

Never any complained of beginning with God too soon: many could have wished they had known the ways of righteousness sooner, Rom. xiii. 11; many have judged 'the time past more than enough,' 1 Peter iv. 3.

3. It is not so slight and easy a thing to get to heaven as the world imagineth: Mat. vii. 14, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able.' Many deceive themselves; it is not so broad as the opinions of some, as the practices of more would make it, and the carnal hearts of all would have it. Broader or narrower it cannot be than Christ hath left it. In the general, a man may come much too short, none go over. Oh! when you do but consider that many are afar off. Eph. ii. 13, and some are near, as Christ told the young man, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven;' and others are scarcely saved, and some enter abundantly, it concerns us therefore to take heed to ourselves.

4. This is your wisdom. There is a great deal of do in the world about wisdom: Job xi. 12, 'Vain man would be accounted wise.' A man cannot endure to be counted a fool, will sooner own a vice in morals than a weakness in intellects. Now wisdom lieth in providence, and folly in negligence, especially in weighty matters. These wise virgins provided oil in their vessels, and the wise builder built upon a rock. They are wise in God's account, whatever the world thinketh of them, that are wise for heavenly things, and govern their hearts and ways exactly, Eph. v. 14, 15; and they are fools that never mind the good of their souls.

What would you have us do? I will only press you to three things:—

[1.] Let your belief be sound and firm to the great articles of Christianity. It is faith enlivens all our notions of God: John vi. 69, 'We believe and are sure that thou art Jesus the Son of God.'

[2.] Let your resolutions for God be unbounded, Ps. cxix. 112. You never knew a man fall off from God, but he loved some secret lust, some corruption was left unmortified, though for the present it did not appear to the party himself; this in time will break out, and cause some scandalous fall.

[3.] I would have you put it out of all question by the lively exercise of your grace, and by your diligence in the spiritual life, Phil. ii. 12; and in time it will grow up into an evidence, 2 Peter i. 5; Luke xiii. 3. Nothing will yield you comfort but the exercising and increasing grace.

SERMON II.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.—MAT. XXV. 3, 4.

Nor only the openly wicked, those that eat and drink with the drunken, are rejected, but those that have some show of godliness; yea, hopeful beginnings, but not improved, is the drift of this parable.

We have considered wherein the ten virgins agree ; now, wherein they differ : they had so much wisdom to take their lamps with them, but so much folly as to take no oil in their vessels. These vessels were annexed to their lamps, or that part of the lamp which was kindled and lighted. By the lamps are meant outward profession, Mat. v. 16 ; by the oil, the Spirit, called ' the anointing which abideth in us,' 1 John ii. 27. Now the foolish virgins are such inconsiderate Christians as content themselves with the name and blaze of outward profession, neglecting the great work within ; namely, an inward principle of grace, which should maintain their profession before men, and their uprightness before God ; they had only some transient motions of the Spirit, or inclinations to that which is good, enough to keep up their present profession, but not to hold out and suffice at Christ's coming. But the wise virgins, that had oil in their vessels, with their lamps, are sound and solid Christians, who, with the lamps of external profession, are careful to be furnished inwardly with the graces of the Holy Spirit.

Doct. 1. It is not enough to have oil in our lamps, but we must have oil in our vessels also.

Doct. 2. This will be found to be our true wisdom, and the other to be the greatest folly.

For the first point, that it is not enough to have oil in our lamps, but we must have oil in our vessels also, let me explain this point in these propositions :—

1. Profession must not be neglected : both the wise and the foolish took their lamps with them. Burning profession is twofold—vocal and real. Vocal : Rom. x. 9, ' If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart.' Christ will be owned by those that are his. Christ's followers need not be ashamed of avowing their master. Faith should not, and love cannot be smothered and hidden ; therefore profession is as necessary as believing in its kind. Again, there is a real profession, not so much by word of mouth as by constant practice and conversation ; so Christians are bidden to ' shine as lights,' Phil. ii. 15. This is for the glory of God, Mat. v. 16, and the honour of Christ that it should be so ; therefore the apostle prayeth, 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, ' Wherefore we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' It is not meant of the illicit acts, but the fruit that it produceth ; and it is for the honour of the truth. Suitable practice joined with profession puts a majesty and splendour on the truth, and recommendeth it to the consciences of beholders : Titus ii. 10, ' Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.' It is not so much by good words and expressions that Christians do put a loveliness and beauty upon the ways of God, as by ordering their ways with all strictness and gravity ; so that this fair profession is of great use, especially the real part ; it is an evidence that all is right within, for the breaking out of sin and folly in the life clearly evidenceth the power and prevalence of unmortified lusts in the heart ; therefore we must keep our lamps burning ; the foolish and the wise did both well in that.

