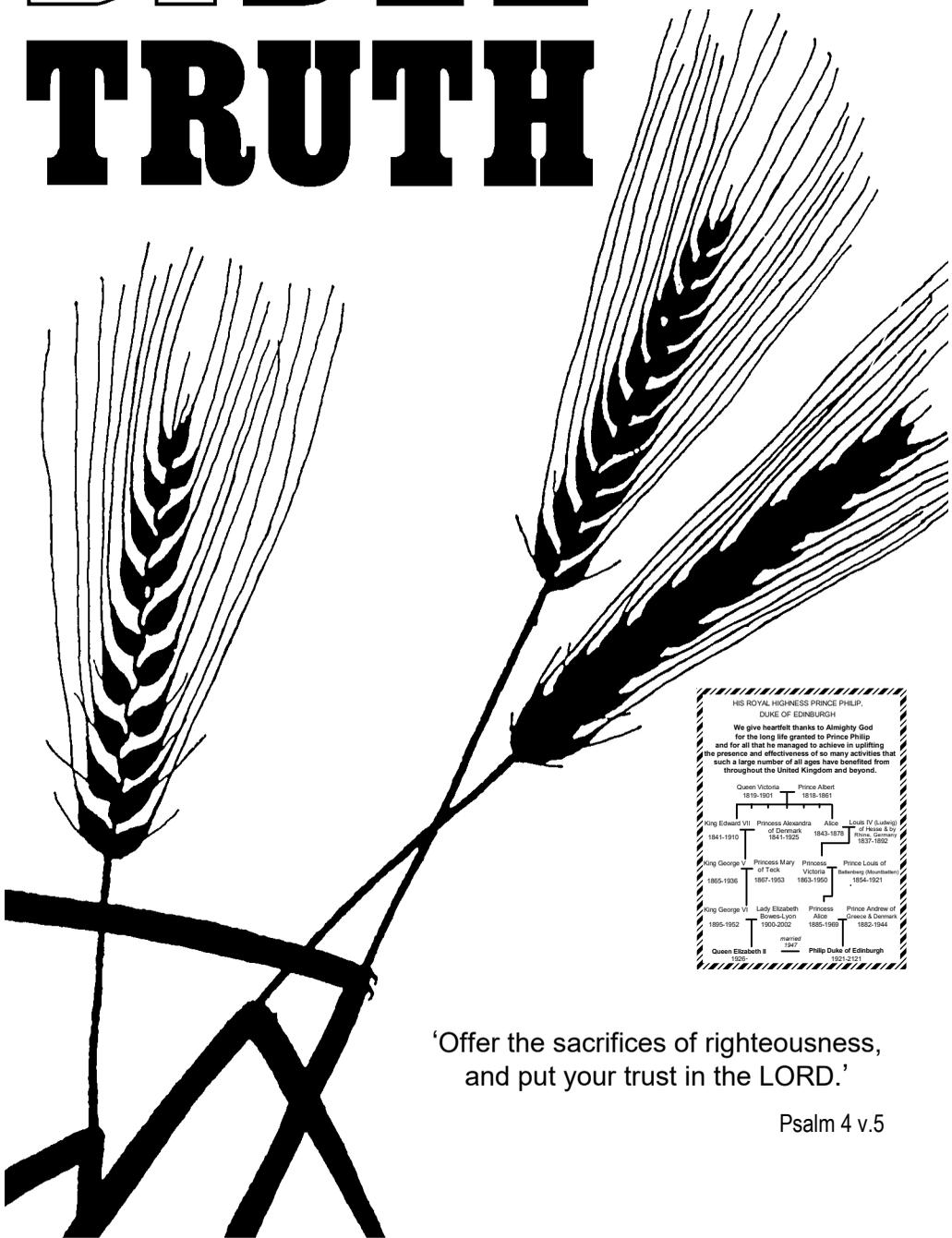


BIBLE TRUTH

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**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHILIP,
DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

We give heartfelt thanks to Almighty God
for the long life granted to Prince Philip
and for all that he managed to achieve in uplifting
the presence and effectiveness of so many activities that
such a large number of all ages have benefited from
throughout the United Kingdom and beyond.

