

[We are reading a Sermon message given by our F.C.G. CHURCH 'Founding Pastor', late Pastor A. Clark, as (given in 1920s & printed (Jan.1930)]

# Amusement, Dress, and Fellowship

(#188A) (S406R 0312 25W)

We have not spoken much on these subjects before (he said), but as they come so near to the everyday life of each human being, it is very important that we take the right attitude to God in these matters. (as they should be of much concern to a person who seeks Eternal Life). The question that naturally arises is, what should our attitude be toward worldly amusements, (modest) dress, and (keeping Scriptural) fellowship?

We should always keep in mind that our attitude regarding these questions should (always) be the result of an inward 'divine life'. If we refrain from indulging in worldly amusements, and dress very modestly as a religious, self-righteous act, that could no more change our hearts than a leopard could change its spots. We have often noticed that the people who do these things as a mere outward act of showing their religion, are the most un-Scriptural, altogether filled with self, and have least faith in God.

There are several religious organizations, such as the Mennonites, Dunkards, Quakers, and others, whose religious life consists almost entirely in dressing very modestly; the women wear plain black dresses and poke bonnets, and the men wear dark suits and hats, etc., as an outward religious life. And yet practically none of them trust God for their health and protection of their bodies, the supply of their financial needs, nor the control of their families and homes.

So, we should see that our outward life should be the result of an inward, divine life. We have spoken very much on the inward Christ-

life, and this morning we want to bring out the natural results of that inward Christ-life.

The Holy Spirit is not only at our side to open our eyes to see all the Truths of His Word, but He is to lead us in taking the right attitude to the various details of God's will.

On the other hand, Satan has the power to put desires in our heart for unScriptural things, such as unScriptural amusements, and entertainment, and to dress unbecomingly, and unscriptural fellowship. If we do not know that it is Satan planting those desires in our heart, we would yield to them and it would (if we were not firmly established in the Truth), cause us to 'drift away from God', and to take in a worldly spirit and lose ground (on our Christian pathway). We are not living just for this life only, but also for eternity. It is important that when any question arises in our mind on any particular point, we should always 'give God the benefit of the doubt'.

First of all, we want to take up the 'amusement question'. We know every one of us is willing to obey God (even at the cost of our lives), but sometimes a perplexing question arises, and we wonder just how far we can go, while we still do not want to be unnecessarily in bondage, but, again we do not want to be lax in anything (where God's Will would be put in question). The verses of text which come to us with more force than any others (he said), are given in the first Epistle of John, which say: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

The whole world system is composed of a great number of things. It is planned by the devil and man together. Of course, the devil is back of it altogether, to take the place of God in everything. Anyone who comes to know God will be perfectly satisfied with Him. God will be all the enjoyment and real happiness one would ever desire, and they would not care for anything else.

We have read a few lines of poetry which read like this: "As by the light of opening day, the

stars are all concealed, So, earthly pleasures fade away when Jesus is revealed."

When we come to a real knowledge of God, unscriptural amusements and entertainment all drop off without any effort on our part, and we really will not want them. Then, after we come into the Truth, if we should be tempted with worldly desires and for things that are not Scriptural, we can go to God and have Satan rebuked (the same as any other temptation), and have our peace restored, and be perfectly satisfied with God. Even naturally speaking, if there is anyone we love supremely, we are perfectly satisfied just to be in their presence. To have God present with us every moment of our life (and He is more lovable than all human beings put together), we will find that His presence will be enough for us, as we get real knowledge of Him.

So, Satan has various worldly attractions and amusements just to 'take the place of God in our life', and to satisfy the longings of our heart, and act as a substitute for God.

To be taken up with these things will surely hinder our growth and knowledge of God and will fill our minds with things which will (to a great extent) shut out the 'knowledge of God' we should have. We have been considering carefully 'where to draw a line on amusements before we would speak about it, he said, because we know none of us willfully want to do anything wrong.

After considering this for a long time, and in view of the near-coming of Jesus, and the absolute necessity of us being fully prepared to meet Him (not wanting to 'miss Heaven by a hair's breadth'), we should give God the benefit of the doubt on every questionable thing that arises. Such things as motion picture theaters and various kinds of theatricals and other things of that kind (and we can add many videos of this day), which are mere worldly amusements raised up by the devil just to take the place of God in our lives, are indeed a real hindrance to one's spirituality, and to us 'getting a real knowledge of God', and our being prepared to meet Jesus Christ on His return for His people!

We do not want to be arbitrary nor to lord it over God's people, (he said), but simply

to be an example to the flock. Our advice then would be to hold aloof and stay away from all such things that are mere 'worldly amusements'. By our giving God the benefit of any doubt, it 'takes the club out of Satan's hands' so that he cannot hinder or harm us in any way. We can all ask God to take all un-Scriptural desires out of our heart, and to put such a desire and hunger and thirst for God that we will be perfectly satisfied with Him.

But we need to always remember that our outward actions should be the result of the inward Christ-life. In (Gal.6:15 Paul says) "For neither circumcision nor the omission of it, is of any importance; but a new nature is all-important."

However, we will never come to the place where we will not be tempted by Satan, but when he does come with his temptations (and he can certainly paint his pictures very bright and he will paint God's Will mighty black), we all can go before God and have Satan rebuked, and so enjoy 'God's peace', with our hearts and minds being 'kept in union with Jesus Christ'!

