

# THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON,  
OCT. 2.

Lesson I. The Wise and Foolish Virgins, Matt. 25. 1-13. Golden Text, Luke 12. 40.

Verse 1. Then—Indicating the viewpoint of the parable. Jesus has just finished speaking of the coming of the Son of man in judgment. At that time events will take place as described in this picture and the one following.

The kingdom of heaven—Considered both as a present and a future reality. The ten virgins represent those who are members of the kingdom as we see it in the visible church, and who are therefore candidates for membership in the kingdom which is to be. So, in some sense, they are all friends of the bridegroom.

Took their lamps—Oriental weddings usually occur after dark, and one of the principal features is the procession, when the friends go forth to meet the bridegroom and accompany him to the house of the bride's parents. All the details are, of course, not capable of interpretation. The number ten, standing for completeness, is the entire number of those who make up the expectant church. Among the Jews, ten constituted a congregation. The lamps stand for the outward profession of church members. To carry a lamp is to announce to the world a definite purpose to be counted among the friends of Christ, who of course is the bridegroom. The bride is not mentioned, simply because the church here is depicted in the wise and witless virgins.

2. Five . . . were foolish—Not bad, but improvident and careless.

3. Took no oil with them—The oil symbolizes all that is inward in the life of the Christian. Without that grace which is infused by the abiding Spirit all the externals of religion, such as philanthropies and creedal confessions, are lacking in warmth and light; indeed, are a cumberance to those who bear these empty lamps and a cause of stumbling to those who may look to them for guidance. Jesus is not speaking of hopeless hypocrites; the foolish had a little oil, that is, a modicum of true religion. But they hadn't any to spare for an emergency, and have been well compared to those of the parable of the soils who had no depth of earth.

4. The wise took oil in their vessels—The lamps are probably to be understood as torches, consisting of poles wrapped on one end with oily rags. These, of course, would burn only a limited time, and so would need to be replenished with oil from the little earthen jar carried for that purpose. If the inner life is nourished by the Spirit, there will be light for each day and for all that the future may require.

5. The bridegroom tarried—The cause for this delay is not given. The one thing certain is that, though his coming may not be at an hour expected, it is bound to occur.

All slumbered—Both wise and foolish. It was natural, and in the story may be regarded as "a merciful concession to human weakness. It is impossible for creatures such as we are to keep our religious life always at high pressure." Others look upon the figure as meaning the repose of faith, a "serene confidence in God." Sometimes all we can do is to wait, and, if all is in readiness, it is well. But the slumber of the foolish is a false complacency.

6. At midnight—The cry breaks upon the drowsy senses of the waiting virgins with startling suddenness. Our Lord had just described his coming as a lightning gleam, the swoop of eagles, and the surge of a flood (Matt. 24. 27, 28, 37). The time for preparation has gone entirely by; now, all that is left is to go forth to meet him.

7. All . . . arose, and trimmed their lamps—Both wise and foolish at the last moment required to do a little trimming. Who of us in the end but will feel the need of, and be grateful for the chance of, a hurried prayer?

8. Our lamps are going out—It is an artist's touch which makes the going out of these lamps coincident with the coming of the bridegroom. A formal religion may barely do to get a man through this life, but it leaves him in darkness when the summons sounds.

9. There will not be enough for us and you—In that day no man will have more than enough for himself. And, even if he should, he would be unable to communicate it to another. Each man must buy for himself. The personal experi-

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ence of Christ's grace is only for those who are willing to pay the price.

10. While they went away to buy—Why is it that men put off, till some great crisis forces them to it, the thing that they can do so easily at any moment? There is an interval between the warning cry and the actual coming of the bridegroom, but it is not long enough to transact the business for which there has been ample time given before. These five were foolish to the last, for they ought to have considered that the merchants would be asleep at such an hour, and that the bridegroom would have come and gone.

The door was shut—For those that were ready this meant security and the delights of the marriage feast. For those who were not ready it meant banishment and darkness.