2. A profession of godliness, though never so glorious, should not be rested in without a saving work of grace upon the heart to maintain it. There was the folly of one sort of virgins, that they were contented with having oil in their lamps for their present use, without looking further; and the wisdom of the other, that their vessels were furnished as well as their lamps. Grace must flow forth, but withal it must have a bottom within. As a fountain or spring sending forth streams to water the ground about it, or the heart sendeth forth life and spirits to every faculty and member, so the graces of the Spirit in believers flow forth in their carriage and behaviour, to make their tongue drop that which is savoury, their actions orderly and even, their carriage in all relations and affairs grave and serious. It is well when all this hath a bottom, that there is a principle of life within, to diffuse this virtue into every part of their conversations, and to keep them mindful and respective to all the commands of God. Now this is required—(1.) Partly because this glorious profession and practice will not serve the turn for the present; for God looks not to outward appearance, but regards the frame of the heart; it is internal holiness that is lovely in his eyes, Ps. li. 6, and without which the external is loathsome to him, Mat. xxiii. 17. A Christian hath more in the vessel than in the lamp: Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within.' That which is outwardly professed is inwardly rooted and cherished by them who worship and serve God in spirit and truth. Knowledge, faith, love, hope, zeal, courage, patience, these adorn the heart, as well as the fruits of them appear in the life, and this maketh us beautiful in the eyes of him that seeth in secret. It would help us to discover our mistakes if we did make God our witness, approver, and judge; for the present studying to approve him in the frame of our hearts, which is hidden from all others. And (2.) Partly because the lamp will not long hold burning unless there be a stock of oil to feed it; so that if it could suffice for the present, yet without grace in the heart, for the future, we shall miscarry when the slender provision and store is spent. A Christian is to provide for the time to come such grace as may endure and hold out in all trials, and bear weight in the day of judgment. We are often pressed to set ourselves in such a state, and put ourselves into such a frame, as will endure the glory of Christ's presence; and to think of that time, and what we shall do, or how we shall be found when he appeareth. He only believeth aright in Christ that will not be ashamed at his appearance: Luke xxi. 36, 'That ye may stand before the Son of man;' and 1 John iv. 17, 'That we may have boldness at the day of judgment;' and 1 John ii. 29, 'When he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed of him at his coming.'

3. A saving work of grace is an inward principle of life, and that in such a degree and measure, which the unsound, though the most glorious professors of the gospel, do not attain unto. Some slight and insufficient touches upon their hearts many professors may attain unto that yet never had this rooted principle of grace, which may properly be called oil in the vessel. It differeth in radication and efficacy, as I showed before. They are enlightened, but the day-star doth not arise in their hearts, 2 Peter i. 19, and Eph. v. 8. A flash

of light they may have, but are not light in the Lord. Are affected with the truths of the gospel, but not changed or transformed by it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Sin may be restrained or benumbed, but it is not subdued and mortified, Gal. v. 24; we cannot say it is crucified. They are half loosed, but are still in bonds; make some show of escape from Satan, but are surprised by him again; worse hampered than before, Mat. xii. 45; urged, excited to some good, but not enabled and inclined to love God with all the heart, and seriously and constantly to set about the things that please him, and to avoid the contrary. They have not the grace the apostle prayeth for, Heb. xiii. 12, that grace 'that may make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ.' Have you this grace, to be always working that which is pleasing in his sight? Their fire is like a straw fire, soon in and soon out; so that there is a difference. The common grace that they have is real, but not of an abiding and everlasting nature, not secured by God's covenant and promise; there is not that solid, rooted piety. Therefore, it is not enough for Christians to see that the lamp burneth, but to look what there is in the vessel, to feed the flame. It is not sudden affections on our part, nor the transient motions of the Spirit on God's part, that will amount to a constant principle of life.

4. This constant, abiding state of grace or principle of life may be known partly by the terms by which it is set forth in scripture, and partly by the effects of it.

First, By the terms by which it is expressed in scripture.

1. It is expressed sometimes with respect to the original author, pattern, and fountain of it, which is God; and so it is called the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4; whereby is not meant the infinite essence of God, which can neither be divided, or communicated to any creature, but of those holy and heavenly qualities and dispositions whereby we resemble God. The heart of this Christian is so stamped with God's own image and character, that he beginneth to look like God for wisdom, holiness, purity, pity. So sometimes it is called the life of God, Eph. iv. 18: that spiritual life that is begun in regeneration is so called; not as God is the first original author of life natural, but the pattern of it. From both these places it appeareth we must first be partakers of such a nature as God hath, before we can live such a life as God doth.

2. It is sometimes expressed with respect to the meritorious and procuring cause, or the immediate head and fountain of it; and so Christ is said 'to live in us,' Gal. ii. 20; 'to dwell in us,' Eph. iii. 17; 'to remain in us as the hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. That Christians may live the life of grace, they must first be united to Christ; for he liveth in us as the head in the members, or the root in the branches: we must be united to Christ, and receive influence from him as branches from the root. Through faith Christ is perpetually present in virtue, grace, and spirit. We must first partake of Christ himself, being most strictly united to him, as members to the head, from whence they receive sense

and motion: he taketh up a fixed and unmovable habitation in our hearts, John xiv. 23, not for a visit and away; but keepeth a perpetual residence in the heart.

3. With respect to the immediate author and fountain, which is the Spirit given to us, to dwell in us, by some special way of operation, Rom. v. 5; and 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have not received the spirit of world, but the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God;' and Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you.' A believer's body and soul is the Spirit's mansion-house; and those that have the Spirit to dwell in them, not to come upon them at times, are in an abiding state of grace. The Spirit came upon Balaam at times, Num. xxiv. 34; but in his people he makes his abode. He doth act in others as a spirit assisting, but not as a spirit inhabiting: he dwelleth in his people. The Spirit is often promised to dwell in our hearts, not only for a season, but for ever: John iv. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up to everlasting life.' Mark, the Spirit doth not give a draught, but the spring; not a dash of rain that is soon dried up, but a well; not a pond, that may be dried up at length, but a fountain that ever keepeth flowing, so that we shall never thirst more. It shall quench his thirst after worldly vanities and delights: these things grow tasteless the more of the Spirit we have. The Spirit of Christ, as the fountain, doth make this grace enduring in itself and in its effects, a well of inexhaustible fulness and refreshment. So John vii. 38, 'He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' Not a petty refreshment for a season, but his Spirit to dwell in us as a full fountain, to flow forth for the refreshment of himself and others. Though the ocean be in God, yet there is a river in the saints. In Christ there is *plenitudo fontis*; in us, *plenitudo vasis*. If we find any remission of the comforts of this spring, it is through our own pride and unbelief and idleness: John xiv. 16, 17, 'I will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' The Spirit will not change his dwelling-place. This is such a degree of grace as the unregenerate world cannot receive.

