

ing the day. It was often most sumptuous and luxurious, and thus represents the rich varied blessings of Christ's gospel, Isa. xxv. 6. *Bade many.* This refers to the many promises and invitations addressed exclusively to the Jews in Old Testament times. *All things are now ready.* It is still the custom in some countries to send a second messenger to the guests. Christ might refer to the invitations given by Himself and his apostles, Matt. x. 5-7. — "Beginning at Jerusalem," was his rule. Ver. 18. None openly refused to come, but all made excuse. The excuses were most insufficient; none of the circumstances precluded acceptance of the offer. Those invited evidently did just what they liked best, yet the things for which they rejected the invitation were all in themselves lawful. Oxen were used in ploughing, 1 Kings xix. 19.

#### II. *The house filled,* ver. 21-24.

Ver. 21. All was reported to the Lord, Isa. liii. 1.

*Being angry.* Nothing so provokes God's anger as sinners refusing to be saved!

The servants were first sent to gather the offscourings of the city, and when there was still "room," they were sent further into the country, "highways and hedges"—to gather guests till the house was "filled." Ver. 24. The Jews are a monument of God's wrath to this day.

#### III. *Who cannot be Christ's disciples,* ver. 25-35.

Ver. 25. Christ seems to have left the Pharisee's house, a great multitude following Him. He stopped, turned, and evidently still pursuing the line of thought suggested by the case of those who, giving their hearts to other objects, sought to be excused from serving God, addressed to the crowd the impressive words, "If any man," &c., ver. 26. Christ uses the word *hate* to imply that the love we were bound to give even to father or mother, was "hatred" compared with the love due to Christ! *Bear his cross*,—a symbol of shame and death. Christ saw his own "cross" lying across his life-path; his people must be partakers with him.

Ver. 28-30 is a solemn warning to count the cost of serving Christ. Ver. 31-33, tells how greater still the cost, and how great the folly of attempting to fight against God. Ver. 34, 35. One who professes to be Christ's, and yet does not so follow Him, is like salt that has lost its savour.

#### APPLICATION.

1. *God has prepared a feast for us.* Christ is himself the feast, Matt. xxvi. 26-28. In Him is all a poor sinner can require, 1 Cor. i. 30. "Come unto me," Matt. xi. 28.

2. *How free, full, and frequent the invi-*

*tation!* Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. lv. 1; Prov. i. 20-23. How often have you been invited by the Bible, minister, parent, or teacher?

3. *Beware of rejecting Christ.* Few openly and plainly say they will not have Christ to reign over them; many make "excuse." "I am too young," Eccles. xii. 1. "Too happy with my pleasures," Eccles. xi. 9; Matt. xvi. 26. "Some other time," Acts xxiv. 25; 2 Cor. vi. 2. "None of my companions are going to Christ," Prov. xiii. 20; viii. 36. Beware, God will never excuse you! nothing makes Him so angry, Luke xiii. 25; Prov. i. 24-28.

4. *Are you really a disciple of Christ?* If so, then, *first*, you have counted the cost and know the folly of fighting against God! ver. 31; Isa. xxvii. 4. *Secondly*, You have counted the cost and are willing to give up all for Christ. It is not easy to do so. "The young man," Matt. xix. 21. Peter. Yet Abraham gave up his son—and many their lives for God, Heb. xi.

5. *False disciples of Christ are like salt that has lost its savour*, fit for neither this world nor the next, ver. 35. Has your life a "savour" of Christ?

#### SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Fellow teachers! see you bear your Lord's invitation to whom and as He sends it—Tell Him if it is rejected.

2. We perish by abusing lawful things!—putting them in Christ's place.

3. "Yet there is room"—in Christ's love and grace, and in heaven too—and God will have it filled with ransomed sinners. How many stand without, ver. 23, 25. Oh, compel them to come in.

4. Though you lend an ear to nothing else, "hear" this, ver. 35.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

It is not death but life that we long for when we sigh to flee away and be at rest.

When we think of the grave, of the chill and ghastliness of death, we cannot say that we are so willing to try it; but when we *leap the grave*, sink the very memory of it, and land safe over in heaven, then, indeed, are we ready, ay, longing to depart.

How skilfully does Paul sail past the two unpleasing points, without touching too hard on either: "It is not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon."

It is not desirable to be borne away alone; to lie and moulder in the cold, damp grave; but it is desirable, soon as may be, to enter heaven.—*Beecher.*