

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES WHICH JESUS DID.

## A Sermon

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"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."—John ii. 11.

At this time I shall not consider the relation of this miracle to total abstinence. The wine which Jesus made was good wine, and it was made of water: we are not likely to meet with anything of the kind in this country, where the wine is seldom made from the pure juice of the grape, and where it is not known who made it, or of what it is made. What is now called wine is a very different liquid from that which our Lord divinely produced. We use our Christian liberty to abstain from wine, and we judge that our Saviour would approve of our avoiding that which, in these days, makes our brother to offend. We who quit the intoxicating cup of to-day have our ways of viewing our Master's action in this instance, and we do not find it difficult to see wisdom and holiness in it; but even if we could not so interpret what he did, we should not dare to question HIM. Where others cavil, we adore. Even this is more than I meant to have said; for my object this morning is far removed from this controversy. I pursue a spiritual theme, and pray for help from on high to treat it aright.

We find this miracle only in John; neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, has a word of it. How did John come to know of it? In part it was because of his being present; but the preface in reference to the mother of Jesus came to him in another way, we think. Remember our Lord's words to John from the cross, and how it is written, "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." I believe that no one heard the word of Jesus to his mother but Mary herself. It was after the manner of his delicacy to utter a reproof to her alone. But when John and the honoured mother conversed together, she, in all probability, reminded him of the miracle, and told him of her mistake. Saints gain precious things from God's poor and tried servants; and those who entertain the widow and the fatherless shall not go without reward. If my conjecture be correct, I see the holy modesty of "the mother of Jesus"—that she narrated her own fault, and did not forbid John to mention it. The Holy Spirit moved the evangelist to chronicle not only the miracle, but the error of Mary. It

was wise; for it is a conclusive argument against the notion that the mother of Jesus can intercede for us with her Son, and use authority with him. It is evident from this narrative that our Lord would tolerate no such idea, either in her mind or in ours. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" is a sentence which rings the death-knell of any idea of our Lord's being moved by relationships according to the flesh. With all loving respect, he yet very decidedly shuts out all interference from Mary; for his kingdom was to be according to the spirit, and not after the flesh. I delight in believing, concerning the mother of Jesus, that though she fell into a natural mistake, yet she did not for an instant persist in it; neither did she hide it from John, but probably took care to tell it to him, that no others should ever fall into similar error by thinking of her in an unfitting manner.

Let it never be forgotten that "the mother of Jesus" had a very firm and practical faith in her Son, concerning whom angels and prophets had borne witness to her. She had seen him in his infancy, and watched him as a child; and it could not have been easy to believe in the divinity of one whom you have held as an infant to be nourished at your breast. From his marvellous birth she believed in him; and, now that she receives a kind of rebuff from him, her faith does not fail her; but she calmly turns to the servants and bids them stand ready to obey his commands, whatever they might be. She felt that he was quite certain to do the kind and needful thing. Even from his word, "Mine hour is *not yet* come," she probably gathered that his hour to work would arrive. Her faith was accompanied with imperfection, but yet it was of the right kind. It persevered under difficulty; and in the end it was triumphant, for the wine which had failed became plentiful again, and that which he provided was of surpassing quality. May we have a faith which will outlive a rebuke. May we, like Mary, sing, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"; and may Jesus be to us, as he was to her—a trusted and beloved one upon whom our soul has learned to wait with confidence. With that end in view I have taken this subject for discourse. Oh, that his disciples may trust him more and more! John said, in another place, concerning the doings of our Lord, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Truly, I can say, this sermon is preached that my beloved hearers may believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved.

We shall consider three things in connection with the text; first, the *significance of this beginning of miracles*. Read "signs" instead of "miracles," and you will be nearer the meaning of the original. This "beginning of miracles" was intended, like all that followed it, to be an instructive sign. Secondly, let us observe its *speciality as a manifestation*: "And manifested forth his glory." And then, thirdly, its *sufficiency as a confirmation of faith*: "And his disciples believed on him." It was calculated to establish their faith, and it did so.

I. To begin with, let us think upon THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS BEGINNING OF SIGNS. May the Holy Ghost graciously assist our thoughts, and warm our hearts!

