

## **FROM AND TO THE WEDDING.**

A brother requests our explanation of Luke 12:36, and Matt. 25:10, intimating the possibility of a mistranslation in one of them.

We have no fault to find with the translation nor do we know of any critic who materially alters either of these texts. The Diaglott renders Luke 12:36. "Be you like men waiting for their Master when he will return from the nuptial feasts; that when he comes and knocks they may instantly open to him." And Matt. 25:10, is rendered: "And while they were going away to buy, the Bridegroom came and they who were prepared entered with him to the nuptial feasts."

The fact that one text speaks of going in to the marriage, and the other of a return from a marriage has troubled some and has given rise to the query: "May not Luke refer to a company not the bride, but coming after?" We think not, for the reason that the context addresses them as "Little flock" – vs. 32. The marriage (union) of Jesus and his church is so different in many respects from earthly marriages that it can be but imperfectly illustrated by them. In the earthly, the Bridegroom comes to the Bride's home and there they are married; but not so the heavenly. True the Bridegroom comes – "The Lord himself shall descend," but the church also goes – "We shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air," &c. There is in fact no one scene which could fully picture the event, therefore several are used.

Our Lord comes as "a thief" upon the world and takes away his Bride. It is not to be in the general form of a marriage, rather an elopement. He has communicated to the virgin (chaste) church his design and instructed that during all the night she "sleep not as do others," (2 Thes. 4.) but be awake, robed, ready and eagerly

watching the various signs promised. The earthly marriage feast at the Bride's home lasted an indefinite time and when it was over Bridegroom and Bride went to his home where all things were in readiness and the servants on the alert, robed in their best livery were watching and waiting to receive their Master and Mistress; and woe to the servant found careless or napping on this important occasion. Our Lord used this illustration to show the proper attitude of his church at his coming. They are to be on the alert, watching, robed and waiting, having their "loins girt about with truth," i.e., being nerved up, made strong by the truth and ready for any service. Our Bridegroom does not come to us after the marriage, but when he comes we are to be as those servants were under those circumstances.

The Bride only, thus awake and expecting the Bridegroom hears his knock and opens to him. The sleeping world and drowsy worldly church, neither hear the knock nor heed his ("parousia") presence, but eat, drink, plant, build and marry as ever and "know not" of His presence. This scripture has, we believe, been largely fulfilled. The prophetic arguments have rapped loudly enough for some to hear who were awake and ready. They declare to us plainly that –

"Our Lord has come to take us home;  
O hail happy day!"

Yes we heard his knock and opened by faith and received him, and his words have been fulfilled – "Blessed are those servants." Yes truly blessed has been our experience since we recognized his presence and received him. Verily he has girded himself (become our servant) and caused us to sit down to meat (heavenly food,) and we have feasted and are still feasting upon Jesus and His word. We thank him that ours has been a continuous growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus, whom to know is life everlasting.

True, we have long known him in a measure and have known much of his plan, &c., but our realization of his love and of the fullness which is in our "Head" and our experimental knowledge of "the deep things of God" have been greater than we could have supposed possible. It has been "a feast of fat things" of "wines (Joys) well refined." But this knock has not been heard by all the servants at once. It is an individual matter; each must hear for himself as Jesus further explains – Rev. 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." The presence and knock began in the Fall of 1874. It still continues and many have received him and are being feasted and prepared for the elopement. Soon from the field, mill and bed one shall be taken and another left – "caught up to meet (unite with) the Lord in the air.

We understand the word to teach that those taken, although knowing neither the day nor hour of their taking will not be in darkness on the subject but will have discerned the Lord's presence, received him and been feasted before going to him. Have you heard his knock and opened to him?

Let us next examine the parable of Matt. 25.

### **"THE TEN VIRGINS."**

Unlike many of our Lord's parables this one is placed and fixed by the word "then." Taken in connection with the preceding chapter, it is fixed as belonging to the last generation of the church living when the Lord comes. The kingdom of heaven is a term applicable to the church, which, from its establishment at Pentecost has always been God's kingdom in which He is King and over which his will is law. True, in the future it will be "set up" and then it will be more generally recognized by mankind but even now we are really his kingdom; and when it has nearly finished its course in the world –

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

The name virgin means chaste, pure; in the parable ten are made to represent a larger company of chaste ones in the church. The conditions of this parable have been fulfilled by the church of our day. At any other period as well as the last, the church might have been properly represented by virgins of any number, but of no other than the last could it be said: "They took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom," because not until this nineteenth century has the "lamp" ("Thy word is a lamp") been in the hands of the virgins – the church, to give them light on the subject of the Bridegroom's coming.

