

PARABLE XII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

MATTHEW xxii. 1-14.

THIS is sometimes called the parable of the Wedding Garment. The name is a faulty one, being drawn from that which after all is but an episode in it; and the title given above, the same which it bears in our Bible, quite as effectually distinguishes it from the Great Supper of St. Luke (xiv. 16). Such distinction indeed it is needful to maintain, for the two must not be confounded,¹ as merely different recensions of the same discourse. Both indeed rest on the image of a festival to which many are bidden, some refusing the invitation and some accepting; but this is not sufficient to identify them with one another; and indeed there is much, and in many ways, to keep them apart. They were spoken on different occasions—that at a meal, this in the temple. They belong to very different epochs of our Lord's ministry, that to a much earlier period than this. When that was spoken the Pharisees had not openly broken with the Lord; it was indeed in the house of a Pharisee, whither He had gone to eat bread, that the parable was uttered (Luke xiv. 1). But when this was spoken, their enmity had reached the highest pitch; they had formally resolved by any means to remove him out of the way (John xi. 47-53). Then there was hope that the chiefs of the nation might yet be

¹ See Augustine, *De Cons. Evang.* ii. 71; Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 38 *in Evang.* Strangely enough, Theophylact, Calvin, and Maldonatus, maintain their identity; the last saying, 'The differences which appear are so slight that they ought not to withdraw us from this opinion.'

won over to the obedience of the truth; now they are fixed in their rejection of the counsel of God, and in their hatred of his Christ. In agreement with all this, the parable as last spoken, or as we have it here, is far severer than when first uttered, than St. Luke has recorded it. In that the guests, while they decline the invitation, are yet at pains to make civil excuses for so doing; in this they put it from them with a defiant and absolute No—so hating the message that some among them maltreat and kill the bearers of it; even as we cannot doubt that, had it consisted with decorum, and if the parable would have borne it, the king's son himself, as the last ambassador of his grace, would have been the victim of their outrage, as is the householder's son in the parable that just goes before. It is there a private man whose bidding is contemptuously set aside, it is here a king. It is there an ordinary entertainment, here the celebration of the marriage of his son. In the higher dignity of the person inviting, in the greater solemnity of the occasion, there are manifest aggravations of the guilt of the despisers. And as the offence is thus heavier, as those were but discourteous guests, while these are rebels, so is the doom more dreadful. In St. Luke's parable they are merely shut out from the festival; in this, their city is burned, and they themselves destroyed; the utmost which in fact is threatened there being that God, turning from one portion of the Jewish people,—from the priests and the Pharisees,—would offer the privileges which they despised to another portion of the same nation, the people that knew not the law, the publicans and harlots, with only slightest intimation (ver. 23) of a call of the Gentiles; while here the forfeiture of the kingdom by the whole Jewish people, who with fewest exceptions had shown themselves unworthy of it, is announced.¹

¹ Fleck (*De Reg. Div.* p. 241) with truth observes: 'Of the parables put forth in the latter parts of the book of Matthew the character is such that they breathe the sacred sadness of the divine spirit and reveal a severe mood. They come into the period in which the Saviour after full experience of the wiles, the malignant plots, and the blindness of the Pharisees, priests, and elders of the people, foresaw that these would

A late objecter,¹ taking no account of these altered conditions, which justify and explain the different forms in which the parable appears, asserts that St. Luke is here the only accurate reporter of Christ's words, St. Matthew mixing up with them some foreign elements,—reminiscences, for instance, of the maltreatment and murder of the servants, drawn from the parable preceding; and also blending into the same whole fragments of another parable, that, namely, of the Wedding Garment, which, when uttered, was totally distinct. For the first assertion his only plausible argument is, that while it is quite intelligible that husbandmen should maltreat servants of their lord, who came demanding rent from them; it is inconceivable, and therefore could find no place in a parable, of which perfect verisimilitude is the first condition, that invited guests, however unwilling to keep their engagement, should abuse and even kill the servants sent to remind them that the festival, to which they were already engaged, was actually ready. This, it is true, *can* with difficulty be conceived, so long as we suppose no other motive but unwillingness to keep their engagement at work in them. But may not a deep alienation from their lord, with a readiness to resist and rebel against him, existing long before, have found their utterance here? The presence of these his ambassadors, an outrage against whom would constitute an outrage against himself, may have afforded the desired opportunity for displaying a hostility which, though latent, had long been entertained.² If there be something monstrous in their

be daily more hostile to the divine cause.' And Unger (*De Parab. Jes. Nat.* p. 122): 'Thus Matthew seems to have recorded the parable as Jesus himself repeated it on that later and sterner occasion, with variations and additions, made more severe, and now sorrowfully prophesying concerning the whole Jewish people.'

¹ Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. 677 seq. So too Keim, *Leben Jesu*, vol. iii. p. 129.

² Oftentimes in the East a feast would have a great political significance—would, in fact, be a great gathering of the vassals of the king; contemplated on this side, their refusal to come assumes the aspect of rebellion. Thus some have supposed the feast recorded in Esther i. is identical with the great gathering which Xerxes (Ahasuerus) made when

conduct, it is only the fitter to declare the monstrous fact, that men should maltreat, and slay, the messengers of God's grace, the ambassadors of Christ, who come to them with glad tidings of good things,—should be ready at once to rend *them*, and to trample their pearls under foot.

His other assertion, that the episode of the wedding garment cannot have originally pertained to the parable, rests partly on the whole objection, that the guest could not with any justice be punished for wanting that which, as the course of the story goes, he had no opportunity of obtaining,—on which something will presently be said,—and partly upon this, that an entirely new and alien element is here introduced into the parable; marring its unity; awkwardly appended to, not intimately cohering with, it. But it is not so. Most needful was it that a parable, inviting sinners of every degree to a fellowship in the blessings of the Gospel, should also remind them that, for the lasting enjoyment of these, they must put off their former conversation; that if, as regarded the past, they were freely called, still for the present and time to come they were called unto holiness,—in Theophylact's words, 'that the entrance, indeed, to the marriage-feast is without scrutiny, for by grace alone we are called, as well bad as good; but the life of those that have entered, hereafter shall not be without scrutiny; that the King will make a very strict examination of those who, having entered into the faith, shall be found in filthy garments.'

Thus much on the relation in which this parable stands to the similar one in St. Luke. When we compare it with that which it immediately follows, we see a marked advance. The Lord revealing Himself in ever clearer light as the central figure of the kingdom, gives here a far plainer intimation than there of the dignity of his person, the nobility of his descent. There He was indeed the son, the only and beloved one, of the householder; but here his race is royal, and He

he was planning his Greek expedition (*σύλλογον ἐπικλήτων Περσέων τῶν ἀρίστων*); though Herodotus (vii. 8) brings out more its political, the sacred historian its festal, side.

appears as Himself at once the King, and the King's Son (Ps. lxxii. 1). It is thus declared that the sphere in which this parable moves is that of the kingdom; which, announced and prepared before, was only actually present with the advent of the King. In that other, a parable of the Old Testament history, the Son Himself appears rather as the last and greatest in the line of its prophets and teachers, crowning and completing the old, than as inaugurating the new. In that, a parable of the law, God appears *demanding* something *from* men; in this, a parable of grace, He appears more as *giving* something *to* them. There, He is displeased that his demands are not complied with; here, that his goodness is not accepted. There He requires; here He imparts. And thus, as we so often find, the two mutually complete one another; this taking up the matter where the other left it.

