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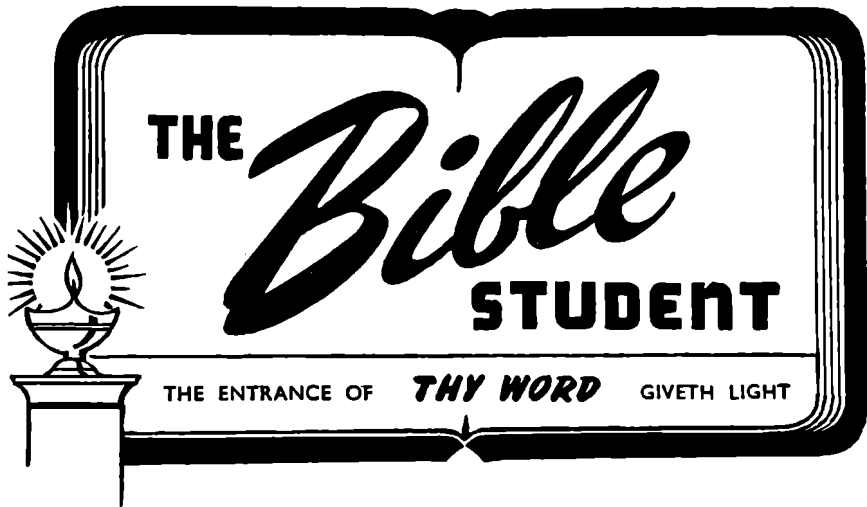
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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

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CONTENTS

'A NEW CREATION'	1
PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL	4
CONSCIENCE	14
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL	20
SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS	26
BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS	33
THE APOKALYPTIC LETTERS	37
THE COMPENSATING GRACE OF GOD	39
N.T. GREEK WORDS	44
'MINE OWN VINEYARD HAVE I NOT KEPT'	47

Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF ST JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. F. BRUCE, M.A.

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (John 1: 19—12: 50)

(b) MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE, JERUSALEM AND
SAMARIA (John 2: 1—4: 42)

i. *The Miracle at Cana* (2: 1-12)

Ch. 2, v. 1—*And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee*—‘The third day’ is probably to be counted from the events last mentioned, the calls of Philip and Nathanael. The reckoning is, as usual, inclusive; we should say ‘two days later’, as Moffatt has it. The distance from ‘Bethany beyond Jordan’ (1:28) to Cana cannot be accurately measured since the identification of the former place is uncertain, but it was a distance which a group of young men could easily walk in two days—perhaps sixty miles or thereby. Less probably we might interpret the expression to mean two days after their arrival in Galilee. Some interpreters wish to take ‘the third day’ in a symbolical sense; that Jesus ‘manifested his glory’ (v. 11) on ‘the third day’ has been held to adumbrate His resurrection. It is very doubtful whether the Evangelist had any such thought in his mind.

‘Cana of Galilee’ (possibly to be identified with Khirbet Qana, about 8 miles north of Nazareth) was the home of Nathanael, as we learn from Ch. 21:2. It has, indeed, been thought that Jesus had arrived in Galilee before the call of Philip (of Bethsaida) and Nathanael; thus Moffatt translates Ch. 1: 43, ‘Next day Jesus determined to leave for Galilee; there he met Philip . . .’ This, however, is not the natural implication of the narrative. If it were, ‘the third day’ would not be reckoned from the departure from Peraean Bethany.

And the mother of Jesus was there.—The mother of Jesus appears in two scenes in this Gospel—at this marriage in Cana, and at the cross (Ch. 19:25 ff.). There is also an allusion to her in Ch. 6:42. In none of these places is she referred to by her personal name, Mary. This may simply be to avoid confusion with

other women of that name mentioned in the Gospel. Allegorizing interpreters tend to view the mother of Jesus in this Gospel as personifying Israel or the Church; such ideas are completely unconvincing.

v. 2—*And Jesus also was bidden, and His disciples, to the marriage.*—The Evangelist no doubt sees a parabolic significance in the marriage festival, and in the presence and action of Jesus; but this does not imply that it was not an actual marriage. The presence of Jesus at such an event adds a further sanctification to the divine ordinance of marriage. There is a wide divergence between His participation in this joyful celebration and the attitude of the Essenes who despised marriage. As He graced the marriage feast at Cana with His bodily presence, so His spiritual presence and blessing have been invoked at many a marriage since; and He may always be relied upon to change the water of earthly joy into heavenly wine. The present marriage, however, is also a picture of the Kingdom of God, which indeed is presented under such a figure more than once in the Gospels, and elsewhere in the New Testament (not to mention Rabbinical and other Jewish literature).

