

## **WATER TURNED INTO WINE.**

– JAN. 15. – JOHN 2:1-11. –

*"And his disciples believed on him." – John 2:11.*

THE third day from the calling of Nathaniel to discipleship found our Lord and his disciples invited guests at a wedding, in Cana. Cana was near to Nazareth, for many years the home of Jesus, and quite probably those who invited him, his mother and his disciples were either relatives or old acquaintances. This is implied in the fact that Jesus' mother knew when the wine was exhausted; a matter which rather implied scarcity of provision, and which would be carefully kept from the knowledge of outsiders who might be guests. It is also implied in the statement that Mary gave commands to the servants to do whatsoever Jesus should direct, a matter which would have been quite improper in an ordinary guest.

The fact that our Lord was willing to attend the wedding implies a sympathy with the marriage institution. Indeed, we know that God himself instituted marriage as between our first parents, and we have the Apostle Paul's inspired explanation that this union between man and woman which God approved was designed to be an illustration of the union between Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and the Church, his Bride. – Eph. 5:22-28.

Jesus' mother seems to have had some intimation of his power to help the friends out of the difficulty and ignominy of a feast in progress and the supplies run short: and yet she could not have known of the Lord's power to turn water into wine from any previous experiences during the thirty years of her acquaintance with him; for, contrary to all apocryphal stories, the boy Jesus did no miracles, nor did the young man Jesus do miracles, but, as here declared, the miracle at Cana was the beginning of his miracles. Nevertheless, his mother had

considerable confidence of some sort, else she would not have instructed the servants to give heed to anything Jesus might command.

Our Lord's reply to his mother has rather the appearance of rudeness, but we may be sure that this was not the case. The sense of the Lord's words would seem to be to call his mother's attention to the fact that while he had, in every sense of the word, been a dutiful son for thirty years, he had now reached the period of manhood, according to the Law, and was now devoted, consecrated, to the Lord. No doubt he and his mother had talked the matter over previously, and he was thus reminding her that his life being consecrated now she could not expect him to be under her direction to the same extent as formerly – the time had fully come that he must now be about his Father's business. **[R2419 : page 16]**

The six water-pots mentioned as for purifying were probably intended for the use of the guests for washing their hands. Washing of hands had become an important part of the Jewish observance, and "unless they washed oft they ate not." (Mark 7:3.) We nowhere find these washings and waterpots referred to in the Law. They were, therefore, probably part of the tradition of the elders, to which our Lord so frequently referred as taking the place of the Law of God. These water-pots had handles, permitting them to be tipped over, so as to pour water upon the hands of those who washed, and the six held about one hundred and twenty gallons of water for the supply of the many guests. Our Lord made use of these water-pots in the performance of his miracle for two reasons: **(1)** Such vessels were probably rarely or never used for wine, so there could be no misunderstanding of his miracle. **(2)** He probably intended a symbolical lesson in their use; for we are expressly told that this miracle was a manifestation of his glory beforehand (vs. 11) – a manifestation of his work in the Kingdom. Water is a symbol of truth, both as respects its cleansing properties and also as respects its refreshment, one of the necessities of life, from which thought we have the expression, "water of life." Thus during the Millennial age the

servants of the truth will fill up all of mankind who are suitable vessels, and all thus filled with the truth, and brought into harmony with it, under our Lord's direction, shall then, by supernatural power, find the truth transformed in them into the wine of joy – a joy superior to any other joy, as the wine in the miracle was superior to any other wine.

It cannot be claimed for our Lord Jesus that he was a total abstainer from alcoholic liquors, and the claim made by some that the word "wine" here mentioned signifies a non-intoxicating wine, is not true. It can, however, be said on the other side of the question, that many of the wines of that vicinity and time contained much less alcohol than do many of the wines of to-day. It may also be noted that changes have taken place in humanity, so that the inhabitants, particularly of the temperate zone, are more highly nervous than those of any other time. Hence, with stronger wines and with weaker nerves, there is a largely increased tendency to excess and to injury. It is our opinion, therefore, that if the Lord were living where we do, and now, he would be a total abstainer from alcoholic liquors, not only on his own account, but also as an example for others.

This miracle was evidently not only designed to establish faith in our Lord by his disciples, and amongst the people in the vicinity of his home, but also, as already suggested, was particularly designed to manifest in advance the still future glory of Messiah's great work.

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