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WORLDLY CONFORMITY IN DRESS

By Albert Sims

Compiled from the writings of
C. G. Finney, John Wesley,
B. T. Roberts, Dr. Judson,
Mrs. A. E. Barr,
And Some Others

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01 -- WHY IS IT WRONG FOR CHRISTIANS TO FOLLOW THE FASHIONS OF THE WORLD?

1. Because the Word of God plainly and positively forbids it. "I will that women (and by parity of reason, men, too,) adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered (curled) hair, or gold and pearls (one kind of precious stones, which was then most in use, put for all), or costly apparel; but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." (I Tim. 2:9, 10). Again, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward

adorning of plaiting (curling) the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (I Peter 3:3, 4).

The following articles are condemned by the above Scriptures: (1) The wearing of gold; (2) precious stones; (3) costly apparel -- that is, apparel worn for its costliness -- to present an appearance of superiority or show; (4) brodered (or curled) hair; (5) "putting on of apparel." Putting on of apparel for adorning is just as plainly forbidden as gold or costly apparel. It undoubtedly means the use of superfluous ornaments, or those parts of dress worn under the name of trimmings, such as lace, fringes, embroidery, braid, strips of velvet, etc. 3. Wesley says: "Buy no velvets, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring color, or which is in any kind gay, glistening or showy; nothing made in the very height of the fashion, nothing to attract the attention of bystanders. I do not advise women to wear rings, earrings, necklaces, lace -- of whatever kind or color -- or ruffles, which by little and little may easily shoot out from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats or on their sleeves. It is true these are little, very little things, which are not worth defending; therefore give them up, let them drop, throw them away, without another word; else a little needle may cause much pain in the flesh, a little self-indulgence much hurt to your soul.

"But cannot the force of these two passages be evaded? Yes, and nearly every command in Scripture can be evaded, and every doctrinal assertion perverted, plausibly and handsomely, too, if we set about it in good earnest. But preserving the posture above alluded to, with the inspired volume spread open at the passage in question, ask your hearts, in simplicity and godly sincerity, whether the meaning is not just as plain as the sun at noonday. Shall we, then, bow to the authority of an inspired apostle, or shall we not? From that authority shall we appeal to the prevailing usages and fashions of the age? If so, please to recall the missionaries you have sent to the heathen; for the heathen can vindicate all their superstitions on the same ground." -- Judson.

2. Because it is directly at war with the spirit of the Gospel, and it is minding earthly things. What is minding earthly things, if it is not to follow the fashions of the world, that like a tide are continually setting to and fro, and fluctuating in their forms, and keeping the world continually changing? There are many men of large business in the world, and men of wealth, who think they care nothing for the fashions. They are occupied with something else, and they trust the fashions altogether with their tailor, taking it for granted that he will make all right. But mind, if he should make a garment unfashionable, you would see that they do care about the fashions, and they never would employ that tailor again. And they think it beneath the dignity of a minister to preach about fashions. They overlook the fact that, with the greater part of mankind, fashion is everything. The greater part of the community are not rich, and never expect to be; but they look to the world to enable them to make a "respectable" appearance, and to bring up their families in a "respectable" manner; that is, to "follow the fashions." Nine-tenths of the people seldom look at anything higher than to do as the world does, or to follow the fashions. For this they strain every nerve. And this is what their hearts are set on, and what they live for. A man deceives himself, therefore, if he supposes that fashion is a little thing. The great body of the people mind this, their minds are set upon it, the thing which they look for in life is to have their dress, equipage, furniture, and so on, like other people, in the fashion, "respectable," as they call it. -- Finney.

3. To conform to the world is contrary to their profession. When people join the church, they profess to give up the spirit that gives rise to the fashions. They profess to renounce the pomp and vanity of the world, to repent of their pride, to follow the meek and lowly Savior -- to live for God; And now, what do they do? You often see professors of religion go to the extreme of fashion. Nothing will satisfy them that is not in the height of fashion. A Christian female dress maker -- who is conscientiously opposed to following fashions -- cannot get her bread. She cannot get employment even among professedly Christian ladies unless she follows the fashions in all their countless changes. God knows it is so, and they must give up their business, if their conscience will not permit them to follow the changes of fashion. -- I bid.

The "General Rules" of the Methodist Church -- after stating a great variety of sins, including the putting on of gold and costly apparel, which the candidate for membership is required to avoid, says: "And all these we know His Spirit writes upon truly awakened hearts." According to these "General Rules," thousands now in the Methodist churches who wear gold, jewelry, feathers, flowers, etc., including many who profess holiness, are not so much as "truly awakened."

4. This conformity is a broad and complete approval of the spirit of the world. What is it that lies at the bottom of all this shifting scenery? What is the cause that produces all this gaudy show, and dash, and display? It is the love of applause. And when Christians follow the changes of fashion, they pronounce all this innocent. All this waste of money and time and thought; all this feeding and cherishing of vanity and the love of applause, the church sets her seal to when she conforms to the world. "Be not conformed to this world." (Rom. 12:2) -- Finney.

