

Faithful Stewardship

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." [1 Corinthians 4:2](#).

IT is well that our dear Brothers and Sisters should make a right account of us. Paul says, in the verse preceding our text, "Let a man so think of us," for there are some who make a wrong reckoning as to the ministers of the Gospel. Some go to an extreme, for they glory in men. One glories in Paul, who is so deep in doctrine, another in Cephas, who is so energetic and plainspoken, another in Apollos, who is so exceedingly eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. But Paul says, in the latter verses of the third chapter, "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." You do not belong to your ministers, you must not put yourselves down as followers of them—you belong to Christ and Christ, Himself—and all His ministers belong to you.

But while some erred in thinking too much of their ministers, as no doubt they still do—God deliver them from such a delusion—there were, no doubt, others who erred in not thinking enough of them, not appreciating their position and condition so as to sympathize with them and pray for them. Had they known to what a responsible office they were called and what was required at their hands, they would lovingly have borne them upon their hearts, and gone with their names to the Mercy Seat in continual prayer. Hence, it is very important that men should so think of us as to judge us correctly, so that while they do not rely upon us in any wrong sense, they may, at the same time, feel an affectionate sympathy with us and constantly bear us up before the Throne of Grace.

Paul goes on to tell us how we ought to think of the ministers of Christ. The word should be, "servants," of Christ. There is a great respectability about the word, "minister," which really does not belong to it, for, if you take it to pieces, it means an under-rower, one of those men who had to take an oar on the lowest benches of the slave ships. There were three benches for the rowers and it was a hard task for all who were at the oars—but to the under-rowers, who had to bend to their work in the most trying position as they sent the galley flying through the water, it was stern toil, indeed! Now, God's ministers, if they act as they should, are under-rowers of Christ. They are tugging away at a very heavy oar and they may well ask you to pray that as they use up their strength, fresh force may be imparted to them from the God of All Power, that they may not labor in vain, nor spend their strength for nothing!

We ask men, therefore, to think of us as servants, not as masters. The word, "bishop," has come to have a wonderful significance about it which is not in the least degree Scriptural. We are simply to be shepherds of the sheep—and a shepherd is no great lord. He is the servant of all the sheep and though he leads them, it is by going first, taking the brunt of all that comes, and finding out the best places for them to feed and to rest. Let a man so think of us as servants, but not merely as servants to the Church, certainly not as servants to men, but as servants of Christ! That is our honor as ministers—we serve the Lord Jesus Christ—the best of Masters! But, as He deserves to have the best of servants, the responsibility of the position weighs down the honor attached to it. Oh, if they who serve men should serve them faithfully, how much more should they be found faithful who are the servants of Christ!

Then the Apostle adds that men are to think of us as stewards. And it is about that office that I am going to speak to you—"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Although my text, no doubt, refers, in the first place, to those who labor in word and doctrine, to whom it is a life's vocation, yet all the people of God are stewards, and each child of God, in his own way and in his own place, should reckon that whatever gift he has should be used for the Lord Jesus

Christ, and laid out for Him. And he should also remember that he is made one of the Lord's stewards and that it is required of him that he be found faithful. And I may even add that every unconverted man has a stewardship to fulfill. As God's creature, he is bound to be God's servant—and at the Last Great Day he will have to give an account of every opportunity and capacity for service which God has given to him! And woe unto him if he is found an unfaithful steward in the day of his Lord's reckoning!

If I should seem to speak rather more about ministers than about anybody else, I will ask you kindly to pick out all that belongs to yourselves, you who are private Christians, and you who are not Christians at all. I pray the Lord to make use of what I say to myself and then to you who are His people—and to those, also, who are not His people—that they may be pricked to the heart and made to feel how ungenerously they have acted towards the great Lord of the house. To begin, then, I will first ask—how are we stewards? Secondly, if stewards, how are we to behave? Next, how are we in danger of misbehaving? And, lastly, what will be the result of right behavior or of misbehavior in those who are stewards?

