

**Parable**  
**of the** **10**  
**Virgins**



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**Parable of the Ten Virgins**  
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**Chapter One**

*“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. And five were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” Matthew 25:1-4.*

There is not in the whole Bible a parable that applies more accurately to this congregation than this. Like the ten virgins, you may all be divided into two classes. Some of you are wise, I trust; and some, alas! are foolish. Like the virgins, you all profess a great deal; and yet some have the gift of the Holy Spirit, and some want it. And the day is fast hastening when you will be separated. The truly saved among you will enter in with Christ, the rest will be shut out for eternity. At present I can overtake only three facts.

**1. God’s children are wise; the rest are foolish (verse 2).**

Those of you who are God’s children are truly wise. First, not worldly-wise. This is denied: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” (1 Corinthians 1:26, 27); “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:19); “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25); “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength” (Psalm 8:2). Not many of deep, profound mind are saved, not many men of learning, not many of your sagacious, worldly men – men wise to drive a bargain. These are often passed by; and God takes some little child that knows nothing of the world, or some peasant from behind his plough, and brings him to glory. Why? Just that no man may boast and say: It was my wit that saved me. Second, yet God’s children are wise, the only wise in this world.

*They see things as they truly are.*

You that are mere professors do not see things as they truly are.

You do not see time as it truly is – the threshold of eternity. You do not see how short it is – that three score and ten years are but a span. You do not see how rapidly it passes – like the swirl ships, like the eagle to the prey. You do not see that it cannot be recalled, and that every moment is precious, that it is the time for conversion, the only time; else you could not waste it in mere pretences to godliness. They that are Christ's see time as it really is.

You do not see yourselves as you truly are. You have never seen what it is to be by nature children of wrath. You have never seen the awful mountains of sin that are piled over your soul. You have never seen the lusts that bind your soul, the deep volcano of burning lust that is in your own bosom. They that are Christ's see this somewhat as it truly is.

You do not see the favour of God. You have never seen how precious it is. You know the value of the favour of man, and therefore you wear a cloak of profession; but you know not the value of God's favour, or you would fly to Christ. They that are Christ's know this as it is.

*God's children do not rest in knowledge.*

Hypocrites always rest in their knowledge. You never can tell them anything new. They say: I know that. Tell them of sin, of Christ, of judgment to come, they think they shall be saved because they have knowledge; although this knowledge has never led them to rest on Christ, to pray, to leave their sins. But you that are Christ's do not rest content with this. You not only know of Christ and speak of him, but you do the things which he says. You have turned from idols. You are the only wise.

*A child of God lives for eternity.*

A hypocrite lives for time. This was all Judas lived for if he could pass off for a while as a true disciple, if he could keep up appearances for a time, if he could indulge his lusts, and yet be esteemed a believer, and a true apostle. He tried to keep up appearances to the last. So Demas wanted to deceive Paul for this life – to be thought a brother. Alas, how many of you are thus foolish! Living so as to keep up an appearance of being a Christian for a little time, though you know that you are living in positive sin, and that you will be discovered before the world in a short time.

You only are truly wise who live for eternity, who live as you shall wish you had done when you come to die.

*A child of God is like God.*

God is the only wise. In him are all the fountains of divine wisdom. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. To become like him is to become truly wise. Those of you who have fled to Christ are becoming like God. You have his Spirit, and you are being changed into his image. You have one will with God. You fall in with God's purposes in this world. His joy is your joy. You that are mere professors have none of God's likeness. You do not seek it, nor desire it.

## **2. The wise and foolish are alike in many things (verses 3, 4).**

The virgins were alike in many things. To the eye of man they appeared the same. All were virgins, dressed probably in white, all their faces probably fair and comely. Each of the ten carried a silver lamp, bright and polished, and every lamp was lighted. Nay, all of them seemed to have one object in view. They went forth to meet the Bridegroom. In one thing alone they differed. The foolish took no oil in their lamps; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. So it is with professors and God's children to this day.

In many things man can see no difference.