'And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables.' That He spoke is plain, but that he '*answered*' seems to require some explanation, seeing that no question had been addressed to Him. It is sufficient to observe that he '*answers*,' on whom an occasion, or it may be a necessity, of speaking has been imposed.¹ So is it here. This new parable is the Lord's answer to the endeavour of the Chief Priests and Pharisees to lay hands upon Him. '*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage² for his son.*' The two favourite images under which the

¹ Bengel: 'The word "answers" may be used not only of him who has been asked a question, but of him to whom a cause for speaking has been given.'

² Ποιεῖν γάμον (Gen. xxix. 22; Tob. viii. 19; 1 Macc. ix. 37; x. 58) is rather, as often in classical Greek, to celebrate the marriage *feast* than the marriage (Matt. xxv. 10; Esth. ii. 18); and sometimes the notion of a marriage falls altogether into the background, and that of a festival alone remains; thus Esth. ix. 22; and probably at Luke xiv. 8. Exactly the reverse has befallen the German hochzeit, which, signifying at first any *high* festival, is now restricted to the festival of a marriage. These marriage festivities lasted commonly seven, or fourteen, days (Gen. xxix. 27; Judg. xiv. 12; Tob. viii. 9); and this not by accident, but because of the significance of this, the Covenant number.

prophets of the Old Covenant set forth the blessings of the New, and of all near communion with God, that of a festival (Isai. xxv. 6; lxxv. 13; Cant. v. 1), and of a marriage (Isai. lxi. 10; lxii. 5; Hos. ii. 19; Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29; Ephes. v. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 9), meet and interpenetrate one another in the marriage festival¹ here. There results indeed this inconvenience, a consequence of the inadequacy of things earthly to set forth things heavenly, that the members of the Church are at once the guests invited to the feast, and, in their collective capacity, constitute the bride at whose espousals the feast is given.² But as we advance in the parable the circumstances of the marriage altogether fall out of sight;³ the bearing of the several invited guests is that to which our whole attention is directed. This, like the last, has its groundwork and rudiments in the Old Testament (Exod. xxiv. 11; Zeph. i. 7, 8; Prov. ix. 1-6); and it entered quite into the circle of Jewish expectations that the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah should be ushered in by a glorious festival; our Lord Himself elsewhere making use of the same image for the setting forth of the same truths (Luke xxii. 18,

¹ Vitranga (*In Apocal.* xix. 7): 'These nuptials figure the intimate union of Christ with the Church, which is accompanied by the mutual plighting of faith, and sealed by a treaty of contract, for the begetting of that spiritual race which is to cover the world. The marriage feast shadows forth alike the benefits of grace which by the power of the righteousness of Christ are set forth for satisfying and making joyful the Church, the participation also of these benefits, and lastly the joy and festivity which are conjoined with the fruition of the blessings of grace, and flow forth from it on to the guests of this banquet.'

² Augustine (*In Ep. 1 Joh. Tract.* 2): 'Not as in earthly marriages where some come to the marriage, and another, namely, the bride, is married: in the Church those who come, if they come in the right spirit, become the bride.'

³ Augustine and Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 38 *in Evang.*) escape this difficulty, regarding this marriage as one between the divine Word and the human Nature; not, at the same time, excluding the more obvious meaning suggested by such passages as Ephes. v. 24-32. Gregory the Great shows how well the two interpretations can be reconciled, saying: 'Here the Father made a marriage for his royal Son, by which through the mystery of the incarnation He joined to him the holy Church.'

80). The marriage indeed of which He there speaks, and at Rev. xix. 7, will not be celebrated till the end of the present age, while it is here as already present. We put the two statements in harmony with one another, when we keep in mind how distinct the espousals and the actual marriage were held in the East, and regard his first coming as the time of his espousals, while only at his second He leads home his bride.

'And sent forth his servants¹ to call them that were bidden to the wedding' (cf. Prov. ix. 3-5). In the corresponding parable of St. Luke (Luke xiv. 16-24), the giver of the feast, a private man, 'bade many.' Here we may assume a still more numerous company, from the higher rank and dignity of the giver of the feast, and the greater solemnity of the occasion (cf. Esth. i. 3-9). This summoning of those already bidden was, and, as modern travellers attest, is still, quite in accordance with Eastern customs; the second invitation being always verbal. Thus Esther invites Haman to a banquet on the morrow (Esth. v. 8); and when the time has actually arrived, the chamberlain comes to usher him to the banquet (vi. 14). There is therefore no slightest reason why we should make *'them that were bidden'* to mean them that were now to be bidden;² such an interpretation not merely violating all laws of grammar, but disturbing the higher purposes with which the parable was spoken; for our Lord, assuming that the guests had been invited long ago, does thus remind his hearers that what He brought, if in one sense new, was in another a fulfilment of the old; that He claimed to be heard not as one suddenly starting up, unconnected with anything which had gone before, but as Himself 'the end of the law,' to which it had been ever tending, the birth with which the whole Jewish dispensation had been pregnant, and which

¹ Technically, vocatores, invitatores, κλήτορες, δειπνοκλήτορες, ἐλέατροι.

² Thus Storr (*Opusc. Acad.* vol. i. p. 120) affirms τούς κεκλημένους may as well signify 'they that were to be bidden' as 'they that were bidden'! Did not this refute itself, Luke xiv. 16, 17 would be decisive in the matter.

alone should give a meaning to it all. In his words, '*them that were bidden*,' is involved the fact that there was nothing abrupt in the coming of his kingdom, that its rudiments had a long while before been laid, that all to which his adversaries clung as precious in their past history was prophetic of blessings now actually present to them in Him.¹ The original invitation, which had now come to maturity, reached back to the foundation of the Jewish commonwealth, was taken up and repeated by each succeeding prophet, as he prophesied of the crowning grace that should one day be brought to Israel (Luke x. 24; 1 Pet. i. 12), and summoned the people to hold themselves in a spiritual readiness to welcome their Lord and their King.

Yet the actual calling pertained not to these, the prophets of the older dispensation. They spoke of good things, but of good things to come. Not till the days of John the Baptist was the kingdom indeed present, was there any manifestation of the King's Son, any actual summoning of the guests, bidden long before, to come to the marriage (Luke iii. 4-6). By the first band of servants I should understand John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2), the Twelve in that first mission which they accomplished during the lifetime of the Lord (Matt. x.)—and the Seventy (Luke x.). His own share in summoning the guests, inviting them, that is, unto Himself (Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 14, 15), his '*Come unto Me*,' naturally in the parable falls out of sight. It would have disturbed its proprieties had the king's son been himself a bearer of the invitation. A condescension so infinite would have seemed unnatural; for it is only the Son of the *heavenly* King who has ever stooped so far. He indeed was content, even while the marriage was made for Himself, to be as one of those sent forth to call the guests thereunto. It is not implied that on this first occasion the servants had any positive ill-usage to endure. They found

¹ Tertullian makes excellent use of this parable, or rather of its parallel (Luke xiv. 16), arguing against Marcion (*Con. Marc.* iv. 31), who would fain have cut loose the New Testament from the Old; cf. *Irenæus*, iv. 36.

