

**THE  
PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM  
OF  
HEAVEN  
EXPOUNDED**

**Or, An Exposition of the first thirteen Verses  
of the twenty-fifth Chapter of Matthew.**

***Matt. 13:34. All these things spake Jesus to the Multitude in  
Parables, and without a Parable spake he not unto them.***

***Luke 8:10. Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the  
kingdom of God, but to others in Parables, etc.***

***Psal. 78:2. I will open my mouth in a Parable. I will utter dark  
sayings of old.***

***Psal. 49:4. I will incline mine ear to a Parable.***

**By Han. Knollis.**

**London,**

**Printed for Benjamin Harris, and are to be sold at the  
Stationers Armes in Rents, in Cornhill, near the Royal  
Exchange.**

**1674.**

**Table of Contents**

**To the Reader**

**Editor's Introduction**

**Matthew 25:1-13 and Introduction**

**Verse 1**

**Verse 2**

**Verses 3 and 4**

**Verse 5**

**Verse 6**

**Verse 7**

**Verse 8**

**Verse 9**

**Verse 10**

**Verses 11 and 12**

**Verse 13 to The End**

**To the Reader**

**Art thou a Professor? I entreat thee do not rest in the form of Godliness without the power thereof; that undid the foolish Virgins to Eternity. It is a vain thing for any person to seem to be religious and not so in truth. The fig tree that had leaves was cursed by Christ, because it bear no fruit, and it suddenly withered.**

**Art Thou a Believer? Ponder then what is propounded in this little Treatise, and search the Scriptures, whether what is therein affirmed by true or not, I know but in part, yet am I willing to impart my knowledge for thy Edification. And if any truth here asserted, shall profit your understanding, my earnest request to you is, that you will give all the Glory to God.**

**Are you a profane person, and one that does scoff at the Doctrine of the Coming of Christ? Then know, that yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. But if (in the meantime) you die in your sins, you will be damned to Eternity. Be serious therefore in reading this little Book, it may be God will make it a blessing to your Soul, and then I have my end.**

**Thy soul's friend, Han. Knollys.**

**Editor's Introduction**

**As you read this old work you will be impressed with Knollys' knowledge of the different ways the Scriptures set forth the Comings of Jesus Christ, especially**

**His great Second Coming. In this work, Knollys deals with Christ's coming at the beginning of His thousand years. He shows the terrible condition that will then prevail over the earth and even among Christ's churches and saints. He then shows what this coming is, and how the saints go forth to meet Christ and their blessings in so doing.**

**The Key in understanding Knollys' concepts is how the old Baptists considered Christ's Comings. They considered Him to come in at least these three basic ways:**

- 1 His first coming, in the flesh; the first time;**
- 2 His second Coming, in the flesh the last time, at the great White Throne Judgment;**
- 3 However, in between these two comings, at the midnight hour, Christ comes in spiritual power as the BRIDEGROOM. This is to began His monarchial reign for 1,000 years.**

**Knollys understands this parable as presenting Christ's coming as the Bridegroom.**

**As you read this you will be impressed with Knollys' deep spiritual searching into the heart and soul of gospel professors. The Old Baptists had no idea of any carnal Christians. Yes, Christians could, and often did, backslide and left their first love, but they did not remain in such a condition. You may find his searching manner a bit unnerving. Still, he goes on, and in love to Christ and His people, shows what is mean by having the Form of Godliness and Denying the Power Thereof.**

**As you read Knollys on The Ten Virgins, you will be impressed with his expectation of hope. He did not set forth a defeated church at the Coming of Christ. Rather, he sets forth the expectation of a great revival and world-wide turning to Christ, His Church and His ordinances, in the last days.**

**I hope he is correct, but either way, the impact from this work is, Saints prepare to meet the Bridegroom by going froth to Christ in the fullness of His Gospel Church, Ministry and Ordinances. These are the Wise Virgins. The Foolish Virgins are those who do not have Christ within, and therefore do not go forth to meet Him as the Bridegroom in His True Church, His true Ministry and His true Ordinances.**

**Let me say a few words about Knollys and common grace. To him, common grace was the Lord's having the gospel church, ministry and ordinances about for sinners to look unto for divine guidance. When sinners rejected the gospel church, ministry and ordinances, they were rejecting God's common grace. He is not presenting what Andrew Fuller presented centuries later.**

**In addition, you will be impressed by Knollys' earnest love and appeal to lost sinners to come to Christ in the true gospel way. This foundational concept of their understanding of the gospel is one of the main reasons they were so successful in spreading the gospel in the 1600s.**

I feel Knollys' most import part is, Christ In His Fullness and His Glory is presented in a unique way not found in many other works. May you enjoy Knollys' holding up and presenting Jesus Christ as the Coming Bridegroom to His Spouse, His Church.

If you are unfamiliar with the old Particular Baptist's writings about Christ and His gospel system and Church, you will be amazed as Knollys sets forth what the Church of Christ really is as held forth in the Sacred Scriptures. They did not believe in the Protestant concept of the universal, invisible church. Your view of the Gospel Church will never again be the same if you are a first time reader of the old Baptist's Ecclesiology.

*By One Who Has Been Given A Reason  
to Hope He is to Mercy a Debtor.*

**Matthew 25:1 to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> verse.**

1. Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their Lamp, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3. They that were foolish, took their lamps, and took no oil with them.

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all those Virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

9. 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 your selves.

10. 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.

11. Afterward came also the other Virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

</div>

**Introduction:**

The Lord Jesus Christ being asked by his Disciples what shall be *the sign of his coming*, chapter 24:3, answered and said, verse 12, *Iniquity shall abound and the love of many shall wax cold*, and verse 21, *Then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*. So the Apostle testified also, 2 Tim. 3:1. But saith our Savior verse 29,

*Immediately after the Tribulation of those days, verse 30, Then shall appear (not the person but) the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven ----- And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with power and great Glory ----- Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten Virgins, chapter 25:1.*

### **The Parable Analyzed**

These thirteen verses contain a Parable and the Application of it to Christ's Disciples. In the Parable are three General parts, viz. 1. verses 1-5. 2. verses 6-9. And 3. (verses 10-13. And the Exhortation or Application of the Parable, in verse 13.

In the setting of the parable observe:

- 1 The time, *Then*, that is when the Kingdom of God, and Coming of Christ in power and great glory is at hand, or near, even at the door.
- 2 The Subject or Matter, that our Savior spoke of, *The Kingdom of Heaven*.
- 3 The Resemblance thereof, *Likened unto ten Virgins*, who are described in this first verse by their preparation, *They took their Lamps*; and by their Action, *They went out to meet the Bridegroom*.

#### **Verse 1**

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven, etc.

### **Definitions of the Kingdom**

By the Kingdom of Heaven in some places of the Holy Scripture we are to understand *the Kingdom of Glory*, Matt. 5:3. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. In other places of Scripture by the Kingdom of Heaven, we are to understand the *spiritual Kingdom of Grace in the hearts of sanctified Believers*, Matt. 13:31. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a grain of Mustard seed*. By the Kingdom of Heaven in some other places of Scripture we are to understand the *mystical Kingdom of the Church of Christ under the Gospel*, Matt. 16:18,19. *Upon this Rock (that Rock is Christ, 1 Cor. 10:4) I will build my Church, And I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*.

### **Why this refers to the Gospel Church**

By the Kingdom of Heaven in this verse we may not understand the Celestial Kingdom of Glory, for there are no foolish Virgins in that Heaven, nor the spiritual Kingdom of Grace which is the Kingdom of God within us, Luke 17:21. But, the *Mystical Kingdom of the Church of God under the Gospel*, wherein there are both wise and foolish Virgins.

### **The Resemblance of Every True, Visible Constituted Gospel Church**

1. Meditation. Every true visible Constituted Church of Christ under the Gospel did in the Apostles' days and shall in the latter days bear some resemblance unto

the Kingdom of Heaven. For Confirmation of this Doctrine read: **Isa. 60:1,2,3,7,13,14,15,19,22. *The glory of the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee, verse 2. I will glorify the house of my glory, verse 7. And I will make the place of my feet glorious, verse 13. I will make thee an eternal Excellency, verse 15. The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory, verse 19. I the Lord will hasten it in his time, verse 22.***

That is, in Christ's Day.

### Two Key Points

In the Explication of this point, two things are to be inquired into:

- 1 What is a true visible constituted Church of Christ under the Gospel.
- 2 Wherein the Church of God on Earth bears proportion with and resemblance unto the Kingdom of Heaven.

### What a True Gospel Church Is

Touching the first particular, A true, visible Constituted Church of Christ under the Gospel is a Congregation of Saints, 1 Cor. 1:24; called out of the World, Rom. 1:7; separated from Idolaters and Idol Temples, 2 Cor. 6:16,17; from the unbelieving Jews and their Synagogues and all legal observations of holy days, Sabbath days, and Mosaical Rites, Ceremonies and shadows, Acts 19:9, Col. 2:16,17; and assembled together in one place, 1 Cor. 14:23; on the Lord's Day, *the first day of the week*, Acts 20:7; to worship God visibly by the spirit and in the truth, John 4:23,24; in the holy Ordinances of God, 1 Cor. 11:2; according to the faith and order of the Gospel, Col. 2:5.

### The Resemblance of the Church to the Kingdom

Touching the second particular to be inquired into, it consists of two parts.

- 1 The Church is called a Kingdom.
- 2 The Church is called the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Church is compared to a Kingdom, because:

### The Kingship of Christ

1. Christ the head of the Church, is the King of Saints, Rev. 15:3, and the King of Zion, Psal. 2:6 and 149:1,2. ***Let the Children of Zion (the Congregation of Saints, verse 1) be joyful in their King.***

### The Church is Christ's Throne

2. The Church of God is Christ's Throne, Jer. 17:12. ***A glorious high Throne from the beginning (of his Mystical Kingdom) is the place of our Sanctuary, Rev. 4:4. A throne was set in Heaven, the Church, and ONE sat on the throne, namely Christ. And round about the Throne were twenty-four Seats or Thrones; And upon the Seats I saw twenty-four Elders (the spiritual Priests of God) sitting***

**clothed in white Raiment, and they had on their heads Crowns of Gold.**

### **As King, He is also Lawgiver**

**3. Christ the King of his Church, is their Law-giver, Isa. 33:22. The Lord is our Statute-maker, and the Bible is his Statute-Book wherein are published all the Laws of God's house, Ezek. 43:10,11, according to which Laws the Church of Saints are to be governed by their Elders whom Christ has set over them to Rule and Govern them, Heb. 13:7,17, according to the Laws of his house.**

### **The Church compared to the Kingdom**

**The Church is compared to the Kingdom of Heaven:**

**1. With respect unto the gracious and glorious presence of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Church: God dwelling in Zion, Psal. 9:11, Joel 3:21; for it is his Rest, Psal. 132:14. Matt. 18:20, *For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* Rev. 2:1, *Christ walketh in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks.* God's presence makes Heaven to be Heaven, and that makes a Heaven on Earth, a Heaven in the heart, and a Heaven in the Congregation of Saints.**

**2. With respect unto the spiritual glory of the Church of God in the latter days, Isa. 60:12,13. The Beauties of Holiness, Psal. 110:3, makes Zion the perfection of Beauty, Psal. 50:2. The Temple was filled with the Glory of God, Ezek. 43:5 and 44:4. *And the Glory of the Lord filled the House of the Lord.* The house of the Lord is the Church of the living God, 1 Tim. 3:15. And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, Rev. 15:8.**

**3. With respect unto the great Company and number of Saints in the Assemblies and Churches of Christ (called the Churches of Saints, 1 Cor. 14:33) among whom and in whose Assemblies *are the holy Angels because of whose presence the Women were to be veiled,* 1 Cor. 11:10. This will be more evident in the last days, when the holy City the New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband, Rev. 21:1,2,3. And when we are come to Mount Zion, unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, to the general Assembly and Church of the first born, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, Heb. 12:22,23,24, then will the Church of God on Earth bear some greater proportion with and resemblance unto the Kingdom of Heaven.**

**Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, etc.**

**Ten is a Mystical number as Dan. 7:7,20,24, ten horns; Jude 14, ten thousand of Saints; Rev. 2:10, ten days, and so ten Virgins. That is a definite number for an indefinite.**

### **Why Virgins**

**By Virgins we are to understand Gospel professors and Church members, (2 Cor. 11:2, *I have espoused you to one Husband that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ*) who have escaped the pollutions of the World through the**

knowledge of Christ, 2 Tim. 3:5.

### **Foolish Virgins**

Some are foolish Virgins, formal professors denying the power of Godliness, only seeming to be Religious, James 1:26, who after they have escaped the pollutions of the World through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, are again entangled therein and overcome, whose later end is worse than their beginning, 2 Pet. 2:20.

### **Wise Virgins**

Others who are wise Virgins having not only the form but the power of Godliness also, and being partakers of the Divine Nature have escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust, 2 Pet. 1:4. These being not defiled with spiritual Whoredoms do follow Christ wheresoever he goes, Rev. 14:4. These are they which are not defiled with Women (neither the great Whore of Rome, Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, Rev. 17:1,5, nor the Daughters of that Whore, false Churches, whose Mother Mystical Babylon is, though some of those Daughters be (as Nineveh was called, Nahum 3:4) well-favored Harlots, because of the multitude of their spiritual Whoredoms.

### **The Church in the Last Days**

Meditation. The Churches of Saints in the last days shall be reformed and restored unto a Virgin state of primitive purity and spiritual Glory, as in the Apostles' days.

For the Confirmation of this Doctrine read and consider these Scriptures, viz. Isa. 2:2-5: *And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the Mountains, etc. Isa. 60:2-6; 13, 17, 21. He that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, etc. [Isa. 4:3]; Isa. 60:7,13,21: I will glorify the house of my Glory, and I will make the place of my feet glorious, etc. Isa. 65:17,18,19,25: For behold I create new Heavens and a new earth, etc.: Rev. 20:1-5. Behold I make all things new, 2 Pet.3:13,14. Rev. 14:1-5, These are they that follow the Lamb, for they are Virgins.*

In the Explication of this point we are to consider two particulars.

1. What Reformation will be in the Churches of Saints in the last days.
2. What things shall be restored then which are or have been wanting in the Churches of Saints since the Apostles' days.

### **Purifications in the last Days**

Touching the first particular,

1. Professors of the Gospel and Members of Churches will be much reformed from many Corruptions in their Judgments and Conversations. The Apostles tell us and foretold the Churches that in the later days some Professors would be corrupted in their Judgments. Compare 1 Tim. 4:1-3 with 2 Pet. 2:1-3. *And*



*many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* And in the last days other Professors would be corrupted in their Conversations, 2 Tim. 3:1-5. *Covetous, proud, promise and Covenant Breakers, Lovers of pleasures more than Lovers of God, having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof.* And are not too many members of Churches (*who seem to be religious*, Jam. 1:26) very much corrupted in their Judgments, and some also in their Conversations? But the days are coming when there shall be a great Reformation in both these Respects.

For God will return to the people a pure Language, Zeph. 3:9,13. *The Remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.* And those Virgin professors that follow the Lamb, Rev. 14:4,5 *shall be redeemed from the Earth, verse 3, and from men, verse 4. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God,* verse 5.

2. The Discipline and Government of the Churches will be very much reformed in the last days, for then Christ the *LORD will Reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem and before his Ancients gloriously*, Mich. 4:6,7, *from henceforth even for ever.* The Churches of Saints shall be ruled and Governed by the holy, Righteous and good Laws of the Lord Jesus Christ, Isa. 33:22, who is the Son over the house of God, Heb. 3:1,6. Ezek. 43:10,11: *Show them all the Laws of the house and let them measure the Pattern*, etc. Isa. 9:6,7: *The Government shall lie upon his shoulders.* Christ is the Legislator, the Law-giver, the Bible is his and his Church's Statute Book, and all the Churches, Ministers and Saints of God are to be governed by his Royal Law of Liberty, in obeying and keeping whereof there is a Blessing promised, James 1:25.

