumption—to everything hateful and horrible, and yet in the strength of the Lord God, have been enabled to fight and "resist even unto blood striving against sin?" The Lord has appointed for such a kingdom "I appoint unto you a kingdom." 'O,' says some poor tried soul, 'I want to get at this kingdom. I can follow you well enough when you talk of trials and temptations. I can go along with you well enough when you talk of the pantings of the soul after Christ—how the soul is exercised with fears of perishing—how one tosses upon the restless midnight couch, panting and groaning that the Lord would reveal himself with power. And when you speak of hungering and thirsting after righteousness—crying to God from a burthened heart, under a distressing sense of guilt. I can go along with you in all this. But when you preach that there is a kingdom, and that that kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; I stop short at the outer door, I cannot get in. I stand knocking, but he opens not the palace. I stand in the cold, but he sends no message for me to come into his chamber. I cry and pray, but he seems deaf to all my intreaties.

Now look at the disciples. Even after the Lord had departed and given them the promise of a Comforter, had they not to

wait till the day of Pentecost to be baptized by the Holy Ghost? But the manifestation of this kingdom is appointed, is decreed, is predestinated, is determined, unalterably and irreversibly determined. "I" said the Son of God, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." It is a part of my eternal decrees, a part of my irreversible council. I—the Son of God. I—of my own authority—of my own right "I appoint unto you a kingdom."

If then he has appointed a kingdom, the soul passing through temptation must wait until it is revealed; it must struggle on until it is endued with power from on high. It must wait on the Lord, sighing at his feet, crying unto him until he enables it to believe in his name, and say with an unwavering tongue, "My Lord and my God."

To you then that know temptation, that are exercised with trials, that are following after Jesus as the hope of your never dying souls—to you, as well as to the apostles, our Lord speaks. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, &c." To you that are not getting into a secure path, into a doctrinal rest, into antinomian sloth and presumption; that are not seated upon some lofty mountain where there is neither dew nor rain; that are not buried in the world, nor overwhelmed with pride; but are lying in poverty of spirit at Christ's feet, seeking after the drops of his atoning blood; and determined with the apostle to "know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified," to you the Lord speaks, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." Now do I not, **to those I speak who are distressed in conscience**, do I not describe the longing desires of your souls, when I speak of an inward kingdom of grace as revealed and set up by the power of the Holy Ghost? You know that nothing but a revealed salvation will do for you. You have tried doctrines, and found that unless

the Blessed Spirit sealed them upon your heart, they contained no power or savour. You have tried ordinances and though they are good in their place, you have found that in themselves they afforded no comfort. You have tried reading books and authors, and they have left you dark, and stupid, and dead. You have tried hearing ministers, and yet you often go away from preaching with a heart more cast down than when you entered the chapel. You have tried the good opinion of man, and found it to be a broken reed; you have tried your own heart, and found it treacherous; your own resolutions, and they have been overcome; your own strength, and found it weakness; your own nature, and found it rotten to the core. And therefore, being stripped and made poor, and needy and naked, you are sighing after a manifested Jesus—after the sweet visitations of his love to your soul. And as you are engaged in your daily employment, as you are driving the bolt into the ship, or standing behind the counter, or holding the stilts of the plough, or you of the other sex, plying the needle, or engaged in some household work, there is a secret prayer going up from the heart unto the Lord. There in an inward sighing, panting, crying of your heart after him "as the hart panteth after the water brooks." Then to you saith the Lord, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, to eat and drink at my table—to eat my flesh which is meat indeed, and drink my blood which is drink indeed." "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." O poor hungry soul, are you not longing for these spiritual delicacies? And you who have a spiritual appetite, are you not hungering after this heavenly banquet? Is not all insufficient but Jesus' blood, and grace and glory? But mark this, when you come to sit upon thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; when you say 'this man's experience is defective, and, that man's experience is rotten'; when you declare that this man is nothing but a presumptuous hypocrite, and that man is bolstered up with a name to live

while dead; when you tell the children of God that they must sink lower in the depths of humiliation, before they can sit upon Christ's throne, that they must have a broken heart, a contrite spirit, and a tender conscience, before Jesus will reveal himself to their souls; when you judge the twelve tribes of Israel by putting the plummet into their hearts, expect to be hated and despised of all men for Jesus' sake; expect to be harrassed by the devil, to be tempted by your own hearts, to be abhorred by the professing church.

But expect also to have the sweet enjoyments and heavenly consolations of Jesus, when he takes you away from men to converse with himself, and withdraws you from the noise of tongues, to reveal himself with glory and power in your soul.