

Parable of the Feast (Luke 14:16-24)

16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper

(That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; a certain man made a great supper: by which is meant not the Lord's supper, which was not as yet instituted; nor the supper of the Lamb, which will be at the end of the world; but the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and the provisions of it in the word and ordinances: and which is called a "supper"; because made in the end of the world, in the last days.)

and invited many,

"This first bidding more especially respects the Jews, who are said to be "many", in reference to the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand of the sea.)

17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

(This is John the Baptist, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, who declared that the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, was at hand; and exhorted the people to believe in Christ that should come after him.)

18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

(These were the principal men among the Jews, the Pharisees and rulers among the people; who were rich and covetous, worldly men; seeking their own worldly advantage more than their spiritual and eternal welfare, or the interest of God and religion.)

19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'

(This man represents also the carnal and worldly Jews, who preferred temporal things before spiritual.)

20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

(This man is more rustic and rude than the former; he does not so much as desire to be excused; and represents such who are fond of their sensual lusts and pleasures, and are resolved to indulge them, and will not be taken off from them by any means whatever.)

21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'

(In short, under these characters are represented natural and unconverted men, and the most vile, profligate, and abandoned of them; which are sometimes under the power of divine grace accompanying the ministration of the Gospel brought to Christ, and into his church. So the "blind and the lame", in 2Sa 5:6 are by the Targum on the place, explained of, "sinners and wicked persons.)

22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'

"Still there is room for the Gentiles, after God's elect, among the Jews, for that time were gathered in: there was room provided for them in the heart and love of God from everlasting, and in electing grace; in the suretyship engagements of Christ, in the covenant of his grace; and they had a place in the redeeming grace of Christ, in time; and in the last commission he gave to his disciples; and there was now room for them in the church of God; and will be in the new Jerusalem, and in the heavenly glory.)

23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'

(These are the Gentiles who walk in their own highways; either following the various sects of the philosophers, which are vain and foolish; or going into different practices of idolatry and walking in very sinful and vicious courses. "The hedges" denote separation from God that make a partition. The highways and hedges are outside the city. They are to be compelled, not by outward force, but by forcible words, by powerful arguments, and by the strength of persuasion; which expresses the nature of the Gospel ministry.)

24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper."

(These are the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and the greater part of the nation; who first had the Gospel published to them, who are the many that were called, though few were chosen because of their wickedness being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and from whom, in a little while, the Gospel was wholly taken; and is not yet afforded to them as a body; nor will till the latter day, when the veil shall be taken away, and they shall turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; but as for the first disbelievers and rejecters of Christ among the Jews, they died in their sins, and perished eternally.)

Black text is a summery of John Gill's much longer exegesis.