

MR No. 1223—The Parable of the Ten Virgins

[[Matthew 25:1-13](#), quoted.]

Matthew 25

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, 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 yourselves.

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.

A special message has come to our world in the messages of the first and second angels. [[Revelation 14:6-8](#), quoted.] 16MR 267.1

Revelation 14

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Under the proclamation of these messages, the midnight cry was made, and the believers in the messages were compelled to go out from the churches because they preached the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. The whole world was to hear that message, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” Here is the parable of the ten virgins. 16MR 267.2

When the ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom, their lamps were trimmed and burning. Five of these virgins were wise. They anticipated delay, and filled their flagons with oil, prepared for any emergency. From those flagons their lamps were supplied, and not left to go out. But five of their number had not this foresight. They made no provision for disappointment or delay. 16MR 267.3

The second call is made, and the ten virgins are still watching for the bridegroom. Hour after hour passes. Their eyes are anxiously looking for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay, and the weary, watching ones fall asleep. But at midnight, at the very darkest hour, when their lamps are most needed, the cry is heard, “Behold the bridegroom cometh.” The sleeping eyes are opened. Everyone is astir. They see the procession they are to join moving on, bright with torches and with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The five wise virgins trim their lamps from the oil in their flagons, and their lamps burn brightly. 16MR 267.4

“But five of them were foolish.” These had made no provision wherewith to replenish their lamps, and when aroused from their slumbers they found their lights going out. Their flagons were empty. 16MR 268.1

Their first thought was to borrow of their neighbors, and they said to the wise virgins, “Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the answer comes back, “Not so; lest there be not enough for yourselves and for us. Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” And while they went to buy, the procession moved on and left them behind. The bridal train entered within the house, and the door was

shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, an unexpected denial was given them. They were left outside in the blackness of the night. The door was shut. 16MR 268.2

All the Christian world is represented in this parable. The bride constitutes the church that is waiting for the second appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some who have a nominal faith are not prepared for His coming. The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The representation is such as to call forth our earnest study, that we may know what preparation we who are living in the last days are to make, that we may enter in and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. We are to accept the last message of mercy given to a fallen world: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." 16MR 268.3

There is a delay in the coming of the Bridegroom in order that all may have an opportunity to hear the last message of mercy to a fallen world. The first and second angels' messages are all united and complete in the third: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." 16MR 269.1

John was shown these things in holy vision. He saw the company represented by the five wise virgins, with their lamps trimmed and burning, and he exclaimed in rapture, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." 16MR 269.2

Many who heard the first and second angels' messages thought they would live to see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven. Had all who claimed to believe the truth acted their part as wise virgins, the message would ere this have been proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But five were wise and five were foolish. The truth should have been proclaimed by the ten virgins, but only five had made the provision essential to join that company who walked in the light that had come to them. The third angel's message was needed. This proclamation was to be made. Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third angel's message, the last testing message to be given to the world. 16MR 269.3

A similar work will be accomplished when that other angel, represented in [Revelation 18](#), gives his message. The first, second, and third angels' messages will need to be repeated. The call will be given to the church, "**Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.**" "**Babylon, the great, is fallen, is fallen,** and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.... Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" [[Revelation 18:2-5](#)]. 16MR 270.1

Take each verse of this chapter, and read it carefully, especially the last two: "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." 16MR 270.2

The parable of the ten virgins was given by Christ Himself, and every specification should be carefully studied. A time will come when the door will be shut. We are represented either by the wise or the foolish

virgins. We cannot now distinguish, nor have we authority to say, who are wise and who foolish. There are those who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and these appear outwardly like the wise. 16MR 270.3

Said Christ, "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.... Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man" [[Matthew 15:13, 18-20](#)]. 16MR 271.1

It is impossible for men to read the human heart, for the tares so closely resemble the wheat. It is not given to human beings to try to separate them. But the angels of God know them, for their fruits declare their character. Have they not been commissioned to counterwork the work of those who fight against the truth of God's word? These angels will never make a mistake in gathering the wheat from among the tares. 16MR 271.2

[[Matthew 7:15-23](#), quoted.]

Matthew 7

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 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 in heaven.

22 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?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

This is the test. Those who are counted among the wise virgins will let their light burn in good works. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. They have not a knowledge of His ways. Let none rest in the idea that baptism has saved them, while they give no evidence that they are conformed to the image of Christ, while they cling to their old habits, while they exert their influence on the side of the world, and weave their fabric with the threads of worldly ideas and customs. These have not kept the oil in the vessels with their lamps. They are not ready for the Bridegroom. The oil is the holy grace that is sent from heaven, and there must be an inward adorning with that grace, that they may be enabled to stand when He appeareth. 16MR 271.3

The parable of the talents is given to represent the kingdom of heaven, and to show the necessity of an accurate use of the endowments that God has entrusted to us. It is of the highest importance that we understand these parables and know wherein they have any bearing upon us individually. The ten virgins are represented as watching in the evening of this earth's history. They represent the church of professed Christians. This lesson should fill our minds with serious thought, and drive us to our Bibles, the Word of the living God. It should lead us to most earnest supplication that God will lead us into all truth. 16MR 271.4

Said Christ: [[Matthew 7:24-27](#), quoted].

Matthew 7

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it

The apostle says: [Jude 1:20-25, quoted].

