

Matthew 10 Commentary-C H Spurgeon

PREVIOUS

NEXT

MATTHEW 10:1-15 THE KING COMMISSIONING HIS OFFICERS

Matthew 10:1. AND when he had called unto him twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

See the way of making apostles. They were first disciples, and afterwards teachers of others: they were specially his, and then they were given to be a blessing to men. They were “called unto him ”; and thus their higher call came to them. In the presence of their Lord they received their equipment: “and gave them power. ” Is that so with us in our own special office? Let us come to him, that we may be clothed with his authority and girded with his strength.

Their power was miraculous; but it was an imitation of their Lord's, and the words applied to it are very much the same as we have seen in use about his miracles of healing. The twelve were made to represent their Lord. We, too, may be enabled to do what Jesus did among men. Oh, for such an endowment!

Matthew 10:2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John. his brother.

The Holy Spirit does not object to truthful statistics: there were twelve apostles. This was a complete number, neither too many nor too few; and a number which linked the spiritual Israel with the nation which had typified it. The Holy Spirit has no love to the anonymous, or to the use of initials, as some have in these days. He gives the names, and why not? Order is observed in this muster-roll. “The first ”, for he generally put himself first, and was by his energy and ability most fittingly the leader, “Simon who is called Peter ”, “a stone ”; and a right solid stone he came to be. With him is Andrew, his manly brother. It is well when brothers in the flesh are brothers in spirit. Then come James and John, the two sons of thunder; one of them so early to be a martyr, the other so inexpressibly dear to the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 10:3. Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican: James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.

It seems probable that Bartholomew is Nathanael, whom Philip led to Jesus: they are well put together. Bartholomew is never mentioned without an and: he was a kind of man to work with other people. It is also likely that Lebbaeus is Jude, or “Judas, not Iscariot”: there may have been some link between him and James. A man may have an alias, and yet not be an alien. Observe how Matthew keeps us in mind that he had been a publican.

With holy gratitude he thus records his former estate, that the grace which called him might be the more conspicuous. Thomas was as truly called by the Lord as any of them, though he was one whose mind entertained distressing questions.

Matthew 10:4. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Thus they go two and two, till the traitor brings up the rear. Simon the Zealot is cooled down by the calculating prudence of Judas Iscariot. Judas was probably the best financier of the company, and he comes at the end with the bag. This quality rendered him useful, but it was perverted to his ruin, for he sold his Master for silver. What a description to follow a name — “who also betrayed him ”! God grant it may never be set after the name of any one of us! The apostolic number fitly represents the twelve tribes of Israel; and for practical purposes the twelve form a workable band of leaders, a sufficient jury, and a competent company of witnesses.

Matthew 10:5, 6. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

This was "a mission to the Jews" only, meant for the general arousing of the chosen nation. It is an example of a special mission, and it gives authority for missions to special characters; but it must not be made into an example by which the Lord is supposed to prescribe a cast-iron rule for all missions. The people at that time were favorably disposed to our Lord, and thus his apostles might expect treatment of a more generous kind than can be looked for in these times. Certain of these regulations were altered on a subsequent mission, when the people were less favorably disposed. This was a mission from Israel to Israel. It was not for the Gentiles, but it was to be strictly confined to "the House of Israel." Even the people most like the Jews were not to be visited: "Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." It was a search for "lost sheep of the house of Israel", in the pastures near the fold. We may occasionally have class-services-for working-men, etc.; but the standing orders are not so, but rather, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Matthew 10:7. And as ye go, preach saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Their first work was proclaiming the coming kingdom, and preparing the way for the coming King. Those Israelites who were willing might become subjects of this heavenly kingdom, and therefore were they informed of its near approach.

Matthew 10:8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Having ministered to souls, they were to bless the bodies of men; and thus they would confirm their message by their miracles. These deeds of mercy are on the ascending scale: note the steps. All; was to be done without fee or reward: their powers had not been purchased, their miracles were not to be sold.