5. "Nay, further, another reason is, that in following the fashions of the world, professing Christians show that they do in fact love the world. They show it by their conduct, just as the ungodly show it by the same conduct. As they act alike, they give evidence that they are actuated by one principle -- the love of fashion. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (John 2:15). -- Ibid.

6. "When Christian professors do this, they show most clearly that they love the praise of men. It is evident that they love admiration and flattery, just as sinners do. Is not this inconsistent with Christian principle, to go right into the very things that are set up by "the pride, and fashion, and lust of the ungodly?"

7. "By conforming to the world in fashion, you show that you do not hold yourself accountable to God for the manner in which you lay out your money. You practically disown your stewardship of the money in your possession. By laying out money to gratify your own vanity and lust, you take off the keen edge of that truth, which ought to cut that sinner in two, who is living to himself. It is practically denying that the earth is the Lord's, with the cattle on a thousand hills and all to be employed for His glory." -- Finney.

8. "You show that reputation is your idol. When the cry comes to your ears on every wind, from the ignorant and the lost of all nations, 'Come over and help us,' and every week brings some call to send the Gospel, to send tracts, and Bibles, and missionaries, to those who are perishing for

lack of knowledge if you choose to expend money in following the fashions, it is a demonstration that reputation is your idol. Suppose now, for the sake of argument, it is not prohibited in the Word of God to follow the fashions, and that professing Christians, if they will, may innocently follow the fashions (I deny that it is innocent, but suppose it were), does not the fact that they do follow them -- when there are such calls for money, and time, and thought, and labor to save souls -- prove conclusively that they do not love God, nor the souls of men? Take the case of the woman whose husband is in slavery, and she is trying to raise money enough for his redemption. There she is, toiling and saving, rising up early, and sitting up late, and eating the bread of carefulness, because her husband -- the father of her children, the friend of her youth -- is in slavery. Now go to that woman and tell her that it is innocent for her to follow the fashions, and dress, and display like her neighbors -- will she do it? Why not? She does not desire to do it. She will scarce by buy herself a pair of shoes for her feet; she grudges almost the bread she eats -- so intent is she on her object."

"Now suppose a person loves God, and the souls of men, and the kingdom of Christ, does he need an express prohibition from God to prevent him from spending his money and his life in following the fashions? No, indeed; he will rather need a positive injunction to take what is needful for his own comfort and the support of his own life. Do not ask me why Abraham, and David, and Solomon, who were so rich, did not lay out their money in spreading the kingdom of God. Ah, tell me -- did they enjoy the light that professors now enjoy? But suppose it were as allowable in you as it was in Abraham or David to be rich, and to lay out the property you possess in display, and pomp, and fashion -- suppose it were perfectly innocent; who, that loves the Lord Jesus Christ would wish to lay out money in fashion, when they could lay it out to gratify the all-absorbing passion to do good to the souls of men? How many precious souls have gone down to death with a lie in their right hand, having never heard of the true God and the only Savior! Some of these miseries might have been mitigated; some poor wretch have felt his pain relieved; some widow's heart been made to sing for joy; some helpless orphan have been taught in the Sabbath School and trained up for a happy life here and hereafter. The Holy Bible and valuable tracts might have been far more extensively circulated in heathen lands, had you not been afraid of being thought unfashionable, and not "like other folks;" had you not preferred adorning your persons, and cherishing the sweet, seductive feelings of vanity and pride." -- Judson.

9. "By conforming to the world in fashion, you show that you do not differ from ungodly sinners. Ungodly persons say, 'I don't see but that these Christian men and women love to follow the fashions as well as we do.' Who does not know that this leads many to infidelity?"

10. "By following the fashions, you are tempting God to give you up to a worldly spirit. There are many now that have followed the world and followed the fashions till God seems to have given them over to the devil for the destruction of the flesh. They have little or no religious feeling, no spirit of prayer, no zeal for the glory of God, or the conversion of sinners; the Holy Spirit seems to have withdrawn from them."

11. "You tempt the church to follow the fashions. Where the principal members -- the elders and leaders in the church -- their wives and families, are fashionable professors of religion, they drag the whole church along with them into the train of fashion; and every one apes them, as far as they can, down to the lowest servant. Only let a rich professing Christian lady come out to

the house of God in full fashion, and the whole church are set agog to follow as far as they can, and it is a chance if they do not run in debt to do it. Especially is this true of fashionable missionaries to heathen lands. By their example they teach and encourage the heathen to wear what God has forbidden, and thus they give them a false representation of the Christian religion."

12. "You tempt yourself to pride and folly and a worldly spirit. Suppose a man who has been intemperate, but is reformed, should go and surround himself with wine and brandy, and every seductive liquor, keeping the provocatives of appetite always under his eye, and from time to time tasting a little; does he not tempt himself? Now, see that woman that has been brought up in the spirit of pride and show -- that has been reformed, and has professed to abandon them all; let her keep these trappings, and continue to follow the fashions, and pride will drag her backwards as sure as she lives. She tempts herself to sin and folly."

