

Watching For Christ's Coming

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"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to eat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." [Luke 12:37,38](#).

I AM about to speak of the Second Coming of Christ and I felt thankful that my dear Brother's prayer, although we had not been in consultation with one another upon the matter, was in every way so suitable to the subject upon which I am to speak. He led us in prayer to think of our coming Lord, so that I trust you are on the margin of the subject, now, and that you will not have to make any very great exertion of mind to plunge into mid-stream and be carried away with the full current of thought concerning the Second Advent of the Savior. It is a very appropriate topic when we come to the Lord's Table, for, as that prayer reminded us, the Lord's Supper looks backward, and is a memorial of His agony. But it also looks forward and is an anticipation of His Glory. Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, "For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death till He comes." By looking forward, in a right state of heart, to that Second Coming of Christ which is the joy of His Church, you will also be in a right state of heart for coming to the Communion Table. May the Holy Spirit make it to be so!

The posture at the Communion Table, as you know, according to our Lord's example, was not that of kneeling, but that of reclining. The easiest position which you can assume is the most fitting for the Lord's Supper, but remember that the supper was no sooner finished, than, "they sang a hymn," and when that hymn was concluded, they went out into the Mount of Olives to the agonies of Gethsemane. It often seems to me as if now, after finding rest at the Table by feeding upon Christ, whose real Presence we have—not after a carnal sort, but after a spiritual sort—after that, we sing a hymn, as if we would go out to meet our Lord in His Second Coming, not going to the Mount of Olives to see Him in a bloody sweat, but to hear that word of the angel, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven."

I do not think we ought to feel at all surprised if we were to go always expecting Him, not knowing at what hour the Master of the house shall come. The world does not expect Him—it goes on with its eating and drinking, its marrying and giving in marriage—but His own family should expect Him. When He will return from the wedding, I trust that He will

not find the door shut against Him, but that we shall be ready to open to our Lord immediately when He knocks. That is the object of the few words that I shall have to say, tonight, to stir you up, and my own heart, also, to be always watching for Christ's Second Coming.

I. First, THE LORD WILL COME. He that has come once is to come again. He will come a second time. The Lord will come.

He will come again, for He has promised to return. We have His own word for it. That is our first reason for expecting Him. Among the last of the words which He spoke to His servant John are these, "Surely I come quickly." You may read it, "I am coming quickly. I am even now upon the road. I am traveling as fast as wisdom allows. I am always coming, and coming quickly." Our Lord has promised to come and to come in Person. Some try to explain the Second Coming of Christ as though it meant the Believer dying. You may, if you like, consider that Christ comes to His saints in death. In a certain sense, He does, but that sense will never bear out the full meaning of the teaching of the Second Advent with which the Scripture is full. No, "the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archan-

gel, and with the trump of God." He who went up to Heaven will come down from Heaven and stand, in the latter day, upon the earth. Every redeemed soul can say with Job, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." Christ will as certainly be here again in Glory as He once was here in shame, for He has promised to return.

Moreover, the great scheme of redemption requires Christ's return. It is a part of that scheme that, as He came once with a sin offering, He should come a second time without a sin offering, that, as He came once to redeem, He should come a second time to claim the inheritance which He has so dearly bought. He came once, that His heel might be bruised. He comes, again, to break the serpent's head and, with a rod of iron, to dash His enemies in pieces, as potters' vessels. He came, once, to wear the crown of thorns. He must come, again, to wear the diadem of universal dominion. He comes to the marriage supper. He comes to gather His saints together. He comes to glorify them with Himself on this same earth where once He and they were despised and rejected of men. Understand this, that the whole drama of redemption cannot be perfected without this last act of the coming of the King!

The complete history of Paradise Regained requires that the New Jerusalem should come down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—and it also requires that the heavenly Bridegroom should come riding forth on His white horse, conquering and to conquer, King of kings and Lord of lords, amidst the everlasting hallelujahs of saints and angels! It must be so. The man of Nazareth will come again! None shall spit in His face, then, but every knee shall bow before Him. The Crucified shall come, again, and though the nail prints will be visible, no nails shall, then, fasten His dear hands to the tree.

