

if nurses were to be had the Government would not have them?"

"The poor man was dazed. Money, the god to which he had sacrificed himself and his only child failed him in the crucial hour. The poor boy was wildly delirious now. He died without knowing that his loved ones were with him."

"So long had my Catholic soldier lain absolutely still, I thought, he, too, had died. I went to him, saw that he was breathing gently. When he opened his eyes, I told him of my fear."

"Nurse, I am so happy," he whispered. "I cannot think what I have done to deserve this favor. My Lord has come to me—a poor, weak sinner! Nurse, the goodness of God! I could die of happiness!"

"Sent there to die, he did not, I could have cried for joy the day I saw him taken away, to go back, after a while, to the little home among the hills, where perhaps father and mother, sister and brother, and a sweetheart maybe, were waiting and praying for him. I thought of the other sad home-coming. No other child to cheer those parents' declining days, no grandchild to inherit the wealth which they had piled up. And worse of all, no religion to fall back upon in their sorrow."

"Yes, those contrasting incidents stand out among the experiences of my professional life. I seem to know how poignant was the Master's voice when He cried, 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul!'"

"Though I know my poor patient found mercy at the judgment seat."

"He is not dead but sleepeth." He made no claim to bring back from the dead, only to awaken. Death for Him was only a sleep, a deeper sleep than the common sleep of everyday, a sleep only to be broken by a superhuman love. This love was for the survivors more than for the dead; it was the love of one whose tears flow at the sight of others' tears."

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA

Jesus liked to go to weddings. For the man of the people who very seldom gives way to lavishness and gaiety, who never eats and drinks as much as he would like, the day of his wedding is the most remarkable of all his life, a rich passage of generous gaiety in his long, drab, commonplace existence. Wealthy people who can have banquets every evening, moderns who gulp down in a day what would have sufficed for a week to the poor man of olden times, no longer feel the solemn joyfulness of that day. But the poor man in the old days, the workman, the countryman, the Oriental who lived all the year round on barley-bread, dried figs and a few fish and eggs, and only on great days killed a lamb or a kid, the man accustomed to stint himself, to calculate closely, to dispense with many things, to be satisfied with what is strictly necessary, saw in weddings the truest and greatest festival of his life. The other festivals, those of the people and those of the Church, were the same for everybody, and they are repeated every twelfth month; but a wedding was his very own festival and only came once for him in all the cycle of his years.

Then all the delights and splendors of the world were centered around the bride and groom, to make the day unforgettable for them. Torches went at night to meet the groom with singers, dancers and musicians. The house was filled with abundance, all sorts of meats cooked in all sorts of ways; wine-skins of wine leaning against the walls, vases of unguents for the friends; light, music, perfumes, gaiety, dancing; nothing was lacking for the gratification of the senses. On that one day all the things which are the daily privilege of princes and rich men triumphed in the poor man's house.

Jesus was pleased by this innocent joy, and touched by the exultation of those simple souls, snatched for those few hours from the gloomy, niggardly poverty of their everyday life. In weddings He saw more than a mere festival. Marriage is the supreme effort of the youth of man to conquer Fate with love, with the union of two affections, with the joining of two loving youths. It is the affirmation of a double faith in life, in the continuity and stability of life. The man who marries is a hostage in the hands of human society. Making himself the head of a new society and father of a new generation, he frees himself while he professes to bind himself. Marriage is a promise of happiness, and an acceptance of suffering. Illusion and conscience have their part in it. In the shadow of tragedy, which sends over the future a trembling hope of joy, is the heroic and holy greatness of marriage, which cannot be dispensed with, and yet, in the light of selfish reason, should not be accepted. Who has ever seen, except in this case, a condemnation so eagerly longed for?

For Jesus marriage has a still deeper meaning: it is the beginning of something eternal. Whom God hath joined, man cannot put asunder. When hearts have been united and bodies joined, no law nor sword can sever them. In this our human life, changeable, ephemeral, evasive, frail, there is only one thing that ought to last forever till death and beyond death,—marriage, the only link of eternity in the perishable chain.

Jesus often speaks of weddings and banquets. Among the most beautiful parables is that of the King who sent out invitations to the wedding of his son, that other of the Virgins who wait by night for the arrival of the bridegroom's friend; and that of the Lord who prepared a banquet. Christ compares Himself to a bridegroom feasted by His friends when He answers those who are scandalized because His disciples eat and drink. He did not despise wine, and when with His Twelve, He drinks that wine which is His blood, He thinks of the new wine of the Kingdom. It is not surprising therefore that He should have accepted the invitation to the wedding at Cana. Every one knows the miracle He wrought that day. Six jars of water were changed by Jesus into wine, and into wine better than that which had been drunk. Old rationalists say that this was a present of wine kept hidden until then, a surprise of Jesus at the end of the meal, in honor of the bride and groom. And six hundred quarts of wine, they add, are a fine present, showing the liberality of the Master.

