

COMPEL THEM TO COME IN.

LUKE xiv. 23.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

I feel in such a haste this morning to go out and compel those to come in who are now tarrying in the highways and hedges, that I cannot wait for an introduction, but must at once set about my business.

Hear, then, O ye that are strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus—hear, then, the message that I have to bring you, Ye have fallen—fallen in your father Adam; ye have fallen also in yourselves, by your daily sin and your constant iniquity; you have provoked the anger of the Most High; and as assuredly as you have sinned, so certainly must God punish you, if you persevere in your iniquity; for the Lord is a God of justice, and He will by no means spare the guilty. But have you not heard that God, in His infinite mercy, has devised a way whereby, without any infringement upon His honour, He can have mercy upon you, the guilty and the undeserving? To you, then, I speak; and my voice is unto you, O sons of men.

Jesus Christ, very God of very God, descended from heaven, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Begotten of the Holy Ghost, he was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived in this world a life of exemplary holiness, and of the deepest suffering, till at last he gave himself up to die for our sins, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." And now the plan of salvation is simply declared unto you—"Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." For you who have violated all the precepts of God, and have disdained His mercy, and dared His vengeance, mercy is yet proclaimed, for "whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief; "whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out," for "he is able also to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now all that God asks of you is, that you will simply look to His bleeding, dying Son, and trust your souls in the

hands of him whose name alone can save from death and hell.

Is it not a marvellous thing, that the proclamation of this Gospel does not receive the unanimous consent of men? One would think that as soon as ever it was proclaimed, "that whosoever believeth shall have eternal life," every one of you, casting away his sins and iniquities, would lay hold on Jesus Christ, and look alone to his Cross. But alas! such is the desperate evil of our nature, such the pernicious depravity of our character, that this message is despised—the invitation to the Gospel feast is rejected, and there are many of you who are this day enemies of God by wicked works—enemies to the God who preaches Christ to you to-day—enemies to Him who sent His Son to give his life a ransom for many. Strange, I say, it is that it should be so; yet nevertheless it is the fact; and hence the necessity for the command—"Compel them to come in."

First, I must find you out; secondly, I will go to work to compel you to come in.

I. I must FIND YOU OUT. If you read the verses that precede the text, you will find an enlargement of this command—"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," and then afterward, "Go out into the highways"—bring in the vagrants, the highwaymen,—*"and into the hedges"*—bring in those that have no resting-place for their heads, and are lying under the hedges to rest,—bring them also, and *"compel them to come in."*

Yes, I see you this morning—you that are "poor." I am to compel you to come in. You are poor in circumstances; but this is no barrier to the kingdom of God; for God hath not exempted from His grace the man that shivers in rags, and who is destitute of bread. In fact, if there be any distinction made, the distinction is on your side, and for your benefit—"Unto you is the word of this salvation sent;" "for the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." But especially I must speak to you who are poor spiri-