

Keep in view the fact that the Kingdom of God exists: *First*, in the heart where Christ dwells by his Spirit, Luke 17: 21; Eph. 3: 17; 1 Cor. 6: 19. *Second*, in the world, Matt. 13: 38; "The field is the world, and the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom." Matt. 6: 10, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *Third*, in glory, John 14: 1-3; Matt. 8: 11. Olshausen aptly remarks that the Saviour's parables are "like many-sided precious stones, cut so as to cast lustre in more than one direction."

In interpreting them care should be taken to determine to which sphere of the Kingdom they refer. See Matt. 13. The Kingdom is not of this world. It is spiritual in its laws, its subjects, enjoyments, and rewards. It consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Jno. 18: 36; Rom. 14: 17. It is of supreme importance, and should be sought before and above all things earthly. Matt. 6: 33; Luke 13: 24.

1. The feast in the parable represents the salvation of the Gospel. The sumptuousness, the rich abundance with which the table is spread—not that of an ordinary meal but of a feast—denotes complete provision for all men's spiritual wants. What are these? (1) *Forgiveness*. Seeing we are all shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, Psal. 51: 5, we are naturally condemned, and without pardon must perish eternally. Rom. 3: 10-14. Spiritual life is an absolute necessity for creatures dead in trespasses and sins, and all life is from God, from above.

To enter the Kingdom we must be born anew, Jno. 3: 3.

Spiritual life is not the outcome of the careful cultivation of a good germ indigenous to our sinful nature. It is the gift of Christ by his Spirit. He is our life. Col. 3: 3-4. We are raised up with him, Eph. 2: 1 and 4.7. In him we have life abundantly, Jno. 10: 10.

(2) *Purification* is included in the salvation set forth by the feast. Without this, pardon would be a doubtful boon, and obviously not in the interests of morality. A pure heart is needed as well as clean hands. Psal. 24: 3-4. This cleansing is a work of God. He lifts us out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. Psal. 40: 2. "Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," Isa. 64: 6, but we are made the righteousness

of God in Christ, 2 Cor. 5: 21. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, 1 Jno. 1: 7.

And so all other wants of men—guidance, instruction, protection, hope, peace, joy, and eternal glorification of soul and body, are fully met in what this feast symbolizes.

2. The Invitation.—This is the outward call of the gospel. It is unlimited and urgent.

It brings deep responsibility on those to whom it is addressed—it comes with the obligation of a command from God, Acts, 17: 30.

It was first delivered to the Jews. They were the recipients of God's revelation of the gospel. "It was preached before unto Abraham," Gal. 3: 7-8.

The parable indicates that his descendants rejected it, and then "the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles," Acts 28: 28.

The fact is emphasized that the invitation is as comprehensive and pressing as possible. This is the trend of Scripture testimony both in the Old and the New Testament. Isa. 55: 1-7; Matt. 11: 28-29; Rev. 22: 17; Rom. 10: 13; 2 Cor. 5: 20.

3. The conduct of those who rejected the invitation. This is marked by different degrees of guilt. Some made light of the invitation. They neglected and therefore forfeited the great salvation, Heb. 2: 3. The sinfulness and ruinous effects of neglect should be illustrated and enforced.

Some preferred other things to what the King offered them—farms, money-making, wealth. They were not necessarily disreputable, but they felt no need of God's great gift. They did not believe it, and unbelief, which is deemed by many, harmless, if not even something indicative of superior ability, is a damning sin, Mark 16: 16. It makes God a liar, 1 Jno. 5: 10. The indifferent, and those who cling to what is visible and tangible, are now prominent and influential classes in the world.

Others went much further than cherishing silent contempt for the invitation. They manifested murderous malignity towards the King's servants. This was the case of old—"They were stoned, they were sawn asunder," etc., Heb. 11: 36, 37. The Saviour foretold that this was to continue. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," etc., Matt. 10: 16-17.

It is a favorite method with the devil and his servants to strike at those who represent