

**“Lessons from the Miracles of Christ”:
Water Changed into Wine**

in *The Youth's Instructor*, Vol. XLIX, Nos. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
(May 2, 1901; May 9, 1901; May 16, 1901; May 23, 1901; May 30, 1901; Jun. 6, 1901)

by W. S. Sadler

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Sources for Water Changed into Wine, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels in the Version of 1881* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1893)
- (2) Richard Chenevix Trench, D.D., *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord, Revised, with Additions* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883)
- (3) Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Assn., 1898)
- (4) William M. Taylor, D.D., LL.D., *The Miracles of Our Saviour, Expounded and Illustrated* (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1891)
- (5) Rev. Alfred Edersheim, M.A.Oxon., D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Eighth Edition (Volume One) (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899)
- (6) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Obeying Christ’s Orders” (1889)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Jun. 13, 1889 and it was published in Vol. 35 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1890). I have been unable to access this volume, so have used *The Treasury of Spurgeon on the Life and Work of Our Lord, Vol. IV, The Miracles of Our Lord, 1*, published by Baker Book House in 1979. This source is coded **Spurgeon1**.

- (7) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Waterpots of Cana” (1880)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London sometime in 1880 and it was published in Vol. 26 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1881). This source is coded **Spurgeon2.**

- (8) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Beginning of Miracles Which Jesus Did” (1890)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Jul. 20, 1890 and it was published in Vol. 36 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1891). This source is coded **Spurgeon3.**

- (9) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Satan’s Banquet” (1858)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Nov. 28, 1858 and it was published in Vol. 5 of *New Park Street Pulpit*. This source is coded **Spurgeon4.**

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Light blue** indicates a passage which anticipates something in the Urantia Book.
- (f) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.
- (g) **Gold** points out words and themes that will be treated in a later discussion.

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE

INTRODUCTORY

0:1 *Preceding Events*.—This, the first miracle of Christ, was immediately preceded by these events:—

VI: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GOSPEL. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 32)

§19. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. Matt. 3:13-17. Mark 1:9-11. Luke 3:21, 22, [23a].

§20. THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS. Matt. 4:1-11. Mark 1:12, 13. Luke 4:1-13..

§23. THE FIRST THREE DISCIPLES. John 1:35-42.

§24. PHILIP AND NATHANAEL. John 1:43-51.

0:2 1. Baptism of Christ. Matt. 3:13-17.

0:3 2. Temptation in the wilderness. Luke 4:1-13.

0:4 3. Call of the first three disciples (John, Andrew, and Peter). John 1:35-42.

0:5 4. Call of Philip and Nathaniel.¹ John 1:43-51.

1: THE CHANGING OF THE WATER INTO WINE. (*Trench* 105)

‘And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee’—on the third day, no doubt, after that on which Philip and Nathanael ... (i. 43) ... had attached themselves to Him (Tr 105).

[*Note*: Sadler used the KJV text here. He used the ARV text (as found in *A Harmony of the Gospels*) only when more than one Evangelist reports the miracle.]

0:6 NOTE.—This miracle was performed the third day after the calling of Philip and Nathaniel.

0:7 *Main Reference*.—John 2:1-11.

0:8 *Other References*.—None.

0:9 *The Bible Story of the Miracle*.—“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was[] (but the servants which drew the water knew []), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, [] and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse[] but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory[] and his disciples believed on him.” John 2:1-11.

[Note: Sadler probably used an as-yet-unidentified reference book for these distances.]

0:10 *Place*.—Cana of Galilee, about eight miles north of Nazareth, and eighteen miles from Capernaum.

[Note: The 17th-century theologian John Lightfoot cites two Canas, one of Galilee and the other “of the Sidonians”.]

It was called Cana of Galilee to distinguish it from another Cana in Samaria.

0:11 *Circumstances*.—This miracle was performed in the personal presence of Christ,

[[T]he parties were relatives of Joseph and Mary (White 144).]

at the marriage feast of relatives of Joseph and Mary.

Mary the mother of Jesus was there.

SOURCE

[*Note:* The book of John does not mention James as one of Jesus' early disciples.]

"LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST"

Christ and his disciples (five in number) were invited guests.

The miracle was made manifest by obedience to Christ's two commands; viz., (1) "Fill the waterpots;" (2) "Draw out."

0.12 *Great Lesson.*—

One of the great lessons taught by this miracle is that the growth and ripening of every cluster of grapes is in reality a miracle.

[In performing the miracle] He was working in the line of (*above*, indeed, but not *across*, or counter to) his more ordinary operations, the unnoticed miracles of everyday nature (Tr 115).

The ordinary phenomenon by which nature turns water into wine in the clusters of the vine is just as much a miracle, although common and ordinary to us, as was this unusual and extraordinary wonder which the Saviour wrought.

Both require the same divine wisdom and infinite power,

[Christ's miracle] is in no way stranger, save in the rapidity with which it is effected, than that which is every day going forward among us (Tr 115).

the only difference being in the length of time consumed in the working of the miracle.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLE

1.1 "*There Was a Marriage in Cana of Galilee.*"—

XV: AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST (White 144)

It was the custom of the times for marriage festivities to continue several days (W 145).

It was the custom of the times to have the marriage festivities continue for several days.

The ceremonies accompanying such an occasion were, in many respects, quite different from the marriage ceremony of to-day.