13. "You are tempting the world. You are setting the world into a more fierce and hot pursuit of these things. The very things that the world love, and that they are sure to have scruples about their being right; professing Christians fall in with and follow, and thus tempt the world to continue in the pursuit of what will destroy their souls in hell."

14. "By following the fashions you are tempting the devil to tempt you. When you follow the fashions, you open your heart to him. You keep it for him, empty, swept, and garnished. Every woman that suffers herself to follow the fashions may rely upon it she is helping Satan to tempt her to pride and sin. She thus creates and fosters a flame of lust, leading to the worst crimes. In this way many women have been damned."

15. "You lay a great stumbling-block before the greatest part of mankind. There are a few persons who are pursuing greater objects than fashion. They are engaged in the scramble for political power, or they are eager for literary distinction, or they are striving for wealth. And they do not know that their hearts are set on fashion at all. They are following selfishness on a large scale. But the great mass of the community are influenced mostly by these fluctuating fashions. To this class of persons it is a great and sore stumbling-block, when they see professing Christians just as, prompt and as eager to follow the changing of fashions as themselves. They see, and say, 'What does their profession amount to, when they follow the fashions as much as anybody?' or 'Certainly it is right to follow the fashions, for see the professing Christians do it as much as we.'"

16. "Another reason why professing Christians are not to be conformed to the world in fashion is the great influence their disregarding fashion would have on the world. If professing Christians would show their contempt for these things, and not pretend to follow them or regard them, how it would shame the world, and convince the world that they are living for eternity How irresistible it would be! What an overwhelming testimony in favor of our religion! Even the apparent renunciation of the world, by many orders of monks, has doubtless done more than anything else to put down the opposition to their religion, and give it currency and influence in the world. Now, suppose all this were hearty and sincere, coupled with all that is consistent and lovely in Christian character, and all that is zealous and bold in labors for the conversion of the world from sin to holiness. What an influence it would have! What thunders it would pour into the ears of the world, to wake them up to follow after God." -- Finney.

17. The foregoing remarks also apply to the wearing of mourning fashions.

"Why do we wear black garments and call them 'mourning'? Black is by no means now the special livery of grief. If it ever had any significance in this respect the sacredness of the idea is quite lost. So universal is now the assumption of black raiment, that no wardrobe is complete without a suit of it. Therefore the adoption of it as an every-day costume has broken the exclusiveness of its claim as a mourning habit; since it is as likely to be a sign of vanity as of grief.

"Besides, if we believe that our beloved have gone to that land where there is no shadow of death, no tears, and no night, why should we wear a color which, denoting privation of life, also declares loss of life? The Mohammedan chooses blue, because it is the visible emblem of heaven. The ancient Greeks and Romans chose white, as typical of purity, and during the days of their mourning consecrated the flowers and garlands of their festivals to the graves of their beloved. Even pagan China favors the same color of light and purity. It is our modern Christianity which chooses for itself the shadow and the dolefulness of black.

"Yet Christ handselled the grave in spotless linen, and the early Christians carried their dead to the grave with hymns of joy. St. Jerome commends those who omit a mourning habit. Cyprian goes much further and says he was ordered by divine revelation to preach that Christians should not lament their brethren delivered from the world, nor wear any mourning dress for them, seeing they were all gone to put on white raiment, lest they gave occasion, for the scorn of unbelievers by lamenting those as lost whom we affirm to be with God.'

"But, supposing that mourning is really worn as an emblem of grief, why, then, make it the most costly materials, and in the most fashionable styles? Why call in the aids and extravagances of crape and heavy, silk and dull jet? That this is habitually done defeats all that can be said in favor of the custom, and makes it the thinnest of mockeries.

"Black garments for the dead are part of the priestly machinery of an age which delighted in making 'transition' horrible; which originated the skull and cross-bones as an emblem and set a skeleton at every grave's mouth. It is a vulgar and sensational sentiment, the growth of a superstitious and ignorant age, and it naturally developed itself further in long strings of crawling black carriages, in black hearses and awful funeral plumes, in the ghastly shroud, and black pall and crape 'weepers.'

"The early English divines, the Nonconformists, and especially the Quakers, protested vigorously against such a misrepresentation of the highest and holiest of our hopes; and their arguments are worth recalling for our own consideration.

"1. They contend that the mourning habit had its origin in semi-barbarism, and before the revelation of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

"2. That the trappings of grief are childish where the grief is genuine, and mockery where it is not genuine.

"3. That if mourning garments are, in. tended to remind the mourner of his loss, he ought not -- if his sorrow is true -- to need any such memento; and if they are designed to point out his grief to others, their object is unnecessary and immoral; while if they are designed as a consolation to the mourner, they must miss the intention by constantly reminding him of a past forever gone.

"4. Their inconvenience. Into the solemnity of the house of death, and perhaps into the very presence of overwhelming sorrow, must come dealers in mourning wares, and the makers of them; hired strangers may be sewing in the hushed rooms, and the household work is increased instead of lessened.

