

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapse's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapse's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

John 2: 1-25

Douay Rheims Version

Christ changes water into wine. He casts the sellers out of the temple.

1. And the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there.
2. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage.
3. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine.
4. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.
5. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye.
6. Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece.

Great having been destroyed, has occupied a hundred years in building, and even at the present time we see continually in process of erection turrets, altars, pillars, chapels, &c.

Symbolically, the forty-six years of the building of the Temple signify that the Body of Christ was built up in as many days. Hear S. Augustine (*de Trin., lib. 14, c. 5.*): "This number answers to the perfection of the Body of Christ; for forty-six times six make two hundred and seventy-six, that is, nine months and six days; for in so long time was the Body of Christ coming to perfection." The same (*in Joan, tract. 10*) says, "Christ received a body from Adam. Now the Greek for the east is *ἀνατολή*, for the west *δύσις*, for the north *ἀζκτος*, for the south *μεσημβζία*, which four letters form Adam's name, even the elect who are to be gathered from the four winds when the Lord shall come to judgment. The letters also of Adam's name count for forty-six, according to the Greek numeration; for alpha signifies one, delta four, alpha one, and mu forty, in all forty-six. Thus Bede, S. Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, and others.

Ver. 21.—But *He spake*, &c. S. Chrysostom asks, "Why He did not explain to them, being in doubt, that He called His flesh the Temple?" and answers that "since they had no belief in Him, even if He had explained the Jews would have derided Him, and treated Him still worse."

Ver. 22.—*When therefore He was risen*, &c. *They believed the Scripture*, which foretold that Christ would rise from the dead. This, which they did not previously understand, they understood when they saw it actually fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. Such a Scripture is that verse of the Psalms (xvi. 10), "Thou shalt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."

Ver. 23.—*But when He was at Jerusalem*, &c. They believed in His name, that is, that He bore truly the name of Messiah, or Christ, as He Himself named Himself, and was so publicly named and celebrated by the faithful.

Ver. 24.—*But Jesus did not*, &c. He did not trust, *i.e.*, He did not confide. For although He knew that they believed in Him, yet He also knew that they were fickle, and would easily fall back from this faith, and be perverted by His numerous enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees. For the authority and power of those men was great. For this reason Christ neither securely, nor for long, conversed with them, but went away into other parts of Judea, for He knew not only what they were then doing and thinking, but what they were hereafter about to think and do against Him, to persecute Him even unto the death of the cross.

Ver. 25.—*For He had no need*, &c. For He was searching the heart of each, whether it were constant, or fickle and inconstant. Wherefore, as S. Chrysostom says, "He did not regard outward words who enters into the mind itself, who penetrates human thoughts, who knew how soon their fervour would grow cold. Jesus had no need of testimony to know the minds which He had formed." Augustine adds, "That the Maker knew better what was in His work than the work what was in itself. Man's Creator knew what was in man."

breast. Observe: the Body of Christ is called a temple because in It dwelt the fullness of the Deity, not merely by grace as it dwells in us, but corporeally and personally (Col. ii. 9). So S. Cyril. As though He said, "You, O ye incredulous Jews, ask of Me a sign, or a miracle; lo, I give you one, even My resurrection from the dead. This thing is now indeed dark unto you, because ye are unbelieving. But after a little while ye will understand it, or at least ye might easily understand, when ye shall see that I am risen on the third day. For then ye shall understand who I am, and how great I was, that I was in truth the Lord of My own Body, that of My own will I gave Myself to die, and rose to life again. Thus, in consequence, ye may understand that much more am I the Lord of this Temple, which is only a type and shadow of My Body; and therefore that I have power to cast out of it the buyers and sellers." So Bede.

Moreover, Christ calls his Body a temple rather than anything else because this contention took place in the Temple and about the Temple. As though He said, That ye may know, O ye Jews, that I am Lord of the Temple, *loose ye*, that is, I permit you to destroy the temple of My Body, which ye will do when ye kill and crucify Me, and I rise again by My own power on the third day. "*Destroy ye*," not as inciting them to His destruction; but predicting in figurative language what He knew they were about to do. So Euthymius.

