[DOCTRINE RESUMED.]

[The text we are upon is] Matt. 25:1-12, especially at this time, v. 8: “[And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out].”

Three things wherein they differed:

1. [That the one have] oil {in their lamps, and the other have none}.

2. [The] consequences [of this].

3. [That] general character [manifest from the consideration of both].

We were last on the consideration of the difference consisting in the consequences of the one’s having oil, {and the other having none}.

We observed that those consequences are of two kinds: either with respect to their behavior, or their state. As to the difference between true Christians’ behavior [and false], they were considered in the former part of the day.' I come now,

(2) To consider those consequences of true Christians having oil, and the other having none, with respect to their state. And the consequences of this are twofold: the one is with respect to their hopes of a state of grace, and the other with respect to a state of glory. I would,

I. Consider the consequences of this with respect to their hopes of a state of grace. And the difference between true Christians and false, with respect to this, consists in this, viz., that when Christ comes, false Christians’ hopes and seeming evidences of a state of grace, will at once totally vanish away. But with respect to true Christians, it will be far otherwise.

   a. When Christ comes, [the] hopes and seeming {evidences of a state of grace in} false Christians will totally vanish away.
What is signified by the lamps of the virgins, as has been observed, is the appearances of godliness that are in them. And those appearances of godliness are either those whereby godliness seems to appear in them in the eyes of others, or in their own eyes.

The lamps of the virgins are either those by which they shine in the eyes of others, or in their own eyes.

So that one thing signified by the lamps of the foolish virgins, are the seeming evidences of their godliness, whence they have entertained an hope of their state as good.

And therefore by their lamps appearing to them to be gone out when the midnight cry was heard, we are taught that those things in them, that shined in their eyes like a bright lamp, and served to uphold light and comfort and hope in them before, won’t shine then; but instead of appearing like a lamp that shines bright, will, when the midnight cry is heard, appear like a lamp that is extinct. There will be nothing to be seen there to give ‘em any light, or to afford any hope or comfort. There will be all darkness then, without the least glimmering of the light.

The first that the foolish virgins saw that they were without any lamps, was when that cry was heard, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh.”

They might have discerned it before, if they had been watchful, but till then they were asleep; they trusted to their lamps, that they presumed to sleep in the state they were in, and then when they were waked by this solemn cry, they at once saw that their lamps were extinct. Very often false Christians have a good opinion of themselves while they live here, and God lets ‘em alone. It has been already observed, they may agree with the godly in that, that they think they are converted; yea, they may have a strong confidence of it.

But yet when Christ comes, they will have their evidences of a good estate to seek. They will look where they used to look, but they won’t
then find what they used to think they did find.

Those things that before used to look to ‘em like burning lamps, will then appear as stinking snuffs. Those things that before glorified, and appeared as precious jewels, will now appear to be nothing but an heap of ordure and filthiness.

Before, when they heard awakening sermons, whereby they were told of hell, they had their refuges to fly to. They had met with these and those things, and these quieted them, and made ‘em think themselves safe. The refuges they fled to then seemed strong to ‘em, and for the present did their turn, and kept their minds in quietness and security.

And when they come to hear the awakening, awful cry, they will go to fly to the same refuges that they used to fly to, but they wont find ‘em; they will be gone; their walls, that have been daubed with untempered mortar, will be fallen down. They will go to fly to their strongholds, but they will all vanish away before their eyes.

Then they will go catch hold on those things that they used formerly to hang by, to keep themselves from sinking, and they thought strong; but now they will find nothing to lay hold of.

Thus will it be with the hope of the hypocrite at that time, Job 27:8. All their foundation will then be gone, and they will be left in a dreadful state and condition. His “hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be as a spider’s web; he shall lean upon his hope, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure,” Job 8:14-15. When that cry is heard, they will fly to their lamps in a great hurry, and they will fall to trimming their lamps to make ‘em burn, and give ‘em as much light as they used [to]: but it will all be in vain. They will soon see it is in vain. They won’t be able to revive their old religious affections. They used to think themselves clothed in shining apparel, but now they will see themselves quite naked; and if they look about for their
garments, they won't find 'em; if they strive to patch up something to cover their nakedness, it will be in vain. But they will then see and know that there is no other way but for 'em to walk naked, to be exposed in their nakedness and hideous deformity before God, angels and men.²

There may be two reasons given of this. This will be brought to pass by the voice of a twofold judge.

a. Conscience, that before was stupefied and blinded, will then be thoroughly awakened and enlightened, to pass a right sentence concerning their seeming evidence of a good estate.³

b. They must then have their state tried by a Judge that searches the heart, and cannot be deceived. The Wise Man observes, in Prov. 16:2, "that all the ways of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits." Men may deceive others, and may deceive themselves, but they can't deceive God.