### The Glorious Restorations of the Last Days

Touching the second particular,

1. The Ministry of the Gospel will be restored in the later days, Jer. 13:14,15. *I will bring you to Zion and I will give you Pastors according to my heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and with understanding.*

2. The gifts of the Holy Spirit shall be restored in the last days, Joel 2:21,23,28,29,30,31. *The LORD will do great things ----- Be glad then ye Children of Zion ----- I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*, etc. Acts 2:17,18, *And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh*, etc. This is that which God has promised and will again perform.

3. The Ordinances of God will be restored to his Churches in the later days. Antichrist has made void the Commandments of God by the Traditions of men (as the Scribes and Pharisees did Mark 7:6-8). And he has changed the Ordinances of Christ, and brought in the Ordinances of men, Col. 2:20,22,23. *Why are ye subject to Ordinances (or Traditions) after the Commamdmnts and Doctrines of men*, which is (Greek word) will-worship, verse 23 and vain worship, Matt. 15:8,9. (Greek words) *But in vain do they worship me*, etc. The Ordinances of God (which have been corrupted by men's Inventions, and superstitions) shall

be restored to their primitive purity and first Institutions. Read Jer. 32:38 and [30:40] and compare it with Zeph 3:9. Then will I turn to the people a pure Language (or a clean Lip) *that they may call upon the Name of the Lord and serve him with one shoulder (or consent). In that Day the LORD shall be ONE, and his Name ONE.* That is, in the later Days Christ and his Saints shall be ONE Kingdom, and his way and worship but ONE in all the Earth.

### Which took their Lamps

The Virgin Professors of the Gospel and Worshippers of God in the Churches of Christ have Lamps, that is, the presence of God in his Worship and Ordinances, Matt. 18:20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, says Christ, there am I in the midst of them.* So God manifested his presence with Abraham when he was offering a Sacrifice to the Lord, Gen. 15:17,18. *Behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, passed between those pieces; And God made a Covenant with Abraham.* Read Exod. 19:18,27 and 20:11, and Isa. 4:5, Rev. 15:9. God appointed seven Lamps to be lighted and supplied with sweet Oil of Olives, both in his Wilderness Tabernacle, Exod. 25:37 and in his Canaan Temple, 2 Chron. 4:20,21, that they might burn continually before the Lord, which typed forth the seven Spirits of God, Rev. 3:1,4,5. *And there were seven Lamps of Fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God,* that is, the variety and abundance of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Eternal Spirit. There are diversity of Gifts, but the same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:4 and so there are diverse and many fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22,23.

### The Lamps likened to Commandments

*These ten Virgins having received their Lamps,* to wit, a commandment from the Lord (for the Commandment is a Lamp, Prov. 6:23) to worship him by the Spirit in Truth, and Spiritual Gifts and Grace to perform the Gospel Instituted Ordinances of Christ according to the holy Will of God revealed in his written word. *For his Word is a Lamp, unto the feet of his Saints, and a Light unto their Paths,* Psal. 119:105.

3. Meditation. The Virgin Professors of the Gospel and Worshippers of God in the Churches of Saints shall have Gospel Light and Spiritual Gifts in the later days to Worship God in the Order and Ordinances of the Gospel according to the written Word of God.

### The Worship in the Last Days

First, Virgin Professors shall have Gospel Light in the later days to worship God aright. The written Word of God (*through the teachings of the holy Spirit*) to wit, the commands of Christ and the Examples of his Apostles, Churches, and Saints approved by Christ (recorded in the holy Scripture of Truth) will be a Lamp and a Light unto them, Psal. 119:105; Prov. 6:23 and 1 Cor. 11:1,2; 14:37, Phil. 3:16,17 and Isa. 60:1-3. *Arise, shine, thy Light is come -----.* *And the Gentiles (or Heathen Nations) shall come to thy Light, etc.*

Secondly, Virgin Professors in the Churches of Christ in the later Days shall have spiritual Gifts qualifying and enabling them to worship God by the Spirit and in the Truth in the Order and Ordinances of the Gospel, Acts 2:17. *And it shall*

*come to pass (saith God) in the last Days, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, etc. 1 Cor. 12:4, There are diversities of Gifts, but the same spirit. As in the Days of the Apostles, so shall it be in the last Days, Joel 2:21,28,29, much more poured forth. (Editor's note, these old brethren held that the spiritual gifts were the true and empowered ministers of Jesus Christ, see for Example Samuel Richardson's The Saint's Desire, REP).*

**And went forth to meet the Bridegroom.**

**This Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ, John 3:29. *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom,* that is, Jesus Christ, to whom his Churches and Saints are espoused, 2 Cor. 11:2, whom Christ has betrothed to himself in loving kindness and faithfulness for ever, Hosea 2:19,20. They are his Sister and his Spouse, Cant. 4:10, the Lamb's Wife, Rev. 19:7,8. And He is the Bridegroom, Isa. 62:5. *With the Joy of the Bridegroom over the Bride shall the LORD rejoice over thee.***

**Meeting the Bridegroom**

**To meet the Bridegroom, does imply two things. First, that the Virgins did know and believe that Christ was coming, Psal. 96:9,11,13. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the Earth be glad and rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh,* etc. Had not the foolish Virgins known and believed that Christ would come, yea and that he was coming, they would not have gone out to meet him, but would rather have scoffed at his coming when the wise Virgins had spoken of it, as those Scoffers will do, 2 Pet. 3:3,4. *There shall come in the last Days Scoffers saying where is the promise of his Coming?***

**Secondly, that all the Virgins did know and believe, that the coming of the spiritual Bridegroom Christ Jesus was near, and that he would come quickly or shortly. The Bridegroom's coming was even at the Door, therefore they went out to meet him, Heb. 10:37. *Yet a little while and HE that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the Just shall live by Faith.* The Virgins believed this and went out to meet the Bridegroom, and they had Scripture ground to believe it, because Christ had revealed it in his written word, Rev. 22:12. *Behold I come quickly, verse 20. HE which testifieth these things saith surely I come quickly, Amen.***

**They went out to meet the Bridegroom**

**That is, the Virgin Professors in the Churches of Saints in the later days knowing and Believing the Coming of Christ the Bridegroom, will go out from their nearest and dearest Relations, their great Possessions. They will forsake Father and Mother, Wife and Children that will not go out with them to meet the Bridegroom, and will follow him wheresoever he goes, as his Disciples did, Matt. 19:27. So will the Virgins do, Rev. 14:1,4. And it is the duty of all Christ's Disciples so to do, Luke 14:26,27; Matt. 20:37-39. And they that forsake all their Relations, Estates, Lands, Houses, Goods and all for Christ, shall not lose by so doing, Luke 18:28-30, and Mark 10:28-30, Rev. 22:12. *Behold I come quickly and my Reward is with me.***

**4. Meditation. That such Gospel Light will be revealed to Virgin Professors in the**

later days, and such anointing of the Spirit will be poured out upon them, as will cause them and make them willing to sell all, lose all and forsake all, and go out to meet the Bridegroom.

### **The Shinning of Great Gospel Light in the Last Days**

1. Gospel Light touching the Kingdom and Coming of the spiritual Bridegroom our Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed in the later days, Matt. 24:14. *And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Preached in all the world ----- And then shall the END come, Zech. 14:6, 7:7. It shall come to pass, that at Evening Time it shall be light. ----- And the Lord shall be King over all the Earth. In that DAY shall there be ONE Lord and his Name ONE. And Rev. 22:5. The Lord God giveth them Light ----- And they shall see his face, and his Name shall be in their foreheads, And they shall Reign for ever and ever. ----- Which must shortly be done, Behold I come quickly, etc.*

2. The Anointings of the Spirit, the Gifts and powerful operations of the Spirit will be upon Virgin Professors in the later Days, Joel 2:28,29; Isa. 43:3,5,6 and 32:15-17; 1 John 2:13,14,20,27. The Fathers, the young Men, and the little Children shall have the *Unction* of the Holy ONE, etc. Then it will be with Virgin Professors as it was in the Apostles' Days, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, etc. *There are Diversities of Gifts but the same spirit; and there are diversities of operations but the same God; All these worketh one and the self same Spirit.*

3. This Gospel Light, Anointing and operation of the Holy Spirit upon Virgin Professors in the last Days will engage them and make them willing to go out to meet the Bridegroom, Psal. 110:2,3. *The Lord will send the Rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies. Thy People shall be willing in the DAY of thy power, in the Beauties of Holiness, etc.* God will put his Spirit within them and cause them to walk in his ways, Ezek. 36:27. HE will pour his Spirit upon them, Ezek. 39:29 and they shall obey his voice, Matt. 25:6. *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* And they went out to meet the Bridegroom.

### **Verse Two**

**Verse 2: And five of them were wise and five were foolish.**

- 1 **In this Parable Virgin Professors in the Churches of Saints are variously distinguished by Christ; viz. *Five of them are wise and five are foolish.***
- 2 **The Foolish took no Oil with them, but what was in their Lamps, verse 3. The Wise took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps, verse 4.**
- 3 **The Lamps of the Wise Virgins (*being trimmed and supplied with oil in their Vessels*) continued burning, the Lamps of the foolish Virgins (*being trimmed but not supplied with oil*) went out, verses 7 and 8.**
- 4 **The Wise Virgins, *being ready*, went in with the Bridegroom to the Marriage: but the foolish Virgins, *not being prepared*, were shut out, verses 10-12.**

## **The First Distinction between the Virgin Professors**

**This verse contains the first Distinction of Virgin Professors. Five were wise, and five were foolish. Five is a definite number put for an indefinite, and thereby a small number here is put for a great number, and a few for a very many, the five foolish Virgins, for all sorts of Gospel Professors, who having a form of Godliness want the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3:5. And the five wise Virgins, for all sorts of Worshippers of God that make not only a Profession of Christ, but have also Possession of Christ dwelling in their hearts, Eph. 3:17, both which particulars will plainly appear in the Exposition and handling of the 3rd and 4th verses.**

**Meditation: There are some wise, and many foolish Virgins.**

**The Holy Spirit has given many distinguishing Characters in the Scripture of Truth between these wise and foolish Virgins, whereof some in this Parable, which I have already mentioned in General, and shall afterwards show particularly. And the Scripture Distinctions between sanctified Believers and Hypocrites: between them, that only seem to be Religious, and them that are sincerely so in deed and Truth; between those that are in Christ, having an Everlasting and inseparable Union with him, and those that are without Christ, who make a profession of Christ, but have not possession of Christ in their hearts. I say all those scripture distinctions are applicable, and may be accommodated unto the wise and foolish Professors, but especially that Scripture Distinction, 2 Tim. 3:1-5, which the holy Spirit makes between *them that have the form, and them that have the power of Godliness*, which Christ in this Parable does metaphorically express by the foolish Virgins, verse 3, who took their Lamps, but took no Oil with them, and the Wise Virgins, that took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps, verse 4.**

### **Verses 3 and 4**

**Verses 3 and 4: They that were foolish took their Lamps, and took no Oil with them.**

**But the wise took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps.**

### **The Lamps are Temple Light**

**By Lamps we are to understand Temple Light, viz. Divine knowledge and spiritual Gifts, as has been proved in the Exposition of the first verse, whereby our Savior did mystically and metaphorically show, *That the foolish Virgins had a form of Godliness.***

### **The Oil of the Foolish Virgins is the Shinning Outward Profession of Christ**

**By Oil in their Lamps is meant that shining outward profession of Christ, which went out at last, verse 8. *Give us of your Oil for our Lamps are gone out.* The Light of the knowledge of Christ and of the Prophecies and of the Mysteries of his Kingdom and Coming, which shined in the Profession they made, and in the Witness and Testimony that they had born for Christ against Antichrist, withered away and died. And all their common Gifts and Graces faded and failed. And they all fell away like the stony ground hearers, Luke 13:8. *Who believe for a time, but in Time of Temptation fall away.***

## **The Oil of the Wise Virgins is Jesus Christ in a Real and True Union**

**By Oil in the Wise Virgins' Vessels we are to understand Jesus Christ, and the spirit of Christ and the sanctifying knowledge of Christ, and the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts and in their souls. For their souls are Vessels of Mercy prepared for Glory, Rom. 9:23,24. And their Mystical and spiritual Oil is the Unction of the Holy ONE, which they have received, I John 2:20,27. Whereby our Savior did figuratively and mystically show *That the Wise Virgins had the power of Godliness*. And in this part of the Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ declares and testifies, that they are foolish Virgins, who rest satisfied and content themselves with the form of Godliness without the power of Godliness, who have Lamps but no Oil..**

### **The Wise have both Lamps and Oil**

**2. That they are wise Virgins who have both Lamps and Oil in their Vessels (to wit, Christ and his Spirit and his Grace in their hearts) having both the Form and Power of Godliness.**

**Meditation: It's not the Lamp-light of Profession and the Form of Godliness, but the Oil of Grace, and Sanctification, even the Power of Godliness in heart and Life, that will put the Denomination of, and distinction between wise and foolish Virgin Professors in the last days.**

**Though this be very clear and plain by what has been already said, in this Exposition, yet because I do think it may be profitable,**

- 1 First, for the Conviction of some formal Professors, who are foolish Virgins, especially sinners in Zion the unconverted Church members.**
- 2 For the Edification and Establishment of Sanctified Believers in the visible constituted Churches of Christ, especially weak Christians.**

### **The Form and Power of Godliness Opened More**

**I am therefore willing (through Divine Assistance) to treat more largely of the Form and power of Godliness, (and therein to demonstrate the Wisdom and folly of Virgin Professors) than I shall do of some other things held forth in this Parable, which I judge less necessary to enlarge upon.**

**That which I shall offer to Consideration touching the Form and Power of Godliness does consist in these three following Propositions.**

**1. *There is the form of Godliness and the power of Godliness*. All the Virgins had burning and shining Lamps, and some of them had Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps, verse 3.**

**2. *The form of Godliness, may be where the Power of Godliness is not*. The foolish Virgins took their Lamps, but took no Oil with them, verse 3, to wit, in their Vessels, that is, They had the form of Godliness in their Profession, but they wanted the power of Godliness in their hearts and Conversation.**

**3. *That some Virgin Professors in the Churches of Saints having the form of***

**Godliness will deny the power thereof in the last days, of whom the Apostle spoke expressly and foretold, 2 Tim. 3:5.**

### **The Meaning of the word Form**

**Touching the first Proposition, the word in Greek signifies any form, or kind of Worship, or Godliness. Having no Article joined with it, it does not signify *this, that, or the form* of Godliness properly, or strictly; but indefinitely, any form, and every form of Godliness, and consequently *the form* of Godliness.**

### **Human Forms of Worship**

**There are diverse forms of Religion wherein men worship and serve God according to the different apprehensions and persuasions of persons professing Godliness; whereof some, yea several are of man's devising, Matt. 15:8,9 compared with Col. 2:20,22,23. But there is a form of Godliness, which is of God's own Institution under the Gospel, wherein men ought to worship God in Spirit and Truth, John 4:23,24, according to his own appointments, Psal. 3:3,16.**

### **Divine Forms of Worship**

**The Form of Godliness (*of God's own appointment*) consists in the External religious performance of all those Evangelical Duties which he has Commanded us in his holy Word, Ezek. 43:10,11, according as he has commanded, wherein persons seem to be religious and Godly. Formal Professors do perform those religious Duties**

### **The Religious Duties of Formalists**

#### **Self**

**1. They act from the principle of self, which is the common and highest principle that formal Professors and Hypocrites are acted by in the Worship of God. They pray for themselves, fast and mourn for themselves, and live to themselves, Zech. 7:4-6. Self-love, self-seeking, self-confidence, self-dependency, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, and self-salvation is the frame and End of a formal professor. Self is the Spring and main principle of all he does in his Religion, Hosea 10:1, 2. Israel is an empty Vine, He brings forth fruit unto himself.**

#### **Human Traditions**

**2. They act from a principle of Tradition which they have received from their Fathers by custom and Education. So did the Apostle Paul worship God before his conversion, being zealous of the Traditions of his Fathers, Gal. 1:14,15. *I profited in the Jews Religion above many ----- Being more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of my Fathers.* Thus many formal Professors now worship God after the Traditions and Customs of their Fathers and Teachers, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, whom Christ reprehended, Mark 7:8,9,13. *Ye hold the Tradition of men,* and in vain did they worship God, making the word and Commandments of God of none effect by their Traditions. Jer. 7:18, and 44:16,17. *The Children gather wood and the Fathers kindle the Fire, and the***

*Women knead their Dough to make Cakes to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out drink-offerings unto other Gods, that they may provoke me to anger. ----- As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee ----- But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes in the Cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of Victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.*

#### **Fear**

3. They act from a principle of fear; legal fear, (to wit, the fear of hell, wrath or Curse, etc.) causes many professors to pray, hear Sermons, perform holy duties, and to partake of God's Ordinances. Also a servile fear of the Anger and displeasure of men, causes many Children and Servants to Worship God formally, and they seem to be Religious because they are afraid to anger and displease their Godly Parents, Masters, or some other Godly Relations. And that their fear of God is taught by the Commandments of men, Isa. 29:13, and thereby they are made conformable unto the External parts of God's Worship, and attain unto a Form of Godliness, yet are without the power thereof..

