in marriage processions: see also Luke xix.  
13.

**to meet the bridegroom]** It  
would appear that these virgins had left  
their own homes, and were waiting somewhere for the bridegroom to come,—probably  
at the house of the bride; for the  
object of the marriage procession was to  
*fetch the bride to the bridegroom's house.*  
Meyer however supposes that in this case  
the wedding was to be *held* in the bride’s  
house, on account of the thing signified—  
the coming of the Lord to His Church;—  
but it is better to take the ordinary custom, and interpret accordingly, where we  
can. In both the wedding parables (see  
ch. xxii.) the *bride* does not appear for  
she, being the Church, is in fact the  
aggregate of the guests in the one case, and of  
the companions in the other. We may  
perhaps say that she is here, in the strict  
interpretation, the Jewish Church, and  
these ten virgins Gentile congregations accompanying her. This **went forth** is *not  
their final going out* in ver. 6, for only half  
of them did so,—but *their leaving their  
own homes:* compare **took**, in vv. 3, 4  
The interpretation is—these are souls come  
out from the world into the Church, and  
there waiting for the coming of the Lord—  
not hypocrites, but *faithful souls, bearing  
their lamps* (**their own lamps;** so, literally : compare 1 Thess. iv. 4)—the inner  
spiritual life fed with the oil of God’s Spirit  
(see Zech. iv. 2–12: Acts x. 38: Heb. i.  
9). All views of this parable which represent  
the foolish virgins as having only a  
*dead faith*, only the lamp without the  
light, the body without the spirit, &c., are  
*quite beside the purpose;*—the lamps (see  
ver. 8) were *all burning* at first, and for a  
certain time.

Whether the *equal partition* of wise and foolish have any deep  
meaning we cannot say; it *may* be so.

**3,4.]** {4} These were not torches, nor  
wicks fastened on staves, as some have  
supposed, but properly *lamps:* and the oil  
vessels (which is most important to the  
parable) were *separate from* **the lamps.** The lamps being the hearts lit with the  
flame of heavenly love and patience, supplied with the oil of the Spirit,—now comes  
in the difference between the wise and foolish:—the one *made no provision for the  
supply* of this—the others *did*. How so?  
The wise ones *gave all diligence to make  
their calling and election sure* (2 Pet. i. 10  
and 5–8), making their bodies, souls, and  
spirits (their *vessels*, 2 Cor. iv. 7) a means  
of supplying spiritual food for the light  
within, by seeking, in the appointed means  
of grace, more and more of God’s Holy  
Spirit. {3} The others *did not this*—but trusting that the light, once burning, would  
ever burn, made no provision for the  
strengthening of the inner man by watchfulness and prayer.

**5–7]** {5} **delayed:**  
compare ch. xxiv. 48, where the Greek  
verb rendered *delayeth* is the same. The  
same English rendering ought to have  
been kept here. But the thought of the  
foolish virgins is very different from that  
of the wicked servant: his—‘there will be  
plenty of time, my Lord tarrieth;'—theirs,  
‘surely He will soon be here, there is no  
need of a store of oil.’ This may serve to  
shew how altogether diverse is the ground  
of the two parables.

**they all slumbered and slept**] I believe no more is meant  
here than that all, being weak by nature,  
gave way to drowsiness: as indeed the wakefulness of the holiest Christian, compared  
with what it should be, is a sort of slumber:—but, the while, how much difference  
was there between them! Some understand  
this verse of sleep in death. But, not to  
mention that this will not fit the machinery  
of the parable (see below on ver. 8), it would  
assume (**they all**) that none of the faithful  
would be living on earth when the Lord  
comes.

**{6} a cry made]** See Isa. lxii.  
5–7: and the porter’s duty, Mark xiii. 34  
This warning cry is *before* the coming:  
see ver. 10. The exact rendering is *present*, graphically setting the reality before  
us: **there ariseth a cry.**

**{7} all]** *All* now seem alike—all wanted their lamps