No. 104.

On the parable of the marriage feast.
Matt. xxvii. 140. And Jesus answered, Take note upon them again by seven weeks.

The main design of this parable is very similar to that of the parable in the last chapter of the vineyard. It represents the offer of the sins made to the first nation, this rejection of them, & the consequent ruin & punishment brought upon themselves. The general scope is in fact the same: but in that which we have just read, the circumstances are sufficiently different: place, sufficiently different manners before us, to afford materials for further reflection. There is one dif-
between these two parables, and states us at first
views. In that of the vineyard, the latter is the

speaks particularly of himself, (of the treatment on
he had experienced as was to experience from the rulers
yielded,) whereas, in that of the marriage feast, he
does not once bring himself to view as the messenger
of the most High; but solely as the son for whom
the entertainment was given. This seems to intimate
that the scene which is here represented, after the ascension of glorious

of Jesus,—when he was no longer a teacher

of messengers, but more especially a son. Advancing in
dignity in heaven, represented by his sitting at the
right hand of God. In the former, parable, the

inaugurates, but in the vineyard, (the

of the O.T., but in this, the servants

sent to invite the guests to the marriage feast, are
intended solely the apostles of the

the new dispensation. The former refers to Jesus's

York; the latter refers to it by alone.

With the view before us, we may proceed to unfold
the meanings of the figures we represent in the
parable or case, as to consider. The king, who made
a marriage for his son, is God himself, who, through
his Son's death, hath set aside a spiritual kingdom on
earth. The marriage feast, with all the circum-
stances of preparation, represents the type, the in-
troduction of Jesus. If the invitations to this feast are
designed to set forth the messages which the

Apostles, disciples of Jesus, forth to the world
in the preaching of the first heralds of the

there who were hidden in the wedding, i.e., the
first invited guests. We are to understand the

Jewish people, to whom we know the Apostles

directed their admonitions and invitations. But, they
are to seek, small light of the introduction of the


their ways, one to this farm, another to his merchant
shop; 2 that the rest took the servants, sent out
d them gratefully to do them; 3 this where a
representation of the manner, in which the great
part of the Jewish nation treated the missionaries
of the Apostles. In general, they rejected them
with contempt. 4 even went so far as to perse-
cute of first to death those, who brought them.
In consequence of this, we are informed, the king
sent forth his armies, destroyed these number
of homes their city; this refers to the punish-
ments with God inflicted on people by awful
ing their ground of Believers Jerusalem to be
destroyed, of the whole nation to be scattered
to the four corners of the earth... We see
the fact that the most malignant act the rejection
of his mission, said to his tenants, that the Day
is ready, but they who were invited were not
worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and
many, as ye shall find, lead to the marriage. For
we have an invitation to the extension of evil to the
nations. These, to whom it had been first offered,
had shown by their conduct that they were un-
worthy of it; if its mission were now com-
pounded, the time to the nations, to preach the
Gospel every where indiscriminately to all. In
the words of himself charged his Apostles, “go ye secular
all nations.” 6 thus it is that the has become
the common property of the world. From the
history of the Apostles, however, we learn that
it took a long time to break down the exclusive
feelings, no they had in common with other com-
mon men, to make them willing to carry the
Gospel out of their beloved home. India to native
men, who has been accustomed to despise. But
at length they did go abroad, with the mind of
truth, 6 triumphed over the most determined
From the bed, the sinner from the hypocritical.

The wedding garments of such the unhappy guest was destructive, signifies the virtuosity of the eunuch life; that character these attachments, and every follower of Christ should maintain; if they, who like this guest have not these virtues of graces, will at last like him be speedless will have nothing to say in their defence, shedding all the flood suckets, much they had been accustomed to hear, falling ends them, will little by lament, that they have not wear out the wedding garments of a true character, will feel how much they have lost, by aspiring to nothing more than the name of a follower of Christ.