There is no hiding anything from God, no, not in the most secret corner of the heart. The eyes of the infinitely holy Judge will try men's hearts, as gold is tried in a furnace of fire; and therefore the Prophet, Mal. 3:2-3, when speaking of Christ's coming to judgment, he says, "He is a refiner fire, and like fuller soap"; and 'tis said, Rev. 19:12, "His eyes are like a flame of fire." The eyes of this Judge are piercing, and pierces into the dark recesses of the heart; his eyes are more piercing than lightning, that is so quick and powerful in its effects.

Those eyes will try men's religion, of what sort it is. Men's religious affections and impressions that they have had, must come under the test of the piercing eyes of this Judge.

And he'll try the principles men have acted from; he'll discern whether there has been any sincerity in anything that men have met with. There is no deceiving this Judge with any paint, {or any} disguise whatsoever.
Alas, “who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth?” [Mal. 3:2]. Surely none that are rotten at heart, whatever fair shows of piety they have had, and whatever false hopes and comforts they have entertained.

Everyone is to be as it were tried by fire. Every heart must come under the trial of that light, that is a thousand times more piercing than the fire of the fiercest furnace, or the keenest lightning.

And in such a trial as this, ‘tis impossible any dross should pass for gold, or that any false covering should fail of being burnt up.

This omniscient and strict judge will have no regard to the opinions of men, neither good neither bad; he'll have no regard to the determinations men have formerly come to about themselves. But he will try how they are in reality; he [will] search and see what bottom men stand upon, and whether they are built on a rock or on the sand.

And therefore, ‘tis impossible that it should be otherwise at that time, than that all the seeming evidences and false hopes of false Christians should then totally vanish away, and be as it were everlastingly consumed.

Thus the hopes and seeming evidences of false [Christians].

2. It will be far otherwise with true Christians, which may appear in these three things:

a. Then their hopes and evidences will not vanish away, but will endure. They will stand the trial of that day, and bear the test of that judgment. Those things that were the evidences that they depended on, will appear evidences still. Their comforts won’t fail, and be turned into horror and despair, as it will be with false Christians.

Their consciences will not pass sentence against them. The light of the awful majesty and holiness of their Judge won’t scare away all their hopes, and extinguish their lamps.
The wise virgins, when they were awaked with the midnight cry, they did not find their lamps gone out. But when the wind blows, {their lamps} won’t shake,¹ {and} when the fire comes, {their foundation} won’t burn up.

b. Their evidences will then be brightened, and their former judgment of themselves confirmed. The wise virgins, when the midnight cry was heard, arose and trimmed their lamps, and they burnt brighter than before. Some true Christians, before that time, are wavering in their hopes; they have often doubts and fears. But when that time comes, their doubts will be removed, and those evidences that before appeared dim and obscure, will then appear bright; the clouds that before hid them, will now all be scattered.

The light of the false Christians will then be removed, and nothing but darkness left. But it will be contrariwise with respect to true Christians: their darkness will then be all removed, and there will be only light, or light without darkness.

The light of that day will discover what is truth. And therefore, it will more clearly discover the goodness of the foundation of the godly, as it will manifest the badness of the foundation of the ungodly.

The more trying that time is, the more piercing and searching the eye of conscience and the eyes of the Judge will be, and the more like a refiner’s fire, so much the more certain will it render the good estate of the true Christians.

That the eyes of the Judge will be as a flame of fire, will bring no danger to those that have a true hope, nor any tendency then to bring the godly to question their hope; but the effect will be, that their hope will be the more certain. And whereas now, many of the godly have only hoped with a fearful, trembling hope that their state was good, they will then know that their state is good; everyone will have assurance.

c. Then their hope will begin to turn into fruition. They shall not
only have their hope strengthened to assurance, but they shall then begin to see and enjoy the things they have hoped for.