Ver. 20.—*The Jews then said*, &c. There were three buildings of the Temple of Jerusalem. The first was by Solomon, and occupied seven years. The second was the rebuilding after its destruction by the Babylonians, by Zorobabel and his companions, under Cyrus, King of Persia. This rebuilding occupied fifteen years only, though many ancient and modern writers have erroneously supposed it to have occupied forty-six years, and to have been here referred to by the Jews. The third was the rebuilding of the Temple by Herod of Ascalon, who murdered the innocents of Bethlehem. He built the Temple afresh for the Jews, in order that he might secure the kingdom for himself and his posterity, and that he might be accounted by them as the true Messiah. And it is exceedingly probable that the Jews were here referring to this rebuilding from their use of the pronoun *this*. For "*this*" points out an existing Temple. And inasmuch as the two former Temples were destroyed, they could not be thus pointed out. Herod began his erection of the third Temple in the eighteenth year of his reign. For it was at that time he made known his intention of rebuilding the Temple, as Josephus testifies (*Ant., lib. 15, c. 14*).

Wherefore, since Christ was born in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Herod, as I have shown on Luke ii. 1, it follows that from his beginning to build until the birth of Christ, sixteen years had elapsed. Add thirty years of the life of Christ and you have forty-six. For it was in His thirtieth year, in which also He was baptized, that Christ had this disputation with the Jews.

You may say that Josephus, in the passage cited above, says that Herod completed the building of the Temple in eight years instead of forty-six. I answer that he finished building as far as the most important parts of the Temple, such as the holy place and the Holy of Holies, were concerned: but both he himself and his successors laboured for many years after, even to Christ's thirtieth year, in adorning the same. For in constructing the courts, the porticoes, and in beautifying the whole, inside as well as out, eighteen thousand men laboured all that time, as the same Josephus records (*Ant. 20, 8*).

Finally, some think that the Jews spoke of both Temples, viz., Zorobabel's and Herod's. For Herod did not so much build a new Temple as adorn the old Temple of Zorobabel, so as to make it loftier and grander. This Vilalpandus clearly proves from Hegeppus and other authors. The Temple then of Zorobabel occupied fifteen years in building. It was afterwards for several more years enlarged and adorned by the Maccabees, by Simon the son of Onias the High Priest (Ecclus. 1. i), and by Herod. If you reckon up all these years you will easily make them come to forty-six years. Similarly the Basilica of S. Peter at Rome, the ancient one of Constantine the

7. Jesus saith to them: Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.
8. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it.
9. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water: the chief steward calleth the bridegroom,
10. And saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now.
11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.
12. After this, he went down to Capharnaum, he and his mother and his brethren and his disciples: and they remained there not many days.
13. And the pasch of the Jews was at hand: and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
14. And he found in the temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.
15. And when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen: and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew.
16. And to them that sold doves he said: Take these things hence, and make not the house of my Father a house of traffic.
17. And his disciples remembered, that it was written: The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.
18. The Jews, therefore, answered, and said to him: What sign dost thou shew unto us, seeing thou dost these things?
19. Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up.
20. The Jews then said: Six and forty years was this temple in building; and wilt thou raise it up in three days?
21. But he spoke of the temple of his body.
22. When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this: and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said.
23. Now when he was at Jerusalem, at the pasch, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did.
24. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them: for that he knew all men,
25. And because he needed not that any should give testimony of man: for he knew what was in man.

Vers. 1-3.— Verses are in narrative form.

On the third day, &c. *The third day*, that is, from Christ's departure for Galilee, and the calling of Philip. For this was the last date mentioned by S. John. The following is the sequence of these days in the life of Christ. He was baptized by John in the thirty-first year of his age, on the

