

The Faithful Steward

Edgbaston Old Church has many interesting 'story' windows; turn left after coming through the doors and you will see one bearing the quotation 'He will make him ruler over all that he hath.' (Luke 12: 44). This phrase comes from the parable of the faithful steward, embedded in a complex discussion that Jesus has with his disciples about readiness to respond to the call of God.

A Victorian stained glass window designer could expect church-goers to be familiar with this text from Luke's gospel, and to know its context. So, the artist has had the confidence to extract three elements from the extended biblical passage, and to tell the story as a journey moving through space and time.



Farthest away, the top left-hand side of the window depicts the serving of an orderly meal. In his master's absence, the good steward has been following instructions and giving everyone their due measure of food.

On the opposite side, in perspective slightly nearer to the observer, and also closer in time, the master has returned. He extends his hand in a gesture of approval towards a chest representing a well-ordered household,



the slightly open lid of the wine jar indicating that the steward is indeed keeping everything in constant readiness for his master's return. Whilst these 'back story' scenes are full of movement and activity, the two figures in the foreground balance this with stillness and serenity.



The steward kneels at the feet of his master, ready to receive the keys of the household.

The artist takes the text literally: the moment of receiving 'will' happen, but it is still in the future.

