

Devotion on the Wedding Garment as a Type of Christ – Wednesday after the Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity Sunday - 1 November 2012, Anno Domini (All Saints Day)



### All Saints Day

#### *The Collect*

**O** ALMIGHTY God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

#### *The Collect.*

**G**RANT, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.** (Matthew 22:11-14)

Today's devotion on the Wedding Garment should rend the heart of all who know Christ, love Him, and worship Him in the Beauty of Holiness. We observe so many today in churches that are promised a false prosperity, a false speaking of the Holy Ghost (who cannot speak falsely), and a false Gospel. These

people in such churches are as passengers on a long, black train comfortably seated in the dining car, or dosing in the sleeper car, oblivious to the fact that the bridge across a great river has been washed away some five miles ahead. Standing in the knowledge of this fact, we gather by the wayside and shout the warning, but they are not inclined to listen to the voices of those warnings being drowned out by the sound to the trestle and tracks of the modern church. Men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea faced the same sorrow. They saw clearly the coming tragedy, warned of it, but none would listen.

Dr. R.C. Trench, author of *Parables of Our Lord*, has commented on the importance of the Wedding Garment: "*The Wedding Garment is righteousness in its largest sense, the whole adornment of the new and spiritual man – including the faith without which it is impossible to please God, and the Holiness without which no man shall see Him, or, like the speechless guest, shall only see Him to perish at His presence: - it is the faith which is the root of all graces, the mother of all virtues, and is likewise those virtues and graces themselves.*" I would add that all virtue and all goodness and all grace belong to Christ, therefore, the Garment is, itself, a symbol of Christ as our covering for sin. The covering provided us in the Garden at Eden symbolizes that sacrifice that Christ must have made to redeem us from our sins. The lamb's blood over the lintel and doorpost of Israel in Egypt symbolizes that covering for us through the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

Jesus is not only the Wedding Garment, but a healing Garment to all who touch Him as well. *And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.* (Matt 14:35-36) Jesus is the Garment of Light that replaces our garments of blindness: And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. *And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.* (Mark 10:49-50) Bartimaeus never again needed that old garment once he had come to know Christ and to see.

The Garment of the Lord is a Garment of praise: *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified* (Isaiah 61:3) and the Garment of the Lord is a Garment of salvation and Righteousness: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* (Isaiah 61:10)

Why the need for the peculiar dress of a Wedding Garment? In ancient times, and indeed presently in many Eastern countries, a particular garment is provided by the father of the Groom to each invited guest. The greater the father, the more elaborate and fine the Garment. If one appears at the Wedding Feast without the appropriate Wedding Garment, he is immediately exposed as not having come with an invitation, but by ruse and fraud. *Many will say to me in*

*that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* (Matthew 7:22-23) We must not only be dressed with His Robe of Righteousness and Salvation, but we must also appear at the appointed time. Once the door to salvation (the Wedding Feast) is closed, there shall no admittance be made.

The purpose of a garment is to cover that of which we are ashamed – our nakedness. We are all alike naked before the eyes of God, but He will give us a covering for our sins in the form of a Wedding Garment if we will agree to become the party of the Bride (the true Church). Remember the garment God provided Adam and Eve in the Garden – it was the skin of an innocent animal. Theretofore, there had been no death, but Adam brought suffering and death upon all of Creation by his disobedience. That animal that had to die to provide a covering for Adam's nakedness foreshadowed the Lamb of God who would die to cover the nakedness of our sins. God does not see our sins because our Wedding Garment – Jesus Christ – covers them from sight.

What of our own garments of righteousness – are they not enough? *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away* (Isaiah 64:6) The prodigal was wearing those filthy dung-contaminated rags when he came to his father who covered him with the BEST Robe! (Luke 15:22) Every garment is of a different quality – those of the sinner are as filthy rags, those of the merchant as spotted silks, but those of the King are excellent and fine. Our King is the King of Kings – there are not Garments like unto His for worth, for grace, for righteousness, or for salvation. A garment covers and protects from the elements. So does the salvation of God.

Garments are for dress and are ornamental to make the wearer thereof appear lovely and presentable. The Garment of Christ creates an innate and spiritual beauty for the believer. He appears clean and wholesome in the eyes of men, though they may not know the reason.

Garments are made to fit the wearer uniquely. So the Wedding Garment of Christ is made to fit our peculiar forms of gifts and talents perfectly. The Wedding Garment replaces all of our former garments as they are laid aside before we don the Wedding Garment. Our old filthy rags of sin are laid aside as we prepare to take upon our shoulders the White Robe of Righteousness.

The Wedding Garment is worn with the full expectation of a glorious and joyous day. So we dress for the occasion – the Wedding Supper of the Lord! When we appear well-dressed in the Righteous covering of Christ, the Bridegroom will be delighted at our comeliness. *For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.* (Isaiah 62:5) The Wedding Garment of Christ is unspotted by the world or the flesh thereof. When we go before the Bridegroom at that great Wedding Feast, if we wear the Garment He has provided, we shall hear these words of comfort: *Thou art all fair, my love; there*

*is no spot in thee.* (Song 4:7)

Dear Reader, are you appareled in your sinner's rags of filth, or have you received the Wedding Garment of Christ?