We want to take up the subject of (modest) dress and so have some verses of Scripture to be read and then make a few comments on them. We are not criticizing or pointing the finger at anyone (he said), because, as we have said before, we have all had habits of life which are not always changed in a day (especially in our early Christian life), and we can well-forbear with each other.

The Hicksite Quakers, who lay so much stress on dressing very modestly, do not believe in the 'divinity of Christ'. And Mennonites practically (fully) reject God's healing and financial plans. If we disobey so vital a thing as 'divine healing' and God's 'financial plan, it shows that we are not Scriptural in anything else. Our spirituality depends on trusting God for the lesser things, and if we are not obedient in the lesser things, we would never be obedient in the greater things. In (1 Pet.3:1-5) and (1 Tim.2:9,10), there are some verses of Scripture that we all should read), on the question of 'how to dress' (in a Godly way).

“So again, you married women should submit to your husbands, in order that if a man rejects the Message, he may (without word being said) be won over through the conduct of his wife, by watching her submissive and blameless conduct. A woman's attractions should not depend on such external things as the arrangement of her hair, the jewelry she wears, or the style of her dress, but, upon her inner life-the imperishable beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit; for this is very precious in God's sight. That was how those holy women of old, who placed their hopes in God, made themselves attractive.”

(1<sup>st</sup> Tim.2:9-10) “I also desire that women should make themselves attractive by their discreet, quiet and ‘modest dress’. They should not indulge in wreaths or gold ornaments for the hair, or in pearls or expensive clothes, but as is proper for women who ‘profess to be religious’—they should make themselves attractive by their good actions.” (from Twentieth Century Translation).

The point wanted to be made is, that it has become the custom with women (with few exceptions), to follow ‘the modes of the day’, both in color and style. We are not going to give drastic commands on this subject (he said), but I am going to give you my personal opinion of it (and I am sure that it is Scriptural as well).

It seems that it is unnecessary slavery for a person to be ‘up-to-the-minute’ in style (of which most are very immodest or even indecent), and then it is Satan who has those styles for two reasons: The first is, the average person likes to be (noticed and admired) and looked up to by other people not realizing that this is pride. That in itself is totally wrong, because it is really conforming to ‘this world’, instead of being conformed to the image of Christ. (Rom.12:2 tells us) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He walked around wearing ordinary clothes; (not to be noticed, but to have a humble appearance): that is (as our example) He

dressed like the common people. All around us we can see how far the average person has drifted from the Bible standard in the ‘matter of dress’, (following styles of dress as those of the world do follow), and ‘habits of living’. We all know that many such things take up the average person's time and attention, and it worries them if they are not dressed ‘just so’. That is such an unnecessary thing, and so far from what God had ever intended.

We will give our personal opinion on the matter (he said). of “How should a woman dress?” Should she dress like some of the Mennonites, Dunkards, etc. with a calico dress almost dragging the ground? I would say, “No, that is not necessary.” However, a woman should surely dress modestly. Her dress should be at least several inches below the knees, which, in our opinion, would seem to be quite proper. For us to be Scriptural, it is not necessary to be right up to where the world is in the matter of style or dress.

One of the main reasons for continual new styles is to bring more money into the clothing trade. If they can change the styles frequently, clothing would not be worn by men and women as long as it ordinarily would, because when the style or color changes, worldly men and women feel obligated to buy new clothing. That is one reason why there are so many millionaires-just a change of styles to keep money coming in (the root of all evil). Jesus warned that we cannot trust on God and on money if we want to enter His Kingdom! I personally would not care to ‘fall in’ with that selfish and worldly money-making scheme (the Pastor said).

When it comes to jewelry (necklaces, earrings, etc.) and makeup such as nail polish, hair dyes, rouge, powder, and lipstick, (and we are not casting reflections on any person, he said), but when a woman or a girl begins to use lipstick and puts rouge on her face, to our mind it is a subtle ‘snare of Satan’, to sidetrack and get a person to depend on that instead of trusting God to make them attractive. God can give every person who trusts on Him alone, a beautiful complexion and clear smooth skin, without blemishes

whatever, but we take ourselves out of God's hands when we try to improve our complexion and skin via 'artificial-means' (instead of trusting God).

When our dependence is on God alone, we will have such health of body, that our skin and complexion will be clear, and it will be a kind that will be permanent and not be subject to wrinkles or any blemishes whatever. If God could make a beautiful woman (Eve) out of a man's rib, how much more could He make a person attractive and give them a perfect complexion and clear, healthy skin, just by trusting God alone?

This teaching may seem radical to some people, but it is perfectly Scriptural as well as sensible. For us to take these bodies to the One who made them, is the only sensible thing anyone could do. However, our 'greatest desire' should be to have a Christ—life enthroned in us, and when we do have Christ within ourselves, it will reach to our bodies and will keep us in perfect health.

We have noticed (in many instances) that as a person grows and develops 'spiritually', and the more the 'Christ life' is developed in them, the less they care about 'being up-to-the-minute in style'. They seem to lose interest in worldly styles (just like a little girl who will fight for her doll when young, and when she grows older, she naturally begins to lose those desires).

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