

Matthew 16 Commentary-C H Spurgeon

PREVIOUS

NEXT

MATTHEW 16:1-4 THE KING AND HIS CHOSEN SIGN.

Matthew 16:1. THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees come, and tempting desired him that he would shew them, a sign from, heaven

The King is again met by his foes. Two sects, which were violently opposed to each other, unite their forces against him. It is the way of the wicked to become friends when seeking the overthrow of the kingdom of heaven.

On this occasion they come not with a question, but with the old demand for a sign. This time it must be "a sign from heaven", possibly a marvel in the sky. What right had they to set him a test of such a sort as their fancy might suggest? What need for more signs when his miracles were so many?

Were not all his miracles signs from heaven? Did not this demand cast a slur on all that he had already done? Was it not a practical ignoring of all his previous works of power? Too often we also have fallen into the weakness of asking a new token of divine love, thus undervaluing former favors. If the evidence we have already received of our Lord's grace and power is not enough, when will our doubts be ended?

In this demand for a sign, our Lord's foes were tempting him. Did the temptation lie in urging him to seek his own glory by some ostentatious display of power, for which there would be no real need? Whatever it was, our Lord passed scathless through this ordeal, for there was no pride in him. Pharisees and Sadducees will tempt us also. From their wiles and smiles may the Lord deliver us! From the desire to stand well with men may we be happily freed by our love to Jesus!

Matthew 16:2, 3. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

They could prognosticate the weather by certain signs, and our Lord Jesus mentions the weather-tokens of Palestine; yet they could not read the plainer and more plentiful warnings of the near future. Weather-signs are doubtful; but there were moral and spiritual tokens around them which could hardly be misunderstood if they would only consider them. Each country has its own sky warnings, and those of Palestine differ from those of England; but the signs of the times are the same in all lands. Our Lord singled out an instance of their supposed weather-wisdom: the same sign which, in the evening, was a token of fair weather, was, in the morning, a mark of foul weather. They were able to draw nice distinctions on the variable condition of "the face of the sky:" why could they not "discern the signs of the times?" They could have seen, if they had chosen to do so, that all the prophecies were one in declaring that the date of Messiah's appearing had arrived; and they could also have observed that every event was fulfilling those prophecies; but they were false at heart, and would not see, and yet cried out for a sign. Signs were all around them, and yet they repeated the parrot cry "Show us a sign." Most justly our Lord was indignant with them, and upbraided them, using the justly severe words, "O ye hypocrites!" Today the men who want more evidences of the supernatural deserve a similar denunciation.

Lord, do not allow any of us to be blind to the heavenly signs, — thy cross, thy resurrection, thy Word, thy Spirit, and thy work of grace, Teach us carefully to "discern" these things as being in very deed the abiding "signs of the times." Even in the growing coldness of the church, and the abounding iniquity of the world, let us see the tokens of thine Advent, and stand waiting and watching for thy long promised appearing.

Matthew 16:4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

It was not lack of evidence, but the sad depravity of their minds, which set them upon seeking after a sign; and therefore

the Lord would not satisfy their unhealthy cranny. They were wicked in morals, and adulterous in heart in their forsaking the one true God; and then they turned round and justified their unbelief in the Son of God by pleading want of proof, demanding more miracles to enable them to come to a right conclusion.

Such is the deceit of man's heart.

Our Lord repeats his former answer: he will give them no other. In the compass of the Old Testament there is no fuller sign of our Lord than Jonah. Our Lord knew that he would fulfill the type of Jonah even in its details, and therefore he points them to that prophet's life. This is a subject which deserves our careful meditation, but we cannot enlarge upon it here.

Our Lord looks to his death and resurrection, and gives the prophet Jonas as his sign. Jesus will be buried, and will rise on the third day, and in the power of his resurrection, will win the Gentiles to repentance: in this he will be the antitype of Jonah, and this shall be the sign that he is indeed the Christ of God. This our Lord had said before, and he here repeated it, because it was a sufficient reply, and there was no need to study variety with a set of people who, themselves, harped perpetually upon one string.

Our Lord quitted such persons, for there was nothing to be done with them. "He left them, and departed", and that place saw him no more. Lord, do not leave any one of us; for that would be a sure sentence of death to us.

MATTHEW 16:5-12 THE KING MISUNDERSTOOD BY HIS OWN 5.