I. First, then, HOW ARE WE STEWARDS?

Well, God's ministers are stewards, first, as appointed to look after other servants. You know, dear Friend, if you are a servant, you have enough to do to mind your own work. But if you happen to be an upper servant, such as a steward is, you have not only your own work to mind, but it is a part of your own work to look after the work of other people. There are some who are so foolish that they look only at the honor of this position, whereas, if they were wise, they would look more at the responsibility of it. Brothers and Sisters, if I had my choice, I would rather look after a horse than look after a man! The second is much the

more difficult animal to manage! And to look after many men—oh, this is, indeed, a difficult task!

I had an old friend, who was, for 40 years, a shepherd, and after that he became a minister—and he lived to be 40 years a shepherd in a spiritual sense. I asked him, once, "Which was the easier flock to manage?" "Oh!," he replied, "the second flock of sheep was a deal more sheepish than the first." I understood what he meant. They say that sheep have as many diseases as there are days in the year. Yes, but men have as many complaints as there are minutes in the year! It is not long that they are free from one malady or another! I mean, men and women—all those that belong to the spiritual flock of which the minister is the shepherd—there is a certain form of trouble arising out of each one. True, there is a certain amount of comfort and joy arising out of every Christian, but there is a measure of difficulty that must come to the steward from everyone of his fellow servants. It is by no means a position which any man who understands it might desire for himself! The real steward is one who has been appointed to the position—and if he is not appointed, why, he has no right to be a steward at all! It is the great Master of the house who calls this one or that one to look after the other servants—and it is from this calling that he has the right to interfere in any respect with them.

Next, notice that the servants of God—whether called ministers or not—those who are really so, are stewards because they are under the Master's near command. An ordinary servant in God's house may take his orders from the steward, but the steward takes no orders from anybody but the Master and, therefore, he is in an evil case and the household is in an evil case, too, if he does not often resort to the Master—if he does not distinctly recognize his position as an underling of his Master—and if he does not so keep up his daily fellowship with the Master that he, himself, knows the Master's mind and is able to communicate it to his fellow servants.

There are many of you, dear Friends, who have around you your children, your servants, your fellow workers. Well, in that respect, you are a steward to them—they have to do a good deal that you tell them. Then do, I pray you—and I speak this to myself as well as to you—let us wait upon the Master! Let us come forth to speak to our fellow servants, not our own words, but the words of Him who is Master and Lord to the whole household! How beautifully Jesus, the greatest of all stewards, did this! How constantly He said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works." He was always referring those who were His brethren back to the great Head of the family—and He did not speak without His Father's authority. Having taken up the position of a subordinate in order to work out our redemption, He continually declared that He was His Father's servant.

It is an ill day for us when we begin to think that our thoughts are to be given out in the house instead of the Master's thoughts! It is not for us to deliver our own speculations, but

to go straight away to the Word of God and, by the teaching of the indwelling Spirit, to come forth to the people with what we have received—not what we have invented!

You shall find no power, my Brothers and Sisters, in doing Christian work unless you keep on doing it as receiving your mission and commission from the great Lord of All!

I recollect how McCheyne says, "It is God's Word that saves, not our comment on God's Word." And I am sure that it is so. It is God at the back of the steward who blesses all in the household. But when the steward does not go to the Master and get his orders from Him, he soon puts everything into confusion. He loses his own standing and he is apt to do desperate mischief to all who are round about him.

