

## AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT

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*The Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 25, 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.” In particular the words, “and the door was shut.”*

In the first part of the chapter, we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” By the kingdom of heaven in this place, we are not to understand the kingdom of glory, for there are no foolish virgins in the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of heaven is Christ’s kingdom or church in this world.

My kingdom, Christ says, is not of this world. It is in the world, but not of it. Christ had a kingdom in this world from the beginning. There was the Old Testament dispensation or administration of the kingdom, but when Christ, the King Himself, came in the flesh, and when He began His public ministry, He was calling upon men to repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand—that is the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom. The Old Testament dispensation administered through sacrifices and types—a dispensation which was largely typical—was to pass away through His own death and His resurrection, and the kingdom—the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom—set up.

After His resurrection He showed Himself alive for forty days to His apostles, to whom He gave commandments and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God. The commandments which He gave, during these forty days, were in connection with the kingdom of God, the New Testament Church in this world. This dispensation of the kingdom is to remain until the end of time, as we find the Apostle saying to the Hebrews: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” And in this kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, or in other words, the visible Church in the world, we have, as Christ

here points out, the two classes—the wise and the foolish virgins or, as in other parables, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats. We have these two classes in the kingdom.

Now in connection with the words of our text, “and the door was shut,” we may in the first place make a few remarks about the door here mentioned. The words imply that the door was open, but now, when the midnight call came, that is at death, the door was shut. We may make a few remarks about the door here mentioned and the opening of this door.

In the second place, those who are to be shut out. There will be those who will enter in at death—those who are wise.

“They shall be brought with gladness great,  
And mirth on every side,  
Into the palace of the King,  
And there they shall abide.”

But there are those, and this is what will meet them at death, a shut door, “And the door was shut.” We shall notice, therefore, the character of those who shall be shut out who shall meet with this solemn truth at death “and the door was shut”, and the character of those who shall enter in. In the last place we may make a few remarks about what is implied in the door being shut.

First of all, the door, which is here mentioned, is the door of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Christ is the door, for it is in Christ that God is merciful. It is in Christ that God receives sinners. It is in Christ that He is a Saviour.

Christ is set before sinners as a door of hope, a door of mercy, and a door of salvation, as He Himself declares, “I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.” Now in connection with Christ being a door of Salvation in the everlasting Gospel, we may notice first of all that there was a door of life set before Adam in a state of innocence in the promise of the Covenant, “Do this and thou shalt live.” If Adam continued to give the obedience which God required in terms of the covenant which the Lord made with him, then Adam and his posterity, the whole human race, would be confirmed in a state of innocency. They would enter into full possession of the life promised in the covenant. This door of life, of eternal life and felicity, was set before Adam and the human race in him, in the promise of the covenant. But we see how Adam by

sinning against God and breaking the covenant, closed the door of life, and opened the door of death—spiritual, temporal and eternal death—the death threatened in the covenant. The Lord said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and Adam, by sinning against God, closed the door of life and opened the door of death and the door of hell for himself and for his posterity. Accordingly, when we are born into this world our faces are set on the door of death.

Every moment that is passing is bringing us nearer the door of death, and if we are Christless, nearer to the door of hell, for death will be the door for Christless sinners into a lost eternity. God could have left all mankind in that condition, but in His mercy and love He had a purpose of mercy towards lost and perishing sinners, that He would open a door of life for them in the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, His only begotten Son. That door, as a door of hope, of mercy and of salvation, was first opened and set before Adam and Eve in the first promise. Christ in the promise was the door, the door of salvation. Christ was also set forth as the door of hope and of salvation, in the sacrifices and the types of the Old Testament, all of which pointed to Christ as the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. All who were saved in Old Testament times were saved through entering in by Christ, the door. He was the only door of salvation set forth in the promises and the types, and all who were saved, were saved through faith in Him as the One who was to come.

It is when He did come, and when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice on Calvary’s accursed tree—when He cried on the cross “It is finished”—that the door was actually opened, that atonement was made for sin.

When He cried “It is finished” we read that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, indicating among other things, that a new and living way was now opened up. Christ in the Gospel is set before us as the door of salvation. This door is not set before the angels who kept not their first estate. It is not set before sinners in a lost eternity. The door of mercy is forever closed upon them. It is to those to whom the Gospel comes that Christ is setting an open door, as He declares, “Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it.”