But instead thereof, He shall grasp the scepter of universal sovereignty and He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

When will He come? Ah, that is the question, the question of questions! He will come in His own time. He will come in due time. A brother minister, calling upon me, said, as we sat together, "I should like to ask you a lot of questions about the future." "Oh, well!" I replied, "I cannot answer you, for I daresay I know no more about it than you do." "But," he said, "what about the Lord's Second Advent? Will there not be the millennium, first?" I said, "I cannot tell whether there will be the millennium, first, but this I know, the Scripture has left the whole matter, as far as I can see, with an intentional indistinctness, that we may be always expecting Christ to come, and that we may be watching for His coming at any hour and every hour. I think that the millennium will commence after His coming, and not before it. I cannot imagine the Kingdom with the King absent. It seems to me to be an essential part of the Millennial Glory that the King shall then be revealed. At the same time, I am not going to lay down anything definite upon that point. He may not come for a thousand years. He may come tonight. The teaching of Scripture is, first of all, 'In such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.' It is clear that if it were revealed that a thousand years must elapse before He would come, we might very well go to sleep for that time, for we should have no reason to expect that He would come when Scripture told us He would not."

"Well," answered my friend, "but when Christ comes, that will be the General Judgment, will it not?" Then I quoted these texts, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." "But the rest of the dead lived not, again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." I said, "There is a resurrection from among the dead to which the Apostle Paul labored to attain. We shall all rise, but the righteous shall rise a thousand years before the ungodly. There is to be that interval of time between the one and the other. Whether that is the Millennial Glory, or not, this deponent says not, though he thinks it is. But this is the main point, the Lord shall come. We know not when we are to expect His coming. We are not to lay down, as absolutely fixed, any definite prediction or circumstance that would allow us to go to sleep until that prediction was fulfilled, or that circumstance was apparent."

"Will not the Jews be converted to Christ, and restored to their land?" enquired my friend. I replied, "Yes, I think so. Surely they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son. And God shall give them the Kingdom and the Glory, for they are His people, whom He has not forever cast away. The Jews, who are the natural olive branches, shall yet be grafted into their own olive tree, again, and then shall be the fullness of the Gentiles." "Will that be before Christ comes, or after?" asked my friend. I answered, "I think it will be after He comes, but whether or not, I am not going to commit myself to any definite opinion on the subject."

To you, my dear Friends, I say—Read for yourselves, and search for yourselves, for still, this stands first, and is the only thing that I will insist upon tonight—the Lord will come. He may come now. He may come tomorrow. He may

come in the first watch of the night, or the second watch, or He may wait until the morning watch—but the one word that He gives to you all is, "Watch! Watch! Watch!" that whenever He shall come, you may be ready to open to Him and to say, in the language of the hymn we sang just now—

"Hallelujah!

Welcome, welcome, Judge Diviner So far I know that we are Scriptural and, therefore, perfectly safe in our statements about the Lord's Second Advent.

Brothers and Sisters, I would be earnest on this point, for the notion of the delay of Christ's Coming is always harmful, however you arrive at it, whether it is by studying prophecy, or in any other way. If you come to be of the opinion of the servant mentioned in the 45th verse, you are wrong—"If that servant says in his heart, My lord delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Do not, therefore, get the idea that the Lord delays His Coming and that He will not or cannot come as yet. Far better would it be for you to stand on the tiptoe of expectation and to be rather, disappointed, to think that He does not come.

I do not wish you to be shaken in mind so as to act fanatically or foolishly, as certain people did in America, when they went out into the woods with "ascension dresses" on, so as to go straight up all of a sudden! Fall into none of those absurd ideas that have led people to leave a chair vacant at the table and to put an empty plate because the Lord might come and need it! And try to avoid all other superstitious nonsense. To stand star-gazing at the prophecies, with your mouth wide open, is just the wrong thing to do! Far better will it be to go on working for your Lord, getting yourself and your service ready for His appearing, and cheering yourself all the while with this thought, "While I am at work, my Master may come. Before I get weary, my Master may return. While others are mocking at me, my Master may appear! And whether they mock or applaud, is nothing to me. I live before the great Taskmaster's eyes, and do my service knowing that He sees me and, expecting that, by-and-by, He will reveal Himself to me, and then He will reveal me and my right intention to misrepresenting men."