"5. Their bad moral influence. It is impossible but that the wearers of mourning must occupy themselves about the materials, fit, and style, and thus the lesson God would teach by the bereavement is much weakened, if not lost, in the consideration of veils and bonnets and mantles.

"6. The expense of such a habit. Often the necessity comes after long, depleting sickness, the purse is low, the heart is anxious and heavy with many cares, and for the robing of the body the soul is kept so troubled about debts and obligations that it misses altogether the lesson it ought to have learnt. The dead are not justly dealt with in such cases, their very memory becomes an anxiety, all the sweetness of their love and life is forgotten in the straits with which their death is mostly remembered.

"Scarce anything in our whole social economy needs such thorough reformation as the rites surrounding death and burial. If we believe that Christ died and rose again, and that through Him we also shall have eternal life, why, then, wear the garments of despair? It is pagan, not Christian,

ought to prevail against us, or disturb our cheerful faith in the assurance 'it is well with the dead who die in the Lord.'" -- Mrs. E. A. Barr.

From, the above it will be seen that Christian parents are bound to refrain from putting ornaments, on the dress of their children as much as on their Own clothing. Those who indulge their children in superfluous ornaments commit the double sin of doing wrong themselves and teaching their children to do what God has positively forbidden. Do not try to satisfy your conscience by merely being plain yourselves. God requires that you should "train up a child in the way he should go," and you will be held. responsible for the performance of this duty.

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02 -- OBJECTIONS

1. Other professors of religion wear these, fashions. "What is that to thee, follow thou me." "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Christians should set, not follow the fashions.

2. Our ministers say there is no harm in adorning the body. "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have (already) received, let him be accursed." We have already proven from the. Word of God that conformity to the world is sinful. Whoever therefore says, "There is no harm in these things, may as well say, "There is no harm in stealing or adultery."

3. I love God, and my heart is not set on these things. You may think so; but if all your ornaments were stripped off you would soon find the contrary. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

4. One might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. "You are not of the world but I have chosen, you out of the world." A dead bird has no use for feathers.

5. I can afford to wear these things. "Ye are not our own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and spirit which are God's." "So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

6. I never had the light. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

7. Why, I never think of these little ornaments. Well, if you never think of them, why do you remember always to put them on? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things, are passed away; behold all things are become new." "When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things."

8. Did not the Israelites wear ornaments, and was not Rebecca presented with a set of jewelry? Admitting the fact does not prove that it was right. The Bible is a faithful history. It records the failings as well as the virtues of those of whom it speaks. Some who were good in the main, did some very foolish and wicked things. Some, when young, made mistakes of which they afterwards repented. The unholy women, as they do now, adopted a fashionable and worldly attire. They were known by their appearance. Please read very carefully Gen. 35:1-4, and Ex. 33:4-6. "They had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites." If they had been true Israelites they would not have, worn those useless ornaments. In the third chapter of Isaiah, the various modes that fashionable women adopted to render themselves attractive, are specially mentioned and unsparingly condemned. On the other hand, we have positive proof that the holy women of old abstained from the use of superfluous ornaments. For after this manner (that is, without gold or superfluous ornaments), in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves."

9. What is the standard of dress? I do not see the use of all your preaching and laying down rules about plain dress, unless you give us a standard. This is a great stumbling-block with many. The matter is extremely simple. 1. Be sure, in all your equipage and dress, and furniture, to show that you have no fellowship with the designs and principles of those who are aiming to adorn themselves, and to gain the applause of men. Aim directly at pleasing God. 2. Let economy be first consulted, and then convenience. Follow Christian economy -- that is, save all you can for Christ's service; and then, let things be as convenient as Christian economy will admit. 3. Aim at promoting the health of the body; it is God's temple. Dress on sanitary principles. 4. Let your dress be made so as to promote neatness, tidiness, simplicity and good taste -- not slouchily or repulsively. 5. Dress so that a sound reason can be given for the wearing of every article. 6. Let your dress be a rebuke to unreasonable fashion and extravagance, and a model worthy of imitation. 7. Do not

be afraid to profess religion by your dress. Do not shrink from the singularity of being right in this particular.

10 "If God has given us plentiful fortunes, if we are placed in the higher ranks of life, we must act suitably to our fortune. We ought then to dress according to our rank, that is, in gold and costly apparel." Where is this written? Our Savior, on one occasion, said, "Behold" they who wear gorgeous (splendid) apparel are in kings' courts;" but He does not say they ought to be even there; He neither enjoins nor countenances it. And where is this either enjoined or allowed by Him, or any of His apostles? Bring forth plain scriptural proof for your assertion, or it cannot be allowed.

11. "But did not God give express command by Moses that some, even among His chosen people, should be adorned in the most exquisite manner with gold and precious stones, and costly array?" Indeed He did; He expressly commanded this with regard to Aaron and his successors in the high priesthood. But to this we answer: (1) This direction, which God gave with regard to the Jewish high priest, can certainly affect no person here; (2) the Jews and we are under "different dispensations. The glory of the whole Mosaic dispensation was chiefly visible and external, whereas the glory of the Christian dispensation is of an invisible and spiritual nature.