He is the door that is set before us and we are called upon to strive to enter in. He, as the door of salvation, calls upon sinners to strive to enter in while it is yet

called today for the door shall not always be open. “Now,” He says, “is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” We ought to be seeking to enter in while it is called today, lest death will find us, as it found the foolish virgins who, with all their profession, never entered in through faith in Christ, and when death came it was a shut door that confronted them. How solemn the words “and the door was shut”! And the door was shut, and shut for all eternity, but it is an open door that is now set before us in the everlasting Gospel.

We shall notice in the second place those who shall be shut out at death. The Word of God makes it clear who they are that shall be shut out: all who die in their sins shall be shut out. We find the Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, making mention of the fruits of the flesh; he gives a long list of divers sins, and he goes on to say that they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who go on living in these sins shall be shut out at death. He says the same in his First Epistle to the Corinthians— “Be not deceived”, — “neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Be not deceived”—that clearly shows that sinners deceive themselves. They think they can live in those sins and at last inherit the kingdom of God. In our day people are being deceived by persons in high places telling them that they can live in those sins and yet inherit the kingdom of God. But this is what the Holy Ghost through the apostle declares, “Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” They shall be shut out at death unless they repent. The Lord Jesus Christ solemnly warns us that except we repent we shall assuredly perish. The apostle, in the case of the Corinthians to whom He was addressing these words, goes on to say “and such were some of you,” some of them were guilty of these sins, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” And as the Lord washed away the sins of the Corinthians, these terrible sinners, there is the same efficacy, and the same merit in His blood to cleanse from all sin.

But in this parable, we shall notice that those who shall be shut out at death are spoken of as foolish virgins. They professed to be virgins, they professed to go forth

to meet the bridegroom, and they fully expected that they too would enter in at death; but we see that when the midnight call came the door was shut, and they were shut out for all eternity. Now in connection with the character of the persons here mentioned who shall be shut out, we may notice some of the respects in which the wise and the foolish are similar. There are four respects in which they are similar. To all appearance the wise never suspected the foolish. They were similar in this respect that they all had the name of virgins. The foolish had the name of virgins as surely as the wise. We see that the apostate church of Rome is called the great harlot and the mother of harlots, and that, because she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of God's Word.

When persons depart from the doctrines of God's Word and from His Worship, the Word of God calls that spiritual whoredom and harlotry, spiritual adultery. Now the church of Rome, at one time, was a virgin as she was when the apostle wrote his epistle, keeping to the truth and to the doctrines of the truth, and gave many martyrs for the truth. The catacombs of Rome are a standing witness to the numbers who laid down their lives for Christ, for the church of Rome pays tribute to these martyrs and canonizes them.

Nevertheless, she is not keeping to the doctrines for which these martyrs died. She has apostatized from the faith. She is a harlot in this respect, that she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. She is called the mother of harlots. There are other churches which are harlots in that they are not pure virgins with respect to the doctrines of the Truth and to the mode of worship which God set up in His Church. But in the case of the foolish they had the name of virgins. They could not be accused of having corrupted or departed from the doctrines of God's Word. They were sound in doctrine, and in their walk and conversation evidently showed that they honoured their profession outwardly. They had the name of virgins as surely as the wise.

Secondly, they were similar in this respect that they all went forth to meet the bridegroom. They all professed to be betrothed to the bridegroom—that Christ was their Saviour.

They also went forth in the way of a public profession, in the way of testifying and professing to be on His side. And thirdly, we see that they all had a lamp, the lamp of a public profession or the lamp of their hope, although in the case of the foolish

the lamp was a false hope. We read that the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, his hope shall go out at death. But the righteous hath a hope in his death.

Now they had this lamp of a profession as surely as the wise had. It is the Lord who could see whether they had a true hope or not. They professed outwardly to have a hope and, as we mentioned, to all appearance the wise never suspected, but that they had the same hope as they had. But they proved that their hope was a false hope, that they were hypocrites, that they were self-deceived, for that is what the hypocrite very often means in the truth, persons who are self-deceived. Persons may try to throw dust in people's eyes and deliberately try to make out that they are what they are not. That is what we usually mean by a hypocrite. They are trying to get a name for themselves and a place for themselves, and if they get a name and place that is all that they are after, and they may go so far as to deceive the very elect. Well, these are certainly hypocrites in the strict sense of the term, but the term hypocrite is also applied to persons who deceive themselves, who are self-deceived and who, instead of having a good hope through grace, are entertaining a false hope which shall go out at death as the hope of the foolish virgins did.