Matthew 10:9, 10. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

They would not need to pay for food or lodging: the people would entertain them freely, and therefore they required no form of money; not even a copper. They needed not to carry a wallet; for meals would be generously offered them by those whom they instructed and healed. They were not to load themselves with extra clothing; for if the weather should require it, the people would supply it: even if their shoes wore out, their hearers would see them shod. When a ministry is really acceptable, the preacher will not be left to suffer want as to the absolute necessities of life.

They needed not even wait to find a staff; for if one was required, and they set off without it, one would be given. Among a willing people, such a mission is not only possible, but it is in the highest degree suitable. It is but right and just that people should support in temporals those who minister to them in spirituals, and it is right that plans should be adopted which cast this duty upon them, as in this case. The preacher is to preach freely; but those who are benefited are also freely to find meat for him. Such a mission as this is not a mission to the heathen in any sense. Its methods are good for itself, but they would not be possible among hostile tribes: in the case of work among opponents, our Lord's command under other circumstances is to be followed. See Luke 22:36: "He that hath a purse, let him take it," etc. Different modes of procedure are to be adopted at different times. Oh, that some of our very spiritual brethren had a little common-sense! We offer the prayer with very faint heart.

Matthew 10:11. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

Seek out people fit to be associated with you in holy service. Whatever their circumstances may be, regard chiefly their character. For the best work look out the best men. Do not compromise your Master by lodging with persons of evil repute. But do not shift your quarters, or run from one to another, lest you seem mere mendicants, begging from door to door.

Keep to those good people with whom your mission begins. It may be that richer people will turn up; but never forget the worthy men and women who first entertained you. Wise rules, these. This is not the method to be followed among the heathen, where none can be called "worthy." There we seek the sinful, and feel ourselves sent to the most degraded.

Matthew 10:12. And when ye come into an house, salute it.

Say, "Peace be to this house." Be very courteous openly, and very benevolent inwardly. You come as a benediction, come with a benediction.

We ought never to enter a house without wishing it good, nor to leave it without having endeavored to make it better.

Matthew 10:13. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Think well of all till they prove by their conduct that your good opinion is an error. Bless the house, and if it be worthy, the Lord will make your blessing effectual, and peace shall dwell there; but if the house be not worthy, the blessing shall, by your Lord's ordinance, "return to you", and that will enable you to bear the rebuff without being discouraged. We cannot judge of worthiness; but the Lord will do so. We are to hope well of all. We shall get good even if we fail to do good. If the failure be through no fault of ours, it will be no failure to us.

Matthew 10:14. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Disclaim all fellowship with those who will not have fellowship with your Lord. Be not angry; do not denounce with bitterness; just "shake off the dust of your feet," and go elsewhere. Don't depart to rail at the people in private; but let them know that you quit them because they refuse your message. Do this openly, and in the most solemn and instructive manner, hoping that your departing act may be remembered. It is to be feared that we treat rejectors of Christ in a sadly biding manner, and do not hold up their rejection of our King to the detestation it deserves. We ought to let impenitent sinners know that we consider them out of our fellowship. If they will not hear, we must make them see that we disown them, and count them to be unclean, because they refuse Christ Jesus. How little of this is done by the smooth-tongued preachers of today! Men may refuse their gospel, and still be the bosom friends of those who preach to them. Yea, they try even from the pulpit to cheer them in their impenitence by the dream of a "larger hope."

Matthew 10:15. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

The accursed cities of the plain may look for a fearful doom; but their portion will not be so unbearable as that of those to whom the gospel comes in freest fashion; and yet they will not receive its messengers, nor even hear their words. With what solemnity do these threatenings surround both the preaching and the hearing of the kingdom! Our Lord seals his terrible prophecy with a Verily and with that solemn introduction, "I say unto you." Here our ever-blessed King sends forth his royal ambassadors under orders to summon the Jewish nation to own their sovereign Lord; and he supports them in their errand by a tremendous threat of doom to those who will not receive them, or listen to their words.

