

invitation, preacher, Sunday school teacher, friend. (4) *It is a high honor to be God's herald of the glad tidings.* **At supper time.** Kitto went too far when he stated that it was customary in the East to formally remind invited guests of their engagement; but such a course would not be contrary to custom, and in a place where timepieces are practically unknown, and where the guests live close together, it would be convenient both for the host and for the guests. **Them that were bidden.** Those that had accepted the first invitation. **Come.** The invitation to the Gospel feast is (1) authoritative, from God; (2) joyful, promising only pleasure; (3) urgent, demanding immediate attention; (4) none can partake of the feast unless he "comes." **All things are now ready.** The food was cooked, and the waiting maidens were ready to serve it. So the Gospel came in the fullness of time, when the world had been prepared for it. So **now**, in the accepted time, our souls shall find, if we only come, that every provision to meet the full needs of our souls has been made, and all things are now ready.

18. They all with one consent began to make excuse. Their hearts and minds were one, although the guests were of several sorts. "They all" refers, first of all, to God's chosen people, who as a race rejected Christ—"have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" But there are many around our churches and homes who make similar excuses where a cordial acceptance might be expected. (5) *The wonder is that any should seek excuse from heavenly delights.* True friends do not make excuses; they may at times feel the need of giving sufficient reason for their action, but no one with love in his heart will frame an excuse; besides, no excuse can be framed which will suffice to explain the neglect of salvation. The feast at which they all "sat" gave point to this whole story. Those who surrounded the table had not treated the hospitable summons in any such contemptible way, but very likely that man who had piously sighed about eating bread in the kingdom of God was at this very time making excuses in his heart for rejecting Jesus. **The first.** An excuse in the East is almost equivalent to a declaration of war, bitter enmity. The first is that of the man who, like all wealthy farmers in the East, lives in the village, but owns fields far and near. He has bought a new one and makes his purchase an apology for not going. The frivolity of the excuse is evident. His farm would not run away; he might have looked at it before he purchased it; he might have looked at it after

the feast had been eaten. His excuse was really an insult courteously expressed. (6) *We should attend first to that duty which can least afford to wait.* (7) *How many and how varied are the influences which tend to hinder our soul's salvation!*

19. I have bought five yoke of oxen. An evasion as absurd as the last. Many peasant farmers in the East have as many as five yoke of oxen. (8) *The one already rich has no time for salvation; the one seeking to be rich has no time for it.* (9) *"Things lawful in themselves, when the heart is too much set upon them, prove fatal hindrances in religion."*—Matthew Henry.

20. Married a wife. (10) *How often earthly affections stand in the way of heavenly treasures.* **Cannot come.** It is not customary for women in the Orient to accompany their husbands to public places or to parties. The luxurious nabob had simply added one woman more to his harem, and it was a plain statement that there was more pleasure for him at home in his own resources than in his friend's house from his friend's resources. Read Deut. 24. 5 for excuses granted to newly-married bridegrooms.

21. Showed his lord these things. (11) *He who is unsuccessful in his holy endeavors should go at once to the Master and tell him all his disappointment.* **The master of the house being angry.** Being indignant. He felt that something must be done at once. (12) *Workers for God must be prompt.* **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city.** The creditable and discreditable portions of the city. To the Jews who listened this meant that as the elders had rejected Jesus he had now turned to the masses, to the publicans and sinners. **The poor.** This described most of the congregations that Jesus preached to. **The maimed, . . . the halt, . . . the blind.** Those who have defects in character can have them supplied by him who summons them to the feast.

22. It is done. This servant unquestioningly obeys the strange command.

23, 24. Highways and hedges. The reputable and disreputable parts of the country. **Compel them to come in.** Not by force, but by the constraint of good reason and much love. The ultimate decision of every soul rests with itself. There was no persuasion offered to those who had already excused themselves, because they showed no interest; but those who are really unfit, and not at all prepared for the royal feast, are urged and besought to come. **None of those.** God never tolerates the contempt of the self-righteous.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 15. Blessed. The words of the Lord just spoken concerning the resurrection of the just, called forth the ejaculation of this unknown, who

might indeed have expressed thereby a desire to enter the company of the prophets and patriarchs and fathers of Israel, and to **eat bread** in their