Matthew 16:5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

They had forgotten to victual their boat. This they seem to have found out for themselves as soon as they "were come to the other side." They seldom forgot such temporal matters. Possibly they trusted each other, and what was every man's business was nobody's business. They did not notice the omission while they were crossing the sea; but mealtime came, and their minds were quickly brought to think of the loaves. Controversy had for a while engrossed their minds with religious matters; but lack of bread, and consequent hunger soon recalled them to the things of earth.

Matthew 16:6. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

He used a parabolic expression, which they would readily have understood, had not their minds been already absorbed by their lack of bread. He saw that in them, too, there would soon be a desire for a sign, now that they needed bread; and he feared the influence of both the Ritualism of the Pharisee, and the Rationalism of the Sadducee upon his little church. Hence his double word, "Take heed, and beware." The warning is needed today as much as in our Lord's time: possibly it is even more required, and will be less regarded. "Pharisees and Sadducees" are both leavening the churches, and the spirit of the one is as bad as that of the other. Everywhere we see the one evil force, operating in two opposite ways, but rapidly leavening the meal of nominal Christendom. Lord, save thy people from this souring and corrupting influence!

Matthew 16:7. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

Their thoughts ran along the low material level from leaven to bread. Did they imagine that he forbade their borrowing leaven from the Pharisees when they began to make a batch of bread? How could they have found any meaning in the literal sense of leaven as applied to Sadducees? They were earthbound by anxiety, or they could not have blundered so foolishly.

When a number of hungry men are together, is it not very natural that they should look at everything with hungry eyes? Yes, it is natural; and it is not natural to men to be spiritual. We need to pray that we may not reason among ourselves after the same groveling fashion, when we come into a little need.

Matthew 16:8-10. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and

how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Want of faith made them thus dull and carnal. Want of bread would not have troubled them if they had possessed more grace. Our Lord as good as says to them, "Why begin raising questions as to what can be done under this small difficulty? Have I not dealt with far greater necessities? :Have not your own personal wants been richly supplied? Has your store been exhausted even when all your thoughts have gone out towards the multitude, and all your store of bread and fish has been given up to them?"

What occasion can there be for anxiety in my presence, when I have always supplied your wants?"

How foolish they were, but how like we are to them! We seem to learn nothing. After years of experience, our Lord has to say, "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember? " Two stupendous miracles had not lifted those disciples to that plane of thought which is becoming in believers; and after all our experiences and deliverances, we, alas! are much as they were.

How our mind dwells on the bread which we are wanting, and how readily it forgets former times when all such wants were abundantly supplied! The many baskets which were so amply filled by former providences were the disciples' own share and store, and therefore they ought not to have forgotten the miraculous festivals. Even the empty baskets should have refreshed their memories, and reminded them of how they had twice been filled. If it were not for our wretched little faith, and our reasoning among ourselves, the memory of our former deliverances would lift us beyond all tendency to mistrust our God.

O sacred Spirit, teach us, or we shall never learn! Make us wise, or we shall still continue in the folly of carnal reasoning!

Matthew 16:11. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

At bottom it was unbelief which clouded their understanding. Jesus may well say to doubters, "Ye do not understand. " Truly, nothing more effectually blunts spiritual perception than an overpowering anxiety for the bread which perisheth. When a doctrine is not understood, it may not always be the fault of the teacher. Very plain speaking is frequently misunderstood when the mind is absorbed in pressing needs. It was sad to see apostles taking our Lord literally, and failing to see the obvious parable of his words. How could "the leaven of the Pharisee " be a term used concerning bread?

Matthew 16:12. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

The doctrine of these sectaries had a secret, insinuating, and souring influence; and the disciples must carefully watch lest even a little of its spirit and teaching should get into their minds, and then spread throughout their whole nature. Both these leavens may be at work at once in the same community; in fact, they are only one leaven. The two sets of opponents assailed the Lord Jesus at the same time, for they had a common ground of opposition against him. To this day these two forms of evil are ever working, either secretly or openly, and we have need to beware of them at all times. It is well to understand this, and both purge out the old leaven of Pharisaism, and keep out the new leaven of Sadduceeism.

Self-righteousness and carnal reasoning must alike be cast out. Faith will find them both to be her deadly foes. Many are amusing themselves with the evil leaven; and before they are aware, the unhallowed thing will defile them. To be evangelical, and yet to be superstitious or rationalistic at the same time, is next to impossible. Certain of our contemporaries are trying to bake with this leaven, but their bread will be sour.BEWARE!

