**The Garment Spotted By the Flesh**

The Scriptures say that we are to be washed by the water and the word. To wash ourselves means that we are going to take God’s word and let it cleanse away the wrong ideas, the corruptions, spots and wrinkles of our character.

We now seek God’s word to gain the understanding of the words in Jude:

**Jude 1:17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.**

These words have been very much the imprint upon my mind ever since the Lord has called me into His work. This scripture has often affected my labours.

**Verily, the Lord has need of armies of workers, and some of the most precious souls will be found in the pit of degradation. God calls upon us to work for this class. Do not lose your purity because you are among the impure. {ST, June 21, 1899 par. 11}**

The members of the church are people who are workers for God, and those who are not yet members, I hope are also holding onto this desire: we are to be a team of workers that are at work to reach out for precious souls in the pit of degradation.

But as you are amongst them doing this work, *do not lose your purity because you are among the impure*. Very applicable to these words are the words of Isaiah when he saw God in his purity. He saw into heaven in his vision, and after he had seen this, he said:

**Isaiah 6:5 …Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**

He is overwhelmed, and he cries like this; but then notice what God does:

**Isaiah 6:6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, [which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid [it] upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here [am] I; send me.**

When was Isaiah ready to be sent? When he realised his true condition, when he saw God in His purity and he saw what he really was – undone and iniquitous. Why? Because he dwelt among a people who had unclean lips. So God had to cleanse him. And when his iniquity was cleansed, he could then respond to the call to go.

You and I are being called to be the witnesses for God. But we dwell among a people of unclean lips, we dwell in a time of earth’s history where corruption is rampant, and we have grown up in that and though we regard what we see around us as bad, we are getting a bit accustomed to it.

In fact, not only are we becoming accustomed to it because we have grown up in it, we have been drawn from the gutter – every one of us. When you look at God’s purity and holiness you discover that. And when we look at King David as an example, he was a man of God. You know so well the story of the terrible sin he committed with Bathsheba. Why did he do that?

**It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David’s fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him. Intercourse with surrounding nations also exerted an influence for evil. According to the customs prevailing among Eastern rulers, crimes not to be tolerated in subjects were uncondemned in the king; {PP 717.2}**

This was a custom.

**…the monarch was not under obligation to exercise the same self-restraint as the subject. All this tended to lessen David’s sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust to his own wisdom and might. {*Ibid.*}**

Why did he commit this terrible sin with Bathsheba? Because his mind had been conditioned to think that he was a king like other kings, and sin didn’t look quite so serious; so in his eyes it was within his rights to desire a woman whom he saw and to call her across and do what a king does in those times. Are we surrounded by customs and practices that make us become unaware of the seriousness of sin and we fall for the ploy?

**There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible. {PK 178.1}**

This is what we are surrounded by – customs, fashions, practices that become a norm to our sense. And after a period of time, like King David who was a man after God’s own heart, we slip, and our perceptions are not sharp anymore. Have we not been drawn from just such circumstances in our life? Those of us who have been in the pit of degradation have been drawn out; God has made a difference with us, He has redeemed us from the corruptions that we have been familiar with. Where do reformers dwell in relation to this subject?

**Prevailing Circumstances**

The words of 2 Timothy 3 are a perfect description of our prevailing circumstances. When we use the word *prevailing,* it means a constant, regular drift. And if you have ever driven along the seashore where the prevailing winds are in a certain direction, what do the trees look like? They are all bending in that direction. The most vivid experience I have ever had was when I was traveling along the south coast of the south island of New Zealand, right along the bottom which is open to the winds from the Antarctic – and you should see the trees. They are all on a slant. What are we to be spiritually speaking? Trees. We are to be trees of righteousness. But if the prevailing drift of society around us keeps on pushing us, what is our danger? To actually bend and keep growing in that direction.

**2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**

We are in this peril.

**2 Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves,**

Is this not the reality? This is all around us.

**2 Timothy 3:2 …covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent,**

What does *incontinent* mean? When a person is in bed and he is incontinent, it means he can’t hold his water. Here are people today that cannot hold their spiritual water, their passions. They have to let them go. You cross their path, you’ll soon find out.

