

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*" (Matt. xxv. 1-13).

The bridegroom manifestly represents "the Son of man" or Jesus Christ. The five wise virgins who have oil with them, represent all those Christians who, by *practising* Christianity,—by labouring for the good of their fellow-man, have acquired such a degree of Christian knowledge that they will be prepared to go out as it were to meet Jesus, now that he is coming to separate the true Christians from the merely nominal Christians; and gather them together into one country, and there bless and prosper them, while he suffers the merely nominal Christian nations to weaken themselves by their divisions. Thus he will, in the figurative language of Scripture, "gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," as John the Baptist prophesied he should (Matt. iii. 12). The five foolish virgins who have no oil with them represent those merely nominal Christians who do not *practise* Christianity, who do not labour for the good of their fellow-man, nor attempt to show by their deeds or actions that they love their neighbours as them-