

"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 shock the feelings of many modern religionists—a statement opposed to the spirit of the age—one which may possibly call forth a storm of vituperation, and yet it must be said; for it is the truth—the truth of God and of His Holy Word.

Our Lord Jesus Christ began His Messianic career—began that glorious and dazzling series of mercy-giving, life-prolonging, pain-destroying, evil-dispelling miracles—with the production