# TALMAGE IN KANSAS.

## The Brooklyn Divine's Sermon to a Fort Scott Congregation Last Evening.

### How Christ Decorates the Souls Which Come Into the Heavenly Kingdom.

### A Ring Which Signifies Adoption, Marriage, and Festivity, and No Separation.

FORT SCOTT, KAN., March 18.—The Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage, D. D., of the Brooklyn, N. Y., Tabernacle, preached here this evening to a crowded congregation. He took for his subject "The Decoration of the Soul," and his text was Luke xv., 22: "Put a ring on his hand." He said:—

I will not rehearse the familiar story of the fast young man of the parable. You know what a splendid home he left. You know what a hard time he had. And you remember how after that season of vagabondage and prodigacy he resolved to go and weep out his sorrows on the bosom of paternal forgiveness. Well, there is a great excitement one day in front of the door of the old farmhouse. The servants come rushing up and say: "What's the matter?" "What's the matter?" But before they quite arrive the old man cries out: "Put a ring on his hand." What a seeming absurdity! What can such a wretched menial look as this fellow that is tramping on toward the house want with a ring? Oh, he is the prodigal son. No more feeding of the swine trough. No more longing for the pods of the carob tree. No more blistered feet. Off with the rags! On with the robe! Out with the ring! Even so does God receive every one of us when we come back. There are gold rings, and pearl rings, and carnelian rings, and diamond rings; but the richest ring that ever flashed on the vision is that which our Father puts upon a forgiven soul.

I know that the impression is abroad among some people that religion belittles a man; that it takes all the sparkle out of his soul; that he has to change a roystering independence for an ecclesiastical straight-jacket. Not so. When a man becomes a Christian he does not go down; he starts upward. Religion multiplies one by ten thousand. Nay, the multiplier is in infinity. It is not a blotting out—it is a polishing, it is an aborescence, it is an efflorescence, it is an irradiation. When a man comes into the kingdom of God he is not sent into a menial service, but the Lord God Almighty from the palaces of heaven calls upon the messenger angels that wait upon the throne to fly and "put a ring on his hand." In Christ are the largest liberty, and brightest joy, and highest honor, and richest adornment. "Put a ring on his hand."

I remark, in the first place, that when Christ receives a soul into his love he puts upon him the ring of adoption. In my church in Philadelphia there came the representative of a benevolent society in New York. He brought with him eight or ten children of the street that he had picked up, and he was trying to find for them Christian homes; and as the little ones stood on the pulpit and sung our hearts melted within us. At the close of the services a great hearted, weather-beaten man came up and said: "I'll take this little bright-eyed girl, and I'll adopt her as one of my own children." And he took her by the hand, lifted her into his carriage and went away.

The next day, while we were in the church gathering up garments for the poor of New York, this little child came back with a bundle under her arm, and she said: "There's my old dress. I hope some of the poor children would like to have it," when she heard a step behind and beamed away, and there was one who more immediately examined her so that she had a ring on her hand. It was a ring of adoption.

There are a great many persons who place themselves on their accessory and the glory over the royal diadem of God, their entrance into the family would be as servants or as paupers; but when the Lord Jesus puts upon us the ring of his adoption, we become the children of the ruler of all nations. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." It may not be now how poor our parents may be in this world, or how small our means, or how humble our lot, but we live in, if we have that ring of Christ's adoption upon our hand we are assured of eternal mansions.

Adopted! Why, then, we are brothers and sisters to all the good of heaven. We have the king's name, the family wardrobe. The father looks after us, provides for us, defends us, blesses us. We have royal blood in our veins, and there are crowns in our line. If we are his children, then princes and princesses. It is only a question of time when we get our coronet. Adopted! Then we have the family privileges, the family secrets. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Adopted! Then we have the family prerogatives, and in the day when our Father shall divide his treasures of heaven we shall have our share of the diamonds and pearls and topaz. Henceforth let us be as no more of an earthly ancestry. The insignia of eternal glory is our coat of arms. The ring of adoption puts upon us all honor and splendor. Now we can take the words of Charles Wesley, that prince of hymn-makers, and sing:—

"Come, let us join our friends above,
Who have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle wings of love
To joy celestial rise.

"Let all the saints terrestrial sing
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King,
In heaven and earth, are one."

