

## **UNION WITH CHRIST IN DEATH AND LIFE**

A Sermon Preached on Lord's Day Morning, June 27, 1841, at  
Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street

"It is a faithful saying: for it we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." 2 Tim. 2:11-13

We live in a peculiar day, one in which there is a widely spread profession of religion; but it seems that in proportion to the width of the surface is the shallowness of the water. In the days of our forefathers the profession of vital godliness was like a river hemmed in by banks; persecution, and opposition on each side restrained to a narrow channel the river of profession. But these banks have been in a measure broken down; or at least considerable breaches have been made in them. The spirit of the age in which we live has taken what is called a liberal cast, and the removal of the banks has suffered the water, which was once penned in a narrow channel, to extend itself widely over the level fields. And what has been the consequence? Instead of flowing on, the river has now become stagnant; instead of being deep, it has now become shallow; instead of being scarcely visible, as being hidden by high banks, it has now so widely spread, as to arrest the eye in every direction. But vitality and depth are wanting in this wide-spread sea of water. However men may take up a profession of religion, the real work of God upon the soul will be confined to a few. The strait gate and narrow way are not to be widened by men endeavouring to force down the bars and door-posts. The words of the Lord will still stand, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The real family of God are therefore in this day exposed to

temptations that our ancestors knew but little of. We are so apt to learn the "way of the Gentiles;" "evil communications" so easily "corrupt good manners;" the coldness of the churches when brought into near contact is so apt to communicate the same chillness and torpor to the living family of God. And thus one temptation of God's children in these days in which we live, is, to be satisfied with the superficial, thin, flimsy religion which is so current, instead of the deep, massive, solid, weighty religion which we find traced out in the Scriptures of truth, and which the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of God's living family.

The beginning and the end of all vital godliness consists in a union with Christ. It is the beginning, because if a man has no eternal union with Christ, he never will be brought into communion with him. And it is the end **if end it can be called, for eternity knows neither end nor beginning** of all religion, because this union will be consummated in eternal bliss. The Scriptures of the New Testament are continually setting forth the nature of the union betwixt Christ and his church. Every act of Christ upon earth—that is, every marked act, is set forth in the Scriptures of truth as being, in some way, connected with his union with the church. When he was circumcised, it is said, "we are circumcised in him" **Col 2:11**; when he was crucified, we are said to be "crucified with him" **Ga 2:20**; when he died, we are still said to have died with him **Ro 6:8**; when he was interred in the sepulchre, we are said to be "buried with him" **Ro 6:4**; when he was raised up from the tomb, we are said to have "risen with him" **Col 2:12**; and when he ascended to sit in glory, it is said still, "God has made us sit together in heavenly places in him" **Eph 2:6**. The Scriptures of truth then trace out this union of Christ and his members, in well nigh every action and suffering during his transitory abode upon earth; and thus they set forth in the most prominent

light, that in all that he did and suffered, there was a union, an eternal union with his beloved people.

In the words, from which I hope, with God's blessing, to speak this morning, we have this union with Christ very experimentally and sweetly set forth. And depend upon it, friends, unless we know something in our souls of the solemn realities that are set forth in these words of Scripture, there is no evidence that the God of all grace has begun his work upon our hearts. We will then, with God's blessing, endeavour, so far as the Lord shall enable us, to trace out, how this union with Christ is manifested in the way of experience, that the Lord may encourage us to believe, that we have felt and known something of the fruits of an eternal union with the Lord of life and glory.

"It is a faithful saying." This expression occurs more than once in the epistles of Paul; and the meaning of the words seems to be this, it is a saying in every way to be depended upon; it is a truth demanding implicit credence; it is a solemn verity which every believer is called upon to receive; it is no "cunningly devised fable;" no forged lie; but a matter pregnant with importance, a subject of deep and vital import, one which deserves to be enshrined in the conscience of every living soul, and one to which we are called to pay the utmost heed. Thus the apostle says, **1Ti 1:15**, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Whenever, then, you find a passage thus prefaced, "it is a faithful saying," it seems as though special attention was intended to be called to it.