Then they were similar in this respect that they all slumbered and slept. By the slumbering and the sleeping of the wise virgins we are to understand their backsliding. They first slumbered instead of being lively in their graces, (perhaps the world and divers lusts got the upper hand of them) and instead of being lively in following the Lord they began to slumber. They got sleepy and at last they slept, but such backsliding will be made bitter to His own. They shall learn that it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord. He shall awaken them and they shall hear His voice as surely as the Ephesians did, for it is to the saints in Ephesus that the words are addressed in the first place, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead"—"Come out from among them and be ye separate," and "Christ shall give you light."

The wise slumbered and slept and so did the foolish. This was a comfort to the foolish that they could see the wise slumbering and sleeping. The slumbering and sleeping of the wise however, was made bitter to them, and they could receive no consolation until the Lord restored to them the joy of His salvation, as we find the psalmist confessing "my soul He doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, even for His own name's sake."

Those who are wise want their souls to be restored. But the foolish would say, 'Oh well, the wise, the saints, in the Old Testament and the New fell and went astray.' That is the plaster that they will put on their wounds, the short-comings and the failings of the Lord's people. "Because they are like that" they say, "we are just like them; some of them have fallen farther than we have." That is the source of their consolation. But that is no consolation to those who are wise. What will console and comfort their soul is the Lord's restoring to them the joy of His salvation, His receiving them graciously, and His taking away their iniquity so that their souls are restored to walk again in the paths of righteousness.

But the foolish saw the wise slumbering and sleeping and therefore they excused themselves. They made excuses for their fallings and their failings, and for their backsliding. But those who are wise cannot make excuses for themselves. They beat upon themselves and say, "My folly makes it so." Instead of trying to excuse themselves they will be making an open breast of their failings and of their fallings to the Lord, and seeking that He would cleanse them and receive them graciously. Desertion of soul and mourning an absent Lord are experiences to which the foolish virgins are strangers.

We shall now come to notice the respects in which they differed, and there are three respects, we believe, in which they differed. We see that in the case of the wise they took oil in their vessels with their lamps. The wise had an oil vessel along with their lamp. The foolish had just the lamp and whatever oil they had in the lamp, and however bright their lamps might appear for a time we see that when death came their lamps went out. They went out in despair and they were shut out. But there was this great difference between the wise and the foolish, that the wise had oil vessels along with their lamps. Then there was this difference, that it was the custom of the wise to go to them that sell to buy oil. They needed to have their lamps replenished with oil, and they went to them that sell. That was not the custom of the foolish. And thirdly, there was this respect in which they differed, that the wise were betrothed to the bridegroom of the Church, but the foolish, whatever profession they made, were never betrothed to Him.

In making a few remarks on these points of difference, we shall notice first of all that they differed in this respect that the wise had an oil vessel as well as having a lamp. We may say that the oil vessel which the wise had is the new creation, the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The wise are those who are called

effectually, “Whom He called them He also justified; whom He justified them He also glorified.” That was true in the case of the wise. They entered glory at death, for they had the oil vessel of the effectual work of the Holy Ghost in their souls.

They had the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit dwells in His own work, in the souls of those who are created anew in Christ Jesus. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His”, for it is through His Word and Spirit that Christ dwells in the souls of His people. Now we see that the Holy Spirit is compared to oil, to an anointing or an unction. The apostle John in writing to the saints, to those who were wise, who were new creatures in Christ Jesus, says to them, “But ye have an unction,” ye have an unction or anointing “from the Holy One and ye know all things.”

And he also says, “but the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you”, that is the spirit which they received, “and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” They have this anointing that teacheth them of all things, that is, of all things pertaining to salvation, necessary for their eternal salvation.

They are inwardly taught and inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit. They have this unction. They have the Holy Spirit who teaches them, the Holy Spirit in His effectual work as distinct from the Holy Spirit in His common operations, for it was the Holy Spirit in His common operations that the foolish had, and under the influence of these common operations they went forth and took up the lamp of a profession and entertained the hope which they had, which proved to be a false hope. But in the case of those who are wise, they had the gracious and effectual teaching and working of the Holy Spirit. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One.” They had this anointing which was teaching them and abiding with them.