I have been told that when any of the members of any of the great secret societies of this country are in a distant city and have in any kind of trouble, and rise up in the evening as they have only to give a certain sign and the members of that organization will flock around for defense. And when any man belongs to this great Christian brotherhood, if he gets in trouble, in trial, in persecution, in temptation, he has only to show his ring of Christ's adoption, and all the armed cohorts of heaven will come to his rescue.

Still further, when Christ takes a soul into his love he puts upon it a marriage ring. Now, that is not a whim of mine: "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies." At the wedding altar the bridegroom puts a ring upon the hand of the bride as pledge of love and faithfulness. Trouble may come upon the household, and the carpets may go, the pictures may go, the pots may go, everything else may go—the last thing that goes is that marriage ring, for it is consecrated sacred.

In the burial hour it is withdrawn from the hand and kept in a casket, and on some anniversary day and as you look at that ring you sail under its arch along processions of precious memories. Within the golden circle of that ring there is room for a thousand sweet recollections to revolve, and you think of the great contrast between the hour when, at the close of the "Wedding March," under the dashing lights and amid the aroma of orange blossoms, you set that ring on the round finger of the plump hand, and that other hour when, at the close of the exhaustive watching when you knew that the soul had gone, you took from the cold, white, slave back no response, we clasp from that emaciated hand the ring that she had worn so long and worn so well.

On some anniversary day you take up that ring, and you repolish it until all the old luster comes back, and you can see in it the flash of eyes that long ago ceased to weep. Oh, it is not an unmeaning thing when I tell you that when Christ receives a soul into his keeping he puts on it a marriage ring. He endows you from that moment with all his wealth. You are one—Christ and the soul—one in sympathy, one in affection, one in hope.

There is no power in earth or hell to effect a divorcement after Christ and the soul are united. Other kings have turned out their companions when they go weary of them, and sent them afflicted from the palace gate. Ahasuerus banished Vashti; Napoleon forsook Josephine; but Christ is the husband that is true forever. Having loved you once, he loves you to the end. Did they not try to divorce Margaret, the Scotch girl, from Jesus? They said: "You must give up your religion." She said: "I can't give up my religion." And so they took her down to the beach of the sea, and they drove in a stake at low water mark, and they fastened her to it, expecting that as the tide came up her faith would fail. The tide began to rise, and came up higher and higher, and to the ankle, and to the lip, and in the last moment just as the wave was washing her soul into glory, she shouted the praises of Jesus.

Oh, no, you cannot separate a soul from Christ. It is an everlasting marriage. Battle and storm and darkness cannot do it. It is too much exultation for a man, who is but dust and ashes like myself, to cry out to-day: "I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord." Glory be to God that when Christ and the soul are married they are found by a chain, a golden chain—if I must say so, a chain with one link and that one link the golden ring of God's everlasting love.

I go a step further, and tell you that when Christ receives a soul into his love he puts on it the ring of festivity. You know that it has been the custom in all ages to bestow rings on very happy occasions. There is nothing more appropriate for a birthday gift than a ring. You ought to festoon such a gift upon your children at such a time. It means joy, liberty, festivity. Well, when this old man of the text wanted to tell how glad he was that his boy had got back, he expressed it in this way. Servants, he ordered sandals to be put on his feet; he ordered the fatted calf to be killed to appease the hunger of his guests; he commanded: "Put a ring on his hand."

Oh, it is a merry time when Christ and the soul are united! Joy of righteousness! What a festival thing it is to feel that all is right between me and God. What a glorious thing it is to have God just lose the chains of my bondage and put them on my hand, and put the ring of festivity on me! This said, never to be taken off again. God never to be forgotten. The prodigal home. "Put a ring on his hand."

Every day I find happy Christian people. I find some of them with no soul coat, some of them in miserable tenement houses, not one penny to make them happy, and yet they are as happy as happy can be. They sing songs of joy as no other people in the world sing it. They never wear one jewelry in their life, but one gold ring, and that was a ring of God's love and affection. Oh, how happy religion makes us! Did you take your joy away with you? Did you go with your meal and your wife? I do not think you got rid of any brother, that is of the effect of religion. True religion is joy. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Why, religion lights up all our burdens. It smooths all our way. It interprets all our sorrows. It changes the jar of earthly discord for the peal of festal bells. In front of the blazing furnace of trial it sets the forge on which scepters are hammered out. Would you not like to-day to come up from the swine feeding and try this religion? All the joys of heaven would come out and meet you, and God would cry from the throne, "Put a ring on his hand."