What then is this "faithful saying" that now lies before us? It includes several branches, and yet all these branches connected with a vital union with Christ.

I. The first branch of this "faithful saying" is, "if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." Then there is such a thing as being dead with Christ; and this death with Christ is made, so to say, a condition, or, to speak more correctly, an evidence of our being alive with Christ. The way in which God works, is one that contradicts all the reason of man; one that baffles all the plans and ideas of the creature. The way of God is to bring life out of death, faith out of unbelief, hope out of despondency. Not that the one is the parent of the other; but the Lord the Spirit, by his internal operations, brings the soul into certain states; and then, when he has brought the soul into those states, he communicates a grace which is in perfect contrast with those states, and is precisely adapted to them. Before, then, we can have a manifestation of "living with Christ," we must have some experience in our souls what it is to be "dead with Christ;" because the apostle makes the one an evidence of the other, and not merely an evidence, but a precursor or forerunner of the other. "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him."

There seem to be two ways chiefly in which the soul is "dead with Christ." If we look at the operation of the law as a manifestation of the justice of God, the law was the cause of the death of Christ—that is to say, the law being broken by the church in whose place Christ stood, he, as a substitute and a surety, stood under its curse, and that curse was death. The original penalty was, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die;" and therefore, Jesus, when he stood forth as the surety and substitute of his people, had to endure that penalty, and die under that broken law. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." If, then, we are to die with Christ **and if we die not with Christ, we shall not live with Christ**, if we are to die with Christ, then we must die under the law

just as Jesus died under the law, or else there is no union with Christ in his death. There is no dying with Christ, unless we die in the same manner that Christ died; for unless we die experimentally as Christ died actually, we cannot be said, according to the Scriptures Of truth, to be "dead with Christ." Every one, then, that shall live with Christ, must die under the sentence of God's holy law; he must have the sentence of death in his soul, and be as effectually slain experimentally in his conscience, as ever Christ died under the weight of the law upon the cross of Calvary.

But if we look at what it is to die under the law, we are not to set up one rigorous standard of experience, and to say, that the death inflicted by the law must be a death of a uniform kind, or that the stroke of death must be inflicted in the same manner. All that are assembled here will die naturally; but perhaps there are not two persons in this chapel who shall die precisely the same death, or shall be brought by the same road into that dark valley. Some of us may die of lingering diseases; some of us may be cut down by a fever in a few days; some may gradually drop through old age into the tomb; and some, like one of your number who has been taken away since I have been among you, some may die after an illness of a few hours. And yet all die. And were the corpses to be laid out in the same gloomy chamber, we should see no distinction between him whose death had been after the lingering illness of years, or him who had died of a rapid disease in a few days. Each would lie cold, rigid, and motionless; each would wear the same pallid features of death in his countenance. So, spiritually, all the quickened family of God must die under the law—that is, they must, by a sentence of condemnation in their souls, be reduced to that state, that the law cannot save them from "the wrath to come," that righteousness is not to be obtained from it to please God, that they are utterly lost unless Christ steps

forward in their behalf, and comes into their souls as their Saviour. If a man, then, has not experienced in his conscience a sense of this inward death, he is not "dead with Christ;" and if he is not "dead with Christ," he has at present no evidence that he will live with Christ.

But further, Christ died under the weight of sin and transgression. "The Lord made to meet upon him the iniquities of us all;" "he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He died, therefore, under the weight of sin. The iniquities of his chosen people met upon his head, and sunk him first into death, and then into the tomb. Every living soul, then, that shall die with Christ spiritually and experimentally, must die too under the weight of sin—that is, he must know what it is so to experience the power and presence of sin in his carnal mind, so to feel the burden of his iniquities upon his guilty head, and to be so overcome and overpowered by inward transgression, as to be utterly helpless, and thoroughly unable to deliver himself from the dominion and rule of it in his heart. Now, there are some children of God, who seem, in a measure, unable to trace clearly in themselves that death under the law which I have been just speaking of. They have never been brought so powerfully under the law as others of God's children. And it is often a matter of questioning with them, and anxious questioning, too, whether they have ever had the sentence of death in their consciences, because they have not been plunged so deep into convictions as others, whose experience they have heard and read of. But, I believe, there is a spot to which every living child of God can come, however he may question whether he has experienced the curse of the law in his conscience because he has not felt such pangs of distress as others of God's children have undergone—and that is, that he feels the power of sin in his carnal mind, bringing guilt