6th of January, as the tradition of the Church declares. On the same day, after dinner, He retired into the desert, where He fasted forty days. This fast thus began on the 7th of January, and ended on the 1st of February. Then he returned to Nazareth, where He abode fifteen days. Directly afterwards, that is to say, on the fifty sixth day after His baptism, as S. Epiphanius says (*Hæres.* 51), or the 1st of March, the Jews sent messengers to John the Baptist, to ask him whether He were the Christ or not? The day following, on March 2, Jesus came to John, when he pointed Him out with his finger, saying, *Behold the Lamb*. On the 3d of March, John repeated this testimony before two of his disciples, of whom Andrew was one. On the morrow, or March 4, Jesus went into Galilee, where He called Philip. Since this was the second day from the coming of Andrew with his brother Peter to Christ, it must have been on the third day, or March 5, when the wedding-feast took place. Wherefore S. Epiphanius, in the place already cited, says that it took place on the sixtieth day from Christ's baptism. However, the same Epiphanius, contrary to the rest of the Fathers, and the general consent of the Church, says that Christ was baptized on the 8th of November. This would bring the marriage at Cana to the 6th of January, or the same festival of the Epiphany, on which thirty years previously the Magi had been led by a star to worship Christ at Bethlehem. He adds that in memory of so great a miracle as this conversion of water into wine, even in his own time, on the 11th of the month Tybus, which answers to our 6th of January, certain fountains ran with wine. He testifies this of the fountain of Gerasa in Arabia. He says that he himself had drank of the fountain of Cibyris in Caria thus turned into wine on the day and hour when the miracle was wrought. He says that many in Egypt bear the same testimony with regard to the Nile. What Epiphanius says has led some to think that it was in the thirty-second or following year of Christ's ministry, and on the 6th of January, that the marriage-feast and the miracle took place. But the chronological table given above shows this to be a mistake.

You will say then, Why did God renew the miracle of the conversion of water into wine yearly on the 6th of January? I reply, because the Church commemorates the miracle on that day, though it did not actually take place upon it. For the Church wished to celebrate on the same feast of the Epiphany, or manifestation of Christ, the three miracles by which Christ first made Himself manifest to the world: the first, the leading of the Magi by a star; the second, His baptism, when the Father's voice was heard like thunder, *This is My Beloved Son*; the third, the turning water into wine. Two of these miracles happened on the same day of the month, or the 6th of January; the third, two months afterwards, or the 6th of March. When therefore the Church sings, on the Feast of the Epiphany, "To-day water was made wine," it is as though she said, "To-day is this event recalled to the memory of the faithful." So S. Austin and Baronius.

As a parallel to this miracle, in many places of the West at the season of the Passover, when solemn baptism was wont to be conferred in the Church, copious streams of water have been known to flow out of a dry and arid font or fountain (*fonte*) to be used at the baptism. This was done, not because it was the day when Christ was baptized, but because of the solemn baptism then conferred by the Church.

So Jansen.

And His brethren, i.e., His cousins, James the Less, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55). Also John and James the Greater.

And the Passover, &c. This was the first Passover after Christ's baptism.

Vers. 14, 15, 16.—*And He found in the Temple, &c.* I have explained all these things in S. Matthew xxi. 12. Observe, however, that this was a different driving out of the buyers and sellers from that recorded in the 21st of S. Matthew, which occurred very shortly before Christ's passion. But this took place at the very beginning of His ministry.

Ver. 17.—*His disciples remembered, &c.* This zeal of Christ was righteous indignation, says Euthymius, or rather ardour to do away with what was repugnant to God's honour, so that He boldly exposed Himself, His life and His good name, to defend the honour of God, whom He loved above all things. For Christ did this before the proud and covetous Scribes and Pharisees, who opposed Him. The meaning then is, "The zeal, that is, the burning desire, of caring for the glory of Thy Temple, in which thou, O Lord, dwellest as Thine abode, and the indignation which I have conceived against the traders who profane it, *have eaten*, that is, have absorbed Me." Symmachus translates *consumed Me*, as fire eats away iron, and so transmutes it into itself, that it no longer seems to be iron, but fire itself.

S. Augustine asks, "Who is eaten up with zeal for the house of God?" and answers, "He who strives to amend everything which he sees amiss. He does not rest if he cannot rectify it. He groans and bays within himself, 'My zeal has caused me to consume away because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words'" (Ps. cxix. 139). Wherefore Bede saith, on this passage, "Let us have zeal for the house of God, my brethren. If we see a brother who belongs to the house of God swelling with pride, given to detraction, a slave to drunkenness, enervated with luxury, disturbed by anger, or subject to any other fault, let us strive, so far as in us lies, to rebuke him, to amend what is corrupt and perverse. And if we are powerless to amend any of these things, let us not endure them without the most bitter grief And especially in the house of prayer, where the Body of God is consecrated, where without doubt the angels are always present, let no folly take place, let us strive with all our might that nothing may hinder our own, or our brethren's prayers."

