



## LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 3.

## Parable of the Ten Virgins.

Matthew, xxv., 1-13. Memory verses, 10-13.  
Read Mark xii., 41-44. Matt. xxiii., 1  
to xxv., 13.

## Golden Text.

Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.—Matt. xxv., 13.

## The Bible Lesson.

1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2. And five of them were wise, and five foolish.

3. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them:

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10. 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.

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

## Lesson Hymn.

'Tis but a little while  
And He shall come again,  
Who died that we might live; Who lives  
That we with Him may reign.

Then, O my God, prepare  
My soul for that great day;  
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away.  
—Horatius Bonar.

## Suggestions.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is a parable of the inner life of those who call themselves the followers of Christ. No mention is made of the outside world, of those who did not care to go to the great marriage feast, the parable is simply concerned with those who expect to spend eternity rejoicing in heaven.

Five were wise and five were foolish, but when they started out to meet the bridegroom they all appeared equally fit to honor him and to enter into the joys of the marriage feast with him. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept, at midnight loud voices were heard proclaiming the coming of the bridegroom, and the virgins hastily arose and began to trim their lamps in preparation for the joyful procession. Such a scene is not uncommon in the East even at the present time.

Dr. Trumbell, attending an Oriental wedding, saw the bride's procession in the afternoon. He was told the bridegroom's procession would move out later in the evening. He watched for it several hours, and seeing no sign thereof he went quietly to bed in his tent. But at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Literally,

the substance of his dragoman's call.—From 'Peloubet's Notes.'

As the ten virgins were trimming their lamps, the foolish ones who had brought no oil with theirs, begged the others to give them some of their oil. But the wise virgins could not give away any of their oil for they had only just enough to keep their own lamps burning brightly for the procession through the dark night. So the foolish virgins went to the oil-sellers to buy oil for their lamps, and while they were away the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the great marriage supper, and the door was shut! Afterwards the foolish virgins came knocking at the door and praying to be let in. But they were too late, the door could not be opened again, and the voice of the bridegroom from within said sadly, I know you not!

Poor foolish ones, their hopes were so bitterly crushed we cannot help sympathizing with their disappointment, and yet their hopes were destroyed only because it had been without foundation. When they had first set out to meet the bridegroom they knew that they ought to have oil in their lamps, but they neglected it, they thought that somehow they could get along without, or they refused to think of it at all.

They had the same opportunities to buy oil as the others had, but they did not do it, they built their hopes without a foundation.

If a lad goes up for an examination in subjects which he has never studied, he may be sure of failure, his hopes of prize-winning have no foundation. If a man builds a house carelessly, putting in here a poor brick and there a worn-out shingle, his hope of obtaining a solid, handsome building is without foundation.

The ten virgins represent the Church on earth. The oil represents the Holy Spirit (Zech. iv., 11-14), and the abiding presence of the living Saviour. The waiting time when all slumber represents the present time when all are engrossed in the work of this life and not looking for the immediate coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ. But as sudden as a midnight cry breaking in on the stillness of the night will be that glorious coming, and 'they that are ready,' shall go in with him to the marriage feast which God has prepared. (Rev. xix., 6-9.)

Christian character cannot be divided up and lent to the friend who has none. The soul that has lived in the presence of Jesus and been filled with his Spirit cannot lend its sweetness and power to another when suddenly called into the presence of the King. We cannot enter heaven on the strength of the goodness of our mother or father or any godly man, we must have oil in our own lamps, we must each have for ourselves the abiding presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. (John xiv., 16-18, 23: xv., 4-8.) It is not safe to put off for an hour this 'buying of oil.' (Isa. lv., 1, 6), without money and without price, we may obtain the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life, the life of Christ in us.

## Questions.

Relate the parable of the Ten Virgins. Whom do the virgins represent? Whom does the oil represent? Why were the foolish ones disappointed? Why could not the others divide their oil and share it with them? If God should call you to himself to-day, are you ready?

## C. E. Topic.

Sun., Feb. 3.—Topic.—Christian Endeavor Day.—Josh. 1, 11.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## STRONG JUNIORS.

Mon., Jan. 28.—Keep well.—Dan. i., 11-15.

Tues., Jan. 29.—Be strong in mind.—Prov. iii., 13.

Wed., Jan. 30.—Have heart strength.—Prov. iv., 23.

Thu., Jan. 31.—Be strong to say 'Yes.'—I Kings xii., 6-8.

Fri., Feb. 1.—Have strength to say 'No.'—Dan. i., 8.

Sat., Feb. 2.—Heroes and heroines.—Rom. xv., 1, 2.

Sun., Feb. 3.—Topic.—Be strong.—Josh. i., 1-11.—(Christian Endeavor Day.)

## Free Church Catechism.

15. Q.—What does the resurrection of Jesus teach us?

A.—It assures us that he has finished the work of our redemption; that the dominion of death is ended; and that, because he lives, we shall live also.

16. Q.—What do we learn from his ascension into heaven?

A.—That we have in him an Advocate with the Father, who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

17. Q.—What do we learn from his session at the right hand of God?

A.—That he is exalted as our Head and King, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.



## A Thrilling Scene

(By James B. Dunn, D.D., in 'Sabbath Reading'.)

The following account of a thrilling scene that took place some years ago at a town meeting when the question of licensing taverns was discussed, was related by the late Edward C. Delavan:

The town had suffered greatly from the sale and use of intoxicating liquors. The leading influences were opposed to total abstinence.

At the meeting the minister, a deacon, and the physician were present, and were all in favor of continuing the custom of license—all in favor of permitting a few men of high moral character to sell alcoholic liquor, for they all agreed in the opinion that such liquor, when used in moderation as a beverage, was a good creature of God, and also, to restrict the sale or moderate use, was an unjust interference with human liberty, and a reflection upon the benevolence of the Almighty. They all united in the belief, that in the use of alcoholic liquor as a beverage, excess alone was to be avoided.

The feeling appeared to be all one way, when a gentleman, who was present by accident, but who had been a former resident of the town, begged leave to differ from the speakers who had preceded him. He entered into a history of the village from its early settlement; he called the attention of the assemblage to the desolation drinking had brought upon families and individuals; he pointed to the poor-house, the prison-house, and the graveyard for its numerous victims; he urged the people by every consideration of mercy, to let down the floodgates, and prevent, as far as possible, the continued desolation of families by the sale and use of alcoholic drink. But all would not do.

The arguments of the minister, the deacon, and the physician, backed by station, learning and influence, were too much for the single teetotaler.

As no one arose to continue the discussion, or support him, the president was about to put the question—when all at once there arose from one corner of the room a miserable woman. She was thinly clad, and her appearance indicated the utmost wretchedness, and that her mortal career was almost closed.

After a moment of silence, and all eyes being fixed upon her, she stretched her attenuated body to its utmost height, then her long arms to their greatest length, and raising her voice to a shrill pitch, she called upon all to look upon her.

'Yes!' she said, 'look upon me, and then hear me. All that the last speaker has said relative to moderate drinking, as being the father of all drunkenness, is true. All practice, all experience, declares its truth. All drinking of alcoholic poison, as a beverage in health, is excess. Look upon me. You all know me, or once did.'

'You all know I was once mistress of the best farm in this town. You all know, too, I once had one of the best, the most devoted of husbands. You all know I had five noble-hearted, industrious boys. Where