and distress upon his conscience; that he experiences a burden upon his shoulders, which, unless removed, will sink him down into eternal perdition; and that he is deeply convinced that he has no power to subdue that sin which is continually striving and working in his carnal mind to bring him into guilt and bondage. Now, if you have never been brought to know the power of sin in your carnal mind, and to grieve and groan and sigh under the burden of it, you have no evidence that you are "dead with Christ."

But there is another way in which the soul dies with Christ. Christ not only died **under** the law and died **under** sin, but he died **unto** the law, and he died **unto** sin. As Paul speaks, "death" **which is the penalty of the law** "hath no more dominion over him;" for "in that he died, **he died unto sin once**,"—that is, Christ by fulfilling the requisitions of the law, died to the law, and when he was thus dead, the law was dead to him, and he was dead to it. When the law had killed him, it had done its utmost; when it had spent its curses upon his head, the law became a dead letter; it could do no more. It is the same with human laws: when the murderer has died upon the gallows, all the fury and vengeance of the law has been spent upon his head; the law is a dead letter to him, and he is dead to the law. So in a child of God there is not merely a dying **under** the law, but there is a dying **to** the law—that is, he being brought to a state, where he is slaughtered by the sentence of condemnation in his soul, and being utterly dead as to any expectation of righteousness from that source, he becomes dead to the law, as much dead to it, as though the law was not in existence, as much dead to it as the criminal that is taken down from the gallows and laid in his coffin, is dead to the statute against murder. Then if the Lord has killed you by his law, and brought you to a state of absolute death, so that the law cannot bring to you one atom of righteousness in which you can stand before

God accepted, by dying under the law, you are dead to the law; it is become a dead letter to you, and has no longer any power. Now, this is a point of experience, which it is one of the hardest things in the world to believe. And, in fact, no man can believe it until the Lord gives him faith to receive it, and until he can feelingly enter into the meaning of those words, "ye also are **dead to the law** by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." "But now we are delivered from the law, **that being dead** wherein we were held," **Ro 7:4,6**. We dead to it; it dead to us.

In the same way, there is a dying; **unto** sin. When a man is brought to this spot, that he cannot restrain the power of sin, that he is a poor, guilty, burdened wretch, in whose carnal mind sin will work and will reign, whether he will or not, and he then falls beneath the burden of sin in his soul, and prostrates himself at the foot of the cross without any help or without any hope in himself, then when there is some divine apprehension in his soul, through vital faith, of the substitution of Christ in his place; when there is some spiritual realisation of the death of Jesus upon the cross, and some drops of atoning blood fall from Christ's bleeding body into his heart, so as to "sprinkle it from an evil conscience," then that kindles, or rather manifests, that secret life which is received out of Christ; and having first died with Christ, then he begins manifestly to "live with Christ." But it was all along life in the soul, which really was the cause of the man's death; it was through life he felt the curses of the law; it was through life he groaned under the weight of sin; it was through life that he was enabled, in some measure, to apprehend and lay hold of the satisfaction and death of Jesus, so as to raise him up to a hope in God's mercy, and to kindle some degree of affection toward his dying Lord. He



begins now to live with Christ, and to derive supplies of strength out of Christ, of which he never knew anything before, and to receive life out of Jesus, whereby he is enabled to grapple with that death which is continually working in his carnal mind. When a man is led into any believing apprehension of a crucified Jesus, he then becomes delivered from and dead to the law. The union between the soul and the law, her first husband, is utterly broken, and Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, becomes enthroned in her affections; the second husband takes his bride, and manifests to her the riches of his dying love; and then the bride begins to live with Christ.

