# Matthew 25:1-13 (P. Walderstrom) 72204

Bible Treasury: Volume N11, Parable of the Ten Virgins, The (25:1-13)

These three connected parables—the careless servant, the virgins, and the talents (Matthew 24; 25) —all relate to the present time, that is, the time of the Lord's absence, each giving a particular view of the kingdom of heaven.

In the parable of the ten virgins we are introduced to a scene of joys and affections, and the Lord is spoken of as a bridegroom coming to the consummation of His delights. The company brought before us are those who profess interest in the bridegroom's matters. They leave their own affairs of business or pleasure to come out to look for him. The designation given indicates persons of highly moral character.

Apparently, both in name and purpose, all are alike, but we are told of a great, though hidden, difference—some had no oil in their vessels.

Now, as the lamp is the outward visible vessel of light, so the oil is the essential source of it, and necessary for its maintenance. Surely, then, we are not wrong in taking the lamp as representing the outward life and profession of a Christian, and the oil as typifying the Holy Ghost, which is the type used so frequently of Him in Scripture.

This company—outwardly alike, in reality so different-remind us at once of the wheat and the tares of an earlier parable, and give us another vivid picture of Christendom, where the true children of God are so mingled with mere professors that no one but the Lord can discriminate them.

Now we find that the waiting and expectancy are lost they all sleep. They had come out on purpose to wait and watch for the bridegroom, and we know from Scripture that the early church was looking for the Lord's speedy return (see, e.g.,1 Thess. 1.). It was with it, as it always should be, the one great hope and longing of each heart that loves Him, but it is a fact (almost incredible as it may appear) that for hundreds of years all thought of the Lord's coming to receive His bride was lost. Earnest, pious, godly men knew nothing of this coming to receive us to Himself as distinct from His coming to judge the quick and the dead. Even that greatly used servant of God, Martin Luther, speaks of no coming of Christ, except as the Judge of all.

All idea of the Lord coming as a Bridegroom to call His bride to Himself, became utterly unknown shortly after apostolic days, and yet the New Testament is full of allusions to it. 1 Thess. 4 and John 14 describe it fully and clearly; and yet, singular to say, there is not one single reference to it in the Church of England Prayer Book, or in the writings of Christians for centuries. No! those who should have been watching, slept.

But the Lord in grace causes that they shall be awakened, and “a cry” goes forth. Are we wrong in suggesting that this began about 80 years ago when the eyes of some of God's servants were opened to see in Scripture the blessed hope of the church, and were enabled to preach the glorious truth of the Lord's coming to gather His own for the heavenly mansions?

We see in the parable that the cry causes a great stir; and do we not see, dear friends, all around us this “trimming of the lamps"? Has there ever been, in the whole 2,000 years of the Christian era, such a time of religious eagerness, activities and labors?

But is this in all cases a zeal according to knowledge? Are the Christians of today seeking to be more dependent on the Holy Ghost? Are they anxious to conform to God's word? Is it not fearfully, sadly true that the very presence of the Holy Spirit, in the church corporately, and indwelling the Christian individually, has been slighted, and is now openly denied? Are not the Holy Scriptures more and more put aside, and their inspiration flatly contradicted, not by infidels only, but by ministers and teachers of the churches, National and Dissent?

Dear friends, it is during this period of trimming that the Bridegroom comes, and “they that were ready went in with him to the marriage” —those that had oil in their vessels—who were born of the Spirit, and who had an unction from the Holy One, are here designated as those that “were ready.” Did the parable speak of only the faithful watchers being taken in, what would be the verdict of our hearts and consciences? But, dear fellow-Christians, shall we allow the freeness of God's grace to make us careless? Because of our acceptancy in Christ through God's wonderful love, shall we become cold in response? If God has drawn us out from the world to go to meet the Bridegroom, should we be slumbering? If He has said, “Ye are the light of the world,” shall our lamps be choked and foul with an inconsistent walk? Is there not a need for “wise” and frequent trimming? Should not each one who is “sealed by the Spirit” exercise diligent, watchful care that “the Spirit be not grieved"?

There is no mention of any second “cry.” There is no prophetic event awaiting fulfillment before the Lord comes for His own. Everything combines to show that His coming is surely very near. Are we in the spirit, associations, and readiness of heart and mind to welcome Him? that we be not ashamed before Him at His coming? “Surely, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

W.