The first sign-wonder that Christ wrought was the turning of water

into wine at the wedding at Cana of Galilee; and as we may often judge of a man's course by its beginning, and the beginning is often the key of all that follows, so we may learn the whole tenor of our Lord's miracles from this one.

Note, first, that this miracle *displayed his self-denial*. Our Lord had been a few days before in the wilderness, and after forty days' fasting he was an hungered. It was in his power to have commanded the stones to become bread; and had he done so the beginning of signs would have been a miracle wrought for his own necessities. But such a beginning would not have been like his life-course, and especially would it have been wide apart from the conclusion of his life when it was said of him, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." He would not make bread for himself, but he will make wine for others; and the fact that it was wine, and not bread, that he made, makes the miracle all the more remarkable. He did not merely make bread for men, which is a necessity; but he even went further, and made wine for them, which is a luxury, though he would not make even bread for himself. You see the sharp contrast between his refusal to help himself even to a crust of bread, and his readiness to give to men, not only what might be needful for life, but that which was only needful to their joy. When the wine failed, the only danger was that the bride and bridegroom would be pained, and the wedding dishonoured; and this our Lord prevents. He would not allow the humble festival of two villagers to come to an untimely end, when they had so kindly invited himself and his disciples. He repaid their courtesy by his spontaneous bounty. How greatly is our divine Lord to be admired and beloved by us! Behold his kindness! He has no selfishness about him. We can each one cry, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." He laid down his life for men—he gave his all to others. No selfish aim ever tintured that consecrated life of his. For himself he reserved no measure or degree of power: for others he used that power without stint. This beginning of miracles is a display of unselfish working. Thoughtfulness for others shone in that miracle like the sun in the heavens.

Next, observe that this miracle *was marked with beneficence*. It was "the beginning of miracles," and the first is the keynote for the rest: happy are we that the first miracle is full of blessing! Moses commenced his work in Egypt with a miracle of judgment. He cast down a rod and it became a serpent, and he turned water into blood: but Jesus overcomes the serpent with the rod of Scripture, and turns water into wine. He works no plagues, but heals our sicknesses. Blessed Master,

"Thine hand no thunder bears,  
No terror clothes thy brow,  
No bolts to drive our guilty souls  
To fiercer flames below."

The mission of Jesus is a happy one, and so it opens at a marriage feast; it is intended to bring joy and gladness to heavy hearts, and so it begins with a deed of royal bounty. At the coronation of kings the conduit in Cheapside has run with wine, and here the waterpots are filled with it to the brim. The after-miracles were all beneficent.

True, he withered a fruitless fig-tree, but it was a beneficent act to wither a tree which drew men out of their way by false promises of fruit, and so caused bitter pangs of disappointment to hungry and fainting wayfarers. It was a good thing to teach us all a practical lesson of sincerity at so small an expense as the withering of a good-for-nothing tree. All our Lord's actions towards men are full of royal benevolence and grace. There will be a day when the Lamb will be angry, and, as a Judge, he will condemn the ungodly; but while this dispensation lasts, he is to us all mercy, love, kindness, and bounty. If you, my hearer, will come to him, you will find that his heart will go out to you; and he will freely bless you with life, and rest, and peace, and joy. The Lord will bless you, and remove the curse far from you.

This beginning of miracles was wrought at a wedding to show great beneficence. Marriage was the last relic of paradise left among men, and Jesus hastened to honour it with his first miracle. Marriage is his Father's ordinance; for he it was that brought Eve to Adam; and our Lord wrought in harmony with the Father. He symbolically touched the very springs of manhood, and gave his sanction to that ordinance whereby the race is perpetuated. Jesus comes to a marriage, and gives his blessing there, that we may know that our family life is under his care. How much we owe to the joys of our domestic relationships! thereby life is raised from water into wine. We have sometimes thought it was almost a proof of the divinity of Christianity, that there could be homes so happy as some of our homes have been made by the presence of our dear Lord, whom we invited to our wedding-feast, and who has never gone away since, but has stayed with us all these happy years. It was a miracle which, by honouring marriage, confirmed an institution fraught with happiness to our race.