*You enjoy the same ordinances.*

You sit under the same pastor – in the same seats. You come up together to the house of God in company. You sing the same psalms. Your voices blend together, and no ear but that of God can distinguish the voice of the hypocrite from that of the wise virgin. You stand up at the same prayer, all equally reverent in appearance. You listen to the same sermons. Sometimes you will be affected together. The feeling of sympathy runs through the midst of you, and none can tell where it is like early dew, or where it is the dew of the Spirit, the sympathy of nature or the sympathy of grace. You sit down at the same Lord's table, and pass the bread from hand to hand, you pass the cup from one to another. Ah! how affecting it is to think that so many in this congregation are but foolish virgins, that you will be parted in eternity.

*They use the same speech.*

God's children speak the language of Canaan; but professors learn to imitate it, and at last no one can discover the difference. They speak of convictions of sin, awakening, getting light, seeking Christ, finding Christ, closing with Christ, finding peace. Yet all the time their hearts are far from God, and they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Oh! how sad it is to think that many a tongue that has spoken much about Christ, and regeneration, and the Holy Spirit shall yet want a drop of water to cool it in the burning lake.

*They utter the same prayers.*

One of the great marks of a child of God is prayer: "Behold he prayeth." He loves to pray. But even this is imitated by professors, who have a name to live, and are dead. Often they will pray in secret with great meltings and affections; often they will pray in public with great fervour and pathos; and yet all the time they are living in sin, and know it. Alas? how sad, that many of you whose voices have often been heard in prayer may yet be heard crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," crying on rocks and mountains to cover you from the wrath of God and of the Lamb?

*They have the same outward behaviour.*

The truest mark of children of God is their avoiding sin. They flee from their old companions and old ways, they walk with God. And yet even this is imitated by the foolish virgins. They go out to meet their Lord. They flee old sins for a time, they hasten from their work to the house of God, they seek the company of God's children, perhaps they try to save others, and become very zealous in this. O how sad that many who now cling to the godly will soon be torn from them, and bound up with devils and wicked men!

**3. There is a difference: The foolish virgins have no oil in their vessels.**

Professors are often striven with by the Spirit. In the days of Noah he strove long to get men to leave their sins and enter the ark (Genesis 6:3). So also with Israel in the wilderness: "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit" (Isaiah 63:10). And even in the days of Stephen: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). In the Bible, in the ministry, by mercies, by

afflictions, he strives like a man wrestling with you. He strives to make you quit your sins, and flee into Christ. Most of you have, in each or all of these ways, felt the Spirit's strivings. Still,

*They are not taught by the Spirit.*

All who are saved are taught by the Spirit – “all taught of God.” Without this, no man will come to Christ for the soul is dead. He teaches our lost condition – then he glorifies Christ.

*They are not dwelt in by the Spirit.*

The Spirit dwells in all who come to Christ (John 7:37-39).

Firstly, as a seal: “In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed” (Ephesians 1:13). The heart is the wax, the Holy Spirit the seal, the image of Christ the impression. He softens the heart, and presses on the seal. But not like other seals, he does not lift away, but keeps it there.

Secondly, as a witness: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit” (Romans 8:16). The spirit of adoption, crying “Abba” in the heart, is the Spirit bearing witness. When the soul is taken into the child's place, it can use a child's liberty.

Thirdly, as an earnest: “The earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:22). A little in hand of the full reward. The Holy Spirit in the heart is a little of heaven, all begun. Ah, my friends! be not deceived. Do not tell me you sit under this or that minister, have had those convictions, liberty in prayer. But are you changed? Have you got the new heart? Is heaven begun? Have you oil in your vessels with your lamps?

## Chapter Two

***“While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept”***  
**Matthew 25:5.**

It is impossible to find a more solemn and awakening parable than this. I showed you last day: first, that God's children are truly wise, and mere professors truly foolish. You only who are God's children see things as they are; you live for eternity, and have the mind of God; second, in how many things the wise and foolish virgins appear to be the same: They have the same ordinances, same speech, same prayers, same outward behaviour; third, the difference between them which we shall further consider today: the one class

have, the other have not, the Holy Spirit.