11. Lord . . . open to us—Their interest, then, is just in being admitted to the feast. There are many people who want to get to heaven, but they make very meager preparations for it. The man who is genuinely, and not superficially, a friend of the Bridegroom, will pay gladly what it costs to be ready to meet him, and not come clamoring at the gate when it is too late.

12. I know you not—We are not told whether the foolish virgins obtained their oil, or whether the Bridegroom relented and opened the door later. But this solemn word seems to signify, that the belated attempt to fix up so as to look like his friends was unsuccessful. "The mere wish to enter the kingdom, and even the request to be allowed to enter, is of little avail when the prescribed conditions of obtaining admission have been persistently neglected." He is sure to see us as we are, and not as we try to make ourselves appear, and to recognize us as his own by our abiding his coming.

13. Watch therefore—Our Lord knew full well that the church would not be vividly awake upon his return, that "expectancy would flag and ardor burn low." "But well for such as carry in their souls a deep spring of faith and love, and, when the cry is raised at midnight, awaken with glad surprise to greet him."

## LASH FOR APACHES.

Strong and Growing Demand for This in Paris.

How to protect Paris, France, from the growing Apache evil is the subject occupying the minds of nearly all leading citizens.

Statistics of murders and attempted murders by the type of individual known as the "Apache" show that they have rapidly increased of late. In August crimes of this kind committed with the revolver were nearly seventeen per cent. more numerous than were those in July.

M. Lepine, the Prefect of Police, says that the law, as it exists would suffice for the suppression of this evil if it were fully enforced. He blames the leniency of the Judges. Light imprisonment and lighter fines are the usual punishments for many dreadful crimes.

Strong and growing opinion demands that whipping for the Apache type of criminal be applied in French prisons as it is in English ones. M. Raynaud, a deputy from Charente, announces that he will take the initiative in favor of the lash as a legal means of punishment.

# IT IS A LAND OF ROMANCE

MANY STRANGE TALES OF THE CANADIAN WEST.

One Member of Prospecting Party Predicted His Own Death by Drowning.

Many a curious tale has been told by adventurous travelers when in pre-settlement days they penetrated the vast solitudes of prairie, forest or mountain valley, writes W. J. Barclay, in Chambers' Journal. In the Summer of 1862 there was a great rush in the newly discovered gold mines of Cariboo. A party of over a hundred gold-seekers from Ontario and Quebec made the journey overland via St. Paul, Fort Garry, the prairies, and across the Rockies by the Leatherhead Pass. Descending the Fraser on rafts and in canoes, they found their greatest trials in its tumultuous waters, more than one life being lost in the rapids of the Grand Canon. The circumstances attending the death of a Torontonian named Carpenter were singular. His party consisted of three other men from the same city—Messrs. Fletcher, Hancock and Alexander. When they arrived at the rapids they explored the canon, it being agreed by lot that Fletcher and Hancock should portage the outfit while Carpenter and Alexander ran the rapids in the canoe. In midstream, the canoe struck a rock and upset. Alexander was a strong swimmer, and managed to reach the shore in safety, but Carpenter appeared stunned, and

## SANK IMMEDIATELY.

While exploring the canon his companions had noticed Carpenter making some memoranda in his note-book, which he replaced in an inner pocket of his coat and left on the bank before entering the canoe. His sorrowing companions found the entry to be:—"Arrived at Grand Canon, ran the canon, and was drowned."