But, next, it was a *miracle most compassionate*. Our Lord's miracles were wrought in each case to meet a need. The wine had failed at the wedding-feast, and our Lord had come in at the time of the pinch, when the bridegroom was fearful of being made ashamed. That need was a great blessing. If there had been sufficient wine for the feast, Jesus had not wrought this miracle, and they had never tasted this purest and best of wine. It is a blessed need which makes room for Jesus to come in with miracles of love. It is good to run short, that we may be driven to the Lord by our necessity, for he will more than supply it. My dear hearer, if you have no need, Christ will not come to you; but if you are in dire necessity, his hand shall be stretched out to you. If your needs stand before you like huge empty water-pots, or if your soul is as full of grief as those same pots were filled with water up to the brim, Jesus can, by his sweet will, turn all the water into wine—the sighing into singing. Be glad to be very weak, that the power of God may rest upon you. As for me, I am more and more dependent upon the Lord for every particle of strength, and my deacons and elders know how often of a Sunday morning, before coming into the pulpit, I have thanked God that it is so. I am glad to be entirely dependent upon the Lord, and to have such a failure as to all my natural wine of ability that there may be occasion for my Lord to come in and supply wine of strength, of another and diviner

quality. We are likely to do our work best when we feel most our insufficiency, and are driven in upon God for help. If we go blundering to our service, we shall fail; but if we go tremblingly as to ourselves, by confidently looking up to the Lord, we shall be more than conquerors. If we have a great need, if something essential has given out, if we are likely to be despised for failure, let us in faith expect the Lord Jesus to come for our deliverance. I gather from this miracle that our Lord looks to man's necessities, and not to his possessions. He has an eye to our failures and needs, and he makes our distress the platform upon which he manifests his glory by supplying all our needs.

Further, I cannot help noticing *how condescending was this miracle!* We are told, twice, that it was performed at Cana in Galilee. Twice is this mentioned, that we may observe it well. Our Lord did not choose the high places of Jerusalem, nor any of the notable cities of Palestine, as the scene of his first miracle: but he went to a quiet village in Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles, a district much despised, and there he wrought his first miracle at the city of rushes and canes—even Cana in Galilee. He wrought the sign, not on a spiritual and sacred occasion, nor before ecclesiastics and scientists. Some seem to fancy that all our Lord does must be done in churches or cathedrals. No, no: this miracle was in a private house, and that not at a prayer-meeting, or a Bible-reading, but at the marriage of a couple of poor peasants, names unknown. See how Jesus condescends to the commonplaces of life, and sheds a blessing upon the secular side of our existence!

Those who gave that feast were people of slender means. The wine would not have been so soon exhausted if they had been very rich. It is true that seven more came to the wedding than they had expected; but still, if they had been wealthy people, they would have had more than enough to satisfy seven extra guests; for Easterns kept open house for almost everybody during the marriage week. They were by no means an aristocratic party, or a set of Israel's notables. Why did not our Lord begin his miracles before the king, or the governor, or at least in the presence of the high priest, and the scribes and doctors of the law? Our Lord chose not to make his first appeal to the great and dignified. I feel much comfort in this fact: that he comes to common-place individuals is bliss to me. You and I may, in station and in wealth, be low down in the scale; but Jesus stoops to men of mean estate. To common spots like this Newington, on the south-side of the Thames, the Lord has come to visit his people; here, also, has he wrought his transformations, and many a watery life has been made rich and full through his grace.

My dear hearer, Jesus can come to you, though you are only a labourer, or a servant, or a poor tradesman, or the wife of an artisan. Our Lord loves the poor. He is a great frequenter of cottages. He stops not for grand occasions; but he makes his abode with the lowly. He is full of condescension.