They shall not then only be confirmed in an opinion of their title to salvation, but they shall then begin actually to be made the subjects and possessors of eternal salvation, receiving the joy and issue of their faith and hope, and reign in life by Jesus Christ.

They shall not then merely have hope: “for that which a man sees, why doth he yet hope for”? Rom. 8:24. They shall be got beyond hope, to enjoyment.

When the godly at the day of judgment shall see Christ coming to be their judge, that sight will be a joyful, beatifical sight. They shall see him coming as their judge, and also as their food and portion, and shall then begin to receive the glorious tokens of Christ’s everlasting love, in being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus it is that true Christians and false will differ in the consequence of the one’s having oil, {and the other not}, as to what respects their hope of their state of grace.

[APPLICATION.]

The Use that I would make of what has been said under this head, is of Exhortation to all, to take thorough care that they have such evidences and such a hope as won’t vanish away when Christ appears.

Are not some of you, that have entertained a good thought of your state, too careless and negligent of this matter? Are there none such that have in a great measure left off concern about things of this nature, and don’t spend much time in exercising their minds about them, or concerning themselves about the state of their souls, whether it be good or bad; that of late han’t much to do with their own hearts, in searching of it or inquiring into its circumstances, because their minds are taken up with
other things, the vanities of this world?

If it be thus with you, surely it argues that you don’t think much of that day that we have been now speaking of, when all persons’ evidences and hopes will have such a trial, and when the hypocrite’s hope shall utterly and eternally vanish away.

Or is it because you think you are so sure, that you think there is no further need of troubling your head about it? But you seem to be greatly mistaken concerning the nature of a true assurance: it is not the nature of it, to dispose persons to have their minds less taken up about the things of religion, and to be less earnestly engaged in heart-work, and more taken up about the vanities of the world.

But on the contrary, they that are most assured with a true assurance, have commonly their hearts, more than any, taken from all that is vain and trivial, and their minds most engaged about their heart’s searching, their hearts and ways being conversant and taken up about those things that most immediately concern God and their own souls.

If that be the case with you, that you [are] quiet and easy about this matter, taking it for granted that all is right; and your quietness is of that nature, that the consequence of it is that you have but little to do with soul-concerns, and have your head and heart filled with other concerns: be assured that there is no sort of persons in the world have more need to look about you, and examine your evidences, than such as you.

Therefore let me exhort all, whatever they do, to be thorough now, while the day of probation lasts, in that great concern, to see [to] it that their evidences are good, and the grounds of their hope sure, and such as will never fail. And be advised to attend the following Directions, concerning the manner in which persons should take care of this matter:

First. Never flatter yourself with anything whatsoever that you may
call discoveries or spiritual experiences, when your own conscience testifies that your stated, allowed practice contradicts your hope. If it seems to you that you have had something extraordinary, and something that you could not make yourself; and though others that you have told it to have thought it was right, {and that your experiences} seemed to agree very well with others' stories, {and you} thought you have felt 'em when you have heard 'em talk: let those things be how they will, yet if you would not have such an hope as will vanish away when Christ {comes}, flatter not yourself in any {way}, as long as your own conscience {testifies against you}.

This very rule I now give you, is very much insisted on [in] the Word of God. Why did Christ say with such emphasis, John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"?

And why did the apostle John say as he does, I John 2:4, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"? "He that saith I know him": that is, that pretends he has had discoveries of God.

And why do you think it is the apostle Paul says as he does, I Cor. 6:9-10, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, 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"; as much as to say, "Let others' pretend what they will about what they experience, [they] do but deceive themselves."7 If you, therefore, don't go to deceive yourselves, hearken to no pretenses in the world, as long as 'tis thus with you.

And again, Gal. 6:7, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For that which a man soweth, [that shall he also reap]”; as much as to say, “'Tis
but a vain deceit, and a mere mockery, for a man to pretend that {he loves God but does not keep his commandments}. Eph. 5:5-6, “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

And why did the apostle James say as he does, Jas. 2:14, “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say thou hast faith, and I have works? Can faith save him?”

Is any so vain as to think that Christ and his apostles did not know how to give rules for persons to judge of their condition by? Or what shall we make of those things?

