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FILL THE WATER-POTS.

BY C. C.

You will find the words of my text in the fifth verse, second chapter, according to St. John's Gospel, from the account of the marriage in Cana of Galilee: "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." There is no grander truth brought out in God's Word than the one our text suggests — *obedience*. There can be no harmony without obedience. In the household, in all departments of service, if there is not obedience, there can be no united action, no great results. Do we expect our children to obey us? Then should we obey our Lord and Master

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Jesus Christ, whom we profess to serve.

Obedience brings naught but blessing. But just here is a misconception on the part of many, who think if they receive a great blessing, the Lord is sure to send great trials to test them. Let us look into the matter. If our children are obedient to us, do we punish them and do everything to destroy their peace and happiness? No, we embrace them and hold them the more tenderly to our hearts. And so I believe when we walk in obedience to our Lord, he leads us very tenderly and lovingly, and says: "My child, as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you," then there will be no difficulty about tests. Have nothing to do with these devices of Satan, but believe

that Christ loves you and proposes to love you to the end, and walk on in obedience.

How fraught with blessing is this story of Christ at the marriage-feast! From that day to this there has not been a marriage among the children of God but has been sanctified by the thought: "Our Lord Jesus is here; He sanctioned it on earth by his presence, and He will sanction it now." I contend that marriage must be in the Lord: "Be ye not unequally yoked together." I never marry people who are not both in the Lord; if both are unconverted, we cannot object on account of inequality, but pray for the Spirit to enlighten and bless.

At this marriage-feast they came to the mother of Jesus,

saying, "The wine is all gone." She replied: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." She knew not what He would say or do, but she knew He was the Christ and that He would be the mighty power of God to that people. There were present six water-pots of stone, and He said to the servants: "Fill the waterpots with water, and they filled them to the brim."

I am sure you will see very quickly what I would say: that the Lord Jesus takes just what He finds and makes use of it. We are so apt to think that we are vessels unfit for the Master's use. Let us look back for a moment at the dealings of God with His ancient people. Gideon was threshing wheat in the barn when the angel spoke to him and

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told him he must go to work for the Lord Jesus. David was tending sheep and thought himself of no account.

The thought I would bring to you is this: that He chooses the instrument, and in His hands results are grand and glorious. He took those common water-pots just as He is ready to take anything that *you* bring to Him. The "widow's mite" was more acceptable than greater gifts of silver and gold given from an abundance.

What you have is what He wants, whether it be much or little. Will you then bring *your* all to lay at His feet and ask Him to use it for His glory? It is useless to think He cannot take knowledge of little things. He knows our down-sitting and uprising. When the disciples asked Him where the

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Passover should be held, He said: "Go over to yonder village, and ask of a man carrying a pitcher of water where the guest-chamber is."

There are no mistakes in this blessed Book. It is a precious thought that He knows what you are doing, even to the carrying of a pitcher of water or finding a lodging for some one who has been crowded out, or waiting upon the table. You remember the time when He told the disciples how they would find the colt tied at the corner of two streets.

"The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord."

A few years ago, while laying out the grounds for our summer conventions at Intervale Park, New Hampshire, when the Taber-

nacle was finished, I desired much to have a bell to call to worship. But my funds did not admit of the expenditure, so I just told the Heavenly Father I would like the bell, and thought no more about it. Not long after, a lady called at our Tract Repository and said to the person in attendance: "Will you say to the doctor that I have some articles of household furniture to which he is welcome if they can be of any use in the work." After giving directions as to where we were to send for them, she turned to depart. As if recalling something, she came back and remarked further that there was one more thing she hardly supposed could be useful; however, it would be no harm to mention that she had an old church-bell that she would be

glad to dispose of to any one who would like it.

The glad and joyful surprise that came to my soul at this news you know full well who have asked and received "those things of which ye have need," and never do I hear the peal of that bell but it is like a messenger of God, ringing out: "Answered prayer! answered prayer!" whose echo, flung back from the grand hills about us as from the "everlasting hills from whence cometh my help," enters my very soul.

He who gave His life to prove His love orders such blessed things for us that life is a glad surprise from morning to night, from week to week, and month to month. As I look at the flowers opening at the touch of the sunlight, it seems to me that God not only gave His

only-begotten Son to die for us, but, in the very wealth of His love, threw in the flowers.

Oh, yes, He makes life so grand and beautiful with the gifts of His love that we can but yield our whole beings to Him, walking no more after our own plans. Let the past be forgotten when we selfishly said: "I must have my own personal gratification first, and if there is anything left, God shall have it."