### **1. The tarrying of the Bridegroom.**

In that memorable discourse of the Saviour with his disciples, on the night of the last supper, Jesus said to them: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (John 16:16). And again, John, in Revelation 16:15, heard him say: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." And his last word, which fell like heavenliest music on John's enraptured ear, was, "Behold, I come quickly," and, "surely, I come quickly." Many of the first Christians seem to have thought that he would come in their day: so that Paul, in Second Thessalonians, had to warn them that the great Romish apostasy must happen first. And we find that scoffers, in Peter's time, used to say: "Where is the promise of his coming?" Century after century has rolled away since then, and yet Jesus has never come. This explains the word, "The Bridegroom tarried." Certainly he desires to come: "His desire is toward me." It will be the day of the gladness of his heart, the bridal day. And those that love Christ love his appearing. They cry, like John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Yet still he tarrys. Why is this?

*He is not willing that any should perish.*

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

This is the reason why he tarrys: he is slow to anger. Sometimes, when I see some act of gross and open wickedness, my heart trembles within me. Then I think how the Lord sees all this, ay, all the wickedness committed over the whole world, and yet he forbears. Ah, what a sight of forbearance and long-suffering compassion is here! This is the reason why he tarrys: he has compassion for the vilest, and waits long before he comes.

*To fill up the number of his elect.*

Christ is at this moment gathering a people from among the Gentiles. He is building up the great temple of the Lord, adding stone to stone. He cannot come till this is done. When all this is

done, then he will come, and put on the top-stone, with shoutings of “Grace, grace unto it.” He told Paul to remain and preach at Corinth: “For I have much people in this city.” For the same reason he makes his ministers remain and preach on; for he has much people still. When he comes, those that are ready will enter in with him to the marriage, and the door will be shut. There are, no doubt, many elect ones, many that were given him by the Father before the foundation of the world, still in the sleep of nature. He waits till these are gathered. When the last of his elect are gathered, then he will come.

*To try the graces of his people.*

There are many of the graces of God’s people that can only grow in time of affliction. There is a plant in the garden which the gardener tramples below his feet to make it grow better. So it is with many of the graces of God’s children - they grow better by being tried.

Faith in his word. The world say: “Where is the promise of his coming?” All things continue as they were.” All things seen are against it. Can you look through to the unseen world? This is what is wanted: “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” Now this is one reason why the Bridegroom tarries: that faith may grow.

Bearing with adversaries. If he came now, and avenged us of our adversary, we would have no scope for forgiving injuries, or bearing reproaches for his name. We must be conformable to his death; therefore he bears long with us.

Compassion for souls. This was the most remarkable feature in Christ’s character. This brought him from the throne of glory; this made him weep upon Mount Olivet. It behoves us to be made like him in this also. But this is the only time when we can be like him in this. When Jesus comes, we will cry, “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints,” while he tramples his enemies below his feet. Do not wonder that Jesus tarries.

## **2. The sleep of the virgins:**

*“They all slumbered and slept.”*

These words have been interpreted several ways. I have no doubt that the simplest interpretation is the true one, that before Christ



comes all the Christian Churches will fall into a deep slumber. The Bible shows that not only do hypocrites fall asleep, but true believers also. Hence we find the apostles sleeping at the Mount of Transfiguration, and again at Gethsemane; and Paul cries to the Romans, "It is high time to awake out of sleep."

*How Christians sleep.*

*The eyes begin to shut.* When first brought to Christ, the eyes of sinners were opened, to see the shortness of time - that it is but a span; the vanity of the world - all vain show; the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They saw sin covering them all over like devils, and were amazed that they were out of hell. They saw Christ in all his beauty, fullness, and glory. But now all these things become dim, as to a sleeping man. All outward objects are hidden - the soul sees no longer the shortness of time, the emptiness of the world, the vileness of sin, the glory of Christ.

