

Serving Responsibility

Key Verse: “*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*”
—*I Corinthians 4:1*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 4:1-13

Truth in this manner.

The apostle further emphasizes that these servants of the Truth are ‘stewards,’ which adds further dimension and meaning to the task which has been set before them. Stewardship suggests a deeper sense of responsibility than to simply speak the Truth, and indicates someone who has taken special charge of another person’s property. They are thus considered as managers or overseers of that property. In this case, stewardship pertains to the ministering forth and revealing of long-kept secrets that have been stored in the Scriptures until it was time for them to be revealed.

Being overseers of the secret truths of God is more fully explained by Paul in his letter to the ecclesia at Ephesus. “If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

IN THIS LESSON THE APOS-

tle Paul is directing our attention to the important responsibilities and obligations that the children of God have when serving the glorious Truth of God’s Word to others. The word ‘ministers’ [servants], as it is used in our Key Verse, addresses those who would endeavor to serve the

which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”—Eph. 3:2-5, *New American Standard Version*

Faithfulness in carrying out the duties of an overseer is stressed by Paul in his epistle to the brethren at Corinth. He told them, “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” (I Cor. 4:2) Further to this, he said, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”—vs. 5

We have all been richly blessed by Paul’s ministry and his revealing to us the wonderful mysteries of God. To this he testifies, “I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” (Col. 1:25,26) His responsibility as overseer of these sacred secrets, and the privilege he had to reveal them to the Lord’s people, is also suggested in his letter to the Romans. He says, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.”—Rom. 16:25

The most profound mystery of the ages reveals God’s plan to extend an invitation to consecrated believers of his Word to become a member of the body, or bride, of Christ. This calling and selection of the church has been the principal work during the present Gospel Age, and, when it is finished, this faithful class will share with our Lord in the grand work of uplifting fallen mankind from the penalty of death. In reference to this mystical body of Christ, Paul explains, “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”—Eph. 5:32, NASV ■