indeed a general indifference to the message, and alienation from the messengers; but nothing worse. In agreement with this we have no record of any displays of active enmity against the apostles or disciples during the lifetime of the Lord,¹ nor at the first against the Lord Himself. It was simply, '*they would not come.*'

'Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed'—a token this of the immediate nearness of the feast²—'*and all things are ready; come unto the marriage*' (1 Kin. i. 9, 19). The king graciously assumes that these guests deferred their coming through some misunderstanding, unaware perhaps that all the preparations were completed; and instead of threatening and punishing, only bids the servants whom he now sends to press the message with greater instancy and distinctness than before. Something of this same gracious overlooking of the past breathes through the language of St. Peter in all his discourses after Pentecost, 'And, now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it' (Acts iii. 17), a willingness to regard the sin which hitherto the people had committed in the mildest possible light. This second summons I take to represent the invitation to the Jewish people, as it was renewed to them at the second epoch of the kingdom, that is, after the Resurrection and Ascension. It is true that of these events, as of the crucifixion no more, nothing is hinted in the parable, where indeed they could have found no room. It need not perplex us that this second company is spoken of as '*other servants,*' while, in fact, many of them were the same; for, in the first place, there *were* many now associated with these, as Paul,

¹ The death of John the Baptist cannot be urged as invalidating this assertion; for he by whose command he was murdered was an Edomite, not therefore one of the invited guests at all; and moreover it was for preaching the Law (Matt. xiv. 4), not the Gospel, that he died.

² Chardin (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. iv. p. 48): '*Mutton and lamb are killed in the morning to be eaten the same night. . . . The Persians believe that fresh-killed meat is the best (cf. Gen. xviii. 7, 8; xliii. 16; Prov. ix. 1-5).*'

perhaps too as Stephen and Barnabas, who not till after Pentecost were added to the Church. Those, too, who *were* the same, yet went forth as other men, full of the Holy Ghost and with a message still more gracious than at the first; not preaching any more a kingdom of God at hand, but one already come—‘Jesus and the resurrection;’ declaring, which the servants had not been empowered to do on their first mission, that all things were now ready, that ‘the fulness of time’ had arrived, and that all obstacles to an entrance into the kingdom, which the sin of men had reared up, the grace of God had removed (Acts ii. 38, 39; iii. 19–26; iv. 12, 17, 30); that in that very blood which they had impiously shed, there was forgiveness of all sins, and free access to God.¹

If the king’s servants had found dull and deaf ears on their first mission, they find a more marked averseness from themselves and from their message on the second. The guests, when they heard the reiterated invitation, ‘*made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.*’ The question presents itself, Can we trace a distinction between the several guests? Did the divine utterer of the parable intend a distinction? Perhaps, if we regard the first as one who went *to his estate* (and the word of the original will perfectly bear out this meaning), a distinction will appear. The first is the landed proprietor, the second the merchant. The first would *enjoy* what he already possesses, the second

¹ These missions (ver. 3, 4) have been sometimes differently understood. Thus Origen refers both to the sending of the prophets under the law; Jerome, confident that the first mission (ver. 3) is to be so understood, is more doubtful about the second. Gregory the Great (*Hom. 38 in Evang.*) ascribes the first to the prophets, and only the second to the Apostles: ‘He therefore twice sent servants to invite guests, inasmuch as through the prophets He foretold the incarnation of the Only-Begotten, and after its accomplishment proclaimed it through the Apostles.’ But Hilary’s is the truer explanation (*Comm. in Matt. in loc.*): ‘The servants who were sent to call them which were bidden are the Apostles: for it fell to them to warn those whom the prophets had bidden. Those who are sent forth the second time with the position of teachers, are apostolic men and the successors of the Apostles.’

would *acquire* what as yet is his only in hope and anticipation. The first represents the rich (1 Tim. vi. 17); the second those that desire to be rich (1 Tim. vi. 9). This will agree with Luke xiv. 18, 19; where the guest who has bought a piece of land, and must needs go and see it, has already entered into the first condition; the guest who must try his five yoke of oxen, belongs to the second. The temptations which beset the *having* and the *getting*, though nearly allied, are not always and altogether the same; there is quite difference enough between them to account for the mention of them both. One of the guests being urged to come, turned to that which by his own toil, or the toil of others who went before him, he had already won—another to that which he was in the process of winning.¹ We have here those who are full, and those who are striving to be full; and on both the woe pronounced at Luke vi. 25 has come. This apparent fulness proves a real emptiness; keeping men away from Him who would have indeed filled and satisfied their souls.

But these are not the worst. '*The remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.*' The oppositions to the truth are not merely *natural*, they are also *devilish*. Of those who reject the Gospel of the grace of God, there are some who do not so much actively hate it, as that they love the world better than they love it. We have just heard of these. But there are others in whom it raises a fierce opposition, whose pride it wounds, whose self-righteousness it offends; who, where they dare, will visit on the bringers of the message the hate which they bear to itself. Three forms of outrage are enumerated here: and how full a commentary on these prophetic words do the Acts of the Apostles, and much else in the later Scriptures, supply.

¹ Bengel, with his rare skill in detecting the finer allusions of Scripture, exactly so: 'One was kept back by a false sense of self-sufficiency, another by the lust for gain.' Gerhard suggests the same explanation (*Harm. Evang.* 153): 'By those who go their ways to their merchandise we should understand such as are intent upon riches yet to be acquired; by those who go to their farm, such as take a sinful pleasure in wealth already won and acquired.'

Those who should have received with all honours these ambassadors of the great King 'took,' or laid violent hands on, them (Acts iv. 3; v. 18; viii. 3); they 'entreated them spitefully' (Acts v. 40; xiv. 5, 19; xvi. 23; xvii. 5; xxi. 30; xxiii. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 15); they 'slew them' (Acts vii. 58; xii. 2; cf. Matt. xxiii. 34; John xvi. 2).¹

'But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth:' or better, 'But the king was wroth;' what is more being a gloss. The insult was to him, and was intended for him; as in every case where an ambassador is outraged, it is his master and sender whom the blow was intended to reach (2 Sam. x.). As such it is punished; for the king 'sent forth his armies,' that is, as some say, God sent forth his avenging angels, the armies in heaven (Rev. xix. 14), the legions at his bidding there (Matt. xxvi. 53; 1 Kin. xxii. 19; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16):² or, it may be, the hosts of Rome³ (Dan. ix. 26), which were equally 'his armies,' since even ungodly men are men of God's hand, by whom He punishes his own people that have sinned, or executes vengeance on others more wicked than themselves (thus Isai. x. 5, 'O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger;' cf. xiii. 5; Ezek. xvi. 41; xxix. 18-20; Jer. xxii. 7; xxv. 9, 'Nebuchadnezzar, my servant'). The two explanations do in fact flow into one; for when God's judgments are abroad, the earthly and visible ministers of those judgments and the unseen armies of heaven are evermore leagued together. The natural eye sees only those, the spiritual eye beholds the other behind them. It is ever at such moments as it was with Israel of old (1 Chron. xxi. 16). The multitude,

¹ See 2 Chron. xxx. 10 for an interesting parallel. When Hezekiah restored the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem, he sent messengers throughout all the tribes, inviting all Israel to take part in the solemn passover which he was about to keep: 'so the posts passed from city to city; . . . but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them;' yet not all; there were guests who accepted the invitation; 'divers humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.'

