No. 132.

On the parable of the ten virgins.
Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew xxv. 1–12. Parable of the ten virgins.

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...draws in this chapter, though by some it is only given to
for its final judgment. In this scene of danger, showing
the disciples, of course, had a deep interest. The city of that
same was to be pitched; destroyed; its inhabitants, even the
distinct, natural existence, were to be obliterative. In the
midst of this vision, there were to be the depo-
tancies of the truths, or the death of the habit of the lies. The
interest of Egypt was to be transferred to its hands; if the
life of persons, like the death of ignorant times was to be erased,
the utmost harvest terminated. The duties of these first
world; of course, the ordinary us in wishing or among those de-
ties, that of unwearied watchfulness would stand in the
fruit of work. If one now needed to be vigilante, they would
and "watch therefore," said the Master, "for ye know not at
what hour your Lord comes." It was evident to read
into this duty of watchfulness, that all who were the
...wishing, act as those who were known. The conduct of the
five foolish was the constant of the Master. They were to
avoid that if the wise ones and the conduct they were to
practice. They were to have oil in their vessels, if their lamps
...waxing. The circumstance of the Master taking
their lamps, of journeying to meet the morning. It was to
be particularly this that the most important actions or occasions,
were to be diversified, so as to make the same secret to be
signified as hidden in each circumstance. The de-
ing of the parable is to establish a striking contrast between
the patience or preparation of the wise virgins, and the hastiness
of the consequent condemnation of the foolish virgins, to hold up the
conduct of the wise to be imitated, that of the foolish to
be shamed. The various questions, as have been raised
the parable, such as what is particular is significant. Do the
lamp, the oil, their going to buy the oil; are all these
weil; if all these things, are more circumstances of the
content, extended the act, forth, them with the narrative. The
disciples were to be prepared against the time of the depar-
ture of Jerusalem, for all the ensuing consequent upon that
event; as how could their Master come unwarily except
then, the doing of things, necessarily, than by this per-
He, in all his foolish miers, are represented as shut out from the marriage festival on account of their want of profession. No one was telling them in strong language that if that day of trial and doom should find them standing on their feet, or struggling in their duty, it is ungracious with the amount of absence of a true character, they might expect that at last the Watchman of Some would say to the "nearby, near In gait upon you, I know your not," that if at the dower of God to them, the interests of its children on this by their remission, they would have a reason to be more to that by who had chosen them. They have to thank this message of mercy this revelation of truth.

Such is the lesson of perseverance, and this pain ble taught to the disciples of Jesus. Let us now see what instruction we may draw from it for our lives.

1. In the first place, we learn the necessity of being furnished with moral principles of duty and virtue, as well as to meet the need in unavoidable circumstances of life. We see this is increasingly illustrated in the conduct of the nations. While the bridegroom was

...they all embraced him with joy at that moment. He was contented, when they were almost all to have been prepared, they found that the most important thing in the style of their journey, was to make it their duty, to exhibit their companions. They were of good will, but the sense answer you, not so, lest there be not enough for us. What you see to them, that sell magic for yourselves. And the art may be applied to any representation of the condition of a large part of mankind. While the cause of the is smooth of unpreparedness, no thing occurs to call for the any peculiar sacrifice to duty or execution of principle. We are at ease with regard to our qualifications for such occasions. You fears, they severely suspect our own deficiencies. Like their gins in the paradise are seemly. Be not, but let the cry set mankind to come, like as these wise circumstances of peace have tried and difficulty, let some occasions occur in a call the full exertion of their principles. Of these days and trust. Other, perhaps we find that, like the following: gins, we have our aid, and camps are going out...
the simplicity, instead of giving them preparatory weight, vaneishes like dew in the mornign's sun. The false religion are an exact picture of what the hypocrite is religiun is, having the form of godliness, but destitute of the power thereof; glistening of shining fair outward, but Athe pulviscous in his atheren. It is the who when his Liw enacts will on ther away, of finding no help in himself for his own principles, will turn for relief to others, but neven veni. Personal purity of righteousness will alone make us acceptable in the great day of account. This is just what the hypocrite has never acquired, consequecly He, whose right it is to pronounce judgment, will say, truly does into you. I know you not. "It is the ano-

rual characteristic of hypocrisy in religion, that it not

consist with its being a real thing, it is in the

itself in the world. Many take the name of if is not

taking any thing of the name of it there is the thing, consequently other tho the clay of severe trials comes, these pre-