*The ear does not hear his knockings.* Once the ear heard his voice. Amid a thousand the voice of Christ was sweet and powerful. Now the soul hears as if it did not hear: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

*The sleeper dreams.* So the soul takes up with idols, vain fancies. When first awakened, the soul said, "What have I to do any more with idols?" But now when Christ and divine things are hidden, the soul again takes up with vain idols. Hence come, first, *deadness in prayer.* How sweet prayer is to a believing soul! There is wonderful access to the throne, pouring out of the heart, no separation, nothing kept back; but now there is utter barrenness, the soul has no desire, no free access. Second, *a fearful spirit.* A sense of guilt now lies on the conscience, a stupefying sense of having offended God, a spirit of bondage. Third, *the believer does not fear sin.* Once a sweet trembling fear of sin, a keeping far from the occasions of it, like Joseph: "How shall I commit this great wickedness?" Now there is fearful familiarity with sin.

*How hypocrites sleep.*

*They lose all their convictions.* At one time they had deep and clear convictions of sin; but now they lose them. They have gone

into some open sin and drowned conviction. They quench the Spirit.

*They lose their joy in divine things.* The stony-ground hearers received the Word with joy - a flash of delight. Something about the Word attracts their fancy - eloquence or imagery; or, hoping they are converted, they flatter themselves, and take great delight in hearing. This soon dies away.

They give over prayer. For a long time they prayed in a very melting manner. When under convictions, or under illuminations and a false hope, or before others, they prayed with fluency; but now they give over prayer by degrees. "They all slumbered and slept." They have been out in company, or they are sleepy, or they have no relish for it, and so they give over prayer by degrees.

Between the two there is this great difference, that the godly have still oil in their vessels, the others none. I would not say a word to encourage you who are godly to sleep on; on the contrary, it is high time to awake out of sleep. But I cannot but remark how different is the sleep of the two. First, the godly will waken out of their sleep. It is very sinful and very dangerous, but it is not fatal. The hypocrite seldom ever wakens out of his sleep. The rarest conversion in the world is that of a hardened hypocrite. Second, while the godly are under the displeasure of God, yet they are not under his curse; but the hypocrite sleeps over hell.

### **3. The coming of the Bridegroom.**

#### *The time.*

At midnight, at an unexpected time, Christ will come. The whole Bible shows this: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only;" "Watch, therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." It is compared to lightning: "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." What more awfully sudden than lightning! First an awful stillness, the black inky clouds shrouding the sky, then a bright gleam from east to west. So shall his coming be. It is like travail on a woman with child: "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." It is like a thief: "The day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night."

It is thus in two respects:

(1) In the uncertainty of the hour. When a thief is going to break into a house, he does not tell the hour at which he will come. He gives no signs of his approach. If the goodman of the house knew what hour he would come, he would sit up, and not suffer his house to be broken up. Such will the coming of the Bridegroom be: “Ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.”

(2) A thief comes at the hour of rest. When the family have all gone to rest, when the goodman of the house has locked and barred the door, when every candle is put out, and every eye is sealed in sleep, then the thief comes and forces the bar, and enters in. Such will the coming of the Saviour be. When the world is steeped in slumber Jesus will come.

Some of you will say: “surely we shall have some guess of the time of his coming.” Now, if there be one thing plainer than another, it is that you know neither the day nor the hour: “In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” If I were to go round you all, and say, “Do you think the Son of Man will come tonight?” you would all say, “I think not.” Well just in such an hour he will come. Are you ready?

### **A word to the unconverted.**

Some of you *live in dishonesty*. In buying and selling, some of you, perhaps, use the light weight and the false balance, or in some other way you deceive your neighbour. O how dreadful if Christ should come and find you thus! It is said men will be buying and selling when he comes.

Some live in *deeds of darkness*. Perhaps you say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: “At the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.” Some of you commit those things of which it is a shame even so much as to speak. How awful will it be to you when his holy face appears!

Some of you *stifle convictions*. Like Agrippa, you are almost persuaded to be a Christian. Like Felix, you tremble, and say, “A more convenient season.” Some of you put off your convictions

with a little gaiety, a little worldly pleasure, saying, Plenty of time before I die. Ah! what will you do when the cry comes at midnight? No time for a prayer, no time for your Bible then, no time for conversion. “At midnight there was a cry.”

### Chapter Three

***“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves” Matthew 25:6-9.***

There is something sweet in that midnight-cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.” It will be an awful day even to a child of God.

First, all sudden changes are dreadful. Many persons have been killed by the sudden news of something joyful. How awfully joyful, then, will be that cry, when we hear that all our toils and cares are past, that sin shall no longer reign in the world!