**2 Timothy 3:3 …fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**

This is the prevailing atmosphere we are under. But what is worse? They have *a form of godliness*, but deny the power thereof. So we are told:

**2 Timothy 3:5 …from such turn away.**

This needs to be studied for us to understand the pressure that is upon us, to be very clear as to the peril that we are surrounded by. We are surrounded by this conformity, and if you are going to look different to the way the world is, you will be regarded as a freak. Be careful that you don’t regard your brethren and sisters as freaks.

**Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

*Be not conformed to this world* – How serious are these words. Is it easy to be conformed to this world? We know it is as easy as it was for David to slip into the thing that was a process of the kings’ world around him. We are in exactly the same position. So we are told with some to make a difference, “pulling them out of the fire.” We are being pulled out of the fire today, but as we try to reach these precious souls that are found in the pit of degradation, *do not lose your purity because you are among the impure*. What should you do? Hate even the garments spotted by the flesh, let alone all these degraded situations that we are surrounded by.

We want to examine the meaning of “hating the garment spotted by the flesh.” By dealing with this subject we will be able to understand the true meaning of the entire scripture in Jude. We are surrounded by people who have separated themselves from the pure way of the early apostles.

**Jude 1:19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God,**

What does it mean to keep ourselves in the love of God? We will come back to that. But let us first examine something else. What is meant with the words: “the garment spotted by the flesh”? Let us turn to scriptures that talk about people who deal with garments that are spotted by the flesh. Here we have the prevailing circumstance:

**Isaiah 3:16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing [as] they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:**

What is this describing? Young women mincing. Have you seen them walking on the cat walk with their high heels? Do you know what the Bible is talking about?

**Isaiah 3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments [about their feet], and [their] cauls, and [their] round tires like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs,** **and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.**

As you read this with an open mind and let the Holy Spirit show you, what is the garment spotted by the flesh? It is garments that deal with this kind of mincing, this lustful display of human bodies. What are the prevailing customs regarding the senses of the flesh and the garments to do with that?

We want to see what it means to keep ourselves in the love of God in relation to what Jude is saying there. This is the prevailing circumstance again, and it is crowding upon every single human being, including the people of God:

**1 John 2:16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh,**

What is the lust of the flesh? It is a desire where the flesh is made to feel comforted and soothed, and made to feel sensual satisfaction. But that’s not all.

**1 John 2:16 …and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.**

So we are told to keep ourselves in the love of the Father.

**1 John 2:15 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.**

Keep yourself in the love of God. As we come out of degradation, as we are drawn out of the fire, we should hate even the garments of the flesh, let alone the flesh and its lusts. What is non-conformity to this spirit, in real terms? As men and women are loving the desires of the flesh – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – what is the contrast by which we can say, Oh that’s what it means not to be conformed to the world? What are we to be occupied with? We need to keep our faith uplifted to Jesus.

**It is right to love beauty… {FLB 243.8}**

Isn’t that what the world is concentrating on, the beauty of the body?

**It is right to love beauty and to desire it; but God desires us to love and seek first the highest beauty, that which is imperishable. No outward adorning can compare in value or loveliness with that “meek and quiet spirit,” {*Ibid.*}**

What is this meek and quiet spirit?

**…the “fine linen, white and clean,” which all the holy ones of earth will wear. This apparel will make them beautiful and beloved here, and will hereafter be their badge of admission to the palace of the King. {*Ibid.*}**

I want to have a place in the palace of the King, don’t you? Then what must I do? Love not the world. Love not all that pertains to the desire for beauty and for the sensation of beauty that the world pursues. Hate even the garment spotted by the flesh. What are we to be occupied with? The highest beauty – to be dressed with a meek and quiet spirit. So my dress is my spirit? My spirit is to be revealed through my dress. Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh is the contrast. Can you see? We are to hate the spotted spirit of the garment. I am to be dressed in *fine linen, white and clean*, *which all the holy ones of earth will wear*.

