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Encouraging the wife to 'beautify her face'!!!



I have heard it said that the incident in Ruth 3:3 has been used to justify a woman attempting to make herself beautiful by the means of makeup!

Before coming to the text, it appears to me that any woman who sets out to 'improve her appearance' from its normal state, is acknowledging something rather astonishing! It surely must mean that she is conceding she is in need of improvement!

Brave indeed would be the man who makes that suggestion to his wife. It would give the impression that he is having second thoughts on the wisdom of the choice he made when he asked her to marry him!

I recall hearing it said that Dr Bob Jones, the founder of Bob Jones University, once offered some advice on the subject of make-up to female students in the University. "If the barn door needs painting, then paint it!"

Such a course of action it would appear was being offered to those females who felt that they had a face like an unpainted barn door.

I would imagine that there are few around who hold that view of themselves. Dr Bob was therefore offering this wry counsel to a very select band of ladies!

I never think of this 'quote' from Dr Bob but I smile in remembrance of the words of the 'Bard of Tyrone', Rev W F Marshall, in his poem, "Me an' me Da." I have included the complete poem at the end of this article. I don't know how good your knowledge of Tyrone dialect is but I'm sure you will get the gist of his words and it is worth the effort.

Dr Bob's reference to the 'barn door' rather echoes W F Marshall's description of poor Bridget's 'physog' in the following verse of that poem:

Wee Margit had no fortune
But two rosy cheeks wud plaze;
The farm of lan' wos Bridget's,
But she tuk the pock disayse:
An' Margit she wos very wee,
An' Bridget she wos stout,
But her face wos like a gaol dure
With the bowlts pulled out.

Poor Bridget! She was a candidate for Dr Bob's remedy!

More seriously, does Ruth 3:3 suggest that Ruth underwent some beauty treatment before going to see Boaz?

Look at the verse.

"Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking."

It is the advice given to Ruth by her mother in law, Naomi, when she urged her to apply to Boaz for help as he was their kinsman redeemer.

Did Ruth take herself to some beautician or to a box of paints to improve her looks and make herself more 'alluring' in preparation for this encounter with Boaz?



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That is the rather foolish and, I must say, dangerously close to twisting the plain meaning of God's Word, interpretation that some would place upon this verse.

I believe that the advice given to Ruth was simply a telling her to wash her face and rub in a little olive oil!

That is all this verse endorses and condones.

Hear the comments of good old Matthew Henry.

"Wash thyself and anoint thee, not paint thee (as Jezebel), put on thy raiment, but not the attire of a harlot, and go down to the floor," whither, it is probable, she was invited to the supper there made; but she must not make herself known, that it, not make her errand known (she herself could not but be very well known among Boaz's reapers) till the company had dispersed and Boaz had retired. And upon this occasion she would have an easier access to him in private than she could have at his own house."

Olive oil is not part of the modern make-up 'palette'! Rather every hue is present that the make-up manufacturers can come up with and which requires as much time and effort to apply as it does to decorate a room! Instruction is offered by manufacturers on how best to apply the 'undercoat, base coat and final gloss!'

Olive oil must have surely served the same purpose as do modern face creams which are designed to feed and protect the skin of the face and which dissolve and are invisibly absorbed.

There is no portion of God's Word that warrants the modern trends among some Christian women. The use that some try to make of Ruth 3:3 is evidence of the absence of any scriptural warrant for such a habit.

The modern use of 'make-up' by Christian women is part of the worldliness, the vain conforming to the world in behaviour, habits, appearance and walk that is being adopted and sadly, accepted, within the professing church.

It was not the case a generation ago. The appearance of many women today would have brought a protest from the Christian women of yesterday and their professing of faith in Christ would have been brought into doubt.

In all matters there ought to be a difference between the believer and the world. This is plainly set forth by Paul.

"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," Romans 12:2.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works," 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

There is a solemn warning in the book of Isaiah about the trends amongst Israel's womenfolk which must be seen as a parallel to today's developments.

"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: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. 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, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty," Isaiah 3:16-24.



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The fashion items may have evolved but the spirit that gave rise to such behaviour is still around! "Burning instead of beauty" surely indicates that these practices were all in order to pursue 'beauty'.

The Bible's definition of 'beauty' is something every Christian woman needs to bear in mind. The views of the world of films, television, music and the painted hussies that feature so prominently in the headlines of today, and are held up as the epitome of beauty and decorum, should not be the template of the Christian woman. Rather, there should be a noting of the words of Peter.

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting 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," 1 Peter 3:1-4.

It is the 'inward' rather than the 'outward' appearance that is important!

"The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold," Psalm 45:13.

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom," Psalm 51:6.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Ephesians 4:22-24.

Let us all live in light of that future day that is fast approaching and prepare ourselves for the appearance of our 'Boaz', the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," 2 Peter 3:10-14.

Rev Ivan Foster.

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Me an' me Da

I'm livin' in Drumlister,
An' I'm gettin very oul',
I have to wear an Indian bag
To save me from the coul'.
The deil a man in this townlan'
Wos claner raired nor me,
But I'm livin' in Drumlister
In clabber to the knee.

Me da lived up in Carmin,
An' kep' a sarvint boy;
His second wife wos very sharp,
He birried her with joy:
Now she wos thin, her name was Flynn,
She come from Cullentra,
An' if me shirt's a clatty shirt
The man to blame's me da.

Consarnin' weemin, sure it wos
A constant word of his,
Keep far away from them that's thin,
Their temper's aisy riz.'
Well, I knowed two I thought wud do,
But still I had me fears,
So I kiffled back an' forrit
Between the two, for years.

Wee Margit had no fortune
But two rosy cheeks wud plaze;
The farm of lan' wos Bridget's,
But she tuk the pock disayse:
An' Margit she wos very wee,
An' Bridget she wos stout,
But her face wos like a gaol dure
With the bowlts pulled out.

I'll tell no lie on Margit,
She thought the worl' of me
I'll tell the truth, me heart wud lep
The sight of her to see,



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But I wos slow, ye surely know,
The raison of it now,
If I left her home from Carmin
Me da wud rise a row.

So I swithered back an' forrit
Till Margit got a man;
A fella come from Mullaslin
An' left me jist the wan.
I mind the day she went away,
I hid wan strucken hour,
An' cursed the wasp from Cullentra
That made me da so sour.

But cryin' cures no trouble,
To Bridget I went back,
An' faced her for it that night week
Beside her own thurf-stack.
I axed her there, an' spoke her fair,
The handy wife she'd make me,
I talked about the lan' that joined
— Begob, she wudn't take me!

So I'm livin' in Drumlister,
An' I'm gettin' very oul',
I creep to Carmin wanst a month
To thry an' make me sowl:
The deil a man in this townlan'
Wos claner raired nor me,
An' I'm dyin' in Drumlister
In clabber to the knee.