We may notice some of the respects in which the wise have the Holy Spirit in His saving operations, in His effectual work, as distinct from those who have Him just in His common operations. And they have Him first of all, we might say, as the spirit of bondage. It is not as the oil of joy and gladness that they receive the Holy Spirit to begin with, but as the spirit of bondage, convincing them of their sin and misery, giving them to see that they are in bondage to sin and to Satan. We read the spirit of bondage is the spirit of fear (Rom. 8.15). Fears come into their souls, fear of death. They now believe that death is appointed unto them, and after

death, the judgment. Fear of hell. Fear of their sin, that their sins will bring them to a lost eternity. But above all, a fear that they shall not obtain Christ. There is that fear in connection with their being convinced of their sinnership and of their need of a Saviour. They fear that they may not find the Saviour. They find themselves in bondage and in darkness, in a prison, as it were, and need deliverance from that prison, that prison of bondage in which they are. Some are left in that condition longer than others. Some go through great depth of law work. Others are brought in more gently, as Lydia was. But there is in this spirit of bondage, fear and depression in the soul. The soul is not rejoicing in the Lord's salvation, but weighed down with divers fears, and afraid that no matter what reformation may take place, and does take place, that unless they have Christ they shall come short at last and perish eternally.

Those who have this anointing, who are savingly taught and who are made wise for eternity, have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination. He enlightens. In effectual calling the Holy Spirit not only convinces of sin and of misery, but He enlightens the mind in the knowledge of Christ. The person who is savingly taught is brought to realise his ignorance. Prior to this he may have been flattering himself in all the knowledge he had about Christ, and about the Scriptures, and about the doctrines of the Bible, how well informed he was. But now when he is being taught by the Holy Spirit, he comes to see how ignorant he is; that in spite of all the light he had in his head about Christ and about the doctrines of the truth, he has not got a spark in his heart, that he is ignorant of Christ.

The Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination, illumines the sinner. It is in His light that he sees how dark and how ignorant he is of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Persons can speak with tongues of men and of angels, about the truth, and about Christ, and yet have only just common light, intellectual light, but when the Holy Spirit comes as the spirit of illumination, that person is brought to realise how ignorant he is, how dark he is, and his need of being enlightened. The language of his soul is "that I might know Him." The Lord's people will be conscious of their need of the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination as long as they are in this world. And they will be having the Holy Spirit as the spirit of bondage when they have sinned in convincing them of their sins.

But they have Him as the spirit of illumination. He sends His light forth and His truth into their souls. They find such a veil of ignorance on the eyes of their souls that

they need light from heaven. They need the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination to open up the truth to them. They have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel." They have the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty and as the spirit of illumination, for it is as the spirit of illumination that He is the spirit of liberty, in giving them liberty of soul and freedom of soul, that strength to receive Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel. He creates faith in the soul, and faith is light and faith is knowledge, and they are enabled to close in with Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel.

When Christ meets with them, they cannot but receive Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation as their portion and hope for time and eternity. They have the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty and that is the spirit they would seek to have, that their souls would have this liberty in going forth unto Christ and living a life of faith upon Him.

They have the Holy Spirit, as the spirit of adoption. They are now adopted into God's family through being called effectually. They have the spirit of sons, and of daughters; they are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. They have the spirit of adoption. There is reverence in that spirit, there is love in that spirit, there is worship in that spirit, there is adoration in that spirit, there is thanksgiving in the spirit of adoption. They are now seeking to praise Him, "O Lord, I will praise Thee, though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me." There is praise and thanksgiving and reverence and godly fear, filial fear, in the spirit of adoption, so that they have the spirit of children, and come to God just as children to a father who is able and willing to help them. We have the spirit of adoption, we might say, in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. It is there you find the spirit of adoption. All these petitions are the petitions of sons and daughters. "Hallowed be Thy name" they seek to hallow all that pertains to Him, they seek the coming of His kingdom and they seek daily bread, spiritual and temporal, from Him, for they see that He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and they pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen." You have just in the Lord's Prayer, the prayer He taught His disciples and which is the prayer of all who are His disciples, the spirit of adoption.