It is very clear then that apparel equals character. We are to be dressed in the white garments of Christ’s righteousness – a character. And character is what? A thought and a feeling oft repeated becomes an action, and the action oft repeated becomes a habit, and habits form character. Where are my thoughts? Do they dwell with sense and feeling? And if I dwell with sense and feeling, will that be manifested in my clothing? Does the world manifest their thoughts and feelings in their clothing? The manner in which the clothes are arranged on the body will express the thoughts and feelings. Sr. White writes that the clothing is the index to the heart.

**“Through dress the mind may be read, as through the delicate tissues of the lettered page. A modest [person] will dress modestly; a really refined and intellectual [person] will bear the marks of careful selection and faultless taste.” {RH, October 31, 1871 par. 16}**

We know this to be true, don’t we? A person dresses in the way that he thinks and is, and you can tell him, When you come to such and such a place you’re not allowed to dress in a certain way, and he’ll say, I can dress the way I like. Because he will dress the way he is. So it is of no use to tell anyone what they must wear, because they will wear what they are in character. If my thoughts are upon my flesh and the feelings of my flesh, when I stand there getting dressed and I am looking at the clothes I am going to wear, I will wear what my flesh feels good about.

I still remember the first day I ever got a pair of trousers for church, when I was a youngster in Germany. I was walking with these pleated trousers and I had a tremendous feeling; but it was a feeling that I had associated with going to church. But then I wore some tight jeans one day, and I felt like a cowboy. My clothes dealt with my feelings, and my feelings dwelt with my clothes. It is inseparable.

**God calls His church to be more separate from the world in their dress than you have thought. {TDG 295.3}**

*God* calls for this.

**God is constantly instructing His people to flee from pride of appearance, from love of self, {*Ibid.*}**

Have you ever spoken these words, When are we going to stop talking about dress?? Why do we hear from the pulpit so frequently about dress? Because God is *constantly* instructing His people to flee from pride of appearance and love of self. That’s why. As much as it is a constant pressure of the prevailing influence of the world, God is constantly counteracting it for His people. That is God’s purpose. And if anyone is a messenger of God he will have to speak just as God dictates.

**If we are Christians, we shall follow Christ, even though the path in which we are to walk cuts right across our natural inclinations. There is no use in telling you that you must not wear this or that, for if the love of these vain things is in your heart, your laying off your adornments will only be like cutting the foliage off a tree. The inclinations of the natural heart would again assert themselves. {TDG 139.2}**

I have seen people exhibiting this very thing. They were really shocked into a message of dress reform, and they changed suddenly. But then after about ten years, they followed the natural heart again. Because they were told how to dress instead of how to have a change of heart to dress the way God wanted them to dress. So the inclinations of the natural heart again asserted themselves.

**You must have a conscience of your own. {*Ibid.*}**

We need to come to God and say, “Lord, what is Your instruction? and I am willing to submit, even though I don’t understand and my feelings are completely contrary to that. Never mind.” Pull them out of the fire. You know, it is a very painful thing for me to preach these subjects because I know that there are souls that are bristling under this preaching, and I don’t want to make people bristle. But I must read what is written, and I must share it. God has a preference in reference to dress, because it is a reflection of the character. So if He wants His church to reflect the character of Jesus, He then displays to us what we must understand about dress.

**God’s Preference**

**In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron’s robes, for his dress was symbolic. {6T 96.2}**

That was Aaron. What about us?

**So the dress of Christ’s followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. {*Ibid.*}**

So instead of dealing with what dress I am supposed to be wearing, I am looking at the experience of God’s beauty, as described in Aaron’s experience, and as it is described for us in character (because character represents dress). What should characterize our appearance?

**Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by** [1] **neatness,** [2] **modesty, and purity. {*Ibid.*}**

Modesty and purity are a repetition of one aspect, while neatness is another. Here are two factors that have to do with the moral nature of our character – modesty and purity. Is this not the opposite to the world? Oh yes, they might be neat, but are they modest and pure in apparel? They can’t be, because the love of the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the life.

