

where, and they had slept as well as the foolish. They had "gone in," and thus had falsified their true and primary attitude, which we read of in ver. 1, where we are told, they "went forth" to meet the bridegroom. But once midnight came, a cry was made; this was full of grace. They did not deserve that they should have been awakened and recalled to their first state of expectancy, still it was given. But it *never was repeated*; and what followed was the confusion, but *midnight was past!* Still, amidst all the confusion, there was a consciousness in the wise virgins that they had oil in their lamps. With them all was well. And when the bridegroom came, they went in with Him to the marriage. The others were not ready, and when they came *the door was shut.*

All this is truly solemn, and the more so when we see how the parable connects itself with the previous one: "*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven," etc. (ver. 1), i. e., in the state of things which we find in the parable of the wicked servant—who said in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming. Mark this; he did not deny that he would come at some time or other, but it did not suit his plans and his association with the drunken, or his assumption of power tyrannising over his fellow-servants. His *heart* dictated his conduct in all this. What has Christendom done but this? Centuries of worldliness and assumption of authority have characterized her; and instead of meat in due season, her effort has been to extinguish the