During the three and a halftimes or 1260 years of Papal supremacy, ending A.D. 1798, these two witnesses (the old and new testaments) had been clothed in the sackcloth of a dead (latin) language, but since that time it has been taken up by bible and tract societies and scattered over the world by the million. And it is since this book has been thus among the virgins that its teaching of the coming kingdom and coming Bridegroom has begun to contradict the assumptions of Papacy – that it was his kingdom and its Pope his vicegerent.

Just at a proper time then, as the word of God had begun to circulate freely, comes what is commonly known as the Miller movement. It was a movement among christian people of all denominations, principally Methodists and Baptists, a general awakening, and included many of the best people in all of the churches. Mr. Wm. Miller, a very Godly man, (a baptist) was the prime mover in this country, though simultaneously Wolf and others were calling attention to the same subject in Europe and Asia; the real movement, however, was in our own land.

But the parable mentions a going forth to meet, &c. What does this signify? This is another evidence of our stage of the church, for although [R87 : page 7] the bible had always taught the "second coming of Christ," yet it had been understood in so general a way that none were able to settle upon any definite time and say – then he will come; consequently there could be no such going forth to meet him, as is demanded by the parable. Now the case is changed, Wm. Miller's attention is attracted to and riveted upon the prophecies. He reads: "Unto 2300 days and the sanctuary shall be cleansed." He counts and finds that it would end in 1843 or 1844. He supposes the earth to be the sanctuary and expects its cleansing to be by literal fire. He, though a calm deliberate man, could not forbear to tell his fellows that so read the prophecies, and so he believed. It spread rapidly, among old and young alike, and many virgins after examining with the lamp, were convinced that [R88 : page 7] the word taught them to expect the coming of their Bridegroom in 1844; and on the strength of this faith they went forth to meet him. In going they walked by faith, not by sight, but they did what the virgins never had done before, because never before had the word, or lamp led them to thus definitely expect him. (We believe him to have erred both in what the sanctuary is and what the fire is.)

Five of the virgins were wise and five were foolish. Of those who went forth, some were actuated by excitement, and carried along with the occasion, but others – the wise – not only had the zeal of the moment, but it was backed by a deep, heartfelt desire and spiritual yearning for the Bridegroom's presence. "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Their expectations of the coming of the Bridegroom, and burning of the world, met with disappointment. He "tarried," and they slept. They dreamed all sorts of foolish things, and various times for His

coming, as illustrated by the various fanciful and fanatical views held by them during many years succeeding.

At midnight, or during the night (the Greek word is not definite, like ours), there was a cry made: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." Who made the cry is a matter of no consequence. The cry was made before morning too; i.e., the announcement and preaching that the Bridegroom was due to be here in 1874, was made, as is well known by many of our readers. (We understand that morning began to dawn in 1873, where the 6,000 years from Adam ended.) It was made first among the Second Advent denomination.

The evidences from scripture that the 6,000 years would end and the morning dawn in 1873, and that, with the morning the Bridegroom was due, was preached upon by a brother of very marked ability as a prophetic student, who also published a series of articles on the subject in the leading paper of that denomination, ("The World's Crisis") as well as afterward in a pamphlet, and finally as a monthly paper called "The Midnight Cry." The message attracted general attention from the people of that denomination, so that in a few issues its circulation ran up to 15,000, or more than all other papers devoted to the subject of the Second Advent together. This, we believe, fulfilled this parable, not that Advent people alone are virgins, but they were the part of the company that were at that time looking for the Bridegroom, but asleep and unconscious as to the time of His coming.

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." Their lamps once pointed them to 1844, but He "tarried." A cry is now made that the tarrying time was thirty years (from '44 to '74), as paralleled by the thirty years of the Jewish age, from the birth of Jesus until He "came," being thirty years of age. This cry proclaimed to the virgins that the "2,300 days" did end in 1844, but that the thing

expected was wrong. Instead of the "sanctuary cleansing" meaning the burning of the world, it is now seen that the sanctuary, or God's dwelling-place, is the church, and therefore it is the church that is to be cleansed. It is to be cleansed by the separation of the wise and foolish virgins at the end of the tarrying time – 1874 – when the Bridegroom came. When the cry is heard, the virgins begin to awaken. Some have of the oil (the spirit) in their vessels (themselves), as well as in their lamps (the word). These are able to see. To see what? That the Bridegroom is coming merely? No, they all knew that, but it enables them to see the time of his coming and to again go forth by faith as before.

As the lamp shed forth light on time at the first going forth, so it shed light again on the same subject – the time – and that time was 1874. And bear in mind that the cry is made before morning – in the night, and that it announces the "Bridegroom" and further, if at all right – if it was the true cry, "the Bridegroom came" as it had announced.