4. This inward principle is expressed with respect to the instrument, which is the word of God; so it is called *λόγον ἔμφυτον*, James i. 21, 'The ingrafted word.' The root of the matter is within; it is not the word heard only, or the word obeyed only will save us, but it must be an ingrafted word. It is not bound on, but ingrafted; it is not enough to yield some present obedience to it, but it must be rooted in us. So in that notable promise, Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws in their minds, and write them upon their hearts.' The writing is the law of God, the tables are the minds and hearts of men; that is the understanding and will and rational appetite; and this is written by the finger of God; there where is the source and original of all moral operations, of all thoughts and affections, and inward motions, there is the law of God written; in those parts of the soul where the directive counsel and the imperial commanding power of all human actions resideth, there will God write his laws in lively and

legible characters. And what is the effect? A man becometh a law to himself, he carrieth his rule about with him, and hath a ready and willing mind to obey it: Ps. xxxvii. 31, 'The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.' The truth is rooted in him, and his heart is suited and inclined to it; he unfeignedly loveth what is commanded of God, and hateth what is forbidden by him.

5. The work itself is sometimes generally expressed by these notions. It is called *καινή κτίσις*, 'The new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17, when a man is thoroughly framed anew in all his faculties; and 1 John iii. 9, it is called *σπέρμα*, 'The abiding seed;' not a vanishing affection, but a remaining seed; and it is called 'A good treasure,' Mat. xii. 35. There is a stock that supplieth holy thoughts, words, and actions. As a man that hath a bad treasure of corruption, the more he spends, the more it is increased; so a man that hath a good stock, he bringeth forth holy thoughts, words, and actions. And it is called 'A new heart, and a right spirit,' Ps. li. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; and it is called 'A sound heart,' Ps. cxix. 80. There is a slight heart, and a sound heart, which is not only opposed to the shows of hypocrites, but to the sudden pangs and half-dispositions of temporaries, when grace beareth a universal sovereignty over us, inclining the heart to love, and please, and serve God.

6. Sometimes the work is particularly expressed by the several graces of the Spirit, all which are comprised in faith and repentance: Acts xx. 21, 'Teaching them repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Repentance towards God, because by it we return to the duty we owe to our creator; and faith, in the gospel notion, doth principally respect our Redeemer, and his mediation for us. By repentance we return to the duty enjoined by the law, from whence we are fallen; and by faith we apprehend the love of Christ, and what he hath done for us. By repentance we are set in joint again as to our obedience to the lawgiver; and by faith we close with, and are united to our Redeemer, without which we cannot be accepted with God. Both are the principles of all sincere obedience and subjection to the gospel-law or covenant.

If you ask me, what is this oil in the vessel that we must have to qualify us to meet the bridegroom at his coming?

Ans. It is repentance, mortifying our inward lusts, and faith working by love.

(1.) Repentance, mortifying our inward lusts, that in newness of life we may glorify God; therefore called 'Repentance from dead works,' Heb. vi. 1. By common grace men may cast off all outward evils, escape the pollutions of the world, but are never really and inwardly changed in their natures till the Spirit of Christ worketh this grace in the heart; they are but as a sow washed, 2 Peter ii. 22; there is an inclination to wallow in the mire of carnal delights again. It is possible a man may see such an excellency in Christ, and be so affected at the hopes of his mercy, and melted at the thoughts of his love, as to cast off outward gross evils which the world liveth in; but this is but the sow washed; the heart is not changed. Lust for a while may be benumbed, seem quenched, but it is not deadened, it is not weakened: 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body,'

Rom. viii. 13; as appeareth by its breaking out again with the more violence.

(2.) Faith working by love, that is the great principle of gospel-obedience. True grace doth not lie hid in the soul in lazy habits, but sets the soul a-work for God, upon the apprehension of his love in Christ; this constraineth us entirely to give up ourselves to God, 2 Cor. v. 14, minding his interest, studying his will, seeking to please him in all things. A man is not to be judged by present pangs, but by the constant bent and bias of his soul; it is set God-ward, to please him, and enjoy him, notwithstanding the back-bias of corruption.

Secondly, We now come to the effects. The effects are two:—

1. A constant fitness, readiness, and propension to do and suffer what God calleth us unto, or a habitual inclination of heart towards that which is good.

2. A habitual aversion to that which is evil.

1. A habitual inclination of heart towards that which is good; this is called in scripture, 'the having the heart at the right hand,' Eccles. x. 2. He speaketh not of the natural posture, but the leaning of the heart towards duty; he is ready fitted and prepared for duty. And sometimes this is called, 'having our loins girt,' 1 Peter i. 13, as ready to travel; or it noteth the ready disposition that should be in us for duties or conflicts. So 'we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,' Eph. ii. 10; that is, put into a fitness and aptitude for them. As everything that is created hath a fitness and aptitude for that use for which it serveth, the water to flow, the air to be carried to and fro; so a Christian hath a fitness for his work. The opposite to this is that, Titus i. 16, 'To every good work reprobate;' unfit to be employed for this holy business. Briefly, as every habit serveth for this use, *Ut quis facile, jucunde et constanter agat*; to perfect the operation of that faculty in which it is seated, so that a man may act easily, pleasantly, constantly; so doth habitual grace serve for this use, to incline us, and fit us for the service of God. There are three things that are found in those that have this work wrought in them:—