Then, the true steward is called upon to give an account—and if he does it often, so much the better! I am persuaded that, in the things of God as well as between man and man, "short reckonings make long friends," and if we will often go to our Master with our service and present it to Him, and overhaul it under His Divine Guidance, confessing our shortcomings and blessing Him for every particle of success that has attended it, we shall do much better than if we go on for a long stretch without a reference to Him. Brothers and Sisters, you who are teaching your classes of boys or girls, bring your Sunday work to the Lord at the end of the Sabbath! And when we have finished a sermon, those of us who stand up to preach, let us not be satisfied until we have brought that piece of our work under our Master's eyes. I am sure that if the steward can get to the side of his Master every evening, or every morning say to Him, "We did such and such yesterday, and there is such and such which we propose to do today," that is the way for the house to be well-ordered! Things go right when there is no absentee landlord, but when the great Master is always close at hand and the steward constantly goes to Him with an account of all his work!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us constantly do this! We do not live near enough to God, do we? I know that some of you wait upon Him day and night and you abide under the shadow of the Almighty, but I fear that there are some workers who forget to do this. We should work with the hands of Martha, but yet keep near the Master with the heart of Mary! We need a combination of activity and meditation. When we get that—when we inwardly retire for consultation with our Lord and then come out actively to labor for our Lord—then shall we be good stewards in the little part of the great house with which He has entrusted us.

Further, a steward is a man who is put in trust with his master's goods. This is the main point of his stewardship— nothing is his own—it is all his master's. When he begins to open an account of his own, it is wonderful how apt he is to mistake what is his master's and to call it his own and, by-and-by, he gets into a muddle and cannot distinguish his master's accounts from his own. Oh, it is a glorious thing when you have not any, "own"—when you do not live for yourself at all, but wholly for Christ! Then you will not make any blunders! There will not be any of Christ's property getting into your cash account, so that you will

have a difficulty in disentangling it. "No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life," for he can say—

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done, I am my Lord's,"

"and all the business I have here below is His. I have no sub-ends or secondary objectives, but all I have and am is for Him." Then it is easy to keep our accounts and to make no mistakes in them.

The true steward is put in trust with his master's property, first, to protect it. Oh, with what earnestness ought we to guard the Gospel of Christ! With what holy valor ought we to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints! "Hold fast the form of sound words," wrote Paul to Timothy—not only the words, but the particular form of them which the Apostle had delivered! Not merely sound doctrine, but the very words in which those doctrines had been made to take shape! The true steward is to defend his master's treasure with his very life. The Lord has put us in trust with the Gospel—and all the people of God, in their measure—have also become trustees of those inestimably precious doctrines wherein will be found the Glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men! So we are to defend our Master's property.

And next, we are to dispense it. It is the steward who provides for the table of the household. He brings out of that treasury things new and old. He never forgets, when the table is spread, to put the bread and the salt on it. The bread is Christ, Himself, on which we feed. And the salt is the Grace of which we cannot have too much. The true steward does not starve the children, but he sees that each one is fed with convenient food. To one he brings milk, for he is a babe. To another, he gives strong meat, for he is a man who has had his senses exercised to discern between good and evil. The steward keeps his master's stores and sees that they are not wasted—but he also takes care to magnify his master's liberality by seeing that none of the household know any need.

I have known some who pretended to be stewards of Christ who evidently did not understand the business. There was an old fable of a man who gave bones to the sheep and grass to the dogs, but neither of them did well on such fare. And some preaching seems to me just like that! The preacher assumes, in his opening prayer, that all his hearers are converted, and the whole service goes on as if everybody was a Christian! And yet, if you listen carefully, you will hear that there is an undertone implying that nobody is really saved and that everybody is saved in imagination. Brothers, if we cannot discern between the righteous and the wicked, we shall never be as God's mouth to our hearers! If we have not a javelin for God's foes, as well as butter in a lordly dish for His friends, He will never make use of us as stewards in His house. There is much Grace needed in the dispensing of our Master's goods—the rightly dividing of the Word of God—and bringing out every Truth of God in due proportion and in due season,

These are two parts of the steward's business—to protect his master's property and to dispense it.