I: THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES AT CANA OF GALILEE. (Taylor 28)

To borrow the description of Edersheim,

The following is taken from Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus," Vol. I, page 354,

and very concisely describes the ceremonies and festivities of a Jewish marriage:—

“First came the merry sounds of music; then they who distributed among the people wine and oil, and nuts among the children;

1.2 “First came the merry sounds of music; then they who distributed among the people wine and oil, and nuts among the children;

next the bride, covered with the bridal veil, her long hair flowing, surrounded by her companions,

next the bride, covered with the bridal veil, her long hair flowing, surrounded by her companions,

and led by ‘the friends of the bridegroom,’ and ‘the children of the bride-chamber.’

and led by the friends of the bridegroom and the children of the bride-chamber.

All around were in festive array; some carried torches, or lamps on poles; those nearest had myrtle-branches and chaplets of flowers.

All around were in festive array; some carried torches, or lamps on poles; those nearest had myrtle-branches and chaplets of flowers.

Every one rose to salute the procession or join it, and it was deemed almost a religious duty to break into praise of the beauty, the modesty, or the virtues of the bride.

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Arrived at her new home, she was led to her husband.

Arrived at her new home, she was led to her husband.

SOURCE

Some such formula as "Take her according to the law of Moses and of Israel," would be spoken, and bride and bridegroom crowned with garlands.

Then a formal legal instrument was signed (T 30-31)

I, IV: THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA OF GALILEE—THE MIRACLE THAT IS 'A SIGN' (Edersheim 351)

Then a formal legal instrument, called the *Kethubah*, was signed, which set forth that the bridegroom undertook to work for her, to honour, keep, and care for her, as is the manner of the men of Israel;

that he promised to give his maiden-wife at least two hundred *zuz* (or more as might be), and to increase her own dowry (which, in the case of a poor orphan, the authorities supplied) by at least one half,

and that he also undertook to lay it out for her to the best advantage, all his own possessions being guaranteed for it (E1 354-55).

I: THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES AT CANA OF GALILEE. (Taylor 28)

[contd from four rows above] then after the prescribed washing of hands and benediction, the marriage-supper began, the cup being filled and the solemn prayer of bridal benediction spoken over it"* (T 31).

* Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," vol. i. p. 354 (T 31, fn).

"LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST"

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I, IV: THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN
CANA OF GALILEE—THE MIRACLE
THAT IS ‘A SIGN’ (Edersheim 351)

And so the feast lasted—it might be more than one day—while each sought to contribute, sometimes coarsely, sometimes wisely, to the general enjoyment,

till at last ‘the friends of the bridegroom’ led the bridal pair to the *Cheder* and the *Chuppuh*, or the bridal chamber and bed (E1 355).

And so the feast lasted, it might be more than one day, while each sought to contribute, sometimes coarsely, sometimes wisely, to the general enjoyment.”

W. S. SADLER.

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE II

2.1 “*Jesus Was Called and His Disciples.*”—It appears that both Jesus and his disciples were invited to attend this simple marriage ceremony in the little village of Cana of Galilee. Although Jesus had but thirty-three short years in which to live and do his work,—in which to show forth his Father’s character to a fallen world,—nevertheless he found time to attend this marriage feast. Thus we are taught that while we should be careful to see that our time is not wasted, yet, as his co-workers, we may find plenty of time to attend to those every-day courtesies which have so much to do with human happiness and pleasure.

XV: AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST
(White 144)

[contd] Jesus did not begin His ministry by some great work before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem (W 144).

2.2 Jesus did not begin his great life-work in Jerusalem, in the presence of the chief priests and rulers,

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

Again He met His mother, from whom He had for some time been separated.

Mary had heard of the manifestation at the Jordan, at His baptism (W 144).

As Mary had heard the disciples’ testimony in regard to Jesus, she had been gladdened with the assurance that her long-cherished hopes were not in vain.

Yet she would have been more than human if there had not mingled with this holy joy a trace of the fond mother’s natural pride (W 145).

Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity (W 150).

but rather chose this quiet little village, with its humble inhabitants, as the place where he would first manifest himself as a miracle worker.

Here he met his mother, after a separation of some time.

She had no doubt heard of the remarkable manifestation at his baptism,

and was rejoiced to know that the long-cherished hopes of her son were about to be fulfilled.

There was, no doubt, mingled with this gladness some human mother-pride.

This accounts for the manner in which the Saviour afterward addressed her, saying: “Woman, what have I to do with thee?”

2.3 Jesus began his public ministry by coming into close touch and sympathy with the common people in their daily life.

He was an invited guest at this wedding. What a beautiful thought! How grand to have the Lord Jesus Christ present at the marriage. But oh, how many a wedding is celebrated in these last days, and Jesus is not only absent from the marriage ceremony, but hardly a thought of him is in the minds of those who are united in the bonds of what should be holy matrimony. The true Christian will allow Jesus to preside over the affections, to control the thoughts, and arrange all life’s plans;

SOURCE

[*Compare:* At all our feasts, therefore, let us see to have Christ present, and to be ourselves Christian. Above all, at our marriage feasts let us send our first invitation to him ... (Taylor 43).]

She hoped there might be opportunity for Him to work a miracle before them (W 145).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

and on all occasions, small and great, the Man of Nazareth will be an invited and honored guest.

2.4 Jesus was bidden to this wedding, and he came. The Master never refused to accept an invitation that was given in sincerity. He longs to enter into the human heart as an invited guest, there to take up his abode, to fashion the character, and control the life. Without an invitation you can not expect him; but he says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3:20. This is a feast within the soul. The tables are spread with the bounties of the eternal world, and the Master himself has said that he will sup with you, if you will only bid him enter. Not only upon the great occasions of life, but even in the smallest things of every-day life, let Jesus of Nazareth be present as an invited guest to grace your doings, guide your way, and make your life a blessing to other lives.

