

"WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU, DO IT."

– JOHN 2:5. –

THESE were the words of our Lord's mother to the servants, at the marriage in Cana, about the time of the beginning of our Lord's ministry – our Lord, his mother and his disciples being guests at the wedding. There was a shortage of wine, it will be remembered, and Mary evidently expected our Lord to exercise his power in some manner: although just why she should expect this is not evident, because we are distinctly informed that the miracle of turning water into wine was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. (Vs. 11.) And, by the way, this distinct statement by the Apostle John, gives emphatic contradiction to the apocryphal legends which accredit to our Lord various miracles, etc., previous to this time.

How suitable are Mary's words to all of the Lord's people: "Whatsoever he saith unto *you*, do it!" How important that all should learn the lesson that it is not merely the hearing of the gospel which brings blessing to the heart; but obedience to the glad tidings! Of course, it is necessary that we should believe the Master before we could be ready to obey him; yet the expression, "Whatsoever he shall say unto you, *do it!*" includes a faith in the Lord on the part of all those who are obedient. The Christian cannot do better than adopt these words as one of the mottoes of his life, – Whatsoever my Lord saith unto me, I will do it.

We are not to hear and to obey every voice, but, as our Lord himself said, "My sheep hear my voice, ...and they follow me." (Jno. 10:27.) There are many voices in the world (1 Cor. 14:11), some calling in one direction and some in another. The world calls us, the flesh calls us, the Adversary calls us, and the Master calls us. The Christian may readily enough discern the voices of the world and the flesh, and should be on his guard against their seductive influence. But

he may have more difficulty in discerning between the voice of the Adversary and the voice of the Good Shepherd; because, the Adversary's method is to simulate, or counterfeit, the voice of the Shepherd. His usual methods of deception are through false teachings backed by human organizations; the whole being made to appear as a message of light through messengers of light. (See 2 Cor. 11:13,14.) Christians need to be specially on guard on this point; many are hearing and adopting the voice of the Pope, others the voices of Presbyteries, Conferences and Councils, which hinder them from hearing and obeying the voice of the Shepherd. They have need to remember that the proper course is to "take heed that ye refuse not him which speaketh from heaven" – "Whatsoever *he* shall say unto you, do it."

Hearken to his words! "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." (Jno. 13:34.) "If ye love me keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (Jno. 14:21.) "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10:37-40.) He speaks again and says, "Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the humble-minded, the peacemakers, the pure in heart and those hungering and thirsting for righteousness and enduring persecution for righteousness' sake" – "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you and say all manner of evil **[R3163 : page 86]** against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." He saith to us again, – "Ye are the salt of the earth and the light of the world;" "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." – Matt. 5.

From heaven, he continued to speak to us through the Apostles to the same effect: – "Present your bodies living sacrifices to God, holy, acceptable, your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) "Love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous." (1 Pet. 3:8.) "Laying aside every weight, run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith." "Laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil-speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." And "giving all diligence add to your faith fortitude; and to fortitude knowledge; and to knowledge moderation; and to moderation patience, God-likeness, brotherly-kindness, love." – 1 Pet. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:5.

We have heard his words. They impress us as being the very essence of wisdom and righteousness. We know that he is faithful who has promised that if we *do these things* we shall never fall, but be granted an abundant entrance into his everlasting Kingdom. We have taken the first step of belief; we have taken the second step of response, and have agreed to do these things; the important question with each one of us, therefore, must be – Am I obedient to him from heaven who speaketh? Am I doing whatsoever he says? To whatever extent any shall find shortcomings on the line of obedience to the Shepherd's voice, to the extent of ability let him beware and arouse himself, promptly, energetically to do these things; for the Father also saith, "This is my beloved Son: hear him!" – Luke 9:35.

Returning to the narrative: We note our Lord's command to the servants to "fill the water-pots with water." Remembering the statement of the prophet, **[R3164 : page 86]** corroborated by our Lord's own words "without a parable spake he not unto them," we are inclined to surmise that this, his first miracle, contains some spiritual lesson for us. Endeavoring to draw such a lesson from this miracle, in harmony with the general testimony of the Word, we reason thus: The water-pots symbolize the Lord's people; their number, six, might indicate that it refers to the Lord's people in the present time of evil,

because the number six is a symbol for imperfection and evil condition, as seven is the symbol for completeness and perfection. Thus six days of the week are set apart for labor, while the seventh is set apart for rest and refreshment: likewise the six thousand years of the world's history are permitted by the Lord to be evil, through man's disobedience and fall; while in the seventh thousand God proposes to bring in his Millennial Kingdom – his reign of everlasting righteousness.

The water with which the water-pots were commanded to be filled, is in Scripture the symbol for the truth, the "water of life"; not merely the word of truth, but the word accompanied by and infused with the spirit of the truth – it is with this that the Master commands that we shall be filled. In the symbolic miracle the servants obeyed; not doubtfully or slothfully did they fill them half full, but, as it is recorded, "They filled them up to the brim." So it should be with us; having heard the Master's word, "Be ye filled with the spirit," we should draw abundantly from the fountain of grace and truth, nor cease until we are filled with the spirit "to the brim" – completely. And if we so do the Master's commands, what may we expect as a result? We may expect, as illustrated in the symbolic miracle, that the water will ultimately be changed into wine – the symbol for unalloyed pleasure, heavenly joys.