Besides this, he is to use his master's property for his master's benefit. The goods entrusted to him are to be put out to interest, or used in business to bring in profit for his master. I trust that there are many of us here present who are using the Gospel for the glory of Christ. What little we know, we try to proclaim, that sinners may be converted and that the Savior may be glorified. It is a wonderful thing for us to have the Bible, is it not? But oh, to use the Bible every day so as to bring Glory to God! It is a good thing even to be a tract-distributor, or to do the least service in the Kingdom of Christ, but the one point for us to aim at is to do it so that the profit of it may come, not to us, but to our Master! The steward must not get to trading on his own account. As I have said before, if he does that, there is apt to be a lot of mistakes made in the reckoning! Everything that the steward does is for his master.

Abraham said, "The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus," and Abraham trusted him to go and find a wife for Isaac. So does our Lord use us and trust us, as His stewards. Our great God trusts us to go and find a spouse for Christ—and our business is to go and discover her, to find her out and ask her to come with us that she may be joined to that blessed Lord of All, the Son of the Great Father, to whom He has left the inheritance. Happy are we, when, like the steward of Abraham, we can bring back the beloved one for our Master's Son! This is a part of our work, to make use of everything that the Master entrusts to us for His own dear Son and to look upon the Church with which we have to deal as the bride we are to bring to Jesus, that she may be married to Him forever.

I will say no more upon the first part of my subject except this—a steward is charged with the general care of the family. He has not merely to look after the stores, but he has to take care of all the family. The steward of the olden times used to reckon all that belonged to his master as if it were his own—and he got into the habit of talking of it in that way. His Lordship once asked his steward, "What is that coming up the drive?" "Oh," he answered, "it is our horse and carriage, my Lord." "Our horse and carriage?" exclaimed the nobleman, "and who may be in it?" "Oh, my Lord," replied the faithful servant, "it is our wife and children!"

Exactly so—the man had come to look upon everything that belonged to his master as belonging to himself—and that is the spirit which our Lord would have us cultivate! Those children of His, they are our children. Those that are newly converted to God, oh, they are especially ours and we love them dearly! And this great Church—well, it is a bride to us even as it is to Christ. Our whole life is given up to the blessed service to which Christ has given up Himself. Oh, that we could come anywhere near to this ideal of what a true steward should be! God help us to do so!

II. Our second enquiry is "HOW ARE WE WHO ARE STEWARDS TO BEHAVE?" Our text supplies the answer— "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Note, the Apostle does not say, "it is required in stewards, that a man be found brilliant." No minister will be blamed if he does not prove to be brilliant, nor even if he should not be successful. We shall not be condemned even if the seed does not spring up, provided that we sow it. You are responsible, not for the result of what you do, but for doing it honestly, sincerely, devoutly, prayerfully, believingly. I do not think that in such a case you will be unsuccessful— certainly not as God judges success. Still, the Apostle's point is that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." What, then, should each one of us be with regard to faithfulness?

First, faithful to our Master. Oh, whatever we do, let us not be traitors to Him! Let us not be apparently doing His work, yet not really doing it. Let us not be preaching without praying. Let us not be talking about doing good without always trusting in Him without whom nothing can be good, or strong, or right! O God, may we, each of us, be able to say at the last, "I am clear of the blood of all men"! If we have dealt truly with our Master, if we can feel that we are sincerely seeking not our own glory, but His Glory, and working not for men, but for Him alone, it is well with us.

Next, we must each one be faithful to our office, whatever that office may be. If you, as stewards of Christ, are called to be ministers, be faithful to your ministry. If you are called to have substance, and to give it away, give it with cheerfulness and be faithful in your office. If you are called to teach half-a-dozen children, and no more, it is quite enough to give an account for at the last—so be faithful to your office. Do not run about finding fault with your fellow servants and thinking that you could do their work better if you had it to do. But oh, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of His great Grace, do what you have to do with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Make full proof of your ministry, whatever that ministry is.