[1.] There is an inclination and propensity to a godly life; for as God created all creatures with an inclination to their proper operations, so the new creature hath a tendency to those actions which are proper to its state; as the sparks fly upward and the stone falleth downward from an inclination of nature, so are their hearts bent to please God and serve him, and what they do therein they do with a kind of naturalness, because of this bent and inclination: 'The law is in their hearts,' Ps. xl. 8. There is a purpose there, Acts xi. 23, an inclination there, Ps. cxix. 112. We read in Exod. xxxv. 29, that they gave to the sanctuary 'every one whose heart made him willing.' I bring this expression to explain what I am speaking of; so their hearts being thus prepared and renewed by the Holy Ghost, make them willing; there is some weight and poise within their hearts to carry them unto God, and the duties that concern his glory and service. A man may act from a violent impression contrary to nature, as a stone moveth upward, or a bowl thrown with great strength where the bias is overruled; so a wicked man may do a good action or two,

as Saul forced himself; but the bent and natural inclination is another thing. It is good to attend to the principle of our motions, whether it be natural or violent, whether our spirits make us willing, or some accidental reason constrain us; as when men are acted by something foreign, as the force of holy example, whereby many a man is drawn to do otherwise than he would, as Joash while Jehoiaada lived, 2 Chron. xxiv. A man may be acted by his company, follow good examples, and may be provoked thereby: Heb. x. 24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.' It were well if one Christian would more provoke another. Man is an imitating creature, loath to be outdone; but if this be all, we shall soon bewray our unsoundness. He may be forced by envy, vainglory, and by-ends (Phil. i. 5) to preach or pray, forced by natural conscience, Rom. ii. 14, 15, or set a-work by a corrupt principle. The urgings of a natural conscience are quite another thing than the bent of a renewed heart; there is a principle of life which breedeth an inclination. He may be forced by a sense of his misery; self sets him a-work to seek after God, because he would use him for a turn, to help him out of his distress; as those in Ps. lxxviii. 34-37, 'When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God; and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer: nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied to him with their tongues: for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' Their affections were not sincerely set for God, or towards God, or bent against sin; the sense of a present wrath, or the terror of an angry God, did drive them into a fit of religiousness for the present, which can produce no steadfast purpose. They that make self their utmost end can never endeavour constantly to please and glorify God; but where true grace is, there is a propensity and disposition to every good work, which we should always cherish in ourselves; for as it abateth or increaseth, so we are diligent or sluggish in God's service.

[2.] There is not only an inclination, but a readiness or preparedness, which is a further effect of this solid and substantial grace, and often spoken of in scripture; as Titus iii. 1, 'Ready to every good work; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 'Ready to distribute; 'Ready to communicate,' Heb. xiii. 16. So Paul, Acts xxi. 13, *ἑτοιμῶς ἔχω*, 'I am ready not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem.' Or take a general place, 2 Tim. ii. 4, 'Prepared to every good work;' and Luke xii. 47, 'That servant that knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will;' so Eph. ii. 10, and many other places. This goeth beyond inclination, as fire hath an inclination to ascend upward, but something may violently keep it down that it cannot ascend actually. A Christian may have a will to good, a strong and not a remiss will, yet there are some impediments: Rom. vii. 18, 'For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.' Inclination implieth a remote power, but readiness the next or immediate power. God's people, that have the seed of grace in them, yet how unready are they to that which they desire to do! Therefore a Christian ought always to keep himself in all readiness and fitness of disposition for his duty, whether it concern God, or ourselves, or others.

This is opposite to dulness, sleepiness, listlessness, or wearisomeness in our service, opposite to *ἀκηδία*, which the schoolmen make to be one of the seven deadly sins, a remiss, cold will, hanging off from God.

[3.] An earnest impulsion, which quickeneth us to all holy endeavours of obedience; this is sometimes called the activity or working of grace: 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6; sometimes zeal, or an earnest burning of affection towards God, or that holy ardour whereby we repress those affections, unruly motions, and desires which are contrary to his will, and do excite and stir up ourselves more and more to honour him and please him: Titus ii. 14, 'Zealous of good works;' sometimes alacrity and cheerfulness, as we prevail in striving against sin, and our love to God increaseth, 1 John v. 3, 4. All these are so many degrees. First we can make conscience of doing our duty, but that is not enough: a convinced man may have his conscience stirring and pleading for God; but a converted man, or a renewed heart, hath an inclination, and not only an inclination but some fitness, and not only some fitness but there is an impulsion, which discovereth itself either by stirring or exciting to that which is good (though with difficulty), which is the lowest degree. All grace is stirring, and would fain break out into action; for it is not a dead and sleepy habit, but seeketh to break forth, and is called by the apostle, 'The lustings of the spirit,' Gal. v. 17. Another degree is zeal and love to the glory of God, whom they honour and desire to exalt continually, which maketh them complain of corruption, and to strive against it, and to shake off slothfulness, and the weights of sin that hang upon us, when the Spirit gets the upper hand, but the flesh is not easily subdued. Then we are more at liberty to serve God, and so alacrity followeth, when a man hath pleasure in good actions, and the flesh is so overcome and subdued that it can make little or no opposition, and so we perform our duty with more ease and delight, which is the highest degree.

SERMON III.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.—MAT. XXV. 3, 4.

I COME now to the second effect.

Secondly, A habitual aversation to that which is evil: Ps. xcvi. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' It is as natural to grace to hate evil as to love good. As love was made for God, and the things which he hath commanded, and tends to the enjoyment of him, so hatred was made for sin, and what is contrary to God. Man hath an eschewing faculty as well as an embracing and choosing faculty, and grace falleth upon both, and sanctifieth the one as well as the other: Amos v. 15, 'Hate the evil, and love the good.' Love was given us for good, and hatred for evil; love was made for the chiefest good, and all things that tend to it; and hatred for that which is truly and pro-

perly evil. Now concerning this effect of grace, I shall observe these things.