Queen Victoria 1819-1901 Prince Albert 1819-1861

King Edward VII 1841-1910 Princess Alexandra of Denmark 1844-1925 Alice 1843-1878 Louis IV (Ludwig) of Hesse & by Rhine 1837-1902

King George V 1865-1936 Princess Mary of Teck 1867-1953 Princess Victoria 1863-1951 Prince Louis of Battenberg (Mountbatten) 1854-1921

King George VI 1895-1952 Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon 1900-2002 Princess Alice 1885-1955 Prince Andrew of Greece & Denmark 1882-1944

Queen Elizabeth II 1926 married 1947 Philip Duke of Edinburgh 1921-2021

‘Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your trust in the LORD.’

Psalm 4 v.5

Lamp-trimming Time

by the late Howard B. Rand

Following our Saviour's discourse on the mount of Olives, at when He revealed to His disciples the order of events leading up to His Second coming, He gave a plainspoken admonition concerning the necessity to be alert and watching while awaiting His return and He made this emphatic by the illustrative Parable of the Ten Virgins.

'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.'

Matthew ch.25 vv 1-13

Because it is a parable, the virgins, the lamps, the oil and light are allegorical of conditions and events heralding His Advent when He will rejoin His followers and claim His Kingdom. It is obvious that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of the parable and the virgins are those who are looking for His appearing. The fact that they are virgins indicates that they represent only those who are Christians and who expect the return of the Lord. This parable does not involve disbelievers, who are indifferent and careless, nor the wicked, who scoff at the promise of His coming.

Looking with particular interest at the moment when the cry was made that the Bridegroom was coming, the virgins all arose and began to trim their lamps. The events causing them to start trimming their lamps left no question in their minds as to its significance. But what is signified by the act of trimming their lamps?

What they were seeking, of course, in trimming their lamps, was more light. The wicks in their lamps had evidently become fouled with carbon and the oil could not flow freely, so the trimming or cutting off the wick was essential to restore its usefulness so that more light would be given.

The ten virgins are depicted as going out to meet the bridegroom long before he came and as the bridegroom tarried, the waiting virgins began to nod and sleep. Then at midnight, or as the Greek can be translated, 'in the middle of the night', a cry was made, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him'. The result of this cry was that all the virgins awoke and the first thing they began to do was trim their lamps.

The fact that they began to do this indicated an urgent need for more light. Before this could be secured, it was essential that the deposits of carbon on their wicks be removed, necessitating the cutting off of that part of the wick that was clogged so the oil could flow freely and brighten the lamp's flame.

What is the analogous meaning of this act of trimming their lamps? This question may be answered by asking another. What is it today that is preventing sincere Christian men and women from recognizing the significance of the events which are now signalling the imminence of his coming and the chronological timing of that coming? Why are they so blind to prophecy that the prophetic portions of Scripture have actually become a closed book to them? What is the hardened encrustation that has prevented the oil of the Holy Spirit from flowing freely to the very end of the 'wick' to provide adequate light? In answering this question, it is important to determine the significance of the wick itself.

In the first place we know that the virgins in the parable are in possession of the oil of the Holy Spirit. Even the foolish have oil enough for a little while but not enough to meet the long delay, for, as the Greek shows, when the trimming was complete the five foolish complained that their lights were going out, clearly indicating the possession of oil but not in sufficient quantity for the occasion.

If the oil represents the Holy Spirit, then in view of Paul's statement, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you', it would follow that the believer's body is the vessel containing the oil. The Lord declared of the Holy Spirit that He is 'the Spirit of truth' (John ch.14 v.17), and also the Comforter:

'... whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, ...' John ch.14 v.26

We readily see the essential importance of the wick in the lamp, for the oil in the vessel must work through it to give light. From the expression in the verse quoted above, 'teach you all things', we also perceive the Holy Spirit works through the mind of the believer to increase his understanding. Thus, the wick of the lamp is analogous to the mind of the Christian as the oil of the Holy Spirit saturates it to provide the needed illumination. It was this light-giving qualification of spirit-filled men and women that the Lord had in mind when He said to His disciples,

'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

Matthew ch.5 vv 14-16

When the disciples were endued with power at Pentecost, they came into an understanding of the truth as taught by the Holy Spirit and their minds were opened to discern what they were previously unable to comprehend. As a result of the work of the Holy Spirit through their minds, power was given to them to become the light of the world. Luke follows the statement of Christ that a candle is put on a candlestick to give light, with the observation that,

'The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light'.