Then, next, be faithful to the goods committed to you. I have already dwelt upon the necessity of earnestly defending the faith. Oh, do not, I pray you, tolerate in yourselves any quibbling at God's Word, any picking and choosing out of the great Truths of Inspiration! Endeavor to know the Lord's way, the Lord's truth, the Lord's life and in way, truth and life, follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Search the Scriptures and follow where the Scriptures lead you. Let no book composed by the wisest of men dictate your conscience. Remember that the Bible, and the Bible, alone, has the stamp of Infallibility upon it. Follow its guidance and so be faithful to the treasure that is entrusted to your hands. Had good men, in past ages, been but faithful to the Word of the Lord, there had not been so much of schism, heresy and false doctrine in the world. And if all professing Christians shall always be

faithful to the pure Word of God, then will come the days of the true unity of the Church of Christ, and the conquest of the world by Christ!

Next, we are bound to be faithful to every person in the household. This is a difficult work, but let us try to accomplish it. All of us, according as we are put into the stewardship, must labor for the good of all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We sang just now—

"Have You a lamb in all Your flock I would refuse to feed?"

and I hope that our answer is, "No, great Shepherd of Israel, there is not a single lamb in all Your flock which we do not reckon to be better than ourselves." Do you not sometimes feel as if, if you could be as sure of being right as the very least of the Lord's family, you would be perfectly content? We long to rise to the greatest heights of holiness and consecration, but yet, if we are allowed to wash the saints' feet, it will be a great honor for us. To do anything for Jesus, to be a doormat at the Temple gate, is a high privilege for any of us! Let us try, then, to do all that we ought to do in love and kindness to all the members of our Master's household.

And then we must be faithful to the outside world as well. You see, a steward who looked to everything indoors, and then allowed people out of doors to cheat his master and run away with his goods, would not be a faithful steward! And you and I have much to do with the souls of men outside the Church of Christ. Oh, what a world this is! What a world it is! Shall we be clear of the blood of all these millions in London? Ride or walk from one end of this great city to another and see if you do not feel a mountain of granite pressing on your soul! O Lord, what can we do? "Who is sufficient for these things?" Living in such an age as this and in such a thronged city as this, oh, how shall we be faithful to all the people?

When George Fox was dying, he said, "I am clear, I am clear." I have envied him a thousand times, for I believe the Quaker was clear of the blood of men. He said many odd things and some things he had better not have said, but he never kept back anything that seemed to come from his soul. It mattered not to whom he spoke—whether it was to the king or to a beggar—he said what he believed, without fear of mortal man. Think of brave John Knox, of whom they could say when they buried him, "Here lies he who never feared the face of man." O stewards of God—and I have already said that all you Christians are, in your measure, stewards of Christ—may this be said of you! "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." I have shown you what a wide field that one requirement covers—only the Grace of God can be sufficient for us that we may be found faithful.

III. Now, very briefly, indeed, I want to answer the third question, HOW ARE WE, IN OUR STEWARDSHIP, IN DANGER OF MISBEHAVING? Well, we can very readily misbehave by acting as if we were masters. You know the tendency of Jack in office—let us avoid anything like that. Remember what our Lord said about the man who began to domineer over his fellow servants and to beat them. This is not the way for a steward to behave, for he is, himself, only a servant. He has to look after other servants but his master will look

after him—and if he gives himself great airs, he must beware lest his master should dismiss him from his service, and say to him, "You shall no longer be steward."

Next, a great deal of misbehavior is caused by endeavoring to please men. If the steward begins to try to please his fellow servants and to curry favor with them that they may speak well of him, he will very soon be a traitor to his master. O dear Friends, seek to please men for their good to edification, but never forget that he who is the servant of men cannot be the servant of God, for "no man can serve two masters." May the Lord help us to feel that we are not judged of men's judgment, but that we are going to do our duty as under the great Taskmaster's own eyes!