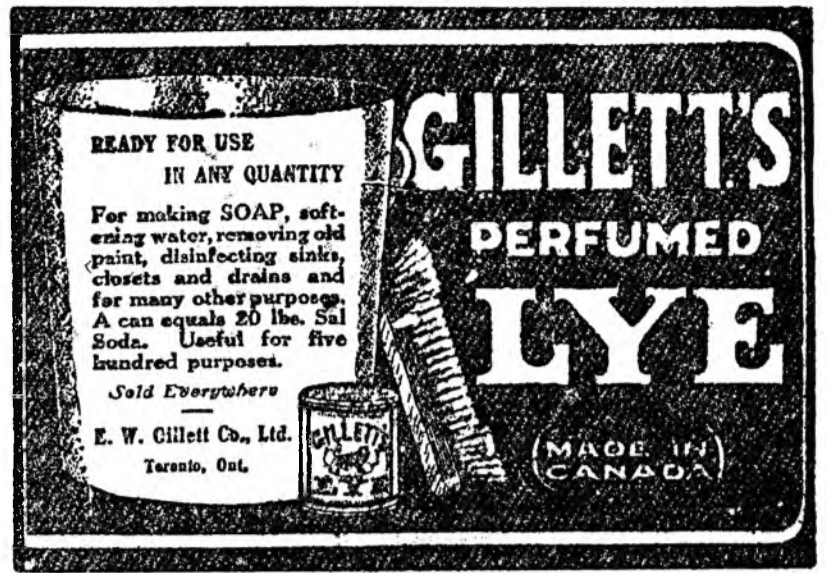
The phenomena of Nature sometimes took a tragical, sometimes a puzzling form. During a storm on the prairies near the south branch of the Saskatchewan a rain of fire suddenly descended upon a camp of Cree Indians and burned everything around them. Thirty-two Crees perished in the flames. The ground was burned deeply for a considerable distance, and only one or two of the party who stood near a deep slough were able to save themselves by jumping into the water. It was not a flash of lightning but a rain of fire that lasted for some moments.

There once lay on the lonely summit of a hill far out on the prairie between the North and South Saskatchewan, a huge block of metal. It was a medicine-stone of surpassing virtue among the Indians over a vast territory. No band of Crees, Blackfeet or Sarcees would pass in the vicinity without paying a visit to this great medicine stone to lay their offerings upon it to propitiate the mysterious powers dwelling therein. Strange stories were told in the lodges concerning this stone. Old men remembered having heard men say that they were only able to lift it, but yearly it had grown in weight so that no single man could carry it. It is little wonder that Indian superstition was stirred by this stone. It was not of this world; it had fallen from heaven. It was, in fact,

## A METEORITE.

In the year 1869 the missionary of Victoria, a small settlement north-east of Edmonton, caused the stone to be brought in to the mission. When the Indians heard of the desecration they were loud in expression of their regret, while the old medicine men declared its removal would be followed by war, disease and the disappearance of the buffalo. It is curious as a coincidence that in the following year the plague of smallpox swept over the Saskatchewan country with fearful violence, leaving whole camps of victims to rot unburied on the plains. The plague was accompanied by the afflictions of tribal war, carried on, in spite of the disease, with unparalleled ferocity; while a few short years sufficed for the extermination of the countless buffalo herds. The stone was afterwards shipped to Toronto, where the curious can now see it in the museum of Victoria University. It is also of interest to note that Iron Creek, Alberta, derives its name from this historic stone, for it was near its banks that it reposed so long as a manito of the red man.

A strange adventure befell Capt. Denny, of the North-West Mounted Police, in the Summer of 1875. From the fort on Old Man River he took a trip to the foot-hills of the mountains, about 40 miles distant, for the



purpose of fishing and deer-hunting. He was accompanied by an Indian guide. The hunt was successful, both the captain and his guide killing a deer. He sent the Indians back to the fort with the horses loaded with the venison while he inflated

## A RUBBER BOAT

brought for the purpose, in which he purposed returning to the fort, fishing on the way. During the morning he made good headway down the river, only once having trouble at a rather nasty rapid, in the middle of which he stuck on a flat stone, and was upset in getting off. He got a thorough wetting before he caught his boat again. About noon the weather began to look threatening, heavy banks of clouds gathering in the north. The thunder storms along the mountains are usually of short duration, but very severe while they last. When the storm broke the captain sought shelter in a clump of timber on the south bank, and during a lull in its fury he plainly heard the drums beating in an Indian camp, and the accompanying "Hi-ya" mingling with the sound. Leaving his boat drawn up on the shore and safely tied, he made his way towards the sound. The storm came down worse than ever, and the lightning was blinding as he made his way through the timber. In an open glade the Indian camp of about 20 lodges lay before him plainly visible, 20 yards away, with a band of horses grazing on the farther side, the gleam of fires shining through the open entrances of the lodges. This was surprising, as the Indians do not move about in the wet if they can help it, and their lodges are kept closed through superstitious fear of the thunder. Capt. Denny stood for a few seconds watching the scene, considering which lodge to make for. He had made a step or two towards that nearest him, when he seemed to be surrounded with