1. Grace produceth a hatred of sin, not a bare abstinence from it. Sin may be restrained by foreign reasons not proper to grace, as a dog that hath a mind to the bait may abstain for fear of the cudgel. So men may abstain because of the penalty of laws, infamy, shame in the world, or other reasons; as Haman refrained himself, that he might the better take revenge upon the whole race of the Jews. Men may refrain from sin, when there is not a rooted enmity against it; whereas in the saints there is a constant principle of resistance against it, 1 John iii. 9, *σπέρμα μένον*, 'The seed of God abideth in him.' The grace of sanctification doth change the nature of a man, and his heart is set against that he loved before. Look, as the Lord will not respect men's external practice of good, when it may be their hearts abhor and loathe it, and are bent on other courses—he requireth chiefly that they be rooted in the love of good and delight in it—so he will not accept a simple not doing or forbearing evil, while it may be their hearts are going a-whoring after it, but will have them really hate and detest it, that there should be an abiding enmity in their hearts against it; and where it is so, that there is a habitual love of good and hatred of evil, Christ will pass by many failings in practice; as you may see, Rom. vii. 22–25, that is the case there, 'The evil that I hate, that do I; and I delight in the law of God in the inward man.' Clear these two once, and the remainders of sin will not be your ruin.

2. Grace produceth a hatred of sin as sin, out of a principle of love to God, and as it is contrary to his law, and the new nature planted in us: 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil;' and 'he that is born of God, sinneth not;' that is the principle, 'because the seed of God abideth in you.' The schoolmen distinguish of two sorts and kinds of hatred—*odium abominationis*, and *odium inimicitiv*. The first is defined by Aquinas to be *dissonantia qucedam appetitus ad id quod apprehenditur ut repugnans et noxium*—an aversation of the appetite to what is apprehended repugnant and contrary to us. Such an hatred there is in the regenerate, for they apprehend sin as repugnant and contrary to their renewed will. To the unregenerate it is agreeable and suitable, as draff to the appetite of a swine, or grass and hay to a bullock and horse. The other is a hatred of enmity, so called both for the ground of it and the effect of it; the ground as an evil, that which is an enemy and hurtful to us, as sin is to our peace and happiness temporal, spiritual, and eternal. But chiefly as to the effect of it, hatred is a willing of evil and mischief to the thing or person hated. Both these hatreds are in the children of God. They hate sin not only as it may bring loss and detriment, horror of conscience and damnation, but out of the pure love of God, as it is contrary to his image and will; and they hate it with a hostile hatred, so as to seek the destruction of it. *Non cessat in lesione peccati, sed in exterminio*. It doth not scratch at the face of sin, but is seeking to mortify and subdue it; and therefore are always mourning, praying, watching, striving, famishing it by cutting off its provisions and denying its satisfactions, and still following the work close, till we get the mastery of it.

3. I observe that renewing grace doth so far obtain and produce

this effect in the hearts of those that are under it, that their hatred to sin is greater than their love to it, and sin is thereby more and more weakened and subdued in the soul. We flatter ourselves with notions of love and hatred, unless there be some answerable success and prevalency. It cannot be imagined that sin should live in its full strength where there is a fixed settled frame of heart against it; that there should be in the soul a working warring principle that shall rouse up a man daily to take heed of it as the greatest evil, and yet sin should be as powerful, and as frequently and freely break out as it doth in others. No; where there is such an enmity, hostility, and irreconcilableness, or, to say in a word, such a habitual aversation, it cannot be: 1 John iii. 9, 'He that is born of God doth not commit sin; his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' He that hath such a blessed change wrought in him by the operation of God's Spirit as to be transformed in the spirit of his mind, it cannot be supposed but that grace will have such energy and efficacy upon him as to prevent the life and growth of sin, and restrain the practice of it; that the habits of grace being cherished, this must needs be famished and starved by degrees. A man that hath a fixed root of ungodliness in him, he is at sin's beck, the devil's slave; but a permanent habit of grace doth produce a constant carefulness, that God be not dishonoured or displeased. The apostle telleth us that 'Christ bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, may be alive unto righteousness,' 1 Peter ii. 24. Now certainly this effect is obtained in those that have benefit by his death, or have assured it by faith. Before they were alive to sin, being active, and delighting in the commission of it, but dead to righteousness, impotent and indisposed for any spiritual act; but afterwards their love to sin is weakened, and their hearts quickened to spiritual life. Once more, that there is a decay of the evil principle appeareth by that of Gal. v. 16, 17, 'This I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' This place showeth that the lusts of the flesh, though they be not wholly abandoned, yet they shall not be fulfilled. We take it otherwise; but the meaning is, the unrenewed part shall be kept under; we cannot fully effectuate the evil we would. The spirit always opposeth what we would do according to the direction of the flesh. There are two active principles never wholly dead. The flesh doth not advance with a full gale, but meeteth with a contrary tide of resistance from the spirit.

Use 1. Is to reprove those that can afford a little religion, but cannot afford enough. It may be good words without practice, or practice without principle. Good words without practice: many talk well, their notions are high and strict; but observe them narrowly, and you will find them cold and careless; like the carbuncle, at a distance it seemeth all on fire, but touch it and it is key-cold. 'Be warmed, be clothed,' will not pass for charity, nor opinions for faith, nor notions and elevated strains for godliness. You would laugh at him that would think to pay his debts with the noise of money, and instead of opening his purse, shake it. It is as ridiculous to think to satisfy

God or discharge our duty by fine words or heavenly language, without a heavenly heart of life, or afford practice without a principle, or an inward disposition or inclination of heart to holy things. It is not enough to do good, but we must get the habit of doing good; to believe, but we must get the habit of faith; to do a virtuous action, but we must have the habit of virtue; to perform an act of obedience, but we must get the root of obedience. The soul must be divested of evil habits, and decked and adorned with habits of grace, and endowed with new and spiritual qualities, before it can have a principle of life in itself. But most men content themselves with a little good affection, that is soon spent: Hosea vi. 4, Ephraim's goodness is like the morning dew, that wets the surface, but is soon dried up. Many have some good things in them, but they want a firm root, which is a habitual inclination towards God. Oh! the difference that is between a man that forceth himself to do good, and one whose heart is inclined to do good! He doth not go to it like a bear to the stake, but with a native willingness: he is inclined to think of good, inclined to talk of good and holy discourse; inclined to pray, to exercise himself to godliness: the Lord hath put a new nature in him, and he feeleth an internal mover, or an inward impression that moveth him: this is life, but it is little regarded. Many have a show, but life cannot be painted; otherwise a handsome picture of godliness men may keep up.