#### **Superstition**

4. From a Principle of superstition many are like the Idolaters of Athens, who worshipped the unknown God, Acts 17:22,23. They were very superstitious in their Will-worship of God. The Zeal and Superstition of the Scribes and Pharisees made them so formal in their legal Ceremonial worship of God, Luke 18:12. *I fast twice a week*, etc. And Rom. 10:2. Many of the Jews being zealous in their Devotion, but wanting knowledge, worshipped God according to the superstitious Inventions of men, which things the Apostle says, have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, Col. 2:20,24. And do make formal professors subject to ordinances of God after the Commandments and Doctrines of men.

#### **The External Worship of God**

This may suffice to evince and demonstrate *That there is a form of Godliness*. And indeed none can Externally worship God without some form of Godliness, wherein Persons do seem to be Religious and may seem to be like God in Holiness and Righteousness both in Worship and Conversation in some measure.

#### **The Power of Godliness**

As there is the *Form* of Godliness, so there is the *power* of Godliness. The Power of Godliness consists:

1. In the truth of Grace.
2. In the lively Acts and Exercise of Grace.
3. In the Growth and perfection of Grace.

#### **True Grace**

The power of Godliness consists *first*, in the truth of Grace. In whatsoever *form*



of Religion any professors worship God; yea though that External form be ordained of God, instituted by Jesus Christ and practiced by the Apostles, Churches and Saints; yet for all this without the Truth of Grace, they are void of the power of Godliness. And therefore the primitive Saints did not only receive the Ordinances but the Truth of Grace also by the Ministry of the Apostles in the Dispensation of the Gospel, Col. 1:4-8. And knew the Grace of God in Truth. True Grace is the incorruptible seed of the New Birth, 1 Pet. 1:23, and of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of Believers, Matt. 13:31,32, which Kingdom of God is within us, Luke 17:21, is not in Word only, but in power and in the holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 4:20 and 1 Thes. 1:4,5.

### **The Power of Godliness Demonstrated**

Now the Power of Godliness does demonstrate itself by true saving sanctifying Grace:

1. In denying all ungodliness.
2. In living soberly, righteously and Godly in this present evil World, Tit. 2:11,12. This is the constant frame of a Believer's heart. He would not sin, he hates all sin. He would be holy, he loves holiness, and desires to be more holy, Rom. 7:15,16,19-22.

### **The Lively Acts and Exercises of Grace**

Secondly, the power of Godliness does consist in the lively Acts and Exercise of Grace, as the form of Godliness appears in the frequent Exercise of holy Duties, so does the power of Godliness appear in the lively Acts and Exercise of holy Graces, to wit, in the life and lively work of faith, 2 Thes. 1:11,12. Also in the labor of fervent love, 1 Pet. 1:22. Bearing all things, enduring all things with all Brotherly kindness, Rom. 13:4,7 and Heb. 6:10. Likewise in the constant exercise of Patience, humility, meekness, and self-denial, taking up the Cross daily, bearing it patiently, following the steps of Christ, who humbled himself unto death, even the Death of the Cross. Now believers who have the power of Godliness, are armed with the same mind, 1 Pet. 4:1, and desire to be like minded to Christ, Phil. 2 5,8. They suffer patiently, knowing that tribulation (which is the trial of their faith) works patience, and are desirous that patience may have her perfect work, James 1:2-4.

### **The Growth and Perfection of Grace**

Thirdly, the Power of Godliness does consist in the growth and perfection of grace. Grace is of a growing nature, 2 Pet. 3:18.

### **Growths of Grace**

For:

1. It grows in its Root which is Jesus Christ, Col. 2:6,7. As the good seed that is sown in good ground and brings forth fruit, Luke 8:8,15. The reason why mere formal Professors fall away is, because they are not rooted nor grafted into Christ, Luke 8:13. And the reason why those believers that are engrafted into Christ, grow as Cedars in Lebanon, as a green Olive Tree in the House of the

Lord, and bring forth fruit as the Vine, is because they are trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, Isa. 61:3, which take Root downward into Christ, and so bring forth fruit upward by that sap and nourishment which they receive from that spiritual Root, to wit, those Divine Influences of the Spirit of Grace that they are made partakers of by being engrafted and rooted into Christ. This growth in Grace is very secret, hidden, not seen nor always discerned, like the growth of Corn underground, or of Trees in Winter, or of the Child in the Womb; yet it does afterwards appear and is visible.

2. Grace grows in its lively acts and Exercise. As a Child after its natural birth grows in all parts and Members of the Body, so a Child of God being regenerated and born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word, does grow in Grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ by adding one Grace to another, unto faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, Godliness, etc., 2 Pet. 1:5-11. This growth in Grace demonstrates the power of Godliness: by this spiritual growth in Grace, the weak in faith, Rom. 14:1, become strong in faith, 1 John 2:14 and little faith becomes great faith. Like the grain of Mustard seed that becomes a great Tree, and very fruitful, whereunto Christ likened the Kingdom of his Grace within us, Matt. 13:31,32 with Luke 17:21.

3. Grace grows in its fruits unto perfection, and hereby is the power of Godliness demonstrated, to wit in bringing forth much fruit, John 15:8, viz. the fruits of the holy spirit, Gal. 5:22,23, which are the fruits of Holiness and Righteousness unto Eternal Life, Rom. 6:22. Thus fruitful were the Saints in the Church of the Thessalonians, 2 Thes. 1:3. And the Apostle Paul exhorted the primitive Saints to perfect Holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7:1. And the Apostle Peter exhorted the called ones of God to be holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. 1:15,16, because he knew that the power of Godliness consisted in the life of holiness and righteousness, and is demonstrated in a holy Conversation.

Thus it appears, that there is the form of Godliness and the power of Godliness, which is the first proposition. The second Proposition is this,

The Form of Godliness may be where the Power of Godliness is not.

#### Simon Magus

Simon Magus seemed to be religious. He believed and was baptized, and took up the form of Godliness, Acts 8:12. But for all this formality he had not the power of Godliness, for he was in the gall of Bitterness and bond of Iniquity, and his heart was not right with God, Acts 8:21.

#### Ananias and Saphira

Ananias and Saphira his wife were both Professors, and Church-members. They had taken upon them the Name of Christ and the form of Godliness, seemed to be very charitable, and pretended much Brotherly Love to the poor Saints, for they sold a Possession, and gave a part of the price unto the poor, Acts 5:1,2. Yet, they were void of the power of Godliness.

There are many professors that are proud, covetous, carnal, covenant-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, heady, high-minded, Lovers of pleasures more

than Lovers of God, etc. Many of them have a form of Godliness, but they have not the power of Godliness, 2 Tim. 3:2-5.

#### **Signs of the formalists who have not the power of Godliness**

**When Professors and Church-Members are generally formal in the performance of the duties of Religion, very perfunctory and superficial in the Worship of God, or lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, very indifferent whether they observe the Lord's Day or another Day, or no day at all to the Lord, so whether they hear the Word preached, or pray in their Families or in their Closets, or pray not at all, whether they come to the Lord's Table or stay away, it argues, they are so far from having *the power of Godliness* that they can *scarcely* be said to have *the form of Godliness*.**

**Again when Professors and Members of Churches are very frequent and constant in Assembling themselves together to worship God, very zealous and precise in the External part of the Worship of God and seem to be very Conscientious and scrupulous in such things as appertain to the form of Godliness, asserting and contending that all things ought to be exactly done in the Church of God, according to the Rule of the written word of God, and yet walk very disorderly at home, are heady and unruly in their own houses, set no Rules nor Bounds to their obstinate and perverse Wills, to their inordinate and vile affections, to their worldly and covetous hearts, who seem to be Religious, yet bridle not their Tongues but deceive their own hearts, their Religion is in vain, Jam. 1:26. These Professors have a form of Godliness, but they want the power thereof.**

**Thus it appears that the form of Godliness may be where the power of Godliness is not. Professors may have Leaves without fruit, as the Fig-tree had. Lamps, and lighted, but no Oil in their Vessels, like the foolish Virgins. Seem very religious in the congregation of Saints, and be very irreligious in their conversation among sinners.**

#### **Reasons why Professors Hold Up the Form**

**The Reasons why Professors rest in and hold up a form of Godliness without the power thereof are these:**

**1. Because they would have a name to live though they be dead, Rev. 3:1. They are very desirous to have a Name in the house of God, to be accounted religious and to be numbered among the Saints. Therefore they take up a form of Godliness and rest therein. Those foolish Professors, Matt. 25:1,2, had gotten a Name among the wise, and were called Virgins. And they seemed to be Religious. They had Lamps of Gospel Profession, and the form of Godliness wherewith they were satisfied. Therein they rested securely till the Bridegroom came, and then He appeared they wanted Oil, that is, the truth of Grace and power of Godliness, for want whereof they were excluded and rejected by Jesus Christ, Matt. 25:8,11,12.**

**2. Because a form of Godliness will comport with a spirit of Worldliness, Earthly-mindedness, Covetousness, Pride, Uncleaness, Drunkenness, so that these Lusts be but secretly committed. A Professor and Church-member may be a self-lover and a lover of pleasures, a Covenant or Promise-breaker, and yet have and**

hold up a form of Godliness without the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

3. Because Professors and Church-members may avoid troubles and persecutions, while they enjoy Sabbaths, Sermons, and Ordinances in an External forms of public worship, whereas the power of Godliness will expose them to suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12. So that the Form of Godliness may be where the power is not. This is the second Proposition. There is a third Proposition, viz:

That some Professors and Church-members having and holding up the form of Godliness, deny the power thereof.

Professors they must be and Church-members they may be, that have and hold up the form of Godliness, and seem to be very devout and Religious in the Worship of God, and yet some of them deny the power of Godliness. We have showed in the handling of the first proposition wherein the form of Godliness and wherein the power of Godliness does consist, and have treated briefly both of the form and power of Godliness. Now it remains, that in handling this Third Proposition, we show:

1. What it is to deny the power of Godliness.
2. The Reasons why they deny the Power of Godliness.

To Deny the Power of Godliness

To deny the power of Godliness, is:

1. To have an Aversion against it in their Affections, not to love and affect the power of Godliness, which Aversion against the power of Godliness does arise and spring from that cursed and sinful Enmity in their carnal minds against God, Rom. 8:7. *The carnal mind is Enmity against God*, and therefore carnal Professors do not love nor like Godliness in the Truth and power of it, though they may be sound in the form and profession thereof. O, says a formal professor in his heart, I do not love this preciseness, this is to be righteous overmuch. I like not those that are so strict, so zealous and so scrupulously conscientious. What necessity is there to deny my self, my Liberty, my lawful Recreation, content and delight in things indifferent? must my liberty therein be judged by another Brother's or Sister's Conscience? He loves not, he likes not this, it crosses his Interest in the World or it is contrary unto some of his beloved and indulged Lusts to be so zealous, so Religious, so Conscientious as the power of Godliness requires, and would engage him to be, therefore he is averse from it, and so may be said to deny it.

What Denying the Power of Godliness Is

To deny the power of Godliness, is:

2. To refuse all the offers of Christ and Grace, which God makes them in the ministry and administration of the Gospel by his holy Spirit, Isa. 53:1-3; Acts 3:13,14. *But ye denied the Holy ONE*. That is, they refused Christ, and would not have him to be their Savior, King, Priest and Prophet, saying, *We will not have*

*this man to Reign over us.* Formal Professors know not the worth of Christ, they are not sensible of their want of Grace, therefore they slight, neglect and refuse the Offers of Grace. They are willing to seem Religious, but as for the truth of Grace and power of Godliness they regard it not. They like Christ as a Savior but refuse him as a Sovereign, though they would be saved, they care not to be sanctified, they refuse to enter in at the strait gate of Grace, and to walk in the narrow way of holiness and yet they would go to Heaven, and to that end they cry, Lord, Lord, Matt. 7:21,22. They pray and Prophecy in Christ's name, Luke 13:23,27. They worship God, seem to be very religious and partake of all God's holy Ordinances, having a form of Godliness, but yet, they deny the power of Godliness by refusing the offers of Christ and Grace in the Gospel and Ordinances of God.

To deny the power of Godliness is:

3. To live in the practice of known sins, secretly indulging and allowing them, Tit. 1:16. *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him.*

When Professors Lives are loose, carnal, worldly, and their works are the works of Darkness, and they themselves workers of Iniquity, they deny God and the power of Godliness.

#### The Power of Godliness and Practical Holiness

The power of Godliness consists in practical Holiness. Some Professors seem to be holy in God's house, who live very ungodly in their own houses. They seem to be religious in the Church and in the Worship of God, but they are irreligious at home, in their Shops and Callings, Trading and Living in sin, and ungodliness. These having a form of Godliness deny the power thereof..

#### Some Reasons why Formal Professors deny the power of Godliness

##### Hearts are not right with God

They are:

1. Because their hearts are not right with God. Simon Magus believed and was baptized, and worshipped God, but his heart was not right with God, Acts 8:21,23. There is a carnal Enmity in their hearts against God, and the power of Godliness, Rom. 8:7, though they like the outward form, yet they love not the inward power of Godliness.

2. Because the inward power of Godliness is cross to their outward and worldly Interests, therefore they deny the power thereof. The Formalist says within himself, though I am religious, a Church member, etc., yet I am resolved to make my Religion and Church-fellowship comport with my Interest in the world, and to be subservient unto my Honor, Credit, Profit, yea and my pleasure, delight and contentment, etc. When formal Professors discern that the power of Godliness will not only check and curb their vile affections, perverse wills, and sinful desires, but also will mortify, kill and destroy their Lusts and Corruptions, root and branch, then they refuse and deny the power of Godliness. Rather than the Formalist will hazard the loss of Life, Liberty or Estate, and expose himself

to poverty, prison, banishment or death for his Religion, he will deny Christ, deny God and the power of Godliness.