Remember that this same Christ that says these things, either by his own mouth or his Spirit in his apostles, is to be your judge; ‘tis his eyes, that are as a flame of fire, that is to judge: and do you think that in judging you, he'll depart from his own rules in judging, and make use of other means? Therefore, if you would not have your hope and evidences vanish away when you come to appear before this Judge, {do no flatter yourself in any way, as long as your conscience testifies against you}.

Second. Settle it with yourself, that that hope is always the most likely to be right, that is attended with a most sensible, tender and awakened conscience. {It is the} tendency of a false hope evermore to stupefy; [you are] more stupid with it than without it, more senseless about the dreadful nature of sin, the importance and worth of the soul, and the like.

{It is the} tendency of a true hope, on the contrary, to awaken, soften the conscience, and make it sensible.

If you find that when your hope is most lively at such times, [and you] seem to have most of a sense of the greatness of God, {the}
dreadfulness of his wrath, {the} dreadful nature of sin against him, [and are] most afraid of sin: that at such time doth judgment and eternity seem to come with most sense of their greatness and weight on your mind. True hope is attended with an holy and religious fear, Ps. 33:18. [Ps.] 147:11, “Those that fear the Lord, they that hope in thy mercy.”

Third. Remember that that hope is most likely to be right, the increase of which is attended with an increase of your conversation within, and softens conversation without. If at such times as when your hope is strongest, {you} find your heart most engaged about those things that are inward, observing what passes there, watching your thoughts, keeping a strict eye on your affections, God’s principles, [and] motives of action; if you at such times find you have most of heart-work to do, most to do in those things that concern God and your own soul, and less to do with the world, {and your} thoughts [are] less taken up [with the world]: a true hope is heavenly; it takes the thoughts off from this world, and makes it more conversant in things spiritual and heavenly. Heb. 6:19, “And thus enters into that within the veil.”

Fourth. Bear in mind that hope is most likely to be right, that when it is strongest, is attended with most of a disposition to self-abasement. Scripture teaches that the hope of the hypocrites exalts, and lifts him up. Is. 65:5, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.” [In the parable of the] Pharisee and publican, [the] Pharisee thanked God {that he was} “not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” [Luke 18:11]. True hope [is] of a contrary nature: when they have most sense of God’s favor, and his being pacified towards them, is their heart most agreeable to that in Ezekiel, “that thou mayest remember, and be confounded,” Ezek 16:63.

Fifth. When you feel your hope most lively and strong, then remember and inquire whether you feel your heart most engaged to grow and make
progress in religion.

[The] tendency of a true hope, [is] to seek after greater degrees of purity with the greatest labors and endeavors—1 John 3:3, “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even, as he is pure”—with the greatest labors and endeavors.8

[DOCTRINE RESUMED.]


[We observed a] threefold difference [of consequences between true and false Christians]:

1. A difference in consequences with respect to a state.

2. A difference that attends hopes of a state of grace.

3. A difference with respect to a state of glory.

[The] difference with respect to a state of glory consists in this: that the one shall be admitted into it, and the other shut out of it.

a. True Christians shall be admitted {into a state of glory}. Concerning what is said of their admittance into a state of glory, [from] the words read in this parable, these things may be observed:

(a) That they shall enter in with the bridegroom. By which the following things seem to be taught us:

a. That it shall be with the full approbation of Christ. [He shall] own them {and} confess their names, Rev. 3:5.

b. Christ will as it were lead them into his glory by his power, [by] his own right hand. He'll bestow it upon them, Rev. 7:17.

c. They shall there enjoy the presence of Christ in glory. John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” I John 3:2, “It doth not yet appear.”

d. [They] shall be made partakers with Christ of his glory. John 15:11, “My joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”
(b) Another thing to be noted, is that they shall enter in with him into the marriage, i.e., to be guests at the marriage feast, partakers of the joys and entertainments of that royal wedding. By which the following things are taught us. This denotes:

a. The heavenly union and love that they shall enjoy. Christ calls ‘em his friends. Cant. 5:1, “Eat, O friends.”

b. Their sweet communion and society. They sup with him, and he with them, Rev. 3:20.