ter.
give expectations of the divine favor; notwithstanding their lamentable deficiency in the tender of grace. Whether a better account cannot be given of the habits of piety, or pietuity, that have in some ages and countries marked the visible parts of religion, than by ascribing them to the corrupt policy of those, who being constituted the religion of the heart, were not extreme discipliners on account of worldly views or making the most splendid pretensions to it, just as the argizens in the parable who had stupidly neglected to bring any oil with them might have been abundantly more as serious on advancing by tainting their lamps, than they who had done this with them in their lamps. We therefore, who refer an impartial examination of himself, can be assured, that his supreme regard is paid to the intrinsic spiritual parts of religion, that he fundamentally considers its essential services and institutions as being only the means of enforcing, securing and preserving this intrinsic principle of piety, may agree in the testimony of his conscience, as being the voice of God within him, pronouncing him to be one approved of heaven, having that temper of mind, as can alone fit him for the fruition of heavenly joys. He is one that takes oil in this vessel, and his lamp doth goeth with cheerfully to meet the bridegroom.

6. We have seen this passed the duty of watchfulness. This is the duty which he himself deduces from it: watch therefore, as the day doth, the hour, whereas the Son of man cometh. The situation in which man is placed is precisely that which calls for the greatest and most absolute corruption of vigilance, for it is a state in many respects the degenerate degree every way, yet one in which all principle and not will invariable lead to certain results. The very idea that this is a state in which we are to prepare for another higher state of being, implies that we should be conscious by means of temptations and dangers. And so cannot move a step in the journey of life without finding it to be so. Here are falsefalls, no matter what the watchful eye can see around; there are allurements, the tendency of which requires vigilance to discern, the strength of which requires firmness to withstand. If fortune had no enemies to encounter, no temptations to struggle with, we clave from
tremendous delectful passions to animate its sedentary, me
considering influence to fear from the power of evil example
fis of minimizing customs, where would be the occasion to the
necessity of watchfulness? So that for any man to imagine
himself so firmly established in the cause of interest of
virtue, that he cannot firmly be in Danile from it to
know it, it is to obliterate as far as relates to himself,
attitude to annul the obligation of this duty of the ever-
continual consequence would be that thinking himself
under no obligation to watchfulness, he will become yielding
one of the victims of watchfulness as many of watchfulness
I will am who thinks he stands to take care not the
fall, but no one suppose that he can be placed beyond
the necessity of constant vigilance. Every day will bring its
temptations into dangers with it, & consequent every day
will impose the obligation of watchfulness. And the duty of watchfulness, let it be remembered, implies that
we are endowed with a power of withstand many moral
enemies, if we will but use that power. For a duty of
impossible to be performed by the same in some cases
unaided by vigilance, must necessarily employ either the
highest tyranny of the greatest defect of wisdom in the
being who commands it. This therefore cannot be done
with regard to any duties enjoined us.凡any
subjects of his moral government. Even then, it is to
acknowledge the influence of human nature, the strength of
human passions, in the urgency of worldly affairs, as an
excuse for our neglect of religion. Either we must deny
that we are under any obligations at all to a duty of
watchfulness, if in other words to a preparation against
state of being, or else we must of course allow ourselves
to be enslaved with the power of reading such a life of
this alternative we may choose which side we please
as we allow ourselves to be enslaved with the power of being
religion, whatever be the faculties of human nature or
the necessities of the world. For an unreasonable part
we therefore bound to remove for the general
gself for the obligation. Where along these power, we are of
course deny the obligation; but then let us remember,
that by an equally certain consequence we degrade
ourselves with the brute creation, for a capacity for reli-


general vigilance is one of the distinguishing characteristics of human nature. Day in, day out that when you are required to watch strenuously against your mortal enemies, you are called to the severest a task. God has given you strength to perform it. He has placed you amid its dangers. He has not left you defenseless or unprotected. He has made it your duty to be watchful, and given you the power to be so. You have but to open the mind in defense, and the secret of divine truth, of these your eye may scan along the line of your duty, marked in characters too bright to be mistaken. By your own disputation you may hope for strength from on high. If then there be any thing important in the formation of character, any thing valuable in preserving from corruption good principles, if there be any thing to animate a claim the soul in the prospect of future reward or punishment, any thing delightful in the expectation of life, or terrible in this brief pleasure, this is the duty of watchfulness, all important. For with all these consequences is the practice of neglect of it ultimately connected, being shall find the consequence of vigilance in the scenes of peace to the removers. "Stand therefore with arms long girded about, your lamps trimmed of learning, and ye shall who wait for the coming of your Lord." Remember how many foes to vitiate your steadiness are cherishing "your enmity, your in life, and in the whole armament of your. What you may engage may successfully with these warring enemies.