v. 3—*And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, they have no wine.*—Such a festal occasion might be prolonged for a week, and for the wine to run short before the festivities were due to end was a serious blow. It may well be that the mother of Jesus had some responsibility for the catering; at any rate she felt that in such a crisis she could not do better than call upon her Son's resourcefulness. Probably she had learned by experience that to draw His attention to a need was a sure way of getting something done.

v. 4—*And Jesus saith unto her, woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.*—But since her Son had left home (it may be some months before), something had happened to Him which (although she did not yet realize it) must make a great difference to their relationship. He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit and power for His messianic task. And now that, after the long silent years at Nazareth, He was beginning to take up His public ministry, everything else must be subordinated to the work His Father had given Him to do. This, at least, lies

behind His surprising answer, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' The English word 'woman', used thus, carries with it a suggestion of disrespect which is totally absent from the Greek (*gynai*, vocative of *gynē*). Our Lord addressed His mother in the same way when He hung upon the cross (Ch. 19:26); and indeed the expression was consonant with the utmost politeness, being translatable as 'Lady' or 'Madam'. The remainder of His question may mean either 'what have I do to with thee?' (as in R.V.) or 'what have you to do with me?' (as in R.S.V.). Some have tried to give a literal rendering of the Greek phrase (*ti emoi kai soi*) such as 'What (is that) to me and to thee?' But this ignores the idiomatic force of the Greek. R. A. Knox's paraphrase brings out the meaning of our Lord's words rather well: 'Nay, woman, why dost thou trouble me with that?' Such an action as His mother wishes Him to perform, for the limited purpose that she has in mind, would not be in keeping with His messianic mission. Even if the action were to be the vehicle for a manifestation of His glory, the time for that has not yet come. That glory would be fully revealed when the Son of man was lifted up. Yet He would grant her implied request, but grant it in a way which would manifest in an anticipatory fashion that glory yet to be revealed in its fulness. 'It is an axiom of our Gospel that the transformation of the symbolical into the "real" can only come about with the bestowal of the Spirit, which in turn cannot take place till after Jesus' death' (G.H.C. Macgregor). Even now, however, the lesson of that future transformation can be taught by an acted parable.

v. 5—*His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*—But Mary, despite her imperfect comprehension, knew that the situation was saved when it had been committed to Him. What He would do she did not know, but He would do the right thing. Hence her instructions to the servants, which confirm our impression that she was in some position of responsibility at the feast. And all who venerate the memory of Mary may well pay heed to these words of hers concerning her Son.

v. 6.—*Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.*—

The stone jars which stood in or near the room where the feast was taking place were probably very similar to stone jars which have been found on the site of Cana and elsewhere in Palestine in our own day. These contained about twenty gallons each. (The Greek word translated 'firkin' is *metrētēs*, equivalent to eight or nine of our gallons.) They stood there to supply water for rinsing the guests' hands and for washing the various vessels required for the feast, 'after the Jews' manner of purifying', details of which are given in Mark 7:3 f. This remark gives the clue to the spiritual meaning of the narrative. The water, provided for ritual purification in accordance with Jewish law and custom, stands for the whole ancient order of Jewish ceremonial, which Christ was going to replace by something incomparably better.

v. 7—*Jesus saith unto them, fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*—The servants, mindful of Mary's direction to them, obeyed Jesus' instructions and filled the six jars with water.

v. 8—*And He saith unto them, draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.*—When the jars were filled, Jesus bade the servants draw some more water and carry it to the chief steward. The traditional view is that the water on which the miracle was wrought was the water in the jars, and it has further been suggested that the purpose of the jars' being filled brim-full was to make it plain that there was no deception—that nothing was added to the water to cause the change. But the verb *antleō* normally denotes drawing from a well, and what was turned into wine was probably the water drawn from the well after the filling of the jars. The fact that the jars were filled to the brim suggests rather that once the appointed time for the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law had run its full course, and had so completely fulfilled its purpose that nothing of the same old order remained to be added, the new order was inaugurated. The 'ruler of the feast' (Gk. *architriklinos*) was the manager of the place where the banquet was held; we might almost translate 'the head waiter'. Since he superintended the supply of food and drink to the wedding guests, it was the servants' duty to take what they had drawn to him before it was served to those reclining at the table (*triclinium*).

v. 9—*And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast called the Bridegroom,*—The manager tasted this fresh wine which was brought him by the servants. He had no idea where it came from (possibly Jesus had forbidden the servants to tell); but he recognized at once that this was the best wine which had appeared since the feast began. He accordingly expressed his surprise to the bridegroom.