*This first of miracles was most munificent.* He did not at the wedding multiply the bread; but he dealt with a luxury, and rejoiced their hearts with that which was as the pure blood of the grape. When our

Lord fed the multitudes in the wilderness, he might have given them each a bit of bread to keep them from famishing; but he never does things in a beggarly, workhouse style, and therefore he added fish, to be a relish with their bread. Our Lord not only gives existence, but happy existence, which is truly life. He does not give to men just enough for their necessity, but he gives up to the higher degree which we call enjoyment. Here he turns good wholesome water into a sweeter, richer, more nourishing beverage; perhaps we little know how truly good and sustaining that God-made drink was to those who were privileged to taste it. Our dear Master will give to all those who are his followers a joy unspeakable and full of glory. They shall not only have enough grace to live by so as barely to hope and serve; but they shall drink of "wines on the lees well refined," and shall have grace to sing with, grace to rejoice with, grace to fill them with assurance, and cause them to overflow with delight. Our Beloved has not only brought us to the house of bread, but to the banquet of wine. We have heaven here below. Jesus does not measure out grace by the drop, as chemists do their medicines; but he gives liberally, his vessels are filled to the brim. And the quality is as notable as the quantity: he gives the best of the best—joys, raptures, and ecstasies. O my soul, at what a royal table dost thou sit! He daily loadeth thee with benefits.

*What a gracious miracle it was!* How free! How unconstrained! He did not need pressing to do it. Mary must not interfere. Stand back, good woman; for the Lord knows what need there is without thy telling him. Dear friend, you think perhaps that you must pray up to a certain quantity; but the Lord is much more ready to give than you are to pray. It is not your prayer that will make him willing to bless you; for he is willing even now to do for you exceeding abundantly above what you ask or even think.

To obtain the supply of wine, it is noteworthy that nothing was required from men but what was very simple and easy. Hasten, ye obedient servants, to fetch water: just draw it from the well; pour it into those large waterpots: that is all you have to do! The Lord Jesus does not come to us with hard conditions and exacting terms. Dream not that, to be saved, you have to do or feel some great thing. As you are you may believe in Jesus to eternal life. Have faith enough to draw out at the Lord's bidding, and, to your own amazement, there will be wine where aforetime there was only water. The Lord, by his Spirit, can come and change your heart, and renew your spirit, so that where only a little natural thought has been, there will be spiritual life and feeling. He will do this without pressing and persuading. Grace is free. Jesus has a tender heart towards needy sinners: the spear has laid it open, a prayer will touch it.

The first miracle was *prophetic*. At a wedding our Lord begins his signs; to a marriage-feast he invites us now; at a glorious marriage-supper all will end. The story of our Bible ends like all well-told tales, with—they were married, and lived happy ever afterwards: for proof read the Book of the Revelation. Our Lord will come to celebrate a wedding between himself and his church, and all the wine they will drink at that high festival will be of his own providing,

and all the joy and bliss will be of his own giving. He is the sun of heaven's day; he is the glory of the glorified. He will take care that throughout the millennial age, yea, and throughout eternity, the joy of his chosen shall never fail; but they shall joy in God and in himself without measure and without bound.

Our Lord began with this special miracle, as if to show us that he had come here to transform and transfigure all things; to fulfil the law and its types, putting into it substance and reality; to take man and lift him up from a fallen creature into a heaven-born son and heir. Jesus has come to unswathe this planet of her mists, and to array it in garments of glory and beauty. Soon shall we see new heavens and a new earth. The new Jerusalem will come down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Jesus has come to elevate, and to fulfil; and he gives the token of this in this beginning of signs.

II. Secondly, I want you to notice in this miracle ITS SPECIALITY AS A MANIFESTATION. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." I believe that there is a very clear connection between the first chapter of this Gospel and the passage before us. John in the first chapter said, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Here you have an unveiling of that grace and glory.

Observe that *he manifested forth his glory*. Truly, he glorified the Father, for that was his great end and aim; but yet he manifested forth his own glory in that very act. Notice that it was his own glory which was manifested. This was never said of any prophet or saint. Moses, Samuel, David, Elias—none of these ever manifested their own glory; indeed, they had no glory to manifest. Here is one greater than a prophet; here is one greater than the holiest of men. He manifested his own glory: it could not be otherwise. I feel that I must adore my Lord Jesus while I read these words. Jesus revealed his own glory as God and man. During all those former years it had been veiled. He had been a boy obedient at home, a young man industrious as a carpenter at Nazareth; then his glory was a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; but now it began to flow forth in the ruddy stream of this great miracle. If you will think of it, you will see more clearly what glory it was. He was a man like other men, and yet at will he turned water into wine. He was a man with a mother: his mother was there as if to remind us that he was born of woman. He was a man with a mother, and yet he was so truly "God over all," that he created, by his will, an abundance of wine. He was but one among many wedding guests, with his six humble followers; but yet he acted the Creator's part. He sat not arrayed in high priest's garments, nor did he wear the Pharisee's phylacteries, nor any other form of ornament betokening ecclesiastical office or profession; yet he did greater wonders than they could attempt. He was simply a man among men, and yet he was God among men. His wish was law in the world of matter, so that water received the qualities of wine. Adore him, brethren! Adore him,