² Gregory the Great (*Hom. 38 in Evang.*): 'For what are those hosts of angels save the armies of our King.'

³ So Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 36. 6.

to whom the purged spiritual eye was wanting, beheld only the outward calamity, the wasting pestilence; but 'David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem.'¹ But to proceed. With those armies thus sent forth he '*destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city*;' the city, that is, of those murderers; no longer that of the great King, who will not own it for his any more. Compare our Lord's word a little later: '*Your house is left unto you desolate (xxiii. 38); your house, and not mine; however it may still bear my name;*' and see Exod. xxiii. 7. This city is of course Jerusalem, the central point of the Jewish theocracy (Matt. xxiii. 34, 35; Luke xiii. 33, 34; Acts vii. 39; xii. 2, 3); burned once already (2 Kin. xxv. 9; Jer. xxxix. 8; lii. 13) as was the constant doom of a taken city (Num. xxxi. 10; Josh. vi. 24; viii. 19; xi. 11; Judg. i. 8; xviii. 27; xx. 40; Isai. i. 7; Jer. ii. 15; xxi. 10; Amos i. 7; 1 Macc. i. 31; v. 28, 35, 65; x. 84; and often); and now threatened with a repetition of the same terrible fate.

'*Then*² saith he to his servants, *The wedding is ready; but they which were bidden were not worthy.*' The Scripture does not refuse to recognize a worthiness in men (Matt. x. 10, 11; Luke xx. 35; xxi. 36; 2 Thess. i. 5, 11; Rev. iii. 4); nor is it any paradox to say that this worthiness largely consists in a sense of unworthiness; the unworthiness, on the other hand, of those whom the bidden represent consisting in the

¹ Even the heathen could understand this. When Troy was perishing, the poet describes the multitude as seeing only their Grecian enemies engaged in the work of destruction; but to Æneas, when his goddess mother had purged his eyes, there appeared other foes; to him

Apparent diræ facies, inimicæque Trojæ
Numina magna Deûm.—Æn. ii. 601-623.

'Dread faces, mighty presences of gods,
Are seen, ranged against Troy.'

² Keil: 'The "then" must not be pressed. The parable is not an historical enumeration of the several facts according to their chronological order, but an imaginary narration in which the several stages of the action are bound together according to their essential connection.'

absence of any such divine hunger in their hearts after a righteousness which they had not, as would have brought them, eager guests, to the marriage supper of the Lamb. 'Go ye therefore into the highways,¹ and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage.'² Compare Matt. viii. 11, 12, which contains, so to speak, this parable in the germ. There, as here, that truth long ago foreannounced by Psalmist (Ps. xviii. 43, 44) and by prophet (Isai. lxxv. 1), but not the less strange and unwelcome to Jewish ears (see Acts xxii. 21, 22), the calling of the Gentiles, and that by occasion of the disobedience of the Jews, the diminishing of these which should prove the riches of those (Rom. xi.), is plainly declared.

'So these servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good.' In the spirit of this command, 'Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them' there (Acts viii. 5); Peter baptized Cornelius and his company (x. 48); and Paul proclaimed to the men of Athens how God now commanded 'all men everywhere to repent' (xvii. 30). When it is said they gathered in 'bad' as well as 'good,'—in which statement there is a passing over from the figure to the reality, since moral qualities would scarcely be predicated of the

¹ These *διέξοδοι* (cf. *διεκβολαί*, Obad. 14) may be transitus or exitus (Passow gives both meanings, *Durchgang* and *Ausgang*): the thoroughfares (see Ps. i. 3) or the outlets leading from the city (Grotius: *Via extra urbem ducentes*), or such as led to its places and squares (Kuinoel: *Compita viarum*), or the points where many roads or streets meet; Chrysostom (*Hom. 69 in Matth.*) more than once substituting *τριόδους* (Schleusner: 'Places where several roads meet'); *ἀρχαὶ δύο ὁδῶν* (Ezek. xxxi. 21); the Revised Version for 'highways' has 'partings of the highways.' All these have their fitness, as places of concourse and resort, where therefore the servants might hope the soonest to gather a company. We must not permit our English '*highways*' to suggest places in the country as distinguished from the town; the image throughout is of a city, in which the rich and great and noble, those naturally pointed out as a king's guests, refuse his banquet, whereupon the poor of the same city are brought in to share it.

² This entertaining of the poor by great men and kings is often referred to in Jewish writings as not unusual (Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. pp. 174, 289: cf. Luke xiv. 13).

guests as such,—this is not to prepare and account for one presently being found without a wedding garment. ‘*Bad*’ here is not equivalent to ‘*not having a wedding garment*’ there; on the contrary, many were ‘*bad*’ when invited (1 Cor. vi. 9–11), who, accepting the invitation, passed into the number of the ‘*good*:’ for the beautiful words of Augustine on Christ’s love to his Church may find here their application, ‘He loved her foul, that He might make her fair.’¹ Neither may ‘*bad and good*,’ least of all the latter, be pressed too far: for in strictest speech none are ‘*good*’ till they have been joined to Him, who only is the Good (Matt. xix. 17), and made sharers in his Spirit. At the same time there are varieties of moral life, even anterior to obedience to the Gospel call. There are ‘*good*,’ such as Nathanael, as Cornelius, as those Gentiles that were a law to themselves (Rom. ii. 14; cf. Luke viii. 15); and ‘*bad*,’ in whom the sin common to all has wrought more mightily than in others (Ps. lviii. 3–5); the sickness of which the whole body of humanity is sick, concentrating itself in some of the members more than in others.² The kingdom of heaven is as a draw-

¹ *Fœdam amavit, ut pulchram faceret*; a thought which he pursues elsewhere (*In 1 Ep. Joh. Tract. 9*): ‘He first loved us who himself is ever beautiful. And what were those He loved save foul and ill-favoured? His meaning, therefore, was not to cast us out as foul, but to change us, and make us beautiful instead of ill-favoured. How shall we become beautiful? By loving him who is ever beautiful. As love increases in thee, so also beauty increases, for love itself is the beauty of the soul.’

² Jerome: ‘Among the Gentiles also there is infinite diversity, since we know that some are inclined to vice and rush upon evil, while others, by reason of the grace of their dispositions, give themselves up to virtue.’ Augustine’s conflict with the Pelagians would have hindered him from expressing himself exactly thus, and he will only allow these ‘*good*’ to be ‘less evil’ than the others. Yet he too is most earnest against the abuse of these words, which should argue from them for allowing men to come to baptism without having faithfully renounced, as far as human eye could see, all their past ungodliness; for that were to make the servants of the householder themselves the sowers of the tares (*De Fide et Oper. 17*). Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc. vii. 202*): ‘He bids both good and bad to enter, that He may increase the good and turn the

net, which brings within its ample folds of the best and of the worst, of those who have been before honestly striving after a righteousness according to the law (Rom. ii. 14, 15), and of those who have been utterly 'dead in trespasses and sins.'—
'And the wedding was furnished with guests.'