Second, the fate of our ungodly friends will be dreadful. All of us have ungodly friends, for whose conversion we pray. When that cry comes, it will be the knell of their souls; and yet for all that it will be a joyful day. In Matthew 24:32, it is compared to summer. It will be the summer of the soul - the winter will be past. “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2). “And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds” (2 Samuel 23:4). “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth” (Psalm 72:6).

But most of all, the cry, “The Bridegroom cometh,” will revive the drooping hearts of his own chosen ones. It will remind us of the time that he chose us to be his own - the time of love, when he wooed us, and said: “Thou shalt be for me, and not for another man.” He that loved us, and died for us, and promised to return and receive us to himself – “Behold the Bridegroom cometh.” Ah! consider, beloved friends, whether it will be a time of joy to you, or of wailing. Careless sinner, what shall then become of thee? Mark here:

#### **1. The discovery: “Our lamps are gone out.”**

A dry wick has often a great blaze for a while. So hypocrites

often keep up their profession to the last; often it is very showy and evident. Many things might awaken hypocrites.

*Their case is described in sermons.* Often the minister is directed by God to speak exactly to their case. Often the Word comes very close to their conscience. We say, Surely that man will take the Word home. No; it slips past some way or other.

*Seeing others converted.* Often hypocrites see others beside them undergo a saving change. They see them convinced of sin, made to lie in the dust, brought to Jesus, filled with joy, living a new life, overcoming the world. This might open their eyes to see that their professed change is false and hollow.

*The death of others.* It must be a solemn thing to a hypocrite to see others cut down. Death tears away every mask for it calls the soul before the heart-searching one. Pretended convictions, pretended grace, words of put-on godliness, will not avail now. When hypocrites see others cut down, I have often thought, surely they will turn now. Yet it is not so: they often burn on to the last.

*They have got a name to live, and they do not like to lose it.* They have made a profession, and they do not like to draw back from it. Ministers have been pleased and satisfied, or godly persons have esteemed them, and they do not like all at once to give up this. So Judas was long esteemed a true disciple, and kept up his profession to the last.

*Often do they delude themselves.* They have some inward light and knowledge, which they mistake for grace. They have a form of godliness, pray in secret and in the family, and so deceive themselves as well as others. But their lamp will go out at the coming of Christ. "Our lamps are gone out." Not one blaze more, not one spark more. What is the reason?

*There is no indwelling grace.*

Their lamps went out because they had no oil. They burned for a while, as a dry wick will do, often with a great blaze; but soon the flame decays, and it goes out for want of oil. This is the case with hypocrites. They have no spring of gracious oil within their hearts. The Spirit of God often comes upon them, but he does not dwell in them. So it was with Balaam. His eyes were opened, he saw much of the joy of God's people, he longed to die the death of the righteous (Numbers 23:10); but he had no oil in the lamp, and his

lamp went out. So with Saul. “God gave him another heart” and “the Spirit of God came upon him” (1 Samuel 10:9, 10); but he had no oil in the lamp, no gracious indwelling of the Spirit, enabling him to cleave to Jesus, and so his lamp went out.

Often, in a rainy season, there are large pools of water gathered in the field where there is no spring or fountain. At first they appear large and deep, but when the summer comes, they dry up and disappear. So it is with hypocrites in this congregation. Many of you have had the Spirit poured on you as it was on Balaam and on Saul. Your eyes have been opened, you have had deep convictions, wonderful discoveries, panting desires after Christ and divine things; and yet you have never been brought, by the working of the Spirit of God to cleave to Christ. Ah! your lamp will go out and leave you in the blackness of darkness.

Dear friends, make sure of a deep and real work of grace upon your hearts. Remember it is said, that the man, who built his house upon the rock, digged deep and laid his foundation on the rock. It is not every change that is saving conversion. Of many it is true, “They return, but not to the Most High” (Hosea 7:16). Do not be contented with being Civilized, if you are not converted. It will not stand you in stead in the great day.