Ver. 18.—*The Jews therefore answered, &c.* Meaning, what miracle dost Thou show, that Thou takest upon Thyself, contrary to the custom, to cast the sellers out of the Temple, as having received authority from God: for from man, that is, from pontiff or governor, we know thou hast none? For Christ had intimated that He was sent by God, yea, that He was the Son of God; for He had said (ver. i6), *Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise*. They ask Him therefore to prove that He was the Son of God, and Messiah, even as Moses had shown signs and prodigies from heaven, by which he demonstrated to Pharaoh and the Egyptians that he was sent by God. So Ruperti.

Ver. 19.—*Jesus answered, &c.* Appositely does He prove His authority over the Temple by His power of rebuilding the Temple.

This Temple, viz., His body, which Christ pointed out by moving His hand to His

a threefold colour. It is red in the long suffering of the saints. This made Isaac glad in his sickness. It is white in the recompense of the just. With this was Noah inebriated. It is black and sour in the damnation of the wicked. Of this Jesus tasted, but would not drink.”

Allegorically, the reason was because this marriage represented the marriage union of Christ with human nature, which took place in His Incarnation. Wherefore it was celebrated on the third day, that is, in the third stage of the world. For the first state was the law of nature, the second was the law of Moses, the third is the law of Christ. It was done in Galilee of the Gentiles, because Christ calls all the Gentiles to His marriage with our humanity. Also it was done in Cana of Galilee, *i.e.*, in the *transmigration of the possession*, or the Christian people, which is Christ’s possession, bought with His own Blood, and therefore it passes from earth to heaven. In His possession Christ gives wine *i.e.*, the doctrine and grace of the Gospel, which makes glad and inebriates the soul. Here also He changes wine into His Blood in the Eucharist.

Tropologically, the reason was that by these nuptials and by wine He signified the union, and as it were the marriage of our soul, through grace and charity, with God. The Mother of Jesus was there, that is, virginal chastity, and the simple faith of the disciples of Jesus, such faith as when humbly acknowledging the wine of our devotion and fervour is failing we entreat Him to bestow it upon us. Then He changes the insipidity of our soul into the good wine of His heavenly grace, by which we refresh and inebriate, not only ourselves, but others, and make them to glow with the love of God.

Analogically, the marriage of the Lamb will be perfected in heaven. There Christ will give us new wine and Divine nectar. He will inebriate us out of the fatness of the house of God, and will give us to drink of the torrent of His pleasures.

Ver. 12.—*After this Jesus went down, &c.* After the marriage Jesus returned with His Mother and friends to their house at Nazareth. Nazareth was situated upon higher ground, so that He would descend from it to Capharnaum, which was on ground sloping down to the Sea of Galilee. The reason why He went was because He did not wish to make Nazareth, a poor and ignoble town, and by whose inhabitants He was despised as a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter, the headquarters of His preaching. For this He destined Capharnaum, which was by the sea-side, and famous for its commerce and concourse of people, so that He might have more fruit of His ministry.

Now this journey of Christ took place before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, as may be clearly gathered from chaps. iii. 24 and iv. 1. It was different therefore from that of which S. Matthew speaks (iv. 13). For that took place after John was put in prison, when Christ actually transferred His place of abode to Capharnaum, and there opened a public school of His doctrine and teaching. The present occasion was only preparatory. This visit was only by the way, as it were *in transitu*, intending to proceed from hence to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, which was now nigh at hand.

Marriage, Syriac, Feast, sc. of a marriage. You will ask, Whose marriage was this; and who was the bridegroom? Bede, Ruperti, Lyra, S. Thomas, and others, think that the bridegroom was S. John the Evangelist. They are influenced by the authority of S. Augustine, who says on this passage, “The Lord called John from the wave-tossing tempest of marriage.”

But I say that this bridegroom was not S. John. For S. John was always a virgin, and never married to a wife. For this reason he was most dear to Christ, and was “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” a Virgin loving a virgin. He would never have broken his purpose of virginity by marriage; yea, he would never have thought of breaking it: but he remained constant to his purpose all through his life. This is the teaching of SS. Ignatius, Jerome, Augustine, and others. Wherefore, what S. Augustine has said, as quoted above, is to be understood not of marriage entered into, but of marriage about to be entered into, or rather that he might have entered into, and which, according to the custom of his nation, he ought to have entered into. Christ called the youthful John to Himself, that he might not think of marriage.

