

Matthew 24 Commentary-C H Spurgeon

PREVIOUS

NEXT

MATTHEW 24:1-2 THE KING AND HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Matthew 24:1-2. AND Jesus went out and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

The King, having finished his final discourse in the temple, left it, never to return: Jesus went out, and departed from the temple. His ministry there was ended. As his disciples moved away with him towards the Mount of Olives, they called his attention to the great stones of which the temple was constructed, and the costly adornments of the beautiful building. To them the appearance was glorious; but to their Lord it was a sad sight. His Father's house, which ought to have been a house of prayer for all nations, had become a den of thieves, and soon would be utterly destroyed: Jesus said unto them, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Josephus tells us that Titus at first tried to save the temple, even after it was set on fire, but his efforts were of no avail; and at last he gave orders that the whole city and temple should be leveled, except a small portion reserved for the garrison. This was so thoroughly done that the historian says that "there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited."

We sometimes delight in the temporal prosperity of the Church as if it were something that must certainly endure; but all that is external will pass away or be destroyed. Let us only reckon that to be substantial which comes from God, and is God's work. "The things which are seen are temporal"

MATTHEW 24:3-31 THE KING ANSWERS DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

The little procession continued ascending the mount of Olives until Jesus reached a resting-place from which he could see the temple (Mark 3:3).

There he sat down, and the disciples came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" These are the questions that have been asked in every age since our Savior's day. There are here two distinct questions, perhaps three. The disciples enquired first about the time of the destruction of the temple, and then about the sign of Christ's coming, and of "the consummation of the age" (R. V. margin). The answers of Jesus contained much that was mysterious, and that could only be fully understood as that which he foretold actually occurred. He told his disciples some things which related to the siege of Jerusalem, some which concerned his Second Advent, and some which would immediately precede "the end of the world." When we have clearer light, we may possibly perceive that all our Savior's predictions on this memorable occasion had some connection with all three of these great events.

Matthew 24:4-6. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Jesus was always practical. The most important thing for his disciples was not that they might know when "these things" would be, but that they might be preserved from the peculiar evils of the time. Therefore, Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." They were to beware lest any of the pretended Messiahs should lead them astray, as they would pervert many others. A large number of impostors came forward before the destruction of Jerusalem, giving out that they were the anointed of God; almost every page of history is blotted with the

names of such deceivers; and in our own day we have seen some come in Christ's name, saying that they are Christs. Such men seduce many; but they who heed their Lord's warning will not be deluded by them.

Our Savior's words, "Ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars ," might be applied to almost any period of the world's history. Earth has seldom had a long spell of quiet; there have almost always been both the realities of war, and the rumors of war. There were many such ever Jerusalem was overthrown; there have been many such ever since; and there will be many such until that glorious period when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "See that ye be not troubled: " is a timely message for the disciples of Christ in every age. "For all these things must come to pass, " therefore let us not be surprised or alarmed at them; "but the end is not yet." The destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning of the end, the great type and anticipation of all that will take place when Christ shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. It was an end; but not the end: "the end is not yet. "

Matthew 24:7, 8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

One would think that there was sorrow enough in "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places "; but our Lord said that "all these " were only "the beginning of sorrows ", the first birth-pangs of the travail that must precede his coming, either to Jerusalem, or to the whole world. If famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are only "the beginning of sorrows", what may we not expect the end to be? This prophecy ought both to warn the disciples of Christ what they may expect, and wean them from the world where all these and greater sorrows are to be experienced.

Matthew 24:9. They shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Our Lord not only foretold the general trial that would come upon the Jews, and upon the world; but also the special persecution which would be the portion of his chosen followers: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. " The New Testament gives abundant proof of the fulfillment of these words. Even in Paul's day, "this sect" was "everywhere spoken against." Since then, has there been any land unstained by the blood of the martyrs? Wherever Christ's gospel has been preached, men have risen up in arms against the messengers of mercy, and afflicted and killed them wherever they could.

Matthew 24:10. And they shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

This would be a bitter trial for the followers of Christ; yet this they have always had to endure. Persecution would reveal the traitors within the Church as well as the enemies without. In the midst of the chosen ones there would be found successors of Judas, who would be willing to betray the disciples as he betrayed his Lord. Saddest of all is the betrayal of good men by their own relatives; but even this they have many of them had to bear for Christ's sake.