At this point the other and earlier spoken parable concludes (Luke xiv. 16); but what constitutes the whole in it is only as the first act in this present; and another judgment act is still in reserve. The judgment of the avowed foe has found place; that of the false friend has still to follow. Hitherto the parable has set forth to us the guilt and punishment of them who openly reject the Gospel of the grace of God; as the great body of the Jewish people with their chiefs and rulers were doing. It is now for others, and contains an earnest warning for as many as have found a place in his kingdom. Besides the separation between those who come and those who refuse to come, it shall be also proved who among the actual comers are walking worthy of their vocation, and who not; and as it is thus or thus, there shall be a second sifting and separation. But as in the parable of the Tares it was not the office of the servants to distinguish between the tares and the wheat (Matt. xiii. 29, 30), as little is it their office here to separate decisively between worthy partakers of the heavenly banquet and unworthy intruders; and, indeed, how should it be, seeing that the garment which distinguishes those from these is worn, not on the body, but on the heart?¹ This separating act is for another, for One to whom all hearts are open and manifest, who only can carry it through with no liability to error (Heb. iv. 13). It is of Him, 'whose fan is in his hand and who will thoroughly purge his floor,' that we now hear.

disposition of the bad to better things; that so that may be fulfilled which was read; "then the wolves and the lambs shall feed together."

¹ Augustine: 'For that garment was looked for in the heart, not on the body.'

'And when the king came in to see¹ the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.' It pertained to the dignity of the king, that he should not appear till all were assembled, nor, indeed, till all had occupied their places; for that the guests were arranged, and as we, though with a certain incorrectness, should say, seated, is implied in the word which describes them now.² At a glance he detected one, a spot in that feast (Jude 12), who, apparelled as he was, should not have presumed to take his place at a royal festival, or enter a royal presence. Him he addresses, as yet with a gentle compellation, for possibly he can explain away his apparent contempt; and he shall have the opportunity of doing so, if he can; 'Friend, how³ camest thou in hither, not having⁴ a wedding garment?' But explanation to offer he had none; 'he was speechless.' Why could he not answer that it was unreasonable to expect of him, brought in of a sudden and without warning from the highways, to be furnished with such?—that he was too poor to provide,—or that no time had been allowed him to go home and fetch,—such a garment? Some willing to get rid of any semblance of harshness in the after conduct of the king, and fearing lest such might

¹ Or better 'to behold' (*θεδρασθαι*) 'the guests,' as in the Revised Version. The Vulgate, which has *ut videret*, is not so good as the earlier Italic, *ut inspiceret*.

² *Τοὺς ἀνακειμένους* = *discumbentes* (Vulg.): 'the men sitting at the meat' (Wiclif).

³ Bengel: 'By what favour of the servants? By what daring of thine own?'

⁴ The subjective, and not the objective, particle of negation is here used, *μή* and not *οὐ*—*μή ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου*, 'not having (and knowing that thou hadst not) a wedding garment.'—The *ἔνδυμα γάμου* is not exactly the *ἱμάτιον νυμφικόν* of Plutarch (*Amator.* 10), for that is the garment not of the guests, but of the bridegroom; nor yet the *ἔσθης νυμφικῆς* of Charito, i. p. 6, which is that of the bride (Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 467). Yet may there not lie under this phrase, which seems to belong rather to the bridegroom than to the guests, a hint that the true adornment of each of these is identical with his? from Him they have it; it is like that which He wears Himself: for Christians are reflexions, copies, most faulty and imperfect it is true, but still copies of Christ.

redound on Him whom the king represents, maintain that no such excuse would have served, or would really have touched the point which the king's question raised. They remind us that in the East, when kings or great personages made an entertainment, they were wont to present costly dresses to the guests ; that such a custom is here tacitly assumed ; and therefore that this guest could only appear at the wedding not having such a garment, because he had rejected it when offered to him ; in the same act pouring contempt on the gift and on the giver, and declaring plainly that he counted his ordinary work-day apparel, with any soil and stain which it might have gathered, sufficiently good in which to appear in the presence of the king.

Many, however, deny that any certain traces of such a custom can anywhere be found, that what alone resembles such a usage is the modern custom of clothing with a caftan those admitted into the presence of the Sultan. It must be owned that Judg. xiv. 13, often adduced in proof, proves nothing ; and perhaps no distinct evidence of any such practice is forthcoming. Still we know enough of the undoubted customs of the East to make it extremely likely that presents of dresses were often distributed among the guests at a marriage festival, especially at one like the present, celebrated with great pomp and magnificence ; and if this were the case, our Lord's hearers, to whom those customs were familiar, would naturally have supplied the omission in the parable, and taken for granted such a gift going before ; most of all, when they found one so severely punished for a want which in any other case he could scarcely have avoided. We know, in the first place, that it was and is part of the magnificence of Oriental princes and potentates to have vast stores of costly dresses laid up, a large portion of their wealth being often invested in these (Job xxvii. 16 ; Isai. iii. 6 ; Jam. v. 2 ; 2 Kin. x. 22).¹ We know, moreover, that costly

¹ The story told by Horace (*Ep.* i. 6. 40) of the five thousand mantles which Lucullus, on examining his wardrobe, found that he possessed, is well known ; and Chardin, whose accuracy all later in-

dresses were often given as marks of peculiar favour (Gen. xli. 42 ; xlv. 22 ; Judg. xiv. 19 ; 1 Sam. xviii. 4 ; 2 Kin. v. 5, 22 ; x. 22 ; Dan. v. 7 ; Esth. vi. 8 ; viii. 15 ; 1 Macc. x. 20, 62) ;¹ being then, as now, the most customary gift ; that marriage festivals (Esth. ii. 18), and other seasons of festal rejoicing (2 Sam. vi. 19), were naturally those at which gifts were distributed with the largest hand. Gifts of costly raiment it would certainly be expected should be worn at once ;² so proclaiming the magnificence of the giver, and adding to the splendour of the time ;—not to say that a slighting of the gift is in the very nature of things a slighting of the giver.³

quirers into Eastern customs join in praising, is here to the point (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. iii. p. 230) : ‘ One would not believe the expense to which the King of Persia is put for these presents. The number of robes which he gives is countless. His wardrobes are always kept full ; and the robes are kept in stores duly sorted.’

¹ Add to these passages Homer, *Il.* xxiv. 228, sqq. ; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii. 3. 1.

² See Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 36.

