

BY REV. F. PEPPER
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY

"The mother of Jesus saith to Him: 'They have no wine.'" (John 4:4)

Life is a marriage-feast at which people seem to sit comfortably side by side; every one appears to wish to contribute as much as possible to his neighbor's pleasure and happiness, and yet nothing fails so often as the wine of charity. Hence the Church to-day reminds us of the Holy Name of Jesus, to tell us that we, too, ought to invite Him to share our feast, so that if the wine of Divine love tends to fail, He may give it to us again. Jesus is the name of everlasting love, let us glorify it, and beg our Lord to come and take up His abode with us, and work in us spiritually the miracle that He wrought long ago in Cana. What was that miracle? He changed water—the less noble liquid—into wine—the more noble. To change what was worse into what was better, to transform a sinful human heart into the pleasing to God, was the task of His infinite love, and we, too, ought to strive to transform what is base within us into something honorable, and what is good into something better. Such is our task here on earth; in the midst of our mean, temporal exertions, cares and struggles, we have to earn the noblest of all treasures, heaven, eternal bliss. O happy indeed shall we be at the hour of death, when Jesus will turn our last tears forced from us by the bitter deceptions of life, into the wine of everlasting joy!

The name of Jesus encourages us to cooperate with our Lord in the important business of transforming what is base within us into what is noble, in zealously working Him at the task of our sanctification.

How can we do this? Let us ask Him how He effected the change of the lower into the higher, and then we shall see what we have to do. It was at a wedding that He changed water into wine, and He did it because He is always ready to listen to any one, and His kind heart is always disposed to grant every prayer. In a higher sense He had already accomplished what in a lower sense He did at the marriage feast. He came down from heaven and was born into the world, uniting His divine nature with our frail human nature, which was thus infinitely exalted and ennobled. The Church reminds us of this fact at every Mass, for when the priest pours the wine into the chalice, he mixes it with water. The wine signifies our Lord's Divinity and the water His Humanity, as is stated in the prayer said by the priest: "O God, who didst wonderfully create and dignify the human race, and hast still more wonderfully reformed it; grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His Godhead, who vouchsafed to become partaker of our manhood, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord." Yes, by assuming our human nature, Christ united it with the divine nature in the unity of His Divine Person, and thus to some extent made us, weak mortals as we are, participants in His Divine Nature. What an honor for us! What a stimulus to do all in our power to become more worthy of this favor, to strive more and more to attain to the bliss that Jesus has obtained for us, and to become better, through growing in likeness with Him. Why did our Lord do all this? Why did He unite His Humanity so closely with His Divinity? In order that humanity might be one with God. His incomprehensible love worked this miracle.

Yet this was not all. Man was to advance from one stage of perfection to another; and our Lord teaches us this lesson very beautifully. At the marriage feast He changed the water into wine, and at the last supper He changed wine again into His Sacred Blood, and He shed for the remission of the sins of many. Over and over again, whenever Mass is said, He allows this miracle of the changing of wine into His Blood to take place, that we may unite with Him, and through this close union may be gradually transformed and raised to the dignity of true children of God. What caused Him to do this? It was again His love, His infinite, incomprehensible love.

Now we can return to our former question: How can we cooperate with our Lord in the work of our sanctification? By entering into the infinite love of God; by letting ourselves, our hearts and minds be penetrated by that love, by letting every action in our whole life be in harmony with the words of Thomas à Kempis: "All is vanity, except to love God and serve Him alone." If we love God, the muddy water of sin must be changed into the refreshing wine of forgiveness. Love God, and in this love begin to fight against your passions, hard as the struggle may seem. Have you not in your heart a guest able to change water into wine? Can it be more difficult to convert you than to work this miracle? Both are hard things, far beyond your human strength, but nothing is too difficult for Him Whom you love, therefore be not despondent. One drop of evil passion after another will be changed in you, until you are able to say: "I am with you, O Lord, and I will do as you will, and cooperate with Him as far as you are able."