**The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. {6T 96.3}**

Remember when we studied the subject of living by every word that proceeds out of God’s mouth? Here it is. Study it for yourself. Don’t be told by others that you need to dress like this and like that; study it for yourself. Live by every word.

**We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. {*Ibid.*}**

What *God* appreciates. Not what you and I appreciate. You see, if I don’t do what God appreciates I am doing the same thing as Hazen Foss. I have my own opinion, and I’m going to argue with God. And that is what I hear people doing. But let’s get off that platform.

**All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. {*Ibid.*}**

What will they do? They will heed.

**Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel. {*Ibid.*}**

What will express the truth of the gospel? Even our style? “Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” So the garment spotted by the flesh has a style – a spirit of the world, a spirit of the flesh. And we are to hate that, and even our style of dress demonstrates the purity of the gospel, to cover our sins. Isn’t that what the gospel is? So the sense of our body, the sensual feelings of our body, is what the world palliates and dresses to appease. Therefore the question for God’s people is, Is my sense holy or sensual? The priestly garments were symbolic of something. What was it? We are told in Exodus 28:2 that those clothes were “for glory and for beauty.”

**In accordance with their office, a special dress was appointed for the priests. “Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty” (Exodus 28:2), was the divine direction to Moses. . . . Everything connected with the apparel and deportment of the priests was to be such as to impress the beholder with a sense of the holiness of God, {FLB 195.3}**

If you study the priest’s garments, everything was thought of to impress the beholder with a sense. And what is this sense? It is the exact opposite to the sense of the flesh.  As we have been redeemed out of the degradation of our sinful, fleshly desires, and we now make a difference with others, pulling them out of the flesh, because we are dwelling amongst the people, we are in danger like David to be affected. So we must hate even the garment spotted by the flesh. Because if I don’t hate the garment spotted by the flesh, I will begin to sensually pursue the next step into the degradation again. It doesn’t happen overnight. It is very slow, very insidious.

If I don’t hate the garment spotted by the flesh, if I actually caress it and let it caress my body, I am right in Satan’s track.

**Everything connected with the apparel and deportment of the priests was to be such as to impress the beholder with a sense of the holiness of God, the sacredness of His worship, and the purity required of those who came into His presence. {*Ibid.*}**

The apparel of the priest was to impress with a sense of the purity required of those who come into God’s presence. Our clothing is to impress us also with this sense, because we are to be following the example of the priest. So the priestly garments are symbolic. They are symbolic of character. They are symbolic of our sensuality – whether my sense is holy, or whether my sense is the flesh. This is a very important criterion.

We now want to listen very carefully to the Spirit of God in His word in application to the sensualities of the world and our resistance to that. Let us spell out some sensual aspects to contrast with God’s sense of purity, so that we might shudder instead of being attracted, that we might understand what it means to come out of her and touch not the unclean thing.

**Worldly Ways**

What are worldlings occupied with in regards to their body? What do women do? They go to the boutique. And what do they do there? They tissy up their body. Apart from their hair, what else do they do? All their fingernails, they can’t do them at home, they have to get someone else to do it, to make their fingernails look professionally beautiful. What else do they do? They wax their legs. What for? Because women, and even men, think that hairs are ugly on the legs. That is devilish, that is totally worldly, and a lot of people don’t even know it.

When the sheer stocking came in, that was when the waxing of the legs came in, because you can see the hair on the legs. I’m speaking straight here, brethren and sisters. This is not my opinion. I read about it when it came in by Seventh-day Adventists who were disgusted with the sheer stockings. We read of something very interesting thing that people are occupied with in regards to their body and the sensuality of it:

**A great amount of time and money is squandered upon needless adornments. Many inventions have been sought out in extra puffings, tucks, and trimmings, which have a direct tendency to lessen vitality and shorten life. {RH, October 31, 1871 par. 17}**

Why are there tucks in the dress of both men and women? Sr. White talks here about women who have naturally small waists. You know what she says about them? Have you ever quaintly said, “Oh, you’ve got just such a perfect waist; you’re so nice and slim.”?