MATTHEW 10:16-25 THE KING'S MESSENGERS MAY EXPECT TO BE MALTREATED

Matthew 10:16. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

“Behold.” Our Lord calls for special attention, and then sets before his sent ones, both then and now, what would be the future of their crusade. What he was doing was very wonderful; hence the “Behold.” It would be foolhardy to go if Jesus did not say, “I send you.” When Jesus sends forth sheep, they may go fearlessly into the very “midst of wolves.” He sends them, not to fight with wolves, nor to drive them out of their haunts, but to transform them. The disciples were sent to fierce men to convince them, and therefore they must be wise; to convert them, and therefore they must be gentle. The weapons of Christians are that they are weaponless. They are to be prudent, discreet, “wise as serpents”; but they are to be loving, peaceful, “harmless as doves.” The Christian missionary will need to be wary, to avoid receiving harm; but he must be of a guileless mind, that he do no harm. We are called to be martyrs, not maniacs; we are to be simple-hearted, but we are not to be simpletons.

After all, the mission of sheep to wolves is a hopeful one, since we see in the natural world that the sheep, though so feeble, by far outnumber the wolves who are so fierce. The day will come when persecutors will be as scarce as wolves, and saints as numerous as sheep.

Lord, in my work for thee, so teach me that I may display the wonderful blend of serpent and dove, which thou dost here commend to thy ministers.

Never allow me to become to others like a wolf, but may I conquer by the meekness of a lamb!

Matthew 10:17, 18. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

“Beware of men.” Do not rely upon them, or regard them as fellow-helpers in setting up the kingdom of heaven, nor attempt to soften down your testimony to suit their taste. Do not court their approbation, or place any great value upon their favor. They will not shelter you, but “deliver you up”; they will not arrange for, your entertainment, but for your accusation before councils; they will not load you with decorations, but lash you with scourges in their places of public assembly. Thus would Israelites treat Israelites. The cruelty described by the words, “scourge you in their synagogues” must surely have been a refinement of malice; yet with some men persecution is a part of religion.

The malice of the Jews would call in the interference of Gentile magistrates and monarchs. These also would become persecutors, and before their tribunals saints would have to plead for their lives; but as this would be for Christ’s sake, they would thus be enabled to bear witness for their Lord, and against his foes. In this way only would heathen governors and kings be likely to hear their testimony; and therefore they were to welcome the summons to appear before earthly rulers.

Our attitude must be one of caution towards men. We must not commit ourselves to them, nor rely on their patronage; but we must at the same time make use of every opportunity to testify for our Lord before them.

Our Protector and Lord is in heaven.

Matthew 10:19. But when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

When you are before the judge, or about to be there, do not worry yourself about “what you shall speak.” Be not anxious as to your manner or matter when on your defense. If you are the Lord’s true servant, you are the spokesman of the Holy Spirit; he will work in, you a peaceful frame of mind, and fit words “shall be given you.” He will speak in you and through you. The Father himself will put into your mouth, at the moment, the fittest reply to your adversaries. This has been wonderfully true in former ages in the cases of martyrs for the truth’s sake; and bold defenders of the faith still receive the same kind of guidance. Simple peasants have groveled great philosophers, and humble women have put learned ecclesiastics to a nonplus.

Matthew 10:20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

All along, men of God are simply instruments for God. Our Lord Jesus claimed to speak, not of himself, but from the Father; and to this he conforms his faithful witnesses. They speak and yet they speak not: God is silent and yet he speaks by them.

Matthew 10:21. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall use up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Unnatural hatreds have sprung out of religious bitterness. The old serpent not only endeavors to poison the relationship of the creature to the Creator, but even that of child to parent, and parent to child. Brothers can become unbrotherly, and all other relations unnatural, when under the dominion of religious bigotry. In times of persecution we may not expect love to ourselves from those who love not God. It might have seemed impossible that blood relations should be willing to assist in compassing the death of each other; but history has abundantly shown that our Lord's words were none too strong. He knew the hearts of men, and forewarned his disciples of the pitiless tempest which would beat upon in consequence of human enmity to the truth.

Matthew 10:22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

These are heavy words, but true. If we are faithful we shall of necessity make enemies. Jesus as good as says—The classes and the masses will turn against you because of the name, the doctrine, and the rule of your Master.

Sometimes the monarch, and sometimes the mob will rage against you; but either from one or other, or both, shall the opposition arise. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" was the storm-signal by which successive persecutions were announced. That signal may again be displayed in the order of divine providence. Happy are they who can bear persecution, and hold on and hold out even "to the end" of the trial—the close of life, or the termination of the dispensation. Such "shall be saved" indeed; but those who can be overcome by opposition are lost.

