

ANGRY—To refuse to come to a feast after accepting the invitation, was an insult to the host. Where he had power to do so, as in the case of a king, he would likely enough issue an order for the arrest and execution of those who had done him this despite, as Jesus makes him do in another parable (see

Matt. 22 : 7); especially where the indignity was accompanied with violence towards his servants. In the rare cases where such a thing happened in the East, it would be natural for the host to cover up his disgrace in the manner mentioned, by bringing in whoever would come.

APPLICATION

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Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, v. 15. It meant much to be permitted to eat bread with an Oriental king.

By that act the king became the friend and protector of his guest. Any foe, in making an attack, would have to reckon with this powerful ally. His aid could be counted upon in operations against an enemy. Now, God invites us to be His guests. When we accept this invitation, it is as if we had eaten bread with Him. There is no assault of our enemies against which He will not defend us, there is no fight against evil in which He will not make us more than conquerors. His love and His power, His wisdom and His riches, are all pledged to meet our need. We can be safe and joyful, with the Almighty as our Friend.

A great supper, v. 16. How great the gospel feast is, appears when we consider what had to be done to prepare it. Those

who were to be the guests—
 At a Great every one of them—had broken
 Price God's holy law. They had failed and fallen short of His requirements, they had transgressed His precepts. Before the invitation could issue to such rebels as these, the law's penalty must be endured, the law's commands must be obeyed. Neither of these things could any man do. Left to themselves men must have perished. To save them, the Second Person in the glorious Trinity had to take into union with His divine nature their human nature, dwell for a season on earth, be crucified and buried, rise again from the dead, and enter into glory. All this was done, that the gospel invitation might come to us freely. Truly this is a "great salvation" which has been provided. What guilt can be greater than the guilt of those who "neglect" it?

Come, v. 17. Coming to the gospel feast is practically the same thing as coming to Jesus. For it is by His hand that all its provision has

What "Com-
ing" Means

been made. And coming to Jesus always means some definite act of obedience to Him. The four fishermen of Mark 1 : 16-20 came to Him, when, at His bidding, they forsook their nets, and followed Him. Zacchaeus came, when he gave half of his goods to the poor and turned his back on all his dishonest practices. Saul of Tarsus came, when he ceased persecuting the Christians and began to preach the gospel. So will it be with each one of us. When it is said to us, "Come," let us look for the thing we know Jesus wants us to do, and do it. Or, if we are in doubt as to what He would have us do, let us ask Him to show us. It may be a very simple thing in itself, as simple as signing our name to a card declaring that we are resolved to follow the Saviour. But if it is done out of obedience to Him, it is really coming to Him. Obedience is the fruit and proof of our faith. Conduct is the sure test of creed.

They all began to make excuse, v. 18. In olden times, men, in order to escape military service, used sometimes to cut off the thumb of the right hand, thus disabling themselves for handling the bow. In more modern

Unwillingness, the Root days, men of wealth, drafted into the army, have paid large sums to substitutes. It is very seldom, however, that we find men trying to escape from the offer of wealth or pleasures or honors. But such conduct would be wisdom itself compared with the folly of refusing the offers of salvation. And every excuse for acting thus has its root in unwillingness. "Ye will not," said the Saviour, "come unto Me, that ye might have life." It is never His hand that shuts the door be-