

Next let us consider the circumstances under which He "manifested forth His glory."

It was at a marriage feast. In the East such entertainments often lasted a whole week. What a strange environment, judging with human judgment, 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 winebibber, 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 favours, 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.