However much we exert ourselves and look to see what amount of good wine we have ready, we shall always have to confess that it is very, very

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little. This is not because our Divine Guest, Whom we have lovingly invited, has not used His grace, but because in our carelessness we are always adding fresh water, that is to say, fresh sins, or because we are not exact in our obedience to the orders that He gives, but imagine ourselves to know better than He does, and, therefore, the transformation of our poor weak hearts into strong and perfect ones is effected very slowly. We ought to acknowledge that even if we have toiled for a long time at our own improvement, we have not cast off all that is evil as much as we should have done. Do not let us be satisfied that in one or other respect the transformation of the water into wine has really taken place, but let us rather fix our attention upon the points where the change has not yet been effected. If you have improved, you have not yet improved as much as you might and ought to have done. Therefore, do not rest contented with the good wine that God's grace has poured into your hearts, but strive every day to become better and more perfect. You ask, perhaps, how you are to do this: by loving Jesus more day by day; love Him more deeply and let that be the aim of your lives.

Love us our Lord can change the water of your deeds, and works into the good wine of actions pleasing to God. How hard a man works who does not love God! He toils, labors, suffers and struggles, but because there is no love of our Lord in his heart, all his efforts are in vain, or, at best, deserve only an earthly reward; for work done without love of Jesus has its reward only in this world. But as soon as he begins to labor for love of our Lord, to do what He wills and because He wills it, then all his works are transformed into merit, entitling him to heaven as his reward, and at last the bitter cup of labour, toil and trouble will be filled with the golden wine of eternal happiness. Love Jesus daily more and more, and your whole life will be changed, a commonplace succession of little tiresome duties and trivial annoyances and sufferings will become a series of good deeds, meriting an eternal recompense.

Love Jesus truly, and your hearts and minds will be changed! Our hearts and minds, even if not deeply stained with sin, are apt to be very poor and miserable. What can a heart feel that is void of love of God? Pleasure only in fleeting, childish and foolish things. And in the same way the thoughts of a mind without love of Jesus are never noble, and are prompted by wretched curiosity and interest in what is beneath our notice. Hearts and minds in which love of Jesus has no place, cling to foolish amusements and trivial gossip, to things that do not concern them and have no good results—truly a pitiable state of affairs. But the more fervent is our love of Jesus, the more will our hearts long for higher things and strive to attain for them; and our minds will be inspired from above so that we shall desire what is holy, so that we shall become more accessible to all good influences and more kindly disposed towards our neighbors. What is hard in us will be softened, what is mean will be ennobled and what is stained and disfigured with sin will require a heavenly beauty. If you do your best to raise your hearts and minds, the improvement will be seen sooner or later in your outward life which will be transformed, when true love of Jesus has penetrated, purified and transformed your hearts. You will be gentle and loving to your neighbors, doing much good and preventing much evil; you will do your duty cheerfully and willingly, and so benefit yourselves and others, and by your life, works and sufferings you will be sources of true holiness and happiness.

Love Jesus ever more and more, and your life that has hitherto perhaps been like water, rendering yourselves and others miserable, will be changed into the holy wine of love, gentleness and true piety.

Let us therefore, invite our Lord to the marriage feast in our hearts, where our earthly life is united to heaven. Let Him be our welcome guest, whose love will transform what is bad in us, so that sin may give place to purity; passions to virtues, work on earth to eternal merit, and our struggles here to glorious results and heavenly dispositions. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

THE CATHOLIC T. A. UNION

A gentleman, whose wife was dissatisfied with their home, engaged a broker to sell it and buy them a satisfactory one. Not long afterwards he came to show the broker the advertisement of a house for sale which he said his wife wished him to buy, as it was the one she wanted.

"Why, my friend, that is the house she is now living in, and which you told me to sell for you."

She was like you perhaps with reference to the Catholic Total Abstinence Union. You have not studied it up, and do not know exactly what it has accomplished, and how much more it could accomplish if you and a host of other Catholics, who think and act like you, were active members of it.

Here is a clipping sent me from the editorial columns of a non-Catholic newspaper. I do not know who sent it nor the newspaper from which it was taken, but the editor evidently has a better opinion of the C. T. A. U. than too many Catholics have.

"The Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America, now holding its convention in Pittsburgh, is one of the most effective temperance organizations in the country."

"Its campaigns or activities are along educational and social lines. It teaches self control, thus preparing the youth of the Church to resist other temptations equally as vicious and destructive as the desire for strong drink. It would wipe out the saloon by destroying its patronage. It would have the same influence against the club and the speak-easy—evil akin to, if not greater than, the open saloon."