**Some women have naturally small waists. But rather than regard such forms as beautiful, they should be viewed as defective. {RH, October 31, 1871 par. 23}**

What is our mind affected by when we think the other way? What did she call it?

**These wasp waists may have been transmitted to them from their mothers, as the result of their indulgence in the sinful practice of tight-lacing, and in consequence of imperfect breathing. {*Ibid.*}**

It has been passed on through the heredity.

**Poor children born of these miserable slaves of fashion have diminished vitality, and are predisposed to take on disease. {*Ibid.*}**

When men and women go to the body-building thing the customs and fashions cause them to follow very unhealthy practices. Have you ever been told, Come on, tuck your tummy in? I have been told to do that, and when I tuck my tummy in I become like bodybuilders. But you know what it does when you tuck your tummy in? It stops you from breathing with the lower parts of your lungs, which is a necessity for your health.

And I have actually had to get confused myself. I have learned through my nursing to breathe properly, to lift the stomach instead of the chest. But if you tuck your stomach in, how can you lift your stomach? You’ll be constricted. It’ll be completely impossible for you to breathe deep. And women who are of the same mind are doing the same, when usually women breathe with their stomach. Sr. White has much to write about this. All because of worldly, lust-spotted clothing to reveal the figure, the tucks and the bulges. “Look good at the tops and narrow at the waist. That is beautiful.” No; not in God’s eyes.

And with regards to the stockings and the hairy legs, we read the following:

**It is a common thing to see the dress raised one-half of a yard, exposing an almost unclad ankle to the sight of gentlemen, {HR, May 1, 1872 par. 18}**

That was in those days, when the ladies had to lift their dresses one-half a yard (40cm) to expose an almost unclad ankle to the sight of gentlemen,

**…but no one seems to blush at this immodest exposure. {*Ibid.*}**

What is the meaning of the writings of the Spirit of God when it talks about *modesty*? Here you can see it. To expose the leg half a yard, thus revealing *an almost unclad ankle* – this is immodesty.

**No one’s sensitive modesty seems shocked for the reason that this is customary. It is fashion, and for this reason it is endured. No outcry of immodesty is heard, although it is so in the fullest sense. {*Ibid.*}**

So according to the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy, what is it when women wear sheer stockings with a half a yard of their leg revealed? How much have we been conditioned to that, to regard that as normal? The Spirit of God tells us to hate “even the garment spotted by the flesh.” What is a sheer stocking? A garment spotted by the flesh. What is the clothing that fits to the figure of the body with the tucks and the puffings? It is a garment spotted by the flesh.

What does Scripture reveal regarding all this now? What are we to put on?

**Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].**

Make no provision. So when we go and buy our clothing, when we deal with our clothing procedures, and we are trying to reach others to pull them out of the fire, what must we do? We must dress ourselves in a way that shows that we hate the garment spotted by the flesh. It is as simple as that. We will make no provision in our garments to display the spotted, spiritual nature.

**When the King Comes In**

In fact, we live today in the judgment, which means that what is Jesus doing right now? What is the King doing right now in the story of the hour of God’s judgment, as this feast is prepared and the king comes in? We are living today when the King is seeing the guests.

**Matthew 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:**

He didn’t have the character. And the character was revealed by a garment.

**Matthew 22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few [are] chosen.**

How relevant is this?

**How is it? Are we confessing Christ in our daily life? Do we confess Him in our dress, adorning ourselves with plain and modest apparel? Is our adorning that of the meek and quiet spirit which is of so great price in the sight of God? Are we seeking to advance the cause of the Master? Is the line of demarcation between you and the world distinct, or are you seeking to follow the fashions of this degenerate age? Is there no difference between you and the worldling? Does the same spirit work in you that works in the children of disobedience? {TDG 139.1}**

Let a “Thus saith the Lord” govern our behaviour, our dress, and everything of our life, our character – the thoughts and feelings which will express themselves. Our calling is to reflect Jesus therefore. As the beautiful little children’s song says,

*Be like Jesus, this my song,*
*In the home and in the throng;*
*Be like Jesus all day long!*
*I would be like Jesus.*

Amen.