May the Lord prepare us to bear up under the utmost unkindness, and hold on till the day of judgment comes, or till he makes even our enemies to be at peace with us!

Matthew 10:23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

They were to keep to their work, and preach in all the cities of Israel; but they might flee from danger in one city, and move to another. They were not to stop in a town, and contend with the magistrates, and create confusion and disorder, but quickly to move off when they were cruelly opposed. It is to the last degree foolish to attempt to force religion upon men: it advances by gentleness, and not by violence. If a town is up in arms against the preacher, let him go where he will be less opposed.

There would always remain cities which needed the light. They would not be forced to cease their labors, because certain towns closed their gates against them. Much waste land needed reclaiming, let them hasten to fresh fields, and raise harvests there.

While they were to change their place they were to keep to their plan.

Their mission to Israel was to be a quick; work altogether, for the Lord would soon visit the land in judgment; and they would hardly have time to traverse the whole country before Israel's day of mercy as a nation, dwelling in her own land, would come to a close. The persecution which they felt in one city should quicken their pace in going to another, and so promote the rapid visitation of the whole country. They were not to delay over a hopeless town, for they had no time to spare. In some such diligent manner ought we to evangelize the world, believing that we have not an hour in which to loiter; for the Son of man may come on a sudden. If his Advent were very speedily to happen, it would come before all tribes and peoples had heard his gospel; and this must not be. Many should run to and fro and spread the knowledge of his cross. If we do not do this willingly, it may be we shall be driven to it. Persecution has often been a spur to the church. Let us be diligent in our holy calling, and preach the gospel while we can do so in peace, for perilous times may be upon us, or the Lord himself may appear before we think.

Matthew 10:24, 25. The disciple is not above His master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

The scholar is not more excellent than the teacher, nor the servant than his master. Who would wish to see such a violation of all order and rule?

Therefore, even if we had not had so much respect paid to us as to our Lord, we ought to have been well content. If we receive the same treatment as our Master, we have enough honor, and more than we have a right to expect. What then? If the Master of the family is likened to Beelzebub, the fly-god of the Philistines, and named after the prince of demons, by what names will they call us? Doubtless malice will quicken wit, and sarcasm will invent words which pierce as daggers, and cut like knives. Thank God, they may call us what they like, but they cannot make us evil. They can, and wild, cast out our names as evil, for they call good evil, and evil good. God was slandered in Paradise, and Christ on Calvary; how can we hope to escape? Instead of wishing to avoid bearing the cross, let us be content to endure dishonor for our King's sake. Let it be our ambition to be as our Master in all things. Since we are "of his household", let us rejoice to share with "the Master of the house." It is so great an honor to be of the royal household, that no price is too high to pay in consequence. Close conformity to the image of their Lord is the glory of saints. To "be as his master" is to every true servant the climax of his ambition.

O Lord Jesus, our Savior King, we see how thou wast treated, and we joyfully enter into the fellowship of thy sufferings! Grant us grace never to shrink in our loyalty to thee, cost whatever it may.

MATTHEW 10:26-42 THE KING CHEERING HIS CHAMPIONS

Matthew 10:26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

The King gives reasons for courage, saying, "Fear them not therefore." Have no fear of slander; your Lord and Master bore the full blast of that pitiless storm. Have no fear of misrepresentation, for the great God will right our characters before long. You and your traducers will alike be shown up in the colors of truth. Though you should be "covered" with obloquy, your integrity shall be "revealed"; though your true value is "hid", it shall yet be "known." Secret villainy and secret virtue will alike be set in the full blaze of day. Anticipate the future, and be not overwhelmed by the present.

Matthew 10:27. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

God is the great revealer, and, you should imitate him by publishing the truth to men. Go on, true believers, with your proper work, as mouths for God. Tell out what your Master tells you. Receive a message from himself in your quiet meditation, and then make it known everywhere. Hear it like a whisper in your ear, and then sound it forth as the eastern town-crier, who gets to the highest point in the village, and makes all the people hear from "the housetops." Keep the study and the closet out of sight, and there in secret meet with Jesus; and then set the pulpit of testimony in as conspicuous a place as you can find. If plunged "in darkness" of sickness, trouble, or distress, listen to him whose voice is heard in the thick darkness, and then "speak ye in light" the profitable lessons ye have learned.