You are not happy. I see it. There is no peace and sometimes you laugh when you feel a great deal more like crying. The world is a cheat. It first wears you down with its follies, then it kicks you out into darkness. It comes back from the massacre of a million souls to attempt the destruction of your soul to-day. No peace out of God, but here is the fountain that can slake the thirst. Here is the harbor where you can drop safe anchorage.

Would you not like, I ask you—not perfunctorily, but as one brother might talk to another—would you not like to have a pillow of rest to put your head on? And would you not like when you retire at night to feel that all is well, whether you wake up to-morrow morning at six o'clock, or sleep the sleep that knows no waking? Would you not like to exchange this awful uncertainty about the future for a glorious assurance of heaven? Accept of this, or rather come to-day, and all is well. If on your way home some peril could cross the street and dash your life out it would not hurt you. You would rise up immediately on worlds stand in the celestial streets. You would be amid the great throng that forever worship and are forever happy. If this day some sudden death should come upon you it would not injure you. If you knew you were going you could give a coin for well to your friends at home on earth and know that you are going right into the companionship of those who have already got beyond the toiling and the weeping.

You feel on Sunday night different from the way you feel any other night of the week. You come home from the bank, or the store, or the shop, and you say: "Well, now my week's work is done, and to-morrow is Sunday." It is a pleasant thought. There is refreshment and reconstruction in the very idea. Oh, how pleasant it will be, if, when we get through the day of our life and we go and lie down in our bed of dust, we can realize: "Well, now the work is all done, and to-morrow is Sunday—an everlasting Sunday."

"Oh, when, thou city of my God,
Shall I my courts ascend?
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end."

There are people in this house to-day who are very near the eternal world. If you are Christians, I bid you be of good cheer. Bear with you our congratulations to the bright city. Good men, who will soon be gone, take with you our love for our kindred in the better land, and when you see them, tell them that we are soon coming. Only a few more sermons to preach and hear. Only a few more heartaches. Only a few more toils. Only a few more tears. And then what an entrancing spectacle will open before us!

"Beautiful heaven, where all is light,
Beautiful angels clothed in white,
Beautiful streams that never tire,
Beautiful harps through all the choir;
There shall I join the chorus sweet,
Worshiping at the Saviour's feet."

I approach you now with a general invitation, not picking out here and there a man, or here and there a woman, or here and there a child; but giving you an unlimited invitation, saying: "Come, for all things are now ready." We invite you to the warm heart of Christ, and the inclosure of the Christian church. I know that a great many think that the church does not amount to much, that it is obsolete; that it did its work and is gone now, so far as all usefulness is concerned. It is the happiest place I have ever been in, except my own home.

I know there are some people who say they are Christians who seem to get along without any help from others, and who cultivate solitary piety. They do not want any ordinances. I do not belong to that class. I cannot get along without them. There are so many things in this world that take my attention from God, and Christ, and heaven, that I want all the helps of all the symbols and of all the Christian associations; and I want around about me a social phalanx of men who love God and keep his commandments. Are there any here who would like to enter into that association? Then by a simple, candid profession, apply for admission in the visible church, and you will be received. No questions asked about your past history or present surroundings. Only one test—do you love Jesus?

Baptism does not amount to anything, say a great many people, but the Lord Jesus Christ said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," putting baptism and faith side by side, and an apostle demanded: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." I do not stop for my friend's prejudice, but I put great emphasis on the fact that it ought to be captured. Yet no more emphasis than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the church puts upon it. The world is going to alter a law to lose a great many souls by it. There are to come revivals of religion that will shake the earth. We say, let us wait. There is a great host coming in to stand under the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you be among the gathered saints?

Some of you have been thinking on this subject for years and years. You have found out that this world is a poor position. You want to be Christians. You have come almost into the kingdom of God; but there you stop. You think that to be almost saved is not to be saved at all. Oh, if you are near enough to come so near to the cove of mercy, if you turn back you will never come at all. After you have felt of the goodness of God, if you turn away again, it will not be because you did not have a good offer.

"God's spirit will not always strive
With the hardened, impenitent man;
Yet we despise His love to grieve,
May never hear His voice again."

