

Expository Thoughts On John - JOHN 10:19-30

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

Another sharp division took place among the Jewish authorities because of these words. Many of them were saying, "He is possessed by a demon and has lost his mind. Why do you listen to him?" Others said, "These are not the words of someone possessed by a demon. A demon cannot cause the blind to see, can it?"

Then came the feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple area in Solomon's Portico. The Jewish religious leaders surrounded him and said, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replied, "I told you and you do not believe. The deeds I do in my Father's name testify about me. But you refuse to believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; no one will snatch them from my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from my Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

We should notice, first, in this passage, what strifes and controversies our Lord occasioned when He was on earth. We read that "there was a division among the Jews for His sayings"--and that "many of them said He has a devil, and is mad," while others took an opposite view. It may seem strange, at first sight, that He who came to preach peace between God and man should be the cause of contention. But herein were His own words literally fulfilled--"I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matt. 10:34.) The fault was not in Christ or His doctrine, but in the carnal mind of His Jewish hearers.

Let us never be surprised if we see the same thing in our own day. Human nature never changes. So long as the heart of man is without grace, so long we must expect to see it dislike the Gospel of Christ. Just as oil and water, acids and alkalies, cannot combine, so in the same way unconverted people cannot really like the people of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God." (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14)

The servant of Christ must think it no strange thing if he goes through the same experience as his Master. He will often find his ways and opinions in religion the cause of strife in his own family. He will have to endure ridicule, harsh words, and petty persecution, from the children of this world. He may even discover that he is thought a fool or a madman on account of his Christianity. Let none of these things move him. The thought that he is a partaker of the afflictions of Christ ought to steel him against every trial. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." (Matt. 10:25)

One thing, at any rate, should never be forgotten. We must not allow ourselves to think the worse of religion because of the strifes and dissensions to which it gives rise. Whatever men may please to say, it is human nature, and not religion, which is to blame. We do not blame the glorious sun because its rays draw forth noxious vapors from the marsh. We must not find fault with the glorious Gospel, if it stirs up men\

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