

this desert, this waste country, like the garden of Eden.

Paul, I have no doubt, saw this dispensation of the “fulness of times,” or he never would have predicted the great gathering that should then take place, namely “all things in Christ”—notice that expression; not those who are *out* of Christ, not those who have not been *baptized into Christ*; but “all things *in* Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth; even in him.”

This forcibly puts me in mind of the parable of our Savior concerning this great latter-day gathering. In the 24th chapter of Matthew he speaks of his second coming “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” and how the Gospel should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, before he should come in his glory. In the next chapter, in order that his disciples might fully understand his sayings, he goes on to explain that at that particular period the kingdom of heaven should be likened unto ten virgins; not the former kingdom that was to be built up, when he came on the earth in the flesh; that was not likened unto ten virgins; but at the time he should commence the great work of gathering, that wheresoever the main body of the kingdom is gathered together, from the four quarters of the earth, preparatory to his second coming, then, at that time, should the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth—(signifying that they did not remain in their native lands) to meet the Bridegroom. It was a literal gathering out; and after they had gathered out, taking their lamps with them, they began to be sleepy, and it is written, “they all slumbered and slept.” It was a time to

sleep, a time of drowsiness; it is called midnight; but when all was silent, and when probably the world outside was not looking for anything very great, was careless and indifferent, a voice was heard in the depth of this silence, saying, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” Then all those virgins awoke, both the wise and the foolish. The wise ones trimmed their lamps, and had some oil left; but the lamps of the foolish had gone out, because there was no oil in them. It seems that they had been so careless, that all the Spirit of God—which may be compared to the oil that gives brightness to the lamps—had gone out of them, and their lamps would not burn. “Well,” said they, “what shall we do? We have been expecting the Bridegroom as well as you that are wise; we believed the Gospel, but really we have been too careless; the spirit has been withdrawn from us; there is no oil in our lamps; cannot you give us some? Won’t you sell us a little?” “Oh, no,” say the wise ones, “we almost fear we have not got enough for ourselves; if you want any, you had better go and buy of those who want to sell.” Hence, five that had gathered were foolish, and five were wise. The wise entered in with the Bridegroom, and the door was shut before the foolish ones could get in. But they afterwards arrived and begged to be admitted; and the question was asked. “Who are ye?” “We have been here among your people for a long time. Have we not cast out devils at a certain time? Have we not been on missions? Have we not healed the sick and done many wonderful works in your name?” What is the reply? “I know you not.” Why? Because they have apostatized; they have lost the oil out of their lamps;