May God Almighty this hour move upon your soul and bring you back from the husks of the wilderness of the Father's house, and set you at the banquet, and "put a ring on your hand."

### Big and Little Farms.

Considerable interesting discussion is just now going on between the partisans of "large" and "small" farming. The latter are strong in their assertion that no man on earth is a happier than the fortunate possessor of a "little farm well tilled," while the farmer of broader acres and perhaps a longer pocket is equally sure that the big farm properly managed yields more in profit and comfort than its smaller neighbor. Below are two short extracts from men on both sides of the fence. Who is right?

FOR THE BIG FARM.

In many ways the large farmer has advantages over the small one; he can avail himself of labor-saving machinery and the latest improved implements, which the small farmer cannot always afford to do. The latter must wear out his tools in use, though there are great improvements in new ones, while the former will wear out and change every three years, having always the newest improvements.—*T. P. Roe, in Country Gentleman.*

FOR THE LITTLE ONE.

The little farm has certain manifest advantages over the larger one that it might do well to discuss briefly in passing. The work on a little farm is concentrated, and the farmer loses no time in going to and from the field. In this item alone several days' time and many miles of travel may be saved every year. Thus on a little farm a man is able to do much more effective and profitable work than on one where the outlying fields are half a mile or more from the house. The time thus saved may be employed in better tillage or in improving the farm, and at the end of the year the farmer is so much better off.—*Allen Pizey, in Rural New Yorker.*

### For Coin Collectors.

A coin is said to be "proof" when it is specially struck by hand press, instead of by steam press, from a polished planchet, and a "proof set" is a complete set of proofs of current coins. A "pattern piece" is an early specimen of proof from a newly adopted coinage die or dies. An impression in soft metal to test an experimental die is called a "trial piece." When a piece is struck from regular dies on experimental dies with experiment legends, devices or designs, it is denominated an "experimental piece." Trial and experimental pieces, struck for mint purposes only, will not be issued, circulated or sold. Pieces popularly known as restrikes, false metal pieces and metallic replicas, or copies, are prohibited by the revised statutes. Proof and pattern pieces are sold by the superintendent of the mint. The superintendent will furnish without charge, a pattern piece to any incorporated numismatic society in the United States. In such cases, if the pattern be in gold or silver the value of the metal will be required.

### SUBJECTS FOR THOUGHT.

—The right of private judgment is absolute in every American citizen.

—To him nothing is possible who is always dreaming of his past possibilities.

—There are no greater prudes than those women who have some secret to hide.

—God has placed the genius of women in their hearts; because the works of this genius are always works of love.

—In the great majority of things, habit is a greater plague than ever afflicted Egypt; in religious character it is a grand felicity.

—Happiness is a blessing often missed by those who run after pleasure, and generally found by those who suffer pleasure to run after them.

—Every event that a man would master must be encountered on the run, and no man ever caught the reins of a thought except as it galloped by him.

—Love is not altogether a delirium, yet it has many moments in common with it. I call it rather a discerning of the infinite in the finite, of the idea made real.

—Truth is the object of our understanding as good is of our will; and the understanding can no more be delighted with a lie than the will can chose an apparent evil.

—True love is grand, infinite, and always finds a light, strong and pure, without which it is inconstancy; it is seen with white wings, and is always young in the heart.

—Good listeners, whether at the table or elsewhere are as indispensible as good talkers, for the less of the story owes the life of its success more to the ear of the listener than to the narrator.

—If we were all less disposed to criticise and more ready to act on truth, we should find on a close field that in what we do now to allow of differences would be the best way to come into harmony of line.

—Christians are like the several flowers in the garden, that have each of them the law of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they entwine at each others roots, whereby, they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of each other.

### A Scientific Secret.

An effective method of petrifying animal bodies was discovered by Dr. G. B. Nassiadis, a distinguished Italian chemist who died more than forty years ago. The secret of the process was left for his legitimate heirs, who have only recently been found. The discovery so long looked up is now eagerly sought, and large sums have been offered for it—thus far unsuccessfully.


### Consumption Surely Cured.

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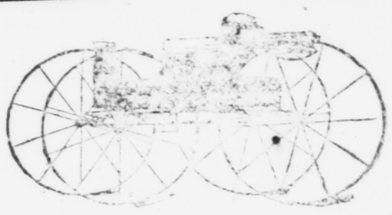

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