reverently! Bow low before him who was a man, a real man, and yet wrought as only Jehovah himself can work! Worship him who counts it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet is found among the guests at a lowly marriage, manifesting his glory even there.

Observe, *he manifested his glory by operating beyond the power of nature.* Nature does not in an instant turn water into wine: if this be done, it must be by the direct hand of the Lord. It is true there are processes by which the dewdrop enters the berry of the grape and is gradually, by secret arrangements, turned into refreshing juice; but by what power could water be taken from an earthen vessel and be transmuted into wine while being carried to the table? None but God himself could do this, and as Jesus did it, he therein displayed his Godhead. By doing this he showed that he had all power on earth. He can do as he wills, and by this one act of creation, or transformation, he makes manifest the glory of his power.

*He did this in part by operating without any instrument.* When Moses sweetened the bitter water it was by a tree which the Lord showed to him. When Elisha purged the springs he threw salt into the water. We have no instrumentality here. Whenever our Lord did use visible means he took care to select such as in themselves were evidently insufficient for the purpose, if not opposed to his design: as, for instance, when he healed the blind man by making clay with spittle, and putting it on his eyes—a thing to blind him, rather than to open his eyes. Here, however, our Lord had no instrument whatever. He did not even speak a word, and say, "Water, blush into wine." No, he simply willed, and it was done. How divinely doth he manifest his glory in this respect!

And *he operated so easily and so majestically*, that he therein reminds us of the method and way of the great God. He simply says, "Fill the water-pots," and the servants do his bidding with enthusiasm, for he is Master of all minds. "Draw out now," he says, and in the process of bearing it to the ruler of the feast, the water is turned into wine. Here is no effort, no breathing as of one gathering up his strength to perform a feat. The earth revolves, but the wheel of nature never grinds upon its axle. God acts by his laws in a perfectly natural and unconstrained manner. Creation and providence abide in that majestic silence which comes of omnipotence. All goes easily where God is. With his own will he can do all things *for us*, and in a moment turn the waters of our grief into joy.

Our Lord manifested his glory by *operating naturally and without display.* I really believe that if you could have worked this wonder, you would have said to the ruler of the feast, "Call upon all the guests to remark that the wine has failed, and I am about to create a new supply. See this huge waterpot. Mark how I have it filled with water, that you may know that there is no wine in it. Observe me while I work the transformation." Then you would have spoken aloud, or you would have gone through a series of performances. Jesus did nothing of the kind. He hates display. He will not have his kingdom come with observation. He shuns pomp, noise, and ceremony; but acts like a God whose wonders are too many to be made matters of note to himself. It was Godlike on our Lord's part

to perform so great a work without appearing to be doing anything uncommon.