12. "But what, then, are gold and precious stones for? Why have they a place in creation?" "What if we say we cannot tell? There are abundance of things in the creation which we do not know the use of. What are crocodiles, lions, tigers, and scorpions for? Why have so many poisons a place in the creation? Some of them are for medicine; but whatever they are for, in whatever manner they may be useful, they are certainly not to be used in such a manner as God has expressly forbidden."

13. "But if all men were to dress plain, how would tradesmen live?" To this Wesley replies: "(1) God certainly considered this when He gave these commands. And He would never have given them had He not seen that, if they were universally observed, men in general would live better than they otherwise could; better in this world, as well as that to come. But (2) there is no danger at all that they should be universally observed. Only a little flock in any civilized nation will observe them till the knowledge of God covers the earth. (3) If those who do observe them employ the money they thus save in the most excellent manner, that part of what before only served to fit a few rich tradesmen for hell will suffice to feed, and clothe, and employ many poor that seek the kingdom ,of heaven. (4) But it is not this; it is not a regard to trade, or the good of the nation, that makes you disobey God. No, it is pride, vanity, or some other sinful, temper, which is the real cause of these sinful actions."

14. "But, we cannot carry on our own trade. without dressing like other people." "If you mean only conformity to" those customs of your country that are neither gay nor costly, why should you not, dress like other people?" But if you mean conformity to them in what God has forbidden, the answer is ready at hand. If you cannot carry on your trade without breaking God's command, you must not carry it on. But I know no trade which may not be carried on by one who uses plain and modest apparel. I fear you love these things, and therefore think them necessary. Your heart carries away your judgment. If you were not fond of them you would never dream of their necessity."

15. "Is it best for Christians to be singular?" Certainly; Christians are bound to be singular; They are called to be a peculiar people -- that is, a singular people, essentially different from the rest of mankind. To maintain that we are not to be singular is the same as to maintain that we are to be conformed to the world. "Be not singular" -- that is, be like the world. In other words, "Be ye conformed to the world." It is your duty to dress so plainly as to show to the world that you place no reliance on the things of fashion, and set no value at all on them, but despise and neglect them altogether. But unless you are singular, unless you separate yourselves from the fashions of the world, you show that you do value them. There is no way in which you can bear a proper testimony by your lives against the fashions of the world, you show that you do value them. There is no way in which you can bear proper testimony by your lives against the fashions of the world but by dressing plainly. We do not mean that you should study singularity but that you should consult, convenience, economy, and the glory of God, although it may be singular. -- Finney.

16. "But if we dress plain, people will notice it." "The reason of it is this: So few do it that it is a novelty; and everybody stares when they see a professing Christian so strict as to disregard the fashions. Let them all do it, and the only thing you show by it is that you are a Christian, and do not wish to be confounded with the ungodly. Would it not tell on the pride of the world if all the Christian's in it were united in bearing a practical testimony against its vain show?"

17. "But in this way you carry religion too far away from the multitude. Is it not better not to set up an artificial distinction between the church and the world?" The direct reverse of this is true. The nearer you bring the church to the world the more you annihilate the reason that ought to stand out in view of the world, for their changing sides and coming over to the church. Unless you go right out from them and show that you are not of them in any respect, and carry the church so far as to have a broad interval between saints and sinners, how can you make the ungodly feel that so great a change is necessary? -- Finney.

18. "You will throw obstacles in the way of persons becoming Christians. Many respectable people will become disgusted with religion. If they cannot be allowed to dress as they choose and be Christians, they will take to the world altogether." This is just about, as reasonable as it would be for a temperance man to think he must become drunk now and then to avoid disgusting the intemperate and to retain his influence over them. The truth is that persons ought to know and ought to see in the lives of professing Christians that if they embrace religion they must be weaned from the world, and its pride, and show, and folly, and live a holy life, in watchfulness and self-denial, and active benevolence." -- Ibid.

19. "Is it not better for us to disregard this altogether, and not pay any attention to such little things, and let them take their course; let the milliner and niantua maker do as they please, and follow the usages of society in which we live and the circle in which we move?" Is this the way to show contempt for the fashions of the world? Do people ordinarily take this course of showing contempt for a thing to practice it? Why, the way to show your abhorrence of the world is to follow along in the customs and the fashions of the world. Precious reasoning this! The fact is it is wrong to dress as the carnal mind pleases, whether this fact is believed or not. -- Ibid.

"If we believe not, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." "We ought not to please ourselves . . . for even Christ pleased not Himself?"

20. "No matter how we dress, if our hearts are right." Your heart right! Then your heart may be right when your conduct is all wrong. Just as well might the profane swearer say, "No matter what words I speak, if my heart is right." No, your heart is not right unless your conduct is right. What is outward conduct, but acting out the heart? If your heart were right you would not wish to follow the fashions of the world. -- Ibid.