Next, we can very much injure our stewardship by idling, or trifling, or growing careless, or leaving our hearts out of our work. We can do this in the Sunday school and we can do this in the pulpit! When a man's heart is in his service, he does not need to tell you that it is, for you can soon see it. And I believe that there is more power in downright sincerity than in all the talent that God ever gave to men! A simple, humble, lowly speaker who only says what the Holy Spirit prompts him to say—and who is quite indifferent about how he says it so long as he can say it in a right spirit—he is the man who will reach the hearts of other men! Brothers, if we begin turning over our words, so as to find out comely syllables with which we may please and tickle human ears, we shall lose all power over our hearers! I think that the very best nosegay we can ever give to our friends may be made by plucking a handful of field flowers just as we find them, and then saying, "These grew in God's garden. We have not arranged them very prettily, for their innate beauty is such that anything artificial would but injure them." Oh, let us see to it that we live wholly and alone for this great work of winning souls and glorifying our Master—and let us always speak with the accent of conviction!

If you do not believe the Gospel, do not tell it to others! But if you do believe it, say it as if you meant it! I read, the other day, the story of a minister, whose boys came to him and asked if they might go to a certain show, and he said, "Well my dear boys, I—I—I—I hardly like it. I will show you, by-and-by, the objections there are to it. I do not decidedly forbid you"—and the boys were out of the room in a minute! They ran off to their companion and said, "Jack, we may go." Yes, their father's hesitation was quite enough for them. He was going to say, "I do not decidedly forbid you, but, but, but"—only the boys did not care about his, "buts." And there are some ministers who, in preaching, say that a false doctrine is true, to some extent, only there are certain objections, difficulties and so on. People do not wait to hear the objections and difficulties, but off they go at once with a bit of bad doctrine! It is often so, and it is a pity that it should be so. Ah, me, this trifling with Divine Truth, this playing with God's Word will be sure to do an infinite deal of mischief and mar the stewardship of any man who yields to it!

Next, we can prove ourselves unfaithful stewards by misusing our Master's goods, employing what He entrusted to us for some other end than His Glory, or by neglecting some of the household. We may so preach that there is never any milk for babes and, on the other hand, we may so preach that there is never a morsel of meat for men—and the milk may be so watery that it is not good enough even for babes! It is a sin to neglect any one member of the household, for we must be found faithful to them all if we would be judged to be faithful at all.

We can also misbehave ourselves as stewards by conniving at whatever is wrong in our fellow servants. "Anything for a peaceful life!" is the motto of the unfaithful steward. "Let men live as they like. We cannot rebuke them because then they might quarrel with us." Ah, dear me, if we are not prepared to bear a little of that sort of reproach! Even if reproof of sin must bring unkindness in return, we must not withhold that reproof, but must administer it with all the more prayerful-ness and kindness! It must be given lest, as it was with Eli, a curse shall come upon our house because our sons made themselves vile and we restrained them not.

And, dear Friends, there is one other thing that any steward may do and, thereby, spoil his stewardship. That is, prove unfaithful by forgetting that his Lord will soon come. He may come before we begin our next piece of work. He may come while we are in the middle of it, or He may come just as we are closing it and, may then and there require an account at our hands! Oh, how earnestly we should live if we were sure that Christ would come to-night! What family prayer you would have tonight if you knew that before the morning dawned, Christ would come! Some of you, perhaps, would want to give something extra to His cause, if you knew that it would be the last opportunity you would have of doing so. Some of you would go and wake your children up and talk to them about Christ if you knew that He would come before the morning light.

There is a great deal left undone by most of us—we are not all like Mr. Whitefield, who could say when he went to bed, "I have not left even a pair of gloves out of their place. If I were to die tonight, everything is right." It is a beautiful thing to live, so, and that is how God's stewards should live! "Ready, yes, ready," to live or to die, to go on or to leave off, to stop here or to go to Heaven—whichever the Master appoints! This is good stewardship. But if we forget that He will come, we shall get into a loose and slovenly way of acting—and that will be to our own discredit and to our Master's dishonor.