Many persons speak of the will of God as though it meant disappointment and sorrow all through life. Out upon such a libel upon our Heavenly Father! It means that we may know, that we may have in possession, the riches of His grace, the fulfilment of His promises, the receiving of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

✓ Do not limit the power and the love of God. His kingdom is ours, and that kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. ✓

But for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I should not be where I am to-day. My own plans in life, as a young man, were as different from the plans of God for me as black is from white. I proposed to be a business man, to accumulate wealth. I thought I had a little business talent, and I began to cultivate it and was intensely earnest about it. Then followed sickness, until I was unable to work, and for nearly five years I spoke only in a whisper. I became timid and helpless as far as the carrying out of my plans was concerned. I only desired to hide myself from

the world. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory! I fell under the inspiration of God. Oh, for the power to tell of the blood of Jesus Christ, that cleanseth from all sin! Would to God I could sweep all hearts into the kingdom that are thirsting after righteousness. It was the Spirit of the Lord that spoke to me in my helplessness and need and led me to give myself to Him. I did not know how to be a Christian; I was not brought up to believe in conversion, but my heart yearned for something. I said, I will pray regularly and read God's Word.

So I went at it and read the Bible night and morning. I had only been taught to say the Lord's Prayer and "Now I lay me down to sleep," when a child. The precise moment when God changed

my heart and washed me in the blood of the Lamb I know not, but I *am washed*; I *am made clean*, "whiter than snow," not by works of righteousness, but by the all-abounding grace of my Saviour who died for me. I would not exchange this knowledge for the wealth of an earthly kingdom.

Then there came a time when I desired the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I believed it was for good people, ministers, and preachers, but not for me. By-and-by I had such a heart-thirst that I asked God for the gift. I cannot tell the moment when He sanctified my soul; I do not know; but when I say I am so full of his Spirit this morning that my heart runs over, I tell you it is not half the story. My very soul burns within me as I talk to you of the

blessed love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of His Spirit that comes into a man and puts him on fire for God. This is what He will do for every man, for He is no respecter of persons. God has given me a work to do.

It is grand because it is God's work. I forget myself in looking at it, and say: "Oh, what hath God wrought!" I believe it will stand till He comes, and be a blessing to the world. When we sit around the throne and talk of the things of earth, we shall dwell more on the disappointments of this life than its gratifications, for then we shall see disappointments were shaping our ends toward glory; that He himself was ordering all things for us, and thus they were the very best things.

This should be our faith now —

that the Lord Jesus Christ is a living Person, not in the far-away heavens where He cannot reach us, but here communing with us to-day. He says to every one: "Be saved by the blood of the Cross!" and to every saved one: "Be filled with the Holy Ghost!" Beloved, will not you have this knowledge now and here? Will you not have it?

This blessed Book was not written that you might know what to do in Heaven; we have but one description of Heaven: its gates of pearl, its streets of gold; of its choirs and glad songs of praise. We know nothing more; but the eye of faith looks beyond, and sees Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father and welcoming people from every kindred and nation. We can almost see Him

as He stretches out His hand to bless.

He has given us this blessed Book as our chart, as the guide on our way through this world. These promises are for to-day. Oh, how rich we are! You say perhaps in your heart: "If I only had the faith you have, I could touch these things." A dear man of God attended, for the first time, one of our Tuesday meetings. At the close of the meeting he came to me and said:—

"I wish I had your faith."

"But," I said, "you do not want my faith."

"I wish I had your hope."

"You do not want my hope."

"I wish I had your peace."

"You do not want my peace."

He was puzzled. I said:—

"All you want is Jesus."

He stated afterwards that those happy, but that he had happiness last words, "All you want is a possession in Christ Jesus," thrilled him through and When the Lord Jesus Christ through. He thought he stood said: "Fill these waterpots with over a register, and that a draught water," they might have turned to of air gave him the thrill; but in him with the remark: "They repeating the experience in his do not want water, they want own church, again that blessed wine." It seems to me that if wave went over his whole being, those servants had been servants and he knew he was under the of to-day, they would have argued baptism of the Holy Ghost. Thus: "Now, Lord Jesus, that is

This, then, is what we need. all nonsense; what is the use of Not faith, hope, or any abstract filling the pots with water when blessing: it is the Lord Jesus Christ they want wine?"

in His fulness, and He waits to give. But you will not find a word in A dear brother came here this this blessed Book to indicate that morning and received this bless- any fault was found. They obeyed ing. He is a very quiet brother, the voice of the Master and they for he is a Friend. He said he filled the water-pots "to the brim." was "just as happy as he could Then the Master said: "Draw it be," and that is what the Lord out," and they bare it, first to the Jesus wants us to be. It was not governor of the feast, and then to merely that our dear brother felt the guests. And the governor

said: "How is this? We usually give the best wine first, till the men are filled, and then the poor; but we are having the best wine toward the last of the feast."

It was the first miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ. Turning water into wine was a very simple thing for Him to do. The question will come to scientific minds as to how He did it, but that matters not to us; He can turn this world upside down to carry out *His purposes*. Ours is the "law of His mouth."

