

Temple Garments Greatly Modified



Church Presidency Gives Permission



Style Change Optional With Wearer

Coming not as an order, nor as a rule to be rigidly enforced, but rather permissive in character, is a recent outgiving of the first presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It concerns the garments worn by members of the church who have been married in the temple, or who have participated in other ceremonies performed or rites observed therein.

While minor modifications of the temple garment, it is said, have been made at various times during past years, the latest order in permission is regarded by younger members of the church as most liberal and acceptable. Among the older membership the optional change is variously received. Some of the pioneer stock look upon any deviation from the old order as a departure from what they had always regarded as an inviolable rule. Others of long standing in the church accept the change as a progressive move intended to add to personal comfort.

Old Style Uncomfortable

In the old days the temple garment was made of plain, unbleached linen was as far afield in "finery" as the devotee was permitted to go. No buttons were used on the garment. Tape tie-strings took their place. The garment itself was uncomfortably large and baggy. But despite these imperfections, the old-style garment is faithfully adhered to by many of the older and sincerely devout members of the church. These regard the garment as a safeguard against disease and bodily harm, and they believe that to alter either the texture of cloth or style, or to abandon the garment altogether would bring evil upon them.

One good woman of long membership in the church, hearing of the change that has recently come about, went to the church offices and uttered fervid objection. "I shall not alter my garments, even if President Grant has ordered me to do so. My garments now are made as they were when I was married in the endowment house, long before the temple was built. The pattern was revealed to the Prophet Joseph and Brother Grant has no right to change it," she said.

Explanation was made that the first presidency had merely issued per-

mission to those who so desired to make the modifying change; that any member of the church who preferred to adhere to the original style was at perfect liberty to do so.

President Charles W. Penrose says that modification of the garment is elective with each individual member of the church who has gone through the temple. The change in style is permitted for various good reasons, chief among which are promotion of freedom of movement in the body and cleanliness. Formerly the sleeves were long, reaching to the wrists. While doing housework the women would roll up the sleeves. If sleeves were to be rolled up they might as well be made short in the first place for convenience, it was argued. Permission to abbreviate is now given, but it is not an order and is not compulsory, it is explained.

Is Generally Welcomed

Encasing the lower limbs the old-style garment reaches to the ankles and is looked upon by young members as baggy, uncomfortable and ungainly. The young of the gentle sex complained that to wear the old style with the new and finer hosiery gave the limbs a knotty appearance. It was embarrassing in view of the generally accepted sanitary shorter skirt. Permission is therefore granted by the first presidency to shorten the lower garment. Also buttons are permitted to take the place of the tie-strings.

Young men of the church, especially those who take exercise or play games at gymnasiums, favor the shorter garment. The permission granted is hailed by the as a most acceptable and progressive one. Altogether, and except in few instances the permissive modification is welcomed as a sanitary move and a change looking to the comfort and health of those who wear temple garments.

Instead of the old style, coarse, unbleached, irritating material of which temple garments were once made, the finer knitted goods, and even silks, are now used. These materials and modified styles are officially approved, but such alterations are optional with each individual, and by no means compulsory, church officials desire it understood.