But in living with Christ, there will be, if I may use the expression, a dying life, or a living death, running parallel with all the experience of a child of God, who is brought to some acquaintance with the Lord Jesus. For instance, the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And again, he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Again, "I die daily." There is, then, in the life of a child of God a dying with Christ, as a matter of personal and continual experience; and just so far as we are continually dying with Christ, are we continually living with Christ. A daily death in life, and a daily life in death; and death being, as it were, that out of which life comes. For instance, there is the world, with all its charms, its attractions, its habits, and its temptations. We feel it to be a continual snare to us. Our eyes are caught with every passing vanity. The glare and blaze of the things of time and sense attract our eyes. And as the moth flits round the candle till it burns its wings, so are we continually flitting round the glare and blaze of the world, and get often sadly singed thereby. We ask the Lord, then, that he would separate us from the world, deliver us from

these snares, lead us up into some sweet communion with himself, bring us out of this carnal frame, that he would frame and favour us with some blessed enlargement of soul; enabling us to look to him, embrace him in our affections, and love him with a pure heart fervently. The Lord condescends to answer the prayer, but in a way that we little dream of. Instead of answering it by bringing in some sweet manifestation of Christ, he lays guilt upon our consciences; instead of coming to us in some easy, gentle way, so as to fill our hearts with love and praise, he withdraws himself to a greater distance than before. Fresh temptations bring us into a state of conflict, until we are forced to cast ourselves at the foot of the cross, as guilty, filthy rebels. Now, when the Lord has brought the soul there, and enables it by faith to get sight of a crucified Saviour, and by the Spirit's operation, it realises in some measure his substitution and sacrifice, there is a power communicated which separates the heart from this world and all its vanities; and getting separated in affection from the world, there is a new and inexpressible pleasure, sweetness, and blessedness felt, in pouring out the heart before him, which the world with all its vain charms never can produce within.

So with respect to sin, and the temptations to which we are continually exposed from the workings of our base heart. We may strive and struggle and resist and endeavour to overcome these temptations; but our own attempts are all ineffectual. A child might as well try to stop with his hands the coming up tide of the Thames, as a man to restrain sin by his own strength. He must be carried away by the flood of his sins, if he has no better standing; than the creature can give him. But when he is, in any measure, indulged with a sight of a dying Lord, when he gets, by faith a view of Christ's cross, and faith, hope, and love, with tenderness, sorrow, and contrition begin to rise up in his bosom, sin

becomes hated, temptation is weakened, and spirituality of mind produced; and the carnal mind for a while is deadened to those base desires which before were uppermost. In this way only does the soul get withdrawn from the power of sin, and led out of the temptations that sin is continually presenting.

Thus, too, with all those worldly plans that spring from the pride of our hearts the vain ambition whereby we would seek to raise ourselves in the scale of life, and still that hankering after respectability which so carnalises many of the family of God; when there is some entrance, by faith, into the humility of Christ, of what he was on earth, and the soul is enabled in some measure to apprehend him and his lowly image is, in some degree, stamped on the soul—what a poor, vain, wretched thing does all worldly ambition and respectability appear! We are, then, ready to say, "Lord, if thou wilt but give me thy smile, and indulge me with the light of thy countenance, if thou wilt but drop thy lovingkindness into my heart let me be anything. Oh! let me not be seeking after great things, but let me be seeking after the light of thy countenance, and the life of thy favour, and the sweet visitation of thy dying love." These spiritual feelings deaden the pride of life; and when the soul is really brought here, it says: "Oh! let me have Christ in my heart, and I am willing to part with all that the world esteems great and fair; and all that my carnal heart is continually craving." I do not say that these feelings last long; but in this way, and in this way only, does the soul ever get really separated from the pride of life, the ambition of rising in the scale of society, and the going out after vain things, which we are continually hankering after, and yet which never have profited us, but have always issued in disappointment, if not in wounds and guilt.

