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## Responsibility For What We Have

*by T. Austin-Sparks*

*First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" Mar-Apr 1953, Vol. 31-2.  
Republished Jul-Aug 1971, Vol. 49-4.*

*"They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:29,31).*

That is a strange parable, or illustration, that our Lord gave about the rich man and the poor man and their places and conditions after having passed from this life! How much speculative teaching has been read into or made out of it! And yet, in truth, the Lord was not propounding a doctrine of life after death. Anything in that connection was quite incidental.

What He was really touching, as the context shows, is the matter of responsibility. Whenever He came into touch with the existing traditional religious system this was the issue which He deliberately raised and pressed. If the after-this-life factor does have a place in the above story - and it certainly does - it is this factor of responsibility which dominates the situation.

The rich man represents those who:

1. have had every facility and possibility of obtaining a wealth of the things of God:
2. have accumulated all that information, or a great deal of it:
3. have, by reason of it, come to a place of spiritual complacency, smugness, and contentment, or

even pride and superiority:

4. have not grown spiritually although so well provided for:

5. have failed to realize that every bit of spiritual provision is a trust; it must not stay with them, but must enrich the needy always at the gate, as represented by the beggar - the sufferer, the suppliant, the hungry.

There is no need to spend many words in order to try to make the Lord's meaning clear. It just amounts to this:

A. Have we available to us those Divine resources, those riches of Christ, those ministries - personal or printed - which are intended by God to make us spiritually wealthy and of Christly stature?

B. If so, are they just *things* to us, 'teachings', subjects, themes, 'lines of truth', Christian tradition, interesting and informative treatises, etc? How much are we *REALLY* 'growing thereby'?

C. What is the interest value to the Lord Who gave them? Do they stop at us, or is 'our profiting' the gain of others? Not the passing on of truth as such, but the value of our life with the Lord.

The Lord has been strong, almost severe in His warning that a very big responsibility lies at the door of everyone who is in touch with His Divine resources, and that what has issued from them will find us out in eternity.