

*supper time*; the second invitation just before the feast, as is still the custom in the East. (See *Light from the East* and *From the Library*.) *Come*. Jesus and His disciples always began with the Jews in giving the gospel message. Indeed, but few Gentiles heard the message until after the death of Jesus. *All things .now ready*. Jesus and His disciples preached that the kingdom of God was already among men, because Jesus had come. John the Baptist had said that it was near, Matt. 3 : 2, 3.

## II. The Feast Despised, 18-21a.

Vs. 18-21a. *All with one consent*. As an actual fact, very few of the Pharisees or of the rulers of the Jews were willing to accept the invitation which Jesus brought. *To make excuse*; beg off. "It is not usual for invitations to princely dinners to go a-begging, but the improbability of the incident is the very point of it." (Maclaren.) *Bought a piece of ground*, etc.; a very poor excuse, for the ground might have lain as it was for another day. *See it*; that is, look after its cultivation. *Five yoke of oxen*; a valuable property in those days. *To prove*; to test or try them. *Married a wife*; in the man's eyes, a very good excuse (see Deut. 24 : 5). The three excuses are examples of reasons given for refusing to accept the Lord's invitation to His feast. Men are either too absorbed in worldly affairs, or too much preoccupied with their own private enjoyment, to give heed to the spiritual call. This is the secret, in most cases, of the rejection of Jesus Christ.

## III. The Feast Enjoyed, 21b-24.

V. 21b. *The master .being angry*; for he had been insulted, treated with contempt by the friends who should have honored him. *Go out quickly*. It was the very day and hour of the feast, and no time was to be lost. (See *Light from the East*.) *Streets and lanes of the city*; the open squares and narrow streets, where the blind and diseased basked in the sun and the beggars asked for charity, appealing with their sightless eyes and maimed limbs to the passers-by. Note that the invitation is still to those within the city walls. *Poor . . maimed . . halt . . blind*. By these are meant the publicans and sinners, who were

outcasts, social and religious, in the eyes of the Pharisees, as were the beggar tribe. They were Jews, but their practices were abhorrent to these self-righteous Jews, who put them under the ban. Jesus, however, always offered the gospel to the publicans and sinners, Matt. 9 : 13. If the rigid and self-righteous Pharisee would not enter the kingdom, there were other guests.

Vs. 22, 23. *It is done as thou hast commanded*. The command had been executed at once. Jesus had, during His ministry in Galilee, been preaching to the publicans and sinners. *Yet there is room*. How vast is God's grace and the kingdom of God! *Highways and hedges*; that is, outside the city. This means the Gentiles who were beyond the borders of Israel. *Compel* (Rev. Ver., "constrain"). The invitation is such a surprise, that, at first, they will not believe it. So, every effort must be made to persuade them. Paul sought, not the Jews only, but was "made all things to all men," that he "might by all means save some," 1 Cor. 9 : 20-22. *My house .filled*. Very soon after Christ's death, the gospel passed from the Jews to the great Gentile world (see Matt. 24 : 14; 28 : 19). The whole world shall be invited to the feast of God's salvation.

V. 24. *None of those men .shall taste*. The Jewish nation perished at the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. What a terrible answer to the complacency of the Pharisees as seen in v. 15! It was a calamity which they had brought upon themselves by their obduracy.

## Light from the East

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SENT SERVANT—When there were no watches or clocks in any house, it was not easy to determine the hour for the assembling of a party. So, when an old time householder of any social standing gave an invitation, he specified that, on the appointed day, his servant would call at the proper time and conduct the guest to the feast. This custom, not only solved the question of time and removed all difficulty that a stranger might have experienced in finding the house of the host, but it became a recognized courtesy which could not well be omitted.