3. Because the power of Godliness engages professors to follow Holiness, and to deny all ungodliness, Tit. 2:11,12. Such Professors as have the form of Godliness only, are very apt to rest in the external part and performance of holy duties and sacred Ordinances without the enjoyment of God and Jesus Christ. But the truth and Life of Grace and the power of Godliness will not suffer the soul to rest in duties and Ordinances without the enjoyment of fellowship and Communion with God, therefore the Formalist will not close with the power of Godliness, but refuses and denies it, because he is unwilling to leave his sins. I shall now make some application of what I have said touching the form and power of Godliness.

#### **The Form and Power of Godliness**

**The Use of Instruction to Virgin Professors.** There are three things necessary unto the form of Godliness, viz.

#### **Knowledge of God's Revealed Will**

1. The knowledge of the Revealed Will of God in his written Word touching Christ's Institution of Gospel Ordinances, and his Constitution of the Worship of God therein, and thereby. How can any person worship God in spirit and truth (*as true worshippers ought to do*, John 4:23,24) unless they understand and know the truth, revealed in the holy Scriptures? Ignorant persons are not capable to perform the external part of the worship of God, for they do not know it. The Athenians worshipped the unknown God, which the Apostle told them was their great superstition, Acts 17:22,23. And our Savior told the Woman of Samaria, that the Samaritans worship they know not what, John 4:21,22. So then knowledge is necessary unto the form of Godliness. Many persons think it is enough that their Ministers know how they ought to worship God, and so are willingly ignorant, whose fear towards God is taught by the precepts of men, and they willingly walk after the Commandment, Hos. 5:11, which formality of Conformity Christ reprehended, Matt. 15:9. *In vain they do worship me teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of men.*

#### **Unity in Faith and Worship**

2. In the *form* of Godliness there must be a Conformity unto the Revealed Will of God in his Word, especially in the External part of the Instituted worship of God in the Gospel. Uniformity in Worship in any Nation or Congregation without Conformity unto the Rule or Canon of the holy Scripture, is but superstition and a worshipping God after the Inventions and Traditions of men, which the Apostle reprov'd in the Colossians, and calls *Will-worship*, Col. 2:20-23.

#### **God's Measuring Rod**

The Temple, the Altar and they that worship, (that is, the Church, the worship of God and the worshippers of God) are to be measured by the Reed or Rod of the Sanctuary, that is, by the written word of God, Rev. 11:1. Moses was commanded

to do all things according to the pattern that God showed him in the Mount, Heb. 8:5 and the Prophet Ezekial was commanded to show the House of God's worship to the House of Israel and admonished them to measure the pattern, Ezek. 42:10.

3. In the Form of Godliness there ought to be an Uniformity among all the Churches of God in every Nation, in every City and in every Village. All that worship God in one place, are to Worship him in one way, with one accord and with one shoulder. It was so in the Apostles' days, Acts 1:4,24; Phil. 2:2, *Being of one accord, on one mind.* Acts 4:32, And so it shall be in the last days. Jer. 32:36,38,39, *And I will give them one heart, and one way that they may fear me, (i.e.) worship me, for ever.*

Not as the Corinthians

This Uniformity was tacitly hinted by the Apostle, in reprovng the Confusion that was in the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 14:26,33. *For God is not the Author of Confusion but of Peace,* as in all the Churches of Saints. Uniformity in Worship not after the Invention of men, but according to the written Word of God makes for Peace, Unity and Edification in the Churches of Saints, and is a special means to avoid confusion and disorder in the Worship of God, 1 Cor. 14:40.

Use of Conviction,

1. Of those foolish Virgin professors who rest in the form of Godliness without the power of it. They may hereby be convinced, 1. That their hearts are not right with God, though they do materially that which is right in the sight of God; but are like Amaziah who *did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart,* 2 Chr. 15:1,2. And whosoever rests in a form of Godliness, without the power thereof, deceives his own heart, and his Religion is in vain, Jam. 1:26. Such may be convinced,

2. That in all their solemn appearings before God, and their approachings nigh unto him, their hearts are far from him, Isa. 29:13 and Matt. 15:8. And testifies that all their worship is in vain, Matt. 15:8,9. And they themselves Hypocrites, verse 7. As the heart is, so is the Worshipper in the sight of God. If the heart be proud, covetous, vain, foolish, like-warm, formal and hypocritical, all that Professor's duties, performances and worship is abhorred of God, his soul hates them. Isa. 1:12-15 and chap. 66:3. *Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination to me, the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with. It is iniquity, even the solemn meetings, ----- Your New Moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. -----* And when ye spread forth your hands, *I will hide mine Eyes from you; yea when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. He that killeth an Ox is as if he slew a man, he that sacrifices a Lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck, and he that offereth an oblation as if he offered swine's blood, he that burneth Incense as if he blessed an Idol; yea they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their Abominations.* They may be convinced,

3. That they shall never see God in Heaven, Heb. 13:14, *for without Holiness, (the power of Godliness) no man shall see the Lord.* They are declared by God in

his Word to be Hypocrites, Matt. 15:7-9, and if they Repent not, they shall have their portion with Hypocrites, Matt. 24:51, in the lowest and deepest of eternal flames, and of everlasting darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.

Use of Consolation unto the Wise Virgins.

Are you an Israelite indeed? Do you worship God in Spirit and Truth? Have you both the form and power of Godliness? Then be of good Comfort. For,

1. Christ is yours, and all is yours, 1 Cor. 3:21-23. God is your Father, Grace is your portion, and Heaven in your Inheritance, Holiness is your way, and Happiness will be your end, Matt. 5:8.

2. You do and shall enjoy spiritual Communion with God in holy duties, and in his sacred Ordinances. The power of Godliness does make the Believer fruitful under that form of Godliness which Christ has Instituted for the Worship of God; and affords him fellowship with the Father, Son and Spirit, 1 John 1:1-3.

3. Know for your comfort, that the power of Sin, Satan, Hell cannot, shall not prevail against the power of Godliness in you, so far as to provoke the Lord to forsake you for ever, or to cause you to forsake God for ever, for He has said, Heb. 1:3,5, I will never leave thee, never never forsake thee. Read for your Comfort Jer. 32:38,40, *And they shall not depart from me.* But the power of Godliness in you will by the power of Christ prevail against, conquer and overcome the power of darkness, and all the wiles of the wicked one, 1 John 2:13, also the power of this world, Eph. 6:12,13, and the threats, allurements, etc. thereof, 1 John 5:4,5. And likewise the power of sin, both the reigning over thereof (called the *Dominion of sin*) Rom. 6:14, sin shall not have Dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law, but under Grace; and the Tyrannizing power thereof (called the captivity of sin) Rom. 7:2,3 and 8:2. *But the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and Death.* Rejoice therefore in the Lord and bless him, 1 Pet. 1:3-6,8.

Use of Exhortation,

1. To the Profane, 2. To Professors, and 3. To true Believers.

1. A word to all profane persons who have neither the power nor the form of Godliness. I exhort such to consider their woeful state and miserable condition, being all of them without Christ having no hope, and without God in the World, Eph. 2:12. David tells profane sinners, The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the People that forget God, Psal. 9:17. You can live without Christ, trade without Christ, marry and give in marriage without Christ, but tell me, you profane sinners, what will you do if you die without Christ? can you think seriously of going to Hell, and being tormented there to Eternity? will the Enjoyment of the pleasures of sins for a season compensate the loss of your souls, and the pains of Hell forever?

2. A word to the foolish Virgin Professors who having a form of Godliness deny the power thereof.



I exhort such to consider seriously whether seeming to be Religious, and saying Lord, Lord, will save your immortal souls, Matt. 7:21-23. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven ----- Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful works? ----- And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that word iniquity.* Remember Professors that the foolish Virgins had their Lamps lighted, and they shined in the form of Godliness, but they found the Door of the Kingdom of Heaven shut against them. And when they said Lord, Lord, open to us, Christ said unto them, I know you not, Matt. 25:10-12, because they had not the power of Godliness, Luke 13:24,28. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. ----- There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves shut out.*

Do not rest in a form, without the power of Godliness, lest you sitting down in any Church of Saints and under the Sacred Ordinances of God without Christ, come short of Heaven, for without Holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power, 1 Cor. 4:20.

A word to the wise Virgins that have not only the Form but the power of Godliness

Whom I exhort,

1. To exercise the power of Godliness in the performance of holy Duties and in partaking of God's holy Ordinances, and not to rest in the form and external part of the Worship of God.

2. To Demonstrate unto all that you the power of Godliness by being holy in all manner of

Conversation, both in the house of God, and in your own houses, showing forth the virtue of him that has called you. Whereby the Faith, Humility, Self-denial, Patience, the Love and Life of Jesus Christ may be manifested in your Life.

Query 1:

How may Professors attain unto the power of Godliness and so become wise Virgins.

Solution

1. Professors must come to Christ in the Ordinances of God, 1 Cor. 1:18,24. Christ complained of the Jewish Professors that they would not come to him, John 5:40. Many come to Sermons, to Duties, to Ordinances, but few come to Christ, most rest in the form without the power of Godliness, satisfying themselves in coming to Sermons, and attending upon Ordinances, without going to Christ in them, Isa. 55:3.

**2. The Gospel must come to professors not in word only, but also in power and in the holy Spirit, 1 Thes. 1:5, before they can come to Christ or attain to the power of Godliness.**

**3. The Ministers of Christ must declare the Testimony of God not with excellency of speech, not with enticing words of Man's Wisdom. Their speech and their preaching must be in the Demonstration of the spirit and in power, 1 Cor. 2:1,2,4,5, before the Gospel can come to their hearers' hearts in power and in the holy Spirit, and before their hearers can come to Christ, and before they can attain to the power of Godliness. The plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel is the ordinary means whereby God draws sinners with Cords of Love to Christ, and makes the Ministry of the word powerful and effectual to call, convert, sanctify and save sinners, Rom. 1:16,17; Rom. 10:14,17.**

**Query 2:**

**How may Professors know, that they have attained unto the power of Godliness, and that they are wise Virgins.**

**Solution: Professors may know, that they have attained unto the power of Godliness, and are wise Virgins,**

**1. By the Victory they have obtained over the World, Satan, and their own sins. There's none but true Believers have overcome the World, 1 John 5:4,5. None but those that are strong in faith have overcome the Devil, that wicked one, 1 John 2:14. It's the truth of faith, and the power of Godliness, whereby sanctified persons do overcome their sinful Lusts and Corruptions. The Grace of God teaches all men to deny UNGODLINESS and worldly Lusts, Tit. 2:12.**

**2. By the lively Acts and constant exercise of Grace. In whomsoever the power of Godliness is, it will appear in the growth and exercise of Grace, 2 Pet. 3:18. Such Christians are fruitful under God's holy Ordinances, John 15:5. The Gospel came to them not in word only but in power and in the holy Spirit, 1 Thes. 1:5, and their faith did grow exceedingly, and the Love of them all exceeded, 2 Thes. 2:3.**

**3. By their holy Conversation in the World, 2 Cor. 1:12. *This is our rejoicing, the Testimony of our Conscience that in simplicity and Godly sincerity by the grace of God we have our Conversation in the World.* The power of Godliness will appear in a holy life and heavenly Conversation, as it did in the primitive Saints, Phil. 3:20, whereunto they were exhorted, 1 Pet. 1:15, viz. to be holy in all manner of Conversation.**

**Query 3:**

**Are they, that have the power of Godliness, obliged to the form of Godliness?**

**Solution:**

**Yea, the Apostle commended the Church and Saints in Corinth for keeping the Ordinances of God, 1 Cor. 11:1, 2, and the Apostle Peter commanded them to be baptized with water, who had received the holy Spirit, Acts 10:47,48. All the Apostles, the Churches of Saints, and all true Believers looked at themselves to**

**be obliged to the external form of Godliness and worship of God in external Gospel Ordinances, as it appears in the Acts of the Apostles and in their Epistles.**

#### **Verse 5**

**While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.**

#### **Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom**

**The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 1, who is here said *to tarry* or delay his coming, chapter 24:48, which he will not do in respect of the time appointed of the Father. Then he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, Heb. 10:37.**

#### **He Delays His Coming**

**But Christ is said to tarry or delay his coming:**

**1. Because He came not when they prayed for his coming, and earnestly desired his presence and appearance. Thus Jesus tarried two days after Lazarus' sisters had sent him word that he was sick, John 11:1,3,6, and yet came in due time and manifested himself with power and great glory in raising Lazarus from the Dead, verses 23,40,43,55.**

**2. Because He came not when they looked for him, and at the time when they expected his coming. The Apostle tells us, Heb. 9:28, *Unto them that look for him he shall appear the second time without sin unto Salvation.* But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father, said Christ, Matt. 24:36.**

**They all slumbered and slept.**

**All the Virgins, both the foolish and the Wise Virgins. First, they all slumbered or nodded, that is to say, they did not wake and watch as formerly they had done, while they waited for and expected the glorious appearance of their LORD, and bare their testimony of his coming. They began to be careless and secure, neglecting their Duty. They became drowsy and indisposed to wait any longer for the coming of the Bridegroom. They grew weary, silent and sleepy as the Spouse did, Cant. 4:16; 5:1,2, between her entreating and inviting her Beloved to come into his Garden, and his coming. *I sleep but my heart waketh*, verse 2**

**.Secondly, they all slept, or were fast asleep, that is to say, the wise Virgins as well as the foolish were fallen into a state of security, *as persons are when they are fast asleep in the night season*, fearing neither Fire, thieves or any other danger. So all these ten Virgins (it being now near Midnight) were fast asleep (as it were in a dead sleep) through their carnal security, and careless neglect of their Watch and other Holy Duties. And some of them backslide into a deep Apostasy, and so continued till the Cry at Midnight awakened them out of that deep sleep of carnal security, backsliding and apostasy, into which they were fallen, as appears in the 6th and 8th verses of this Chapter.**

#### **Mistakes about Christ's Second Coming**

**Meditation: Many Virgin-professors being mistaken about this time of Christ's coming, who tarried longer than they expected, will fall into the slumber of sinful silence and careless security. And some Professors will fall into a dead and deadly sleep of Backsliding and Apostasy. This Meditation consists of four Propositions.**

**First, many Virgin-professors have been and are mistaken about this time of Christ's coming. And that does appear by what many learned and Godly men have written and witnessed touching the coming of Christ, *many* have looked for the coming of Christ, as the Judge of quick and dead, 2 Tim. 4:1. *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom.* And that at the end of the World, 2 Pet. 3:3,10,12, when he shall give up his Kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. 15:24-28. But few have expected the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom, and the New Jerusalem to come down from Heaven as a Bride adorned for her Husband, Rev. 21:1,2. Who looks for the Marriage of the Lamb? And who will grant that his Bride shall make herself ready, Rev. 14:7,8 to be married to Christ and to live and reign with Christ a thousand years here on Earth between the final destruction of the Beast and the false Prophet and the Eternal Judgment of the last Day, Rev. 20:4. But more will be spoken of the coming of Christ in the Exposition of the next verse.**

**Secondly, the Bridegroom tarried longer than the Virgins expected, *while the Bridegroom tarried*, the Text says. They expected his coming, while they were awake, watching and witnessing, praying and looking for him, but He tarried till they all slumbered and slept. And then He came at Midnight, verse 6, at an hour (in a Dispensation) when they looked not for him. Matt. 24:44,50. *Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. 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.* Matt. 25:13, *Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.* And 1 Thes. 5:2, *For your selves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.***

**Thirdly, the generality of Virgin-professors will fall into the slumber of a sinful silence, neglect to watch and wait for the spiritual Bridegroom, and grow careless and secure while he tarries.**

**So long as Virgin-professors will be speaking of Christ's Coming and Kingdom, and talking of his power (as was prophesied the later day Saints shall do, Psal. 145:11) while they are praying continually for the coming and Kingdom of Christ (as He taught his Disciples to pray, Matt. 6:10, *Thy Kingdom come*), and while they are watching and waiting for the Lord from Heaven in his glorious appearance with Kingly power and Majesty, as the Saints were exhorted by the Apostle to do, 1 Thes. 1:9,10, *To serve the living God and to wait for his Son from Heaven*, I say, so long as Virgin-professors are so doing, they will not, cannot, shall not slumber nor sleep. But when they begin to be silent in bearing their Testimony for the Kingdom of Christ against the Kingdom of Antichrist, and will not, dare not speak of his glorious coming and Kingdom as the Bridegroom, but give over praying for it, and waiting for him, then they begin to be careless of his coming, and to grow secure, *and being at ease in Zion*, begin**

to slumber, and at last some of them fall fast asleep.

