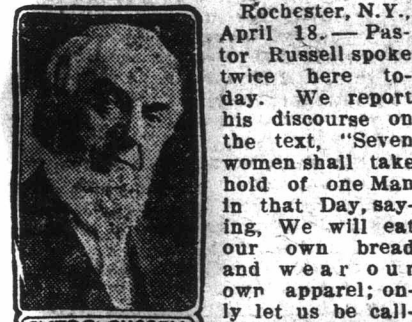


WHY SEVEN WOMEN DESIRE ONE HUSBAND Bible Picture of the Present-Day Religious Conditions.

Woman a Symbol of the Church— Jewish Marriage Typical of the Union of Christ and the Church —The True Church a Betrothed Virgin—The Marriage of the Lamb— "The Spirit and the Bride Say Come"—Who Are the Seven Women?—Who is the Man?—Why He Tries From Them.



ROCHESTER, N.Y., April 21.—Russell spoke twice here today. We report his discourse on the text, "Seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by Thy name, to take away our reproach." (Isaiah 4:1.) He said in part:

Many of the Old Testament prophecies are highly figurative. Doubtless they had some measure of application at the time they were written, but we have Apostolic authority for concluding that they were intended for Spiritual Israel. (1 Peter 1:12.) Our Lord and the Apostles quoted continually from the prophecies and invariably applied the lesson to the Church. Hence we are abundantly justified in assuming that our text is applicable to the present. Its peculiar expression, "in that day," is usual throughout Scripture in referring to the close of the Gospel Age, with its trouble and confusion incident to the inauguration of the Millennium.

Throughout the Scriptures a woman is a symbol of the Church—a pure woman of a pure Church, a corrupt woman of a false Church. Our Lord compared the true Church in the end of this Age to a company of virgins—part wise and part foolish—and likened Himself to the Bridegroom who had come to the end of the Age to receive His espoused Church to Himself in glory, John the Baptist pictured the matter after the same figure, saying, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom"; and St. Paul amplifies the figure by declaring "I have espoused you (the consecrated Church) as a chaste virgin unto one husband, which is Christ." (John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2.) Here, as in the parable of the Ten Virgins, the Jewish marriage is set forth as the type of the union between Christ and the Church—a very different figure from modern marriage customs.

With the Jews in olden times, when a betrothal took place and binding documents were signed by or for the contracting parties, but no actual marriage occurred for about a year. During that period it was required that the espoused be faithful to her espousal as is now expected of any true wife. We see the harmony between the Jewish marriage custom and the Lord's dealings with the Church. No one is espoused to the Lord who has entered into a formal and definite contract with Him. On our Lord's part the contract is the great and precious promises of Scripture, assuring the espoused that if faithful she shall be joint-heir with her Lord in His Millennial Kingdom. On the Church's part the contract is our covenant of consecration, faithfulness to our Redeemer even unto death.

The interim between our personal acceptance of the Lord's gracious promises and our death corresponds in a measure to the betrothal period of the Jewish maiden; but the more exact fulfillment of our justifications is found in the history of the Church as a whole. Our Lord's virgin Church was espoused to Him at Pentecost, and has been awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom and her resurrection change to glory, honor and immortality—the marriage, the union—for nearly nineteen centuries.

In His last Message to the Church, recorded in the Revelation, our Lord continues to picture the Church as a betrothed virgin, unmarried, but under strictest obligations to purity and faithfulness down to the end of this Gospel Age, where she is represented as making herself ready for the Bridegroom's coming and for the marriage. To be ready she must have on the wedding garment, and it must be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." (Ephesians 5:27.) That robe represents the imputed righteousness of Christ, which covers her every unintentional blemish and imperfection; and the spot or wrinkle represents the sin which would be a cause of such grief to the betrothed one that the stain would be removed and the wrinkle pressed out by the gracious arrangement made therefor by the Heavenly Bridegroom for the presented robe and gave directions by which it might be kept "unspotted from the world."

The Revelation shows that with her resurrection change at the end of this Age the "espoused virgin" Church will be no more. She will have passed into the more exalted state of the Bride—married, or united to her Lord and Bridegroom. Not the symbolical picture by which

she is represented—"The New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven." (Revelation 21:2, 9, 10.) That is, the Heavenly Kingdom, the new rulership of the world, is then pictured as the Bride. The grand work of the Church in glory is also pictured as the work of the Bride—"The Spirit and the Bride Say Come, And whatsoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely."—Revelation 22:17.

At the present time not only is the Church not the Bride, but she is not privileged to say, Come, to whomsoever will; for with the calling of this Age there is a measure of election. Our Lord declared, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent Me draw him." (John 6:44.) Moreover, there is no River of the Water of Life now. That bountiful provision is for the future Millennium. Now, as our Lord explained, those who become His consecrated followers are granted to have in themselves "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John 4:14.