II. But we go on to consider another branch of this vital union with Christ. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." There can be no suffering with Christ, until there is a vital union with Christ; and no realization of it, until the Holy Ghost manifests this vital union by making Christ known, and raising up faith in our hearts, whereby he is embraced and laid hold of. And there is no "reigning with Christ," except there first be a "suffering with Christ." I believe that reigning, not only signifies a reigning with him in glory hereafter, but also a measure of reigning with him now, by his enthroning himself in our hearts. Christ reigns now in glory. "The Father has given all things into his hands;" "he must reign until he has put all enemies under his footstool." He has now "the keys of hell and of death." This "reigning" therefore, not merely sets forth his glorious reign in the realms of bliss above, but also the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ to the soul, whereby he reigns as Lord in the heart, enthrones himself in the affections, and "brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" **2Co 10:5**. "Suffering then with Christ" is the evidence and forerunner of "reigning with him."

But whence arose Christ's sufferings? One cause of them was the temptations with which he was exercised. For though he was not circumstanced as we are, in having a nature that could fall in with the temptation, he was exercised by having his holy soul tortured, grieved, and pained by those temptations which were presented to him. It is not our carnal mind that is grieved by temptation; it loves it, it is closely allied to it, it has a sensual communion with it; but it is the new nature that is tormented and grieved and pained by temptation. So, when Satan presented his temptations to the Lord of life and glory **though there was no corrupt nature in Jesus as in us, so as to fall in with temptation, for he was perfectly holy in body and soul, nor was there any**

**speck or spot or slightest taint of impurity in him**, yet these temptations presented to his spotless soul, created torture and grief and anguish. If the children of God, then, are "to suffer with Christ," they must suffer under temptation as Christ suffered. If we are the Lord's, we never can escape temptation—for if we are not in the path of temptation, we are out of the path that leadeth to glory. If we are not suffering, or have never suffered temptation with Christ, we shall not reign with Christ here or hereafter. Every living soul, then, must suffer temptation, for "blessed is the man that endureth temptations" **Jas 1:12**. Temptation in a living soul will produce suffering. When a child of God is tempted to infidelity, to inward blasphemy, or even to curse that which he most reverences and loves, to deny the Lord that bought him, or to commit sins which grieve the Spirit of God; these temptations must produce suffering in a tender conscience, they must be the cause of trouble in every quickened soul. We want, then, to escape these temptations, we cannot bear to have those dreadful thoughts work in our minds, those awful imaginations that are pent up and struggling to burst forth, so as to plunge us into perdition or despair. We should like to walk in some shady, quiet, secluded path, where the hot sun of temptation would never look upon and blacken us **So 1:6**; but if so, we should not suffer with Christ. The proof of our suffering with Christ is to suffer as he suffered, and therefore, as he "himself suffered, being tempted," so we must suffer being tempted too; as he had things of every kind brought before him, which would have been snares to him, had he had a nature that could have fallen in with them **for "he was in all points tempted like as we are"**, so must we have the same snares presented to us, and suffer as he suffered, by the temptations paining our new nature, and "vexing our righteous soul" **2Pe 2:8**.

Christ also suffered from the persecutions of men. How hated, despised, and reproached he was! So no living soul can escape a measure of persecution. Though now protected by law and the usages of society from open persecution, "the scourge of the tongue" will fall upon every living child of God. They can never long escape the enmity of the world, the opposition of professors, the malicious shafts of slander, and the envenomed arrows of calumny. A living soul can never escape having his fair name and idolised character tarnished by reproach, for he is a follower of Him who was said "to have a devil and to be mad;" and "if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!"