2.5 “*And When They Wanted Wine.*”—Before the festivities of the occasion were over, it was discovered that the supply of wine was exhausted. So we find the mother of Jesus coming to him, and saying, “They have no wine.”

Undoubtedly she was anxious to give the Saviour an opportunity to work a miracle.

But the time had come when Mary must look upon Jesus as one who had a great work to accomplish for the whole world; she must henceforth regard him as the world's Redeemer. She must recognize that although she was his human mother, she, with all other sinful creatures, must look to this sinless One for saving grace and life eternal.

2.6 “*They Have No Wine.*”—The lot of man in this sinful world is largely one of want, need, and disappointment. The marriage in Cana of Galilee was characterized by want ere the festivities were over. Even in the happiest and most prosperous times of life, we are reminded of our poverty and shortcomings, both physical and spiritual; but we should learn the **lesson** of taking all our wants and wishes to Jesus, and awaiting his time and manner of supplying our needs. We often blunder in mistaking our notions of mind for the real needs of the soul. No doubt every possible provision had been made for the success of the wedding and its accompanying feast, and yet these provisions failed to meet the demand. The supply of wine ran short.

And we may learn a **lesson** from this. When we have done our best to provide all things necessary for success in the service of God, there is sure to arise a deficiency, something is sure to fail; but we must remember that

[My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).]

his strength is made perfect in weakness.

Our shortcomings are met in his perfection, and whatever the nature of our deficiencies and failures, we should let them draw us closer to Jesus.

In him we shall find that which we so much need, even as on that day he was found to be the one who could make up the lack in the supply of wine. Mary, in telling Jesus of the lack of wine, undoubtedly presented the matter to him in such a way as to lead the Master to recognize that she expected him to supply the need in some extraordinary and miraculous manner.

2.7 “*Woman, What Have I to Do with Thee?*”—The Saviour, in addressing his mother on this occasion, used the term “woman.” This was her highest and most sacred name. He spoke to her in like manner while hanging on the cross (John 19:26);² and, indeed, this seems to have been his customary mode of address. See Matt. 15:28; John 4:21; 20:15.³

The term “lady,” which is used so much in modern times, is far less expressive of woman’s true position than the name which God originally gave her. The majority of the more than six thousand saloons in the city of Chicago bear over their side-doors the sign, “Ladies’ Entrance;” but not once do we find, “Woman’s Entrance.” Women do not go there.

2.8 In addressing his mother at this time, Christ called her simply “woman,” not “mother.”⁴ He desired her to understand that the miracle he was about to perform would not be wrought for the purpose of glorifying either himself or her; and that the time had come for him to stand out before this world and the universe as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

XV: AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST
(White 144)

This answer, abrupt as it seems to us, expressed no coldness or discourtesy. The Saviour's form of address to His mother

was in accordance with Oriental custom.

It was used toward persons to whom it was desired to show respect (W 146).

“OBEYING CHRIST'S ORDERS”
(Spurgeon 93)

[T]he apostate church of Rome has actually made Mary a mediatrix, and prayers have been addressed to her; she has even been asked to use her maternal authority with her son.

It was well that our Saviour should check anything that might tend to give any countenance to Mariolatry ... (S1 93).

The form of the Saviour's address

did not in any way show disrespect or lack of courtesy; for

it was the ordinary mode of address in those days.

2.9 The circumstances connected with this, the first miracle of Christ, are such as forever to banish the idea of

Mary's becoming the mediator between Christ and sinful men:

Christ's words to his mother at this time were of a nature forever to prevent and forestall the arising of erroneous teaching on this point.

It seems very evident that Mary possessed no power to influence or persuade Christ to act against the dictates of his own will and choice, which was to “do the will of him that sent” him.

2.10 The apparent severity of Christ with his mother contains a most valuable **lesson** for us; namely,

Brethren, you and I, with the very **best intentions**, may sometimes **err** towards our Lord;

we sometimes make mistakes in expressing our **best intentions** and most sincere motives to our Lord,

and in order to teach us the lesson that would enable us to recognize our **error**,

and if he then in any way rebukes us, and puts us back, if he **disappoints** our hope, if he does not allow our ambitious designs to prosper,

it is sometimes necessary for him to **disappoint** us by apparently refusing to grant our request.

We shall best learn the lesson he seeks to teach us by

let us take it from him as Mary took it from Jesus. Let us just feel that it must be right, and let us in silence possess ourselves in his presence (S1 94).

being immediately reconciled to his plan,

knowing that he does all things well, and works for our best good.

W. S. SADLER.
(*To be continued.*)

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE III

3.1 “*Mine Hour is Not Yet Come.*”—
The mother of Jesus was anxious to have a miracle performed as soon as she discovered the need of wine, but she was bidden to await the hour of divine choice. True, it came soon, the waiting was not long; but whether brief or lengthy, we must await the will of Providence.

SOURCE

A great part of obedience **lies in not doing** (S1 95).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

A most essential and important part of our obedience and service to God **lies in not doing,**

as well as in doing.

On this occasion, Mary must wait, even after she had discovered the need of wine, before she was permitted to behold the miracle that was to produce it. So in our own experience, we often recognize defects of character, and discover besetments of temperament,⁵ and at once we go with our need to the Lord, asking that they be immediately removed; but not always does the answer come without delay; often we must wait for the hour of deliverance,—the hour determined by divine wisdom. Then, and not until then, will these things be changed, transformed, or removed from our experience. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” Isa. 40:31.