3. We learn from this parable the great danger of delaying the work of preparation to the last moment. Thus the foolish virgins neglected to provide oil for the lamps in season, y consequent were at last overtaken by surprise of thrown into the utmost confusion. At "midnight there was a cry made" at midnight they were lost in sleep, y were awakend. Because to a confused, a hurried sense of their duty, change. But it was too late then to refresh what they sought that it was too late to provide what they ought to secure. Previously, y while in the midst of their strauns, they were seeking for relief, those who were ready went to the marriage, y the door was shut. Of the unprepared of foolish ones, when they returned from that their stupid negligence had excluded them from.
the entertainments... And this is but too time a precaution of the moral conduct of mankind. The almost universal reply to the uncommon speeches of piety is, 'why may not this time, when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.' But alas! the more convenient season never comes. Some new business or exciting flight attends for more. We never go back, but always forward; while he is burdening us, we must make the moments, as he cannot, till we are for ever at improvement, or the time will soon come when it will be too late. The formation of that character, which will prepare us for a useful life or happy death cannot be delayed. It is not in our power the work of amendment; if we put it off till the approach of death, when we shall find so great a work consume us so short a space of time, that we shall probably give up the whole in despair. Why think you will find yourself in a state more or less dependent on that same moment, when the Angel that standeth upon the sea the earth shall lift up his hand to heaven?

swept by him that dwelleth forever, that whilst respect to us there shall be time no longer? When the meat is over, how shall the pain of weakness, if the man does not with confusion of amazement, when darkness is beginning to come over the soul, do things for time to turn effectually, seriously to the things which belong to our everlasting peace? Have we not reason to fear that then the Maker will say to us, 'iniquity, I know you not.' So true then, because of these poor considerations, and the shortness of time, by which the measures of a moment leaves the vast concerns of an eternal scene. Let us remember that the whole of life is given us to prepare for death, with eternity, and that it will take the whole of that life to build up a character as will enable us to die the death of the righteous, to make our latter end like his. In the last place we may observe the particular force of that argument, by which the duty of amendment is urged upon us in the grave; 'for if I know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man.
The expression in its original connection, probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem; but in all other respects, we may consider it as referring to the time when all earthly things shall vanish from our sight, and we shall go down to dust. We are told that we are utterly ignorant of when that time shall be, what a powerful motive does it present to watchfulness. We remember that death appears in a thousand different forms, that it attacks alike the young and the old, the healthy and the infirm, and those who are most at home in their expectations. It is often, when we are least prepared for it, when we think that we are safe, when we are least aware that we are in danger, that it comes upon us like a thief in the night. It is often, indeed, that the very thing that we are least afraid of, that we are least prepared for, that we least expect, that is the thing that happens to us with the greatest force, and with the greatest effect.

I cannot close this subject without reminding you that the instructions of the Bible are particularly appropriate to this time. The present year is rapidly drawing to its close, but one day more, and it will be numbered with the years that have gone forever from us. The last Sabbath in the year shall be a time of solemn reflection, for it reminds us that our Sabbaths and our religious privileges are fast slipping away, and we are summoned to remember how we have abused them. And so, if God shall still further spare us, we shall...
improves them. Many who began the year with good prospects of life, as ourselves, are now sleeping in the grave; but we are still hanging on an air, while, perhaps, without thinking of the number, who have dropped from our side by the way. While we imagine we are standing secure on our little eminences of sand, the next wave of time rolls, and washes as away. We forget those who are gone, or are soon to be forgotten, ourselves. If you wish that we may not all...
Other, in whose hands are the issues of all things,
who, while times and seasons to us are changing away, do
still remain unchanged and unchangeable, are both to the
prayer that we may have grace given us to be faithful
watchful in thy service. May we stand with our lamps trimmed
shining, be like them, who
wait for the coming of their lord. Knowing that the time
of our probation is uncertain, may we improve it whilst it
lasts in the exercise of all good sentiments and affections, by
giving heed to the things that belong to our everlasting peace.
We thank thee that, thou hast brought us to the close of
another year; that we are still the monuments of thy
mercy, the living witness of thy kindness and clemency. Thine
arm has conducted us thus far in the journey of life, in
health, in sickness, in joy and in sorrow, then hast thou, our helper
and support. O give us a due sense of thy mercy, of
the value of time, and of the
shortness of years, which so
quickly pass, and
may be
received to these regions where Jesus
now
reigns.