Luke ch.11 vv 34-36

When an observant person looks into the eyes of a truly spirit-filled man or woman; he will see the reflection of the light within, while the eyes of an unbeliever are often dull in comparison because they do not mirror a soul filled with the light of the Holy Spirit. The worldly wise may be well educated and brilliant by all the standards of modern intellectualism, yet because the light within is darkness, they are void of the wisdom which is the gift of God through His Holy Spirit.

In conjunction with Christ's statement that the Christian is to let His light shine before men so that his good works may glorify the Father in heaven, Matthew records Christ's accompanying remarks concerning the necessity to obey even the least of the commandments. Christ stated that the righteousness of His followers (i.e. their keeping of the law) must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees and He gave a specific reason.

'For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Matthew ch.5 v.20

When the spirit of the Christian is all but strangled by the cares of this life because he fails to acknowledge the necessity to be obedient to the commandments of Christ, the Holy Spirit is unable to dwell within.

Also, when the mind of the believer becomes clogged by erroneous information, false doctrines, creeds and dogmas, the work of the Holy Spirit is frustrated because the mind is no longer susceptible to His leading. Thus, the light that at one time burned brightly grows dim and in some cases flickers for awhile and then goes out. The accumulation of a host of ideas, opinions and beliefs which do not conform with Scriptural truth is responsible for the failure of many Christians to have the spiritual insight which the Spirit is always ready to impart but cannot do so when the mind is unable to assimilate the truth. In all such cases the 'wick' is clogged with an encrustation of 'hardened carbon' that must be removed.

Because of the many years during which much misinformation, especially concerning the prophetic portions of the Scriptures, has been taught as truth, it is not surprising that even Christians who have the oil of the Holy Spirit are in darkness as to the messages of the prophets and the imminence of the coming of Christ, as well as the chronological significance of the times and seasons in which we

are living. Nor is it to be wondered at that many know little about the Bible because of the long-practiced method of spiritualization, which obscures the literal meaning of much of its great story. This is the reason why such a surprisingly large percentage of Christians, and even church leaders, who have been born again and have the Holy Spirit, seem to have no light on the relation of present-day happenings to what the prophets foretold. It also accounts for the 'blindness in part' (Romans ch.11 v.25) of so many, which is designated in the Parable of the Ten Virgins as a state of slumbering.

Before it will be possible for these Christians to have the light that will give them understanding, a drastic change of mind must take place. By an analysis of the story of the virgins we are given to understand that under the pressure of events they will awaken to the fact that they must discard the whole accumulation of long-accepted errors concerning the interpretation of the Scriptures. It will be realized at that time that they must repudiate the Futurist method of prophetic interpretation, which, being based upon the spiritualization of much of the teaching of the Word of the Lord, will have been proved utterly unscriptural. This will, in some cases, require a major 'cutting away' of a hardened over-coating of superficial spirituality, for many Christian leaders have not only preached a subverted doctrine of prophetic interpretation, but some of them have also gone on record in print as an authority on the Scriptures based upon these erroneous conclusions.

What will be the event, or events, to bring about this sudden change, causing those who are asleep be startled into a realization of their great need for light? It is certain that their nature will be such that there will be no question as to the meaning of what is taking place - even to the extent of bringing home to all their need to slough off every excrescence beclouding the mind and spirit. This is the significance of lamp-trimming time.

The first result of the removal of the encrustation from the wick of understanding will be the whole hearted acknowledgement of the truth concerning the identity of the Israel of God with the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples. At the same time the truth will be recognized pertaining to the Kingdom of God – the kingdom over which Mary was told by the Angel that Christ would return to reign forever. The acceptance of the chronological timing of His return will follow, for the very cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh' will have established its accuracy.

It is at the conclusion of the lamp-trimming period when the full light of understanding has dawned, that the foolish will realize they lack sufficient oil to continue to provide the necessary light. The lamps of the wise will be burning brightly with all hindrances removed, but the analogous parable warns that before the foolish are able to secure what they need from the source of supply, the Bridegroom will come and the wise ones will enter with Him to enjoy the marriage supper.

The midnight hour has passed and we are now in the darkest hours of the night of darkness. The watchers are alert and the importance of transpiring events is tabulated as each hour goes by. Paul's words in the Book of Romans ch.13 vv 11-14, as quoted from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, will be understood by those who are wise.

‘Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.’