MATTHEW 16:13-28 THE KING ALONE WITH HIS FRIENDS

Matthew 16:13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Our Lord knew well enough what the people thought of him; but he asked his disciples the question that he might instruct them after

the Socratic method by drawing out their own minds. Our Lord was about to inform them as to his death, and it was well that they should have very clear ideas as to who he was. He begins by asking, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Human opinions about heavenly things count for little; yet it is as well to know them, that we may be prepared to withstand them

Matthew 16:14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets

These were all conjectures, and far from the mark; yet was there some likeness to truth in them all. Herod's notion that Jesus was John the Baptist, newly risen from the dead, seemed a probable one to many, since our Lord had like courage and fidelity with John. Elijah, too, seemed to live again in our Lord's words of fire; Jeremiah was revived in his constant sorrow; and the prophets were repeated in his memorable teachings and marvelous life. Since many of these were types of him, it is small wonder that he should seem to be identical with them. Yet men make no discovery of the Lord's true character by their own guesswork: only those to whom he reveals himself will ever know him.

Error has many voices; truth alone is one, and abiding. Men say differing things concerning our Lord; but his Spirit alone bears effectual witness to the one true Christ of God.

Matthew 16:15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

This is a far more searching question. Our personal thoughts of Jesus touch a vital point. Our Lord presupposes that his disciples would not have the same thoughts as "men" had. They would not follow the spirit of the age, and shape their views by those of the "cultured" persons of the period.

They would have formed a judgment, each one for himself, by what they had heard and seen while in his company. Therefore, he inquired, "But whom say ye that I am?" Let each reader answer the question before he goes further.

Matthew 16:16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Peter, as usual, was spokesman for the rest; and he spoke right well. He had perceived the Messiahship and the divine Sonship of his Lord, and in outspoken words he uttered his inward belief. It was a simple but satisfactory Confession of Faith. We should always be ready to give an answer to those who would know what we believe on a matter so central as the person and nature of our Lord. A mistake on this point would involve all our religion in failure. If he is not to us the Christ, the Lord's Anointed and "the Son of the living God," we know not Jesus aright.

Matthew 16:17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona. for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

His old name is mentioned to bring out the distinction between what he was by nature and what grace had made him. Simon Barjona, the fluttering son of a dove, has now become Peter, a rock. He was a happy man to be taught of God on the central truth of revelation. He had not arrived at his belief by mere reason: flesh and blood had not worked out the problem; there had been a revelation to him from the Father who is in heaven. To know the Lord in mere doctrinal statement, no such divine teaching is required; but Peter's full assurance of his Lord's nature and mission was no theory in the head: the truth had been written on his heart by the heavenly Spirit. This is the only knowledge worth having as to the person of our Lord, for it brings a blessing with it, — a blessing from the mouth of the Lord Jesus: "Blessed art thou."

Matthew 16:18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“Thou art Peter, ” a piece of rock; and on that rock of which thou art a piece “I will build my church. ” He had, by the revelation of the Father, come to know the Son, and to be identified with him: thus he was a stone of the one Rock. Christ is the Rock, and Peter has become one with him, and “upon this rock ” is the church founded. If there had been no Romanists to twist this passage, it would have presented no difficulty. Jesus is the Builder, and he and his apostles make up the first course of stone in the great temple of the church, and this first course is one with the eternal Rock on which it rests. In the first twelve courses or foundations are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Revelation 21:14). We are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” Apostles are not the foundation of our confidence meritoriously; but they underlie us as to date, and we rest upon their testimony concerning Jesus and his resurrection.

The assembly which Christ gathers he builds together; for he says, “I will build my church. ” He builds on a firm foundation: “Upon this rock I will build. ” What Jesus builds is his own: “my church.” He makes his rock-founded building into a stronghold, against which the powers of evil lay continual siege, but all in vain; for “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it .”

Matthew 16:19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven..

The new kingdom would not be all-comprehensive, like Noah’s ark; but would have its dove and its keys. For practical purposes the people of God would need discipline, and the power to receive, reinse, retain, or exclude members. Of these keys our Lord says to Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. ” Foremost among the apostles, Peter used those keys at Pentecost, when he let three thousand into the church; in Jerusalem, when he shut out Ananias and Sapphira; and at the house of Cornelius, when he admitted the Gentiles. Our Lord committed to his church power to rule within herself for him; not to set up doors, but to open or shut them: not to make laws, but to obey them and see them obeyed. Peter, and those for whom he spoke, became the stewards of the Lord Jesus in the church, and their acts were endorsed by their Lord.

