

Death, denial, doubt & dressing divinely

a. Fear of men, fear of God (12:1-12)

12:1-3 How is it ALL religious testimony is soiled or spoiled? (Matt.23)

[1] [12:1] This was true charity. This was doing the work of a physician. This was the pattern which all His ministers were intended to follow. Well would it have been for the church and the world if the ministers of Christ had always spoken out as plainly and faithfully as their Master used to do! Their own lives might have been made more uncomfortable by such a course of action. But they would have saved far more souls. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 58

[2] [12:1] What did He mean by that? The history of the Pharisees is a wonderful history. They arose in the Maccabean period; and were to the Jewish people at that time, what the Puritans were to England in the period of their greatness. The Pharisees constituted an order, created to prevent the nation coming into contact with other nations, and losing its purity and its identity; and their influence was of the highest, and of the best. The Pharisaic movement arose out of the passion of men for the Divine ideal for the nation. In the days of Jesus they had become utterly degenerate. They had lost their spiritual and moral influence; and in effect He said to His disciples, The leaven that has destroyed them is hypocrisy. In that warning our Lord was interpreting the failure of one of the most magnificent movements that had ever arisen in the history of God's ancient people. The leaven of hypocrisy had destroyed it. **G. Campbell Morgan** *Luke* p. 151

12:4-7 There is a proper fear of God (Rev.14:6,7) [12:7b A handy refutation of reincarnation (metempsychosis)]

[3] [12:4] Here the heart of Jesus softens: the thought of the lot which some of them will have to undergo seems to render His own more dear to Him. Hence the tender form of address, *To you, my friends*. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 339

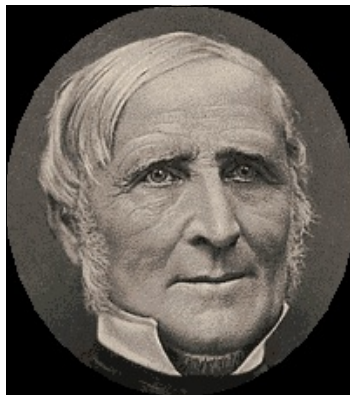
[4] [12:6] The Epicureans, the Academics, the followers of Aristotle and others, maintained that

the gods regarded the universe in general, but not particular persons and things. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 64

[5] [12:4-7] The knowledge of God extends not only to our persons, but even to the most insignificant parts of our being – to those 140,000 hairs of which we loose some every day without paying the least attention. No fear, then; ye shall not fall without God's consent; and if He consent, it is because it will be for His child's good. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 339

12:8,9 Fear must give way to faith. Why are such hard sayings necessary? (John 15:18-21; 16:1-3)

[6] We must be careful not to confine "denying Christ" to such open acts as Peter's denial of Him. We deny Christ when from unbelief, or indolence, or love of the world, or fear of man, we shrink from confessing Him as our Saviour and our King. **J.C. Ryle** p. 69



Frederic Godet

Men *not* condemned for rejecting Christ, nor truth, nor a caricature of the gospel of Christ – but the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit – "goodness itself"

12:10 How can ANYTHING be more serious than sin against Christ?

[7] [12:8-12] To be an ignorant heathen, and bow down to idols and stones, is bad enough. But to be called a Christian, and know the theory of the Gospel, and yet cleave to sin and the world with the heart, is to be a candidate for the worst and lowest place in hell. It is to be as like as possible to the devil. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 67

12:11,12 How high is Christ's view of the Spirit? Whom will He inspire? (John 14:16,17 16:13,14)

[8] [12:12] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all committed to the disciples of Jesus; God, as Father, knows the falling of the sparrows, and cares for them; the Son is waiting for the day when He will confess their name; the Spirit is at their disposal to help them in every hour of difficulty. **G. Campbell Morgan** *Luke* p. 153

The 'blasphemy against the Holy Spirit'

[9] [12:10] Jesus is ready to pardon in this world or in the next every indignity offered merely to His person; but an insult offered to goodness as such, and to its living principle in the heart of humanity, the Holy Spirit, the impious audacity of putting the holiness of His works to the account of the spirit of evil – that is what He calls *blaspheming the Holy Spirit*, and what He declares unpardonable. The history of Israel has fully proved the truth of this threatening. This people perished not for having nailed Jesus Christ to the cross. Otherwise Good Friday would have been the day of their judgment, and God would not have continued to offer them for forty years the pardon of their crime. It was its rejection

of the apostolic preaching, its obstinate resistance to the Spirit of Pentecost, which filled up the measure of Jerusalem's sin. And it is with individuals as with the nation. The sin which is forever unpardonable, is not the rejection of the truth, in consequence of a misunderstanding, such as that of so many unbelievers who confound the gospel with this or that false form, which is nothing better than its caricature. It is hatred of holiness as such – a hatred which leads men to make the gospel a work of pride or fraud, and to ascribe it to the spirit of evil.... hatred of goodness itself in its supreme manifestation. **F. Godet** *Luke* p. 340

b. A more common form of denial – “Thou fool ...”! (12:13-21)