Oh, there are possibilities to faith that we have never touched! There are a thousand possibilities that ought to be in the life of every child of God. "All things are possible to God, and all things are possible to every one that believeth." He gives a blank check,

and tells you to fill it out and draw upon Him for all you need. I am trying it and have proved it to be true, praise His dear Name!

If I had the wealth of the Vanderbilts and Gould, I would lay all at His feet and say: "Lord, I wish I had a million times more; for it could not pay for the joy that fills my soul." But, thanks be to God! it is not to be purchased. It is as grand and satisfying as the outlook of these everlasting hills, that stand with their faces toward Heaven.

The governor was puzzled; he could not account for the rich quality of the wine. But look you, there were certain people in the secret. The servants who poured the wine knew what the Lord Jesus had done. O ye servants of the Master, you know

the secret from whence the power comes! You carry it to hearts and they wonder at the strength and blessing that comes down upon them. "The secret of the Lord is with those that fear Him," and it is a secret that can never be told. People wonder at the joy of Christians. You cannot tell it, for it is one of the mysteries. You cannot tell the love that fills your heart toward your children; there is no language to give it utterance, and there is no language to give utterance to the secret joy that comes when dwelling in the secret place of the Most High.

One more thought in connection with filling these vessels. The Lord Jesus said: "Fill the vessels full." I think if He had told some people to fill the water-pots,

they would have half filled them, and many would have gone away unsatisfied. The servants omitted no part of the injunction; they filled them "to the brim," and when a thing is filled to the brim, you cannot put in any more. The most likely thing to happen then is that they will run over.

O ministers, when you preach the gospel, preach it in its fullness! Fill it "to the brim" and tell people there is a fulness in this life in Christ Jesus that makes a man run over. I beseech you, do not carry any truth, do not preach any gospel, that you cannot live, as well as feel, to the very brim of your existence.

Many of you know this experience, praise God! Who would be satisfied with a man, expected

to take charge of a business, they run over, and the running he gave only one half his time over is to save the world. Such men are full of excuses, and a little while ago a convention are the half-hearted in any work was held over in a neighboring State, and the people were being You will pardon me if I introduce sanctified to God. Without a word here Charles Lamb, so inimitable of invitation, one after another in a story. He tells of himself came and laid their offerings and when a clerk in the East India jewelry on the altar. They brought Company. His employers spoke watchchains and rings and pins and to him about coming so late in bracelets and whatever they had. the morning. He replied: "Well, After the convention, the committee I go home very early in the afternoon." consulted as to what they

It is in a similar way that a half-hearted man in the Christian life should do with the gifts. Finally he will worry along, not happy himself and presenting no incentive some one suggested that they be sent to Doctor Cullis for his work." Two of the brethren to others. Can we help, in the waited upon me the next day face of the fulness that the gospel and told me the story. offers — can we help, I say, calling I was out of money that day, ing such a one a spurious member so I said to my clerk: "I wish of Christ? But there are men you would take these and get the filled to the brim; souls so full cash for them as soon as possi-

ble." There was one silver watch-chain, and the remaining pieces were supposed to be gold. He went out and sold them and brought back fifty cents.

"Well, what is this? Where is the rest?"

"That is for the silver watch-chain."

"But where is the rest?"

"The rest was not worth anything. It was all washed."

Well, I was thankful for the half-dollar!

Another man was waiting to see me at the same hour. He came to know if I would pray with him that he might have his hearing restored. I asked him if he loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He said: "No." I talked to him of the salvation prepared for us, and he sweetly gave himself to the

Lord Jesus. Then we knelt together. When standing again, he said:—

"Why, I can hear you perfectly. I will praise God as long as I live."

He could hardly realize that his hearing had come back to him and that he was saved, body and soul. *Here was the ring of the true metal!* I know from experience, O blessed, blessed Lord! that there is a reality in and under the Spirit of God that makes the life in Christ one of joy and strength and satisfaction under all circumstances.

I beseech you then, friends, take your eyes off the people. You are not told to look at them to find examples of holy walk, but "unto the Author and finisher of our faith." He is the

only perfect One that can fill the heart. I do beseech you and the ministers of God, have all that God wants you to have. Be filled to the brim. Then you will know what it is to have the very glory of God come into your souls and then will you be ready for the fight and ready for the glorious victory that God gives. We are but the "water-pots" to carry soul-satisfying water to the thirsting ones.

A vessel that is half-full can gather up refuse and uncleanness; but one that is full can only run over, and the stream will be pure. The desire of my heart, my beloved friends, is that you may be "filled to the brim."

Could David cry out; "My cup runneth over!" Ah, he was a man of like passions as ourselves.

He fell into sin. He sought forgiveness. He found deliverance and could say: "He restoreth my soul!" Is it not for us in the light of to-day to take a step in advance and, in the power of an indwelling Holy Ghost, "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"?

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