*That he did literally perform the miracle, was certified by impartial witnesses.* John, or Philip, or the whole six, might have said, "Master, we will fill the water-pots with water." But this must not be so, lest there should be a suspicion of collusion between the Master and the disciples. The ordinary servants must fill the waterpots with water. Again, the disciples would have been very pleased to bear the wine to the ruler of the feast, saying, "Here is the wine which our great and good Master has made for you." No; the servants shall bring in the wine, and say nothing at all about whence it came; and the chief witness that what they bring is really wine, and wine of the best quality, shall be the master of the ceremonies—a gentleman not at all spiritually-minded, but one who has been at many such feasts, that knows the custom of them, and has a proverb ready to set it forth. He was evidently a man who was a judge of the quality of wine, and we may safely accept his verdict—"Thou hast kept the best wine until now." The less spiritual the man in this case, the better the witness to the reality of the miracle. If he had been a follower of Jesus he might have been suspected of being in the swim with him and his disciples; but you can see he is a man of another mould altogether. God's work is fact, not fiction: it appeals to faith, not to imagination. God doth his transforming work in such a way that he will have witnesses ready to attest it. As when Christ rose from the dead there were appointed witnesses to certify it, so his first miracle is certified beyond all question as real and true by the best of witnesses. There was a special reason for this. Oh, my beloved hearers, if you come to Christ he will not deceive you; his blessings are not dreams. If you will come and trust in Jesus, the work he will do for you will be as real as what he did at Cana. Even the ungodly shall be obliged to see that God has made a change in you. When they see your new life, they will say, "Here is something good, the like of which we never saw in him before." Come, I pray you, and take Christ to be your all; and he will be, in very truth, all that you need. Trust him with your sin, and he will bring real pardon. Trust him with your trouble, he will give you perfect rest. Trust him with your evil nature, he will renew you. He is no pretender to deeds which he does not perform. He did by the witness of everybody at the marriage actually turn water into wine of special quality; and so he can now transform your character and make it such as nature, when best educated, can never produce. I say again, the speciality of this manifestation lies in this, that it revealed the Lord Jesus as by his own almighty power uplifting everything he touched, transforming men, and things, and facts, into nobler ones than they were before, or could ever have become. This is the speciality of the manifestation of Christ: he saith, "Behold, I make all things new." He brings forth the best last. He raises the poor from hunger to feasting. He uplifts fallen humanity into something so glorious that it stands, in his person, near to the throne of God. In all this Christ is revealed, and his name is glorified.

III. And now, lastly, I think we have here A SUFFICIENCY FOR THE

CONFIRMING OF FAITH. It is said, "And his disciples believed on him."

Brothers, notice something here. How did John know that the disciples believed on him? Why, because he was one of them, and he himself believed on him. The best witness is that of one who has a share in the fact. When you feel a thing yourself, you have a full assurance of it. John knew that the other five disciples believed on Jesus by what they said to him; for their feelings coincided with his own. Let us see to it that we also share in the faith which the marvels of our Lord are designed to produce.

Note, that the guests at that feast all partook of the wine, but the disciples at that feast had something far better; they had an increase of faith. An increase of faith is better far than all the dainties of a feast. Others ate and drank; but these men saw God in Christ Jesus manifesting his glory.

Our enquiry is, What was there in this miracle which would tend to confirm their faith? Notice that I say to *confirm* their faith. It did not originate their faith, but it established it. Their faith had been originated by the word of the Lord, preached by John the Baptist: they had believed in Jesus as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Secondly, they had enjoyed personal intercourse with Jesus, by going to him, and dwelling with him. This had strengthened their faith greatly. And now they begin to taste of the benefit of being associated with Jesus, and to see for themselves what Jesus was able to do. Thus their faith grew. His disciples believed on him already, but this miracle confirmed their confidence.

The miracle abundantly justified the disciples in implicitly believing in Jesus; for it is manifest that *one miracle proves the power to work every miracle*. If Christ can turn water into wine by his will, he can do anything and everything. If Jesus has once exercised a power beyond nature, we may readily believe that he can do it again: there is no limit to his power. He is God, and with God all things are possible. Thus, the first miracle rightly confirmed their faith.

But, next, *it showed their Master's readiness to meet unexpected difficulties*. Nobody had foreseen that the wine would fail. Jesus had not gone to the marriage prepared and primed, as we say among men. The demand came all of a sudden, and the supply came too: the wine ran out, and he was ready for the difficulty. Does not this confirm your faith? Christ is always ready for every emergency. Something may happen to-morrow that you have not thought of; Christ will be ready for the unexpected. Between here and heaven you will meet with a great many unlikely events; but they will not be surprises to him. He has clear foresight: when the trial comes he will provide: "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Again, their faith was confirmed because *he had showed that he would allow nothing to fail with which he was connected*. I like to feel sure that Jesus is with me in any business, for then I know that the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. True, it was not the wedding of one of his relatives or disciples, but still it was a marriage at which he was a guest; and he would not suffer it to be said that they ran short