That is the first point, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord will come. Settle that in your minds. He will come in His own time and we are always to be looking for His appearing.

II. Now, secondly, THE LORD BIDS US WATCH FOR HIM. That is the marrow of the text—"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching."

Now what is this watching? Not wishing to use my own words, I thought that I would call your attention to the context. The first essential part of this watching is that we are not to be taken up with present things. You remember that the 22nd verse is about not taking thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink—you are not to be absorbed in that. You who are Christians are not to live the fleshly, selfish life that asks, "What shall I eat and drink? How can I store up my goods? How can I get food and raiment, here?" You are something more than dumb, driven cattle that must think of hay and water. You have immortal spirits! Rise to the dignity of your immortality! Begin to think of the Kingdom, the Kingdom so soon to come, the Kingdom which your Father has given you and which, therefore, you must certainly inherit! Think of the Kingdom which Christ has prepared for you, and for which He is making you kings and priests unto God, that you may reign with Him forever and ever. Oh, be not earthbound! Do not cast your anchor, here, in these troubled waters. Build not your nest on any of these trees—they are all marked for the axe and are coming down—and your nest will come down, too, if you build it here. Set your affection on things above, up yonder—

"Up where eternal ages roll, Where solid pleasures never die, And fruits eternal feast the soul." There project your thoughts and your anxieties—and have a care about the world to come. Be not anxious about the things that pertain to this life. "Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Reading further down, in the 35th verse, you will notice that watching implies keeping ourselves in a serviceable condition—"Let your loins be girded about." You know how the Orientals wear flowing robes which are always getting in their way. They cannot walk without being tripped up, so that, if a man has a piece of work on hand, he just tucks in his robe under his belt, tightens his belt up tightly, and gets ready for his task—as we would say in English, turning the

Oriental into the Western figure—rolling up your shirtsleeves and preparing for work. That is the way to wait for the Lord, ready for service, that, when He comes, He may never find you idle.

I called to see a Sister one morning and when I called, she was cleaning the front steps with some whitening, and she said, "Oh, my dear Pastor, I am sorry that you should call upon me just now! I would not have had you see me like this on any account." I answered, "That is how I like to see you, busy at your work. I should not have liked to have come in and caught you talking to your neighbor over the back palings. That would not have pleased me at all. May your Lord, when He comes, find you just so, doing your duty!" You see exactly what is meant—you are to be doing your duty—you are to be engaged about those vocations to which God has called you. You are to be doing it all out of love to Christ and as service for Him. Oh, that we might watch in that style, with our loins girded about! Work, and wait,

and watch! Can you put those three things together? Work, and wait, and watch! This is what your Master asks of you.

And next, He would have us wait with our lights burning. If the Master comes home late, let us sit up late for Him. It is not for us to go to bed till He comes home. Have the lights all trimmed. Have His chamber well lit—have the entrance-hall ready for His approach. When the King comes, have your torches flaming, that you may go out to meet the royal Bridegroom and escort Him to His home! If we are to watch for the Lord as we ought, it must be with lamps burning. Are you making your light to shine among men? Do you think that your conduct and character are an example that will do your neighbors good and are you trying to teach others the way of salvation? Some professors are like dark lanterns, or candles under a bushel. May we never be such! May we stand with our lamps trimmed and our lights burning and we, ourselves, like unto men that wait for their Lord, not walking in darkness, nor concealing our light, but letting it shine brightly! That is the way to watch for Christ, with your belt tight about you because you are ready for work, and your lamp flaming out with brightness because you are anxious to illuminate the dark world in which you live.