*They have to appear before Christ.*

It is an easy thing to appear Christian before men: “Man looks only on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.” As long as hypocrites have to appear only before men, they can keep up appearances. They can talk, and read, and pray, as if they were God’s children; but when the cry comes, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,” then they know that they must appear before Christ, the searcher of hearts. When Jesse brought in his seven sons, Samuel looked on Eliab, and said: “surely the **LORD’s** anointed is before him.” But God said: “... I have refused him: for the **LORD** seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:6, 7). Ah, brethren! There are many of you that can now come in boldly before men, though you know yourselves to be graceless, never born again, living in sin. You can sit down at a sacrament, without fear or shame. But when Christ comes, your lamp will go out, you will not be able to bear the glance of his holy eye. O pray for such an interest in Christ now,

that you may stand before the Son of Man at his coming!

**2. The anxious application:** “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”

*Hypocrites will then see the difference between them and the godly.*

Their lamps will be out, but the lamps of the truly godly will be burning bright and clear. At present hypocrites think they are as good as anyone. They think there is no real difference between them and God’s people. In that day they will be convinced that there is a great gulf fixed between.

*They will see what a happy thing it is to have oil in their lamp.*

At present many among you do not see your need of grace. You do not see that you would be any happier with grace in your heart. You are willing rather to remain as you are. But in that day you will cry: “Give us of your oil.” You will see the peace of the godly in that day. They will be unmoved amid a falling universe. The blood of Christ on their conscience will give them abiding peace. You will see their joyful faces, as they hear the cry, as they hear the footsteps, of the coming Bridegroom. You will hear their song of praise as they welcome their Lord and Redeemer. At present the godly are poor and despised, often in trouble, and chastened every morning, and you would not join them, but in that day they will be like the stones of a crown, like the children of a king.

They will apply to the godly. At present hypocrites despise the godly and would not apply to them for anything. When a truly godly person warns you or advises you, you are offended. But in that day you will be in despair - glad to apply to any one. You will be glad to apply to godly friends and godly ministers in that day. You that wonder what makes people go to speak to ministers, you that mock and deride the truly godly, you will say: “Give us of your oil.” At this day ministers and godly friends knock at your door, beseeching you to get the oil of grace into your hearts; but at that day you will knock at their door, crying, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”

O what folly to rest in desires after grace, when even hypocrites will have this in that awful day!

**3. The disappointment:** “Not so, lest there be not enough for us

and you.”

*It is not in their power to give grace.* It pleases God to use the godly as instruments, but he has not given them to be fountains of grace: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). Rachel said to Jacob: “Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God’s stead?” (Genesis 30:1, 2). So grace is not in the hand of man. Those who receive Christ “are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). It is in vain, then, that you look to the means to give saving grace to your soul. The axe cannot hew without the hand of the forester. The pitcher that carries water is not the well. It will be in vain that you apply to God’s children in that awful day. Go to Jesus now.

They have none to spare. The righteous scarcely are saved. Every child of God gets just so much grace as will carry him to heaven, and no more. Even now every child of God feels that he has nothing to spare. He has not too much of the Holy Spirit, helping him to pray, to mourn over sin, to love Christ. In time of temptation a believer feels as if he had nothing of the Holy Spirit. He has more need to receive, than ability to give away. When Christ shall come in that solemn hour, he will feel that he has none to spare.

Oh, dear brethren, go and buy for yourselves! You that know yourselves graceless, go, before the cry is made, to Jesus, and get grace for yourselves. The saints cannot give it you, ministers cannot give it you. All our springs are in Jesus. In him the Spirit dwells without measure. Lord, incline their hearts to run to thyself!

## Chapter Four

***“And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh”*** Matthew 25:10-13.

### 1. Who are ready?

All are not ready. This parable shows that all who make a



profession of being Christ's are not ready. The foolish virgins appeared to be ready. They had their robe, their lamp, their wick and flame; yet they were not ready. Many of you come to the house of God, and sit down at sacraments, and make a profession of care for your soul; yet you are not ready. Not all who are anxious are ready. The foolish were anxious now. They had a throbbing heart. They went to buy - their cry was loud and bitter, perhaps they shed bitter tears; and yet they were not ready. Many of you are anxious - going to buy. You have wet cheeks when you go to seek the Lord; and yet you are not ready. If you were to die tonight, or if Christ were to come tonight, you would not be found ready. Who, then, are ready?

