



LESSON I.—OCTOBER 14.

### Parable of the Great Supper.

Luke xiv., 15-24. Memory verses 21-24.  
Read Matt. xxii., 1-14.

#### Daily Readings.

M. Feast of Wis.—Prov. ix., 1-12.  
T. Call of Grace.—Isa. lv., 1-13.  
W. Great Fount.—John iv., 1-15.  
T. Great Feast.—Matt. xxii., 1-14.  
F. Great Food.—John vi., 27-51.  
S. Great Joy.—Rev. xix., 1-10.

#### Golden Text.

'Come; for all things are now ready.'—  
Luke xiv., 17.

#### Lesson Text.

(15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat in the kingdom of God. (16) Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: (17) And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. (18) And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. (19) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. (20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (21) So that servant came, and showed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. (22) And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. (23) And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (24) For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

#### Suggestions.

As our Lord was dining at the house of the Pharisee, one of the company remarked that it would be a blessed thing to eat bread in the kingdom of God. Eating bread together in eastern countries is equivalent to making a covenant of peace and protection. The speaker may have thought of the kingdom of God as an earthly, temporal, but glorious reign with which it would be valuable to be identified, or he may have referred to heaven. In either case he no doubt felt sure of the blessing of which he spoke, for if the Son of God deigned to dine at the house of a Pharisee, no doubt he would invite the Pharisee, and all the rest of the nation to dine with him in his kingdom.

But Jesus answered him with a parable, showing how even those who received the first and most pressing invitations, might finally be shut out from the kingdom by their own carelessness—criminal carelessness—toward God. They might shut themselves off from eternal joys by the temporary excuses of temporal interests. This parable was a picture of the kingdom of God, those to whom the first invitations were sent were the Jews; those who listened day after day, to the marvellous teachings from the lips of the Saviour himself. The scribes and Pharisees and priests rejected the invitation from God, then Jesus gave the invitation to the publicans, and sinners, and they began to flock into the kingdom. The Jews, as a nation having refused the invitation from God, the offer was passed on to the Gentiles, and they began to accept with joy. To-day, the invitation is given first to the children of Christian parentage, and to those who have been carefully trained in Sabbath school and church, but if they reject it, their places can be easily filled from the ranks of the

outcast and sinners. And what is more awful still, those who have had every advantage to start with may, by constant rejection of the offers of God's mercy, find themselves at the end of life without hope, and unable to repent because of a hardened heart (Heb. xiii., 16).

There is a glorious side to the gospel truth, which is not brought out in this parable, that is the fact that every guest is made a messenger to bring in more guests, for there is always room at that table of heavenly delights. If the first called ones had accepted, they would not have hindered the others from being invited, but rather would they have been the means of greatly multiplying the guests. As it was, they by their refusals, became stumbling blocks in the way of others, and of entering into the kingdom themselves, essayed to shut the gates in the face of those who would enter. (Matt. xxiii., 13).

The excuses that were given were trivial, and insufficient, but quite as good as those which are given every day by apparently sound-minded men. The terrible thing about the excuses is that they seem to satisfy and delude those who make them into thinking themselves safe and free from responsibility. But God is not mocked. He accepts refusals only as rebellious refusals to obey his supreme authority. The invitation to the supper is a free gift, but the punishment of refusal is eternal banishment from the presence of God. God is love, and God is light. Banishment from his presence means the total loss of light and love and joy. Those who choose to do without God's presence on earth may find themselves forced to do without it through all eternity. The man who excuses himself from becoming a Christian because doing so would interfere with his ambitions, his business or his pleasures, is like the man with a muck rake mentioned in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' While an angel stood over him holding a bright and starry crown, this man stooped low, and with a little rake, grubbed amongst the rubbish on the ground trying to find something worth picking up. With his eyes fixed on the earth, he could catch no glimpse of the heavenly riches within his very grasp if he would but look up and reach out for them. The earthly things which he saw seemed to him far more important and real than the glories which he would not turn his head to see. So is it with all who allow earthly and temporal interests to blind them to their eternal interests.

