

THE IVORY PALACES.

Dr. Talmage on the Glories of the World to Come.

The Attractiveness of Christ, Who Opens the Way for His Faithful Followers—The Christian's Guide to Heaven.

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In this discourse Dr. Talmage sets forth the glories of the world to come and the attractiveness of the Christ, who opens the way; text, Psalms, 45:8: "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Among the grand adornments of the city of Paris is the church of Notre Dame, with its great towers and elaborate rose windows, and sculpturing of the last judgment, with the trumpeting angels and rising dead; its battlements of quatre foîts; its sacristy, with ribbed ceiling and statues of saints. But there was nothing in all that great building which more vividly appealed to my plain republican tastes than the costly vestments which lay in oaken presses—robes that had been embroidered with gold and been worn by popes and archbishops on great occasions. There was a robe that had been worn by Pius VII. at the crowning of the first Napoleon. There was also a vestment that had been worn at the baptism of Napoleon II. As our guide opened the oaken presses and brought out these vestments of fabulous cost and lifted them up the fragrance of the pungent aromatics in which they had been preserved filled the place with a sweetness that was almost oppressive. Nothing that had been done in stone more vividly impressed me than these things that had been done in cloth and embroidery and perfume. But to-day I open the drawer of this text, and I look upon the kingly robes of Christ, and as I lift them, flashing with eternal jewels, the whole house is filled with the aroma of these garments, which "smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

In my text the King steps forth. His robes rustle and blaze as he advances. His pomp and power and glory overmaster the spectator. More brilliant is He than Queen Vashti, moving amid the Persian princesses; than Marie Antoinette on the day when Louis XIV. put upon her the necklace of 800 diamonds; than Anne Boleyn the day when Henry VIII. welcomed her to his palace—all beauty and all pomp forgotten while we stand in the presence of this imperial glory, King of Zion, King of earth, King of Heaven, King forever! His garments not worn out, not dust bedraggled, but radiant, and jeweled, and redolent. It seems as if they must have been pressed a hundred years amid, the flowers of Heaven. The wardrobes from which they have been taken must have been sweeter with clusters of camphire, and frankincense, and all manner of precious wood. Do you not inhale the odors? Aye, aye, "They smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Your first curiosity is to know why the robes of Christ are odorous with myrrh. This was a bright-leaved Abyssinian plant. It was trifoliated. The Greeks, Egyptians, Romans and Jews bought and sold it at a high price. The first present that was ever given to Christ was a sprig of myrrh thrown on His infantile bed in Bethlehem, and the last gift that Christ ever had was myrrh pressed into the cup of His crucifixion. The natives would take a stone and bruise the tree, and then it would exude a gum that would saturate all the ground beneath. This gum was used for purposes of merchandise. One piece of it no larger than a chestnut would whelm a whole room with odors. It was put in closets, in chests, in drawers, in rooms, and its perfume adhered almost interminably to anything near it. So when in my text I read that Christ's garments smell of myrrh I immediately conclude the exquisite sweetness of Jesus.

I know that to many He is only like any historical person—another John Howard, another philanthropic Oberlin, another Confucius, a grand subject for a painting, a heroic theme for a poem, a beautiful form for a statue, but to those who have heard His voice and felt His pardon and received His benediction He is music and light and warmth and thrill and eternal fragrance, sweet as a friend sticking to you when all else betray, lifting you up while others try to push you down, not so much like morning glories that bloom only when the sun is coming up, nor like "four o'clocks," that bloom only when the sun is going down, but like myrrh, perpetually aromatic, the same morning, noon and night, yesterday, to-day, forever. It seems as if we cannot wear Him out. We put on Him all our griefs and set Him foremost in all our battles, and yet He is ready to lift and to sympathize and to help. We have so imposed upon Him that one would think in eternal affront. He would quit our soul, and yet to-day He addresses us with the same tenderness, dawns upon us with the same smile, pities us with the same compassion.

There is no name like His for us. It is more imperial than Caesar's, more musical than Beethoven's, more conquering than Charlemagne's, more eloquent than Cicero's. It throbs with all life. It weeps with all pathos. It groans with all pain. It stoops with all condescension. It breathes with all perfume. Who like Jesus to set a broken bone, to pity a homeless orphan, to nurse a sick man, to take a prodigal back without any scolding, to illuminate a cemetery all plowed with graves, to make a queen unto God out of the lost woman, to catch the tears of human sorrow in a lacrymatory that shall never be broken? Who has such

an eye to see our need, such a lip to kiss away our sorrow, such a hand to snatch us out of the fire, such a foot to trample our enemies, such a heart to embrace all our necessities? I struggle for some metaphor with which to express Him—He is not like the bursting forth of a full orchestra; that is too loud. He is not like the sea when lashed to rage by the tempest; that is too boisterous. He is not like the mountain, its brow wreathed with the lightnings; that is too solitary. Give us a softer type, a gentler comparison. We have seemed to see Him with our eyes and to hear Him with our ears and to touch Him with our hands. Oh, that to-day He might appear to some other one of our five senses! Aye, the nostril shall discover His presence. He comes upon us like spice gales from Heaven. Yea, His garments smell of lasting and all pervasive myrrh.

