

Matthew 2:11 (George Sherrington-Morris) 71292

Bible Treasury: Volume N6, Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

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Matt. 2:11

The fulfillment of the promise that had been awaited by the expectant angels around God's throne through the long, sad years of human sinfulness, was at last accomplished. Through high heaven the commandment had gone forth that the holy Babe of Bethlehem, just then brought into the world, was to receive the adoration of all the angelic host. No inferior worship was to be His; for to Him they were to sing, led by the angelic messenger of His coming, the great Hallelujah chorus of "Glory to God in the highest;" and around the humble hostelry where was His manger-bed, they celebrated His worthy praise. There had been no need for such command when the eternal Son from all eternity had adorned the throne of infinite majesty. No need for heavenly host to be commanded to worship Him then; for it had ever been their ceaseless joy to sound forth His hallowed name. Still less such need when He entered paradise and there received the poor thief, the first trophy of His cross, and earliest follower on that way. He had been seen of angels during all His self-sacrificing life; and in Gethsemane's garden, prior to the cross with all its ineffable agony of all-atoning worth. They had been spectators of the awful conflict, and of the conclusive and irreversible victory; and heaven's gates had been high uplifted to let the King of glory, the Vanquisher of Satan and all his legions, enter in everlasting triumph over all. But the angels might have hesitated to adore the lowly Babe, for whom earth, sinful earth, had no welcome and no room at all. No reception, but from the first, rejection, rejection, and still rejection, right on to His cross of shame; and He is still the rejected One, and still the despised. So, therefore, it stands written, "When He bringeth in and there is no real righteousness in practice apart the First-begotten into the world, He smith, Let all God's angels worship Him;" and since neither the ambient heavens above Bethlehem, nor the fragrant meadows around, could contain the innumerable multitude of worshipping spirits, a glorious deputation sang unto the lovely Infant, God's eternal Son, heaven's highest praise. Then came the Magi from afar, seeking Him Who was born King of the Jews—their wisdom plainly manifest; they were seeking for Jesus. Led by their starry guide, by Bethlehem's manger their weary quest terminated, for there they found Him, blessed Object of their long search. So it has ever been from that bright hour until this very day. No one has ever sought for Him aright and failed to find heavenly guidance, and sure success at length or speedily. Entering the house, they saw the young Child and His mother—Christ first, Christ preeminent then and always—and falling down before Him, Him they worshipped, Him only. No sort of reverence, nor even one poor gift to the virgin mother, for they did not approach Him by her mediation. Firstly, they gave themselves to Him in humble adoration, and so their presents became acceptable. Then, next, they offered gold—their tribute to His kingly majesty. Then, the frankincense, as to God manifest in flesh. Not incense, but one of its two chief ingredients; for none but Aaron might compound the sacred perfume, which, in its fullness, symbolized the perfection of Christ Himself. Lastly, came the offering of myrrh, prophetic of His death as the victim, when wine mingled with myrrh was given to dull the keen anguish of His pain. He tasted, but He would not drink. Tasted to show His appreciation of the sole kindly deed; but refused, because He had chosen the appalling cup His Father had given Him to drink, and He would drink this with all its bitterness of wrath and fierce indignation against Him; then, and then only, bearing the sins of His people. Myrrh, too, as associated with the burial rites of the nobler families of Israel; and also as showing forth His high-priestly glory as the one anointed with the holy oil, typical of the Holy Spirit to be given without measure, and that descended from His head even unto the hem of His garment; thus baptizing all His own, as at Pentecost, into one mystic body, Himself, the one, only, all glorious Head, ever living in the power of His own endless life.

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