Jude

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

We must not stand in a neutral position. Our position must be one of strong and living faith. We are to rear our houses for eternity, as is represented in the parable of the hearers and the doers of the Word. Those who are superficial in their piety may be willing to take the name of Christians, but they will not comply with the conditions laid down in the Word of God. They do not conform their characters to the Word of God and to the pattern He has given. All are hearers of the word. They comment upon that which they hear, but some, while they assent to the message sent by God to them, do not have the faith that will enable them to place the word of God in their hearts. God knows full well that if self does not die, it will become a controlling power in the soul. When the transforming power of God works upon the hearts of men, then they are represented by the wise virgins. 16MR 272.1

There are many who profess to be the sons and daughters of God who have no connection with Him. But God sees every spot and stain that is upon the characters of those who profess to follow Him, and He will prove every soul. He says: [[Malachi 3:1-3](#), quoted]. 16MR 272.2

Malachi 3

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

God has commanded His people: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, always" [[Deuteronomy 11:1](#)]. [[Verses 13-15, 19-23; 27:1-10](#), quoted.] 16MR 273.1

Deuteronomy 11

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

Deuteronomy 27

1 And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.

2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister:

3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee.

4 Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister.

5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them.

6 Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God:

7 And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God.

10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

The five wise virgins represent those who have perfected a Christian character, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. God's message to His people is: [[Revelation 3:3-5](#), quoted]. 16MR 273.2

A great price has been paid for the redemption of man, and none who are untruthful, impure, or unrighteous can enter the kingdom of heaven. If men do not make Christ their personal Saviour, and become true and pure and holy, there is only one course for the Lord to pursue. He must destroy the sinner, for evil natures cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Thus it is that sin, if not destroyed, will destroy the sinner, just as Satan designed it should. 16MR 273.3

As God made man, he was perfect, reflecting the moral image of God. He was left free to choose good or evil. If he should decide to choose the evil, he must have the evil. And man abused the high prerogative of his nature. Christ gave His life to make it possible for all to be wise virgins, partakers of the divine nature, that they might become complete in Jesus Christ, perfect, without spot, and blameless. Thus through Jesus Christ human nature was placed on vantage ground with God, before the heavenly universe and the fallen world. 16MR 273.4

But the Lord does not release men from responsibility. "Work out your own salvation," He says, "with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here is a cooperation of God with man and man with God. Here is encouragement for the most earnest, noble strivings. Christ declares that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. "What shall it profit a man," He says, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" [[Mark 8:36, 37](#)]. 16MR 273.5

Christ has made it possible for man to rise in moral value with God. By resisting all wrong, by subduing the evil temper, selfishness, and pride, he may attain to the righteousness of Christ. Man is to become one with Christ in God. Sin is degrading, and there is no place for it in heaven. It is our privilege to have the power of self-control, and if we do not have it we reveal that sin still reigns in our mortal bodies. In Christ is all sufficiency for a self-directed life. "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me," He says, "and he shall make peace with Me" [[Isaiah 27:5](#)]. 16MR 274.1

The ten virgins all claim to be Christians, but five are true and five are false. All have a name, a call, a lamp, and all claim to be doing God service. All apparently watch for His appearing. All started apparently prepared, but five were wanting. Five were found surprised, dismayed, without oil, outside the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. There are many who cry peace, peace, when there is no peace. This is the most perilous belief for the human soul to entertain. Christ speaks to all who bear His name, who claim to be His followers, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, else they can have no part with Him. Be not like the foolish virgins, who take for granted that the promises of God are theirs, while they do not live as Christ has enjoined upon them. Christ teaches us that profession is nothing. "He that will come after Me," He says, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" [[Luke 9:23](#)]. 16MR 274.2

Let no one take for granted that he is saved. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Said Christ, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" [[Matthew 5:19, 20](#)]. 16MR 275.1

When we stand the test of God, in the refining, purifying process, when the furnace fires consume the dross, and the true gold of a purified character appears, then we may say as did Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after.... This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" [[Philippians 3:12-14](#)]. 16MR 275.2

These parables were spoken after the solemn lessons given in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of Matthew, when Christ dwelt particularly upon His second coming, and revealed things which would transpire before His second appearing in the clouds of heaven. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Christ said, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" [[Matthew 23:37](#)]. 16MR 275.3

In this lamentation over Jerusalem is given the assurance of protection to all who will come unto Christ. He will accept and protect them, poor, defenseless, dependent, even as the hen spreads her protecting wings over her brood. If her chickens wander from her, the hen has a peculiar call by which she warns them of peril or storm. If they will heed the danger signal, and can reach their mother's protecting wings, they find warmth and safety, for she will defend them while she has any life. She forgets herself, and will give her life in defending her helpless little flock. 16MR 275.4

What a touching figure is this! What an idea it gives us of the watchful care of Christ for all who trust in Him. Christ longed to gather Israel under His mediatorial wings. He longed to hear their voice calling upon Him, and saying: "Hold up my going in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God: incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show Thy marvelous loving kindness, O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" [[Psalm 17:5-8](#)]. 16MR 276.1

[[Psalm 36:5-11](#), quoted.]

Psalms 36

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

"I will abide in Thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of Thy wings" [[Psalm 61:4](#)]. 16MR 276.2

But Christ could not do for Israel all that He desired to do, because they would not respond to His invitations. "Ye would not," He said. Their will was stubborn and unyielding. His last words to the impenitent nation were, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" [[Matthew 23:38, 39](#)].—[Manuscript 92a, 1898](#). 16MR 276.3

Ellen G. White Estate

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Entire Manuscript.