Matthew 24:11, 12. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

What could not be accomplished by persecutors outside the Church, and traitors inside, would be attempted by teachers of heresy: "Many false prophets shall rise , and shall deceive many. " They have risen in all ages; in these modern times they have risen in clouds, till the air is thick with them, as with an army of devouring locusts. These are the men who invent new doctrines, and who seem to think that the religion of Jesus Christ is something that a man may twist into any form and shape that he pleases.

Alas, that such teachers should have any disciples! It is doubly sad that they should be able to lead astray "many." Yet, when it so happens, let us remember that the King said that it would be so.

Is it, any wonder that, where such "iniquity abound " and such lawlessness is multiplied, "the love of many shall wax cold "? If the teachers deceive the people, and give them "another gospel which is not another", it is no marvel that there is a lack

of love and zeal. The wonder is that there is any love and zeal left after they have been subjected to such a chilling and killing process as that adopted by the advocates of the modern "destructive criticism." Verily, it is rightly named "destructive", for it destroys almost everything that is worth preserving.

Matthew 24:13. But he that shall endure unto the church the same shall be saved.

Again our Savior reminded his disciples of the personal responsibility of each one of them in such a time of trial and testing as they were about to pass through. He would have them remember that it is not the man who starts in the race, but the one who runs to the goal, who wins the prize: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same." If this doctrine were not supplemented by another, there would be but little good tidings for poor, tempted, tried, and struggling saints in such words as these. Who among us would persevere in running the heavenly race if God did not preserve us from falling, and give us persevering grace? But, blessed be his name, "The righteous shall hold on his way." "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Matthew 24:14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The world is to the Church like a scaffold to a building. When the Church is built, the scaffold will be taken down; the world must remain until the last elect one is saved: "Then shall the end come." Before Jerusalem was destroyed, "this gospel of the kingdom." was probably "preached in all the world" so far as it was then known; but there is to be a fuller proclamation of it "for a witness unto all nations" before the great consummation of all things: "then shall the end come," and the King shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and decide the eternal destiny of the whole human race.

Matthew 24:15-18. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken, of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

This portion of our Savior's words appears to relate solely to the destruction of Jerusalem. As soon as Christ's disciples saw "the abomination of desolation", that is, the Roman ensigns, with their idolatrous emblems, "stand in the holy place", they knew that the time for them to escape had arrived; and they did "flee to the mountains." The Christians in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns and villages, "in Judea", availed themselves of the first opportunity for eluding the Roman armies, and fled to the mountain city of Pella, in Perea, where they were preserved from the general destruction which overthrew the Jews. There was no time to spare before the final investment of the guilty city; the man "on the house-top" could "not come down to take anything out of his house", and the man "in the field" could not "return back, to take his clothes." They must flee to the mountains in the greatest haste the moment that they saw "Jerusalem compassed with armies" (Luke 21:20).

Matthew 24:19-21. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that; your flight in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

It must have been a peculiarly trying time for the women who had to flee from their homes just when they needed quiet and rest. How thoughtful and tender was our pitiful Savior in thus sympathizing with suffering mothers in their hour of need! "Flight... in the winter" or "on the sabbath day" would have been attended with special difficulties; so the disciples were exhorted to "pray" that some other time might be available. The Lord knew exactly when they would be able to escape, yet he bade them pray that their flight might not be in the winter, nor on the Sabbath-day. The wise men of the present day would have said that prayer was useless under such conditions; not so the great Teacher and Example of his praying people; he taught that such a season was the very time for special supplication.

The reason for this injunction was thus stated by the Savior: "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Read the record written by Josephus of the destruction of Jerusalem, and

see how truly our Lord's words were fulfilled. The Jews impiously said, concerning the death of Christ, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Never did any other people invoke such an awful curse upon themselves, and upon no other nation did such a judgment ever fall. We read of Jews crucified till there was no more wood for making crosses; of thousands of the people slaying one another in their fierce faction fights within the city; of so many of them being sold for slaves that they became a drug in the market, and all but valueless; and of the fearful carnage when the Romans at length entered the doomed capital; and the blood-curdling story exactly bears out the Savior's statement uttered nearly forty years before the terrible events occurred.