With more probability, Baronius, following Nicephorus (*Hist. l. 8. c. 30*), thinks that the bridegroom at this marriage was the Apostle Simon, who was surnamed the Cananite from Cana. And Baronius adds from the same Nicephorus that the place where the marriage was celebrated was adorned by a famous church built there by S. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. As soon as Simon had seen this miracle of Christ at his wedding, he bade farewell to his bride and the world, and followed Him, and was chosen to be one of His twelve Apostles. This was the reason why Christ came to this wedding; and by coming, indeed, honoured marriage; but by calling him to Himself, He showed that celibacy and the apostolate were better than marriage.

Tropologically, a holy soul by faith, hope, chastity, and charity is like a bride married to Christ. She becomes the bride of Christ who, leaving all the allurements of the world, transfers her whole love to Christ, and for Him covers and veils her head, that is, her mind, and all her senses, so as to converse with Him continually above the clouds in heaven, and dedicates and consecrates her whole self to Him. With this idea the etymology of *nuptials*, as given by Festus, most admirably agrees. Some he says derive *nuptiæ* from the Greek, for the Greeks call a bride *νύμφη*. S. Isidore, however, derives *nuptiæ* from *obnubere*, to cover, because women when married were accustomed to cover their head with a veil. An unmarried woman, on the contrary, was called *innuba*, or one whose head was not covered.

Such a bride of Christ was S. Dymphna, virgin and martyr, who, on account of her beauty, being asked in marriage of her father, an Irish king, fled into Brabant, and was beheaded by her own father at a town called Geel, not

far from Antwerp. Thus she died a noble martyr for chastity. Therefore those who are possessed, and visit her sacred relics, are delivered from the devil. I myself once visited her shrine, and did her reverence.

Cana of Galilee. This is added to distinguish it from another Cana, or Chana, which was situated in the tribe of Aser, near Sidon. Hence it was called Cana of the Sidonians, though it also was in Galilee. And the woman of Canaan, from whose daughter Christ drove out the demon, was an inhabitant of it. But this Cana where the marriage took place was in the tribe of Zabulon, above the valley of Casmelon, and about three leagues from Nazareth. (So Jerome in *Locis Hebr.*)

And the Mother, &c. “She was invited as a friend by those who were celebrating the marriage,” says Euthymius. For Simon the Cananite, who was the bridegroom, was the son of Cleophas, the brother of Joseph the husband of the Blessed Virgin. There is no mention of Joseph in this place, nor subsequently; for he was now dead, as S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 78), Baronius, and others gather from the silence of this passage. *Jesus also was called,* as the cousin of the bridegroom. “Jesus being called,” says S. Chrysostom, “was present at the marriage, not having regard to His dignity, but to our profit.” He was present to pay respect to His kinsfolk, and to honour their nuptials by His presence. 2. To give an example of humility, in being present at the marriage of poor people. As S. Chrysostom says, “He who did not disdain to take the form of a servant, was not ashamed to be present at the wedding of servants.” Or, as S. Augustine says (*de Verb. Dom., Serm.* 41), “Let man blush to be proud, sin God became humble. Behold, He came to the marriage, who, when He was with the Father, instituted marriage.” 3. That by the miracle He might make Himself known to His disciples, and show them that He was the Messiah. 4. That He might give His sanction to marriage, and sanctify it by His presence, and so condemn the Encratites, and the followers of Tatian, who were to arise in after times, and revile marriage as a filthy invention of the devil. So SS. Austin, Cyril, and Bede. Hear what this last says (*Hom. in Domin. 2, post Epiph.*). “If there were any fault to be found with wedlock, duly and chastely celebrated, the Lord would not have been present at a marriage. Good is holy wedlock, better is the continence of widowhood, best of all is perfect virginity. Thus Christ was born of a virgin; He was blessed by the prophetic lips of the widow Anna; He came an invited guest to a wedding.”

And His disciples. You will ask, Who were these disciples? For Jesus did not gather together His apostles until after the imprisonment of S. John the Baptist: and this had not then taken place.

I reply, it is probable they were Nathanael and Philip, and perhaps Andrew and Peter. For they had visited Jesus three days before, and for a time adhered to Him as their Master; though afterwards they went back to their fishing until they were called to the apostolate.

And when wine failed, Greek, *ὕστεζήσαντος,* was deficient, because the bridegroom, being poor, had only provided a little, *the Mother of Jesus,* &c. As though she said, “Our relations, the bride and bridegroom, have no wine. Consider their modesty, O

But thou hast kept, &c. Hence it is plain that this wine was most excellent as being the work of Christ, and therefore Divine. For the works of God are perfect. Thus the loaves which Christ multiplied to feed the four thousand were as sweet as manna. And S. Chrysostom says that the limbs of those persons which Christ restored became stronger than they were originally.

