

ment, does the Lord select for manifesting forth His glory! A scene of festivity, a time of making merry—of congratulations—of eating and drinking! What a contrast to his precursor John the Baptist—the last prophet of the old dispensation—the connecting link between the Law and the Gospel—who comes into view in the dreary wilderness, clad in camel's-hair cloth and leathern girdle—hermit-like in his clothing and in his diet—ascetic, austere. To quote the words of Dean Alford's Commentary: "Our Lord at once opens His ministry with the character which He gives of Himself" (Luke vii, 33, 34, 35). "John the Baptist," says He to the Pharisees, "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil: the Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children." "He also," as Archbishop Trench admirably remarks, "gives us His own testimony against the tendency which our indolence ever favors, of giving up those things and occasions to the world and the devil, which we have not Christian boldness to mingle in and purify . . . And such is the verdict of modern religionism, which would keep the leaven distinct from the lump, for fear it should become *unleavened*."

We are not given the name of the host, or of the bride or bridegroom. Doubtless they were relatives or connections of our Lord according to the flesh. Cana was not very far from Nazareth: and the Virgin Mother had evidently considerable authority in the household. (St. John ii. 1, "There was a marriage . . . and the mother of Jesus was there;" again, verse 5, "His mother saith unto the servants," etc.) Our Lord was invited to this wedding feast, and He went.

"And when they wanted wine." This does not mean that there was none originally supplied, but that, for some reason or other, the wine ran short: either the festivities lasted longer, or the guests were more numerous, than had been calculated for. You will observe the Revised Version renders the passage correctly: "And when the wine *failed*." Here let me quote a passage of Archdeacon Farrar's "Life of Christ:" "Whether the marriage festival lasted for seven days, as was usual among those who could afford it, or only for one or two, as was the case among the poorer classes, we cannot tell; but at some period of the entertainment the wine suddenly ran short. None but those who know how sacred in the East is the duty of lavish hospitality, and how passionately the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is felt, can realize the gloom which this incident would have thrown over the occasion, or the misery and mortification which it would have caused to the wedded pair. They would have felt it to be, as in the East it would still be felt to be, a bitter and indelible disgrace."

In order to avert this threatened disaster—in order to dissipate the gloom impending over this festive gathering—in order to enhance their joy and happiness—in order to show that He entered heartily into all their lawful pleasures, and sanctioned their innocent enjoyments—the Son of God, the Eternal Word made flesh, "manifested forth His glory." And how did He do so? I must answer this question with a statement which, I know, will