3.2 The Saviour said, “Mine hour is not yet come.” Christ would do nothing before the time, and nothing after the time: infinite punctuality characterized his life-work. The same unerring accuracy with which the Master hand guides the great astronomical systems in their ceaseless march through space, characterized the performance of his every act when here on earth, even down to the smallest.

I think that our own experience goes to show us that our highest wisdom ... will lie in our cautiously keeping behind Christ, and **never running before** him,

3.3 The Christian **must not run ahead of** the angel of Providence.

never forcing his hand, never tempting him ... but, in holy, humble obedience, taking these words as our life-motto henceforth, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (S1 94-95).

Impetuosity and blind zeal will not guide and control the servants of God; neither should a spirit of indifference and carnal security be permitted to settle down over the heart of him who professes to represent God in the earth. When tempted or urged prematurely to enter upon any work, or put forth any effort for God, let us follow the Saviour’s example, and do nothing before the time, but say, as did he, “Mine hour is not yet come.” On the other hand, what shall we say if we have slept at our post of duty while the hour of opportunity has come and gone? When the hour of opportunity arrives, how important that we should be prepared to grasp it, to act without delay, to “strike while the iron is hot.” The watchword of the overcoming Christian must be, “Do the right thing at the right time.”

3.4 “*Whatsoever HE SAITH Unto You, Do It.*”—From Mary’s experience in going to Christ we may learn a **great lesson**. It is not necessary for us to go to God, telling him how we should be saved, or how our sins are to be forgiven, or in any way to specify what our Christian experience shall be. Our attitude should be that of a humble servant, a confiding child, waiting for his command, with a willing mind to do whatever he bids. When Mary had received with humility the lesson that Jesus sought to teach her, she at once turned to the servants, and sought to impart to them that which she had just learned, saying, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

SOURCE

Beloved, I wish that, when we have learned a lesson,

we would try to teach it (S1 94).

[H]aving learned the lesson well, let us then say to our next friend, “Do not err as I have done. Avoid the rock on which I have struck just now...” (S1 94).

Mary does not say to these people, “Put down those pots, leave off carrying those dishes;

but while they continue to do what they were doing,

she says to them,

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (S1 95).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

How **beautiful** it would be if every Christian would learn lessons so willingly,

and teach them to others so quickly!—

if all would so soon discover their mistakes,

and so soon warn others of the pitfalls, that they fall not therein.

3.5 The mother of Jesus did not suggest to the servants that they all cease their work,

and in idle expectancy await the commands of the Master,

but while they were going about their work,

serving tables, removing dishes, bringing food, or bearing the cup,

her word to them was:

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

A **beautiful lesson** for us! While we go about our daily work, doing with all our might whatever our hands find to do, as unto the Lord, let us listen with a careful ear to hear what saith the Spirit; and then, “whatsoever he saith” unto us, let us perform it. “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” I Cor. 7:20.

3.6 “*WHATSOEVER He Saith unto You, Do It.*”—It is not enough simply to be willing to do, to want to do, to plan to do, but “whatsoever he saith,”—that is the important part,—the very thing he says, the very way he says it, and at the very time he speaks it,—that is the meaning of genuine obedience.

There is a **lesson** in this for

It is disobedience, and not obedience, which prompts us to select from the commands of Christ such as we care to obey (S1 96).

those who would interpret Jehovah’s commands to mean almost anything they choose.

An example is the seeking to substitute the observance of the first day of the week for the Sabbath, in the face of the direct command to observe the seventh day.

Said David, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.” Ps. 119: 60. Implicit obedience to the requirements of Heaven, just as far as they are known, is the only safe course for the Christian. By the aid of the Holy Spirit we shall seek to understand just what our individual duty is, and then, by the grace so freely given, endeavor to walk in the light.

3.7 “*Whatsoever He Saith unto YOU, Do It.*”—

Here we learn the **lesson** that God speaks to us personally,

[Our obedience] must be also ***personal obedience:***

and he expects, in return, **personal obedience.**

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

That which he speaks to us, he expects us to perform.

You know how much there is done **by proxy** nowadays (S1 97).

We can not work **by proxy**;

we can not believe by proxy; neither can we obey by proxy.

If one of these persons who were waiting had said, when the command had come from Christ to fill the waterpots, “John, you go and do that; William, you go and do that;” he would not have followed Mary’s command, “**Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.**” ... Well, if so, from this time forth cease to be a servant of God by proxy, lest thou be saved by proxy, and to be **saved by proxy**

To undertake to be **saved by proxy**

will be to be lost (S1 97).

will simply mean to be lost in the end.

It must also be **prompt** obedience.

Our obedience to divine light should be personal and **prompt**.

Do it at once; delay will take the bloom from the obedience (S1 97).

We should obey without hesitation,

knowing that eternal power and infinite grace are bound up in every divine requirement.

Our loving Commander asks us to do only those things which are for our greatest good and eternal welfare. The commands of God are really divine promises.⁶

III. And now, beloved, let me occupy the last few minutes in answering this question, WHAT WILL FOLLOW FROM THIS OBEDIENCE? (S1 99)

3.8 Another **beautiful lesson** we may get from this thought is that when we quickly and implicitly yield obedience to the Father’s requirements,

The first thing is, that you will be **free from responsibility** (S1 100).

we are at once **freed from all responsibility**.

As obedient servants, we free ourselves from all possibility of future censure or blame; the responsibility reverts to the Master, whose command we made haste to obey.

And again, one can never become a leader in this life until he has first learned to be led;

Wellington used to say that no man is **fit to command**

we are not **fit to command** others

until he has **learned to obey**; and I am sure that it is so (S1 101).

until we ourselves have **learned to obey**.