The heathen and children in Christian lands when they begin to study the Bible are perplexed and inquire, "Which is the Church of Christ? They see churches of various names claiming to be branches of the Church; and they ask, Which did Jesus establish? The answer implies confusion and reproach. All claim genuineness and originality, but none can show any existence of its present organization earlier than the Third Century. When we contrast their elaborate and formal services with the simplicity of the early Church, as described in the New Testament, we are sure that they cannot be the same. When we compare their doctrines with those of Christ and the Apostles, as set forth in the New Testament, their claims fall to the ground for lack of support.

To illustrate: The Scriptures teach that there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6); that the Father, who is above all, sent His Son to be our Redeemer; that when the Son had faithfully accomplished that work, the Father raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His own right hand, or place of honor—next to Himself. Our Lord Himself said, "My Father is greater than I." (John 14:28.) But the various churches, each claiming to be the original, are telling us that there are three Gods, "equal in power and glory." Some explain that the three Gods operate as one; others teach that these are but three different manifestations of the one God. All this has tended to undermine the faith of the more rational members of these various churches. So disgusted have people a general become with their inability to harmonize the various creeds and doctrines formulated in the Dark Ages that many of the brightest minds have abandoned them and sought to frame new and more rational conceptions.

But the great Adversary, as the Apostle forewarned, has manifested himself as an angel of light and leader into all truth, and has captured their college and seminary professors and the most prominent ministers. With wonderful unanimity they have become Higher Critics and Evolutionists. In the name of all that is holy and good they are persuading the leading minds in the various churches that the Bible is not the Word of God; that it is not reliable; that while Jesus and the Apostles were honest enough, they were not brilliant scholars, and therefore could not detect the falsities of the Old Testament, upon which all of their teachings are based.

These wise men of our time assure us that the story of Adam and Eve is, at very most, an allegory, which no right mind might interpret in twenty different ways; that there never was a Garden of Eden; that there never was a sentence upon Adam because of his disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit; that the serpent delude us when they declare that by reason of Adam's disobedience sin and death entered the world. Since they deny man's fall, they therefore deny the need of a Saviour. They deny our Lord's words that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke 19:10.

Denying that there was any sin, they deny that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, which is set forth in Romans 4:24, 25. They ignore the Apostle's statement that by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death passed upon all men, because all are sinners. (Romans 5:12.) Thus do they make void the Word of God and set up, instead, human theories of the golden age, in which all are required to be called respectable, intelligent.

All this while the true Church has been "in the wilderness," as the Scriptures explain. (Revelation 12:14.) In other words, she has been in disfavour, ignored, and unknown to the worldly-wise. Some of her members have been scattered throughout the various denominations, and some have been outside of all these. The popular institutions known as churches are worldly; their aims, ambitions and methods are worldly. Hence there can be no true religious sympathy, fellowship and co-operation between the majority in these systems and the minority who are true to the Lord and His Word.

Other Editors' Opinions IS IT A DREAM? Don't you feel like rubbing your eyes sometimes, asks the California Outlook, to see if you are really awake? And if it were only not so if the world could only wake up and find it a horrible dream!

This is the dream—can it be real? The Christian world has repeated the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, the Outlook declares. The industries, the education, the science and the philanthropy of half the world are suspended. The majority of the able-bodied men in Europe are now freezing and soaking in battered trenches and killing each other by the hundreds of thousands. The two civilizations to which the world has owed most of its progress for a thousand years are now warring against each other, each announcing that it can survive by the destruction of the other. The war so far is a deadlock. Neither side expects to gain much ground. Women have only two purposes left—to grub the fields, while the men are gone, and to bear children, who shall rehabilitate a Europe of generation after next. With brutal directness as an avowed governmental policy, the soldiers have been bred to their women before being sent out to die that the breed may not disappear. And in Germany, the brood woman will be cared for by the state, so that the ranks of recruits for the levy of 1935 may not be jeopardized. But in Belgium there is no state to care for them. There, in the course of nature, the birth-rate must go down as rapidly as several months, and all the babies will starve to death. Born in an impoverished shelter by the roadside, to a mother whose ration is one baker's bun and one bowl of cabbage soup a day, babies by the thousands are coming into the world in Belgium. On that ration, mother's milk does not exist. There are no cows in Belgium and milk cannot be had for money, work, love or crime. Calmly, the world recognizes that these babies must all starve. But each individual mother is fighting to the last limit of desperation to save her own child, and if she can beg or borrow a drop of milk she will give it. In some parts of Poland the conditions are nearly as bad. And with most of the wage-earners of Europe drawing a cent a day in the army, the individual problem of the women and children of the "poorer classes" must be desperate. A family in Europe today that knows whether all its members are dead or alive. Every household in Europe is looking daily for the report of the death or maiming of some member, and few families in Europe know how soon it will be penniless, and no laboring family knows how soon its surviving members may be starving. No nation in Europe knows the evening without next year. The laboratories of Europe, where the secrets of nature were being delved for the relief of human life, are all closed. No one writes books, paints pictures, composes music, or does any other work. Among the millions in the ranks must be some whose genius would have made them the greatest of their race. The scientific researches left unfinished must be lost, and the world will never see the life of the world forever—and they will never be resumed. The current of civilization has been turned backward, into a raging torrent of barbarism.

