

# Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

## 10:34-42

by J.C. Ryle

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### Transcript

In these verses the great head of the church winds up his first charge to those whom he sends forth to make known his Gospel. He declares three great truths, which form a fitting conclusion to the whole discourse. In the first place, he bids us remember that his Gospel will not cause peace and agreement wherever it comes. "I came not to send peace, but a sword." The object of his first coming on earth was not to set up a millennial kingdom in which all would be of one mind, but to bring in the Gospel, which would lead to strifes and divisions. We have no right to be surprised if we see this continually fulfilled: we are not to think it strange if the Gospel rends sunder families and causes estrangement between the nearest relations. It is sure to do so in many cases, because of the deep corruption of man's heart. So long as one man believes, and another remains unbelieving, so long as one is resolved to keep his sins, and another is desirous to give them up, the result of the preaching of the Gospel must needs be division. For this the Gospel is not to blame, but the heart of man. There is deep truth in all this, which is constantly forgotten and overlooked. Many talk vaguely about "unity," "harmony," and "peace" in the church of Christ, as if they were things that we ought always to expect, and for the sake of which everything ought to be sacrificed! Such persons would do well to remember the words of our Lord. No doubt unity and peace are mighty blessings; we ought to seek them, pray for them and give up everything in order to obtain them, excepting truth and a good conscience. But it is an idle dream to suppose that the churches of Christ will enjoy much of unity and peace before the millennium comes. In the second place, our Lord tells us that true Christians must make up their minds to trouble in this world. Whether we are ministers or hearers, whether we teach or are taught, it makes little difference: we must carry a "cross." We must be content to lose even life itself for Christ's sake. We must submit to the loss of man's favor, we must endure hardships, we must deny ourselves in many things or we shall never reach heaven at last. So long as the world, the devil and our own hearts are what they are, these things must be so. We shall find it most useful to remember this lesson ourselves, and to impress it upon others. Few things do so much harm in religion as exaggerated expectations. People look for a degree of worldly comfort in Christ's service which they have no right to expect; and not finding what they look for are tempted to give up religion in disgust. Happy is he who thoroughly understands that though Christianity holds out a crown in the end, it brings also a cross in the way. In the last place, our Lord cheers us by saying that the least service done to those who work in his cause is observed and rewarded of God. He that gives a believer so little as "a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward." There is something very beautiful in this promise. It teaches us that the eyes of the great Master are ever upon those who labor for

him, and try to do good. Perhaps they perhaps seem to work on unnoticed and unregarded; the proceedings of preachers, and missionaries and teachers and visitors of the poor may appear very trifling and insignificant compared to the movements of kings and of parliaments, of armies and of statesmen: but they are not insignificant in the eyes of God. He takes notice who opposes his servants, and who helps them; he observes who is kind to them, as Lydia was to Paul; and who throws difficulties in their way, as Diotrephes did in the way of John (Acts 16:15) (i) (3 John 9). All their daily experience is recorded as they labor on in his harvest: all is written down in the great book of his remembrance, and will be brought to light at the last day. The chief butler forgot Joseph, when he was restored to his place; but the Lord Jesus never forgets any of his people. He will say to many who little expect it, in the resurrection morning: "I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink" (i) (Matthew 25:35). Let us ask ourselves, as we close the chapter, in what light we regard Christ's work and Christ's cause in the world. Are we helpers of it or hinderers? Do we in any wise aid the Lord's "prophets" and "righteous men"? Do we assist his "little ones"? Do we impede his laborers, or do we cheer them on? These are serious questions. They do well and wisely who give the "cup of cold water" whenever they have opportunity; they do better still who work actively in the Lord's vineyard. May we all strive to leave the world a better world than it was when we were born! This is to have the mind of Christ. This is to find out the value of the lessons this wonderful chapter contains.

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