But what are the reasons of this?

1. Negligence. They are loath to be at the pains to get grace, to be at the expense of brokenness of heart, and that humble waiting and earnest praying that it will cost us. A form is easily gotten and maintained: painted fire needs no fuel to keep it in; vanishing affections are soon stirred. A little remorse in a prayer or delight in a sermon they may have; but it will cost us labour and diligence to have the heart strongly bent towards God: Prov. xiii. 4, 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' All excellent things have their incident difficulties, and nothing is gotten without diligence, labour, and serious mindfulness, That which is opposed to common grace is casting off slothfulness, and a diligence to keep some 'full assurance of hope to the end,' Heb. vi. 11, 12.

2. Inconsideration. They do not consider how they shall appear before Christ at the day of judgment. Therefore are they called 'foolish virgins,' because they did not foresee all events to provide against them; as if the spouse should come later. They thought this oil they had might suffice, or they should have opportunity to get more. Christianity is a business of consideration. When Christ had laid down the terms, he biddeth them 'sit down and count the charges,' Luke xiv. 28. A builder doth but lay the foundation of his shame in his cost, if he be not able to carry on the building; a war were better never be begun, if we have not means to maintain it. If you mean to build for heaven, to bid defiance against the devil, world and flesh, you must not rashly engage, but deliberately resolve. We must consider the quality of Christ's laws, what visible oppositions there are, that we may knowingly, all difficulties considered, put ourselves into his hands. There is an anxious and serious deliberation neces-

sary ; otherwise, to leap into profession slightly maketh way for apostasy, or else for such a cheap religion which costs nothing, and therefore is worth nothing.

3. Some unmortified corruption or indulged lust, which hindereth both the radication and prevalency of grace ; the heart divided, touched partly with God and partly with the creature, neither loosed nor unloosed, but between both, can never be sound and upright : James i. 8, ' A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' A man must purge himself from lusts before he be a vessel fit for God's use, 2 Tim. ii. 20. There is some delight in lawful or unlawful things, that lieth between us and Christ, and is so near and dear to us, as to draw away the heart, at least in part, that the heavenly plantation cannot thrive and prosper in our souls, Luke viii. 14. There is some unmortified root of bitterness : Jer. iv. 3, 4, ' Sow not among thorns ; plough up the fallow ground.' Till God be our scope, religion can never be our work. If the pleasing, enjoying, or glorifying him were more sincerely intended, other things would come on with more ease and success ; as the water floweth of its own accord if the pipe be not leaky. If the honour of Christ, his glory, will, and command, lie nearest and closest to the heart, then sin would be more loathed than any other thing, more feared, more avoided, and we would follow our work more heartily. We are enlivened in the means, by an unfeigned regarding of the end ; our carelessness cometh from this, that God is only minded as a matter by the by. The end and means always go together. If anything be prized more than God, or equal with him, or apart from him, a little grace and godliness will serve the turn. If God were entirely our end, we would be mainly for him, and most industrious to approve ourselves to him ; if it be not so, something there is that causeth that neglect, that must be found out ; something that cloggeth thy heart, and detaineth thee from this effectual pursuit ; some lust, the gratifying of which is the delight and pleasure which contents us, and therefore are we cold and slight in religion.

4. Unbelief ; for faith doth enliven all our notions of God, and Christ, and heaven, and the day of judgment, and maketh them effectual and powerful. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 1, ' That faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' It puts a presence into things, and so affects us as if the things believed were before our eyes ; otherwise, a man cannot see things at a distance, 2 Peter i. 9. Christ and eternity are afar off, hence to an unbeliever they seem little, and therefore, it is not made a business of the greatest weight or importance to seek after them. At the day of judgment how will wicked men stamp and tear their hair, when matters of faith become matters of sense, that they minded them no more ! Oh ! if I had known this, I should never have dreamed out my time as I have done, saith the convinced wretch, but made a more serious business of my preparation. If the day of judgment be too far off, let us lay the scene a little nearer. Suppose one of the damned souls now in torments, that feeleth that which he would never believe, thus crying out, Oh ! had I thought my lazy desires and good meanings would have done me no more good, that my slothfulness would have ended so sadly, I would rather have wept out my eyes, and have

filled the world with sorrowful complaints; I would have bereaved myself of sleep by night, and refused my bread by day, rather than to have wanted time to have thought of God, and the great affairs of my soul. If our faith be so short-sighted that we cannot look as far as the region of darkness, time may come in this world that we shall wish we had done more for God and our precious and immortal souls. First or last we bear witness to this truth, when the neglected soul cometh to be separated from the pampered flesh or over-prized body. If we would learn to shut the eye of sense, and open the eye of faith, we might see it now.

Use 2. Is to press you to get oil in your vessels, to be rooted and grounded in faith, settled in love, hope, zeal, temperance, and perfect what is lacking to every grace. That you may be sensible what I exhort you to, I shall give you the sum of it by degrees.

1. Do not merely affect the reputation of good people, and rest there. As the Lord saith of the church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 1, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' Do not rest in this, that you have a name to live. God judgeth not as man judgeth. Man judgeth according to outward appearance, but God judgeth according to the reality of the thing. Many have the name without the thing: Isa. xlvi. 2, 'For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel;' that is, they get themselves a name to be his people, but they have not the thing itself. On the other side, we read of some 'that are Israelites indeed,' John i. 47. Some are only so in the show and outside, and some are 'disciples indeed,' John viii. 31; so in reality; others are so in pretence only. There is no true ground of solid comfort but in this, in being real disciples. So John viii. 37, we read of some that were 'free indeed.' The Jews had the name of freemen, but were not 'free indeed;' stood upon their liberty; they were in bondage to no man. Some are religious indeed, humble indeed, fear God indeed: when a man hath gotten the thing, he may refer himself to God for the name.