Come, for all things are ready. Jesus is close beside you now, inviting you to his feast of love. He has made all the preparation; he has done everything possible to save you; his part is accomplished; it is only left for you to come. But how shall I come? asks some little child, I do not know how. Dear child, the Saviour is close beside you. Though you cannot see him, just speak to him and say, Lord Jesus, I come to thee, I give myself to thee. Please wash away my sins, and come and live in my heart. Amen. And the Lord Jesus will be so glad to hear your prayer, and he will wash away your sins, and come into your heart to live. Then you will know that you belong to him, that he is your Saviour, and you are his little child. The Lord Jesus will make you want to be good, and will teach you how.

#### Questions.

Where was this parable spoken?  
How does the parable represent the kingdom of heaven?  
To whom was the invitation first offered?  
How did they reject it?  
Could any good excuse be found for disobeying our Father in heaven?

#### C. E. Topic.

Oct. 14.—Paul, the missionary; the secrets of his success.—II. Tim., iv., 5-8. (Quarterly missionary meeting.)

#### Junior C. E. Topic.

##### THE MISSIONARY APOSTLE.

Mon., Oct. 8.—Conversion.—Acts xxii., 6-10.  
Tues., Oct. 9.—Paul's purpose.—I. Cor. ii., 2.  
Wed., Oct. 10.—How he worked.—I. Thess. ii., 9.  
Thu., Oct. 11.—Serving with Christ.—Col. i., 23, 29.  
Fri., Oct. 12.—Why God blessed him.—I. Cor. iii., 14.

Sat., Oct. 13.—Little missionaries.—John vi., 9.

Sun., Oct. 14.—Topic.—Paul, the missionary; the secret of his success.—II. Tim. iv., 5-8. (Quarterly missionary meeting. Africa.)

### Discipline in the Sunday-School.

The first essentials in any school are quietness and order. Without these we may have the best teachers and the brightest scholars, but no work will be done, and no results attained. The public schools recognize the fact, and a teacher who cannot maintain order will not be kept long in her position. When children are young, in the earliest grades, they are made to keep quiet in spite of their natural restlessness.

There is a marked contrast to this quiet and orderliness in many of our Sunday-schools. On entering the room there is heard a noise which would not be tolerated for an instant in a public school. Looking over the classes, the visitor sees in every class inattentive children who are talking or playing with each other. The teacher, occupied with one or two pupils, has no eyes or ears for the boys at the other end of the pew.

In the public schools, the fact that the teacher is busy with one group of children does not break up the orderliness of the others. The work goes quietly on with only an occasional whisper when 'teacher is not looking.'

Disorder and noise in a Sunday-school is not inevitable. It is not so easy to prevent it here as in the public schools, but it can be done. In the public schools the pupils recognize, and in extreme cases feel, the authority of the teacher. In the Sunday-schools there is a general feeling that there is no authority and no penalty. In many schools there is, neither, but there ought to be.

Let each rector, superintendent, and teacher realize and assert their authority, without regard at first to the penalties for violation, and a great advance will be made. Children will never feel the authority unless their superiors are ready to assert it. The difference between a teacher who can be 'run,' and the teacher who commands obedience is that the former is not sure of himself and his authority, while the latter is sure of both.

The first step, then, in the discipline of the class is the recognition of power and authority. In the public schools obedience is enforced. The same must be possible in the Sunday-school. Force, however, is a last resort. It is wise to take a disorderly boy by himself, to tell him plainly what the school is for, and why he is there; to show him that by his disorder he is harming the school and wasting his time, and give him to understand that neither can be allowed.

Persuasion is not of much value in such cases, there must be exhibition and assertion of authority. Do not say to Johnnie, 'Do be an orderly, quiet boy.' Say, 'You must be.' When the child recognizes a righteous and steady authority, half the battle is won. Few children are wilful rebels.

Many schools are so anxious to increase their attendance that some children feel that they are conferring a favor on the school by coming. This is, of course, fatal to all discipline, for the youngster, under pressure, will threaten not to come. Let all the children understand, in case of disorder, that it is better not to have a school than to have it disorderly, and they will be obedient.—'The Church.'

#### Blackboard Work.

Is it hard for you to use the blackboard before the class? Try drawing all your work lightly on the board. Then, when you give your lesson, go over this work before the children. You can see the lines, and the children see but dimly, if at all; so you have the advantage of doing your work as you want it, and also of bringing out new thoughts as you are ready for them. I recommend this plan especially to one who is easily confused, or who is new in blackboard work.—Mrs. E. L. Miller, in 'Sunday-School Times.'