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"Why do some Christian women paint their faces??"

It is difficult to understand why this habit is prevalent amongst professing Christian women. I don't believe that those who practise this habit can find any precedent for it in the behaviour of former generations of godly women.

One wonders how a husband is not perplexed by a wife's habit of painting her face, when it is usually the case that she paints herself only when preparing to go out to meet others. It surely is obvious that she is not painting her face for him as invariably she is bare-faced in her own home! Why should that be so?

The Lord said this to Israel on one occasion: "Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life," Jeremiah 4:30.

These words make it clear that "the painting (or rending), of the face" by a woman is the action associated with one desirous of alluring a man. That in itself is enough reason for any chaste woman to abhor utterly such a practice!

To look at this matter in the light of the Bible we must consider the one woman of whom it is recorded there that she painted her face. That woman is Jezebel. Her name means 'Baal is husband to' or 'unchaste'! That tells us a lot about her character.

Her name has become synonymous with all that is evil in a female.

Consider this verse.

"And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window," 2 Kings 9:30.

Jehu was God's avenger sent to destroy the house of Ahab, Jezebel's evil husband. Ahab had already been slain under the judgment of God. "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake," 1 Kings 22:34-38. That was some thirteen years before. But here judgment draws near. Jehu, the Lord's Avenger, has come to where she is living. She knew the purpose for which Jehu came. She knew her death was near.

What did she do? And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired (or she beautified) her head."

It is to be noted that ':

I. THIS 'PATRON SAINT OF MAKE-UP' WAS MORE TAKEN UP WITH HER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE THAN SHE WAS WITH THE MATTERS OF ETERNITY

Death was approaching and she thought only of her physical appearance! This must surely say something to the users of face paint.

What hours must be taken up with applying the layers of facial paint and with the removing of it again! I seriously doubt that those taken up with such matters would spend an equal time in prayer and the reading of God's Word. Surely the spending of so much time and money on such a fleshly activity cannot be considered a "redeeming of the time", Ephesians 5:16?



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

II. SPIRITUALLY-MINDED WOMEN DO NOT ACT SO

"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. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:" 1 Peter 3:1-5.

Here is the chaste 'life-style' (conversation) of a good and holy woman of old, of whom Sarah, Abraham's wife, is an example, verse 6.

We have their attitude toward that which features so much in today's society - their 'adorning' or arrangement of garments and their appearance. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

We are firstly told what was not the emphasis in their lives. They were not taken up with or thought chiefly about their 'outward' appearance, their hair, their jewelry, their dresses! Now that stands in contrast to many Christian ladies today!

We are also told what was the chief matter for these holy women. "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." They were anxious, and doubtless spent time engaged in the pursuit of this, even an inner godliness which was pleasing to God. They were out to impress and please God not their fellow creatures. The behaviour of such women Peter commends to the wives to whom he is writing.

May we not commend such to the Christian ladies of today?

There is mention of the 'Bride' of Christ in Psalm 45:13. "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." A very helpful comment on these words is to found in C. H. Spurgeon's commentary on the Psalms.

"Her beauty is not outward only or mainly; the choicest of her charms are to be found in her heart, her secret character, her inward desires. Truth and wisdom in the hidden parts are what the Lord regards; mere skin deep beauty is nothing in his eyes.

The church is of royal extraction, of imperial dignity, for she is a king's daughter; and she has been purified and renewed in nature; for she is glorious within. Note the word 'all'. The Bridegroom was said to have all His garments perfumed, and now the bride is all glorious within -- entireness and completeness are great points. There is no mixture of ill savour in Jesus, nor shall there be alloy of unholiness in His people, His church shall be presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Her clothing is of wrought gold. Best material and best workmanship. How laboriously did our Lord work out the precious material of His righteousness into a vesture for his people! no embroidery of golden threads can equal that masterpiece of holy art. Such clothing becomes one so honoured by relationship to the Great King. The Lord looks to it that nothing shall be wanting in the glory and beauty of His bride."

The Church seeks only inward beauty and leaves her outward adorning to the hands of her Saviour, Who robes her with Heaven's best garment - the garments of His righteousness.

III. THE BIBLE DOES GIVE GOOD ADVICE ON THE SUBJECT OF BEAUTY TREATMENT

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace," Psalm 144:12. Here is what fathers should be seeking for their children, their sons and their daughters.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

We are considering the matters related to the female so we will note what is said of daughters. "That our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

There is clear instruction connected to our subject. Fathers should be anxious to have their daughters bear these marks of character.

1. Daughters should be as corner stones. The corner stone is a stone that binds and supports the whole structure. No one can overstate the importance in the home of a godly and wise woman. The husband may be the head of the house but the key to stability and strength is undoubtedly a good wife and mother. That is what our daughters should be raised to be. The role of a wife was first stated by the Lord in Genesis 2:18. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Eve was to be a help and a support to Adam. What she was intended to be, not what she became, is to be the model for our daughters.

2. Daughters should be as polished corner stones. I have a little note scribbled in the margin of my Bible next to these words. "Polished, not painted!" You don't paint granite or marble or diamonds or emeralds or rubies! No, you polish them so that their inward beauty shines forth. The polishing and cutting process grinds away and removes the impurities of the outer fabric of the stones and brings forth their inward beauty. This what the Christian woman should be seeking after.

The spiritual equivalent to this cutting and polishing of stones is found in Ephesians 4:22-24. "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." The likeness to old Adam is ground and polished away and the beauty of Christ and His righteousness, imparted to us by the work of the Holy Ghost, is brought forth and made to be seen.

This is God's beauty treatment.

3. Daughters should be as polished corner stones, even the stones of a palace. How significant this is. Our daughters (and I can direct this word to us all) are to be as palaces, the dwelling place of a king.

The children in our Childrens' Meetings sing a little chorus:

There is a flag flying high
from the castle of my heart,
from the castle of my heart,
from the castle of my heart.
There is a flag flying high
from the castle of my heart
for the King is in residence there.

So let it fly in the sky,
let the whole world know,
let the whole world know,
let the whole world know.
So let it fly in the sky,
let the whole world know
that the King is in residence there.

Does this not explain the words of the psalmist when he says: "That our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." As I said, this applies to us all. We all should be as polished stones,



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

like those found in a palace and show every evidence that "the King is in residence there"!

In the light of these few words, may I ask again: Why do some Christian women paint their faces?

It is not in keeping with God's role and pattern for a godly woman.

Ivan Foster.

4th September, 2017.