2. Do not rest in a common work of grace. Look, as in the beasts there is some little tincture of reason, so in temporaries there is something that looks like saving grace, but is not; something that resembles it, and looketh most like it; yet it is but the shadow of grace, not true grace itself. Historical faith is the shadow of true saving faith. There are some outward lineaments of repentance in Ahab's humiliation, and Judas his compunction; of spiritual affection in Herod's delight in John; and 'the stony ground received the word with joy;' and some show of reformation there was in those that escaped the pollutions of the world. Therefore if you rest here, without a powerful and inward affecting of the whole heart, you may come short of glory. The grace of temporaries is good in its kind, but must not be rested in. It is good in its kind, it is like priming the post, to make it receptive of other colours; it is an inchoate, imperfect thing. They are affected almost with the same feeling the godly are, come very near. How nice a point is that wherein the temporary and the real Christian differ! Both pray with sorrow, hear with joy, perform duties with some enlargement and sweetness—*Simili fere sensu afficiuntur*—yet, as two hills may seem very near at the top, when their bottoms are far

distant one from another, so these operation may seem near together, when in bottom and root they much differ. These motions argue God's Spirit working on them, not dwelling in them. Actuated they are with the Spirit of Christ assisting, but not reforming; as an angel sometimes appears in an assumed body. But it is dangerous to rest in this; it maketh our sin and judgment the greater if after a taste we rest in a common work. Historical faith, if not growing into a saving sound faith, it is a kind of mocking of God, and a hypocrite's portion. As for instance, we profess to believe him omniscient, yet fear not to sin in his presence; omnipotent, yet cannot depend upon his all-sufficiency; to believe a day of judgment, yet make no preparation for our account, Titus i. 16. Men's sins and judgments are aggravated according to the sense they have had of religion, and so 'their latter end may be worse than their beginning,' 2 Peter ii. 20. And sad it will be for those that from hopeful beginnings fall off from God. I will tell you, a man may live and die with a temporary faith and affections to God and holiness, without making any visible apostasy, and yet have no sound faith of the right constitution. Yea, if you regard what little rooting grace hath in men's hearts, how weak their pulse beateth this way, how strong their affections are to the world and the things thereof, how little they can vanquish the cares and fears of this world, and the temptations that arise from voluptuous living, it is to be feared the far greatest part of Christians are but temporaries.

3. Oh! then, be sure to get this truth of grace into your hearts. Let your hearts be effectually subdued to God; let there be a principle of life set up in them. Religion respects our principles as well as our performances: 2 Tim i. 5, 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.' There must be a renewed heart as the fountain, a well-informed conscience as our guide, and faith unfeigned as our great encouragement. And so all acts of charity to God and men are accepted with God as a piece of obedience done to him. If we will not regard the manner, God will not regard the matter. Oh! then, get this renewed heart, and a lively faith, and an awakened conscience: this is to get oil into your vessels, and if once you get this, it will never fail, but increase exceedingly, like the Sareptan's oil.

But how shall we get it?

I answer—(1.) You have this oil from Christ. The unction is from the Holy One, 1 John ii. 20. As the precious oil was first poured on Aaron's head, and then came down to the skirts of his garment, so Christ is first possessed of the Spirit, and then we have it by our union with him: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace.' We must go to the fountain every day to seek new supplies. Christ was 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' Zech. iv., Christ is represented by the bowl and the two olive-trees that always poured forth golden oil. Christ as mediator is the storehouse of the church, who is instructed with all gifts and graces for our benefit. Oh! bring your empty vessels to this golden olive-tree. The widow only brought casks, the oil failed not till the vessels failed.

(2.) If you would have it from Christ, you must use the means of grace, the word, prayer, sacraments, meditation. We need continual

supplies, must use continual prayers, seek the grace of the Spirit to keep in our lamps, Luke xi. 13. So the word; God droppeth in something to the soul that waiteth on him: Mark iv. 24, 'Take heed how you hear; for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.' If we be earnest and diligent in waiting upon God, God will abound to us in blessing his word to us. So for meditation; Mat. xiii. 19, the highway ground did not bring the word to their minds again; doth not revolve it, mindeth it not, heedeth it not. So for the Lord's supper; it is a means to root us in the love of God when we so often renew our oath of allegiance to him, to excite our faith in Christ. All these are a price put into our hands to get oil in our lamps, and prepare for his coming.

(3.) Keep your vessels clean. The Spirit dwelleth not but in a clean heart: doves build not their habitations on dunghills. He cometh as an efficient cause, as a Spirit assisting, before he comes as a Spirit inhabiting, and purifieth our hearts by faith.

(4.) After you have gotten this oil, cherish it, that it may not decay. Of its own nature it would do so; witness that stock of original righteousness which Adam had. God's promise by which it is secured supposeth our endeavours to waste it: Luke viii. 18, 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.'

(5.) Do not only cherish, and keep it from decay, but see that you increase it: 2 Peter i. 5, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge;' 1 Thes. iii. 10, 'Perfect what is lacking;' 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'That as you have received of us how you ought to walk, and please God, so you should abound therein.' A little faith will be as no faith; not honourable to God, nor comfortable to you, nor useful to others. All our doubts, perplexities, uncertainties, come from the smallness of our graces. It will not make an evidence, therefore give diligence. No endeavour, labour, pursuit after God, but hath its recompense; not an earnest thought, an earnest prayer, or time spent. What shall I say? They whose hearts are upon the ways thereof, go on 'from strength to strength.' You are almost at home; nearer than when you first believed; then you thought all your pains too much, now all too little.