They have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of holiness. As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God, and He leads them in the highway of holiness so that they fully believe that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Because they have Him as the spirit of holiness they have a daily consciousness, a continual consciousness of their own unholiness, and of their own sinfulness. They know in measure the plague of their own hearts, and their daily cry is “create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within,” and

“Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me,  
I shall be cleansed so;  
Yea, wash Thou me, and then I shall  
be whiter than the snow.”

Ps. 51.

They seek to run in the way of His commandments, for the law is holy, just and good. The precepts of the Gospel are just the spirituality of the law opened up by the Holy Spirit. Some people maintain that the Lord’s people are not under the law as a rule of life. Because they have been delivered from the condemnation of the law, they think that they have been delivered also from the law as a rule of life. But the apostle says that we are under the law to Christ. They maintain that believers are not under the law—under the Ten Commandments, as their rule of life, but under the precepts of the Gospel. But what are the precepts of the Gospel but just the law, the law in its spirituality, opened up in the Scriptures.

“Thy law,” said the psalmist, “is exceeding broad.” It is the desire of the wise to run in the way of His precepts, in the way of His commandments. Having the Holy Spirit as the spirit of holiness, they are brought to see that holiness becomes His house and all His service, and that His Day is holy. They find out that the claims of God’s holy Day are binding upon them. You find people making great claims. They speak about “Holiness Movements” and a person is reckoned holy if he gives up smoking and drinking and going to dances and pictures and so on. All that is perfectly true of those who are taught by the Holy Spirit, but in the estimation of the foolish these are the main things, as it were.

When it comes however, to the claims of God’s holy Day, as the day which He has appointed to be the memorial of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, they do not seem to have any consciousness about these claims. Where the Lord writes His

law in the heart, and He does that in regeneration, there is a love to the Lord's Day as the day set apart for worshipping God, and as a day that commemorates Christ's resurrection from the dead. Now, where there is no love to the Sabbath, there is no grace in the heart. Persons can make their own 'Holiness Movements' and have their own standards about worshipping God and Sunday-keeping, as they term it, but this is the crucial test, where there is no love for God's holy Day, when persons can play fast and loose with the divine claims respecting His Day, they prove they are graceless. They are but foolish virgins, whatever their profession. They put their own pleasures before the claims of God's holy Day, and they put their own profit before the claims of God's holy Day, but where the Holy Spirit is, as the spirit of holiness, that person is led to say with the apostle that the things which are gain to him, whatever gain he might have had, and pleasure he might have had in connection with the way in which he observed the Sabbath in the days of his ignorance, he now counts these as loss and as dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

He acknowledges Christ as Lord, and as Lord of the Sabbath, as He Himself claims "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." Those who profess the lordship of Christ and who have no respect for the day which in a special way sets forth His lordship, are by their works denying Christ. But all in whom the Holy Spirit is as the spirit of holiness, seek to keep the Sabbath holy and thereby give to Christ that place which He claims and which is His due as Lord of the Sabbath. They also acknowledge Him as Lord in His own house. They believe that holiness becomes His house and all His service, and they seek to honour Him in refusing to admit into His house either in the way of doctrine or worship what He has not authorised in His Word. The anointing which they have teaches them to own and acknowledge and honour Christ as Lord of the Sabbath and as Lord in His own house. As Lord of the Sabbath, He makes it clear how He would have His Day honoured. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

The anointing teaches those who are wise to have the spirit that was in Christ Jesus. "Learn of Me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is in drinking in of His Spirit and in seeking to be of the meek and the lowly that they will be finding rest for their souls. It is the proud, the revengeful, the self-centred spirit they are of, as they are by nature, which so often robs them of their rest and liberty and fills their souls with darkness and bitterness. But they are taught to hear what God the Lord doth speak. "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Those who are wise have the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of Truth. He is not the spirit of error nor the spirit of delusion. The anointing which they have teaches them to abide in the Truth, and to try the spirits whether they be of God. They are kept from the religious delusions which abound in our day. They are led by the Spirit of God and are found therefore going forth in the footsteps of the flock, seeking to be found in the "old paths" trodden by the true Church of God in every age and generation. New-fangled doctrines and new ways of worship are from Satan as an angel of light. But the wise are kept from the religious delusions which abound in our day. The foolish who do not receive the truth in the love of it are given over by God in His righteous judgment for their forsaking the truth, "to strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). What need we have in this day of delusion and error to give heed to the exhortation, "Buy the truth and sell it not!"