These Voltairian vermin have not noticed that only John, the man of allegories, the philosopher, tells of the Marriage at Cana. It was not a sleight-of-hand trick, but a true transmutation, performed with the power of Spirit over matter, and at the same time it is one of those Parables in fact, instead of in words, a Parable told by actual deeds.

But whoever does not stop at the literal meaning of the story, sees that the water turned into wine symbolizes the new epoch which

begins with the Gospel. Before the Annunciation and the vigil in the desert, water was enough; but the world was left to sorrow. But now the joyful tidings are come, the Kingdom is at hand, happiness is near. Men are about to pass from sadness to joy, from the widowhood of the old law to the new marriage of the new law. The Bridegroom is with us. Now is no time for sadness, but for enthusiasm. There will be no more fasting but rejoicings; no more water but wine.

Remember the words of the steward to the Bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but Thou has kept the good wine until now." Such was the old usage, the usage of the Jews of old times and of the heathen. But Jesus meant to overturn this old amphictyonic usage also. The men of old gave the good and then the poor; He, after the good wine, gives better. Sour, unripened wine, the poor quality which was drunk at the beginning, symbolizes the wine of the old law, the wine that has turned sour and can no longer be drunk. Christ's wine, finer and stronger, which cheers the heart and warms the blood, is the new wine of the Kingdom, wine intended for the marriage of Heaven and earth, wine which gives that divine intoxication which will be called later, "the foolishness of God."

The marriage of Cana, which in John is the first miracle, is an allegory of the evangelical revolution.

THE ACCURSED FIG-TREE

Another parable expressed in the form of a miracle is that of the withered fig-tree. One morning towards Easter, returning from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus was hungry. He came up to a fig-tree and found only leaves. It was too early to expect fruit, even from the earliest species. Yet Jesus, according to Matthew and Mark, was angry at the poor tree and cursed it.

According to Matthew, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever." And presently the fig-tree withered away.

According to Mark, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever." And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots."

In the Evangelists the account of the curse is followed by a return to the thought many times expressed by Jesus, that anything can be obtained if asked for with powerful faith.

Others instead see here a metaphorical lament which many times returned to Jesus' lips. The fig-tree is Israel, the old Jewish religion, which from now on will bear only unfruitful leaves of rites and ceremonies, leaves fated to shrivel without nourishing men. Jesus, hungry for justice, hungry for love, sought among the leaves for sustaining fruits of mercy and holiness. He did not find them. Israel did not feed His hunger nor fulfil His hope. From now on nothing can be expected from the old trunk, leafy but sterile. May it be dead to all eternity! Other races will henceforth be fruitful.

The miracle of the cursed fig-tree is at bottom nothing more than a very apparent gloss of the parable of the sterile fig-tree in Luke. "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

The tree was not condemned at first, but after three years of sterility, and even then by the intercession of the workman, was given a year's respite, and in that year the plant was handled and treated with loving care. That was to be the final test: only if all care was unavailing was it to be hewn down and burned.

For three years Jesus had preached to the Jews, and He was thinking of giving them up, and announcing the Kingdom to others. But one of His workers, a disciple still attached to his people, asked for mercy; one respite more. We shall see whether even great love could convert this adulterous and bastard generation. But when they were on the road from Bethany, Judaism had been put to the test. Christ had only His Cross to expect. The evil fig-tree of Judaism deserved to be burned and from that time on no one will eat its tardy, withered fruit.

MORE VOCATIONS URGED

Speaking after celebration of Pontifical Mass on Sunday in observance of the third anniversary of its installation as head of the diocese of Cleveland, Bishop Joseph Schrembs said that perhaps the most serious problem before the diocese was that of providing schools for fifty per cent. of the Catholic children who are not attending Catholic schools.

The problem also involved, the Bishop said, the aiding of smaller parishes which are unable to provide their own schools. The number of teachers which is now 1,400, should be twice as large, the Bishop said.



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He appealed to young women to consider the religious life as a career and said that there are many young women whose life is largely an aimless career who could do a wonderful work for the church if they entered the sisterhoods.

The three years of his administration in Cleveland have passed quickly the Bishop said in reviewing his work thus far. "Although it has meant much labor the labor has been made easy by the hearty cooperation in all my appeals by priests and laity," he remarked.

"If much has been done, much still remains to be done," he continued. "We may not cease work for one moment; we must labor until our dying day, and what sweeter retrospect can there be as we pass out of life than the recollection that we did all we could to advance the Kingdom of Christ."

When truth is sown broadcast it also produces more blossoms until the whole world is filled with rarer fragrance and perfecter beauty.—Charles J. O'Malley.



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