³ We have examples in the modern East (and Eastern manners so little change that modern examples are nearly as good as ancient) of a vizier losing his life through this very failing to wear a garment of honour sent to him by the king. The story is in Chardin. The officer through whose hands the royal robe passed, out of spite, sent a plain habit in its stead. To have appeared in this would have implied that the vizier was in disgrace at court ; he therefore substituted another dress, a gift of the late king, and in that made his public entry into the city. When this was known at court, men declared the vizier a dog, that he had disdainfully thrown aside the royal apparel, saying, ‘ I have no need of Shah Sefi’s habits ;’ and they so incensed the king, that it cost the vizier his life (Burder, *Orient. Liter.* vol. i. p. 94 ; cf. Herodotus, ix. 111, for the manner in which the rejecting of a monarch’s gift was resented).—Olearius (*Travels*, p. 214), with the ambassadors in whose train he went, was invited to the table of the Persian king. ‘ It was told us,’ he goes on to say, ‘ by the mehmander, that we according to their usage must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king over our dresses, and so appear in his presence. The ambassadors at first refused ; but the mehmander urged it so earnestly, alleging, as also did others, that the omission would greatly displease the king, since all other envoys observed such a custom, that at last they consented, and hanged, as did we also, the splendid vests over their shoulders, and so the cavalcade proceeded.’ We gather from this

But this rejection of the gift, if such may be safely assumed, involved a further affront—namely, the appearing of this guest at a high festival in unsuitable, probably in mean and sordid, apparel. Even with us there are occasions when this would be felt as a serious lack of respect; much more in those Eastern lands where outward symbols possess so much more significance than with us.¹ It is evident, too, that the more honourable the person, and the more solemn the occasion, the more flagrant the offence; here the person is a king, and the occasion the marriage of his son. And thus, however others may have been forward to say many things in this guest's behalf,—as that he could not help appearing as he did, or that his fault, after all, was a trivial one,—*he did not count that he had anything to say for himself; 'he was speechless,'* or literally, his mouth was stopped, he was gagged,² with no plea to allege for his contemptuous behaviour. He stood self-condemned,³ at once convinced and convicted, and his judgment did not tarry; but of that presently.

When we seek to give a spiritual signification to this part of the parable, many questions, and some most important,

passage that, strictly speaking, there was no actual changing of apparel, but the garment of honour was either a vest drawn over the other garments, or a mantle hung on the shoulders. Schulz describes that given to him as 'a long robe with loose sleeves, which hang down (for the arm is not put into them), the white ground of which is goat's hair, mixed with some silver, but the flowers woven in are of gold-coloured silk.' He too mentions the necessity of putting it on before appearing in the presence of the Sultan (Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenl.* vol. v. p. 76; see also Schuyler, *Turkistan*, 1876, vol. ii. pp. 40, 41).

¹ Irenæus, then, puts it well when he says (iv. 36. 6): 'The man who has not on a marriage garment, that is a scoffer.' And what stress Cicero lays (*In Vatin.* 12, 13) on the fact that Vatinus once appeared clad in black at a high festival (*supplicatio*)—how much of wanton indignity and insult he saw in it toward the giver of the feast and the other guests.

² Ἐφιμώθη, from *φιμός* (= *ἐπιστόμιον*), a gag. The word is used in its literal sense, 1 Tim. v. 18. Chrysostom explains it well, 'he condemned himself.'

³ For, in Cicero's words, 'Silence is a form of confession.'

demand an answer. And first, *When* does the great King come in 'to see' or to scrutinize, 'the guests?' In one sense He is doing so evermore; as often as by any judgment-act hypocrites are revealed, or self-deceivers laid bare to themselves or to others; ¹—at every time of trial, which is also in its very nature a time of separation, He does it. But while this is true, while we must not relegate to a day of final judgment all in this kind, which, indeed, is continually going forward, it is not the less true that for that day the complete separation is reserved; and then all that has been partially fulfilling in one and another will be altogether fulfilled in all.

But the guest himself 'which had not on a wedding garment'—does he represent one or many? Some unwilling to let go the singleness of this guest, and fain to hold it fast in the interpretation of the parable, have suggested that Judas Iscariot may be immediately intended.² Assuredly a mistake, except in so far as words having their fitness for every hypocrite and deceiver had eminently their fitness for him. Others of the historico-prophetical school, as Vitringa and Cocceius, see in him the man of sin,³ by whom they understand the Pope. It is little likely, however, that any single person is intended, but rather that many are included in this

¹ Augustine: 'God enters the judgment seat, who in his longsuffering abides without;' and the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*: 'The king must be held to enter when God makes trial of men, that it may appear what degree of virtue each man has, and whether he be worthy of the place which he holds in the Church.'

² Thus Pseudo-Athanasius (*De Parab. Script.*); and in later times Weisse (*Evang. Gesch.* vol. ii. p. 114).

³ So Gurtler (*Syst. Theol. Proph.* p. 676), who urges in confirmation the address, ἐταίρε (=friend, partner, comrade): 'Antichrist is in a peculiar sense ἐταίρος, since he proclaims himself Christ's vicar, and places by the side of Christ's throne the throne of his own wickedness.'—The Jews have a curious tradition about Esau, who is their standing type of Antichrist, that he will be such a guest thrust out from the kingdom of God. It is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, and is as follows: 'Esau the wicked will veil himself with his mantle, and sit among the righteous in Paradise in the world to come: and the holy blessed God will draw him and bring him out from thence: which is the sense of those words, Obad. 6.'

one; the 'few' presently said to be 'chosen,' as compared with the 'many called' suggesting that a great sifting has found place. Why this 'many' cast out should be represented as a single person has been explained in various ways. Townson instances it as an example of what he happily calls 'the lenity of supposition,' which marks our Lord's parables; just as in another *one* servant only is brought forward as failing to turn his lord's money to account (Matt. xxv. 18; Luke xix. 20). Gerhard ingeniously suggests, that 'if many had been thrust out from the marriage, the nuptial festivities might appear to have been disturbed.' But more valuable is another suggestion which he offers, namely, that the matter is thus brought home to the conscience of every man: 'so diligent and exact will be the future scrutiny, that not so much as one in all that great multitude of men shall on the last day escape the piercing eyes of the Judge.'¹ Nor is there any difficulty in thus contemplating the whole multitude of evil-doers as a single person. For as the faithful are one, being gathered under their one head, which is Christ, so the congregation of the wicked are one, being gathered also under their one head, which is Satan. The mystical Babylon is one city no less than the mystical Jerusalem. There is a *kingdom* of darkness (Matt. xii. 25, 26), as well as a kingdom of God.²

What the wedding garment itself is, and what he lacked,

¹ Cajetan the same: 'A most exact discernment amid this great multitude is here described, for God so sees all men that He has an individual care for each of them, and therefore we have here a single man described as being seen.'

² Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. lxi. 4*): 'Amid that great crowd of guests one man was taken from the banquet and consigned to punishment. But the Lord, willing to show that this one man is one body made up of many, when He ordered him to be cast forth and consigned to the due punishment, immediately added: 'For many are called, but few are chosen.' . . . Who were the chosen, if not those who remained? Yet only one was cast forth, and many remained. How, if only one out of many was cast forth, can the elect be few unless in this one many were contained?' See also *Con. Don. post Coll. 20*. We have the exact converse of this, 1 Cor. ix. 24; where the whole number of *the elect* are included in the '*one*' that receives the prize.

who had it not, has been abundantly disputed. Was it faith? or was it charity? or was it both? That it was something indispensable is self-evident, and theologians of the Roman Church, eager to draw an argument from hence that charity is the one indispensable grace, have urged that it must have been charity, and not faith, which this unworthy guest was without; for faith, as they argue, he must have had, seeing that without that he would not have been present at the feast at all. But, arguing thus, they take advantage of the double meaning of the word faith, and play off its use as a bare assent to, or intellectual belief in, the truth, against St. Paul's far deeper use;—and this with injustice, since only in the latter sense would any attribute this guest's exclusion to his wanting faith. Were it needful so to limit the meaning of the wedding garment that it must signify *either* faith or charity, far better to restrain it to the former. Such would be the deeper and truer interpretation, since the flower is wrapped up in the root, but not the root in the flower, and so charity in faith, but not faith in charity.¹ There is, however, no need so to determine for one of these interpretations, as to exclude the other. The foremost teachers of the early Church put themselves in no contradiction with one another, when some of them asserted that what the intruder lacked was charity, and others faith; nor with themselves, when they gave now the one interpretation, and now the other.² For what

¹ These according to Ignatius (*Ad Ephes.* 14) are 'the beginning and end of life; faith the beginning, love the end.'