To put it very plainly, I think that watching for the Coming of the Lord means acting just as you would wish to be acting if He were to come. I saw, in the Orphanage schoolroom, that little motto, "What would Jesus do?" That is a very splendid motto for our whole life, "What would Jesus do in such a case and in such a case?" Do just that. Another good motto is, "What would Jesus think of me if He were to come?" There are some places into which a Christian could not go, for he would not like his Master to find him there. There are some kinds of amusements into which a Believer would never enter, for he would be ashamed for his Master to come and find him there. There are some conditions of angry temper, of pride, petulance, or spiritual sloth in which you would not like to be if you felt that the Master was coming. Suppose an angel's wing should brush your cheek just as you have spoken some unkind word and a voice should say, "Your Master is coming"—you would tremble, I am sure, to meet Him in such a condition! Oh, Beloved, let us try, every morning, to get up as if that were the morning in which Christ would come! And when we go up to bed at night, may we lie down with this thought, "Perhaps I shall be awakened by the ringing out of the silver trumpets heralding His Coming. Before the sun arises, I may be startled from my dreams by the greatest of all cries, 'The Lord is come! The Lord is come!'" What a check, what an incentive, what a bridle, what a spur such thoughts as these would be to us! Take this for the guide of your whole life—act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged—and if you would not wish to be caught in that act by the Coming of the Lord, let it not be your act.

The second verse of our text speaks about the master coming in the second watch, or in the third watch. We are to act as those who keep the watches of the age for Christ. Among the Romans it was as it is on board ship—there were certain watches. A Roman soldier,

perhaps, stood on guard for three hours, and when he had been on the watch for three hours, there came another sentry who took his place, and the first man retired and went back to the barracks. And the fresh sentinel stood in his place during his allotted time. Brothers and Sisters, we have succeeded a long line of watchmen! Since the days of our Lord, when He sent out the chosen 12 to stand upon the citadel and tell how the night waxed or waned, how have the watchers come and gone! Our God has changed the watchers, but He has kept the watch. He still sets watchmen on the walls of Zion who cannot hold their peace day or night, but must watch for the Coming of their Master, watch against evil times, watch against error and watch for the souls of men.

At this time some of us are called to be specially on the watch and dare we sleep? After such a line of lynx-eyed watchmen, who counted not their lives dear unto them that they might hold their post, and watch against the foe, shall we be cowards and be afraid, or shall we be sluggards and go to our beds? By Him that lives, and was dead, and is alive forevermore, we pray that we may never be guilty of treason to His sacred name and Truth! But may we watch on to the

last moment when there shall ring out the clarion cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes! Go you out to meet Him." People of the Tabernacle, you are set to watch, tonight, just as they did in the brave days of old! Whitefield and Wesley's men were watchers and those before them, in the days of Luther and of Calvin, and backward even to the days of our Lord! They kept the watches of the night and you must do the same, until—

"Upstarting at the midnight cry,

'Behold your heavenly Bridegroom near,'" you go forth to welcome your returning Lord.

We are to wait with one objective in view, viz., to open the door to Him and to welcome Him—"that when He comes and knocks, they may open unto Him immediately." Perhaps you know what it is to go home to a loving, tender wife and children who are watching for you. You have been on a journey. You have been absent for some little time. You have written them letters which they have greatly valued. You have heard from them, but all that is nothing like your personal presence! They are looking out for you and if, perhaps, the boat should fail you, or the train is late—if you arrived at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, you would not expect to find the house all shut up and nobody watching for you! No, you had told them that you would come and you were quite sure that they would watch for you. I feel rebuked, myself, sometimes, for not watching for my Master when I know that, at this very time, my dogs are sitting against the door, waiting for me—and long before I reach home, there they will be and, at the first sound of the carriage wheels, they will lift up their voices with delight because their master is coming home! Oh, if we loved our Lord as dogs love their masters, how we should catch the first sound of His Coming—and be waiting, always waiting—and never happy until at last we should see Him!

Pardon me for using a dog as a picture of what you ought to be, but when you have attained to a state above that, I will find another illustration to explain my meaning.

III. Now, lastly, THERE IS A REWARD FOR WATCHERS. Their reward is this, "Blessed are those servants,

whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching."