But the Lord himself upon earth, though never free from suffering, seems to have had an occasional respite from the temptations which Satan brought against him; for we read, that "when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." His temptation, then, only ceased "for a season." So, we have perhaps had a similar experience; we have had temptations, and, through God's mercy, these temptations have not prevailed, but "when the enemy came in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him." These attacks, then, have perhaps ceased for a while—we are not exposed now, it may be, to the same powerful and violent temptations that once assaulted us, and we think, that as the cannons cease to roar, we are got out of the reach of gunshot; and because this malicious enemy has not for some little season hurled his blasphemous darts into our carnal minds, we think he has exhausted the arrows of his quiver; we are inclined to hope that the Lord will ever effectually repel him, and build up a permanent hedge, as Job thought **Job 1:10**, that Satan cannot shoot through. But the archer bides his time; he awaits the opportunity, and lurks amid the thickets in "the

places of drawing water," and will perhaps come with tenfold more malice, and shoot again his fiery darts into our souls. Again, then, we must suffer, and it is the mark of a tender conscience, that it does suffer. If these fiery darts kindled no sorrow, brought no grief, produced no anguish, it would show, that there was no spiritual conscience, no new nature, no holy and living principle within that recoiled from these horrible temptations. So that the very suffering of the soul under them, is an evidence that there is life; the very recoiling and shrinking with horror from the powerful temptations of this enemy, is an evidence that we have in us a nature which is foreign to them, which sides with God against them, and therefore, being on God's side is born of God, and abhors them, because God's image is stamped upon it.

In proportion, then, as we suffer with Christ in these things, shall we reign with him, that is, his powerful reign and government and authority are made manifest by means of, and amidst the suffering. It is impossible to know anything of the reign of Christ in the soul, as Lord of all might and power, unless we are placed in circumstances where that reign is needed. What a flimsy, scanty, superficial thing is modern Calvinistic religion! I do not mean what is called "moderate Calvinism," but what is often called "high Calvinism," such as most of my hearers here profess. What a flimsy, superficial thing this for the most part is! Men take certain truths out of the word of God, and they hammer this pure gold upon the anvil of hard hearts and seared consciences, until it becomes as thin and as light as gold leaf. This gold leaf they spread over their hearers, and they go forth in all the gilded glare of gospel truth; But how different is this outside gilding, these plates from Uphaz, from the massive, weighty gold which the Spirit inwardly communicates! But those that preach and those that profess

this flimsy, superficial religion, if they are of God's family, will be thrown into the furnace with their book of gold-leaf in their hands, that the fire may burn up the ochred pages, and melt the gold-leaf down into one solid ingot. If any of you have a work of grace in your hearts, and yet are gilded over by doctrinal truth beyond your experience, you will be thrown into the furnace of affliction and of fiery temptation; and this furnace will burn away everything but the gold that is within you, though it may melt into the gilding that is without you. But depend upon it that the furnace will bring your religion into a very small compass, as the gold-leaf, which covers such an extent of surface, would make but a very small piece when reduced to a solid shape.

But I pass on to show how those that suffer with Christ reign with him. Perhaps, then, we have been suffering some persecution from the world. In the season of this persecution the Lord may pay us a visit. It was so when the man whom Jesus restored to sight was cast out of the synagogue; the Lord found him, and said unto him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" **Joh 9:35** So, when we are cast out in the world, cut off by professing churches, and begin to feel the weight of persecution, the Lord will sometimes come and drop a word into our souls, so as to bring us into his blessed presence. In times past, when I knew more of open persecution from the world, I have found the Lord in those seasons make himself precious to me, and to give me some visitation of his presence, so that I could rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake. So also when Satan has been shooting his fiery darts of temptation into the mind, and the soul has been grieving and groaning under the weight of temptations, the Lord will sometimes come and comfort it. Just as when Satan departed, angels came and ministered unto the Lord Jesus, and as in his garden of agony an angel strengthened him, so will he