Fourthly, some Professors will fall into a deep and deadly sleep of Backsliding and Apostasy. As some of the later day Saints will be shining Believers, Isa. 60:1,2. So some of the Virgin Professors in the last days will prove backsliding formalists and damnable Apostates, and this grand and greatest Apostasy has these four steps or gradations.

1. A liberal inordinate resting and reposing their hearts in and upon worldly contentments.

2. A cooling in their Affections and careless neglect of holy duties, Ordinances and the pure worship of God.

3. A fearlessness of declining and backsliding.

4. A benumbed (sic) deadness, hardness, insensibleness, security and contentedness, being at ease and rest, and so fall asleep in that condition, and this will happen a little before the coming of Christ, 2 Thes. 1:2,3. *Now we beseech you Brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together in him ---- that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither be spirit nor by word, nor by letters as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand ---- Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.* This Apostasy was foretold also by the Apostle Peter in his second Epistle the third Chapter, and the 3rd and 4th verses. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming; for since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation. The Apostle Paul also foretold Timothy, that in the last days, (*which will be perilous times*) men eminent for profession, (*having the form of Godliness*) will deny the power thereof through their own Lusts, 2 Tim. 3:1-5. There are two Expressions used by both those Apostles touching this grand and last Apostasy which does confirm my opinion, that they both prophesied and wrote of the same Apostasy. Paul says, 2 Tim. 3:1, *This know also that in the last days.* And Peter says, 1 Pet. 3:3, *Knowing that first ---- that in the later days, etc..*

#### Self-Love is the Root of the Apostasy

The Root of this grand and last Apostasy is self-love, and love of pleasures, which the Apostle in his Epistle to Timothy notes to be the chief Character of the formal Professors and Apostates in the last days, 2 Tim. 3:2,4. (Greek here -- page 59) , The men of Name shall be Lovers of their own selves and Lovers of pleasures, more than Lovers of God. These sinful Pleasures, and worldly Contents cause Professors to slumber, and some to fall fast asleep in Apostasy, Self-love is that Root of bitterness out of which those unblest, yea those cursed Branches of sinful lusts (there mentioned) do sprout and grow, *especially Covetousness, Pride and Covenant-breaking.* And the Love of Pleasures is the corrupt fountain from whence the bitter waters of those sinful Lusts spring and show.

Let him that has understanding judge what I say. If MEN not profane *only* but Professors *also*, not only the men of the world, but also members of Churches, do love themselves more than truth and Righteousness, and love the world more than faith and a good Conscience, yea love their vain sinful delights and pleasures more than God and Jesus Christ, may not those and such as those be ranked and numbered among the Apostates and Backsliders of the last days? By how much the more we see and know men that have been very eminent in profession above many others, and have been highly esteemed in the Churches of Saints, *men of name*, Chief men among the Brethren, yea among the Elders for knowledge, Gifts, Zeal, etc., who have born a glorious Testimony for Christ against Antichrist; but yet they have afterwards (*through love of themselves and love of pleasures and other sinful Lusts*) Backslider, Revolted and Apostatized from what they formerly practiced and professed before many Witnesses, may we not conclude them to be among the number of the Apostates of the last days?

#### Verse 6

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

#### The Night

1. Night does Mystically and Metaphorically signify a time of Rest, Ease, and Quietness, also drowsiness, sluggishness, and a lazing disposition; likewise a condition of a sinful careless security, Rom. 13:11,12: *And that knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed ----- The Night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the Armor of light.* 1 Thes. 5:2,6,7: *For your selves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night ----- Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober ----- For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night.* Matt. 24:48-50: *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.*

2. A condition and time of great darkness, discomfort, sore Afflictions and heavy Judgments, Exod. 12:29. *And it came to pass, that at Midnight the LORD smote all the first Born in the Land of Egypt.* Mich. 3:6,7: *Therefore Night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a Vision, and it shall be dark unto you that ye shall not divine, and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets and the day shall be dark over them ----- Then shall the Seers be ashamed, and the Diviners confounded, yea they shall cover their Lips, for there is no Answer of God.* Joel 1:13: *Gird your selves and lament ye Priests, howl ye Ministers of the Altar: come lie all night in sackcloth ye Ministers of my God, for the Meat-offering and the Drink-offering is withholden from the house of your God.*

3. A time of greatest retirement and repose for most serious devotion and spiritual Meditation, and holy Contemplation, Psal. 4:4: *Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still,* etc. Psal. 16:7: *My reins shall instruct*

*me in the night season. Cant. 3:1: By night on my Bed I sought him whom my Soul loveth, I sought him but found him not.*

#### **What this Midnight Dispensation Shows**

**This Midnight Dispensation in the text does *Mystically and Metaphorically* signify all these three particular conditions at the time of the *Bridegroom's* coming, with respect to the several sorts of persons, who will be then and in that day concerned therein, viz.**

#### **Sinful and Careless Security**

**First, the foolish Virgins will then be found in a sluggish disposition and condition of a sinful careless security, so sleepy that their Lamps go out, verse 8. And the Wise Virgins will be too secure and careless at that time, verse 5.**

#### **Great Darkness, Discomfort and Amazement**

**Secondly, worldly professors who are taught to worship God according to the Commandments and precepts of men, and the Inventions and Superstitions of men will then be found under great darkness, discomfort and amazement, Luke 21:25-27: *And there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the Earth distress of Nations with perplexity, the Sea and the Waves roaring ----- Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth, for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken ----- And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a Cloud with power and great glory.* Because of the sore Afflictions and Righteous Judgments of God, Matt. 24:21,29,30: *For then shall be great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the World to this time, no nor ever shall be ----- 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 power of the Heavens shall be shaken ----- And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.***

#### **The Faithful Few**

**Thirdly, there will be some, a few, a small Remnant of Virgin Saints who will accompany the Bridegroom when he comes, *even in the midnight dispensation*, and they are those hundred forty-four thousand who have their Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev. 14:1-5, being in their retirement, repose and secret devotion *formerly* sealed for the Servants of God, Rev. 7:3,4. And now come with the Bridegroom and shall stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion being without fault before the Throne of God.**

**There was a Cry made, etc.**

**The question is, 1. What Cry this was? 2. Who made this Cry? 3. Who heard this Cry?**

**Touching the first question, what cry this was,**

**I answer the Greek word does both here and in many other places of Scripture**

signify a very loud, fierce and vehement Cry, as Acts 7:57: *They cried out with a loud voice*; Acts 19:28. As an *Herald at Arms* cries out with a loud voice when he proclaims an Edict, or when the common Cryer makes proclamation, Rev. 7:2: *He cried with a loud voice*, etc. And Rev. 10:3, Rev. 19:17.

Touching the second question, Who made this Cry,

I answer, either the LORD himself, or the Ministers of Christ, or the people of God. For this Cry is *either* by Preaching the coming of Christ publicly, Isa. 58:1: *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet*, etc.; Matt. 24:14. And the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed or preached publicly (Greek) in all the inhabited world, or else a Cry raised by the voice of a great number of the Saints and Servants of God in the Temple of God that was opened in Heaven, Isa. 66:6: *A voice of the LORD, a voice from the Temple*, after the Resurrection of the two prophetic Witnesses of Christ which the Beast had killed, compare Rev. 11:7,11,12,17,19. *And they heard a great voice from Heaven, saying unto them, come up hither*, verse 12, with Rev. 19:1,4-9. *And a voice comes out of the Throne, and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, saying Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come. Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. These are the true sayings of God*, or by the Lord himself, Joel 3:16. *Jehovah also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the Heaven and the Earth shall shake*, read Hag. 2:6,7 and Heb. 12:26,27 and verse 25, *see that ye refuse not him that speaketh from Heaven*.

Touching the third question, Who heard the Cry?

I answer, all the Virgins both wise and foolish heard this Cry, *The Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*, as appears in the next verse. For they all (being awakened by that loud Cry) rose and trimmed their Lamps, verse 7, and *probably* there were many others, even great multitudes that heard this Cry or Proclamation of the Bridegroom's coming, who were glad and rejoiced that the Marriage of the Lamb was come, and that does appear by what is prophesied and recorded, Rev. 19:1-9.

The Sum and Substance of the Cry

The sum and substance of this Cry is contained in these words, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*, wherein are three things to be observed, viz.

1. The Attention, *Behold*.
2. The Assertion, *The Bridegroom cometh*.
3. The Obligation or Duty enjoined and commanded, *Go ye out to meet him*.

When God would have some wonderful and glorious thing made known unto the world and unto his people, He stirs up their Attention by this word, *Behold*, Isa. 65:1; Zeph. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:21; 1 John 3:1; Rev. 15:5 and 21:5, especially when God speaks of his Son Jesus Christ, Isa. 28:16; John 1:29; Rev. 1:7, 16:15, 22:7. *Behold he cometh*, etc. *Behold I come quickly*. So in the text, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*. This is a matter which is worthy of, and calls for the



**Churches', Ministers' and Saints' Attention.**

**The Bridegroom cometh.**

It's not said HE will come, though that is true, Heb. 10:37. Yet a little while and *HE that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* But HE cometh. HE is upon his March, Rev. 19:11-15. HE has been coming a great while, HE went forth long ago, Rev. 6:2 and now He is very near even at the Door ready to enter into the Bride-chamber. Only HE stands and stays at the Door till the Bride have made her self ready, Rev. 19:7,8. Verse 10 of this chapter, And they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage and the Door was shut.

**This Coming of Christ Explained**

Seeing that many both Learned and Godly men have been mistaken in their Opinions about the coming of Christ as was hinted in the Expositions of the former Verse, it concerns the Churches of Saints, the Ministers of Christ, and all sanctified Believers to search the holy Scriptures and pray that God will by his holy Spirit open the Scriptures to us, and open our understanding thereby in this his coming.

And now let not the Churches, Ministers, nor any of the Saints be offended with me for showing my Opinion, touching this coming of Christ and the Scripture grounds and Reasons for the same, which I humbly offer with all submission unto their Judgment.

**This is His Spiritual, Virtual, and Powerful Coming**

I do believe and am persuaded that the coming of Christ (spoken of in this Parable, verses 6 and 10) is not the coming of Christ in his own person upon the Earth (though I do believe Christ will come the second time in his own person upon the Earth, Heb. 9:28, Zech. 3:4,5) but this is his virtual, spiritual, powerful and glorious coming in his Saints and Sanction *as the Bridegroom of his Church, the new Jerusalem, who shall also come down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband.* This is our David's Mystical Kingdom on Earth among his Saints, when HE shall be King of all the Earth, and all the Kingdoms of this world shall be Christ's. And when the Lord's redeemed Ones, whom HE has made Kings and Priests to God, shall have the Kingdom and Dominion under the whole Heaven given to them, and they shall reign on Earth.

And the reasons grounded on Scripture are as follows. 1. Negatively. 2. Affirmatively.

**Negatively.**

That the coming of Christ spoken of in the 6th and 10th verses of this Parable is not the coming of Christ in his own person upon the Earth.

First, because at the personal coming of Christ on Earth, (called his appearing the *Second* time, Heb. 9:28) all his Saints shall come with him, Zech. 14:5, *And Jehovah my God shall come and all the Saints with thee.* 1 Thes. 3:13, At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all *his Saints.* The living Bodies of the

Saints shall be changed and glorified. And the Bodies of the Saints deceased shall then be raised and also glorified, Phil. 3:20,21, *For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior our Lord Jesus Christ ----- who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* 1 Thes. 4:14-17, *For if we believe, That Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep ----- For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout with the voice of the Archangel and with the Trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first ----- Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* But there will not be such a general and Physical Resurrection at the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom, for then the living Saints *only* shall enter into the Bride-Chamber, and those wise Virgins who never came personally into the Kingdom of the Father in Heaven shall be admitted into the Kingdom of the Son on Earth, Rev. 3:21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne; Even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his Throne,* which Christ himself expounds, Rev. 2:26 saying, *To him will I give power over the Nations, Even as (or the same power that ) I received of the Father.*

Secondly, Because at the personal coming of Christ on Earth, will be the Universal Physical Resurrection of all that are dead (and the Physical change of all their Bodies that are then alive, 1 Cor. 15:51,52. *Behold I shew you a Mystery we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an Eye at the last Trump (for the Trumpets shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed).* Which Resurrection Christ in John 6:39,40,44 three times together testifies shall be at the last day, and Matt. 25:31,32, *When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory,* compared with Rev. 20:11-13. *And I saw a great white throne and him that sate on it, from whose face the Earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was found no more place for them. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the Books were opened, and another Book was opened which is the Book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Book according to their works ----- And the Sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to his Works; together with the eternal Judgment, Matt. 25:33,34,46; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Jude 14,15; Rev. 20:12.*

Thirdly, Because when Christ comes virtually and spiritually as the Bridegroom, then will begin the times of the Restitution of all things. Then God will restore our Judges as at the first, and our Counselors as at the beginning, Isa. 1:25-27. Then Christ will restore Israel, and restore the Kingdom to Israel, Mich. 4:7,8. Even the first *Dominion* shall come to the Daughter of Zion, *the Kingdom shall come to the Daughter of Jerusalem.* Then Christ will make all things new, Rev. 21:5. But when Christ shall come personally upon the Earth, (as the judge of quick and dead) then will be the dissolution of the material Heaven and Earth,

and the final Consumption and Conflagration of all things, 2 Pet. 3:4,7,12. *When the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved.* Now consider that this great Desolation of all things, yea of the *material* Heavens and Earth (*which the Scripture testifies will be at Christ's second coming*), cannot be at the beginning of his Kingdom here on Earth for above a thousand years, after that time Gog and Magog will be gathered together and compass the Camp of the Saints about and the beloved City, Rev. 20:4,5,7,8,9.

**Objection:**

Does not this Opinion exempt and exclude Christ from Rule and Sovereignty in his *Monarchical* Kingdom on Earth, contrary to Rev. 20:4, *They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years?*

**Answer:**

No. Consider first, Christ may be said to be with a person or people, and they with him *virtually* by his Spirit and power or his powerful spiritual presence. Isa. 57:15; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 2:1; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12,13. As it is said, Jer. 8:9, *Is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in Her?* though not personally, but spiritually.

