

The Tailless Fox

By Beverly Carradine

Every now and then the papers report that another preacher has declared for the theatre, dancing, card playing, and other kindred things. We can but wonder why such men stay in the church and pulpit who have drifted so far from spirituality and true holiness. If they have become sinful, why not go back at once to their crowd? Why try to bring the world into the church to suit their depraved and backslided tastes? If they prefer to be degenerated instead of regenerated, and walk with men instead of God, let them “go to their own place,” as Judas did to his.

There is a great multitude of Christians in the land who cannot be persuaded that Jesus would attend a theatre, a dance hall, or a card playing party; and they want to be like Him in all things. Why should they forego a heavenly example for a worldly standard because every now and then some shorn Samson in broadcloth and beaver hat bids his congregation to follow him instead of the immaculate cross-bearing Son of God?

Aesop tells of a fox that in some manner had the misfortune to lose his tail. But, being a fox and quite adroit in mental matters, he framed a fine argument and glowing speech in praise and defense of a tailless body. He urged that it was cool, to begin with, and such a restful deliverance from a burden in that part of the physical frame. There was nothing to carry, etc., etc. He then begged his brethren to cut off their caudal attachments and enter into the like freedom and advantage which he enjoyed.

The foxes assembled in convention, and listened gravely for a while. But as they took in their unfortunate brother’s “bobbed off” appearance, and noted his agony in fly time, there was a general smile in the assembly, an incredulous look in every eye, and a unanimous vote passed that they would not part with that plummy appendage which a beneficent Providence had bestowed upon them.

The moral of all this is that when a man loses his religious experience, and gets spiritually sheared, denuded, or bobbed off” by the world or the devil, at once his cry is heard in the land against the severity of church rules. He pleads for what he calls toleration, broadness, and liberty, which is only another name with him for license in the ways of worldliness and sin. He has become a sinner and wants others to follow. He may have kept the form of godliness, but has lost the power, and craves his brethren to be in alike condition with himself.

The newspapers give him credit for being an advanced thinker, when he is a retrograding doer. From being a convert, he became a divert, then a pervert, and is now a subvert, posing as a teacher of ethics or morals, and applauded by worldlings in and out of the church as a reformer and a kind of second John Wesley. But God will show him up at the Judgment Day, and perhaps even this side of the grave, as a spiritual fraud and humbug, a travesty on a gospel ambassador. And a downright backslider in heart and life; and that, too, all the while he was attitudinizing in the pulpit as a teacher and leader of immortal souls.

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