himself come and strengthen the soul that has been passing through this conflict, and drop some word of sweet consolation into the heart that has been grappling with all the powers of hell. As the soul, then, has been suffering with Christ, it reigns with him, or, rather, he reigns in it, by communicating his power, and shedding abroad and manifesting the strength of his grace and love in it. So, after a long conflict with sin, when a child of God has been utterly unable to overcome the raging passions of his carnal mind, when it seems as though all hope were gone, and there was no longer any strength left to fight against the power of sin within, then the Lord will sometimes begin "to reign;" he will keep back, as it were, the temptation from coming with its former power; he will soften the conscience and melt it down, so as to hate sin; he will bring a feeling of self-loathing into the soul, so that it shall abhor itself for being so carried away, and will afford some sweet relief by dropping some testimony of his favour into the heart. This, then, is a reigning with Christ; but there can be no such reigning, unless there has been previous suffering. If the inward power of sin had never been felt, nor the weight of Satan's temptations been experienced; if the world had never shot its malicious arrows against us, there would be no desiring to be taken up into the sanctuary to enjoy communion with Christ; there would be no retiring from this persecuting world, so as to be desirous to be embraced by the arms of Jesus; there would be no separation from the professors of religion who have slandered our names, no simple desire to be satisfied with the Lord's own testimony alone, unless we had felt pained and grieved with their accusations. So that just in proportion as the soul suffers with Christ, and walks in his footsteps, is as he was, and is led into some conformity to his image—just so, and in that measure only, does it reign with Christ. And he that reigns with Christ, by having the kingdom of God set up in his heart here, will reign with Christ

hereafter in the realms of never-ending day. See, then, what an empty, vain, unscriptural doctrine that is, that we are always to stand in what they call the liberty of the Gospel, always to be posted upon some lofty mountain, away from sin, away from the world, away from temptation, and away from the devil. Why, the word of God stamps the lie upon such a religion; God the Holy Ghost never revealed such a religion as that. The religion of the Bible has two sides to it. But the profession that I am speaking against is like a portrait that you may see in a picture-shop. There is one side pretty enough; it seems almost like life; but look behind the picture, there is nothing there but some dirty canvas; there is no **body**—no substance. So it is with that pretty looking religion which a man may take from one text and another. He puts the colours upon his palette, and sketches out a portrait, which at first sight seems a living man. But turn it, and look at the back; why, it is nothing but a piece of canvas; there is no life, no body, no form, no reality—it is an imitation, a picture, and that is all. The religion of the Holy Ghost has a life in it, a substance **for the saints "inherit substance"**; a power, for it has two sides to it. It has not a half religion, but a whole religion, one which comes down from the Father of lights, all whose works are stamped with perfection and unity. But this one-sided religion talks of living with Christ, without any dying with him, of reigning with Christ, without suffering with him; soaring I know not where above doubts and fears, temptations and soul trouble. Why, the Scriptures of truth testify in every page against such a religion. The word of God stamps it as the religion of a hypocrite, that "his excellency mounts up to the heavens, and his head reaches unto the clouds" **Job 20:6**. The highest attainment here below is suffering with Christ; and therefore the apostle prays that "he might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the **fellowship of his sufferings**." It was the cry of his soul to know, feel, and enter into Christ's

sufferings, and have communion with Christ in them, that he, by knowing what it was to walk in the footsteps of the tempted, tried, distressed, and suffering Jesus, might enter into the glory of Christ, which glory is only made known by walking in this path.

If we would reign, then, with Christ here and hereafter, we must first suffer with him. I appeal to your consciences, whether you ever had a single drop of enjoyment in your soul, a single look of love from Jesus, or a single testimony from God that you were his, except by walking in this path. A tender conscience will give an honest verdict, for it is an unbribable jury; and conscience will say, that when you are unexercised, untried, untempted, there is no sweet visit from the Lord, no melting of heart, no inward testimony; your judgment may remain firm in the doctrines, but as to a feeling realization of truth in the soul, and blessed communion with the Lord of life and glory, you know, and conscience will bear its testimony to my words, you know that you have no vital apprehension of divine realities but in the path of trial, temptation, and difficulty. In this path alone is there any vital enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ. And all knowledge of Christ that is not a living realisation of his grace in the soul, is but a name, a profession, a theory, a standing in the letter not in the Spirit, in the form not in the power.