All of this has been wonderfully fulfilled, it seems to us. It was first seen that the night (6000 years) would end with 1873. There the Millennial morn began to dawn. And the monthly, called the "Midnight Cry" ceased because the name was no longer applicable when the morning had begun to dawn. The editor of that magazine tersely remarked (p. 30), "Will some one inform me how a "Midnight Cry" can be made in the morning?" The division between the wise and foolish virgins, the one part seeing the 1874 time as taught in God's sure word of prophecy, and the others interested at first, but unable upon examination of the word to see any light on the subject, is illustrated by the fact that the 15000 readers of the "Midnight Cry" dwindled down to about 2000. The others went to the "Eastern Question," &c., to look for light, confessing that they no longer had light from the sure word of prophecy on the time of

the Bridegroom's coming. They took the paper, examined the arguments and apparently sought to get oil or light from the wise, but it must be an inward oil (the indwelling Spirit) that will reveal some of the deep things of God. Of this Spirit the wise can have enough for themselves but never enough to spare. Each virgin must buy for herself.

While the advent people have been used to a large degree as representatives in the movements of the parable, yet we do not think that it is confined to them, nor to people who were interested in the movements prior to the coming of our Bridegroom. (1874.) The writer, among many others now interested, was sound asleep, in profound ignorance of the cry, etc., until 1876, when being awakened he trimmed his lamp (for it is still very early in the morning.)

It showed him clearly that the Bridegroom had come and that he is living "in the days of the Son of Man." Yes the Bridegroom has come and is making up his jewels, and early before the servants of the house or the outside world are awake the chaste virgin church will be caught away to be united to her Lord.

"They that were ready went in with him to the marriage." Some time ago we supposed that this going in meant translation, but it now seems clear to us that it is a going in to a condition rather than a place; that it implies a withdrawing from the world and a coming in to a condition of special preparation for the marriage. This too has been fulfilled to a great extent, and particularly of late. The theme of most of our writers and public and private speakers has been Holiness – the "Wedding Garment" – for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And this preparation still continues. Some are just awakening, and others are more nearly dressed in the spotless robes of Christ's righteousness. It is a time of helping each other to put on the wedding dress. ("His Wife hath made herself ready.")



Another parable (Matt. 22:11) shows a work which must take place before the marriage, viz.: "When the King came in to see the guests." This shows an inspection among those assembled, and one not having the wedding garment is cast out from the light of the position into which all had come; cast into "outer darkness," the darkness which covers the world on this subject; the darkness in which the foolish virgins were when their lamps would not burn. These so cast out are not "counted worthy to escape the things coming on the world, and consequently have part in the time of trouble, when there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

But when will our Lord be present as King? We answer that the parallels of the Jewish and Gospel ages, so perfect throughout, indicate this point also. It was just three and a half years after John had announced Jesus as the Bridegroom (Jno. 3:29) to the typical house of Israel, that He came to them as their "King." "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee" was fulfilled the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the ass. The parallel point in the Gospel age shows Him to have been due here as King in the Spring of 1878, just three and a half years after He came as Bridegroom, and some time this parable must be fulfilled, and the King inspect the company assembled for the marriage supper. So at some time after 1878 we may look to see some (we wish there were none) cast out of the light into which all had come. As the light was on the time of the Bridegroom's coming, it would seem to teach that some would come to disbelieve the Bridegroom's presence. Why? Because not clothed with the wedding garment. Probably they will trust in, and "go about to establish their own righteousness," which is as "filthy rags," and endeavor to climb up some other way," and win their way to eternal life.

After inspection, we expect translation – to be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" – to be "made like unto Christ's

glorious body," and to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." This will be our marriage – being made like and united to Him. But the supper is apparently delayed until the company of our loved brethren – those who go through the trouble, and "wash their robes," etc. – shall have "come up out of (after) the great tribulation," because, after the marriage of the Lamb, the message goes forth: "Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. 19:9). Among this great company, whom no man can number, will doubtless be many of the foolish virgins. They have lost the position and honors of the Bride, but evidently, ultimately get oil and may gain a place among "the virgins, her companions that follow her." Psa. 14:14.

When the Bridegroom says, in answer to their appeal, "I recognize you not," we believe it has reference to His not recognizing any as part of His Bride when once that company is complete, or the door to that position closed.

Have you heard the cry, the knock announcing our Bridegroom's presence? Are you awake? Are you seeing to it that you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ as with a garment. See that, under His direction, you have it "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and help one another, "and so much the more as you see the day approaching," remembering that it is written, "The Lamb's wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19:7.

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