Secondly, as Christ is said to be in his *Mystical* Kingdom *the Church of God here on Earth*, where his Laws, his Statutes and his Ordinances are dispensed in his Name, and by the power of his holy Spirit; even so will he be in his *Monarchical* Kingdom, *the throne of his Father David here on Earth*, Luke 1:32,33. *And the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end; not personally at the beginning of it, but virtually by his Laws, etc.*

**The Impersonal Reign Considered**

Did not the Caesar's and Roman Senate govern the world by their Laws and Edicts, and by those Kings and Governors of Provinces whom they Commissioned and made Rulers for them? Is not the King of Spain said to Rule and Reign in those parts of America, and in other parts of the World, (which he or his Ancestors conquered) by his Laws civil and ecclesiastical, although he himself was never present there in his own person? And does not the Pope reign over the Kings and Kingdoms of the Earth, who have agreed and given their Kingdom to the Beast, Rev. 17:17,18, though he was never personally in those Kingdoms, but gives Commissions to his Kings, his Nuntios, his Cardinals, and his Prelates to rule in his Name and by his Laws and Edicts, Canons and Constitutions to govern the people in those his Kingdoms?

**Christ Shall Then Reign**

So shall Christ reign over all the Nations and Kingdoms of the World *whom he shall Conquer*, and they shall become his, Rev. 11:5 (sic). And HE shall be King of all the Earth, Zech. 14:9. And God shall give him the Throne of his Father David, Luke 1:32,33. And the Judgment shall be given to the Saints of the most high, and they shall possess the Kingdom, and govern the Nations by Christ's Laws, Dan. 7:14,21,27, and in his Name, and by his Commission with his holy

Spirit and power, and in great glory. Isa. 60:1,2,3,7,11,12,13,14,15: *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ----- The Sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee, shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee the City of the LORD, the Zion of the holy one of Israel ----- Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal Excellency and Joy of many Generations: from the beginning of the thousand years Reign, Rev. 20:4, until the end thereof, which is Christ's Davidical and Monarchical Kingdom.*

### **Christ Shall Rule in and by His Saints**

And after that Christ has put down all rule, all authority and all power that are his Enemy's, by the hands of his Saints, who shall bind Kings in Chains and Nobles in Fetters of Iron, and execute the Judgment written, *This honor have all the Saints*, Psal. 149:7-9. Then will the Lord Jesus Christ himself come in his own person, and all his holy Angels and Saints shall attend him, Matt. 25:31,32. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his glory ----- And before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats. Then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and the Saints shall sit upon thrones with Christ, Matt. 19:28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory: Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel. Rev. 3:21: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even also as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*

### **The Mount of Transfiguration**

This personal coming of Christ had its typical vision and mystical appearance at his Transfiguration, Matt. 17:1,2,9. *And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his Brethren, and bringeth them up into an high Mountain, and was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the Sun, and his raiment was white as the Light. And as they came down from the Mountain, Jesus charged them saying, Tell the Vision to no man until the Son of Man rise again from the dead. Those Apostles Peter, James and John his Brother, were they of whom Christ spoke, Matt. 16:27,28. For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works ----- Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom. And Peter being one of those three, bare his Testimony and Record thereof, 2 Pet. 1:16,17,18. For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eyewitnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ----- And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy Mount. And it shall be visible indeed, Matt. 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, Acts 1:11, He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into*

Heaven. And *very glorious*, for Christ shall come in the Glory of his Father, Mark 8:38. In his own glory, and his Father's, Luke 9:26. In the glory of the holy Angels also, Matt. 25:31 and likewise in the glory of all his Saints, 2 Thes. 1:7-10.

Then shall Christ be admired by all those who believe

Then shall Christ the King of Saints, the King of Zion, and the King of Nations be admired of all them that believe, 2 Thes. 1:10. *And praised, saying, Who would not fear Thee O King of Nations, Jer. 10:7,10. The Blessed and only Potentate, the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords, 1 Tim. 6:15.* Then also shall the Saints be glorified, Phil. 3:20,21. *For, our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ ----- Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, etc. 1 John 3:2, Behold now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: and Rewarded, Rev. 22:12, Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me. Matt. 25:34, Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World.*

**The Judgement of the Wicked**

Then wicked men and wicked Angels shall by Christ and his Saints be judged according to their Deeds, 1 Cor. 6:2, *Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the World? verse 3, Know ye not that we shall judge Angels? and 2 Tim. 4:1, I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom.* And then shall Christ deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father, 1 Cor. 15:24,28. That as Christ is now All and in All, Col. 3:11, so God the Father then shall be All in All, 1 Cor. 15:28. Thus much negatively.

**Affirmatively.**

That the coming of Christ in the 6th and 10th verses of this chapter is his virtual, spiritual, powerful and glorious appearance in his Saints and Sanction (As the Bridegroom of his Church the New Jerusalem, the holy City, the general Assembly and Church of the first born, written in Heaven, who also shall come down from God out of Heaven prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband) and in his Davidical Kingdom on Earth.

For proof of this my opinion, search those places of holy Scripture, Isa. 60:2,3,7,13; Psal. 110:1,3; 2 Thes. 1:10; Rev. 14:1-5; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 21:1-5. *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. ----- For behold darkness shall cover the Earth and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee ----- And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising ----- All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the Rams of Nebajoth shall minister unto thee, they shall come up with acceptance on mine Altar, And I will beautify the house of my glory; the Glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the Box together to beautify the place of my Sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make*

*thine Enemies thy footstool. Thy People shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the Beauties of holiness from the Womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth ----- When he shall come to be glorified in his Father, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day ----- And I looked and lo a Lamb on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand, having his Father's Name written in their foreheads ----- And I heard a voice from Heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new Song before the Throne, and before the four Beasts, and the Elders, and woman could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which are not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whither soever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the Throne of God. To the General Assembly and Church of the first Born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirit of just men made perfect. And I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first Heaven, and the first Earth passed away, and there was no more Sea. And I John saw the holy City New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband. And I heard a great Voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sate upon the Throne said, Behold I make all things new, And he said unto me write, for these words are true and faithful. Read Isa. chapter 62, particularly verse 5. Christ not in his own person, but by his substitutes, does marry his Church, so shall thy sons marry thee.*

**Go ye out to meet Him.**

The Virgins went out before and that of their own accord, and very early too. But now they are called out, and that by a loud voice, and are commanded, *Go ye out to meet him.* They who at *first* were so forward, are now at last so backward, that they must be provoked, stirred up, yea roused out of their slumbering, sleepy, careless security, and commanded *if not compelled* to go out *again* to meet the Bridegroom.

**The Spouse Seeks Him**

The Spouse of Christ said within her self, Cant. 3:2, *I will rise now, I will seek him whom my soul loveth.* And she said to her Beloved, *Come my Beloved, Let us go up early to the Vineyards, there will I give thee my Loves,* Cant. 7:11,12. But for all this her fervency, she cooled in her spiritual Affections towards Christ, was sleepy and indisposed for spiritual communion with her Beloved, she framed excuses, being lazy and loth to open the door, though she heard him call her, and knew his voice, Cant. 5:2,3. *I sleep but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undeiled, for my head is filled with the dew, and my Locks with the drops of*

*the night. And I have put off my Coat how shall I put it on, I have washed my feet how shall I defile them.*

It has been hinted in the exposition of the first verse, in what respects the Virgins went out at first to meet the Bridegroom. Let us consider what is further intended and here Commanded them in these words,

Go ye out to meet him.

By going out *again* to meet the Bridegroom, we may *here* understand three things,

1. A Rising and shaking off all security, carelessness and indisposition, to watch and wait for the appearance of Christ, Rom. 13:11-14. *And that knowing the time that now is, it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we Believed ----- The night is far spent, the day is at hand, Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the whole armor of God. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the Lust thereof.*

2. A recovering themselves out of their Backsliding and Apostasizing condition, by Prayer, Repentance, and Reformation, Jer. 3:12,13,14,22. *Go and proclaim these words towards the North and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. ----- Only acknowledge thou thine Iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice saith the LORD. Turn O backsliding Children saith the LORD, for I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and I will bring you to Zion. ----- Return ye Backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings. Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the LORD our God, Hos. 14:1-7. Read the whole Chapter.*

3. A preparing to meet the Lord, Amos 4:12, 2 Chron. 30:19. *Prepare to meet thy God O Israel. ----- That prepareth his heart to seek God the LORD God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the Purification of his Sanctuary. Luke 1:17, To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. So did those Virgins, the foolish seemingly, the wise sincerely, verse 7, Then all those Virgins arose and trimmed their Lamps.*

#### 1. Meditation.

There will be a Midnight Dispensation of Mystical and Spiritual darkness upon Professors, Isa. 60:2. *Darkness shall cover the Earth and gross darkness the people, etc. Distress and perplexity, and great Tribulation upon the Inhabitants of the Earth, Luke 21:25-27. There shall be upon the Earth distress of Nations with perplexity; Men's hearts failing them for fear, etc., Matt. 24:21,29. And too great security, formality and drowsiness upon some of the wise Virgins, sanctified Believers, before the coming of the Lord Jesus in his Kingdom here on Earth, Matt. 26:40. What, could you not watch with me one hour? 41, Watch*

*and pray, etc. Rev. 3:3, If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Cant. 5:2,3, I have put off my Coat how shall I put it on, etc. Matt. 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26,30, As it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Even thus it shall be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, Luke 17:30.*

## **2. Meditation.**

*That there will be such a voice of the LORD, such a voice from the City, and from the Temple, such a loud Cry in the Time of the Midnight Dispensation, that will awake and rouse up all the slumbering and sleeping Virgins, Isa. 66:6, A voice of noise from the City, a voice from the Temple, a voice of the LORD that rendreth recompence to his Enemies. Rev. 11:12, And they (the slain or despirited Witnesses, verse 7) heard a great voice from Heaven, saying, Come up hither. Joel 3:6, Jehovah also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.*

## **3. Meditation.**

*That the next glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ will be his virtual and spiritual coming in his Saints and Sanction (as the Bridegroom of his Church) to marry her by her Sons, Isa. 62:4,5 and by them to reign over the Nations with power and great glory a thousand years here on Earth, Dan. 7:27.*

### **The Three Kinds of Christ's Comings**

*There are but three special kinds and times of Christ's coming.*

- 1. His coming in the form of a servant in the days of his flesh, Phil. 2:7.*
- 2. His coming as a Judge at the last day, when he shall judge the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. 4:1, called his appearing the second time, Heb. 9:28. Both these are his personal appearances or his coming in his own person.*
- 3. But between these two appearances or comings of Christ in his own person, there is witnessed by the Holy Prophets and Apostles, and recorded in the holy Scripture of truth another kind of Christ's coming at another time.*

### **His Coming as The Bridegroom**

*And that is his coming as the Bridegroom, and as the only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, 1 Tim. 6:14,15; Rev. 19:16, which is his virtual, spiritual, powerful and glorious coming in his Saints and Sanction, and by them to marry his Jerusalem, Isa. 62:4,5, so shall thy sons marry thee, and with them to reign over the Nations and Kingdoms of the World, a thousand years on Earth, Rev. 11:15-17. And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty Elders which sate before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power*



*and hast reigned. Rev. 19:1,4,6-9,16, And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many Thunderings, saying, Alleluja, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, give honor to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her self ready. Rev. 20:4,5,7,9, And I saw Thrones, and they that sate upon them, and Judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the Witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his Image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they had lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first Resurrection ----- And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison ----- And they went upon the Breadth of the Earth, and compassed the Camp of Saints about, and the Beloved City, and Fire came down from God out of Heaven and devoured them.*

#### **4. Meditation.**

**It is the Duty of all Virgin professors, especially sanctified Believers, who are wise Virgins, to go out and meet the Bridegroom, when he comes by his spiritual power and glory in his Saints and Sanctions, to set up his Kingdom and to reign on Earth.**

**First, The Lord Jesus Christ who is King of Saints, Rev. 15:3, King of Zion, Psal. 149:1,2, and the King of Nations, Jer. 10:7, shall be the only Potentate, 1 Tim. 6:14,15, and King of all the Earth, Zech 14:9. And all the Kingdoms of the World shall be his, Rev. 11:15, and his Saints, Dan. 7:14,22,27. And they shall reign with Christ on Earth a thousand years, Rev. 5:10 and Rev. 20:4.**

**Secondly, the God of Heaven will set (up) this Kingdom of Christ and his Saints in (the) days of those Kings of the fourth Monarchy that oppose him and his Saints, Dan. 2:24. And give it unto Christ as he is the Son of David, Luke 1:32,33. *He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End ----- And unto the Saints of the most high.* Dan. 7:27, And the Kingdom and Dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most high, whose Kingdom is an Everlasting Kingdom, and all Dominions shall serve and obey him, who (shall) take it and possess it a thousand years.**

**Thirdly, when Christ comes to set up his Kingdom and to reign on Earth Virtually and Spiritually in his Saints and Sanction, with power and great glory, it's the duty of all Virgin-professors, especially sanctified Believers, who are wise Virgins to go out to meet the Bridegroom, verse 6.**

#### **What Meeting the Bridegroom Means**

**To meet the Bridegroom implies,**

**1. To be walking in the same way of Truth, wherein Christ comes, viz. To own that truth, and to witness unto that truth of the Kingdom, and power, and Glory**

of our Lord Jesus Christ, against the Kingdom, power, and Glory of Antichrist, which is the finishing Testimony of all the *faithful* Witnesses of Christ, Rev. 11:7. *And when they shall have finished their Testimony, the Beast that ascended out of the Bottomless pit shall make war against them and overcome them and kill them.* Which Testimony is that Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ that must be preached in all the World for a Witness unto all Nations, Matt. 24:14.

2. To meet the Bridegroom implies a progress and going on in the way of truth without weariness, fainting, sitting down and slumbering, Isa. 40:28-31. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the Everlasting God is LORD, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his understanding --- He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have nomight he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, and they shall walk and not faint.*

3. To meet the Bridegroom implies a diligent and continual watching and waiting for the virtual, spiritual, powerful and glorious appearance of Christ the Bridegroom, Isa. 26:8,9. *Yea in the way of thy Judgments have we waited, O LORD have we waited for thee: The Desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the Remembrance of thee, in the night, yea with my Spirit within me will I seek thee Early; For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness. Habak. 2:3,4, For the Vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith. Matt. 25:13, Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

#### Verse 7

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps," or cleansed their lamps.

The virgins being awakened by the cry at midnight, did all rise, that is to say, all those virgin professors began to shake off their carnal security, and rise from their beds of sloth, laziness, and lukewarmness; "Rise up ye women that are at east," Isaiah xxxii. 9; Can. Iii: 2. And went out again to meet the bridegroom, as they were commanded, being said to hear that Christ was now coming, in that midnight dispensation. They do as David did, "At Midnight will I arise and give thanks unto thee." As Jonathan arose and went to meet David, so those virgin professors arose and went out again to meet the bridegroom, Christ Jesus, the Son of David. Now the virgins are awakened, and they call upon one another like the watchmen of Mount Ephraim, saying, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto Jehovah our God." The coming of Christ the bridegroom, will be a morning of such glorious light, that shineth from one end of the heavens unto the other, that will shine upon all the virgin professors, and cause the wise virgins to arise and shine as was prophesied: "'rise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee." And in order to their shining profession, the virgins being risen are said to trim their lamps.