They have a present blessedness. It is a very blessed thing to be on the watch for Christ, it is a blessing to us now. How it detaches you from the world! You can be poor without murmuring. You can be rich without worldliness. You can be sick without sorrowing. You can be healthy without presumption. If you are always waiting for Christ's Coming, untold blessings are wrapped up in that glorious hope. "Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure." Blessednesses are heaped up one upon another in that state of heart in which a man is always looking for his Lord.

But what will be the blessedness when Jesus does come? Well, a part of that blessedness will be in future service. You must not think that when you have done working here, you Sunday school teachers, and those of us who preach and teach, that the Master will say, "I have discharged you from My service. Go and sit on a heavenly mountain and sing yourselves away forever and ever." Not a bit of it! I am but learning how to preach, now—I shall be able to preach, by-and-by. You are only learning to teach now—you will be able to teach, by-and-by. Yes, to angels and principalities, and powers, you shall make known the manifold wisdom of God! I sometimes aspire to the thought of a congregation of angels and archangels, who shall sit and wonder as I tell what God has done for me—and I shall be to them an everlasting monument of the Grace of God to an unworthy wretch, upon whom He looked with infinite compassion and saved with a wonderful salvation!

All those stars, those worlds of light—who knows how many of them are inhabited? I believe there are regions beyond our imagination to which every child of God shall become an everlasting illumination, a living example of the love of God in Christ Jesus! The people in those far distant lands could not see Calvary as this world has seen it, but they shall hear of it from the redeemed! Remember how the Lord will say, "Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things"? He is to keep on doing something, you see. Instead of having some little bit of a village to govern, he is to be made ruler over some great province. So it is in this passage. Read the 44th verse—"Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has." That is, the man who has been a faithful and wise steward of God, here, will be called of God to more eminent service hereafter. If he serves his Master well, when his Master comes, He will promote him to still higher service!

Do you not know how it used to be in the Spartan army? Here is a man who has fought well and been a splendid soldier. He is covered with wounds on his breast. The next time that there is a war, they say, "Poor fellow, we will reward him! He shall lead the way in the

first battle! He fought so well before, when he met 100 with a little troop behind him— now he shall meet ten thousand with a larger troop!" "Oh!" you say, "that is giving him more work." That is God's way of rewarding His people and a blessed thing it is for the industrious servant! His rest is in serving God with all his might. This shall be our Heaven, not to go there to roost, but to be always on the wing, forever flying and forever resting at the same time. "They do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face." These two things, blended together, make a noble ambition for every Christian!

May the Lord keep you waiting, working, watching, that when He comes, you may have the blessedness of entering upon some larger, higher, nobler service than you could accomplish, now, for which you are preparing by the lowlier and more arduous service of this world! God bless you, Beloved, and if any of you do not know my Lord and, therefore, do not look for His appearing, remember that He will come whether you look for Him or not. And when He comes, you will have to stand at His bar. One of the events that will follow His Coming will be your being summoned before His Judgment Seat—how will you answer Him, then? How will you answer Him if you have refused His love and turned a deaf ear to the invitations of His mercy? If you have delayed, and delayed, and delayed, and delayed, how will you answer Him? How will you answer Him in that day? If you stand speechless, your silence will condemn you and the King will say, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away."

God grant that we may believe in the Lord Jesus unto life eternal and then wait for His appearing from Heaven, for His love's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. LUKE 12:12-48.

Verses 13, 14. And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? Our Lord kept to His proper business, which was the preaching of the Gospel and the healing of the sick. We find, in these days, that the minister of the Gospel is asked to do almost everything. He must be a politician. He must be a social reformer. He must be, I know not what! For my part, I often feel as if I could answer, "Who made me to do anything of the kind? If I can preach the Gospel, I shall have done well if I do that to the glory of God and to the salvation of men. Surely there are enough people to be judges and dividers, there are quite sufficient politicians to attend to politics and plenty of men who feel themselves qualified to direct social reforms. Some of us may be spared to attend to spiritual affairs."

15. And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Jesus gave His hearers a good moral and spiritual lesson from the occurrence which they had witnessed, and then passed on to speak of the matter which always occupied His thoughts.

