

TURNING WATER INTO WINE

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Lessons: *John 2*

After the Lord had lived in this world for thirty years, He began to preach and teach. At the same time He began to perform miracles. We read in the Gospels about many of these miracles, and there are special reasons why the Lord came here on earth and performed them, and why they were written down in the Word.

Miracles are marvelous things which only God can do. In performing miracles, therefore, the Lord showed His twelve disciples, and others, that He was God, that He had power to do all good things, and that there was such power even in the words of His mouth and the touch of His hands. His miracles showed them through their eyes, as His words told them through their ears, that He was the God who made and gave life to all things, who delivered people out of the hands of evil spirits, who saved people from their sins, and who gave eternal life and happiness in heaven to those who loved Him and kept His words. They helped those who already believed in Him to believe even more—to be sure that everything He said was true. And they caused many who did not yet believe in Him to wonder who He could be, to think much about Him, to read the Word again, and to reflect on it.

That is one reason why the Lord came on earth, and performed the miracles about which we read in the Word. But there is also another reason. Many people think that the Lord performed miracles only when He was in the world, and that the age of miracles is now past. But this is not true. The Lord is still working miracles, but we cannot see them, because they are done in our minds, secretly, and we would therefore not know of them unless the Lord had provided a way by which we might learn about them. He did provide such a way by doing miracles here, for all the miracles which the Lord performed on earth teach us about the other miracles He is still working, but which we cannot see. Just as His parables were earthly stories with heavenly meanings, so were His miracles earthly deeds with heavenly meanings. These meanings the Lord has now explained in the Word He has given for the New Church; and if we learn them we can see that the Lord is doing for us now the same wonderful things He did when in this world.

We can see something of what this means from the first of all the miracles performed by the Lord. There was a marriage in Cana, a village near Nazareth about sixteen miles from the Sea of Galilee. Mary, the mother of the Lord, was at the marriage, and the Lord Himself, together with the men He had just called to be His disciples, was invited, and arrived later. At that time it was the custom of the Jews to celebrate a marriage with a feast which lasted for seven

or eight days, and at those feasts they always gave wine to their guests; buying the very best wine they could afford, and enough to provide all the guests with as much as they wanted. But for this feast the host had not bought enough wine. It would be a disgraceful thing if the guests found this out. They would think that the host had not shown the proper hospitality, and he would feel sad.

Mary knew the host well enough to learn about his difficulty before it became known to the other guests. She felt sorry for him and wished to spare him the pain of having his guests find out that there was no wine. So she told the Lord what had happened. He had not yet performed any miracles, but she believed that He could do wonderful things and hoped He might do something before the guests discovered what had happened. Of course the Lord knew that there was no wine, and knew that this had come about that He might perform a miracle, and so He began to show His power. For that reason He did not wish to perform the miracle until it was known that there was no wine. So He said to Mary, "Mine hour is not yet come." And she said no more, but told the servants to do whatever He might tell them.

Outside of the house there were six large water pots of stone, each holding over twenty gallons of water, in which the guests might wash their hands before sitting down to the feast. The Lord told the servants to fill them to the brim with water, and when they had done so, He told them to pour out the water, and bear it to the governor of the feast. Nothing happened to the water that remained in the jars, but as the water that was drawn off was being poured out, the Lord turned it into noble wine. When he had tasted it, the governor of the feast was amazed and astonished, because it was a much better wine than had been given to the guests at the beginning of the feast, and he did not know whence it came. But the servants knew, and they told the guests what had happened.

Now what do you suppose the Lord does for us that is similar to this miracle of turning water into wine? It is this: when we go into the Lord's other world a marriage takes place in our minds. There the Lord makes us completely good, so that we can enter heaven, or allows us to become completely bad, so that we can enter hell. Our life on earth is a preparation for one or the other of these marriages, and as a part of our preparation we learn many things about the Lord and His kingdom. These things are put into our minds, which are like vessels, to be filled with knowledges, just as the water-pots were filled with water. Now the things we have only learned from the Word, that is, the things we can repeat, but which we neither love nor do, are of no use to us in the other world. But if we have loved the Lord and His Word, and kept His commandments—that is, invited the Lord to the marriage, and at the same time have filled our minds with knowledges from the Word—then, as we use them by living according to them, the Lord will change them into things that will bring us into heaven among the angels. *Amen.*