*Those who have the wedding garment.*

This you see in Revelation 19:7, 8: "For his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." And so Psalm 45:9, 13: "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." And in Matthew 22:11, we find this was the first thing that struck the eye of the king, that the man had not on a wedding garment. This wedding garment is the righteousness of God, the skirt of Jesus cast over the soul, the imputed righteousness.

This is the first part of readiness to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. Have you been shown your own utter loathsomeness, that you are all as an unclean thing, all vile and filthy? Have you got a glorious discovery of the way of righteousness, by what Christ has done being reckoned to us? Have you lain down under the blood and white robe of the Lord Jesus? Then you are ready. Do not mistake.

It is not the knowledge of this imputed righteousness. Many people hear and know a great deal about this robe of righteousness, who never put it on, and are not a whit the better. Knowledge will but condemn you, and sink you deeper.

It is not a desire to have this righteousness. The sluggard desires, and hath nothing. Many have lazy desires after Christ, that are never satisfied, and they are none the better for them - like beggars wishing they were rich.

It is not having it once put over us, and then something else afterwards. This fine linen must be granted unto us for ever. It is not that Christ is our righteousness at first, and our own holiness after; but it is Christ to the end. Our wedding garment in heaven must be Christ's blood-washed robe; we must have it granted to us every day - every moment. Happy soul, who daily beholdest thine own vileness, and daily receivest that wedding garment to hide thy nakedness.

*Those who have the new heart.*

Can two walk together except they be agreed? It is impossible that two souls can be happy together if they love opposite things. It is like two bullocks in the yoke drawing different ways. Hence the deep wisdom of the command which forbids God's children to intermarry with the world. What fellowship hath light with darkness? In the same way with Christ's bride, she must be of one mind with him, if she would enter in with him to the marriage.

Suppose one of you who has an old heart were to be admitted with Christ to the marriage. Your heart is enmity to God, you hate God's people, the Sabbath is a weariness, you serve divers lusts and pleasures. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne would lead you, and God would wipe away tears from your eyes. But you hate God and the Lamb. How could you be happy there? None but God's children or companions (psalm-singing hypocrites, as you used to call them) - could you be happy with them? An eternal Sabbath! My highest notion of heaven is an eternal Sabbath with Christ. Could you be happy? Could you enjoy it? Ah, my friends, there shall in no wise enter in any that defileth, any that maketh or loveth a lie. If you are still unborn again, you are not ready.

*Those whose lamps are trimmed.*

While the wise virgins slept, they were not ready. True, they had the wedding garment and the oil in their vessels, although their lamps were dim - their eyes were closed. But when they heard the cry, they arose and trimmed their lamps, and now they are ready to meet and enter with the Bridegroom. It is not every child of God that is ready. Is a backslider ready - one that has gathered fresh guilt upon the soul, and not got it washed away; one that is still lying under guilt, and not hastening to the Fountain; one that is

standing with his back to the house of God, and his face toward his idol? Is an idolater ready - one that once loved Christ, and now puts an idol in his place, entangled with some unlawful affection? Is the soul ready that has left its first love, grown cold in divine things? Was Solomon ready, when his heart went after many wives? Or Peter, when he denied his Lord?

Ah! learn, dear friends, to stir up the grace that is in you. Stir up your faith in Jesus, your love to him and to the saints, if you would be ready. Watch! Live among divine things. Keep the eye open to the coming glory.

**2. The reward of those who are ready:** *“They went in with him to the marriage.”*

*Christ will own them.*

Christ will take them in with him before his Father, and say: “Behold, I, and the children whom thou hast given me.” These are they for whom I died, prayed, reigned. At present Christ does not publicly own his people, or put a difference between them and hypocrites.

The world does not know them. The sun shines on the evil and on the good. Worldly men think we are like themselves.

Saints do not know us. Often they suspect us. Often the children of God suspect one another unjustly. They have not this or that experience, this or that mark of God’s children.

Often we know not ourselves. When the war of corruption is strong within, when we have fallen into sin, when grace is low in the soul, “Can I deem myself a child?”