Today the Lord continues to back up the teaching and acts of his sent servants, those Peters who are pieces of the one Rock. The judgments of his Church, when rightly administered, have his sanction so as to make them valid. The words of his sent servants, spoken in his name, shall be confirmed of the Lord, and shall not be, either as to promise or threatening, a mere piece of rhetoric. When he was here on earth our Lord himself personally admitted men into the select circle of disciples; but on the eve of his departure he gave to their leading spirit, and thus to them also, the power to admit others to their number, or to dismiss them when found unworthy. Thus was the church or assembly constituted, and endowed with internal administrative authority. We cannot legislate, but we may and must administer the ordinances and statutes of the Lord; and what we do rightly in carrying out divine law in the church on earth is ratified by our Lord in heaven. A church would be a mere sham, and its acts a solemn farce, if the great Head of the Church did not sanction all that is done according to his statute-book.

We need not at any length deal with the claims of the Pope of Rome. Even if Peter had been made the head of the church, how would that affect the bishop of Rome? As well say that the Cham of Tartary is the successor of Peter, as make that claim for an Italian Pontiff. No unsophisticated reader of his Bible sees any trace of Popery in this passage. The wine of Romanism is not to be pressed out of this cluster.

Matthew 16:20. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

As yet they were to be silent as to our Lord’s highest claims, for fear the people should in rash zeal set him up as king by force of arms. It was dangerous to tell such an ill-instructed multitude what they would be sure to misunderstand and misuse. The command to tell no man must have sounded very strangely in the disciples’ ears. It was no business of theirs to discover the reason of their Lord’s orders; it was enough for them to do as he bade them. We are under no such embargo, and therefore we will tell to all that our Lord is the Savior, the Anointed of God, or, as he has himself worded it, “Jesus the Christ. ”

Matthew 16:21. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes , and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

The Church or Assembly being now actually arranged, and treated as a fact, our Lord began to prepare his disciples for the time

when, as an associated body, they would have to act alone, because he would be taken from them. Their first great trial would be his death, of which he had spoken darkly before. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples " his death more plainly. There is a fit time for painful disclosures, and our Lord is wise in selecting it. He mentions the gathering together of his foes: "elders and chief priests and scribes " will eagerly unite. Their fury will show itself in multiplied cruelties: he will suffer many things. He declares that they will push their enmity to the bitter end; he will "be killed. " He foretells that he will "be raised again " and he specifies the time, namely, "the third day. " All this must have fallen sadly on the ears of men who still indulged visions of a kingdom of a very different sort. The most of them were wisely silent in their sadness, yet there was one who had far too bold a tongue.

Matthew 16:22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

Peter could not be trusted as steward or major-domo. He takes too much upon himself. See, how great he is! He half fancies that he is the master.

He loved his Lord so well that he could not bear to hear of his being killed, and he would gladly stop him from talking upon a subject so terribly sad.

He thinks the Lord is morbid, and is attaching more importance to the opposition of the Pharisees than it deserves. Therefore he gets the Lord alone, and chides him. The words are very strong: "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. " He meant to be his Lord's candid friend, and at the same time to maintain towards him that respectful bearing which would be becoming in his follower; but evidently he took too much on himself when he ventured to rebuke his Lord. He could see in our Lord's death nothing but ruin to the cause, and therefore he felt it must not be. He implored the mercy of heaven to forbid so dire a catastrophe. "Be it far from thee, Lord. " It must not, cannot fall out as Jesus had prophesied. "This shall not be unto thee. " He would even drive such an idea out of our Lord's mind.

Should we not have done the same, had we been there, if we had been as much concerned for the honor of our Lord as Peter was? Should we not have been horror-stricken at the idea that such a One as he should be put to a cruel death? Might we not have vowed in terrible earnest, "This shall not be unto thee "?

Matthew 16:23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the thing that be of God, but those that be of men.

Our Lord was superior to the temptation which grew out of the very love of his friend. He would remain no longer aside with Peter: he turned away from him. Seeing the devil using Peter as his instrument, he addresses Satan himself, and Peter too, so far as he was identified with the evil suggestion. "Get thee behind me, Satan. " The attempt was made to put a stumbling-block in that path of self-sacrifice which our Lord intended to pursue, even to the bitter end. He spied out the hindrance, and said, "Thou art an offense unto me. " His dearest friend was his direst foe when he would put him off from his life-work. The devil thought to succeed through our Lord's newly appointed foreman; but Jesus made short work of the temptation: he threw the stone out of the road, and cast it behind him, so that he could not be stumbled. The pith of the error was that Peter looked at things from the point of view of human honor and success, and not from that grand standpoint in which the glory of God in the salvation of men swallows up everything.