All these things were wisely ordered by Christ, so that the miracle might be perfectly well attested. For the master of the feast called the bridegroom, and asked him from whence was this wine. He replied that he knew nothing about it. Then, learning from the servants the sequence of what had been done, they came to the waterpots, and found them all full of the best wine. Whereupon they burst forth in praise of Jesus as the author of the miracle, and their benefactor, and made known what had been done to all the guests. Jesus, avoiding vainglory, retired, first admonishing them to use this wine with moderation, to the praise of God, with giving of thanks to Him.

Ver. 11.—*This beginning,* &c.; *glory, i.e.,* His Omnipotence and Divinity. *And believed, i.e.,* their faith grew.

Beginning. From hence the Fathers gather *passim* that this miracle was absolutely the first which Christ publicly wrought. This is the refutation of the book on the “Infancy of the Saviour,” condemned by Pope Gelasius, which was forged by the heretics; and in which it is related that Christ publicly wrought miracles when He was yet a boy. Yet there is no reason, says Maldonatus, against our thinking that Christ may have wrought miracles privately before, and may by them have assisted the poverty of His parents. It might seem as if His Mother, animated by the recollection of such, had here asked for, and expected, a similar miracle. But Christ could have relieved His Mother’s wants by some special providence short of a miracle.

You will ask why Christ willed this to be His first miracle? I reply, because it was especially appropriate to the time, the place, and the persons. For wine is the most noble beverage, which makes glad both God and man (Judges ix. 13). Wherefore Noah, immediately after the Deluge, discovered wine, and was a type of Christ here making wine. Again, Christ by this miracle showed that He is the self-same Being who, year by year, does the same thing in the vines by converting their watery sap into wine. “The only difference is,” as S. Chrysostom says, “that in the vine-tree He effects by a process extending over a considerable time what He did at the marriage in a moment.” For what else is wine but water changed by the rays of the sun?

The symbolical reason is, because wine is the most fitting symbol of the grace, charity, devotion, fervour, strength, with which Christ endues His own. Whence S. Bernard says (*in Sentent.*), “The wine in the cup of God has

From this conversion of water into wine, the Fathers prove the conversion of bread and wine in the Eucharist into the Body and Blood of Christ. And they add that it seems to be a greater miracle for Christ to turn water into wine than wine into blood. For wine is nearer akin to blood than water is to wine. So S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat.* 4), S. Cyprian (*Epist. cont. Aquar.*), S. Irenæus (*l. 3, c. 11*). S. Isidore of Pelusium asks (*l. 1, Epist.* 393) why Christ willed this to be His first miracle? He gives the answer mystically, that it was because He wished to supply what was wanting to the Law. "For the Law," he says, "only baptized with water, but He perfected the sacred initiation with His own Blood, joining both in Himself, and uniting the Law with grace." For water was the symbol of the old Law, which purified all things by water, but only with a corporeal cleansing. But wine is the symbol of the Blood of Christ, which, being shed upon the cross, cleanses souls. For Christ changes wine into His own Blood in the Eucharist. Christ, therefore, by changing water into wine at the beginning of His preaching, signified that He was about to change the Law of Moses, which was as cold and insipid as water, into the Gospel of His grace.

Master of the feast. S. Gaudentius says, that when marriages were celebrated amongst the Jews, a priest was assigned to preside over the proper ceremonies. The same person took care of conjugal modesty and ordered the provision for the feast, and the ministers; wherefore he was called the master, or governor of the feast. Christ therefore orders that the water which had been made wine should be borne to this *master of the feast*, because he by his office was a most sober and responsible person, and also well skilled in the flavour of wine. Therefore he was the best able to judge of the excellence of this wine, and to make known Christ's miracle unto all.

They bore it. It is probable that Christ turned the water into red wine, both because red wine is the only kind used in Palestine, and also that it might be the more evident that the water had been changed into wine. *They bore* then with joy, gladly obeying, and contributing their part to this miracle of Christ. For their prompt obedience in drawing the water contributed not a little to this miracle.

Ver. 9.—*When the governor of the feast, &c. Tasted:* he did not give credit entirely to the smell and ruddy colour, but he tasted, and found that it was the very best and most excellent wine. For tasting was the surest way of judging.