In the symbol the miracle of *change* from water into wine came only to those vessels which were filled to the brim with water; so, likewise, the Lord has promised a still greater change to his faithful followers who receive the treasure of divine truth, and its spirit into their "earthen vessels," and who are filled with it. They shall be "changed" in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, under the sounding of the seventh trumpet; they shall be changed from the human nature to the divine nature; from earthly conditions to heavenly conditions: this greater miracle, yet to be accomplished by our Lord, was well symbolized in the change of the water into wine – the joys of the Kingdom, the joys of the new nature. The Lord's consecrated people

are symbolized not only by the water-pots and by the servants who fill them, but also they are symbolized by the bride at the marriage, just as the bridegroom is also the one who commands that the vessels be filled with the water. The governor of the symbolic feast who pronounced the new wine to be of the very finest quality, aptly symbolizes the heavenly Father who is the great Governor of the great feast associated with the union of the heavenly Bridegroom with his Bride, and the excellence of the wine represents fitly the joys of the Lord with which we shall be filled at our "change." Already we share to some extent in the blessings of this union; already we know something of the joys of our Lord; already we taste not only of the cup of his sufferings, but also "have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Already we partake of the wine on the lees, and the fat things full of marrow (Isa. 25:6); but our present **[R3164: page 87]** joys are but foretastes of the coming realities – the best of the wine comes at the end of the feast, when our heavenly Bridegroom shall have changed us to his own image and likeness that we may share his glory.

Oh, how important that we remember the words, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it!" 'Tis but a little time since we heard his voice directing us how our dearth of joy and happiness might be overcome, and how, instead of impurities and filth of the flesh, we might be filled with the truth, its spirit and its joy, and subsequently have the whole instantly "changed" to the perfection of joy, – into the divine nature. How are we heeding the Master's words? To what extent have we gotten filled with the truth and its spirit? He will give ample opportunity to each of us to be filled, and if any, therefore, is only partly filled, it will be because of a lack of the proper spirit of obedience. Our vessels may not all be of the same size; as with those in the symbol which apparently varied in size, holding from two to three firkins apiece, so our capacities, opportunities, etc., may vary; but, to fulfil the Master's requirement, each must be filled full, – no more, no less, – if we would experience the desired "change."

While this lesson evidently applies merely to the hearing of the Lord's voice by the Church, during this Gospel age, the principle holds good also for the Millennial Age. Now, the vast majority of the world do not hear the Lord's message of grace, and, consequently, are not responsible; but by and by all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and all the sin- and prejudice-blinded eyes shall be opened; and the Lord shall be recognized as the great Teacher, and all shall hear his voice. This is set forth by the Apostle Peter (Acts 3:22,23); after picturing the great Prophet (teacher), Christ the Head and the Church his body, whom God is raising up during this Gospel age, and fitting for the great work of the Millennial age, he declares, "Him shall ye hear [obey] in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be *destroyed* from among the people" – in the Second Death.

If the responsibility of those who will hear during the Millennial age is thus prefigured, and declared, so as to leave no doubt that "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" shall be visited upon all who shall then refuse to obey, what shall we say would be the result of a refusal now to obey on the part of those who hear the Master's voice during the Gospel age? We will not say positively that there is no hope for such; but we see little room for hope for such as, hearing the voice and recognizing it, make no effort to obey it. On the contrary, we hear the Apostle saying, "If we sin wilfully after we have *received a knowledge* of the truth" [heard the Lord's voice], after we have tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the holy spirit, and [experienced in our justification] the powers of the age to come, there remaineth no longer a share for us in the great sacrifice for sin; but only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which would devour us as adversaries who had despised the mercy and grace of God. – Heb. 4:6; 6:4,5; 10:26-31.

Hearken to the Apostle's words again, "See that ye refuse not him from heaven who speaketh." (Heb. 12:25.) "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should

let them slip."..."How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." (Heb. 2:1,2.) So far as we may judge, the hearing of the Word of the Lord in every case brings with it responsibilities; and becomes "a savor of life unto life or of death unto death." We do not say that those who are partially negligent – who fail to fill their "earthen vessels" *to the brim* with the truth and its spirit – will be esteemed to have despised the words of the great Teacher; on the contrary, the fact that they are seeking at all to be filled with the truth and its spirit is an evidence that they have respect to the Lord's Word, and do not reject nor refuse "him that speaketh from heaven." But their failure to give diligence to be filled with the truth and its spirit will mean their loss of the great prize, the fulness of joy in the "change." These are they who neglecting to use their opportunities zealously, neglecting to be filled full with the spirit of the truth, are correspondingly partially filled with the spirit of the world, and not accounted "overcomers" of the world. These are they who will "come up out of great tribulation," washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9,13-15.) Losing the great prize because of a deficiency of zeal, these will, nevertheless, get a great blessing because they did not refuse "him from heaven that speaketh."

We must remember, however, that the hearing of the natural ear is not the only hearing to which the Scriptures refer. Hence, the expression, "He that hath an ear let him hear;" and again, "Ears have they, but they hear not;" and again, our Lord's words respecting the multitudes, "To them that are without, these things are spoken in parables, that hearing they might hear, and not understand." Our responsibility is not, therefore, marked by the opportunities of the outward ear. Many have heard with the outward ear who have never heard in the responsible sense of the Scriptures, in the sense that all **[R3164 : page 88]** eventually must hear; – in the sense of understanding, appreciating the message. The responsibility as to how we hear, and how we reject, is upon those who have an understanding of the Lord's grace. "Blessed are your ears for they hear, and your eyes for they see." But the blessing can only come to such as "refuse not

him from heaven that speaketh." Let us all, therefore, who have heard the Master's voice, strive to remember his Word, as we have considered it foregoing: and let each of us seek to live as nearly as possible according to that Word. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