Lord, let no one of us speak till thou speakest to him, and then let him not be silent. May all thy disciples present to thee their opened ears, and then use in thy cause their fire-touched tongues!

Matthew 10:28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

This, following upon the former verse, forbids us to forbear our testimony from fear of men. We may not say less or more because of the opposition of the foe. A mighty argument against fear is the comparative weakness of the enemy. Men can only wound our inferior part, the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But if we disobey God, the Supreme Lord of life and death has power even to destroy both parts of our being by casting them both into the death and darkness of Gehenna, or hell. Let us fear the Greater, and we shall not fear the less. There is no cure for the fear of man like the fear of God.

Matthew 10:29-31. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Here is a sermon against fear, and sparrows are the text. Those birds are of little worth, and you are of far greater consideration than many of them.

God observes the death of a sparrow, and he much more notes the lives and deaths of his people. Even the least part of his children's bodily frame has been registered. The very hairs of their head are counted and catalogued; and, to the most minute circumstance, all their lives are under the arrangement of the Lord of love. Chance is not in our creed: the decree of the Eternal Watcher rules our destiny, and love is seen in every line of that decree.

Since we shall not suffer harm at the hand of men by their arbitrary conduct, apart from the will and permission of our Father, let us be ready to bear with holy courage whatever the wrath of man may bring upon us.

God will not waste the life of one of his soldiers; no, nor a hair of his head.

If we die in God's battle we live in the grandest sense, for by loss of life we gain life.

Matthew 10:32, 33. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Because divine providence rules over all, the destiny of believers is secure beyond fear of harm, and they must not shrink from the boldest avowal of their faith because of anxiety to preserve their lives. Our business is to confess Christ before men. In him the truth we acknowledge begins, centers, and ends. Our Confession of Faith is a confession of Christ: he is our theology, or Word of God. What a joy to confess him now! What a reward to be confessed by him hereafter in the glory-world! It will be a high offense against the great God, whom Jesus twice calls "my Father which is in heaven", if we fail to confess his Son on earth.

It is clear that in this passage to "deny" Jesus means,—not to confess him.

What a grave warning is this for the cowardly believer! Can a nonconfessing faith save? To live and die without confessing Christ before men is to run an awful risk. Actually to recant and give up Christ must be a dreadful crime, and the penalty is fearful to contemplate. Disowned by Jesus before his Father who is in heaven! What hell can be worse?

Lord, let me never blush to own thee in all companies! Work in me a bold spirit by thy Holy Spirit. Let me confess thy truth whatever the spirit of the age may be, uphold thy church when she is most despised, obey thy precepts when they cost most dear, and glory in thy name when it is most reproached.

Matthew 10:34-36. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Peace will be the ultimate issue of our Lord's coming; but, at the first, the Lord Jesus sends a sword among men. He wars against war, and contends against contention. In the act of producing the pence of heaven he arouses the rage of hell. Truth provokes opposition, purity excites enmity, and righteousness arouses all the forces of wrong.

During the process of fermentation, in which the right works for mastery, natural relationships go for nothing as preservatives of peace. The coming of Christ into a house is often the cause of variance between the converted and the unconverted. The more loving the Christian is, the more he may be opposed: love creates a tender zeal for the salvation of friends, and that very zeal frequently calls forth resentment. We are to expect this, and not to be put about by it when it occurs. Animosities on account of religion often excite the fiercest of enmities, and nearness of kin inflames rather than quenches the hostility. We are to press on in confessing the Lord Jesus, come what may of it. Even if our house becomes a den of lions to us, we must stand up for our Lord. The peace-at-any-price people have no portion in this kingdom.

Lord, teach us how to behave in these trying circumstances.

Matthew 10:37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Christ must be first. He herein claims the highest place in every human breast. Could he have done so had he not been divine? No mere prophet would talk in this fashion. Yet we are not sensible of the slightest egotism in his speech, neither does it occur to us that he goes beyond his line. We are conscious that the Son of God has a right to speak thus, and only he.