And when men are inebriated (Vulg.), *well drunk* (Eng. Vers.), i.e., *exhilarated*. For intoxication in Scripture often means a liberal draught which gladdens the mind, but does not deprive it of the use of reason. For if these guests had been really drunk, surely Jesus would never have turned water into wine for them, for then He would have assisted and encouraged their drunkenness. Much rather would He have put a stop to their potations, and sent them home. And the Blessed Virgin would have done the same.

Then that which is worse: because, when the stomach is filled with wine, it is a poor judge of the quality. This is a type of the deceitfulness of the world, which at the beginning presents things that are fair to the eye, and afterwards brings in what is vile and worthless, and so deceives and deludes its lovers.

my Son, that they be not put to shame before their guests. I know Thou art able to do this, for Thou art the Son of God, and it is becoming both to Thy kindness and Thy providence, so that by now performing a miracle Thou mayest make manifest both to Thy disciples and all the guests that Thou art the Messiah." So S. Cyril.

Observe the modesty of the Virgin. She does not bid, or even ask. She does not say, My Son, provide wine for them. She did not doubt that Jesus in His providence and love would provide it. Hear what S. Bernard says (*Serm. 2, de B. Virg.*): "Those words of hers are a most sure index of innate meekness, and virgin modesty. Accounting the reproach of others her own, she could not bear it; she could not profess ignorance of the wine having failed. When indeed she was reprov'd by her Son, forasmuch as she was meek and lowly in heart, she neither answered again, nor yet despaired. She only bade the servants do what He told them."

Moreover, the Mother having a certain confidence that she would obtain, here tacitly asks her Son to procure wine. During the thirty years they had lived together in close companionship she had learnt from Him that He had been sent by the Father, that by His heavenly doctrines and miracles, He might convert men to Himself and God. It is impossible to doubt that when Christ bade goodbye to his Mother, when He was going to John's baptism, and after that to enter upon His office of preaching, He had expressly told His Mother the same. Wherefore, she deeming that the present was a fitting occasion for Jesus, by a miracle, to gain authority and belief in Himself, fearlessly asked for a miracle, not doubting that Christ would perform it, and by doing so would gratify His Mother and his relations, and would advance His own office and dignity.

Ver. 4.—*And Jesus saith, What is it to Me and to Thee, &c.* Meaning, What have I to do with thee in this matter? (*Quid mihi tecum in hac re est negotii?*) Observe, the Blessed Virgin did not out of ostentation, or in an untimely, unbecoming, or indiscreet fashion ask this miracle of her Son, as S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius think: but out of necessity charity and piety, as SS. Cyril, Bernard, and others say. Therefore there was no blame attaching to her. Therefore Christ did not really blame her. And yet He seems to reprove her, that He might teach, not her, but us, that in things pertaining to God, and miracles, parents have no right or authority. They must not be done in accordance with their affections and desires, but only for God and charity's sake. The meaning, therefore, is this, "Thou, O Mother, in this matter, art not My Mother, but as it were another woman. For, from thee I have received human nature, not Divinity. It belongs to My Divine nature to work this miracle, not in accordance with thy desires, and those of relations, but in accordance with the will of God My Father.

According to that will I shall work, when the hour and time decreed by God shall come." Hear S. Augustine on this passage: "The word *woman* is used

simply to express the female sex.” “He, as God,” says Euthymius, “said not ‘Mother,’ but ‘woman.’” “He means,” says S. Bede, “that He had not received in time from His Mother the Divinity by which He was about to perform a miracle, but that He had It eternally from the Father.” “He means to say,” says the Interlinear Gloss, “What is there in common between My Divinity and thee My Mother according to the flesh?” “Thou didst not beget, or produce (*genuisti*) My Divinity, which works the miracle,” says S. Augustine. S. Chrysostom adds, “He speaks thus, lest the miracle should seem to be the result of collusion. He should have been asked by those who needed the wine, not by His Mother.”

Mine hour, &c., i.e., when I may appropriately work this miracle. I wish to wait a little while until the wine has wholly failed, that all the guests may perceive the miracle more clearly, and that all may know that I have wrought it, and so may believe in Me. For he who does not experience the need, will not greatly feel the necessity. So S. Chrysostom. The same S. Chrysostom gives another explanation: “Mine hour is not yet come, because I proposed to work My first miracle in Jerusalem, the capital of Judea: nevertheless at thy prayers, O My Mother, I will change My purpose, and will do it here in Cana of Galilee.”