12:13-15 Note how the Lord turns a question about rights into a warning about motive

[10] A voice was heard in the crowd appealing to Him suddenly, breaking in on His conversation with His disciples, and apparently uttering a cry for justice; but, as well shall see presently, it was actually an expression of covetousness. **G.C. Morgan** *Luke* p. 153

[11] There is one sin expressly forbidden in the Ten Commandments which few people think of as wicked: namely, “Thou shalt not covet.” **Harry Ironside** *Luke* p. 406

[12] [12:13,14] His form of address, *Man*, is far from cordial (*cf.* Bengel, ‘He addresses him as a stranger’.) He came to bring men to God, not to bring property to men. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p.212

[13] Ministers of Christ would do well in modern times to mark our Lord’s conduct in this case, and, as far as possible, to walk in His steps. The less ministers have to do with secular things, and especially with the administration of law, the better. **J.C. Ryle** p. 75

12:16-21 Is this man, by either Jewish standards or our’s, a great sinner? What are his values?

What do this man’s choices effectively deny?

[14] [12:16] He speaks to *his soul* ... the seat of his affections, as if it belonged to him (“my soul;” comp. the four [*mou*, *my*] ... verses 17 and 18): and yet he is about to learn that this soul itself is only lent him. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 343

[15] [12:17] it is just here that there is some resemblance to the story of Nabal: “Shall I take *my* bread, and *my* water, and *my* flesh that I have killed for *my* shearers and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they be?” (1 Sam. 25:11) ... **A. Plummer** *Luke* p. 324

[16] [12:18] Let it be observed, that the rich man talks of “my” barns, “my” fruits, “my” goods, with all the self-sufficiency and petty importance of one who knows no will but his own, and no master but his own selfishness. It should remind us of Nabal’s language, in 1 Sam. 25:11. Of him too it is written, “Fool is his name, and folly is with him.” (1 Sam. 25:25) **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 76

[17] Even when converted, the rich carry a great weight, and run the race to heaven under great disadvantages. The possession of money has a most hardening effect upon the conscience. ... Poverty has many disadvantages. But riches destroy far more souls than poverty. **J.C. Ryle** p. 74

None of our “stuff” – not even our *soul* – belongs to us! Nabal’s “right” denied!

Do these sayings bother us? That’s a sign we have a problem!

c. Doubt’s preoccupations vs. faith’s ‘Divine dressing’ (12:22-34)

12:22-24 Another blow to acquisitiveness – even necessary things can become idols!

[18] [12:24] There is possibly significance in the fact that the ravens were unclean (Lv. 11:15). God makes provision even for these unclean birds. And Jesus goes on to remind His hearers that they are of more value than birds (*cf.* verse 7). **Leon Morris** *Luke* p.213

12:25-31 What IS worth worrying about? (11:2)

[19] [12:29] Again our Lord is not saying that we are to take no thought of these things. He says we are to take no anxious thought. ... The supreme passion of all our days, in all our ways, is to be a passion for the Kingdom of God, and that not as some “far-off Divine event” only, but as something already existing, with which we are to seek right relationship. The passion of life is to be a passion for the Kingdom of God, and the measure in which we obey this injunction, is the measure in which we pass into the realm of unruffled peace and rest and calm. **Campbell Morgan** *Luke* p. 155

12:32-34 How can we know where OUR heart is? (Do these sayings bother us? That’s a sign there’s a problem)

[20] [12:32] Believers are a “little flock.” They always have been, ever since the world began. Professing servants of God have sometimes been very many. Baptized people at the present day are a great company. But true Christians are very few. It is foolish to be surprised at this. It is vain to expect it will be otherwise until the Lord comes again. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14.) **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 84

[21] [12:33] Almsgiving is not to be a mere giving of what we can spare. Nor is it merely for the sake of the receiver. It is also for the good of the giver, that his heart may be freed from covetousness. The attempt to keep the letter of the rule here given (Acts 2:44,45) had disastrous effects on the Church of Jerusalem, which speedily became a Church of paupers, constantly in need of alms (Rom. 15:25,26; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1). **A. Plummer** *Luke* p.329

Covetousness – the poisonous root of a catalog of sins

[22] It would be vain to decide positively which is the most common sin in the world. It would be safe to say that there is none, at any rate, to which the heart is more prone, than covetousness. It was this sin which helped to cast down the angels who fell. They were not content with their first estate. They coveted something better. It was this sin which helped to drive Adam and Eve out of paradise, and bring death into the world. Our first parents were not satisfied with the things which God gave them in Eden. They coveted, and so they fell. It is a sin which,

ever since the fall, has been the fertile cause of misery and unhappiness upon earth. Wars, quarrels, strifes, divisions, envyings, disputes, jealousies, hatreds of all sorts, both public and private, may nearly all be traced up to this fountain-head. Let the warning which our Lord pronounces, sink down into our hearts, and bear fruit in our lives. Let us strive to learn the lesson which St. Paul had mastered, when he says, “I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content.” (Phil. 4:11). **J.C. Ryle** p. 72