W. S. SADLER.
(*To be continued.*)

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE IV

4.1 “*There Were Set There Six Waterpots of Stone.*”—The waterpots were symbols of purification. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matt. 5:8. Notice what Christ can do with earthen vessels, pure, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use. Water is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit. “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38. Just as the Saviour bade the servants fill the waterpots with water, so he has bidden us to be “filled with the Spirit,” in place of selfishness, animosity, jealousy, backbiting, and faultfinding. Our souls should be filled with the water of life. The life-giving stream should flow forth from us, to quench the thirst of others.

I: THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES AT
CANA OF GALILEE. (Taylor 28)

Out of the water-pots of the law

he brought that which may well represent
the blessings of the gospel (T 41).

4.2 Out of the waterpots, symbolic of
purification prescribed by the law,

the Saviour brought the new wine of the
gospel,

the first miraculous blessing of the new
dispensation.

In doing this, he did not break the
waterpots,—that is, seek to destroy the
law,—but with them, and out of them, he
worked the miracle that made them yet
more honorable and serviceable to those
present. And so the life-work of Christ
was not to annul the law, but to exalt it; to
remove the curse, and make the law a
blessing indeed to all who would
endeavor to walk in its precepts.

4.3 “*Jesus Saith unto Them, Fill the
Waterpots with Water.*”—In the
beginning God created out of nothing. On
this occasion Christ created wine, not out
of nothing, but out of water, which
represented all that man could do to
produce wine. He commanded the
servants to fill the waterpots to the brim.
Our fellow men all have a part to act in
the making and developing of our
characters, in fitting us for usefulness, in
filling us to the brim. It is not important
what instrument the Lord may choose to
help in the work of making us what we
ought to be.

“THE WATERPOTS OF CANA”
(Spurgeon² 103)

There are a good many brethren here from the College to-night, and they are trying to improve their gifts and their abilities. I think you do right, my brethren. But I have heard some people say, “The Lord Jesus does not want your learning” (S2 111).

Our Lord to-day does not want empty heads in his ministers, nor empty hearts; so, my brethren, fill your waterpots with water.

and expect the Lord Jesus to turn the water into wine (S2 111).

He can sanctify human knowledge

Many well-meaning Christians are found depreciating the value and importance of Christian education,

reasoning thus: “If we have received the Holy Spirit, if he knows all things, if he was sent to teach us all things, why should we seek to learn from human teachers?”

4.4 There is a **lesson** in this miracle for all such. The servants, human instruments, could not pour wine into the waterpots. It was their work to pour in water; and in the process of drawing out the water, and serving it, the Saviour himself wrought the marvelous miracle of turning the water into wine.

And so the Christian youth, and all Christians, for that matter, should seek to fill the empty waterpots of mind and soul, the earthen vessels, with the water of life,—living principles, truth, useful knowledge,—

and then depend upon the power of God and of his Spirit to

use this knowledge, this education, this training, in work for him,

so that it shall be useful to the setting forth of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (S2 111).

making it a gracious blessing to one and all with whom we come in contact.

4.5 The juice of the cluster is mysteriously made from the water which the vine takes up from the earth; and so, adhering to the natural process of wine-making, Christ commanded the servants to bring water, ordinary water, such as that from which every grape must make its juice. He did not send for any special water, and we have no record that he in any special way blessed this water before working the miracle. Could not Christ have created wine out of nothing as easily as change water into wine?⁷—Certainly; but he did not choose so to do, and we believe that the divine choice is infinitely the best. Therefore we learn here the **lesson** which he sought to teach so many times; namely, that we should co-operate with nature, at least as far as we know how.

4.6 “*And They Filled Them up to the Brim.*”—The waterpots were filled to the brim. Just the moment a soul is filled to the brim, God begins to draw out. “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Isa. 12:3. Converted men and women, who are consecrated to service and filled to the brim with the good graces of God, may become channels of light and truth to the world. Christ is the fountainhead of the stream of life. The Lord does not fill us merely to keep us feeling good. We are filled that we may become wells of water, sources of help to others. Faithfulness in the work of helping others will bring to our souls great peace of mind and abundant satisfaction.

SOURCE

[14. The Christian's business should be to get truth and give truth. He should be a transfer station between Heaven and earth, getting from God with one hand and giving to man with the other hand ("Sparks From the Training-School Bible Class," in *The Life Boat*, Sept. 1900, p. 168).]

Secondly, *Christ's commands are not to be questioned, but to be obeyed.*

The people want wine, and Christ says, "Fill the waterpots with water." Well, now, if these servants had been of the mind of the captious critics of modern times, they would have looked at our Lord a long while, and objected boldly:

"We do not want any water; it is not the feast of purifications; it is a wedding feast... (S2 106).

"LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST"

The Christian is a transfer station between heaven and earth.

His work is to keep the streams of life flowing from above to those below. Jesus did not say we should be pools brimful of water, but that out of us should flow rivers of water,—an ever-flowing stream, an overflowing well. When a vessel is full to the brim, it is ready to overflow. We are first filled to the brim with the Spirit; then by the overflow we are baptized with its precious, heavenly influence.⁸ Small vessels can not hold as much as large ones, but they can overflow just as much, or even more. It is possible for a small vessel to overflow quickly, and in such quantities that the vessel itself knows very little of the greatness of the overflow.

4.7 Heaven's voice to the soul must not be questioned.

Divine requirements are not to be debated. Implicit obedience, in the spirit of a little child, is the portion of the children of light. Light was made to be received, to be walked in.