S. Augustine gives another explanation, to the following effect: The hour of My passion is not yet come, in which I will show what I have to do with thee My Mother, that indeed I have of thee truly assumed man’s nature, and that I am thy Son. When in the weakness of My human nature, of which thou art the Mother, I shall hang upon the cross, then I will acknowledge thee. For He commended her then to His disciple.

Ver. 5.—*His Mother saith, &c.* His mother modestly holds her peace, and rightly yields to her Son, as being the Son of God. Although the Son seems to deny His Mother, the Mother knows His filial piety. Therefore with all confidence she bids the servants what to do. S. Gaudentius comments in these words, “The Mother would not have said, *Whatsoever He saith unto you do it*, unless being full of the Holy Ghost from her birth she had foreseen the whole process of Christ’s turning the water into wine.” Wherefore S. Bernard on these words (*Hom. 2*) says, “I see plainly that it was not as being wroth, or as wishing to confound the shrinking modesty of His Virgin Mother, that He said, *What have I to do with thee*, but for our sakes, that the care of parents according to the flesh should not trouble those who are converted to the Lord.” For Christ presently obeys His Mother, and to honour her performs the miracle. Hear S. Chrysostom: “Although He answered thus, yet He complied with His Mother’s prayer, that He might give honour to her, and not seem stubborn (*contumax*) to her, nor put her to shame when so many were present.” And Euthymius says, “How very greatly He honoured her is plain from many other reasons, and also from this, that He fulfilled her exhortation.”

Moreover, in these words of the Virgin her meekness, piety, charity, prudence, faith, constancy, and greatness of soul wonderfully shine forth.

Ver. 6.—*There were set, &c.* Christ then made use of these *water-pots* that it might be the more clearly evident that they had no wine in them; and so the turning the

water into wine in such vessels might be the more conspicuous.

Purification: by which the Jews according to their traditions were accustomed at their feasts to wash their hands, if they happened to touch anything unclean at the table. (See S. Mark vii. 3.)

Tropologically, S. Bernard expounds thus (*Serm. 1 in Domin. 1, post. Oct. Epiph.*): The six waterpots are the six purifying virtues of the soul. “The first waterpot, and the first cleansing, is in compunction, of which we read, that in the very hour in which the sinner shall groan, I will no more remember all their iniquities. The second is confession; for all things are washed by confession. The third is the giving of alms; for we read in the Gospel, ‘Give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you.’ The fourth, forgiveness of injuries; for we say when we pray, ‘Forgive us our debts, as we forgive those who are indebted to us.’ The fifth is affliction of the body; for we pray that we, being purified by abstinence, may sing glory to God. The sixth is obedience to the commandments: even as the disciples heard what may we too deserve to hear, ‘Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.’” He then applies the rest as follows: “They are filled with water, that they may be kept in the fear of God, since the fear of the Lord is the fountain of life.” Then he adds: “But by the Divine power the water is changed into wine when perfect love casts out fear. Now the water pots are said to be of stone, not because of hardness, but for steadfastness; for they contained two or three firkins apiece.”

Two or three firkins—Greek, *measures*. This measure was the same as the Hebrew *ephah* or *bath*.

Ver. 7.—*Jesus saith, &c.* S. Chrysostom asks, “But why did He not Himself fill the waterpots with water, and then turn it into wine?” He gives the right answer, saying, in order that He might have them as witnesses to the miracle who had drawn the water, lest any fraud or trickery should be supposed.

To the brim: lest, if any vacant space were left, Christ might have been supposed to have poured wine on the top of the water, which might have communicated the flavour of wine to the water underneath.

Ver. 8.—*And Jesus saith, &c. Draw out* of the great water pots, and pour into smaller vessels, and carry it to the master of the feast, and let him judge how good the wine is. As Christ said this, He in one moment by His Almighty power changed the whole of the water in the six water pots into wine. Listen to Nonnus: “Suddenly was the miracle wrought; and the water, changing its colour, flowed with a ruddy glow instead of its own pale colour, and was changed into purple wine.” As S. Cyril says, “What is difficult to Almighty God, or why should not He, who called all things into being out of nothing, much more easily change one thing into another?”