Matthew 24:22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

These were the words of the King as well as of the Prophet; and as such, they were both authentic and authoritative. Jesus spoke of what "should be" not only as the Seer who was able to gaze into the future, but as the Sovereign Disposer of all events. He knew what a fiery trial awaited the unbelieving nation, and that "except those days should, be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." If the horrors of the siege were to continue long, the whole race of the Jews would be destroyed. The King had the power to cut short the evil days, and he explained his reason for using that power: "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Those who had been hated and persecuted by their own countrymen became the means of preserving them from absolute annihilation. Thus has it often been since those days; and for the sake of his elect the Lord has withheld many judgments, and shortened others. The ungodly owe to the godly more than they know, or would care to own.

Matthew 24:23-26. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

It is a grand thing to have such faith in Christ that, you have none to spare for impostors. It is important not to distribute your faith too widely. Those who believe a little of everything will, in the end, believe nothing of anything. If you exercise full faith in that which is sure and steadfast, "false Christs and false prophets" will not be able to make you their dupes. In one respect, the modern teachers of heresy are more successful than their Judeean prototypes, for they do actually "deceive the very elect", even though they cannot "shew great signs and wonders." One of the saddest signs of the times in which we live is the ease with which "the very elect" are deceived by the smooth-tongued "false Christs and false prophets" who abound in our midst. Yet our Savior expressly forewarned his followers against them: "Behold, I have told you before." Forewarned is forearmed.

Let it be so in our case. Our Savior's expressive command may be fitly applied to the whole system of "modern thought" which is contrary to the inspired Word of God: "Believe it not."

Matthew 24:27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

When HE comes, we shall know who he is, and why he has come. There will be no longer any mystery or secret about "the coming of the Son of man." There will be no need to ask any questions then; no one will make a mistake about his appearing when it actually takes place. "Every eye shall see him." Christ's coming will be sudden, startling, universally visible, and terrifying to the ungodly: "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west." His first coming to judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem had terrors about it that till then had never been realized on the earth; his last coming will be more dreadful still.

Matthew 24:28. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Judaism had become a "carcase", dead and corrupt; fit prey for the vultures or carrion-kites of Rome. By-and-by, there will arrive another day, when there will be a dead church in a dead world, and "the eagles" of divine judgment "will be gathered: together" to

tear in pieces those whom there shall be none to deliver. The birds of prey gather wherever dead bodies are to be found; and the judgments of Christ will be poured out when the body politic or religious becomes unbearably corrupt.

Matthew 24:29, 30. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Our Lord appears to have purposely mingled the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his own second coming, so that there should be nothing in his words to satisfy idle curiosity, but everything to keep his disciples always on the watch for his appearing. These verses must apply to the coming of the King at the last great day. There may have been a partial fulfillment of them in "the tribulation" that came upon his guilty capital; and the language of the Savior might have been taken, metaphorically, to set forth the wonders in "the heavens" and the woes on "the earth" in connection with that awful judgment; but we must regard Christ's words here as prophetic of the final manifestation of "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." There will be no further need of "the sun and the moon and the star," when HE, who is brighter than the sun, shines forth in all the glory of his Father and of his holy angels.

Christ's coming will be the source of untold joy to his friends; but it will bring unparalleled sorrow to his foes: "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." When Jesus comes, he will find the nations still unsaved, and horror will be their eternal portion.

Matthew 24:31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,

Our Lord's first concern, when he comes again, will be the security of "his elect." He has gone to prepare a place for them; and when the place is ready, and the time for their glorification has come, "he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." "East and west, and south and north, Speeds each glorious angel forth, Gathering in with glittering wing Zion's saints to Zion's King." What a contrast between the gathering together of the eagles to devour the rotting carcass and the gathering together of Christ's elect at the great trumpet-summons of his holy angels! May every reader of these lines be in the latter company! Such will look forward with joy to the time of the King's appearing.

MATTHEW 24:32-41 THE KING SPEAKS OF THE TIME OF HIS COMING

Matthew 24:32-35. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.

Our Lord here evidently returns to often made use of its illuminated the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in these words gives his apostles warning concerning the signs of the times. He had recently used the barren fig tree as an object-lesson; he now bids his disciples "learn a parable of the fig tree" and all the trees (Luke 21:31). God's great book of nature is full of illustrations for those who have eyes to perceive them; and the Lord Jesus, the great Creator, often made use of its illuminated pages in conveying instruction to the minds of his hearers. On this occasion, he used a simple simile from the parable of the fig-tree: "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." They could not mistake so plain a token of the near return of summer; and Jesus would have them read quite as quickly the signs that were to herald the coming judgment on Jerusalem: "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The Revised Version has the words, "Know ye that he is nigh," the Son of man, the King. His own nation rejected him when he came in mercy; so his next coming would be a time of terrible judgment and retribution to his guilty capital. Oh, that Jews and Gentiles today were wise enough to learn the lesson of that fiery trial, and to seek his face, those wrath they cannot bear!

