

buried in Canaan, chiefly because it was typical of that better country which he desired.

Learn, 1. That God is merciful to all.—*Matt. v. 45.*

2. That he watches with peculiar care over his church,—*Psal. cxxxv. 4; 1 Tim. iv. 10.*

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FEAR GOD,—LUKE XII. 1-12.

*I. Christ's warning against hypocrisy.*

An innumerable multitude, in the original, myriads, of people had gathered together for the purpose of hearing him who spake as never man spake, from which circumstance we learn that though his reproofs were re-sented by the Pharisees, yet his preaching was highly acceptable to the common people. Before this immense multitude he warns his disciples against the sin of hypocrisy. This warning though applicable to all his hearers was aimed more especially at his own disciples, the twelve apostles or it may be the seventy whom he sent out to preach the gospel. The very best of men have need to watch against this insidious sin so natural to the human heart. Our Lord compares it to leaven; for like leaven it works silently and secretly and soon affects the whole mass.—The reason Christ assigned for this admonition was that "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed," v. 2. From Him neither privacy nor darkness can conceal anything, and soon every one must appear before Him in his true character.

*II. Whom Christ's disciples should fear.*

They were not to be influenced by the fear of man, who could do them no greater injury than killing the body, and could not even do that without permission. But they were to fear him who had power either to kill or to preserve the body, and to cast both body and soul into hell. They who fear God fear nothing else, but they who fear him not, are greatly influenced by the fear of man, whatever they may profess. "It is true," said the martyred Bishop Hooper, when urged by the Papists to recant at the stake, "It is true life is sweet and death bitter; but eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death more bitter."

*III. Christ's encouragement to his persecuted disciples.*

In all times of trouble we have need to strengthen ourselves by a consideration of the first principles of our blessed religion.—Firm belief in the universality and extent of God's providence has sustained and comforted thousands. Not one of the most insignificant of creatures is forgotten before God. He feeds and preserves the sparrow and takes notice of its death. How much more then shall he be concerned in all the interests

of his servants for whom he gave up his Son to die. He is infinitely better acquainted with all our concerns than we can be ourselves. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," v. 7. With all confidence therefore, in all the circumstances of this changeful life may we rely upon him. Properly speaking there is no such thing as "chance," "fortune" or "misfortune," but the hand of a heavenly Father is in every event of the Christian's life, and our language ought always to be "It pleaseth the Lord, therefore it shall please me."

*IV. We must confess Christ if we wish that he would acknowledge us as his saved ones on the judgment-day.*

This confession must be constant and persevering. It will not do to confess him one day and deny him the next. We must confess him before men, whatever opposition the confession may involve. Through good report and bad report in the face of every persecution and of death itself we must own him for our Lord or he will deny us before his holy angels. We must confess him not only in word, but also in deed.

*V. That there is such a thing as an unpardonable sin.*

As to the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, the soundest divines believe it to be a combination of great speculative knowledge of gospel doctrines and an unsanctified heart. They also unanimously believe that this sin cannot consist with the fear of having committed it. For insensibility, total depravity, and impenitency, are the prominent characteristics of those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

*VI. That Christ's disciples should not be over anxious as to what they shall say when required to give an account of their religion.*

From this passage some have most unwarrantably inferred that ministers should make no preparation for their pulpit-duties. But the word of God is too solemn a thing to be trifled with. It is quite evident that the passage has no reference to the duty of ministers with regard to the preaching of the word; but it is an assurance to believers that when they are brought before human tribunals whether civil or ecclesiastical they would by Christ's Holy Spirit be taught a wise and consistent answer to the accusations of their adversaries. Witness the fulfilment of this promise in Paul's defence of himself before the Jews at Jerusalem, on the steps of the castle, and before Felix, Festus and Agrippa; also the answers of the Reformers and Martyrs at their public trials.

Learn 1. That we should ever act as under the eye of God,—*Gen. xvii. 1; Chron. xvi. 9; Heb. xi. 27.*

2. That we should fear God and not man.—*Psa. lvi. 4; Isa. viii. 12, 13.*

3. That we should prayerfully endeavour