It is a dream; a nightmare. But there is no power to awaken the world from it.—Wichita Deacon.

DANGERS OF THE STREET. A great deal has been heard of late of the prevalence of young girls on the streets at night as if the evil was of recent origin. The Post has drawn attention to the matter, and has again, and pointed out the terrible responsibility resting upon the parents who exercise no restraint over their offspring. The number of young girls indulging in this dangerous practice keeps increasing, to say nothing of those who deviate from the paths of virtue and become criminally bad. Parents and guardians should realize the responsibility which is placed upon them when the Almighty bestows the most valuable of blessings—children, possessed of all their faculties. Yet they seem utterly indifferent, entirely callous to the dangers that beset their offspring when they are allowed to wander at will around the streets at night. Rarely can a person walk down any of our main thoroughfares in the evening without seeing girls of all ages unattended by older persons (as guardians) and unprotected from the dangers that beset them on all sides. When girls in their innocent and exuberance of spirits and the things to do as they will, go where they choose and come home when they get ready, who is to blame for the sorrow and remorse brought into the home, but the parents? The streets are not a fit place for girls at night. The years are not many gone when the strictest watch was kept by mothers and fathers on their daughters. The peril of a doubtful companionship seems constantly pointed out, and girlhood was taught that the jewel of womanhood was virtue. Now the fire-side is neglected and deserted, the simple truths of life are forgotten, and young to be learned by experience, and just such experience sent a young girl to an early grave in Peterboro a few days ago. Can it be that family prayer, which according to a father's duty and mother have become a byword? Is it that men and women who bring children into the world have no sense

and gladly walking on a foot-steps in the narrow way of self-sacrifice and service. We see the vast majority ignorant of the Truth and of the grace of the Lord—not knowing from what they were redeemed, not knowing to what they have been called, and not knowing the trials and difficulties of this present time, for all the faithful ones.

We see that the fruits of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, love—possessed by the wheat class, are not esteemed by the tares. The tare class is full of earthly ambitions, schemes, and they give evidence that they are of the earth earthy. Some of these tares are fine, noble people in many respects; but they have never consecrated their lives to the Lord's service even unto death; they have never entered the narrow way, which alone leads to glory and honor.

Having in mind the numerous brands of Churchianity and their various conflicting doctrines, we wonder that the Scriptures use the word Babylon—confusion—as a name for these systems as a whole. One can put his finger with some degree of definiteness upon those things of confusion, and his followers know what they believe; the same with those of Buddhists, Brahmists, etc., but not so with Christians; for their doctrines are legion.

The confusion of doctrine, and the various branches of Churchianity has brought reproach upon them all. The heathen are inquiring how it comes that there are so many kinds of Christians, and how it is that they all get their conduct from the same Book. This reproach is keenly felt by the leading minds of all denominations. Consequently their creeds are very generally ignored, but the organizations still uphold those creeds as held to most truly. The systems are worshipped, and the creeds repudiated.

We have seen that in Scriptural usage women symbolize the churches; that the true Church is represented by a virgin, and the false systems by harlots, unfaithful to their espousals and associating with the world. (Revelation 17:5.) Throughout Scripture the number seven is well recognized as the symbol of completeness. Accordingly we assume that in our text it signifies all the churches of this world, but does not include the true Church, which is not of this world and does not follow its course.

We have come to the time when these seven women—all the various sects and denominations—are with one heart feeling the reproach of their situation. And what is their conclusion as to the proper course to be pursued? We answer that it is prophetically voiced in our text. The one Man represents our Lord, the Heavenly Bridegroom. Our text signifies that all the churches of this world have come, or are about to come, to the place where they desire to be called the churches of Christ, but care to have nothing more to do with Him. They wish to hold their sectarian names, and at the same time to be called Christians. The name of Christ is almost their only asset. For the doctrines of Christ they care nothing; and for any thought of redemption and covering of sins through Him they care nothing. It is merely His name that they desire. "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; merely let us be called by Thy name."

But the great Adversary, as the Apostle forewarned, has manifested himself as an angel of light and leader into all truth, and has captured their college and seminary professors and the most prominent ministers. With wonderful unanimity they have become Higher Critics and Evolutionists. In the name of all that is holy and good they are persuading the leading minds in the various churches that the Bible is not the Word of God; that it is not reliable; that while Jesus and the Apostles were honest enough, they were not brilliant scholars, and therefore could not detect the falsities of the Old Testament, upon which all of their teachings are based.

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