"What it accomplishes is lasting and its methods of achievement can give no possible offense. It is governed by the ablest ministers of the Church and not by the riffraff or miserable, ministerial refuse that is too often in evidence in the spasmodic attempts made at betterment."

"In other organizations an appeal is made to the law and the strong arm of force is invoked. Convention arises and the parties in conflict represent the most ultra partisans, conservatism and often decency are driven from the arena. Here the Church is represented by so called preachers who put on the pike by their ignorance and incapacity, seek the scenes of temperance endeavor for the purposes of reginalization and getting before the people."

"All hail the honest effort made by the Total Abstinence Society in its appeal to the conscience. Its work never ceases. It knows no political campaigns. It knows nothing but success through sensible availing effort."

Should not such an organization have your hearty support and number you among its active members? Do you owe it to Christ. Who has called you to fellowship with Himself, and do you not owe it to your weaker brother who needs the support of your example to break off from drink, or to persevere if he has already broken off? It would not curtail your liberty more than drink curtails the liberty of your weaker brother. Now do not say that you are not bound to do this. The liberty you prize may be one of those things, which as St. Paul says, are lawful; but it may also be one of those which he says are not expedient. Doubtless, it is not sinful to use drink sometimes; but the apostle goes on to say that to nothing will he become enslaved; and to preserve his freedom, he will abstain entirely from the use. While persons have a right to take a drink and are rightly jealous of their personal liberty, they should not forget that through the vindication of this very liberty they may become slaves of something else. There is nothing lost by abstinence, and no risk taken by those who abstain, and very much gained, as those who leave all things for Christ's sake receive a hundred fold as much now in this time and in the world to come, life everlasting. When those outside the Church recognize the worth of the means she employs to combat vice, those belonging to the Church ought to make use of these means and encourage them.—The Very Rev. M. A. Lambing.

IT AND IT ALONE

A new Bible, the whole Bible, a new Luther, a new reformation—these things are wanted, according to Rev. Dr. Gates, speaking in New York (Chapel of Intercession—Trinity parish). The doctor says that "One of the greatest libraries of sacred writings is contained in what is known as the Apocrypha," and that "It is the fault of the Bible societies that this wonderful part has been stolen from the Bible. If these societies were truly Protestant, they would not commit such a grievous theft. They would not keep the Bible from the common people," which state of things, Dr. Gates believes, calls for "a new Luther to arouse us and to lead a new reformation for the freedom of the Bible."

It may be wondered why it does not occur to Dr. Gates to have recourse and give consideration to another and a better remedy, to be found in the Bible in certain plain and memorable words, from the highest source:

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I shall build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi, 18). "Going therefore, teach ye all nations. . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 20).

The Institution founded in those divine words gave the Bible to the world and has preserved it through the ages. It and it alone has authority to speak and say with decisive voice what is and what is not part of the sacred and inspired writings.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WHY IT OBJECTS TO PROTESTANT BIBLE

Whether the Protestant translation of the Holy Scriptures be correct or erroneous, the Catholic Church objects to it chiefly because it was made in violation of the divine authority of the Church as the teacher of mankind in the religion of Jesus Christ. It was made in pursuance of the Protestant plan to set up the Book against the Church. It was made in insubordination to the Church which was established by our Blessed Lord and in defiance of it. It was to be used as a weapon against that Church, and the Catholic Church can no more accept it and look upon it with favor than could a loyal mother care for the dagger with which her darling son had been slain. The Catholic Advance with admirable clearness sets forth the position of our Church with regard to the Protestant Bible:

Another great objection of the Catholic Church to the Protestant version of the Bible is that the makers of it, without authority, without knowledge, without the illumination of the Holy Ghost promised by Christ to the Church which He established, presumed to declare certain parts of the Bible as not sacred and canonical, not inspired, spurious. They, therefore, left out of the canon of the Scripture seven books accepted by the Council of Carthage and the Council of Trent, and declared by the Catholic Church to be a part of Holy Writ. These books are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and first and second books of Maccabees. They dared to omit parts of other books, namely, Esther, chapter 10, verse 4; Esther, chapter 16, verse 24; Daniel, chapter 8, verses 24 to 29; Daniel, chapter 13, verses 1; and Daniel, chapter 14, verses 42. They have, therefore, mutilated the Bible and run counter to the attitude of the Church as maintained for more than 1500 years.