Such is a connective view of this parable, (of the meaning voiced under its figurative covering. It represents, as we have seen, the publication of the law to Jews first, and then to the Gentiles, its rejection in a great degree by the Jews, until the
consequent punishment, its extension to all mankind, the prominent collection of good and evil, who would accept the invitation of the solemn judgment passed by the All in the sealing guests, i.e. on them, of the separating work, they who possess the former character, these will possess it not...

At the close of this parable, there is an expression, and often occurs in the discourse of our Lord, "for many are called, but few are chosen." The meaning of this is, that many are invited to accept the offer of the Gospel, and take the privileges, privileges, designed for the worthy subjects of the kingdom of heaven, but that few complain truly do accept the invitation with a hearty and cheerful heart, i.e. that the means of religion are offered to multitude, but that small is the number of those who use them as they ought. This is the meaning of the expression, "called," but few are chosen, because they were faithful and sincere in the cause of their religion; for it is true, those who, by their lives, that the grace of nature of the God, dwell in their hearts, are called elect and chosen. The expression has respect only to the character of individuals, not to any determinate time, nor may it be imagined to have passed in the mind of God concerning the salvation of a small part of his creatures, ages before they were born, as he has become moral agents.
Having thus considered the meaning of our parable, let us now attend to the moral instruction which may be drawn from it, particularly from two passages in it.

1. From the man's in all the guests, that were first bidden, received the invitation: they made right of it, went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize. The last, in garnet, came, pare, says—'they all with one consent began to make excuse.' Some were engaged in business of purchases, or they would not dismiss; others were detained by domestic cares. This is something as the mere relation of this conduct, which makes us arrogant at the ingratitude of poverty of the poor. In another man, we may suppose, who made the entertainment was the friend, benefactor of those who were invited, yet they did not hesitate to sacrifice their obligations to him, in order to gratify their own inclinations at the moment. But when we rise from the literal meaning, wovale, this, which

as emblematical of social ingratitude, & negligence we cannot but feel, that it is a dark picture, which this presents. And we shall do well to keep it, till we desire instruction for ourselves. If we do not too much resemble these unfortunate persons who, when they were bidden, was bright of escort their ways? Is it not too true of us, that when we are called to our religious duties, with our conscience are service to us, are call with one consent, began to make excuse? We have so many other claims to attend to, that we have no time for that claim, all best do serve our attention. Our hearts are too pressed on other thousand other thoughts, that they thoughts of being an immortal being are crowded out. And the excuses, by which we justify this neglects are the most false and idle, that can be imagined? We are very apt to talk, as if an attention to religious duties would interfere with our worldly concerns;—because we are obliged to go our ways pre
to his farm, and the bar merchandise, we suppose
we must turn a deaf ear to business concerns. Now
all this reasoning is totally false. There is nothing
in religion, rightly understood, that is in the least
degree inconsistent with a proper regard to our worldly
affairs. You may attend to your farms, you may
attend to your merchandise, if you may attend to re-
ligion too. If you suppose that in the course of life, the
law prescribes to you there
is any thing, that will enable you to make
pleasure, that will call your self con-
ning for some other comfort, then the
family, that will make you universal, guilty,
peculiar, if you have such an idea of religion, you
have under a great mistake and by mistake. Re-
ligion is sometimes greatly misrepresented. There are
many circumstances, that have in some the world
instead of the true coin. If you see a man indolent,
muse, disregar’d of the duties of his station in society
whatever may be his connections, you may see
he is not a religious man. Does not the old Fable
say, that he worked with his own hands, that the
might be chargeable to me man? How can
are the enemies, and the invitid guests in the house
make for neglecting the invitation, when inexcu-
able shall we be, if we repeat the same excuses, that
in one months they are quite as idle of false, as the
more in theirs. When we are called to attend to the
society is institutions of life, let us not begin to make
excuse, to say that our gains or our pleasures will
not oblige us to attend? It was one good reason in
the days of old, if it is one good reason now, One great
cause of the neglect of the sabbath, or of the obser-
ces of the law, especially of the observance of the law
of Washington. Suppose, is to make some excuse for the present, to
fruit of till a more convenient time what we acknow-
dge to be our duty. But tell me, when will that
more convenient time come? Will you not always
have other hands full of business of cares? What
not always be just as easy for you to make excuses as it is now? Believe one, there is nothing gained by delay. When you are called to attend the service of God, the duties of religion, the celebration of the affecting memorial of the body & blood of Jesus; do not turn away, but that you have means, you are bound, to occupy all your time of all your heart, do not shut off from one day to another, from one week to another, from one month to another, from one open to another, these duties, which is just as much in your hands to attend to now as it will ever be. And by just as much, it is better to attend to at one time as another.