IV. Now, finally, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP?

Supposing we are good stewards, what will the result be? A reward from our Master's own lips. In the Day of Account He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Now, after that, you do not need a crown, do you? You do not need any ruling over many cities! You will have all that, but I think that this utterance of our Master is quite enough for any

steward of His, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Oh, if He should ever say that to us, there is enough in it to make a whole eternity of bliss!

But suppose that, at the last, we are found unfaithful, what will the result be? Punishment from the Lord's own hand! If it is so, that we have never washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. If it is so that our hearts have never been renewed by Divine Grace. If it is so that we have never been saved from our sin and, consequently, have never been saved from our unfaithfulness—if it should turn out that we have never been saved from living to ourselves, never been saved so as to live honestly and faithfully to God—then what will the result be? I mean, for you who profess to be Christians? Here are our Lord's words. I am not going to enlarge on them any more than I did on the other words—"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"—as if that was the worst punishment that could be meted out to him! God grant that none of us may ever have that portion!

But oh, you who are unbelievers—do you not see that your portion is that which God will appoint to these who are unfaithful and only worthy of condemnation? What is your portion? It is something truly terrible, for it will be that which God appoints as a punishment for the worst of sinners, the treacherous and the unfaithful! O unbelievers, I would not be in your place five minutes for all the world! As the Lord lives, there is but a step between you and Hell! Only a breath and you may be gone. If I were in your place, I would be afraid to eat a morsel of bread, tonight, lest a crumb should go the wrong way and, by causing my death, should land me in everlasting misery! One might be afraid to shut his eyes, tonight, as an unbeliever, lest, as he closed them on earth, he shut them forever to all light and hope, world without end—

"You sinners, seek His Grace,

Whose wrath you cannot bear! Fly to the shelter of His Cross And find salvation there."

Oh, fly to Jesus at once, for He has said, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." God help you to trust to Christ, tonight, and to go out of this Tabernacle saved men and saved women, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: LUKE12:35-48.

Verses 35-37. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. 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. This is a wonderful passage. Christ has already had one turn as a Servitor. He was Master and Lord, yet He washed His disciples' feet. But He says that if we are watchful and faithful, if

we truly serve Him, the day shall come when, in all His robes of Glory, He shall gird Himself and serve us.

38-40. 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 into. Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of Man comes at an hour when you think not. This is a warning to Christ's own people, but it is still more a warning to those who do not know Him. Suppose He were to come tonight—where would you be, you who have, up to now, lived as if you were your own masters and were by no means the servants of Christ? Take heed unto yourselves, for you know not when your Lord shall come!

41-44. Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speak, then, this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, 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. What rewards Christ has in store for His people! If we will but be His servants, now, and the servants of our Brothers and Sisters, He will make us rulers over all that He has! I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but I bless the Lord that they are absolutely true!

45, 46. But and if that servant says in his heart, My master delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink, and to be drunk; the master of that servant will come on 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. Again let me say that I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but, oh, what will be the horror, the terror, of the punishment which will fall upon the unfaithful steward, the minister who is untrue to his holy calling, the professor who says that he is a child of God and a steward of Christ, and yet is unfaithful to his trust? I will read our Lord's words again. You know how we are sometimes accused of saying things too dreadful about the wrath of God in the world to come, but, Beloved, we never say anything dreadful enough! If you will carefully examine the Word of God, you will find there expressions such as even Dante or the mediaeval preachers, with all the horrors they depicted, never surpassed! We cannot exaggerate the awful depth of meaning which we find in the words of the loving Christ, Himself! Let me read this verse again—"The master of that servant will come on 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."

47, 48. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and did not prepare himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 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. Judge you, then, Brothers and Sisters, how much of ability and talent your Lord has entrusted to you— and be not content to have rendered Him some service—but look for proportionate service and humble yourselves in His Presence if your service is not in proportion to the opportunities entrusted to you! Who among us can refrain from humbling himself before God when he thinks of this?