



The 19,665-ton luxury liner De Grasse has been purchased by Canadian Pacific Steamships for the transatlantic trade. The vessel, formerly operated by the French Line on the Havre-New York service and on West Indies cruises where she built up an enviable reputation for her comfortable and spacious accommodation, will replace the Empress of Canada, which was destroyed by fire recently at her Liverpool dock. The De Grasse

has accommodation for 358 first class and 355 tourist passengers. It is expected that she will enter service under her new ownership sailing from Liverpool April 28 for Montreal. The ship was scuttled by her French crew during World War II to prevent her falling into the hands of the Nazis, and after the war was refloated and completely reconditioned, re-entering peacetime service in 1947.

ASK PROVINCE FOR MORE ROAD HELP

The Ontario Association of Rural Municipalities voted last week to ask the provincial government for more money to maintain township roads.

By a vote of 102 to 96, the meeting passed a resolution from

Arthur Township asking that the provincial subsidy on general road work be raised from 50 to 75 per cent.

Eaton Armstrong of King Township asked for an 80 per cent subsidy and an assurance that a certain percentage of township roads will be hard surfaced every year.

THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JESUS URGES ALERTNESS (Temperance)

Golden Text. — Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.—1 Cor. 16:13

Approach to the Lesson

We have come to the fifth and last of the great bodies of teaching which are one of the marked features of St. Matthew's Gospel. It may be good to remind ourselves of these, each terminating with the phrase, "When Jesus had finished."

The principles of the Kingdom (Matt. 5:1 to 7:29)

The promotion of the Kingdom (chaps. 9:36 to 11:1)

The progress of the Kingdom (chap. 13:1-53)

The problems of the Kingdom (chaps. 18:1 to 19:1)

The prospects of the Kingdom (chap. 24:1 to 26:1)

This last we generally term the Olivet Discourse.

Notice the occasion of this predictive discourse. Jesus had just said, in His lamentation over Jerusalem, "Your house is left unto you desolate" (chap. 23:38). The response of the disciples was to call His attention to the wonderful buildings of the Temple—that very house whose doom He had pronounced. Had they misapprehended His statement? Or were they expressing incredulity that any evil could befall so sacred and magnificent a house? At any rate, their admiration of the great stones (Mark 13:1) gave the Lord opportunity to clarify to them the rather veiled statement that had puzzled them. Then His explicit statement (Matt. 24:2) drew from the disciples, as they later sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking the abandoned city, their triple-pronged question about "these things," "thy coming," and "the end of the age." The entire discourse flowed from that question, and presented the prospects of the Kingdom.

The utmost charity is required in dealing with the Olivet Discourse, which has been made far too much a battleground of rival interpreters. The very fact that there are so many proposed explanations from men of equal scholarship and piety ought itself to keep us from too much dogmatism. The present writer has never offered himself as a prophetic teacher (at least not since he was twenty-one!). The most he can claim is, to be a student who has more questions than answers. There is still much light to break forth from the sacred page, and a humble, prayerful spirit will have its reward.

Verse by Verse
Matt. 25:1—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." The "then" follows from the subject at the end of chapter 24. Here is the spiritual situation as it will be at the second coming of Christ. The scene depicted was a familiar one to the disciples. Ten was a usual number of attendants for the bride on her journey to the bridegroom's house for the wedding feast.

Verse 2.—"Five . . . wise, and five . . . foolish." Compare the parables of the Tares and the Dragnet in chapter 13, where also we see a mixture of good and bad right to the end.

Verse 3.—"They that were foolish . . . took no oil with them." They expected the little bit of oil in their lamps to last long enough to get them to the bridegroom's house, not reckoning on delays.

Verse 4.—"But the wise took oil in their vessels." Perhaps they had had previous experience of a bridegroom's tardiness in making his appearance. In the East in those days, as in some parts of the East today, things were not done in the split second.

Verse 5.—"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." As this was usually a nighttime procession, sleep would be easily indulged during a delay, especially if the night were sultry.

Verse 6.—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Someone at the bride's home would be on the watch and as the lamps of the bridegroom's party appeared in the distance, would give warning to all who were asleep.

Verse 7.—"Trimmed their lamps."

The lamps in the meantime had been allowed to burn low. More oil, and cutting the charred end of the wick, would brighten the flame.

Verse 8.—"Give us of your oil: for our lamps are gone out." Read "going out." Without a fresh supply of oil, the wick would not respond to trimming.

Verse 9.—"Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." This may seem harsh on the part of the wise virgins, but they could not risk the whole company's being left without light.

Verse 10.—"And while they went to buy . . . the door was shut." The wedding must wait for a tarrying bridegroom, but not for tardy attendants, who probably had to wake the oil merchant from sleep to serve them.

Verse 11.—"Lord, Lord, open to us." So far as the story goes, the word "lord" is simply a respectful "sir." When we come to apply the word to the Lord Jesus, it has its full content, and should be capitalized.

Verse 12.—"I know you not." That is, he refused to recognize them as members of the wedding party. Their carelessness and consequent lateness were an insult to the bridegroom.

Verse 13.—"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Far more is at stake than being shut out of a wedding feast. No tardy, testy bridegroom is the one we wait for, but the Lord of glory, whose demands of readiness and watchfulness are just and right.

The Heart of the Lesson
This parable has been positively tortured in attempts to spiritualize every detail. It will be much safer to let the parable enforce its own lesson without forcing it to serve our particular slant of prophetic teaching.

The picture that Jesus drew was a common one. He always used common things to illustrate great truths. He had one main lesson to press home by means of this illustration, which was His way with parables. We may indeed appeal to features in this story to illustrate other truths, but if we are expounding it as a parable of our Lord's, we should be content to let it teach what He was driving home that day—preparedness and watchfulness. Let us see the features of the story which specially point to this.

1. All the virgins thought they were prepared for the bridegroom's coming, but five had only an appearance of readiness, while not having the one thing needful. Peter exhorts us to "make your calling and election sure." Many have the outward form of Christianity, and mingle with the Saints, but have mistaken Christian profession for salvation.

2. The foolish virgins did not "wake up" to a realization of their fatal lack till it was too late. The coming of the bridegroom discovered their lack, and they were barred from the feast. The coming of the Lord will be a time of discovery. Those who have depended on appearance will be found unprepared but those made ready by a true work of the Spirit will be gathered home.

3. Had the wise virgins not slept they might have warned the foolish virgins in time. Perhaps many sleep on in their delusion till it is too late, because too many "wise virgins" sleep on in their security. More watchfulness on the part of the saints might save the self-deceived from final loss.

One thing we know: Christ is coming. One thing we know not: when Christ is coming. The certainty should be enough to make us watch.

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