But then Christ will own us, and that will put an end to all doubt for ever and ever. The scoffing world will then know that Christ loved us, they will then wish they had cast in their lot with us. The saints will see that we are Christ’s as well as they, they will have no more suspicions of us. We will have no more doubts of ourselves: no more deadness, inconsistency, corruption, darkness, sin. Christ will confess our name before his Father. He will say: “Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you.”

**Saints shall be with Christ:** *“Went in with him.”*

The greatest joy of a believer in this world is to enjoy the presence of Christ - not seen, not felt, not heard, but still real - the

real presence of the unseen Saviour. It is this makes secret prayer sweet, and sermons sweet, and sacraments sweet, when we meet with Jesus in them: "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Often Jesus hides his face, and we are troubled. We seek him whom our soul loveth, but he is gone. We rise and seek, but find him not. At the best, it is but half bliss to feel after an unseen Saviour. Suppose a husband and wife parted by many seas. It is sweet to have letters and love tokens, and to see a friend who left him well; but this will not make up for his presence. So we mourn an absent Lord.

But when he comes we shall be with him. "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more" (Psalm 16:11). Here we have drops and gleams of pleasure. Christ could not be happy without us. We are his body. If one child of God were wanting, he would not be complete. We are his fullness. Hence his prayer: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John 17:24).

We could not be happy without Christ. Take us to the golden pavement, the pearly gates, the songs, the thrones, the palms, the angels, we would still say, Where is the God-man that died for me? Where is the Angel that redeemed me from all evil? Where is Jesus? Where is the side that was pierced? "We shall see his face." The Lamb is the light thereof. We shall stand with the Lamb upon mount Zion. We shall never be parted more.

### 3. **The fate of hypocrites:** "*The door was shut.*"

The door of Christ stands wide open for a long time, but shuts at last. When Christ comes, the door will be shut. Now the door is open, and we are sent to invite you to come in. Soon it will be shut, and then you cannot. So it was at the flood. One hundred and twenty years the door of the ark stood wide open. Noah went forth, and preached everywhere, inviting men to come in. The Spirit strove with men. But they only mocked at the coming flood. At last the day came. Noah entered, and God shut him in. The door was shut. The flood came and carried them all away. So it will be with many here. The door is wide open now. Jesus says: "I am the door: by me



if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” Christ does not say, I was, or I will be, but, I am the door. At present any man may enter in. Soon Christ will come - like a thief - like a snare - like travail on a woman with child and you shall not escape. Enter in at the strait gate.

They prayed, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” At present hypocrites do not pray, or not in earnest. They have a cold, formal, dull prayer; but in that day they shall cry in real earnest. At present many of you would be ashamed to be seen in earnest about your soul - weeping, or praying, or going to a minister; in that day you will lose all shame - you will weep and howl, and run to Christ’s door in agony of spirit. At present many of you are sought after by Christ: “He is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” He is the shepherd seeking the one sheep that was lost. He stands at your door and knocks - stands and cries: “Unto you, O men, I call;” “Turn ye, turn ye;” Sinner, sinner open to me.

In that day it will be the very reverse. You will seek after the Saviour in that day, and not find him; you will stand and knock at his door; you will exert your voice, and cry: “Lord, Lord open to me.” What a scene this parish will present in that day! Those who come not to the house of God, old men and old women grey headed in carelessness and sin, young persons mad upon pleasure, children who live without Christ, you will be all in earnest on that day. May this not rebuke some of you that pray not, or pray in a cold, dull manner, or in a form? Ah! you will pray in that day, when too late. Why not antedate that anxiety, and begin to pray now?

They were disappointed. The Lord answered: “I know you not.” Christ will own his own people: “I know them.” The poor despised believers he will own. Though the world knew them not, Christ will know them. Not one shall be passed over in that day. But not so with the foolish virgins, who have no oil in their lamps. Christ will not own them. Ah! it will be a fearful thing to be denied by Christ before his Father and the holy angels.

“Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.” See that ye have true grace in your hearts, that Christ is your righteousness, that your soul is alive.



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*“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.*

*Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh”*

**Matthew 25:1-13.**

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