

Oct. 13.—**The Gospel Feast**—Luke 14: 15-24. A. D. 30.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

"*Blissed be he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*"—v. 15.

## IN THE STUDY.

"The Lord had been invited to eat bread with one of the chief Pharisees, v. 1. The meal must have been a costly and ceremonious one. It included, probably, friends and kinsmen and rich neighbours of his host, v. 12. But among these guests, hostile, as for the most part they were to the young Galilean Teacher, there was one who could not forbear expressing his sympathy with some words which fell from the Lord's lips, v. 15. To him, and through him to all, this parable was vouchsafed."—*Trench*.

"The people of the East take two regular meals a day, i.e., a hearty breakfast in the earl' morning, and the principal meal at night, after they come home. Rich people often eat a regular meal at noon, but more commonly take a light luncheon. The evening meal is that to which the guests are usually invited."—*Van Lennep*.

"The hospitality of the present day in the East exactly resembles that of the remotest antiquity. The parable of the 'Great Supper' is in those countries literally realized. And such was the hospitality of ancient Greece and Rome. When a person provided an entertainment for his friends or neighbours, he sent round a number of servants to invite the guests—these were called *nomotaxoi* by the Romans, and *blatou* by the Greeks. The day when the entertainment is to be given is fixed some considerable time before; and, in the evening of the day appointed, a messenger comes to bid the guests to the feast. They were not now asked for the first time; but had already accepted the invitation when the day was appointed, and were therefore already pledged to attend at the hour when they might be summoned. They were not taken unprepared, and could not, in decency, plead any prior engagement. They could not now refuse without insulting the host, and insulting the master of the feast, and therefore justly subjected themselves to punishment. The terms of the parable exactly accord with established custom, and contain nothing of the harshness to which infidels object."—*Paxton*.

"The parable is both *historic* as relating to the conduct of the Jews towards Jesus in rejecting Him, and *prophetic* as indicating His 'larger purpose of grace than could be satisfied by the bringing in of a part and remnant of the Jewish people; that He had prepared a feast in which more should sit down than they—found a church with room in it for Jew and Gentile.'"—*Trench*.

## IN THE CLASS.

Lesson framework. 1st. The gospel feast. 2nd. Various excuses. 3rd. Gathering in the outcasts.

## THE GOSPEL FEAST.

And when one of them. One of the Pharisee's rich friends or neighbors. Who sat at meat. "This time Christ glorifies the meal through table talk, which more than that of any other, was seasoned with salt."—Col. 4: 6.—*Van Oosterhout*.

Eat bread in the kingdom. He referred to the temporal kingdom for which they looked. "They believed that the kingdom should be opened with a great feast, of which all the members, the Jews, should be guests."—*Nicolson*. A certain man. "A feast is frequently employed in Scripture as a symbol of what is provided for the soul in the great gift of the Saviour, Christ Jesus. Man not only needs bread for his body, but also for his immortal soul." The feast that Christ has prepared is great because of its

cost, and because of the manifold blessings it provides—pardon, peace, reconciliation, adoption, fellowship, sanctification, heaven. It cost the precious blood of the Son of God. And bade many. There was a class first called. "Those who must be presumed the most favorably disposed for embracing the truth; the most religious among the people, the priests and elders, the scribes and Pharisees. Christ still bids many; all are bidden."—*Trench*. All things are now ready. "There was beyond a doubt a time in the world's history when more than any other, it could be said 'all things are now ready,' when the kingdom of Heaven was set up, and men, both Jews and Gentiles, invited to enter into it."—*Trench*.

## VARIOUS EXCUSES.

And they all with one consent—"of one." Out of one mind or spirit. "The excuses which are mentioned, are such as plainly indicated, on the part of those who made them, a slighting both of the entertainment, and of him who had prepared it. Real friends would never make such excuses. The temper of these self-excusers is threefold, the excuses themselves are threefold, the spirit is one."—*Alford*. "The three excuses represent the influence of *pride, business, and family ties*. The distinction between the first two is, that 'the one man has got, the other is getting. Observe that the engagements pleaded are not sinful; the parable shows the danger of being engrossed even in lawful things.' The first told. 'Some one has got, why did he not look at the ground before he bought it? If he had been a good business man, he would have seen the ground first. He couldn't make the bargain any better by going to look at it now. And now that he has got it, he can go and look at it any time; the land can not run away. Strange time to go and see ground, just at supper time. He did not want to go to the feast, and so he manufactured this excuse to ease his conscience. That is what people make excuses for. The devil gets men into that grade, and rocks them to sleep in it.'"—*D. L. Moody*.