² The Fathers generally contemplate the wedding garment as charity, or holiness. Thus Irenæus (iv. 36. 6): 'Those who were called to the supper of the Lord, because of their evil conversation did not receive the Holy Spirit;' Tertullian (*De Resur. Carnis*, 27): 'Holiness of the flesh;' Leo: 'The garment of virtues;' Origen: 'the robe of virtue;' Hilary: 'The marriage garment is the glory of the Holy Spirit and the whiteness of the celestial robe, which has been received by the confession of a good interrogation and is kept whole and undefiled unto the assembly of the Kingdom of Heaven;' so Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 38 *in Evang.* This is the predominant, though not the exclusive, sense given to it in our *Exhortation to the Holy Communion*; with which compare Chrysostom, *Hom.* 3, *in Ephes.*, quoted by Bingham (*Christ. Antt.* xv. 4. 2).

this guest wanted was *righteousness*, both in its root of faith and its flower of charity. He had not, according to the pregnant image of St. Paul, here peculiarly appropriate, 'put on Christ;' in which putting on of Christ, both faith and charity are included,—faith as the investing power, charity or holiness as the invested robe.¹ By faith we recognize a righteousness out of and above us, and which yet is akin to us, and wherewith our spirits can be clothed; which righteousness is in Christ, who is therefore the Lord our Righteousness. And

Yet Grotius, who gives for his own explanation, 'walking worthy of our calling,' affirms too much, saying: 'Thus the ancient commentators on this passage, with great unanimity:' for Ambrose (*De Fide*, iv. 1) speaks of the 'marriage garment of faith;' though elsewhere (*De Pœnit.* i. 6) he says: 'He is rejected who has not on a marriage garment, the cloak, that is of charity, the robe of grace;' and again, uniting his two former expositions (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 204): 'The marriage garment, that is, faith and charity:' with which Augustine (*Serm.* 90) consents: 'Have faith with love, this is the marriage garment;' the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*: 'The marriage garment is true faith, which is through Jesus Christ and his righteousness;' see also Basil the Great (*in Esai.* ix) for a like interpretation. The author of the Second Clementine Epistle, § 6, will have understood baptism as the wedding garment, if indeed there is reference to this parable in his words: ἡμεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ τηρήσωμεν τὸ βάπτισμα ἄγνόν καὶ ἀμίαντον, ποῖα πεποιθήσει εἰσελευσόμεθα εἰς τὸ βασιλεῖον τοῦ Θεοῦ; To give this application of the words any probability, we must take *βασιλεῖον* here as palace, and not as = *βασιλείαν*: 'Except we keep our baptism holy and undefiled, with what confidence shall we enter into the palace of God?'

¹ So Gerhard: 'The marriage garment is Christ, who in these nuptials is both the bridegroom and the food. For we put on Christ alike when by faith we lay hold of his merit, so that our nakedness in the presence of God's judgment may be covered with his righteousness, as with a costly garment, and also when by holy conversation we tread in his footsteps (Rom. xiii. 14), since Christ has not only been given us as a gift, but also set before us as an example;' and Jerome's words are remarkable; 'a marriage garment, that is the garment of the supra-celestial man,'—while the sordid garment is 'the clothing of the old man.' Compare the *Shepherd* of Hermas (iii. sim. 9, 13); he sees in his vision some virgins, and is told that they represent the chief Christian virtues; 'These are holy spirits, for a man may by no other means enter the kingdom of God if these do not clothe him with their garment. Yea, it will profit thee nothing to receive the name of the son of God, unless also thou shalt receive from these their garment.'

this righteousness by the appropriative and assimilative power of faith we also make our own; we are clothed upon with it, so that it becomes, in that singularly expressive term, our *habit*,¹—the righteousness imputed has become also a righteousness infused, and is in us charity or holiness, or more accurately still, constitutes the complex of all Christian graces as they abide in the man, and show themselves in his life.

Setting aside then all narrower interpretations, not as erroneous, but as insufficient, we may affirm of the wedding garment that it is righteousness in its largest sense, the whole adornment of the new and spiritual man; including the faith without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6), and the holiness without which no man shall see Him (Heb. xii. 14), or shall, like this guest, only see Him to perish at his presence. It is at once the faith which is the root of all graces, the mother of all virtues, and likewise those graces and virtues themselves. Whether we contemplate this guest as a self-righteous person, trusting in a righteousness of his own, instead of a righteousness of Christ's, imputed and imparted,—or see in him a more ordinary sinner, who with the Christian profession and privileges is yet walking after the flesh and not after the spirit,—in either case the image holds good; he is rejecting something, even the true robe of his

¹ This image runs through all Scripture, its frequent use attesting its fitness. Thus we are bidden to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. xiii. 14), to put off the old, to put on the new, man (Col. iii. 10; Ephes. iv. 22), to put on the several pieces of the armour of God (Ephes. vi. 13–16; 1 Thess. v. 8); baptism is a putting on of Christ (Gal. iii. 27; cf. Rom. xiii. 12; Ezek. xvi. 10; Job. xxix. 14; Isai. lxi. 10; Eccles. vi. 31; xxvii. 8). Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 699) shows in some remarkable quotations that the mystery of putting on a righteousness from above was not wholly hidden from the Jews. And as grace is put on here, so glory in the kingdom which shall come: 'He that overcometh the same *shall be clothed* in white raiment' Rev. iii. 5; iv. 4; vi. 11; vii. 9; 2 Esd. ii. 39, 45). In the book of Enoch these garments are 'garments of life.' Angels, according to Jewish tradition, strip off the grave-clothes from every one who enters Paradise, and clothe him in white and glistening raiment (Eisenmenger, *Entd. Judenth.* vol. ii. p. 310).

spirit, bestowed on him when he was made a member of Christ;¹ and which if he has since let go, he may yet, on the strength of that gift, freely at any moment reclaim; he is a despiser, counting himself good enough merely as he is in himself, in the flesh and not in the spirit (John iii. 6), to appear in the presence of God (Prov. xvi. 2). But a time arrives when every man will discover that he needs another covering, another array for his soul; that this is a garment narrower than he can wrap himself withal. It is woe to him, if, like the guest of this parable, he only discovers this, when it is too late to provide himself with such; and then suddenly stands confessed to himself and to others in all his moral nakedness and shame. As it was the king's word which struck the intruder speechless, so will it be the light of God shining round and shining in upon the sinner, which will one day reveal to him all the hidden things of his heart, all that evil whereof he has hitherto wilfully chosen to be ignorant, but now can remain ignorant no longer. He then, like the unworthy guest, will be '*speechless*.' However forward he may have been in other times to justify himself, as there are now a thousand cloaks for sins (Gen. iii. 12, 13; Jam. i. 13; 1 Sam. xv. 21), in that day his mouth will be stopped; he will not even pretend to offer any plea why judgment should not proceed against him at once.