Where you find a person who has the Holy Spirit as the spirit of bondage, of illumination, of liberty, of adoption, as the spirit of holiness and as the spirit of truth, you have there a person who has the anointing that teaches of all things (1 John 2:27). You have there one who has the oil vessel which the wise have. You have there a person who is betrothed to Christ, one whose soul is bound up in the promise, "Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is His name, and thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called."

The next respect in which they differ is that it was the custom of the wise to go to them that sell. We see that when the midnight call came and the foolish began to realise that their lamps were going out they said to the wise "give us of your oil."

They replied, “Not so lest there be not enough for us and you.” We have just what will do for ourselves; we are afraid that we may not have what will do us. Lest we should not have enough, you had better go to them who sell. Now this shows that there was this difference between the wise and foolish, that the wise were accustomed to go to them that were selling oil, that they were a poor people and a people dependent upon the Lord. It is the Lord that sells. He sells without money and without price. He is calling upon people to buy of Him—wine and milk, without money and without price. All the blessings of redemption are offered to us freely without money and without price. The fact that it was true of the foolish that they were not in the habit of going to buy shows that they were self-sufficient.

They were not poured from vessel to vessel, a poor and a needy people needing to go to the Lord to supply their spiritual needs and to uphold them. They fully believed they were going to heaven as surely as the wise. They were not harassed by doubts and fears nor praying to the Lord “Say unto my soul I am thy salvation.” They were self-sufficient. They were increased in goods, in their own estimation, spiritual goods, and in need of nothing. But those who are the wise, are a poor people and a needy people and are dependent upon the Lord, and they go to Him that sells. He sells in the Truth. He sells in the public means of grace. That is why it is said that the Ministry is for the edifying of the body of Christ, for the edification of His mystical body, that the members thereof might be edified and built up in their most holy faith. Christ in the Gospel, and in the preaching of the Gospel, is there selling without money and without price.

The blessings of the Gospel are free, and those who are of the poor and needy will be coming and seeking for oil, seeking for spiritual food, seeking for the blessings they stand in need of, seeking for the Holy Spirit who is compared to oil. Their desire is that they would get a fresh baptism—an anointing in their soul. They feel themselves withered and dried and they need a fresh anointing of the oil of gladness in their souls’ experience. Now the preaching of the Gospel is spoken of in the Word of God as the ministration of the Spirit. The Spirit of God maketh the reading but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. It is the ministration of the Spirit. Those who are of the wise seek to be where Christ has promised to be, through His

Word and Spirit. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," and they are coming, hoping to get what will revive and refresh their souls. They feel themselves poor and needy and there are times when they are revived and refreshed in the means of grace, and they go on their way rejoicing.

Although they would receive manna today for their souls, they are as needy again the next day to receive again out of His fulness. They are not like the foolish who show that they are self-sufficient, and who do not need to be waiting on the means of grace. When you see persons who profess to have a hope and hoping to go to heaven at last and, at the same time, are not in the path of duty with respect to the command of the Lord, "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," who are not seeking Him where He has promised to be, and who are not coming with an empty vessel to receive out of His fulness, then this will be true concerning them when death comes, that the hope which they have will begin to go out. They will then be crying for the prayers of the Lord's people and saying "give us of your oil." But it is now too late. They allowed the day of grace to pass, deceived by Satan in this way, that they had what would stand them. Oh, how awful to be self-deceived for eternity! When death comes, when the midnight call comes, and the darkness of death and despair is closing in upon their souls, they are now crying but it is forever too late. The door is shut and they are shut out for all eternity.

In the last place there is the curse of God in the closing of the door. When He closes the door, He is, in effect, saying to that person, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." There is the wrath of God in the closing of the door. It is closed in wrath. There is eternal despair in the closing of the door. The door is eternally shut and how solemn the words "and the door was shut", "and the door was shut". How we should be seeking while it is yet called today to be of those who are seeking to buy, coming as poor and needy sinners to the Saviour, crying for mercy and seeking that we would receive of His own Holy Spirit as He says, "if ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him." "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." (Rev. 22:17)