**And trimmed their lamps.**

**"And trimmed their lamps." It seems while the virgins slumbered and slept, their lamps decayed, that is to say, the oil in their lamps wasted and was spend, and the wick and smoking flax was burnt, and the light that had shined for some time, began to grow dim, and was going out, and some of their lamps were gone out, being foul and unsavory.**

**The Mean and Endeavors used to Cleanse and Purge their Lamps**

**By trimming their lamps is meant all the means and endeavors those virgin professors used to cleanse and purge their lamps, to supply them with oil, and wick or flax, and so to repair their light, and prepare themselves to meet the bridegroom, that is to say, Now that the virgins are awakened and risen up, they, especially the wide virgins, begin to speak of the glory of Christ's kingdom, and to talk of His power; and prepare themselves for the coming and kingdom of Christ.**

**The Wise are Like the Bride**

**The wise virgins having oil in their vessels, get their lamps supplied; and like the bride, the Lamb's wife, they make themselves ready. "And they that were ready went in with him," with Christ the bridegroom, "to the marriage." But the foolish virgins having no oil in their vessels, that is, they being without Christ, and not having the spiritual unction of the grace of God in their hearts, their lamps went out, and they were shut our of the marriage chamber, while they went to buy oil, even whilst they were seeking after Christ; "How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Then shall they call upon me early, but I will not answer; for they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you now, whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.:"**

**Meditations**

**1<sup>st</sup> Medication. The public testimony of the nearness of Christ's coming as the bridegroom, with spiritual power and great glory in His saints and sanction, will awaken and rise some virgin professors out of their security, backing sliding, and apostasy.**

**That there will be a cry at midnight, viz. A loud voice from the Lord, a voice from the city, a voice from the temple, to wit, a public ministerial testimony, even in the midst of the midnight dispensation; and saying, Behold the bridegroom comes, and has been showed in the exposition of the sixth verse, and the words of this seventh verse testify that loud voice or cry did awaken and cause the virgins to rise. "Then all those virgins arose," to wit, out of the**

slumber and sleep of their sinful silence, worldly ease, carnal security, careless formality, backsliding and apostasy; and some of them with their lions girt, and their lamps burning, did arise and shine, and went out again to meet the bridegroom.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Medication.** That some of the virgin professors shall be recovered out of their security, backsliding, and apostasy, and shall arise and shine at the coming of Jesus Christ as the bridegroom of His church.

### **God's Promise of Healing**

God has promised to heal the backsliding of His people upon their repentance and returning to the Lord. "Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding: Behold we come unto thee, for thou are the Lord our God" Hosea xiv. 1, 4. And he will cause the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to shine in their hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6; and make them shine in a holy, gospel conversation. Isa. lx. 1-3; to the praise and glory of God.

### **Meeting the Bridegroom is a Diligent and Continual Watching**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Meditation.** It is the duty of virgin professors and church members, to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ as the bridegroom. "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh," Matthew xxiv. 44. "let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not," Luke xii. 35, 36, 40.

### **How they are prepared**

To be so prepared and ready, the wise virgins must put on their beautiful garments, Isaiah lii. 1; and rejoice as Zion did: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels,"" Isaiah lxi. 10. And those that have spotted their garments of profession by any sinful conversation or compliance ought to wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14. So that they all being clothed with fine linen white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints, Rev. xix.8, as a bride adorned for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2, may walk with Christ in white. And being thus adorned and made ready to meet the bridegroom, may be counted worthy to enter with him into the marriage chamber.

### **Verse 8**

**And the Foolish Said Unto the Wise, Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.**

**In these words consider,**

**1. The request, that the foolish virgins made unto the wise, "Give us of your oil."**

## **2. The reason of their request, "For our lamps are gone out."**

**The foolish virgin professors were not at last made sensible that they wanted oil, and that it was their great folly that they did take no oil with them, as the wise virgins did in their vessels, when they took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.**

### **Meditations**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meditation.** It argues and demonstrates very great folly in those virgin professors and church members, who seem to be religious, having a form of godliness, and are looking for and bearing testimony unto, the spiritual kingdom and glorious appearance and coming of Christ, the church's bridegroom, to be without Christ, and to want the Spirit of Christ, and the saving and sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ in their hearts.

### **Foolish Virgins Did not Enjoy The Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Church and Ordinances**

**Doubtless, now at last, the foolish virgins were very sensible of their folly, in resting satisfied and contented with a profession of Christ without a possession of Christ; with having their lamps, and the form of godliness, without the oil of grace, and the power of godliness; and with being in a gospel church state, and therein partaking of the holy ordinances of God, and enjoying fellowship with the wise virgin saints, and yet not being partakers of the divine nature, nor having communion and fellowship with God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the ways and ordinances of God.**

**Now those foolish virgin professors which they had some of the wise virgin's oil. O, say they, that we had Christ, the Spirit of Christ, and the grace of Christ in our hearts. Now they ask and beg, they seek unto and entreat the wise virgin saints saying, "Give us of your oil;" communicate of your saving and sanctifying graces to our souls.**

### **The Foolish are Awakened and made Sensible of their Need of Christ**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Meditation.** The time will come when foolish professors, and formal church members, will see and sadly experience their being without Christ, and their want of the Spirit and grace of God.

### **False Christian Life**

**Many professors now can live without Christ, and without God, and without grace in the world, yea, in the churches of saints, and in the ordinances of the gospel, sometimes making shining profession of Christ, and witnessing of, and bearing their testimony to, the kingdom and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and at other times slumbering and sleeping in a carnal security, lukewarmness, formality, and backsliding apostasy; who when they are awakened by some midnight dispensation of God, will see, and be convinced, and made sensible of, their want and need of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, and the grace of Christ.**

### **Awakened to their Need of Christ**

The time will come when they shall see and know by a thorough experience, that none but Christ, can supply their wants, nor satisfy their souls. "Give us of your oil." Oh! That the saving, sanctifying grace of God, and of the Spirit of God, were in our hearts as they are in yours. We now see our want of the power of godliness, truth of grace, and union and communion with Christ which you have and enjoy.

And though men and women, yea, some professors and church members can live without Christ, buy and sell without Christ, build and plant without Christ, for they will be very busy about such things when the Son of man comes, Luke xvii. 26-30. Some professors can have and hold communion with the saints in the churches, and holy ordinances of God, without Christ and grace. Then, when Christ comes, yea, when death comes, they are awakened by that midnight dispensation, then they see themselves lost and undone to eternity. They know not what to do, nor how to die without Christ and without grace. Then they call and cry, send for and seek unto, the minister and saints of God, and say, Pray for us, speak to us, pity us, tell us what we shall do? "Oh men and brethren what shall we do?" Acts 2:37. And as the jailer did, Acts 16:30, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved/" And as the foolish virgins here did to the wise, "Give us of your oil."

"For our lamps are gone out."

"For our lamps are gone out," or are going out, as in the margin. This is the reason of their request, as if they had said, Oh, ye wise virgin saints, sanctified believers, who have union with Christ, who have obtained the precious faith of God's elect, and have received the grace of God in truth, and all the fruits of the Spirit; "Give us of your oil," communicate some of your saving, sanctifying grace unto us. For our lamps of professed gospel light, our shining temple, light, all our spiritual gifts and common grace, all our former gospel enjoyments, even all our hopes and comforts are now delayed, withered,, perished, and are ready to die, and be utterly extinguished; and we ourselves are in the dark, and must sit down and perish in eternal darkness, unless you can and will supply us with some of your spiritual oil; "For our lamps are gone out.!"

3. Meditation. That all the gospel light that shines in the spiritual gifts, and religious actions of foolish and formal professors, will at last be extinguished, and go out, and they will fall away.

#### **Formal Professors and Some Common Graces**

1. There are some formal professors that have received spiritual gifts from God; Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, for to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles, to another prophesy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." I Cor. 12. One member of the church may have a word of knowledge, another a word of wisdom, another a gift of prophecy,

another faith, not sanctifying faith, and all these and several other gifts may have been given then by the Holy Spirit of God, and yet not have Christ, nor the graces of faith and love in Christ Jesus. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and I have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or it tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though, I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing." For in Jesus Christ, neither, circumcision, avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love, Gal. v. 6. The apostle in these words, "Neither circumcision avails anything, shows and testifies, that no privileges, ordinances, gifts, or administrations, that the Jews had under the law; *nor uncircumcision*, that is to say, no privileges, ordinances, gifts, or administrations, which the Gentiles have under the gospel, will profit or avail them any thing in order unto the obtaining of eternal life, and everlasting salvation, without faith in Christ Jesus, that works by love, Or as Paul said, Gal. vi. 15, "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; that is, unless the professing Jew or Gentile be a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17; that is, God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, Ephes. ii. 10, that we should walk in them.

2. And some foolish and formal virgin professors may shine for a season in the acts and exercise of those spiritual gifts that they have received from God for the churches' edification. *Follow* after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, But rather that ye may prophesy. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort." And they may also shine in some kind and degree of gospel-like conversation, and saint-like life, in respect of some external actions and outward performances of holy duties. And they may likewise shine like lamps and temple-lights in bearing their witness and testimony for Christ, his headship, ministry, churches, worship, kingdom, and government. And lastly, they may shine like lamps and burning lights in enduring the afflictions of the gospel, in suffering the spoiling of their goods, imprisonment, banish, yea, and death itself, I Cor. xiii.1-3.

3<sup>rd</sup>, And, yet after all this their lamps will go out, and those foolish and formal professors will fall away; "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Those hard-hearted hearers believed for a time. They made a profession of the faith of the gospel, and they made a confession too, and that before many witnesses; "But in time of temptation fell, away." When that hour of temptations comes upon them, which Christ hath foretold shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth, Rev. iii. 10, then, they will fall away; and the reason is, because they have no root, that is, they have not Christ, they are rooted in him. "As ye therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught; abounding therein in thanksgiving." Faith in Christ never fads away: Blessed be the God and: Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in

heaven for you, who are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." It is a faith without Christ that foolish professors depart from; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing, spirits and doctrines of devils."

#### Verse 9

"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."

This verse contains the answer that the wise virgins gave to the request of the foolish virgins. Wherein,

1. They give them a denial, and the reason. Thereof. "But the wise answered, saying, Not so;" We may not, we cannot grant what you desire of us, Lest there be not enough for us and you," As if the wise virgins had said, It is true indeed, we have oil in our vessels, and supply for our lamps; but we can spare none: our vessels have no more oil in them than we do and shall need for ourselves; "Not so." The Lord Jesus Christ hath given us his saving and sanctifying grace, but we may not, we can not give it to you, no not the least measure of it; not a dram nor a drop can we give, nor can we spare any of it. We stand in need to get more grace for ourselves, lest we should not have enough in those hours and times of trials that we, may meet with yet, ere we meet with the bridegroom; and lest we have not enough for those services of Christ, and suffering for Christ, that our Lord may call us to, either before his coming, or when he comes, or after he is come as the bridegroom.

2. They gave the foolish virgins directions what to do in their condition; "but go ye rather to them, that sell, and buy for yourselves." Wherein we are to consider,

1. Who they are that sell this spiritual oil.?
2. What it is to buy it?

The spiritual oil is the unction of the Holy One, I John ii. 20, 27; that wherewith Christ was anointed above his fellows, Psal. xlv. 7; viz. the saving, sanctifying grace of God, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

They that sell this mystical and spiritual oil, are Christ, and his ministers, and servants. The Lord Jesus Christ is the owner of this oil, and he himself does sometimes sell it, or offer it to sale, as he did to the church of Laodicea. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in tire fire, that thou mayest be rich, and while raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. But ordinarily and commonly Christ authorized and commands his faithful servants, the ministers of the gospel, whom he appointed, commissioned, and sends to offer this spiritual oil to sale, and to sell it unto whomsoever will buy it. "Hearken to me ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are dug. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," John vii. 37. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is



athirst, come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. For as it was a great sin in Simon Magus to offer money, so as to think that the gifts of the Holy Ghost might be bought with material money, so it is a very great sin in any minister to sell this mystical oil for material silver or gold, or any price, or earthly commodity, And it is a very great mistake in foolish professors, to think they may buy, that is, bargain with God for Christ and grace upon the terms of the old covenant of works, and their own righteousness, which is as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6.

To buy this spiritual oil, implies three things,

1. A sense of want and need of it, which tile foolish virgins now had.

2. Attending upon tile ministry of thc word and administrations of the gospel to obtain it, or to get some of this oil, having their heart and hand open and willing to receive it; "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul," Acts xvi. 14

3. A willingness to have it upon Christ's own terms of free grace, without money and without price. "Ho, every. one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come ye, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely," Rev. xxi. 6." And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."

1. Meditation. That virgin saints who have the greatest and fullest measure of grace and holiness, cannot give or impart any of it unto others.

"And the foolish said unto wise, Give us of your oil;"

That is, impart some of your grace unto us: but the wise answered and said "Not so," we cannot give you do not grace, nor can we impart any of our grace to you. Oh! Said a dying father, mother, or some relation, I am without Christ, I have no grace, I am ready, to die and be damned, and I shall perish to all eternity. O, dear wife, child, husband, or other godly relation, that my soul were in your soul's condition. Oh! speak comfort and peace to me; Oh! that I had Christ, grace, pardon, or any hopes of eternal life. But then those godly relations must say, It is not in me, I cannot impart any grace to you: Christ must give you of his Spirit, and God must give you of his grace, I cannot.

Godly parents and relations may and ought to pray, that God will give pardoning grace, sanctifying grace, saving grace, to their children, or to any other relations, but they cannot give any, nor can they impart any grace to them.

Abraham could not give grace to Ishmael, nor could Isaac impart grace to Esau, nor Jacob to Rueben; no, nor David to Absalom, nor Job to his wife. Neither could Paul impart grace, to his country-men, for whom his heart's desire and prayer was, that they might be saved; and although he was willing to be accursed for them, as the holy scriptures of truth testify.

2. Meditation. Every saint and spirit filled believer will, ere he get to heaven, stand in need of all the grace he hath.

Sanctified believers, called *saints*, may meet with such trials, such hellish temptations, such powerful stirrings of corruptions, and so great variety of afflictions, tribulations, persecutions and sufferings; yea, such labors and powers of darkness, and so deep desertions, that will call for and require the virgins lively acts and exercise of all the grace of God they have; yea, and they may be necessitated to go to Christ for more grace as the apostles did. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing, I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Believers will have need of all the grace they have, when they come to die, and die dissolved.

3. Meditation. It is the duty of every person, that sees their need and want of Christ his Holy Spirit, and sanctifying grace, to attend upon the ministry of the Gospel and administrations of the holy ordinances of God, and to accept and receive Christ and grace, oil offered without money or price.

Many sinners are so blinded, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, that they see no form nor comeliness in Christ; and when they do see some beauty and excellency in him, yet they are apt to refuse and reject him, until they be thoroughly convinced of their want and need of him, his Spirit and grace, and that there is not salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. And then they begin to desire and say, Oh! that I had Christ; Oh! that I had grace; Oh! that I could believe. Now it is their duty to attend diligently, and conscionable upon the ministry of the gospel and means of grace; for faith comes by hearing the word preached, Rom. x. 17. .", Incline your ear, come note me, hear and your souls shall live, And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, "&.

And it is their duty to hear, so it is their duty to believe, 1 John i. ii. 23; and by faith, to accept and receive Jesus Christ offered to them upon gospel terms of free grace, without money and without price. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 11, 12. Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. 55: 1-3.

"And while they went to buy, the bride groom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut."

The foolish virgins followed the counsel of the wise and went to buy oil for

themselves; and so do many formal and foolish professors, when they are convinced of their *sins*, and of their necessity of a Savior, then they seek after Christ and cry for grace, and call upon God for pardoning mercy and salvation, but it is too late. "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

#### Verse 10

"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."

They that were duly prepared for the bridegroom's coming, had an entrance admitted to them into his kingdom, and all others were excluded.