A marvel is here. A man may know what only the Father can reveal, and yet he may not savor the things, that be of God. Unless he accepts the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, he has no savor for divine things. He who does not heartily rejoice in the atonement does not discern that sweet savor of rest which the Lord God perceives in the great sacrifice, and therefore he has no fellowship in the things that be of God. He knows not the taste, the aroma, the essence of spiritual things; and however much he may honor Jesus in words, he is an enemy, yea, a real Satan towards the true Christ, whose very substance is his work as our atoning sacrifice. Those who at this day revile the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord, are fonder of the things that be of men than those that be of God. They are loud in their claim to be great philanthropists; but sound theologians they are not.- Eumanitarians they may be; but divines they cannot be. They may be the friends of man; but they are not the servants of God. How sorrowfully do we write these words when we think of the many preachers to whom they apply!

Matthew 16:24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up

his cross, and follow me.

As our Lord, to fulfill his destiny, must sacrifice himself, so also must every one who would be his follower. To keep close to our Lord (which he intends by the words "come after me, ") we must have done with self; for he denied himself to redeem his people. We must not know self, nor assent to it; but we must each one "deny himself." Doing this, each man must cheerfully shoulder his own personal burden of sorrow and service, and carry it with self-sacrifice, as Jesus carried his cross.

He had told them of his cross ; now he tells them of their own crosses.

They might now choose again whether they could and would follow him.

With their increased information as to his destiny, the question was again set before them, whether they would follow or forsake him. If they did continue to be his followers, it must be as cross-bearers and self-deniers.

Nor are the terms altered in these days. Do we accept them? Can we keep step in the long procession of crosscarriers, or will we fall in with the spirit of the age, and say fine things about Jesus, while we deny his substitutionary sacrifice, and shirk the personal self-denial which he demands? Our own wisdom, if it leads us to think lightly of "the precious blood", must be utterly denied and even abhorred.

Matthew 16:25. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it,

Now they were to practice the doctrine he had taught them before. They could only save their real selves by the loss of this present life; but if they settled it in their own minds that they must first and foremost save their outer life, it would be at the expense of their truest being. To tell them plainly of this was honest dealing on our Lord's part; and it argued well for the disciples that they still remained faithful to him. Alas! there was one even of the chosen twelve who probably at this very moment was scheming how he could continue to keep the bag, and yet could ultimately escape from the consequences of his Master's demand.

Matthew 16:26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

If he loses his real life, how can he profit, even if the world be his? The true gain or loss is a gain or loss of life. All external things are trifles compared with that life. Even now, "What is a man profited? " He has no real life in Christ, and what is all else that he may possess? What but a painted pageantry with which he is amusing his soul upon the brink of hell? As to the world to come, there is no question. To lose eternal life is overwhelming loss indeed.

Nothing can be compared with eternal life. The soul's value cannot be estimated by ordinary reckonings. Worlds on worlds were a poor price. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul " Barter is out of the question. His soul is so a man's sole inheritance that if he has lost it he has lost all.

Matthew 16:27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

There will come a day when Christ, from the judgment-seat, will make it appear who was wise in his way of life; for then shall the reward or the punishment throw its light on the past conduct of men. He who was himself despised shall be the Rewarder of those who laid down their lives for the sake of his cause. In that day the crucified "Son of man shall come in glory": that glory will be seen to be "the glory of his Father "; that divine glory will be illustrated by hosts of attendant angels. In all the pomp of heaven he shall distribute the rewards of the last assize. The righteous shall through divine grace have their works taken as evidence of their love to God; and the wicked shall with justice have their doom appointed according to their works , because those works will be the evidence that they had not the faith which produces good works.

Lord, by thy good Spirit, keep me ever in mind of that great day of days, which will make eternity bright with immeasurable bliss, or dark with unutterable woe! May I look at everything in the blaze of light which surrounds thy judgment-seat!

Matthew 16:28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

So near was that reign which would repay the losses of the saints for Christ's sake, that before certain of them were dead the Lord would have held a rehearsal of it in his judgment of Israel, by the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and would have set up his kingdom, of which the judgmentseat is an index and an instrument.

We have here a difficult passage, and this appears to be the simplest way of reading it in its connection. Our Lord seems to say, "Through suffering and death I pass to a throne; and by that fact it shall be seen that loss and death are often the way to true gain and real life. That kingdom of mine is not far away and unreal: some of you will see me in the exercise of my royal power before you die.

Yet it has been thought that it means that some would never really taste of death, or know the fullness of its terrible meaning, till the judgment day.

This is true, but it can scarcely be the teaching in this place.