21. "Would you have us all turn Quakers, and put on plain dress?" Who does not know that the plain dress of the Quakers has won for them the respect of all the thinking part of the ungodly in the community? Now, if they had coupled with this a zeal for God, and the weanedness from the world, and the contempt for riches, and the self-denying labor for the conversion of sinners to Christ, which the Gospel enjoins, and the clear views of the plan of salvation which the Gospel inculcates, they would long since have converted the world. -- Ibid.

22. "Would you have us become Methodists?" Who does not know that the Methodists, when they were noted for their plain dress, and for renouncing the fashion and show of the world, used to have power with God in prayer, and that they had the universal respect of the world as sincere Christians? And who does not know that since they have laid aside this peculiarity, and conformed to the world in dress, and other things, and seemed to be trying to fit them selves up as a denomination and gain influence with the world, they are losing the power of prayer? O, that they had never thrown down this wall! It was one of the leading excellencies of Wesley's system to have his followers distinguished from others, by a plain dress. -- Ibid.

23. "We may be proud of a plain dress, as well as of a fashionable dress. The Quakers are as proud as we are." So may any good thing be abused. But this is no reason why it should not be used if it can be shown to be good. We put it back to the objector; is that any reason why a Christian female -- who fears God and loves the souls of men -- should neglect the means which may make an impression that she is separated from the world, and pour contempt on the fashion's of the ungodly, in which they are dancing their way to hell? -- Ibid.

24. "This is a small thing, and it ought not to take up so much of a minister's time in the pulpit." This is an objection, often heard from worldly professors. But the minister that fears God will not be deterred by it. He will pursue the subject until such professing Christians are cut off from their conformity to the world, or cut off from the church. It is not merely the dress, as dress, but it is the conformity to the world in dress and fashion that is the great stumbling block in the way of sinners. How can the world be converted while professing Christians are conformed to the world? What good will it do to give money to send the Gospel to the heathen when professing Christians live so at home? Well might the heathen ask, "What profit is it to become Christians, when those who profess to be Christians are pursuing the world with all the hot haste of the ungodly?" The great thing necessary for the church is to break off from conformity to the world, and then they will have power with God in prayer, and the world will be converted. -- Ibid.

25. "But if we dress so, we shall be called fanatics." Whatever the ungodly call you -- fanatics, Methodists, or anything else -- you will be known as Christians, and in the secret

consciences of men will be acknowledged as such. It is not in the power of unbelievers successfully to pour contempt on the holy church, separated from the world. How was it with the early Christians? They lived separate from the world, and it made such an impression that even infidel writers say of them, "These men win the hearts of the mass of the people because they give themselves up to deeds of charity, and pour contempt on the world." Depend upon it, if professing Christians would live so now, the last effort of hell would soon be expended in vain to defeat the spread of the Gospel. Wave after wave would flow abroad till the highest mountain tops were covered with the waters of life. -- Ibid.

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03 -- REMARKS

1. "By non-conformity to the world, you may save much money for doing good. In one year a greater fund may be saved by the church than has ever been raised for the spread of the Gospel.

2. "By non-conformity to the world, a great deal of time might be saved for doing good that is now consumed and wasted in following the fashions, and obeying the maxims and joining in the pursuits of the world.

3. "At the same time, Christians in this way would preserve their peace of conscience, would enjoy communion with God, would have the spirit of prayer, and would possess far greater usefulness. You profess that you want to have sinners converted. But, what avails it, if they sink right back again into, conformity with the world? Of what use is it to try to convert sinners, and to make them feel there is something in religion, and yet, when they go to trade with you, or meet you in the street, you contradict it all, and tell them, by your conformity to the world, there is nothing in it?" -- Finney.

As Dr. Judson has truly remarked: "Great things depend on small; and in that case things which appear small to short-sighted man are great in the sight of God. Many there are who praise the principle of self-denial in general, and condemn it in all its particular applications as too minute, scrupulous and severe. The enemy is well aware that if he can secure the minute units, the sum total will be his own. Think not any thing small which may have a bearing upon the kingdom of Christ and upon the destinies of eternity. How easy to conceive, from many known events, that the single fact of a lady's. divesting herself of a necklace for Christ's sake, may involve consequences which shall be felt in the remotest parts of the earth, and in all future generations to the end of time -- yea, stretch away into a boundless eternity, and be a subject of praise millions of ages after this world and all its ornaments are burned up.

"Beware of another suggestion made by weak and erring souls, who will tell you that there is more danger of being proud of plain dress and other modes of self-denial than of fashionable attire and self-indulgence. Be not ensnared by this last, most finished, most insidious device of the great enemy. Rather believe that He who enables you to make a sacrifice is able to keep you from being proud of it. Believe that He will kindly permit such occasions of mortification and. shame as will preserve you from the evil threatened. The severest part of self-denial consists in encountering the disapprobation, the envy, the hatred of one's dearest friends. All who enter the

straight and narrow path in good earnest soon find themselves in a climate extremely uncongenial to the growth of pride.