Let me apply all to the sacrament.

1. There we come to meet the bridegroom in a way of grace. The marriage covenant between God incarnate and his espoused ones is here celebrated and solemnised. The sacrament is a transfiguration of the last marriage-supper, to ascertain us what entertainment we shall have at the day of judgment, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be made ready, and clothed with fine linen, Rev. xix. 23, and then be received into the nuptial feast: 'Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.' All is now prepared in this duty.

2. In some respect there should be as serious preparation for the one as for the other, as we would prepare to die, or prepare to meet Christ the judge. Christ did not wash his disciples' feet when he took them with him to Tabor, to his transfiguration, but when he took them with him at his last supper, John xiii. 7. Surely, to rush upon the presence of the bridegroom with a perfunctory, careless, common frame

of spirit, is a dangerous thing. When a people come hand-over-head, prepare themselves slightly, pray slightly before they come, and live carelessly and negligently, they slight the bridegroom, and wrong themselves, strengthen themselves in sin, rather than against it. Methinks it looks like going to the day of judgment. Here we receive the pledges of our salvation or damnation.

3. We should come with oil in our vessels as well as in our lamps.

[1.] Our lamps should be kept burning bright. If you are sluggish now, it is a sign you are slight in the whole. Surely, now the king sitteth at his table, Cant. i. 2, our spikenard should send forth the smell thereof; a lively exercise of grace. Now we come for meat which perisheth not; now is our familiar converse with Christ, and near communion with him; now we come to our legal investiture; Christ and all his benefits are delivered by these signs which he hath instituted. As if a man should say, Here is my house, when a deed is delivered, and you give up the key, or give possession of land by a turf: this is our solemn taking possession of him and all his benefits. We receive Christ in the promises of the covenant, but here is a particular close application. In the word Christ is offered, and exposed to all, as the brazen serpent, that whoever looked upon him might be healed; but this supper is like the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts. In the work, Christ and immortality are brought to light. Now Christ is slain before our eyes; the bread is put into our hands and mouths.

[2.] We should come with oil in our vessels. Would we have the Spirit blow upon a dead coal? He findeth nothing in us to work upon. We are bidden to examine; and what must we examine? 1 Cor. xi. 28. The apostle will tell you: 'Whether you be in the faith or no,' 2 Cor. xiii. 5. But to speak to this case: I confess, that *in foro ecclesie*, in the court of the church, all are virgins that take their lamps, that do profess to believe; all these must be admitted; but *in foro caeli*, in the court of heaven, none but converted ones are admitted; but *in foro conscientie*, in the court of conscience, I dare not discourage those that have the grace of the second or third ground. It is a means to strengthen them in faith, hope, and love, and make them more firm in the covenant of God; and the difference is too nice between temporary grace and saving grace for any to exclude themselves. I am bound to come with grace, but I am not bound to come with assurance. Besides, in the kingdom of grace Christ will not shut them out. They that have good affections should come, but with this caution: I would press them to mind the renouncing and engaging part of the covenant, and earnestly to break the league between themselves and their own ways, and engage themselves more firmly to God for time to come; that you may not think as you have done, or speak as you have done, nor behave yourselves in your relations as you have done; but throw sin out of doors. I would press you in the apostle's words, Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water.' The one relateth to the duty part. 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart;' the other relateth to the promissory part. Though your grace be common grace, it is this way moulded into special.

Doct. 2. That this will be found to be true wisdom, and the other folly.

For wisdom, to begin with that. Wisdom is *index sui et obliqui*. Wisdom lieth—

1. In proposing a right end.
2. In the choice of fit means.
3. In an earnest prosecution of the end by these means. This is the property of wisdom in the general, and it holdeth true in godly wisdom. The wise virgins did so. Their end was right; to be admitted into the nuptial feast, or everlasting enjoyment of God. And then they use right means, such as will bring them to the end. We do not use to draw ships in the sea with horses, nor draw waggons with the wind. We must not use contrary means, nor insufficient means. We cannot go to the bottom of a well that is thirty foot deep with a line that is but ten foot. We must use such as will certainly do. The wisdom of God hath fixed means for us, and we are doubly fools if we will not use them opportunely, carefully and constantly; else it is a 'price put into a fool's hand,' Prov. xvi. 17. The wise virgins did all this; sought oil in time both for their lamps and vessels, Luke xiii. 24. On the contrary, he that contents himself with a profession of Christ, without a work of grace upon his heart, is a fool; he is not a profane fool that doth the contrary, but a professing fool; that sort of profession is better than profaneness, so far it is a degree of wisdom; but rested in it is folly, it faileth in all the points of wisdom in the end. They do not esteem the Lord as the chief good, for they think a little ease of the flesh, or a little sensual liberty, or a satisfaction of a lust, to be better; or honour, or pleasure, or gain; this quiets them in the neglect or want of God. They see some good in Christ, offer fair for him, but take him not as the chiefest good; they are willing to part with something, but not with all for his sake.

SERMON IV.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.—

MAT. XXV. 5.

WE have seen wherein they differed, now we shall see again wherein they agree. In the words observe—

1. What happened to the virgins, *they all slumbered and slept*.
2. The occasion of it (I do not say the cause), *while the bridegroom tarried*. The cause of sleeping was *infirmitas humana*; the occasion of it, *mora sponsi*. In the first of these—

[1.] Who? *they all*.

[2.] What? *slumbered and slept*.

First, Who? *they all*. It is no wonder to hear it of the foolish virgins, but that the wise should do it, there is the difficulty; therefore some of the ancients understand it of death, which is called sleep in scripture; but that is improbable, and suiteth not with the frame and drift of this parable. Some would understand it distributively,