'*Then said the king to the servants,*'—to the 'ministering attendants' rather, for they differ both in name and office from the '*servants*' that brought in the guests,² being no other than the angels, who 'shall gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity' (Matt. xiii. 41, 49; Luke xix. 24)—'*Bind him hand and foot;*' which work of the heavenly *lictors* is by some understood to express that upon the sinner the night is come, in which no man can work, that for him all opportunities of repentance and amendment are gone by. I take it rather to express the impotence

¹ See one of Schleiermacher's *Taufreden* (*Predigten*, vol. iv. p. 787).

² Those were *δούλοι* (ver. 3, 4), these are *διάκονοι* (cf. John ii. 5, 9). See my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § ix.

to which in a moment every proud fighter against God will be reduced.¹ The hands by whose aid resistance, the feet by whose help escape, might have been meditated, are alike deprived of all power and motion (Acts xxi. 11; 2 Sam. iii. 34). This agrees better with that '*take him away*,' which follows, being the sinner's exclusion from the Church now glorious and triumphant in heaven (Matt. xiii. 48; 2 Thess. i. 9). Nor is the penalty merely privative; it is not only this loss of good, but also the presence of evil.² They who carry out the judgment shall '*cast him into outer darkness*.' The phrase occurs only in St. Matthew, but there thrice; viii. 12; xxiv. 30; and here. The imagery is suggested by the parable itself. Within the king's palace is feasting and light and joy; without is desolation and darkness and cold. Not otherwise does the '*outer darkness*' lie wholly beyond and external to God's kingdom of light and joy;³ for as light is the element of that kingdom, so whatever is outside of that kingdom is

¹ H. de Sto. Victore: 'With hands and feet bound, that is, with his power of well doing utterly taken away;' but Grotius better: 'This denotes τὸ ἀμαχὸν καὶ τὸ ἀφευκτόν, the irresistible and inevitable character of the punishment divinely appointed;' cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 526 e. Zechariah (v. 8) supplies an instructive parallel. The woman whose name is Wickedness sitting securely in the ephah, or great *measure* of God's judgments, which she has filled, is forcibly thrust down into it; and its mouth is then stopped with the huge mass of lead, that she may never raise herself again. Jerome (in loc.): 'The angel cast the woman headlong into the midst of the ephah: . . . and lest haply she should again raise her head, and rejoice in her wickedness and impiety, he casts upon the mouth of the ephah a talent of lead after the manner of a very heavy stone, that he may crush and confine Impiety in the midst of the ephah, lest by some means she may break forth.' The women with wings, who bear away the ephah, will further correspond to the servants here; and the outer darkness here to the land of Shinar there, the profane land, whither the vessel and its burden are borne. The whole vision too (v. 5-11) has its similarity to this parable; for that and this speak alike of the cleansing of the Church by judgment-acts of separation upon the sinners in it.

² Augustine, *Serm.* xxxi. 5.

³ Peter Lombard (iv. dist. 50): 'The darkness shall be outer darkness, because then the sinners shall be utterly out of God's presence. . . . They shall be utterly removed from the light of God.'

darkness—even that exterior or ‘*outer darkness*’ into which all fall back, who, refusing to walk in the light of God’s truth, fail to attain in the end to the light of everlasting life (cf. Wisd. xvii. 21 ; xviii. 1). ‘*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* ;’ something on these words has been said already ; see p. 105.¹ With all this it is interesting to compare Zeph. i. 7, 8 : ‘The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king’s children, and all such as are *clothed with strange apparel*.’²

Christ moralizes the whole parable, as He had already done that of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 16), with those solemn words, ‘*For many are called, but few are chosen*’ (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24). To these ‘*called*’ and not ‘*chosen*’ belong others beside this unworthy guest ; for the words are intended to include those who did not so much as seem (which he had done) to embrace the invitation, and who expiated their contumacy in the destruction of themselves and their city. And how many of the severer dealings of God with those who, within the Covenant, yet despise the mercies of that Covenant, do these words sum up. They are evermore finding their fulfilment. They were fulfilled on a scale how large in the history of that entire generation which went out of Egypt ; these were all ‘*called*’ to a kingdom, yet were not in the end ‘*chosen*,’ since with most of them God was not well pleased, and they died in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 22–30 ; 1 Cor. x. 1–10 ; Heb. iii. 7–9 ; Jude 5). They were fulfilled on a smaller scale in those twelve, to whom it was given the first to see the promised land ; two only drew strength and encouragement from that sight, and they only were ‘*chosen*’ to inherit it (Num. xiv. 23, 24). They found their fulfilment in the thirty and two thousand of Gideon’s army ; these all were ‘*called*,’ but only three hundred were

¹ See Meuschen (*N. T. ex. Talm. illust.* p. 106) and Pfeiffer (*Opp.* p. 861) for a Jewish parable bearing some resemblance to the present.

² Ἐνδεδυμένους ἐνδύματα ἀλλότρια (LXX).

found worthy, and in the end 'chosen' to be helpers in and sharers of his victory,—such a sifting and winnowing had there previously been (Judg. vii.). They were fulfilled too in a type and figure, when of all the maidens brought together to the palace of the Persian king, Esther alone was 'chosen' by him, and found lasting favour in his sight¹ (Esth. ii.).

¹ H. de Sto. Victore (*De Arrhâ Animæ*) makes excellent application of Esther's history to the matter in hand: 'See how many were chosen that one should be made choice of, even she who to the eyes of the king should seem fairer and comelier than the rest. The servants of the king choose many for adornment, the king himself chooses one to be his bride. The first choice is of many according to the command of the king; the second choice is of one, according to the will of the king. . . . The most high King, a King's son, came into this world (which He had himself created) to betroth to himself the wife of his choice, his peculiar wife, a wife worthy of a royal bridal. But because, when He appeared in the form of humility, Judæa thought scorn to receive him, she was cast aside. The servants also of the King, that is the Apostles, were sent through all the world to gather souls and to bring them to the city of the King, that is, to holy Church. . . . Many therefore were called and enter the Church through faith, and there receive the sacraments to be, as it were, unguents and remedies prepared for the restoration and beautifying of their souls. But because it is said by the mouth of truth, Many are called, but few are chosen, not all those who are admitted to this adornment are to be chosen for the kingdom; but those only who so strive to purify and adorn themselves by these means that, when they shall be brought into the King's presence, they shall be found such as He himself will rather choose than reject. Look then how thou art placed, and thou wilt understand what thou shouldest do. Thy Bridegroom has placed thee on the couch where the women are adorned, has given thee various pigments and divers spices, and has commanded thee to be served with royal food from his own table: whatever can conduce to thy health, to thy refreshment, to the renewal of thy beauty and the increase of thy comeliness, He has assigned thee. Beware, therefore, lest thou be found negligent in adorning thyself, lest in thy last day, when thou shalt be displayed in the sight of this Bridegroom, thou shalt (O may it not be so) be found unworthy of his espousal. Prepare thyself as befits the bride of a King, yea the bride of a heavenly King, the bride of an immortal Bridegroom.'