

Wanted now! Yes; wanted, a lot more of just such tramps and beggars! And the highway is swept of them, and the hedges are emptied, and into the great supper-room what a throng come pressing! All welcome, all fed! Blessed type of the great salvation, food for all, and free to all.

By Way of Illustration.

The Invitation.

God will not turn away his invited guests. Dr. Bonar tells that on one occasion, having preached on the unpardonable sin, a man came to him and said, "O, sir, I have thought for some time that I was a Christian, but now I have great fear that I have committed that unpardonable sin. Did you ever know one who had the same idea?" "That I did," was the reply. "The devil has often pinned me to the wall with the same thought, but I knew if I could come to Christ I had not committed it, for whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out."

Richard Baxter said, "I am so thankful the invitation says 'whosoever,' If it said, 'Let Richard Baxter come and I will in no wise cast him out,' I should be afraid there was another Richard Baxter in the world and it might mean him."

Invitation Neglected.

Bunyan tells how Christian in his journey saw a man busily employed raking together bits of hay, wood, and stubble, while over him stood a shining angel, holding above his head a crown of light. The perishable things about his feet filled his vision so that he could not see the crown which might have been his. A very old prayer from the Book of Common Prayer says, "May we not so strive for things temporal as to lose things eternal."

There is an old story of a beggar to whom one day there appeared by the way-side a beautiful being, with her hands outstretched, laden with treasures. As he gazed at her in stupid surprise, she glided past him; but she returned with her treasures still held out to him, and once more, with beseeching eyes, as if she would compel him to take what she offered, she passed slowly by and disappeared. She had no sooner gone than, as if waking from a dream, he hurried eagerly in the direction she had taken. He met a traveler, and said, "Have you seen a beautiful stranger, with her hands full of the things that I want, going along this road?" "Yes," replied the traveler, "her name is Opportunity. But once offered, and refused, she never returns."

A short time ago two trains collided near the Edinburgh station and seven men were killed. The signalman was simply neglecting his duty, but the awful cost was seven human lives. He was at once arrested. On the day of his trial he was missing, for he feared to face his judge. He is now outlawed, and dares not return home; and all this because he simply neglected his duty; he did nothing actively wrong, he only neglected. And as surely will men be entirely lost if they neglect this salvation offered to them.

A young man in deep distress of mind applied to his minister for advice and consolation. After he had laid before him the long and black list of sins that troubled his conscience, the minister reminded him that there was one blacker still which he had not named. "What can that be, sir?" he despondingly asked. "The sin to which I refer," said the minister, "is that of refusing to accept the invitation of Jesus Christ. He says, 'Come.' That simple word helped him to a personal acceptance of Christ as his Saviour."

A man of the world was heard to offer sympathy to a Christian because he was a church-worker and had no time for worldly pleasure. He said, "I will enjoy life, and then at the close I will cry, 'Lord, save me!'" A few days later he was thrown from his carriage and killed. He only uttered one word, and that was an oath. To trifle with an invitation from the King of heaven means to place yourself with those of whom it is said, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

The Teacher's Meeting.

Time, place, and circumstances of this parable....

The gospel-kingdom resembles a feast: 1) The bountiful Host; 2) The rich provision; 3) The kind invitation; 4) It is ready now; 5) The invited guests make excuses; 6) A final exclusion of those who refuse; 7) The outcasts are invited; 8) Those whom men reject gladly receive and accept the invitation.... The gospel feast 1) prepared; 2) refused; 3) enjoyed. Analyze the excuses, and the classes of persons represented by them. State who were afterward invited, and what people are therein represented.... What does this lesson teach to workers for souls? concerning opportunities.... Word-picture of the Jewish feast to which Jesus was invited.... Show how privileges of Gospel are illustrated by supper.... Strange conduct of people in hesitating, delaying, and excusing themselves.... Various excuses which people offer for neglect of religion.... Loss of spurned privileges.

References.

FREEMAN. Vers. 16, 17: Double invitations, 691....
FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Vers. 14-22: Poetical, 3421, 3424; Prose, 7773, 3384, 13060, 5790; Poetical, 967.
Vers. 16-24: Prose, 8711; Poetical, 4021. Ver. 18: Prose, 9454, 8491-8499, 5366, 3223, 3023-3025, 1417. Ver. 23: Prose, 6681, 11733. Ver. 24: 10682.

Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS. The table white; the word "salvation" yellow or scarlet.

APPLICATION. The gospel feast is ready. Our King of kings has prepared it, and to it has invited each one of us. On the table is free salvation, forgiveness of sin, joy, peace, and happiness. This was the table prepared for the Jews. All things were ready after years of training and waiting, but the invitation was rejected. Then the new invitation was extended, and Christ desires all men to come. Have I rejected the invitation? What excuse do I make?