## A BLAZE OF LIGHTNING,

and the crash of thunder stunned him and caused him to fall from the shock. A large tree was struck not far off; he could hear the rending of wood. It was several minutes before he was able to look around. But, to his unutterable astonishment and terror, the camp had disappeared. Where a large Indian camp had stood in full view, the voices of its inhabitants distinctly audible, nothing remained in sight but an empty glade surrounded by storm-tossed trees. Little wonder that the captain, before he could gather his wits together, turned and ran, dropping his gun in his course. When lack of breath caused him to sit down on the bank of the river, a quarter of a mile away, he determined to leave his boat and walk to the fort rather than approach the spot again. The fifteen miles made a hard journey, but he arrived about midnight, draggled and worn out. The story told to his brother officers next morning at the breakfast table caused only laughter and chaff as a freak of the imagination. But the captain was firmly convinced of the reality of the experience. He was determined to proceed to the spot again and bring back his boat and gun. With an Indian and Blackfoot interpreter he returned that day, finding no difficulty in locating the place; but it was vacant, without sign of any recent camp. A few rings of stones overgrown with grass showed where an old camp had been many years before. The Indian related how the Blackfeet had surprised and slaughtered a camp of Crees at this spot, and two bleached skulls found among the grass were evident proof of the story.

# GREAT WAR MUST COME

STRIFE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND GERMANY.

The Germans Think It Unavoidable—They Seek Sea Power—Britain Like Rome.

Professor Emil Reich writes to the New York American in part as follows:—

Between Germany and Great Britain there is an antagonism that can be gotten over only by means of armed conflict. There was the same antagonism between Athens and Sparta; between Rome and Carthage; between England and France in the Middle Ages, and up to Waterloo, and between many a minor set of nations.

## INEVITABLE.

It has nothing to do with personal likes or dislikes; with the saying of the press; with dynastic differences, or with "racial" views. It is in the nature of things. It is like the conflict between day and night, or between youth and old age. It can be stayed off for a time! it can never be averted altogether.

In Germany every single person has long since been sufficiently convinced, and every able-bodied man is a soldier. Together with his education as an efficient unit for military purposes, he is taught a little history, and the great spirit of an aggressive and growing nation is infused into him.

Many people imagine that Socialism in Germany is a disruptive force, or one that will impede or incapacitate Germany in any attempt at making political moves of a European grandeur. No greater illusion can possibly be indulged in.

SOCIALISM IN GERMANY, as everywhere else on the Continent, except France, is a purely theoretic force. It yields to the first onslaught of any one of the old historical and real forces on the Continent.

Like ancient Carthage, which could not expand into the interior of uninhabitable Africa, Germany, too, cannot hope to possess much more territory on the fully occupied Continent, and is forced to spread by maritime power. However, Carthage met Rome, that is, a power well knit and strongly organized on land, and very capable on sea. The end was the downfall of Carthage.

Had Rome possessed only sea power Carthage might very well have defeated her. But Rome had land and sea power. Given her sufficient constitution and her two-fold power Rome would not be worsted in the long run.

The Germans, if victorious over the British fleet, can very well invade England, and hold it for some time. The British, with the present organization of their army, could never think of invading one town of Germany.

## SURELY A BIRD.

Mrs. Hoyle—Covered with jewels, isn't she?

Mrs. Dokle—Yes, it is hard to tell, at first glance, whether she belongs to the mineral or animal kingdom.

## PERVASIVE ODOR.

"What is the most expensive perfume you know of?"

And after a moment's thought Mr. Chuggins replied, "Gasoline."

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