On this occasion the servants might have questioned:

"Why fill these waterpots?" or "Why fill them all?" or yet again, "Why fill them all to the brim?"

To the eye of unbelief, to the one who could not recognize the hand of God, there would appear no purpose in these specific directions; but the eye of faith looked on beyond, and saw the glorious end, to which personal obedience to the Master's voice was the chief means. Unquestioning, implicit, and immediate obedience to the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God to the soul,⁹ should ever be the motto of the person who would live a life of Christian victory.

4.8 And yet when the waterpots were full; when man had done all he could, for the Master's instructions were willingly obeyed; when nature had contributed her share, and all things, from a human point of view, had been done, there was no more wine than before. The transforming and creating touch must be experienced,¹⁰ and then in still further obedience lies the discovery of the marvelous wonder wrought by the Master's hand. When we have done our utmost to save a soul, it can not avail unless the sinless mind of Christ has been received in exchange for the sinful heart of man, unless he is born again. Our part is essential, but it is useless without the miracle of saving grace, which he alone can work. Human efforts can not save and cleanse the sinful soul, and yet Heaven has appointed to the human instrument its place of co-operation in the task of enlightening, feeding, and saving the souls of lost men and women. Christ did not change the water into wine until everything possible had been done by the servants. When humanity had done all it could, divinity finished the work.

W. S. SADLER.
(To be continued.)

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE V

5.1 “*Draw out NOW.*”—The time selected by the divine mind as the moment of opportunity has arrived. The water is wine, and the Master says, “Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.” So when you have been greatly favored from above, when showers of blessing have been your portion, then as the finger of Providence points out some needy soul, and the Spirit speaks to you, saying, “Draw out now,” do not delay to obey. The future nourishing and refreshing of your own soul demand implicit obedience. As the message comes to you, “Draw out now,” all heaven waits to co-operate with the effort you put forth to give to others the blessings of salvation which have been given to you. Disobedience to the Spirit’s leading will poison the waters of life, and ruin the wine of grace within the soul. That which, had you promptly yielded to the Spirit’s leading, might have blessed and cheered the heart of another, will by and by become a stumbling-stone to others and a source of darkness to you.

5.2 It was in obedience to Christ’s command, “Draw out,” that the blessing resulting from this miracle was obtained. And it is so in our Christian experience. May we not sometimes neglect to obey while we are seeking a blessing, when in reality the blessing for which we seek will be found only in results of obedience? Christ works miracles for a purpose; for He had no sooner worked this miracle than he said, “Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.” Christ never worked useless or objectless miracles.

5.3 “*But the Servants Which Drew the Water Knew.*”—It is written that the servants who drew the water knew it was wine. Perhaps there were many onlookers who in their minds doubted the miracle of the water being turned into wine, but the servants who drew the water knew. And so we see it to-day. The saving and keeping power of the glorious gospel is seriously questioned by many, doubted by others, and ignored by some; yet the humble servants of God, who are drawing water from “the wells of salvation” with which to refresh their souls, and quench the thirst of dying sinners,—those who are engaged in actually giving to others of that which God has miraculously wrought in their own experience,—they know both the reality and the blessedness of the Christian life. While others may doubt and conjecture, they, by reason of their experience in the things of God and their labor of love for others, know, like the blind man of old, whereof they speak. Whereas once they were blind, now they see, and they know it.

5.4 But he who seeks divine blessings for his own refreshment, and who makes no effort to give the bread of heaven and the water of life to a dying world, soon loses the ability to recognize and appreciate divine things. Those who are drawers of water from the inner side of the well know whence the water comes. Those who are constantly engaged in ministering to others of the grace of forgiveness and the beauties of salvation, are those who know in reality that their sins are forgiven.

“THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES WHICH JESUS DID” (Spurgeon³ 133)

5.5 “*This Beginning of Miracles Did Jesus.*”—

It is interesting to note that

Further, I cannot help noticing *how condescending was this miracle!* ... Our Lord did not choose the high places of Jerusalem, nor any of the notable cities of Palestine, as the scene of his first miracle:

Christ did not work his first miracle at Jerusalem,

with great show and pomp, *before the priests and leaders* of the people.

but he went to a quiet village in Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles, a district much despised, and there he wrought his first miracle at the city of rushes and canes—even Cana in Galilee. He wrought the sign, not on a spiritual and sacred occasion, nor *before ecclesiastics and scientists* (S3 137).

On the contrary, he chose the quiet little village of Cana

as the place where

It was a miracle which, by *honouring marriage*, confirmed an institution fraught with happiness to our race (S3 136).

he would both *honor the marriage institution*

and manifest the glory of his Father; for, he said, “My Father, he doeth the works.”

It is also interesting to notice

Our Lord manifested his glory by *operating naturally and without display.*

how unostentatious Christ was in all he did in connection with the performance of this miracle.

SOURCE

I really believe that if you could have worked this wonder, you would have said to the ruler of the feast, "Call upon the guests to remark that the wine has failed, and I am about to create a new supply.... Observe me while I work the transformation."

Then you would have spoken aloud, or you would have gone through a series of performances. Jesus did nothing of the kind (S3 140).

[He did not call for angels, he did not deliver a long prayer, much less repeat a sacred **incantation** (S3 143).]

"LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST"

He did not call the people around him, and seek to attract their attention to the wonder he was about to work.

as so many so-called modern wonder-workers are wont to do.

