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Boy's 25c Gloves while they last 15c
1909 Base Ball Guides 10c



PROFESSOR FREDERICK DUNN ADDRESSES CONVENTION ON "THE CHURCH BEAUTIFUL"

Frederick Stanley Dunn.

Professor Frederick Stanley Dunn, of the Oregon State University, delivered an eloquent and instructive address before the Lane County Sunday School convention, taking for his subject "The Church Beautiful." Professor Dunn said in part: "Ye shall keep my Sabbath and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord." It was God himself who spoke from Sinai. It was to impress this mighty principle indelibly upon the human soul that there had come that Voice from out the Burning Bush. "Moses, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And we should not be surprised that, when the Christ went up to Jerusalem, He took occasion to enforce this one law with stinging emphasis—the only instance in which his indignation conquered that majestic composure of his. For, we are told, "He made a scourge of small cords and drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves: 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.'" Some years later, Saul of Tarsus took up his mighty pen and wrote to the Hebrews, reiterating the same law in but another form: "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

Thus, in these several dicta—from Sinai, from Jesus and from the Apostle to the Gentiles, are combined the several dispensations, all demanding for the church and its services that sanctity and reverence which should distinguish them and should be peculiar to them alone. What God spoke amid the thunders, what the gentle Christ employed even violence to enforce, what Paul strove with eloquence to disseminate over the world, that principle certainly demands our most heedful and earnest consideration. It most certainly behooves us to pause and ask ourselves, "Do we stand as with naked feet before the Burning Bush?" "Have we sought within his Father's house to which Jesus could point and say, 'Take these things hence'?" or, to use St. Paul's graceful words, "Are we surely serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear?"

The very exterior of the church should breathe out a hallowed atmosphere. It would almost crush the spirit of the Puritan, could he see, as we sometimes see, groups of children scampering up and down the steps and through the vestibule of some of our Evangelical Churches, or—and this is positively revolting—a crowd of insolent young men mass themselves on the sidewalk in front of the church while congregations are assembling or dispersing. There is something radically wrong. The parents of such communities and of such churches are failing to instruct the young in the proper reverence they should have for the sacred church-edifice. Bible schools and Young People's Societies are blind to a most profound error. We should most persistently see to it, not only that we ourselves shall not be guilty of such offense, in those for whom we are responsible, but that, when we see it in others, we shall sternly rebuke it.

What did it mean when He demanded of Moses that he should remove his shoes?—merely the outward evidence of reverence that was consistent with the polite custom of ancient oriental peoples. Ages have rolled past since then, and while the "Burning Bush" demands of us just as much reverence as of Moses, we of today are living under wholly different usages. Now-a-days, polite respect and reverential deference are shown in other ways, more particularly among the men by the removal of the hat. No matter whence or how the custom originated, it has become recognized in western civilization as the mark of the true man to bare the head in the presence of women or of elders or while in attendance upon sacred or solemn ceremonies. No man would be so careless as not to remove his hat on entering the church door to attend divine services, though many heedless men have been seen to stand in the outer vestibule with their hats on, waiting until the prayer is over, or to assume them when scarcely over the threshold of the auditorium at the close of the service. But how is it when there chances to be no service in progress? Ah! there is where the real test lies. To many men, the church as a mere edifice demands no special deference. But, walls that have been consecrated to holy presence, are they not sacred at all times and at all hours in the day?

The church social has much to do with the making of church sanctity. Unquestionably, the church is properly and primarily a place for the social, but, unfortunately, the majority of churches are forced by circumstances to house their noisy socials. The situation is often vexing, especially where the church edifice is small and there are no annexes or basements, or where private homes are not available. Those churches of the larger eastern cities are fortunate which have suitable apartments, whether they can be relegated to refreshments and pantries, where the Ladies' Aid societies may have their afternoon teas, or the leavers their spelling bees

or the Sunday School its Christmas tree.

Frankly the social, as it is usually conducted, can not but desecrate our sacred edifice. The very abandon of our playfulness breaks down all the proprieties which our Sunday services often seek in vain to re-establish. It tends irresistibly to lessen the regard we have for our church building and almost invariably ends in lowering it completely to the level of other structures. Let it not be imagined that socials are therefore to be decelerated. May we never grow so old that we can not enjoy the real merriment of life. Let others, if they will, frown upon it as a weakness, but, as for you and me, let us extract from this hard world all the legitimate fun it affords. And that is just the reason why we should enjoy a social the more when it is somewhere else than in the church. The two are so incongruous, a sacredly dedicated church and a rollicking, boisterous social. Once upon a time we held a caddy-pull in our old barn loft and that was the best social known in the annals of our church. There were no pews in the way, there were no narrow walls to cramp our lungs, above all, in this was the greatest reason, there was no altar there to be desecrated by our laughter and sport.

If this then should be its exterior and the church as a structure, what shall we say of its services? Surely we should so deport ourselves becoming that awful Presence for whom we constantly pray and whose absence we would most contritely bewail. For, did we once feel that God's presence were actually denied us in our seasons of worship, I doubt not we would most heartily seek where it could be found. Our frivolity, all careless gait, all light speech should then leave us at the threshold, for we are entering the house of God, where it behooves us for a brief, a very brief session, to be at least sober and introspective, if not devoutly worshipful. Not that we should assume a smileless, sorrowful countenance and a feeling of stern reserve that robs one of the natural human courtesies of one to another and destroys a joyful worship. Away with the mournful face in our church services of the testimony that habitually weeps, "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise." "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation." These are sentiments which find no sympathy with the long face and the wailing testimony.