Have me excused. "There is a vast difference between *excuses* and *reasons*. These men gave excuses, but they did not give their reasons." So is it now—John 3: 20. I have bought five yoke of oxen. "Why not prove them before he bought? It was no time to prove even after they were bought. And now that the bargain was closed, he could prove them any time."—*D. L. Moody*. I have married a wife. "According to the Levitical law, this reason of his would have been a sufficient one, why he should not have gone to battle, Deut. 24: 5, but it is none why he should not come to the feast."

*Trench*. "The third man's excuse was the most ridiculous of all. Why did he not take his wife along with him? Who likes to go to a feast better than a young bride?"—*Moody*.

Came and shewed his Lord these things—"Declared the ill-success which he had met, reported the excuses which all had made: even as hitherto, in all likelihood, not so much as one among the spiritual chiefs of the Jewish nation had attached himself openly and without reserve to Christ. John 7: 48."—*Trench*.

## GATHERING IN THE OUTCASTS.

Go out quickly. "The day of grace is merging fast into the day of glory; the currents of time are flowing rapidly into the ocean of eternity." Into the streets and lanes. "He was angry at these, and gave directions to go to another class, yet still *fear of the city*; but to go from palaces to the streets and lanes, and to call in such a way as never to lose sight of the Jews." In these words there would seem a distinct reminiscence of the precept which Christ just before had given to him at whose table He was sitting. "Call thou the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," v. 13. He calls the spiritually sick, the spiritually needy;

while the rich in their own virtues, in their own merits, at once exclude themselves, and are excluded by Him. The people who know not the law, and whom the Pharisees accounted accursed, the despised and outcasts of the nation, the publicans and sinners—these should enter the kingdom of God before the great, the wise, the proud; before those who said they saw; before those who thanked God they were not as other men; before those who counted they had need of nothing."

*Trench*. Yet there is room. Implying that these classes had embraced the invitation, and also the abundance of the provision. "The palace is large, and the guest room; neither nature nor grace endures a vacuum."—*Alford*. "The room is indeed as vast as the merits of His atonement, capacious as Heaven itself." Go out into the highways and hedges. Outside the city altogether. The Gentiles, the outscouring, the dogs of society, in the esteem of the proud, self-righteous Pharisees. Compel them to come in. "Compel them by argument, not by force. The nature of the parable shows this. It was a feast to which they were invited." "Not as if they would make the excuses of the first-class, but because it would be hard to get them over two difficulties, 1st. 'We are not in fit company for such a feast'; 2nd. 'We have no proper time, and are in ill order for such a presence.' How fully does this represent the difficulties and fears of the sincere! How is this met? Take no excuse: make them come as they are; bring them along with you. What a directory is this for the servants of Christ?"—*J. F. & B.* They wish to come, but they fear their *unorthodoxy*. Yet love's constraining power compels them. Use all holy arguments and urgency. I say unto you. The sudden transition, and the expression 'My Supper' must have been very startling."—*Moody*. "Our Lord throws off the veil of the parable, and proclaims the supper *His own*, intimating that when transformed into its final glorious power, and the refusers themselves would give all for another opportunity. He will not allow one of them to taste of it."—*J. F. & B.*

## CONCLUSION.

"The gospel is a *feast*, joyful, abundant, satisfying, with good company and a welcome."

"Christ is always ready to receive us. We need never wait for a revival or for further invitation."

"It is wisdom to enquire into the *reasons* for our conduct, and, not hurt our consciences with excuses. 'The more needy we are, the more welcome. None need stay away because not fit to come. Christ will make us fit if we come.'"

"If we reject Christ's invitation, the time will come when He will grant our petition, and excuse us from life for evermore."

Oct. 20.—**The Prodigal Son**—Luke 15: 11-24. A. D. 30.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

"I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me."—Ps. 40: 17.

## IN THE STUDY.

In order to understand the parable of the Prodigal Son, it will be necessary to remember the circumstances that called it forth. The Pharisees complained that because Jesus had eaten with them, yet He had also received publicans and sinners, and eaten with them. This, in their eyes, was a great degradation, for they looked upon them as the veriest outcasts of society, and utterly unfit for the kingdom of Heaven. The three parables are a reply to their charges, a proof of their proud exclusiveness, a vindication of His conduct, and an encouragement to all to come to Him. The publicans had gone astray, so had the sheep, yet the shepherd