Would that you all knew his sweetness! How soon you would turn from all other attractions! If the philosopher leaped out of his bath in a frenzy of joy and clapped his hands and rushed through the streets because he had found the solution of a mathematical problem, how will you feel leaping from the fountain of a Saviour's mercy and pardon, washed clean and made white as snow, when the question has been solved: "How can my soul be saved?" Naked, frostbitten, storm-lashed soul, let Jesus this hour throw around thee the "garments that smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Your second curiosity is to know why the robes of Jesus are odorous with aloes. There is some difference of opinion about where these aloes grow, what is the color of the flower, what is the particular appearance of the herb. Suffice it for you and me to know that aloes mean bitterness the world over, and when Christ comes with garments bearing that particular odor they suggest to me the bitterness of a Saviour's sufferings. Were there ever such nights as Jesus lived through—nights on the mountains, nights on the sea, nights in the desert? Who ever had such a hard reception as Jesus had? A hostile first, an unjust trial in oyer and terminer another, a foul-mouthed, yelling mob the last. Was there a space on His back as wide as your two fingers where he was not whipped? Was there a space on His brow an inch square where he was not cut of the briers? When the spike struck at the instep, did it not go clean through to the hollow of the foot? Oh, long, deep, bitter pilgrimage! Aloes, aloes!

John leaned his head on Christ, but who did Christ lean on? Five thousand men fed by the Saviour. Who fed Jesus? The sympathy of a Saviour's heart going out to the leper and the adulteress; but who soothed Christ? He had a fit place neither to be born nor to die. A poor babe! A poor lad! A poor young man! Not so much as a taper to cheer His dying hours. Even the candle of the sun snuffed out. Was it not all aloes? Our sins, sorrows, bereavements, losses and all the agonies of earth and hell picked up as one cluster and squeezed into one cup that pressed to His lips until the acid, nauseating, bitter draught was swallowed with a distorted countenance and a shudder from head to foot and a gurgling strangulation. Aloes! Aloes! Nothing but aloes! All this for Himself? All this to get the fame in the world of being a martyr? All this in a spirit of stubbornness, because he did not like Caesar? No, no! All this because He wanted to pluck me and you from hell. Because He wanted to raise me and you to Heaven. Because we were lost, and He wanted us found. Because we were blind, and He wanted us to see. Because we were serfs, and He wanted us manumitted. O ye in whose cup of life the saccharine has predominated; O ye who have had bright and sparkling beverages, how do you feel toward Him who in your stead and to purchase your disinthralment took the aloes, the unsavory aloes, the bitter aloes?

Your third curiosity is to know why these garments of Christ are odorous with cassia. This was a plant which grew in Lydia and the adjoining islands. You do not care to hear what kind of a stalk it had or what kind of a stalk. It is enough for me to tell you that it was used medicinally. In that land and in that age, where they knew but little about pharmacy, cassia was used to arrest many forms of disease. So, when in my text we find Christ coming with garments that smell of cassia, it suggests to me the healing and curative power of the Son of God. "Oh," you say, "now you have a superfluous idea! We are not sick. Why do we want cassia? We are athletic. Our respiration is perfect. Our nabs are lithe, and on bright cool days we feel we could bound like a roe." I beg to differ, my brother, from you. None of you can be better in physical health than I am, and yet I must say we are all sick. I have taken the diagnosis of your case and have examined all the best authorities on the subject, and I have to tell you that you are "full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, which have not been bound up or mollified with ointment." The marasmus of sin is on us, the palsy, the dropsy, the leprosy. The man that is expiring to-night in the next street—the allopathic and homeopathic doctors have given him up and his friends now standing around to take his last words—is no more certainly dying as to his body than you and I are dying unless we have taken the medicine from God's apothecary. All the leaves of this Bible are only so many prescriptions from the Divine Physician, written, not in Latin, like the prescriptions of earthly physicians, but written in plain English so that a "man, though a fool, need not err therein." Thank God that the Saviour's garments smell of cassia!