But what we should have is a sincerity and seriousness in our attendance upon church services that will drive out of a careless demeanor and restless, irrelevant behavior. What shall we say of the flutter that sometimes find prevailing throughout the mass of the congregation before the beginning of the service, and, must we say it, even for some time after the service begins—the whispering, the social conversation, the talking aloud, and yes, even laughter? In some churches I have been grieved to observe the pastor walk upon the platform and kneel for personal prayer before opening the service, while, all around where I chanced to sit, there was the buzz of loud conversation and even tittering laughter. How much more becoming, if, at the moment when that pastor knelt, the congregation had bowed their heads to show at least some reverence for that beautiful action of the pastor, if not for the Deity before whom he knelt.

Then let us have quietude and solemnity and, if at all attainable, sublimity in our church services. "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." A spirit? How then shall we be receptive for his entrance, or in attitude to worship Him, if confusion or interruption prevail? We should cultivate the perception of Job's friend, Eliphaz the Temanite, who thus recounts his experiences: "Then a spirit passed before my face; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice."

But why should we be compelled to plead for silence? Silence should speak for itself. Not only are we then enabled, and thus only, to approach God and God himself to approach us, but, for the very sake of the service itself, we should be silent. How else shall we fully appreciate the pathos that can come from out the soul of the organ? One of the sweetest sensations in all one's experience is to be quiet, restful, and to let the chords from the great organ just creep over and into one's very being, overwhelming with its weight of music, and yet lifting one up, away and out of one's self. How else but in silence can we pray when the pastor stands as our representative and asks mediation for his people? How else but in silence can we heed God's word, when the pastor

reads from the scriptures, which mean nothing else than God speaking to us? How else shall we hear the sermon which is intended for our betterment, the patient offering of brotherly advice, the gentle rebuke for short-comings which, in any other department of life, would most certainly deserve at least severe reprimand.

To subserve that undisturbed reign of peace for which we are contending, there should be no one admitted during any one item of the service. Firmness should here be employed by our ushers, for it is often the throng of incoherent that is at fault. Some American audiences, yes, even church audiences, seem to expect admission, whether by aid of usher or not, and will often stream past him if he does not keep them in check. As a rule, the majority of people have learned in a measure to respect at least the prayer and will stand at the door or in the vestibule with a fair amount of reverence until its close, but they should be taught as well that the proper time to be seated is during the intermission between any two items of the service. How unfortunate it is to have the people struggling in during an offertory solo or the reading of the scriptures. The effect is lost and the sanctity is impaired. When once this system is established of ushering the people in at intervals only, many a care-ridden pastor, too, will have respect for the rule and will yield a pause of a minute or two after each feature of the service. As it is, where no such system prevails and where ushers escort the people in at any time and all times, the poor pastor naturally sees no need for brief intermissions. Cooperation is therefore most helpful and a thorough understanding between pastor and ushers will often yield handsome results and tend most materially to beautify the service.

Being, so to speak, floor-managers, it is astonishing how much the ushers are responsible for a beautiful service. For instance, they should be prompt, ushers that can not be on hand to receive the first worshipper who enters the church are not alive to their duties. I have known ushers to amble in carelessly and unconcernedly something like five minutes before the organ prelude, after perhaps three-fourths of the congregation had found their own way into the pews. Alertness, too, is a most essential qualification, including the ability to recognize the stranger from an old member and to give the stranger the preference when it comes to deciding between the two, for the old member can perhaps look out for himself, whereas the stranger needs a welcome. How often have I observed an usher thoughtlessly ignore a stranger in order to escort a deacon to his seat in the amen-corner which he has occupied for forty years.

There is at this point a little matter of etiquette on the part of the people themselves which is all too often neglected. Courtesy pure and simple dictates that the people, on passing into the pew, should turn and acknowledge the usher's service with a slight bow and a low-spoken "I thank you," or even a whispered one would be better. An courteous usher is a boon to a church, so the return courtesy should never be neglected. The well-trained usher will miss it. And I feel sure that such indifference from the laity is often to blame for the laxity of the ushers. To feel that one's services are not appreciated is sure to produce an attitude of indifference on the part of the doer. They say, for instance, that it is humiliating to walk up an aisle and, on turning, to find their supposed escorts composedly seating themselves half a dozen seats back, without so much as a glance at the discomfited usher. Of course, there is in this matter some blame often to be attached to the usher. He should try to know his escorts, whether they prefer seats forward or back. It is often well to inquire quietly before starting, especially if they are strangers.

It is all too true that our western civilization is founded in great measure upon a spirit of abandon and of revolt against propriety. Our churches have been made to suffer accordingly. The younger generation, instilled with the pervading atmosphere of unrestrainedness, is largely devoid of those gentler customs which have produced a sublimity and a delightfully aesthetic tone to church services in the longer established communities. I appeal to the laity everywhere and of all denominations, it pays to study how and wherein to improve our church etiquette. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."

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