We must earnestly beware of making idols of our dearest ones, by loving them more than Jesus. We must never set them near the throne of our King. We are not worthy to dwell with Christ above, nor even to be associated with him here, if any earthly object is judged by us to be worthy to rival the Lord Jesus.

Father and mother, son and daughter — we would do anything to please them; but, as opposed to Jesus, they stand nowhere, and cannot for an instant be allowed to come in the way of our supreme loyalty to our Lord.

Matthew 10:38. And he that taketh, not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Here our Lord for the second time in this gospel brings in his death. At first he spoke of being taken from them; but now of the cross. There is a cross for each one which he may regard as "his cross." It may be that the cross will not take us up, but we must take it up, by being willing to endure anything or everything for Christ's sake. We are not to drag the cross after us, but to take it up. "Dragged crosses are heavy; carried crosses grow light." Bearing the cross, we are to follow after Jesus: to bear a cross without following Christ is a poor affair. A Christian who shuns the cross is no Christian; but a crossbearer who does not follow Jesus equally misses the mark. Is it not singular that nothing is so essential to make a man worthy of Christ as cross-bearing in his track? Yet it is assuredly so. Lord, thou hast laid a cross upon me, do not permit me to shirk it, or shrink from it.

Matthew 10:39. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

If to escape from death he gives up Christ, and so finds a continuance of this poor mortal life; by that very act he loses true life. He gains the temporal at the expense of the eternal. On the other hand, he who loses life for Christ's sake does in the highest sense find life, life eternal, life infinitely blessed. He makes the wisest choice who lays down his life for Jesus, and finds life in Jesus.

Matthew 10:40. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

What blessed union and hallowed communion exist between the King, and his servants! The words before us are especially true of the apostles to whom they were first addressed. Apostolic teaching is Christ's teaching.

To receive the twelve is to receive their Lord Jesus, and to receive the Lord Jesus is to receive God himself. In these days certain teachers despise the epistles which were written by apostles, and they are themselves worthy to be despised for so doing. This is one of the sure tests of soundness in the faith. "He that is of God heareth us", says John. This bears hard on modern critics who in a hypocritical manner pretend to receive Christ, and then reject his inspired apostles.

Lord, teach me to receive thy people into my heart, that thus I may receive thee; and as to the doctrine which I hold, be pleased to establish me in the apostolic faith.

Matthew 10:41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Men may receive a prophet as a patriot, or a poet: that is not the point in hand. The prophet must be received in his highest character, "in the name of a prophet", and for the sake of his Lord; and then the Lord himself is received, and he will reward the receiver in the same way in which his prophet is rewarded. If we cannot do all the good deeds of a righteous man, we can yet

partake in his happiness by having fellowship with him, and by uniting with him in vindicating the faith and comforting his heart.

To receive into our homes and our hearts God's persecuted servants is to share their reward. To maintain the cause and character of good men is to be numbered with them in God's account. This is all of grace; since the deed is so little and the recompense so large.

Matthew 10:42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

He looked away from the apostles to some of the least and youngest of those who followed him, and he declared that the very least kindness shown to them should have its recompense. There may be a sea of warm love in "a cup of cold water ." Much loyalty to the King may be expressed by little kindnesses to his servants, and perhaps more by kindness to the little ones among them than by friendship with the greater sort. To love a poor and despised child of God for Christ's sake shows greater love to Christ than if we love the honorable, and amiable, and rich members of his church.

Acts of love are divinely estimated rather by motive than by measure. "A cup ", and that "of cold water ", may mean as much from one as banquet from another. Cold water has a special value in a hot climate; but this text makes it precious anywhere. Giving refreshment may be made a choice means of fellowship with holy men, if we give it because they are disciples; and specially so when persecuting governments make it penal to succor the saints in any way.

Though every kindly deed is its own reward, yet the Lord promises a further recompense. What we give for Christ's sake is insured against loss by the promise of the text, by the "Verily, I say unto you ", which confirms it, and by the use of the negative "in no wise ", which shuts out all possibility of its being otherwise.