Suppose a man were sick, and there was a phial on his mantelpiece with medicine he knew would cure him, and he refused to take it, what would you

say of him? He is a suicide. And what do you say of that man who, sick in sin, has the healing medicine of God's grace offered him and refuses to take it? If he dies, he is a suicide. People talk as though God took a man and led him out to darkness and death, as though He brought him up to the cliffs and then pushed him off. Oh, no! When a man is lost, it is not because God pushes him off; it is because he jumps off. In olden times a suicide was buried at the crossroads, and the people were accustomed to throw stones upon his grave. So it seems to me there may be at this time a man who is destroying his soul, and as though the angels of God were here to bury him at the point where the roads of life and death cross each other, throwing upon the grave the broken law and a great pile of misimproved privileges so that those going by may look at the fearful mound and learn what a suicide it is when an immortal soul for which Jesus died puts itself out of the way.

When Christ trod this planet with body of flesh, the people rushed after Him—people who were sick and those who, being so sick they could not walk, were brought by their friends. Here I see a mother holding up her little child, crying: "Cure this eroup, Lord Jesus! Cure this scarlet fever!" And others: "Cure this ophthalmia! Give ease and rest to this club foot!" Christ made every house where He stopped a dispensary. I do not believe that in the 19 centuries which have gone by since, His heart has got hard. I feel that we can come now with all our wounds of soul and get His benediction. O Jesus, here we are! We want healing. We want sight. We want health. We want life. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Blessed be God that Jesus Christ comes through this assemblage now, His "garments smelling of myrrh"—that means fragrance—"and aloes"—they mean bitter sacrificial memories—"and cassia"—that means medicine and cure.

According to my text, He comes "out of the ivory palaces." You know, or, if you do not know, I will tell you now that some of the palaces of olden time were adorned with ivory. Ahab and Solomon had their homes furnished with it. The tusks of African and Asiatic elephants were twisted into all manners of shapes, and there were stains of ivory and chairs of ivory and tables of ivory and pillars of ivory and windows of ivory and fountains of ivory that dropped into basins of ivory and rooms that had ceilings of ivory. Oh, white and overwhelming beauty! Green tree branches sweeping the white curbs. Tapestry trailing the snowy floors. Brackets of light flashing on the lustrous surroundings. Silvery music rippling on the beach of the arches. The mere thought of it almost stuns my brain, and you say: "Oh, if I could only have walked over such floors! If I could have thrown myself in such a chair! If I could have heard the drip and dash of those fountains!" You shall have something better than that if you only let Christ introduce you. From that place He came, and to that place He proposes to transport you, for His "garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces." What a place Heaven must be! The Tuilleries of the French, the Windsor castle of the English, the Spanish alhambra, the Russian kremlin, are mere dungeons compared with it! Not so many castles on either side of the Rhine as on both sides of the river of God—the ivory palaces! One for the angels, insufferably bright, winged, fire eyed, tempest chariot; one for the martyrs, with blood red robes from under the altar; one for the King, the steps of His palace the crown of the church militant; one for the singers, who lead the one hundred and forty and four thousand; one for you ransomed from sin; one for me, plucked from the burning. Oh, the ivory palaces!

To-day it seems to me as if the windows of those palaces were illumined for some great victory, and I look and see climbing the stairs of ivory and walking on floors of ivory and looking from the windows of ivory some whom we knew and loved on earth. Yes, I know them. There are father and mother, not 82 years and 79 years as when they left us, but blithe and young as when on their wedding day. And there are brothers and sisters, merrier than when we used to romp across the meadows together. The cough gone. The cancer cured. The erysipelas healed. The heartbreak over. Oh, how fair they are in the ivory palaces! And your dear little children that went out from you—Christ did not let one of them drop as He lifted them. He did not wrench one of them from you. No. They went as from one they loved well to one whom they loved better. If I should take your little child and press his soft face against my rough cheek, I might keep it a little while; but when you, the mother, came along it would struggle to go with you. And so you stood holding your dying child when Jesus passed by in the room and the little one sprang out to greet Him. That is all. Your Christian dead did not go down into the dust and the gravel and the mud. Though it rained all that funeral day and the water came up to the wheel's hub as you drove out to the cemetery, it made no difference to them, for they stepped from the home here to the home there, right into the ivory palaces. All is well with them. All is well.

Queer Collection of Buttons.
The wife of an English clergyman has made a collection of all the buttons placed in the offertory bags during the last two or three years and has fastened them to cardboard in various cunning shapes of animals, birds and flowers. As a bazaar is shortly to take place in connection with the church work, she has had these button pictures photographed and copies will be on sale at the fair.

Suppose a man were sick, and there was a phial on his mantelpiece with medicine he knew would cure him, and he refused to take it, what would you

READING HER PALM.

"AND of course I'll tell you all that he says," she promised, laughing, as she left him in the outer office and passed on to fill her appointment with the great palmist.