The King James version of the Bible has many errors of translation. They are too numerous then, together with errors in the translations to specify them. Thomas Ward made a book of made in 1582, 1577 and 1579. His book is called "Errata of the Protestant Bible; or the Truth of English Translations Examined." It showed the erroneous translations of passages of the Bible relating to the Church, to the Blessed Sacrament, to priests and the priesthood, to celibacy, to baptism, to the confession of sin, to the Blessed Virgin, to sacred images, to Purgatory, to justification, to good works, to free will, to the sufficiency of faith alone, to Apostolic traditions and to the sacrament of marriage.

Protestant scholars know that the so-called authorized Protestant Bible is incorrect—that instead of being the pure and unadulterated word of God, it is in many passages the word of erring men. They long urged the making of a new translation. This was done between 1871 and 1885, when the so called Revised Protestant version appeared. Now, the men who made that revision adopted a rule to make as few alterations as possible, yet in the New Testament alone they made about 20,000 corrections. How many they made in the whole Bible, no one has yet counted. Many other changes were proposed, especially by the American members of the revision committee, which were not finally adopted.

In all the translations—from those made by the first Protestants down to the last Revised Version, there has been a constant tendency to recognize the Catholic version as correct. Even the King James Bible was modified by the Catholic translation of the New Testament made at Rheims in 1582. It would probably also have been affected by the Douay Catholic version of the Old Testament made in 1608-10 if that had been published before the King James translation was completed in 1604-11. But the Revised version is nearer to the Catholic Bible than it is to the Greek Bible of 1589, or the Geneva Bible of 1560, or the Elizabethan Bishop's Bible of 1568, or the King James Bible of 1611.

The Catholic Bible is founded on the Latin translation made by St. Jerome.

Protestants still have all sorts of versions. The Lutherans have Luther's; the Calvinists, that of Geneva; the Zwinglians, that of Zwinglius; the English speaking

people have the various translations above mentioned, but they now nearly all use the King James and later revised versions.

All these translations differ essentially from one another. The "pure and unadulterated word of God" is changed to suit the taste of German Lutherans, Swiss Calvinists and English Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists. The Bible has a different religion for every one of them.

To the Catholic Church, Christ entrusted the work of teaching all nations. To it was given to treasure and to explain the Scriptures. It has the true interpretation of all the texts it existed before the Bible was written and before printing was invented. It will exist to the end of time. Christ told us to hear it—"He who hears you, hears Me." He did not tell us to take the Bible and interpret it for ourselves. All true Catholics hear the Church. They accept the Bible as the Word of God on the authority of the Church. The book does not speak for itself. It does not prove itself. As St. Augustine said: "I would not believe the Gospel itself if the authority of the Catholic Church did not oblige me to do so."

And we say with St. Paul that if an angel from Heaven were to attempt to teach us any doctrine different from the teaching of the Catholic Church, we could say to him: "Anathema," for we have the word of Christ, which is better than that of man or angel, to hear the Church that He established, and the promise that when we hear it we hear Him.—The Missionary.

AN AWAKENING

The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament and Catholic belief in the Real Presence deeply moved the Rev. R. J. Campbell, a Protestant. Describing the scene in a church in France, he says:

Men were kneeling before the dimly lighted altar. Some, the veterans especially, stood erect, their lips silently moving in devoted entreaty.

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"OPINIONS AND CONVICTIONS"

"There is a story told of one who assuredly could not be accused of leanings towards theological prejudices with regard to art," says the Anglican Bishop Frodsham, in the London Saturday Review. "Heinrich Heine stood and gazed up inside the Cathedral at Amiens with speechless admiration. Then, turning to a friend who was with him, he said: 'You may see here the difference between opinions and convictions—opinions cannot build such cathedrals; convictions can.'"

"The are few who do not instinctively believe that Heine's witness is true," the Bishop remarks. "The deepest secret of the Church art of older days lies in the artist's profound earnestness, forced upon them partly by the nature of the times, but still more by the high value placed upon the things that are not seen and yet are eternal. Are those days likely to return now that men are once more staking their lives for things that were little accounted of in times of peace?"

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