

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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THE DRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN

From a new biography of Charles G. Finney I quote the following passage: "In the summer of 1826 the Utica revival attracted the attention of Dr. Dirck Lansing, Presbyterian pastor in Auburn and one of the Auburn Seminary founders, who insisted on the revivalist coming to this city where 'he went and preached with great power and marked success. * * *"

"The church was worldly in attire and conformed to the dress of sinful designs. After one of Finney's sermons, Dr. Lansing arose and pleaded with the people to turn to God. Finney stopped him saying, 'Mr. Lansing, I do not believe such remarks from you can do any good while you wear a ruffled shirt and a gold ring, and your wife and the ladies of your family sit * * * dressed as leaders in the fashions of the day.'

"Dr. Lansing took the rebuff, threw himself from the pulpit, and wept like a child. The people dropped their heads, and under the moaning of their sobs the Spirit moved upon them. Public confession by the church was made, as the pastor led them, saying, 'If these things are an offense I will not wear them.'"

About this, note two things: 1. Mr. Finney's religious background was entirely Presbyterian. Before his conversion he was a choir leader in a Presbyterian Church. After his conversion he became a Presbyterian minister and was so associated at the time of the above incident.

2. And note that this Mr. Finney of such positions on the dress question and similar issues was perhaps the greatest God-used evangelist of all time. It is estimated that 500,000 persons were actually converted directly or indirectly under his ministry.

Let us be reminded again that during the first one hundred years of her history (1739-1839) Methodism was the greatest power for righteousness and salvation of any movement since Pentecost. In those days of her glory Methodism always insisted upon plainness of attire. If you have any doubt about Wesley's position, read his sermon on dress or remind your pastor to read it before his congregation.

Having cited these two considerable authorities, let us admit that most professors of religion are perfectly without conscience on this matter of dress.

Of those who give no attention to the matter there are two kinds:

1. The "popular" church. Most members of these churches seem to have no knowledge that their religion should have anything to do with their dress. They dress exactly as the worldlings about them. There is no reproof or instruction from the pulpit. One reason is hinted in the quotation from Finney. But what preacher, with half his membership disregarding the plain teaching of God's

Word in this matter, dares draw that Word upon that congregation?

2. There have arisen in these times religious movements in which there seems much to approve, especially because they adhere to what we know as the fundamentals of the faith. From here they may pass on to fanatical and unscriptural teachings concerning the Holy Spirit. Too often they tolerate in their membership and even in their ministry men and women of loose marriage relations—as bad as were in that Corinthian church to which Paul wrote (which is not an insinuation against the good, clean people who are often for a time connected with such movements but is a suggestion that a house-cleansing or church-cleaning should be desirable). But to the point: Here is almost a total disregard of the Scripture teaching on the dress question. This writer does not happen to know any women among them that dress like pilgrims. If they cannot get the diamonds and the gold as the "popular" church members sometimes can do, they use the glass and the brass.

Then we have the "holiness churches." Most of these profess to be trying to promote the way of Christian life taught by original Methodism. Most of us have held that God does not care about our observing His word upon dress as upon other things. But there is a swing here and there to a more liberal position. As the people tend to worldliness in attire, the ministry may cease to speak the Word upon this subject lest they give offense. Then the drift tends to be rapid. But has a preacher a right to keep his mouth shut where God has spoken?

What right has a Christian, a person who professes to be "in earnest to get to heaven," to follow "fool fashions?" What right has she to wear spool-heel shoes which cause her feet to be crippled as she walks upon her toes and which compel her to go "mincing" (Isa. 3:16)? What right has she to paint her lips and her face and her finger-nails? What right has she to wear jewelry (better or junk) in her ears and about her neck and upon her arms and upon her hands in the face of the plain teachings of God's Word? Above all, what right has she to wear skirts of such a length that in the parlor or even the very house of God men must turn their heads lest they be treated or subjected to unseemly exposure?

"Everybody does it," I know. But do you belong to the everybodies or are you a pilgrim?

What is the divine authority for plain and modest attire? "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, (which becometh women professing godliness), with good works" (I. Tim. 2:9-10). "Whose alorning, let it not be that

outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel; but it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even that of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I. Peter 3:3-4). "And be not conformed," etc. (Rom. 12:2). And especially read Isaiah 3:16-26. Also every passage which deals with pride and worldliness and forbids waste bears directly upon this subject of dress.

But truly one must choose between going the way that "everybody" goes or going according to God's Word. He can hardly go both ways.—Free Methodist.

THE COUNTERSIGN

The following incident was often related by Mr. George H. Stuart, President of the United States Christian Commission. He was with the Army of the Potomac. Going about one dark night, he was suddenly halted by the guard, a mere boy; "Halt! Who goes there?"

"A friend with the countersign."

"Advance and give the countersign."

"Blennerhassett."

"Mr. Stuart," said the guard, lowering his gun, "I recognize your voice, but you have not got the countersign. Stand where you are till I call the officer of the guard."

By some unaccountable oversight the countersign of the previous day had been given him, and by the rules of war he might have been shot.

When the officer came he was admitted to the lines. Tapping the guard on the shoulder, Mr. Stuart said to him: "My boy, if you should be taken off in one of these battles, could you give the countersign at the gate of heaven?"

"Yes, Mr. Stuart, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'"

Two days later Mr. Stuart found this boy mortally wounded. He gave Mr. Stuart his watch and a parting message for his mother, and died in the triumph of faith.—Selected.

CANAL HANDLES 5,903 SHIPS

Five thousand nine hundred and three ocean-going commercial vessels used the Panama Canal during the 1938-39 fiscal year, Secretary of War Woodring told the President in his annual report submitted early in January, 1940.

Tolls amounted to more than \$23,500,000, with a net return of more than two and one-half per cent on the \$500,000,000 canal, its largest earnings during the past decade.

American ships carried 35.6 per cent of the cargoes, British ships 34.4 per cent, Japanese 6.1 per cent, German 5.3 per cent, Swedish 3.6 per cent, while the remainder was carried by ships of some fifteen different countries.—Southern Churchman.

Mr. Donald Tedlie, Feb 41

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