2. We are led to speak of the necessity of mindfulness of that righteousness of character. This is represented by the wedding garment. When we read the parable we cannot but feel that it was offering a great indignity to the master of the feast, from his own house to appear there, in such a deplorable, sordid habiliment, as to draw the attention of all around him; you find in con-

sequence, that having severely rebuked the hungry shut out from the entertainment. And will not one conduct himself for anyone offensive to the King of heaven? and, if we presume to think ourselves prepared for the celestial entertainment above, while we are deplored of the white robe of righteousness? In this world, God has given us the means of acquiring this wedding garment. He has placed under his moral government, he has bestowed upon us the faculty of improving the power to do as he will. He has set the Son of his love, to disclose to us fully the nature of our moral condition here below, to show us that this is the childhood of our being, the framing period of our existence, to bring to our minds the most glorious truths respecting the character of designs of God, to give us spiritual strength, to save us from our sins, if we open our minds to the transgression, may return to the hand Parent of good kind.
he has wandered so far is so heavy. Now when Beelzebub accosts all this for us, shall we not even part do what he requires of us? When he reaches forth his hand for our help, shall we not of duty receive the aid? In his infinite mercy, he has looked with kind regard on our helplessness, and given us the means of acquiring the graces and virtues of the Gospel. Now it is these virtues, graces, of God, that make the wedding garment to shine; that garment must be clothed on us as soon as the light assembly above. There is no substitute for it. If we profess the true name, we must mean the true name or expect, like the man in the parable, to be shut out from the entertainment of God and heaven for those who have him. The graces, not to oppress the true character, are subjects of personal concern and man must acquire them for himself, for himself. See the word of Scripture expressly declares: ‘The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him,’ 

the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon them.”

“Hence,” he went on, “as well as expect to be beautiful by another’s beauty, a poor man to be rich by another’s riches, a rich man to be healthy by another’s health, as a rational being, a moral man to be made righteous by another’s righteousness, let us then strive for grace on the line that when our Lord comes to view the guests, he may not find us destitute of the wedding garment.”

And permit me to remind you that one of the means of acquiring this garment is to join in the memorial of the death and sufferings of our Lord. What you come to this assembly or not, you are equally under the obligation to join in the work of a character. But the celebration of this ordinance is one of the means of strengthening good impressions upon principles, of cherishing that love of God and our Lord, which should habitually dwell in our hearts, is in the light of one of the means of edifying, of unifying,
light, that we should view this solemn institution, so much we are most solemnly bound to use it. There is surely no danger, that we shall be too good: we need the assistance of all the helps to holiness, with we can have, shaming them none is more powerful, if rightly employed, than the celebration of the dying love of the Saviour.

May 1821.

Most high and holy God, with thy grace give us a deep sense of the importance of embracing with all zeal and diligence the means of religion, all the sacred means put into our hands. Save us from all delays to know and do thy will. When invited to the entertainments of divine truth, may we not make excuses of too great a respect for the voice that speaks to us from heaven. May we put on the robe of a sinner of righteousness, the wedding garment of a righteous character. May the graces and virtues of the God, dwell in our hearts, and may we not only profess, but fulfill the duties. May we be truly wise, and understand the words of Christ, and give us the strength to keep the sacred law. Give us the strength to keep the sacred law. Give us the strength to keep the sacred law.

Of many our heart is filled with the spirit of the God, while we meet around his table.
At home. May 6th, 1821, forenoon.
At home. [Reid] lecture, Nov. 14th, 1822.