He uttered no moans or **incantations**,

He did nothing of a sensational nature to attract morbid curiosity. He did not even speak an audible word. He simply gave the command, and when the command had been obeyed, it was promptly followed by another, and the obedience to this second command discovered to all present the wonderful miracle the Commander had wrought. Thus it is with many of our greatest blessings. Many of the mighty miracles wrought by the Master within the soul are discovered to us by the Spirit of loving obedience,—obedience today making manifest the miracle which resulted from our obedience yesterday. "Draw out now" discovers to us to-day the transformation wrought by his mighty power when first he called us to obey.

5.6 “*And His Disciples Believed on Him.*”—

Note, that the guests at that feast all partook of the wine, but the disciples at that feast had something far better; they had an **increase of faith** (S3 142).

Again, their faith was confirmed because *he had showed that he would allow **nothing to fail** with which he was connected* (S3 142).

It showed to them, next—

and this must have greatly confirmed their faith—that *he could use the **poorest** means* (S3 143).

The disciples would in after days know themselves to be nothing but earthen vessels, but they would remember that their Lord could work miracles with them (S3 143).

His disciples believed on him already, but this miracle confirmed their confidence (S 142).

[*Compare:* Just as the Samaritans believed on him at first because of the saying of the woman, so they had believed on him on the testimony of John. But now they could say, “Now we believe, not because of John’s saying, but we have seen his wonderful works ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (Taylor 40).]

[Source?]

The disciples’ **faith was greatly strengthened** by this miracle.

They saw that **nothing could fail** in the hands of the Master.

They were made to see also that

he who could turn water into wine could turn defeat into victory; that he could transform weak and erring men into vessels of honor and service;

that he could take the **poorest** of human instruments,

and by his grace make of them the richest instruments of righteousness.

They had believed on him before, but this wonder confirmed their faith.

It is as it was written of the Samaritans: “Now we believe, not because of thy sayings: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” John 4:42.

Miracles do not produce faith; they simply strengthen, reenforce, and confirm it.

Note, first, that this miracle *displayed his self-denial*.... He would not make bread for himself,

but he will make wine for others;

and the fact that it was wine, and not bread, that he made, makes the miracle all the more remarkable.

He did not merely make bread for men, which is a **necessity**; but he even went further, and made wine for them, which is **luxury**, though he would not make even bread for himself (S3 135).

It was in his power to have commanded the stones to become bread; and had he done so the beginning of signs would have been a miracle wrought for his own necessities. But such a beginning would not have been like his life-course, and especially would it have been wide apart from the conclusion of his life when it was said of him,

“He saved others; himself he cannot save” (S3 135).

5.7 Although Christ would not transform the stones into bread on the occasion of his great hunger in the wilderness,

yet at the marriage feast in Cana he turned water into wine to refresh and gladden those present.

Although he would not provide a **necessity** for himself, he was willing to give **luxuries** to others.

He refused to make bread for himself; yet he supplied wine to others.

Herein is his unselfish character manifested.

At his crucifixion these taunting words were spoken:

“He saved others; himself he can not save.”

XV: AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST (White 144)

It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Prov. 20:1 (W 149).

The wine which Christ provided for the feast ... was the pure juice of the grape....

... The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink (W 149).

5.8 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Prov. 20:1.

Surely it was no such wine as this that Jesus provided.

It must have been the pure, unfermented, refreshing juice of the grape even;

the same as he provides in the clusters as they hang in the vineyard.

W. S. SADLER.
(Concluded next week.)

WATER CHANGED INTO WINE (Concluded)

THE WINE OF WRATH

6.1 AT the marriage feast of Cana, the excellent wine which Jesus had miraculously provided was served at the last of the feast. Its superiority over the other wine is evidenced by the words of the ruler of the feast, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

“SATAN’S BANQUET” (Spurgeon4
115)

This morning ... I am about to introduce you to two houses of feasting. First, I shall bid you look within the door’s of the *devil’s house*, and you will find he is true to this *rule*; he brings forth the good wine,

and when men have well drunk and their brains are muddled therewith, then he bringeth forth that which is worse (S4 116).

I. First, we are to take a warning glance at the HOUSE OF FEASTING WHICH SATAN HATH BUILDED ... (S4 116).

[*Note*: Spurgeon describes four tables in this house: the table of the profligate, the table of the self-righteous, the table of worldliness, the table of secret sinners.]

But at the banquet which is spread by Satan and his agents, as they serve to man the wine of wrath, this order is reversed.

The devil’s plan is: first the good wine

(that which seems good),

and afterward the bad.

That this is Satan’s *rule*, thousands have learned from sad experience.

6.2 1. *Worldly Pleasure*.—The wine of worldly compromise, often so pleasant to the taste of the Christian whose feet have begun to slip, is the satanic draft whose first taste is sweet, but which afterward becomes the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. That which began in sweet drafts of worldly pleasure and sinful indulgence too often ends in vicious pleasure,—in the bitterness of sin of the deepest dye and lowest forms.

6.3 2. *Yielding to Appetite*.—The practice of the Evil One in placing the best first and afterward that which is worse, is clearly seen in the realm of diet.

To the taste, the food may be extremely pleasant, and very agreeable; but later the sour stomach, dyspepsia, and a long train of evils tell again, in other words, that Satan gives that which is pleasant first, and that which is bitter last.

