

April 15, 1913.

## THE SIN OF IMMODEST DRESS.

It is painful for me to think that in this Christian land such an article as I am about to write should be necessary. But that it is necessary for someone to write on it, is a fact, to me very apparent and deeply burned upon my soul. That no pen is able to express in chaste language the half of this evil I am fully aware, and I know that with my inability to wield the pen, I cannot begin to picture things as I would like to; not even to express the hundredth part of the indignation which I feel, or what the subject is due. Nevertheless, since others for the most part continue to maintain profound silence and fail to denounce this sin which is as big and as black and iniquitous as any in the land today, I can no longer forbear taking up arms against it. If it were confined alone to the base and low, or even amongst worldly people, or again if it were noticeable no farther than among nominal professors and church members it would not seem so terribly bad, but O pity us! when we behold the selfsame thing right among the "holiness" people, and when it gets so that a "holiness" camp meeting is not free from it, even on the part of some professing a very high state of grace, it is high time someone got wrought up, protested and began to cry out against it. I could never understand why some preachers seemed so afraid to speak out on the matter and do not know yet, unless they fear they might touch somebody too near to themselves.

This matter of immodest female dress, or more properly undress, has long, long since crossed the border of modesty and gone a very long way down the road on the indecent side. No doubt many girls are profoundly innocent and ignorant of the crime they are committing by wearing the lownecked, short-sleeved, transparent, "peek-a-boo" affairs which they are pleased to call waists, but others are not ignorant. The innocent should be kindly but emphatically and fully informed and the guilty sternly and plumply rebuked. I spoke of the arrangement called "waist." Well, how very applicable indeed is the term, if they mean to spell it w-a-s-t-e, for this essentially means void. Truly! void of beauty, void of common sense, void of modesty, void of decency and for the most part void of the very becoming quality of covering up nakedness. How that otherwise modest young women can put on and wear one of the "rigs" is more than this humble person can understand. Surely, they are ignorant of the fact, or careless of it, that such fashions originate among harlots and actresses and leaders in fast society, whose sole business it is to attract to themselves the gaze of men, and so dress to make themselves conspicuous for this express purpose. And yet, withal, girls and women who would blush at the very thought of being reckoned among such a class, array themselves in the same attire, with no better excuse than that it is fashionable. Now it appears to me that if they sensed what they were doing they would quickly and forever cease. If girls had a faint idea of the disgusting sight they presented or could hear some of the unmanly dissolute remarks made about them as they pass along the streets clad in one of the above described waists, or one of those short, outlandish, tight-gripping, hobble-skirts, they would feel so ashamed that if they had a spark of virtue left in them

they would go to their rooms or get out of sight somewhere till they had a sensible dress to put on. How can they expect people to distinguish them from the low and corrupt if they dress exactly like them! Some try to make excuse for wearing thin material, perforated waists, and the like, because of the heat in the summer time, but this excuse is too flimsy for anything, for I've seen them on the street with their chests exposed to the bitter wind when the thermometer registered ten below zero, when I knew well enough it was not for comfort but for style, or something else more intensely devilish. No wonder so many die of consumption! In this case her own sin is visited upon herself alone, but when by manner of dress she stirs up thoughts in a man's heart to plan her ruin, the sin is not only visited upon herself, but helps to drag another to ruin also. May God give sense right along here! When the great and final reckoning day comes and all hidden things are revealed, this monster evil will be shown to have slain its thousands along with the liquor demon and other sins much more spoken against. To it will be traced the fall and downward career of many a young man, and it will be shown also a very prolific source of social vices. It is a psychological as well as a Biblical fact, see James 1:14, 15; Matt. 5:28, and many instances in the Old Testament, that sin is first conceived in the mind, and in no way is the mind more easily impressed than through the medium of the eye. Then if this be true, how supremely important that everything which would suggest sin be put away from before the eyes. Paul exhorts to shun the very appearance of evil.

This immodest dress evil is a shame, a disgrace, an outrage against the conscience of every upright and pure-minded young man, making it well nigh impossible for him to keep his thoughts clean and barred from the suggestions of the Devil.

Now, lest some one think I have been impelled by some notion of my own in writing as I have, or lest they might think the picture overdrawn, hear what one other has to say. Rev. P. N. Breslin, pastor of a Roman Catholic church in New York City, in speaking on the subject last summer said: "Never in history were the modes so abhorrently indecent as they are to-day. One may make the closest study of costumes through the prints and drawings and sculptures of five thousand years and find nothing to equal the shameless styles worn unabashed in the crowded streets and summer resorts by hundreds of thousands of apparently respectable girls.

"Here from million-dollar heiress to three-dollar-a-week working girl there is a craze for sensational effect in the public highways. This summer the limit of vulgarity has been reached. The effect is so gross that no pen could have the effrontery to describe it in its details of offence—no pencil could illustrate it in all its vicious ugliness. There is no beauty in it, no grace, no picturesqueness. It is nothing but vileness unredeemed, and the pity of it is that most of the wearers of this degradingly suggestive attire, are innocent young girls who have not the faintest idea what they are doing.

*Fashion No Excuse for Immodesty.*

"It is odd to see women, who would not read suggestive novels, parade themselves in costumes that are immodest with no better excuse than that such dress is in fashion. They

must be well aware that their example will be followed and, as such examples are in rescribing, exaggerated. So we behold the poor little working girl sheathed in a cheap tight skirt shortened to show her imitation silk stockings. She cannot walk naturally in the narrow jute, so she hobbles along content to be fashionable at the expense of all grace and comfort. But it is not comfort these would-be fashionable women are seeking. Comfort, the late laureate assured us, 'is scorned of devils,' and if that be so, they have a devilish scorn of it. Silly creatures who will not be content even to look nice, who prefer to look nasty as they look fashionable, will not be content to be comfortable.

*Gracefulness and Disgracefulness.*

"No self-respecting Christian woman, no pure-minded Christian should ever be the slave of vulgar fashion. Their Christian modesty should shrink from appearing in public, and especially from entering God's holy temple in a style of dress that offends Christian decency and can appeal only to the vulgar and evil minded. Let Christian parents impress this on their daughters, and instead of teaching them sinful vanity and foolish extravagance, inculcate prudent moderation and Christian self-respect and simplicity."—*H. C. Muller.*

## GEORGE MUELLER ON KNOWING GOD'S WILL.

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, what ever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so I make myself liable to great delusions.

I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright. Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability, and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continue so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.

In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.—*Sel.*

Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and (sincere) harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.—Phil. 2, 14-15-16.