The King left his followers in no doubt as to when these things should happen: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." It was just about the ordinary limit of a generation when the Roman armies compassed Jerusalem, whose measure of iniquity was then full, and overflowed in misery, agony, distress, and bloodshed such as the world never saw before or since. Jesus was a true Prophet; everything that he foretold was literally fulfilled. He confirmed what he had already said, and what he was about to say, by a solemn affirmation: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever," and though that Lord appeared in fashion as a man, and was shortly to be crucified as a malefactor, his words would endure when heaven and earth would have fulfilled the purpose for which he had created them, and passed away.

Christ's promises of pardon are as sure of fulfillment as his prophecies of punishment; no word of his shall ever "pass away."

Matthew 24:36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

There is a manifest change in our Lord's words here, which clearly indicates that they refer to his last great coming to judgment: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man ." Some would be prophets have wrested this verse from its evident meaning by saying, "Though we do not know the day and the hour of Christ's coming, we may know the year, the month, and even the week." If this method of "renting the words of Jesus is not blasphemous, it is certainly foolish, and betrays disloyalty to the King.

He added that, not only does no man know of that day and hour, but it is hidden from angelic beings also: "No, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. " We need not therefore be troubled by idle prophecies of hair-brained fanatics, even if they claim to interpret the Scriptures; for what the angels do not know has not been revealed to them. Even Christ, in his human nature, so voluntarily limited his own capacities that he knew not the time of his Second Advent (Mark 13:32). It is enough for us to know that he will surely come; our great concern should be to be ready for his appearing whenever he shall return.

Matthew 24:37-39. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Though the King did not reveal the time of "the coming of the Son of man ", he declared plainly that history would repeat itself, and that "that day" would be "as the days of Noe were ." When he comes, he will find many unprepared, even as the antediluvians were when "the flood came, and took them all away ." Yet in both cases, sinners will have had ample warning Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" to the men of his day; "and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come "(v. 14). Christ's coming, like the flood, will be sudden, unexpected, universal in its effects, and terrible to the ungodly, although they will be utterly unconcerned: "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day. " That which is lawful and right, under other circumstances, becomes a positive evil when it takes the place of preparation for the coming of the Son of man. Woe unto those whose eating and drinking do not include the bread and the water of life; and who marry or are given in marriage, but not to the heavenly Bridegroom! That Day, Irae will be a dreadful day for sinners. "Day of judgment, day of wonders!

Hark, the trumpet's awful sound, Louder than a thousand thunders, Shakes the vast creation round!

How the summons Will the sinner's heart confound!"

Matthew 24:40, 41. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.

The division between the godly and the ungodly, at the coming of Christ, will be very precise. Companions in labor will be separated for ever in "that day": Then shall two be in the field ;" ploughing, sowing, reaping, or resting; "the one shall be taken, and the other left." The believing laborer shall be taken by the angels to join the hosts of the redeemed, while his unbelieving fellow-workman shall be left to the judgment that will swiftly be poured out upon him. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill ;" they may be fellow-servants in a rich man's mansion, or they may be mother and daughter or two sisters in a poor man's home; but however closely they may have been attached to one another, if one is saved by grace, and the other is still under the sentence of condemnation,

“the one shall be taken, and the other left. ” This separation will be eternal; there is no hint of any future reunion.

MATTHEW 24:42-51 THE KING COMMANDS HIS SERVANTS TO WATCH

Matthew 24:42. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

This is the practical conclusion of the whole matter. That our Lord is coming, is certain; that his coming may be at any moment, is a matter of faith; and that we are ignorant of the time of his coming, is a matter of fact: “Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ” Christ’s words are in the present tense. He does not say, “Ye know not what hour your Lord will come,” but, “what hour your Lord doth come”, as if to keep us always expecting him; and lest we should not heed his words, he puts the command in plainest language:” Watch therefore. ” The title that he uses gives additional force to the command to his disciples to watch, for it is our Lord who is coming quickly.