III. "If we deny him, he also will deny us," that is the next branch. As I have already occupied so much time, I must not detain you long, and therefore I shall but briefly allude to it. The apostle here seems partly to speak, as the Scriptures do sometimes, upon the broad basis of profession. The words have a twofold meaning; they apply to professors and they apply to possessors. "If we deny him"—he speaks as a member of the visible church, in which there are always

wheat and tares, sheep and goats. As he speaks in the Epistle to the Hebrews **Heb 4:11**; "Let **us** labour, therefore, to enter into that rest." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" **Heb 2:3** Not that there was any doubt whether he had entered into rest, or that there was any risk of his neglecting Christ's salvation; but he expresses himself as one of a number, some of whom would neglect it. Thus, the expression, "if we deny him, he will deny us," seems to have a twofold meaning. There were those in the Church who would deny him, for there were those who never knew him experimentally, and when the trial came, they would act as Judas acted. And then there were those who were real followers of him, but when put to the test, might act as Peter acted. Judas denied him; but Judas was a reprobate. Peter denied him; but Peter was a chosen vessel. Those that deny him, as Judas denied him, he will deny before the angels of God.

But then there is a denying him in our experience; and as we deny him in experience, he will deny us in manifestation. Sometimes we deny him our affections. The world gets hold of us; those whom we love in the flesh twine themselves round our hearts; the things of time and sense begin to be pleasant and sweet to us; we gradually get carnal; cold, and dead. This is a denying of Christ inwardly. Then he will deny us; that is, he will not drop his love into a soul that is pre-occupied by an idol. If we are cold to him, he will be shy with us; and if we are negligent of his favour and his grace, he will requite us by withholding them.

Again, if we deny him by refusing to confess him before men, he will deny his testimony to our souls that we are his. If we turn aside through the fear of man, and deny Christ, we go home with a guilty conscience, and he denies us every token for good. Thus, as we deny Christ in the various branches of

inward experience or outward conduct, he denies us—denies us his love, denies us the sweet visitations of his favour, denies us the testimony of his grace, denies us every thing which we want to have given to us, and denies us access when we desire to come near him.

But then comes the saving clause, "If we believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." If a child of God goes on so, and he is cold to Christ, and Christ is shy with him and denies his manifestations, how will the matter end? Shall they go on like two friends who have formerly been united? one gets cold, and the other becomes shy, separation comes on and alienates the one from the other, till they become altogether enemies. No. Here is the saving clause, "If we believe not, he abideth faithful." "We believe not;" we get shut up in unbelief, become so carnalised as altogether to doubt whether anything we have felt was from him; unable to realise, unable to feel any power, or any faith. "But he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself"—he will deny **us**, but "he cannot deny **himself**"—he will deny us, but "he cannot deny" that love which is in his bosom; he will deny the manifestation, but "he cannot deny" the reality; he will deny the taste of love, but "he cannot deny" the existence of love in his own bosom; he will deny the favours, but "he cannot deny" his own tender heart from which all those favours come. He is like a tender parent: when the child offends him, the parent denies him those things which he would otherwise give him, those little testimonies of affection which otherwise he would grant; but he cannot deny **himself**—he is still a father, he has still the love of a father, he has still the feelings of a father. So the Lord of life and glory "abideth faithful;" "he cannot deny himself." He will not deny his own perfections; he will not deny his own work upon the cross; he will not deny his own glory, nor that blessed satisfaction which he feels in bringing his people to the

enjoyment of himself. "He abideth faithful," however unbelieving their hearts may be. And why? because his elect have an eternal union with him.

Then, friends, so far as we have a union with Christ, we shall know these things in our experience. If, then, you know nothing of these things, if you have never realized these things, I ask you, I appeal to conscience, where is your evidence that you are partakers of the life of God in your soul? And if not partakers of divine life, let honest conscience testify in what spot you stand, and what you are before the eyes of a heart-searching God.