6.4 3. *Mental Food*.—Much of the wine of wrath is brought to man in the form of cheap, trashy literature, and sensational fiction. Although to the youthful mind, such reading may have a very agreeable flavor, and be most fascinating, in the end it will prove to be the means of subverting one virtue of character after another until the forces for good are well-nigh overcome, and the soul has sustained an almost irreparable damage. The novel may taste sweet at first, but the end thereof is depression and disappointment of the bitterest sort.¹¹

6.5 4. *Pride*.—Sweet is the morsel of pride to the youth as they first indulge in its display and vanity, but afterward how bitter, oh, how bitter! the humiliations and disappointments which await them when pride falls. Sweet may be the indulgence of pride to the carnal heart, but most bitter is the fall in which it terminates; showing once more that in giving the wine of wrath to the children of disobedience, Satan gives first the best and afterward the worse.

6.6 5. *Drug Habits*.—So in the whole realm of drug habits, intoxicants, narcotics, etc. Whisky, morphine, tobacco, tea, and coffee are but types of the *wine of wrath*. They are marked illustrations of that which is sweet in the mouth and afterward bitter; of that which seems good at first, but whose end is sorrow and bitterness.

At first, morphine and whisky will banish pain, sorrow, and care; but when their victims have drunk of the wine which seems good, instead of finding a still better draft awaiting them, they find the despair of habitual drunkenness and the wretchedness of morphinism.

THE WINE OF GRACE

II. But you must pardon me while I occupy only a few minutes in taking you into the HOUSE OF THE SAVIOUR, where he feasts his beloved (S4 121).

[*Note:* Spurgeon describes three tables in this house: the table of outward providences, the table of inward experience, the table of communion.]

6.7 In contrast with Satan’s rule of giving that which is sweet first and afterward that which is bitter, Christ reserves the best of the wine until the last of the feast. This is evidenced throughout the entire experience of the Christian life.

6.8 1. *Cross before Crown*.—We must lift the cross first, endure its hardships, and drink the bitter cup of trial, affliction, and ostracism, even to the dregs. After the cross comes the crown.

6.9 2. *Suffering*.—We must suffer with Christ if we would reign with him. It is in drinking the wine of grace from the cup of suffering that the sincere Christian learns true obedience. After having drunk of affliction’s cup, we may drink the wine of grace from the cup of eternal bliss.

6.10 3. *Persecution*.—“In the world ye shall have tribulation;” “Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you,” etc., said the Master. There is not only a blessing in the persecution itself; but the experience which follows,—the draft of the wine of grace,—is an experience that lifts the persecuted soul nearer and nearer God, burns out more and more of the carnal dross, and shows forth brighter and brighter the image of his Creator and Redeemer.

6.11 4. *Grows Better and Better*.—The wine of grace, the wine which Jesus provides, grows better and sweeter with each and every draft. Bitter as was the first draft the sinner took,—bitter because of the sin of the one who drank it,—it grows sweeter and sweeter, until salvation’s cup is filled to the brim with the sweetest water of life. David said, “I will take the cup of salvation,” and in another place, “My cup runneth over.” At the banquet of heaven, at the gospel table spread for hungry mortals here on earth, Christ’s rule is: first the wine that seems poor; afterward that which is very good. The world gives us its best things first, and afterward follow remorse of conscience, sorrow of heart, and sadness of soul. The reverse of this was true in this first miracle that Jesus wrought. They had the best of the wine at the last of the feast. God gives us first trial and tribulation, and then glory and honor and immortality. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

W. S. SADLER

1. In later articles of this series, Sadler spelled it ‘Nathanael’.
2. Trench (p. 146), Taylor (p. 34), and White (p. 146) all point this out.
3. These references pertain to the Syrophoenician woman, the woman of Samaria, and Mary Magdalene.
4. *Compare:*

He did not call her “Mother,” ... but, as we shall immediately see, his very purpose at this time was to tell her that henceforth there could be no human interference, not even that of one who had been so dear to him, as she had been, with the ordering and directing of his life (Taylor 34).

5. Spurgeon talks about the sinner’s desire to “get the mastery over a besetting sin” in “The Waterpots of Cana” (S2 107). He discusses the sinner’s desire to “conquer a besetting sin” in “At Thy Word”, a sermon Sadler used in “The First Miraculous Draft of Fishes”.

6. *Compare:*

Every command of God implies a promise, and every promise a command (Rev. James Lee, M.A., *Bible Illustrations*, Vol. 5 [1868], p. 60.)

7. *Compare:*

The Lord, [Irenæus] says, might have created, with no subjacent material, the wine with which He cheered these guests, the bread with which He fed those multitudes; but He preferred to put forth his power on his Father’s creatures, in witness that the same God, who in the beginning had made the waters and caused the earth to bear its fruits, did in those last days give by his Son the cup of blessing and the bread of life (Trench 124).

8. In “An Appeal to Our Young Men and Young Women, No.4”, published in the Sep. 26, 1901 edition of *Pacific Union Recorder*, Sadler wrote:

The Christian ought to be a transfer station between heaven and earth. Getting truth and giving truth is his business all the time. So let us lay hold of all the truth we can get, and let it pass through our characters. We shall find ourselves filled with the Spirit of God in getting it, and baptized with the Spirit in giving it out.

9. In his later writings, Sadler would state the opposite. In his 1925 book, *Americanitis—Blood Pressure and Nerves* (p. 40), he wrote:

The physician is not disposed to accept conscience as “the voice of God to the soul.”

The Urantia Book reflects his later judgment:

[Conscience] is not to be despised, but it is hardly the voice of God to the soul ... (110:5.1).

10. *Compare:*

The water to fill the jars was brought by human hands, but the word of Christ alone could impart to it life-giving virtue (White 149).

11. In the June 1904 issue of *The Life Boat*, Sadler published the article, “Why Novels Are So Extensively Read”, in which he reported on his years-long study of “the causes of the novel reading mania” and “the baneful effects of fiction reading.”