"The gay and fashionable will, in many cases, be the last to engage in this holy undertaking. But let none be discouraged on that account. Christ has seldom honored the leaders of worldly fashion by appointing them leaders in His cause. Fix it in your hearts that in this warfare the Lord Jesus Christ expects every woman to do her duty. There is probably not one in the humblest walks of life but would, on strict examination, find some article which might be dispensed with for purposes of charity, and ought to be dispensed with in compliance with the apostolic command. Wait not, therefore, for the fashionable to set an example; wait not for one another; listen not to the news from the next town; but let every individual go forward, regardless of reproach, fearless of consequences. The eye of Christ is upon you. Death is hastening to strip you of your ornaments, and to turn your fair forms into corruption and dust.

"We shall all soon appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to be tried for our conduct, and to receive the things done in the body. When placed before that awful bar, in the presence of that Being whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and whose irrevocable fiat will fix you forever in heaven or in hell, and mete out the measure of your everlasting pleasures and pains, what course will you wish you had then taken? Will you then wish that, in defiance of His authority, you had adorned your mortal bodies with gold and precious stones, and costly attire, cherishing self-love, vanity and pride? Or, will you wish that you had chosen a life of self denial, renounced the world, taken up the cross daily and followed Him? And as you will then wish you had done, do now."

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04 -- THE GODDESS OF FASHION

Various are the gods which men worship. In Daniel 3:1-8, we have a minute description of one made by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Upon reading this account many, unconscious of their own bondage, are ready to vow with holy horror that they never would be found guilty of such abject bondage as the subjects of this king were.

Yet these same people today are worshipping a god very similar in many respects to this image of gold -- and that is the goddess of fashion.

There are at least six points of similarity between these two gods:

1. The Image of Gold Had a Bad Origin.

It was conceived in the heart of one of the proudest and worst men probably in all the vast empire of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was a haughty, proud monarch. He was full of pomp and bombast. To such an extent did he go in his boastful career that the Almighty deprived him for some years of his reason, and made him eat grass like an ox.

And where do the fashions of this world originate? An old Scotch preacher is reported to have said in a sermon at Aberdeen: "Ye people of Aberdeen get your fashion's from Glasgow, and

Glasgow from Edinburgh, and Edinburgh from London, and London from Paris, and Paris from the devil." By the great bewitching power of this goddess Satan hopes to entrap millions into the same pit he himself has fallen into. From present appearances it would seem as though his harvest will be great.

2. It Was an Exceedingly Expensive god. We are told that this image was sixty cubits or nine feet in breadth. It is not likely, therefore, that the whole image, from centre to circumference, was made of gold; but supposing it was only covered with a thin layer of gold, even then its costliness must have been immense. In this respect it bears a striking resemblance to the goddess of fashion. The amount of money she grinds out of the people, many of them poor, is something appalling. Even though the comforts of life are lacking, the last dollar must be spent for a dress or a hat in the latest style. Before one fashion is hardly worn out, on comes another. A death occurs in the family, and, though the purse has been drained by necessary expenses, perhaps many of the accounts yet unpaid, yards of expensive black crepe and suits of so-called mourning clothes must be bought, though there may be nothing on hand with which to pay the bills.

In this mad effort to keep up with the best of society so-called, many have gone down to financial ruin and others to keep up the show have been drawn into embezzlement, forgery and open theft. "The women of America spend more for artificial flowers for their hats and bonnets, a great deal, than the whole Church of God gives for missions. The extra buttons which the ladies of America put on their kid gloves would double the missionary contributions of the world."

3. It Was a Very Cruel god.

The command went forth that that image must be worshipped, and if they refused they must suffer the cruel death of being burned alive. And is there a tyrant more remorseless and exacting in his demands than fashion? Take, for example, the cruelties inflicted upon birds to gratify the pride of women. When the wings of seabirds are wanted they are wrenched off and the living, mutilated birds are thrown upon the water to die. The feathers of the white egret are obtained at the time when the bird is breeding, and thousands of young birds die of starvation, while the parent birds, which have been shot, lie festering in the sun. There is something peculiarly repulsive in seeing a woman adorned with feathers which were the beauty of a bird in the love season of the year.

The means often employed to secure the ornaments is shamefully cruel. A minister in the New York Evangelist says: "In Louisville I saw in an apple orchard a man catching the southern red birds in a trap. He skinned them alive before my eyes. He was paid 50 cents each for their skins. Every red bird I have seen since in a milliner's shop, in a church, or on the street, has recalled that blarneyed man, bloody-handed, amid the sweet fragrance and song of that peaceful orchard. Five hundred thousand skins of this species alone have been used this fall. Every humming bird I see on a woman's bonnet; every bright-hued wing or velvety breast of a bird that trims a fashionable hat, hurts me. A human scalp displayed by a savage is less barbarous, for at least human fought human, and the scalp is the reward of prowess, but the bird skin is the badge of cruelty and cowardice. Is womanhood inherently cruel, or only thoughtlessly so?"