16, 17. And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth, plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? He did not enquire, "Where can I find a needy case in which I may use my superfluity for charity?" Oh, no! "How can I hoard it? How can I keep it all to myself?" This was a selfish, worldly man.

18-20. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, You fool. Other men said of him, "This is a wise man. He minds the main chance. He is a fellow plentifully endowed with good sense and prudence." But God said unto Him, "You fool."

20. This night your soul shall be required of you. I should like you to set that up as the counter picture to the one that we had this morning, "Today shall you be with Me in Paradise." [Sermon #2078, Volume 35—The Believing Thief.] That was said by Christ to the penitent thief, but to this impenitent rich man, God said, "This night your soul shall be required of you."

20, 21. Then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. "He that lays up treasure for himself." That was the chief point of this man's wrong-doing—his selfishness. His charity began at home and ended there. He lived only for himself.

22, 23. And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for the body, what you shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Have no anxious, carking care. Do not be looking after the inferior things and neglecting your soul. Take care of your soul—your body will take care of itself better than your soul can. The raiment for the body will come in due time, but the clothing for the soul is the all-important matter. Therefore, see to that.

24-27. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If you, then, are not able to do that thing which is least, why take you thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The lilies simply stand still in the sunlight and silently say to us, "See how beautiful are the thoughts of God?" If we could just drink in God's love and then, almost without speech, show it in our lives, how we should glorify His name!

28. If then God so clothes the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith! But you have some faith, otherwise the Savior would not have said to you, "O you of little faith!" The man who has no faith may well go on fretting, toiling, spinning, but he that has faith, as he goes forth

to his daily labor, looks beyond that to the God of Providence, and thus God keeps him without care, and provides for him.

29, 30. And seek not you what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that you have need of these things. He knows that you must go and work for these thing, but He would not have you fret and fume about them. "Your Father knows." He will provide. It is enough for Him to know His children's needs, and He will be sure to provide for them.

31. But rather seek you the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Thrown in as a kind of make-weight. You get the spiritual and then the common blessings of life shall be added unto you.

32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. That is your share. Others may have inferior joys, but you are to have the Kingdom of God! The Lord could not give you more than that and He will not give you less.

33. Sell that you have, and give alms. Do not merely give away what you can spare, but even pinch yourself, sometimes, and sell what you can that you may have the more to give.

33. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts. Put some of your estate where it cannot be lost. Take care that you invest some of it for God's poor, and God's work, where the interest will be sure and the investment will be safe.

34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You can be sure of that. Your heart will go after your treasure and, if none of your treasure has gone to Heaven, none of your heart will go there, either.

35. 36. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Our Lord constantly reminded His disciples that the time would come when He must leave them for a season, but He always kept before them the thought of His return and bade them watch for Him as those that wait for their lord.

37-39. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. As he does not know when the thief will come, he is always watching.

40, 41. Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of Man comes at an hour when you think not. Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speak You this parable unto us, or even to all? And

the Lord told him that, while it was spoken to all, it had a very special bearing upon Apostolic men, upon preachers of the Gospel, ministers of Christ.

42-44. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has. Just as Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all Egypt, so, when men have done well in the ministry of Christ, He will promote them, and they shall do still more for

Him.

45. 46. But and if that servant says in his heart, My lord delays his coming, and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder. This is a truly terrible expression! We are sometimes charged with using too strong expressions with regard to the wrath to come. It is quite impossible that we should do so, even if we tried, for the expressions of the Lord Jesus are more profoundly terrible than any which even mediaeval writers have ever been known to invent!

46. And will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. The worst portion that any man can get is with the unbelievers! Are there not some here who may, in this verse, see what a dark doom theirs will be if they are among those who are described as being cut in sunder, and having their portion with the unbelievers?

47. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. So that there are different measures of responsibility—there are degrees in guilt, and degrees in punishment.

48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. O my Brothers and Sisters, let those of us who are privileged with the possession of the Gospel, and privileged with any amount of ability to spread it, enquire whether we could give in a good account if the Lord were to come tonight and summon us, as stewards, to give an account of our stewardship. God bless to us all the reading of His Word! Amen.