Matthew 24:43, 44. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

If the householder has reliable information that a thief is coming, but does not know at what hour he will arrive, he will keep awake all night, waiting for his appearance; but if “the goodman of the house ” is told “in what watch the thief ” will come, he will be specially on the alert at that time.

Every little sound will attract his attention. He thinks he hears someone at the back door; no, the thief is trying to enter by a front window! Wherever he comes, he will find that the master’s ear is listening, the master’s eye is watching, the master’s hand is ready to arrest him; for he had received timely warning of the housebreaker’s coming. Men act thus wisely with regard to burglars; what a pity they are not equally wise in watching for the coming of their Lord! We do not know, we cannot even guess, in what watch of earth’s long night HE will come: “In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. ” There is the present tense again, “the Son of man cometh,” he is coming; his own words are, “Behold, I am coming quickly.”

Christ’s coming to the world will be like that of the thief, when it is not suspected or expected, and therefore when due preparations for his reception have not been made; but his true followers will not let “that day ” overtake them “as a thief ” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). “They ought ever to be looking for his appearing. Our Lord’s injunction to his disciples ought to have even greater weight with us who live so much nearer to the time of his Second Advent than it had with those to whom he addressed his warning words, “Therefore be ye also ready. ” We ought to be as watchful as if we knew that Christ would come tonight; because, although we do not know when he will come, we do know that he may come at any moment. Oh, to be ready for his appearing, watching and waiting for him as servants whose Lord has been long away from them, and who may return at any hour! This will not make us neglect our daily calling; on the contrary, we shall be all the more diligent in attending to our earthly duties because our hearts are at rest about our heavenly treasures.

Matthew 24:45, 46. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

The apostles were “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1), and “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

One great qualification for a steward was that he should be found “faithful ” both to “his lord” and to all in the “household ” over whom he was “made ruler. ” It was needful also that he should be “wise ” in his dealings with his fellow-servants; for, notwithstanding the honor put upon him, he was still a “servant ”, who must give to his lord an account of his stewardship. These words describe the service of a minister, preaching the truth with all his heart, and seeking “to give meat in due season ” to all over whom the Holy Ghost hath made him an overseer. Or they picture a teacher, endeavoring to feed the minds of the young with sound doctrine; or they portray any servant of Christ, whatever his calling may be, doing the work that his Master has appointed him, just as he would wish to do it if he knew that his Lord was coming at that moment to examine it: “Blessed is that whom his lord when he cometh

shall find so doing. ." Such a servant of Christ is blessed; he is a happy man to be found by his Lord "so doing." May our Master find us thus occupied when he cometh!

Matthew 24:47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

His lord had formerly made him "ruler over his household", the steward who had charge of all the household servants. His faithful and prudent conduct in that office won for him promotion to a higher post, so that his lord resolved to "make him ruler over all his goods. " Thus is it among the servants of King Jesus, there are rewards for faithful service not of debt, but of grace; not according to the rule of the Law, but according to the discipline of the house of God, and the higher rule of Love.

It should be noted that faithfulness in one form of service is rewarded by further service and increased responsibility. The servant, whose pound gained ten pounds, received authority over ten cities (Luke 19:17).

Matthew 24:48-51. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This man was a "servant ", so that we have here a warning, not to the outside world, but to those who are inside the Church of Christ, and who profess to be servants of God. This is also specially a warning to ministers of the Word, those who are made rulers over God's household. This man, though a servant, was an "evil servant"; a hypocrite, one who had intruded into an office which he had no right to occupy. His thoughts and words were evil: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming. " His conduct towards those put under him was evil: "and shall begin to smite his fellow servant. " His own life was evil: "and to eat and drink with the drunken. " His evil-doing would be suddenly cut short by his master's appearance: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. " Immediate and terrible punishment would be meted out to him: "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: " he was one of them, he pretended to be a servant of God when all the while he was a slave of Satan, serving self and sin; let him go to his own company. He was really cut in two before, outwardly he was a follower of Christ, inwardly he served his own lusts; to "cut him asunder" will only be a righteous perpetuation of his own double-faced character. Will that be the end of him? No; "there shall be weeping and: gnashing of teeth. " What a "portion" for one who was numbered amongst God's servants! As we read of it, let us, in deep humility, remember the solemn injunction of the apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."