"They that were ready," had put off the filthy rags of their own righteousness, and had put on the robes of Christ's righteousness Rom. xiii. 1.1. God had taken away their filthy garments, and had donned them with change of raiment, Zech. iii. 3, 1. Thus Zion the holy city the new Jerusalem, is called upon and counseled by the Lord her Maker, her Husband, and her Redeemer, to loose herself from the bands of her neck, her captivity, lo arise and put on her beautiful garments, Isai. lxi. 1--3. And so she shall do with great joy and rejoicing; and therefore she is prophetically said to do so: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isai. lxi. 10. And to be prepared for the bridegroom's coming is to be arrayed in fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints, Rev. xix. 7, 8. And so the holy city, the New Jerusalem, was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, in John's vision, Rev. xxi. 2. Of this glorious marriage and mystery of Christ and his church, David prophesied, Psal. xlv; wherein we have this great and glorious solemnity of the bridegroom's coming, and of the marriage of the Lamb, mystically and metaphorically sung and penned down by that sweet singer of Israel in that epithalamium, love-song, or marriage-song. "My heart is inditing a good matter, I speak of the things that I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore, God hath blessed thee forever. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory places, whereby they have made thee, glad. King's daughters were among thy honorable women: upon thy right hand did stand the children in gold of Ophir. The King's daughter is all glorious within; Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing they shall enter into the King's palace." And so the prophet Ezekiel, describing the church's condition from her cradle to her crown, speaks of her inward and spiritual beauty and glory under divers metaphors, and figurative expressions. "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I

thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, .and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings it thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus were thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidercd work; thou did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil : and thou was exceeding beautiful, and thou did prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." This prophesy in the mystery of it will be fulfilled when the bridegroom cometh, for then Christ will put on a beautified crown upon her head, and she will be exceeding beautiful, and she shall then prosper, into a kingdom. "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, in the hand of the Lord, for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people." "Thou shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Land of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," Isa. 62:3. When 3. When will this day of Zion's glory be ? then will it be, when the bridegroom cometh and marries his bride; "For as a young man marricth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." And thus, the wise virgin saints were prepared and ready, and went in with him to the marriage.

"And the door was shut."

There is the door of grace and that is all opportunities and seasons that ministers of Christ have to improve to preach, and the people have and improve to hear the gospel of the grace of God; also to administer and partake of the holy ordinances of God in any place, and at any time, called an open door, Rev. iii. 8. A great door and effectual is opened unto me of the Lord. And a door was opened unto me of the Lord,! 2. Cor. ii. 12;. That was a door of grace. And when God removes the candlestick, takes away the gospel, suffering the adversaries to silence and persecute his faithful ministers, and churches of Saints, when their ministers by imprisonment or banishment are removed into corners, and their eyes cannot see their teachers; when the people run to and for, to seek the word of the Lord, and cannot find it, then the door of grace is shut.

There is also the door of the kingdom of Christ: "When once :the master of the house is risen up, and shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence yon are: then shall ye begin to say; "we have eaten and drunken thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But ye shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom o£ God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," Luke xiii. This is the door that was shut here in my text, to wit, the door of Christ's marriage chamber, that is to say, an entrance and admittance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. ,, Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, to make }our calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you

**abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

**1. Meditation. That all persons, especially virgin professors, ought to prepare, and to be ready, when Christ the churches bridegroom cometh.**

**To this end,**

**1. Sinners you must get Jesus Christ; if you will not receive and entertain Christ into your hearts by faith, a true repentant and lively faith; he will not receive, nor admit you into the marriage clamber of his kingdom, when he comes as the bridegroom. If sinners will not let Christ live in them, and reign in them, in thee kingdom of his grace now, they shall not live and reign with Him his kingdom. Christ will shut the door to his kingdom against all those who shut .the door of their hearts against him. Therefore sinners, whilst Jesus Christ, stand at the door, open the door of your hearts to Christ, and let him come and set up the kingdom of his grace in your hearts, according to his gracious promise. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, ,and open !the .door,. I, will come into him, and .will sup, with him, and he with me... To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."**

**2. Saints, you ought to prepare, and be ready to meet Christ the churches bridegroom, when he cometh, and therefore consider what you have to do, ere you and Jesus Christ meet in his marriage kingdom. O gracious and precious saints, have you not something to do ere you die? Call you heartily desire and earnestly pray to be dissolved and be with Christ before you have overcome the world, 1 John v, 4, 6; got the victory over sin, I Cor. xv. 60, 57; and resisted, vanquished, and made a conquest over the devil, I John ii. 13, 14; and in all these to be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord? Rom. viii. 37. Can you expect to inherit 'all things, Rev. xxi. 7, until you have overcome all things? our Lord Jesus Christ overcame before he sate down with his Father in his throne. And will Jesus Christ grant you to sit down with him in his throne, until you have also overcome? Again, consider, saints, are, you prepared as a bride adorned for her husband? Are you clothed, in, fine linen, white and clean, and so made ready for the marriage of the Lamb? Or do not some of you, stand in need to wash and make them white in the blood of the Lamb before you can put on your beautiful garments, and. adorn yourselves with ornaments as a bride, or as the bride maidens the virgins her companions?**

**The Lord first washed his people, with water yea, he thoroughly washed away their blood from, them,: and anointed them with. oil,. and, then He clothed them. with broidered. work, girded, them with linen, and covered them with silk. He decked them also with ornaments, bracelets, jewelry chains of gold and pearls about their neck, and at last he put a beautiful crown upon the churches head, and they prospered into a kingdom. So the apostle testifies, that Jesus Christ gave himself for his church; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such tiling; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." O beloved and blessed virgin, saints, how much cleansing, purging, sanctifying work is there yet to be done in your souls by the Spirit, and**

**word of God in tile lively and powerful applications of tile precious blood of Jesus Christ, Heb. ix. 1:1; xiii. 12.**

### **Are Your Vessels Full of Oil?**

**Once more consider saints, O ye wise virgins, are your vessels full of oil ? Are your hearts full of grace? have you perfected holiness in the fear of God ? 2 Cor. vii. 1; And are you "come in the unity of faith, and of tile knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man," Ephes. iv. 13. If not, you are not yet so prepared, nor are you yet so ready as you should desire and endeavor to be, and may be through the communication of the exceeding riches of the grace of God, and the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, you may attain to before the bridegroom comes.**

### **Meditation**

**2. Meditation. Whilst some foolish and negligent Virgin professors are seeking too late to get, and endeavoring too late to buy the spiritual oil of grace to supply their lamps, Christ will come and shut the door against them; And the door was shut."**

**Some professors being careless and negligent when they. enjoy. powerful means of grace, as the foolish. virgins were when they first went out to meet the bridegroom, content themselves and are satisfied with some spiritual gifts without grace, and the form of godliness. without the power.. of it, as the foolish virgins did that took their lamps, but took no oil with them: and so go on in the broad way of an outward, customary, and formal performance. of holy duties, and partaking of gospel ordinances all the day of grace,. until the night of security, ease, and darkness overtakes them, and they begin to slumber and fall fast asleep in their formality, or in their apostasy, until in some midnight dispensation, a cry with a loud voice from the Lord, from the city, or from the temple, awaken them and affright them. And then they perceive that their lamps are gone out, and that they themselves are in a state of darkness, wanting Christ and grace in their souls, as the foolish virgins did, who wanted oil in their vessels, and went to buy it. So some formal professors, when it is too late, seek for grace and enquire after Christ; saying as Balaam did, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But their day of grace being past, Christ shuts the door of grace, saying, "lie that is unjust let him be unjust still, and lie that is filthy let him be filthy still." And Christ will, when he comes as the bridegroom, shut the door of the kingdom against those foolish virgin professors, who refused the offers, calls and invitations of the gospel in the day of grace; read Proverbs i. from verse 20 to the end of the chapter. In addition, as doth plainly appear in the eleventh and twelfth verses of this chapter.**

### **Verses 11 and 12**

**"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."**

**Afterwards, or last of all, that is, after the wise virgin Saints were entered into the marriage chamber with Christ the bridegroom of his church and after the door of the kingdom of Christ was shut, then came the foolish virgin professors,**

a multitude or very many formalists and hypocrites, saying "Lord, Lord, open to us." They called and cried earnestly, prayed and beseeched the Lord Jesus Christ again and again to open the door of his kingdom unto them, and let them have an entrance admitted into his everlasting kingdom.

"But he answering, said, Verily I say unto you, know you not." As they were earnest in their request, so was Christ very positive in his answer, "Verily," assuredly, indeed and in truth, "I know you not," I love you not, I do not approve of you, I own you not to be of the number of those that my Father gave me, and whom I redeemed with my blood, and whom I called and sanctified by my spirit and grace, and who sought to worship God by the Spirit and in truth. know you not to be the adopted children of my Father, justified and sanctified by faith that is in me. You are formalists and hypocrites, impenitent backsliders and apostates, who have denied my headship, my kingly office, and would not that I should reign over you. In a word, you are workers of iniquity, "*depart* from me," I profess I do not know you, so as to approve of you, to own you, to open the door of my kingdom to you, Luke xiii. 24--27.

### **Meditation**

It will be a sad astonishing and miserably woeful condition, that all foolish virgin professors will be in, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall exclude them, and shut them out of his kingdom, and disown them forever.

### **The Strong Expectation of the Virgin Professors**

Virgin professors having a strong confidence, and great hope and expectation of the pardon of all their *sins*, and of eternal life and salvation, and then at last find by woeful experience that the Lord hath rejected their confidence, Jer. ii. ;37; and their expectations be in vain and perish, Prov, x. 28; and their hope like the spider's web, Job viii. 13, 14. , For what is the hope of the hypocrite, when God taketh away his soul?" Job xxvii. 8..'And.that God will not forgive their iniquities, Jer. xiv. 10; xvi. 18 but will give the wages of their sins, and reward them according to their evil deeds, Rom. ii. 6, 9, 11.' Yea, and they having had a strong persuasion or presumption, rather that when Christ comes they shall have no entrance admitted to them into his everlasting kingdom, and at last Christ comes,, and shuts the door of the kingdom, and then they come and knock, and say, Lord, Lord, open to us, and be denied and repulsed, and Christ tell them he knows them not, and Say, Depart from me ye hypocrites, ye formal professors, ye foolish virgins, and all ye workers of iniquity, what an amazement, and astonishment will it be to them ? And they will begin to say, Lord, we have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets;" that is, we have been under the ministry of thy gospel, and all the administrations thereof. We have 155 been often at the Lord's table and have been partakers of all the holy ordinances of God. " Not, every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is ill heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

### Verse 13

" Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, where in the Son of man comes."

This verse contains the use that Christ would have his disciples make of this parable, and of his doctrine therein contained, and that is, to watch "Watch ye therefore;" which exhortation he urged from their ignorance of the time when Christ, the churches bridegroom, will come: "For ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh."

From whence two propositions do arise,

1. That the time of Christ's coming, as the bridegroom is not known, to any saint or angel, but to the Father only.
2. That, it is the duty of all Christ's disciples to be watching, and waiting daily for the glorious appearance of Christ who will come as the bridegroom of his church.

The Time of this Coming is not known

Touching the first, proposition; But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," Matt, xxiv. And Mark, says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven,, neither the Son, but the Father," Mark xiii. 32. Though God the Father hath reserved the knowledge of the day and hour of Christ the bridegroom's coming, in his own secret decree, yet hath He given forth and revealed some signs of his coming which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures of truth, which his disciples being desirous to know, asked him, saying, "And what shall be the sign of thy coming?"

Some of the Signs of Christ's Coming

Unto which question Christ answered many things, but more particularly he told them:

1. That his saints and servants should suffer great persecutions, Matt. xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 12, 16, 17.
2. That iniquity shall abound, and the love of many wax cold.
3. That the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.
4. That then shall be great tribulation, such as never was, nor ever shall be. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heavens, Matt. xxiv. 29,30.

Watching and Praying Always



Touching the second proposition, read Matt. xxiv. 12; Luke xxi. 36, "Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accented worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man." They that would be accounted worthy to stand before Christ the bridegroom when he comes, must watch and pray continually.

### **Watching Implies**

#### **Watching implies:**

1. That professors, Christ's disciples ought to be awake: And that knowing the time, that now it is nigh time to wake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

2. That Professors are to be in a continual expectation of Christ's glorious appearance as they that watch for the morning: "I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning. And Luke 12: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, when the Lord, when He comes shall find watching: Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

3. That professors be looking, out, desires of and longing for the coming and kingdom of Christ, Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God."

### **Watching is the Duty of Christ's Servants**

Watching is a necessary duty incumbent upon Christians at all times, in all times, it is our duty in every duty. We ought to watch and pray, Matt. xxvi. 41; to watch unto prayer, I Pet., iv. 7; and to watch after prayer, and wait for the return and answer of our prayers. Christians ought to watch their hearts, thoughts, and affections; they ought to set a watch before the door of their lips,, that their tongues do not offend; and' they ought to watch their lives and conversations in their callings and employments in the world. But especially Christians ought to. watch for the glorious appearance of the bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. xxiv. 42; and they ought to be in a watching posture, and upon watching work or duty, especially when they hear of his near approach. Yea, it is the duty of believers to be upon their watch all that mystical night, until the bridegroom come.

### **The Word Watch**

The word, Watch, is borrowed from shepherds, or soldiers or sea-men, or porters, of citizens who use to watch in the night season. The Jews divided the night into three watches, whereof the first began at twilight, and continued, till

midnight called the beginning of watches, Lam. ii. 19. The second watch began at midnight, and continued until the cock crowing called the: middle watch, Judges.vii.,19. And the third watch was from the cock crowing till sun rising, called the morning watch, Exod. xiv. 24. And according to this Hebrew second division of the mystical night in this parable, ,the time for .this duty to be attended, was the morning watch, for midnight, as past, and the day of Christ was dawning or near approaching. Behold the bridegroom, comes; watch ye therefore, &e, as they, Psalms 130. 5, .6

Query , "Watchman what of the night?"

Answer. "The morning cometh, and also the night, if ye will enquire, enquire ye," &c. Isai xxi. 11, 12; viz. That morning when the righteous shall have the dominion, Psal. xlix. 14; and also the night, even that night of mystical Baby, Ion's destruction, foretold in Rev. xviii.

### **The Mystical Night**

But more particularly, That we may the better understand what time of the mystical night it is with us in our land-horizon, it may be considered, that after that fair sunshine day of the gospel, till the days of Christ and his apostles had continued for some years,

### **The First Watch of our Mystical Night**

a night of great darkness and bloody persecution began, which continued to the reign of Constantine the great: and that was the first watch of our mystical night. And after the moon shine reformation during Constantine's time, the Arian clouds of mystical darkness overspread the face of the ecclesiastical heavens; and at last the beast opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit, Rev. ix. And this dark midnight dispensation will continue, till within three or four hours of the sun rising. And this, the second watch of the mystical night of popery and persecution.

### **The Morning Watch**

So that the morning watch in the third and next, which will continue till the sun of righteousness arise; which watch will begin at, or about the time of the beast's killing Christ's witnesses, and will continue about three, and a half prophetic days of years Rev. xi. 7, 1 I, 15. During that time of the witnesses lying dead, Rev. xi. 8, 9, the wise virgins are commanded to watch, Matt. 25.

### **In a Watching Position**

And they ought to be in a watching posture, that is to say, Waking, waiting, looking, longing for, and believing the near approach and sudden coming of the bride. groom, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ. And also about watching work, or Wit, doing the work of their generation in bearing their witness for Christ, against antichrist, his ministry, magistracy, churches, worship, ordinances, and discipline; and in finishing their testimony of the kingdom, and do minion of Christ against thee kingdom and dominion of Antichrist. That when Christ

**comes and finds them so doing, he may say, Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joys of your master. So, the wise virgins being thus prepared and ready, they may enter into the marriage chamber with the bridegroom when he comes.**

**THE END.**