A lady (?) faints to see a chicken's head cut off. Yet she attempts to worship the God of pity with a bird on her head which was caught in a padded trap and skinned olive to please her unholy pride. Perhaps this same merciful, benevolent, holy (?) creature is the preacher's wife! Shame!

A writer in the Christian Standard says: "Who can conceive of anything more incongruous than a number of women bowing around the sacramental altar to commemorate the atoning passion of our tender, merciful Lord with their heads decked out in the badges of cruel, carnal pride, in the shape of dead birds, or nodding aigrettes, torn, ruthlessly from the tortured breast of a little dying mother, while her nestlings are left to starve? Oh, the shame of it -- the awful, cruel shame of it."

To satisfy the demands of this cruel god how many willingly rob their bodies of sufficient clothing! See the growing army of worshippers at this shrine who, to have their headgear in fashion, expose their heads and necks to biting winds and frost, bringing in its train coughs, colds, asthma, and wasting consumption. Hundreds impair their health and injure their vital organs for life by squeezing themselves with the corset into an unnatural shape. Thousands of poor helpless children are robbed of shoes and clothing by the demands made upon their parents by this monster -- all to keep up an outward show of style.

4. It was a Senseless god.

This image served no earthly purpose whatever, except to gratify the pride and lust of Nebuchadnezzar. So of the fashions of this day -- they are senseless and useless. The only thing they are good for is to gratify the awful pride of the human heart and to cater to the lusts of men. The unsightly bustle, the disgusting crinoline, big sleeves, frightful bangs and some other styles are samples of what the arch fiend is doing to debase women and to drown men in destruction with them. These and many other fashions instead of improving the looks of the wearer make them appear ridiculous in the extreme.

5. It was a Tyrannical god.

Nebuchadnezzar gave no reason why his people should worship that image except that it was his own sweet will, and yet down upon their knees they must go, with the threat as to what he would do with them if they refused. So with this modern idol; no matter how silly, costly, cruel, or senseless the new fashion may be, it must be worshipped. You will be told that you might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. If you don't worship it you will be hated and despised as much as the Hebrew children were. You will get in the furnace of persecution, sneer and reproach, which will be a worse one than theirs was, for they escaped in a few hours, whereas your furnace will be for life.

6. It was a Very Popular god.

Everything was calculated to make it so.

1. The king issued a command that it should be worshipped. 2. All the great men of the kingdom led the way. 3. All the people except three peculiar men bowed down to worship it. Who would dare stand out against such an overwhelming majority as this? 4. Then very charming music

was given to enchant and draw the crowd. Who could have the nerve to withstand such influences as these? It would require superhuman strength to take and maintain such a stand.

We know of no god more popular than fashion. Vast millions worship at its shrine. All classes -- high and low, rich and poor, black and white, learned and illiterate are included among its votaries. The number who do not worship it are so ridiculously small they are laughed at wherever they go; they are about as peculiar and scarce as the three Hebrew children were.

And now what is to be done about this goddess of fashion? That there is any moral difference between prostitution before that image, and worshipping this modern idol, it would be difficult to prove. If one was a sin so is the other. But in view of the worldwide and ever-growing popularity of dame fashion, in view of the adamant chains with which she enslaves her worshippers, the question arises: can anything be done to break her awful spell? Is there such a thing as deliverance from this mighty foe? Thank God there is. Reformation will not do it; joining a church will not do it; baptism will not do it; confirmation will not do it, but old-fashioned Bible salvation will do it for the worst slave who ever looked in a glass. The grace of God will so completely break these chains that you will not want the fashions of a Christless world any more. You will look on them with disdain and contempt and you will become as uncompromising as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were.

"Jesus the prisoner's fetters breaks,
And bruises Satan's head;
Power into strengthless souls He speaks,
And life into the dead."

The following affecting lines tell the sad story of a young and beautiful lady who surrendered all for Christ, received His pardon and was happy in His love. But she was opposed by her father. At last he induced her to give up her Savior by giving her costly jewels and rich, fashionable attire. Not long after she died unsaved. She wore the baubles, of vanity and pride for a short time, but she lost forever the white robe and a crown of glory.

"Go bring me," said the dying fair,
With anguish in her tone,
"Those costly robes and jewels rare --
Go bring them every one."
They strewed them on her dying bed,
Those robes of princely cost.
"Father," with bitterness she said,
"For these my soul is lost."

"With glorious hopes, I once was blest,
Nor feared the gaping tomb;
With heaven already in my breast,
I looked for heaven to come.
I heard a Savior's pard'ning voice,
My soul was filled with peace;

Father, you bought me with these toys,
I bartered heaven for these."

"Take them, they are the price of Blood;
For them I've lost my soul,
For them must bear the wrath of God
While ceaseless ages roll.
Remember, when you look on these,
Your daughter's fearful doom;
That she, her pride and thine to please,
Went quaking to the tomb."

"Go bear them from my sight and touch,
Your gifts I here restore.
Keep them with care -- they cost you much,
They cost your daughter more.
Look on them every rolling year,
Upon my dying day.
And drop for me the burning tear,"
She said, and sunk away.

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THE END