

What does he do about it? The Bible shows the way: FORGIVE, even as Christ forgave us! This, of course, was all without a cause!

Anyone who wears this kind of clothing and does so with a sense of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his life will certainly know something of the winsomeness of Christ our Lord,

4. A NEW MOTIVE v. 14.

The apostle is still dealing with the matter of clothing. Dress in those days was tied together with an outer belt. Hence, over all the other clothing, Paul urges that love be placed. This is the outer garment which serves to bind all the others together. It holds all in proper place and firmness. It gives perfection to all the others. The word "perfectness" suggests the idea that there is a collective thought in the passage. The result of a proper combination is perfectness. Love adds that final touch!

Conclusion

New styles are continually being thrust upon us in the physical world. Fads and trends are some things which many are found to enjoy. The Bible lays emphasis upon a mode of apparel which never is out of style. It is always appropriate clothing for the born again believer on Christ. Let us wear these garments with joy and the freshness of our new affection for Him. Amen.

Notes:

THE EPISTLE OF COLOSSIANS

"The Christian's Dress" Colossians 3:10-14

Introduction

1. It is reported that the "clothes make the man." There is no question about it that one's appearance is a large determinant of person and state.

2. The Bible describes believers in many ways. In this text three terms are used:

- a. Elect--this means that in the providence of an infinite God, believers are His chosen ones. The result of a divine selection through grace.
- b. Holy--this means that the child of God has a special kind of life to live. It is a separated life unto God.
- c. Beloved--this means that in a unique sense those who are born again are loved of God. True, He loves the world, but He loves His own particularly.

Now, these three special privileges breed responsibility. There is the call to conform to the position in which God has placed the believing sinner.

3. Paul describes the situation for a believer's responsibility in terms of dress. A whole brand new arrangement has come into being. Get a real spiritual uplift from these new items of dress:

1. A NEW MAN vv. 10, 11.

Here is the great solvent of so many petty and selfish trends. It is that Christ must be all in all. The Greek puts it this way: "but all things and in all, Christ!" Now this is accomplished by making no room for unBiblical diversities (Greek for "neither" is the strengthened form of the preposition "in" and means "cannot be"). Here are the drastic changes:

- a. Nationally. No room for Greek or Jew. There is no special place because a man is a Jew. Being a Jew is no single credit or virtue.
- b. Ritually. No room for circumcision or uncircumcision. There is no special place for one becoming a Jew. Ritual advantages are done away with in Christ our Lord.
- c. Educationally. No room for intellectual distinctions. How this probes the reality of one's faith on Christ in an academic community! The barbarians were those harse in speech, uncouth, ignorant of Greek language and culture. The Scythians were the lowest of them. Bengel says they were "More barbarous than the barbarians." Heroditus describes them as living in wagons, offering human sacrifices, scalping and sometimes flaying slain enemies, drinking their blood, and using their skulls for drinking cups.
- d. Socially. No room for social inequities. Whether a man is a slave or a free man matters not with God.

Since all of these things are of no significant consequence, what has taken place? Paul gives the answer pointedly: the new man is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him Who created the new man. The verb is present tense and notes the constant activity of God in the life. The goal is full knowledge (great word for Paul's argument in Colossians against the Gnostics). This full knowledge, however, actually produces a character and manner of life in conformity to Him Who is the personal expression of God.

3. A NEW MANNER vv. 12, 13.

Seven glorious virtues are indicated as the proper clothing for believers. One says "clothing" because the verb "put on" is used in this connection, a verb related to clothes.

- a. Tenderhearted mercies. The bowels were considered by the Greeks as the seat of violent passion, but the Hebrews felt they gave rise to tender affection. Hence, the AV translation. Sympathetic hearts is certainly part of the new dress of a believer.
- b. Kindness. This is really goodness in action. The unselfish acts of helpfulness and the loving gifts are all considered here. Perhaps the idea of a sweet disposition is most dominant.
- c. Humbleness. Many have misconstrued this as a sort of sickening weakness. This is far from the truth. What is the true thrust is that one should evidence in his behaviour a dependence upon God. There is the modest consideration of oneself, but a great sense of the Lord.
- d. Meekness. Moses is marked out as the greatest in this category (Num. 12:3). It is in nowise a thing of weakness. Rather, the idea of "control" is dominant. A submissive person is one who is meek. This was a character of our Lord and is to be found among His children.
- e. Longsuffering. To suffer long is a way of putting this clothing. It is the desired manner in which one accepts wrongs without retaliation (cf. Isa. 53:7).
- f. Forbearing. The Bible never says that believers will never tax one another. Indeed this verb argues just the opposite. It notes we will have irritations one with another. But, we are to hold up under these! Most run away from them or give up with the other brother in despair!
- g. Forgiving. It is altogether possible that Christians will do positive harm to one another. The "one another" with this verb should be rendered "yourselves" for the community of believers is emphasized. Suppose one does have an occasion for complaint against a brother.