v. 10—*And saith unto him, every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then, that which is worse; thou hast kept the good wine until now.*—The common practice in such matters was so well known that it had become proverbial. The guests were supplied with the best wine first; as the feast progressed they became less particular about the quality of what was offered them. But for some reason which the manager did not understand, the best wine on this occasion had been reserved to the end of the feast. Commentators whose only concern with Biblical miracles is to rationalize them have solemnly suggested that the water remained water all the time, but that Jesus had it served up under the name of wine in a spirit of good-humoured playfulness, while the manager responded appropriately and said: 'Yes, of course, the best wine! "Adam's wine!" But why have you kept it to the last?' This is hardly worthy even of the name of rationalization, and misses the whole point of the Evangelist's narrative. Jesus' action was a 'miracle of the old creation', to use Professor C. S. Lewis's terminology; the God who year by year, in a manner of speaking, turns water into wine by a natural process, on this unique occasion short-circuits the process but attains the same end (*Miracles*, p. 163). But it was, at the same time, a parable of the *new* creation. Christ has come into the world to fulfil and terminate the old order of Judaism, and to replace it by a new worship 'in spirit and in truth' which surpasses the old as much as wine surpasses water.

v. 11—*This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.*—In the Prologue (1:14) the Evangelist says of the Incarnate Word, 'we beheld his glory'; in the body of the Gospel he relates a

succession of 'signs' (Gk. *sēmeia*) in which that glory was made known, leading up to the final sign in which Jesus is supremely glorified in the fullness of His self-oblation. Here, then, says the Evangelist, is the first sign; here first He manifested His glory. And as His glory was manifested, so the faith of His disciples was strengthened.

Three words are used in the New Testament to describe the supernatural acts of Christ. They are *terata* ('portents' or 'miracles'); they are *dynameis* ('mighty works' or 'powers'); they are *sēmeia* ('signs'). Miracles are never called *terata* and nothing more; they are not mere portents or works of wonder. Wherever the word *terata* occurs it is accompanied by the word *sēmeia*; all the New Testament miracles are *signs*. In this Gospel the miracles of Jesus are called *sēmeia* ('signs') pure and simple. Only once does the Evangelist use the word *terata*, and then in the general statement of Ch. 4:48, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.' He never calls the miracles *dynameis* ('mighty works'), as the other Evangelists do; in fact, the word *dynamis* ('power') is used nowhere in his Gospel.

v. 12—*After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and HIS brethren, and His disciples: and there they abode not many days.*—The narrative of the changing of the water into wine has this brief note appended to it. It is evident from the Synoptic accounts that during the period of Jesus' Galilean ministry His headquarters were in Capernaum, and it appears that His mother and brothers lived in the vicinity, having presumably moved from Nazareth (cf. Mark 3:31 ff.). The move seems to have taken place at the time here indicated by John. The words 'not many days' may simply mean that a short time after settling in Capernaum Jesus and His disciples went up to Jerusalem for the Passover (verses 13 ff.). Capernaum or Capharnahum ('the village of Nahum') lay on the north-west shore of the Lake of Galilee, probably on the site of the modern Tell-Hum.

The most natural view of our Lord's brethren is that they were sons of Joseph and Mary, He Himself being Mary's firstborn. The burden of proof lies with those who wish to understand the word 'brethren' in another than the usual sense.

The disciples of Jesus will be those whose call is recorded in Ch. 1. The call of the disciples recorded by the Synoptic Evangelists (cf. Mark 1:14-20) belongs to a later period, after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. But the implication of John's account, that the apostles had been companions of Jesus from the days when John was engaged in his ministry of baptism, is confirmed by the evidence of Acts 1:21 f., that one of the qualifications of an apostle in the stricter sense of the term was that he should have been a companion of Jesus from the earliest days, 'beginning from the baptism of John.' The call recorded in the Synoptic Gospels must then be taken as a call to more permanent association with Jesus in His public ministry; their earlier association with Him, as recorded in the earlier part of the Fourth Gospel, helps to explain the readiness with which they later left all to follow Him at His bidding.

(To be continued)

SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS

A TYPOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEVITICUS 23

A. MCD. REDWOOD

5. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (continued)

(The Practical Lessons of the Type)

Having dealt with the prophetic interpretation we must consider briefly the practical (and personal) lessons adumbrated in the typology of this Feast: there are four at least, apart from those already dealt with in reference to the great truth of the Second Advent of our blessed Lord.

(i) *The two Trumpets*: Two is typically expressive of *testimony and witness*.¹ Divine truth is conveyed to us today through the two divinely ordained channels of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, the Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments; the latter in particular because of its fuller revelation, consequent

¹ See e.g. John 8: 18. Heb. 6: 18; cf. Rev. 11: 3; and the twofold witness in Rom. 8: 16.