c. Their rejoicing together. Is. 55[:2], “Delight itself in fatness.” Rev. 19:9, blessed and holy is her. [Their rejoicing together is] compared to a banquet, Cant. 2:4.

d. The richness and fullness of their entertainment: exceeding costly, most excellent. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” [I Cor. 2:9]. [They shall] partake to the full of the bread of life, John 6:48; drink of the water of life, Rev. 22, at [the] beginning; [of] that new wine, angel’s food, Ps. 105:40. In the 25th [chapter] of Isaiah [it says, they shall “make a] feast of fat things,” [of] great fullness and abundance, all that is needed. [There shall be] enough for everyone, suited to every faculty of the soul, [enough to] satisfy every holy appetite. [There shall be] “twelve manner of fruits,” [and] yields [of “her] fruit every month” [Rev. 22:2]. [They shall enjoy] inexhaustible plenty. [It is] called “a river” [Rev. 22:1].

b. False Christians shall then be shut out. Concerning what is said of false Christians being shut out, these things are taught us in the parable we are upon:

(a) They shall be admitted to enjoy no part or measure of this glory, but shall be kept far from it. [They shall] not [be] suffered to come nigh; [a] wall of separation [shall keep them out]. [False Christians
shall come to the door, and find it shut; shut on purpose to keep them out, that they might by no means enter. What is here represented by a door locked, or bolted, is elsewhere represented by a great gulf fixed, Luke 16:26. When that door is shut, the door of mercy shall be shut, [the] door of opportunity.

(b) [They] shall be shut out in darkness, expressed by Luke 13:28, by “wailing and gnashing [of teeth].” The whole representation [is] carried on by the similitude of a wedding, which used to be in the night; and therefore this, which is here understood, is elsewhere expressed. This intends misery in “blackness of darkness,” Jude 13, [and] is the power of the prince of darkness.

(c) All requests to be admitted will be in vain. [They will] cry, “Lord, Lord,” [They are] represented as using arguments and pleading. Matt. 7:22-23, “Lord, have [we] not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Luke 13:26, “We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.”

(d) They shall be shut out with great manifestations of Christ’s abhorrence. [They shall be] thrust out, bound11 hand and foot, and cast out.

(e) All hopes of admittance will be dashed. Christ’s answer will bring despair. They will be to show ‘em that ‘tis hopeless.

(f) Therefore, the same answer is elsewhere repeated to confirm it. Luke 13:25-27, Matt. 7:28, “Then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” [It] signifies as much as Abraham’s answer, Luke 16:25. When that door is shut, [the] door of hope [is] shut.

APPLICATION.
[The] Use I would make of what has been said upon this head, is of Warning to those here present, that are hitherto foolish virgins, to take heed that it don’t come to this with you at last: that when true Christians are admitted into {a state of glory, you are cast out}.

But the more effectually to instruct you, [consider] more particularly:

First. How great the glory is that true Christians will be admitted into, which appears in the following things:

1. [They shall have a] perfect rest.
2. [They shall enjoy a] perfect bounty.
3. [They shall have a] kingly glory.
4. [They will have] perfect satisfaction.
5. [They will be] in perfect assurance of the continuance [of their glory].

Second. You shall see them enstated in their glory.

Third. You shall see persons of all nations, and of all sorts. Luke 13:29, “And many shall come from the east, and from the west.”

Fourth. Consider how great the misery is that will overtake you, particularly:

1. The misery your soul shall suffer after death.
2. The misery you shall suffer in body and soul after the day of judgment.
Notes

1 This indicates that no. 461 was delivered during a morning service and no. 462 during the afternoon service.
2 MS There is a shorthand note at this point that reads, “Second time from this place to the mark.
3 At this point in the MS, JE left a page, L. 3v., blank.
4 Conjectural reading.
5 MS: “that they.”
6 MS: “you.”
7 MS: “yourselves.”
8 MS: “ORDINATION.” Possibly referring to the ordination of William Seward (Yale, 1734) as pastor of the church in Killingworth, Conn., on Jan. 18, 1738. If that is the case, then the assumed dates for the final portions of the Virgins Series, February and March 1738, have to be pushed back so that the series, in all likelihood, ended in January.
9 MS: “29.”
10 MS: “suffer.”
11 MS: “bow.”
12 MS: “6.”