It was rather foolish of Edna to insist upon having her hand read, but then, it didn't matter. Everyone was doing it now. Indeed, it was quite the fad, and if Edna wanted to be told again some of her adorable qualities, it was all right. Of course they never told anything else.

It was taking a long time, too. But, pshaw! It was only a matter of business. At least, if he held her hand for the study of lines, he could not fail to see the diamond ring which he had placed there.

He heard the door open and turned quickly. She was coming, and there was a troubled smile on her face.

"I suppose he told you some very nice things?" he queried, as they walked up the avenue.

"Yes—that is—Bruce do you believe in it?" She looked at him with almost an entreaty in her eyes.

"No, I don't." He said it bluntly, as if in reassurance. "I don't know anything about it, but if he said anything to trouble you, it's all bosh."

She smiled at his vehemence. "It might be the truth, even if we didn't like it, you know," she ventured. "Just because we dislike it we ought not to disbelieve it, I suppose. I—that is—well, he thinks—

"She gave him a quick glance. "He thinks we ought not to get married," she continued, with an effort.

"The—" He stopped in time, but a flush rose in his face.

"He read my hand very correctly," she went on, looking straight ahead of her and walking rapidly. "He told me about my long sickness two years ago, and the trip to Europe, and all about me, my character and all, and the little affair with Rogers, and about you and everything."

"Did he say you were jealous?" This, mischievously.

"Yes—but that I was too constant in my love, just the same, so that ought to balance it."

They laughed together.

"And so he doesn't want you to marry me," he said, as the door closed behind them and he took her impulsively in his arms. "The idea, Edna! Tell me about it. He objected? It must have been a case of love at first sight."

The troubled look returned to her face, and she attempted to draw away.

"No, tell it to me here." He drew her down to a seat beside him.

"He told all about our meeting, and my visit to him, and this trouble."

"There isn't any trouble," he exclaimed, bending to kiss her. "We never had any trouble, dear."

"He said I would be very unhappy," she continued.

"Uncomplimentary—"

"No!" she pouted. "It wouldn't be your fault, you see. It is I—I—I would be jealous, and exacting, and unreasonable; and there were very strong lines, showing that I would be very miserable. See—There!"

"But you don't believe this, Edna—do you? Not this?"

"I don't know." The tears were beginning to fall now. "Your lines are just the same there," she sobbed, studying his hand. "Don't you see? We would both be dreadfully unhappy."

"No, we wouldn't. I couldn't be with you, dear."

"You might."

"No—it would be impossible."

"But I'm not going to marry you."

"What?"

"I'm not going to marry you. If it was just myself alone, it wouldn't be so bad, so I would be unhappy, too. I couldn't stand that."

"But if the lines are there, I don't see but I'd have to be unhappy, whenever I married, and I'd rather be unhappy with you than not."

"What do you mean by whomever you married?" She stared at him with wide-opened eyes.

"I'm not going to marry you. If it was just myself alone, it wouldn't be so bad, so I would be unhappy, too. I couldn't stand that."

"Could you marry anyone else?" She looked at him fairly indignant.

"I might get desperate, you see."

"Oh!" She drew away with a dignified motion and rose to her feet. "That settles it. It is very clear to me," she said in a rather tremulous voice; "for when a man can talk as you do about marrying some one else when he pretends to love me, it is a dreadful indication that we have made a dreadful mistake and been utterly wrong. I can only be too glad that I have found it in time."

He attempted to speak.

"I wish you wouldn't," she said, looking at him with entreaty. "If you think that you love me, I want you to go."

There was a great deal of interest manifested in young Bruce and his projected western tour. It was quite the talk of the club, for he was going in regular pioneer fashion, only with appointments up to date.

They were all invited out to inspect the big house wagon in which he was going to make the trip.

It certainly was very convenient, and decidedly unique; and the women of the party gloried in the complete kitchen furnishings, with the aluminum utensils and tiny stoves.

Edna was one of them. They had long since become "just good friends, you know," as she explained to her friends.

Now she was peculiarly interested in this wagon, and she was perhaps a trifle pale as she looked about and took in all the appointments. Indeed, she and Bruce had planned this very thing one glorious night by the sea. It had been ordered then, and here it was done—and he was going alone.

If she had been going, there would have been a long mirror in place of the little square one, and more hooks, and—well, it didn't matter. She had no especial interest in it now, of course.

"I suppose you don't mind taking the trip alone," she heard one of the men suggest. "Of course you'll pick up plenty of folks on the road. You may turn it into a traveling hotel, before you know."

"His stars predict that he won't take it all alone," another said. "But then, you don't believe in astrology, do you?"

Edna did not wait to hear the reply. She suddenly pushed the canvas aside and stepped quickly out among them.

"Of course he doesn't," she answered for him, "or even in palmistry. I don't either." She glanced at him, shyly. "