of provisions when he was there. His connection with the feast may seem to have been remote, but it was a connection; and slight connections are observed by our Lord Jesus. O my soul, if I can but touch the hem of his garment, virtue will come from him to me. I get into the same boat with Jesus, and if I drown Jesus must drown too: and therefore I know that I am safe! O my heart, if I do but get the hand of Christ in my hand, or my hand in his hand, I am linked with him, and none can separate us. In that union is my life, my safety, my success; for nothing that he touches, or that touches him, will ever fail. He is only one of a party at a wedding, but because he is there things must go well. I think this must have encouraged the disciples much when, in after days, they began to preach: their confidence would be that Jesus was with them, and they must prevail. They were poor, unlearned men, and all the scholarship of the age was arrayed against them; but they said to themselves, "We fear not, for Jesus is in this controversy, and he will see it through." Let us get Christ into our quarrel for God's covenant and truth, and the battle is no longer doubtful. If in the matter of your salvation faith brings the Saviour into the business, you may rest assured of eternal life.

It showed to them, next—and this must have greatly confirmed their faith—that *he could use the poorest means*. To make wine the Lord had only water and six large water-pots. Yes, but he can make better wine out of water than men can make out of grapes. Behold his vats and his winepresses, six water-pots of stone. You and I—what are we? Well, we are poor earthen vessels, and a little cracked, I fear. There is little enough in us, and what there is is weak as water; but the Lord can bring forth from us a wine which will cheer the heart of God and man—words of faith which will please God and save man. The disciples would in after days know themselves to be nothing but earthen vessels, but they would remember that their Lord could work miracles with them.

When they saw *the majestic ease of his working*, do you not think it confirmed their faith? He did not call for angels, he did not deliver a long prayer, much less repeat a sacred incantation. He did but will it, and the deed was done. Next time they came into a difficulty, the disciples would believe that the Lord could easily enough appear for them. They would stand still and see the salvation of God. In some way or other the Lord would provide, and he would do wonders without trouble to himself. Brethren, we shall come out at the big end of the horn yet, for God is with us.

It showed them, also, that henceforth *they need never be anxious*. Will you that read your Greek Testament notice the expression here? Is it said, "His disciples believed him"? No. Is it "Believed in him"? No. "Believed on him"? Yes. It is so in our version; but *into* would be more correct. The Greek is "*eis*": his disciples believed into him. They so believed that they seemed to submerge themselves in Jesus. "Into him"—think what that means! John, and Andrew, and Nathanael, and the others, cast their life-long concerns upon Jesus, and felt that they need never have another care. Jesus would see them through to the end. They would leave everything to him. Mary took the matter a little into her own hands,

but she erred therein; the disciples entered into Jesus by the open door of this confirming miracle, and there they rested. Be this your condition—"Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you." They believed right into Jesus. It is one thing to believe in him, and another thing to believe him; it is a restful thing to believe on him, but best of all to believe right into him so that your very personality is swallowed up in Christ, and you feel the bliss of living, loving, lasting union with him. Those six men could not have produced a drop of wine for the wedding; but count their Master in with them, and the seven could flood the streets with it, if there had been need. Entering into partnership with Jesus, their faith rose as a morning without clouds. Now were they sure, steadfast, strong; for their weak and watery faith had gained the fulness and richness of generous wine.

I have done when I have said to any here who are undecided—see, my dear hearer, Jesus Christ will come and visit such as you are. He is willing to go to plain men's houses, even when they have a feast going on. Ask him to come to you just as you are.

See how he is able to bless human joy! You think, perhaps, that you will go to Jesus next time you are in sorrow; but I say to you, come to him at once, while you are in joy. You that are getting on in business, you that rejoice over a new-born child, you that are lately married, you that have passed an examination with honours, come to Jesus in your joy, and ask him to raise your happiness to a higher degree and quality, and elevate it till it touches the joy of the Lord. Jesus is able to raise you, beloved friend, from what you now are into something better, fuller, grander, nobler, holier, and more God-like. May he do it now! Believe in him, believe him, believe on him, believe into him, and it shall be done. Amen.

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PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

John i. 35—51; ii. 1—11.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—257, 775, 435.