
Christian Clothing

Scripture Standards for Dress and Conduct

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21).

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deuteronomy 22:5).

“Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me” (Job 40:6, 7).

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (I Timothy 2:8, 9).

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Introduction

The setting for this booklet is 21st century Australia, a country whose people have brought about the urgent necessity for an address on the subject of Christian clothing. We must recall the truths from a Book once so familiar to our forefathers, that not only did the Lord God present clothes of His own design for our first father and mother (Gen. 3:21), but that He has given mankind this binding command: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 22:5).

The decadence we see in our culture has come about through our negligence in earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude, verse 3). For this reason the first chapter concerns the Church’s doctrinal and moral corruption. And because our clothing must be consistent with the calling conferred upon each one of us, the second chapter is devoted to an explanation of the distinctive roles accorded to men and women by the Word of God. The ensuing chapters concentrate more directly on the need for men and women to wear clothing according to the pattern decreed of God.

My prayer is that this booklet will prove a means of glorifying God in providing biblical encouragement to a holy life in Jesus Christ our Saviour, who alone has power on earth to forgive sins and to breathe life into those who are dead in trespasses and sins (Matt. 9:6; Eph. 2:1).

Stephen Tanner, April 2005.

1. The Church’s Doctrinal and Moral Corruption

In the book of Genesis we are told that Adam, the father of the human race, was created an upright man in the very image of God. We are also told of Adam’s attempt to rise above his own rank and become like a god, resulting in his breaking of God’s command and falling into sin. In him are all his posterity fallen (Rom. 5:12). That is why the carnal mind, being enmity with God and not subject to His law (Rom. 8:7), has a desire to overthrow superior authorities and to establish a new order (Eccl. 7:29). But by the covenant of grace man is freely offered salvation from sin and death, and those who have been raised up in newness of life are enabled willingly to submit themselves to their Maker, falling down before His footstool to give thanks to “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:13, 14). Our Lord Jesus came to crush the head of the serpent, and having made atonement for sinners of mankind He will destroy the works of the devil.

But the Lord's own Church today has been shaken to the foundations; the enemy has come in like a flood and continues to entice man into subverting the order and authority that God has placed in the world. The device of the evil one is to erode the belief in an infallible Word, and since the acceptance of Higher Criticism his purpose has been manifest and his work largely successful – since the 19th century there has been unceasing pressure from within the bounds of Christendom to suppress the most crucial doctrines imparted to man in the Holy Scriptures.¹ C. H. Spurgeon knew it in 1887 when he said:

The doctrine of Christ crucified is always with me. As the Roman sentinel in Pompeii stood to his post even when the city was destroyed, so do I stand to the truth of the atonement though the church is being buried beneath the boiling mud-showers of modern heresy.²

This decline, resisted by the Lord's dwindling flock everywhere, was alluded to in the sermon preached in 1875 at the funeral of Irving Hetherington, minister of the Scots' Church in Melbourne, Australia, and friend of Robert Murray McCheyne. The minister, Dr Macdonald, said of Hetherington:

As a preacher he had many excellencies, including, of course, the chief that he himself believed. He preached in a way that I am afraid is going out of fashion now – logically, doctrinally, evangelically. His sermons were full of marrow, founded on the first of all gospel doctrines – atonement by blood, Christ crucified; and no man mourned more than he over the loose preaching which is becoming popular now-a-days, which does not convince of sin, and in which sound doctrine and godly experience are dropping out of sight.³

Evangelical Christians have attempted to stand firm on the doctrine of the atonement, but many of us have been wounded, failing to take up the shield of faith as we ought, with the result that our belief in the infallibility of God's Word, the immutability of His counsel, the righteousness of His judgement and the everlasting wonder of His mercy in Christ Jesus have not been held in our hearts with constancy. The Scottish preacher Robert Haldane (1764-1842) said:

When the canker of the principles of German Neology, derived from the Continent and from America, is perverting the faith of many, and seducing them into the paths of error, – while a spirit of lukewarmness, and indifference to truth, is advancing under the mask of charity and liberality, – there is a loud call on all Christians to 'stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for

¹ See endnote [1].

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Blood Shed for Many*, a sermon on Matt. 26:28 (preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, 1887).

³ Quoted by Iain Murray, *Australian Christian Life from 1788* (Banner of Truth, 1988), p263.

the faith of the Gospel,' to present a firm and united phalanx of opposition to error under every name, from whatever quarter it may approach, and not to 'stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up, to make their land desolate,' Jer. 18.15. 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see; and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Should believers become unfaithful to their trust, and be seduced to abandon their protest against false doctrines, they may gain the approbation of the world; but what will this avail when compared with the favour of God? But if with prayer to God, in the use of the appointed means, they contend earnestly for the truth, then they may expect the gracious fulfilment of that blessed promise, 'When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.'⁴

As our spiritual forefathers were fearless in convincing men of their sin (cf. Matt. 14:4), so must we stand strong in the face of evil, and if need be, reprove our brethren "in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness" (I Cor. 4:21). It is vital that Christians recognise the need to resist on every side an especially powerful attack which has its roots in the Higher Critical subversion of God's authority, and which, if not withstood, will cause further decay in gospel preaching. This assault is directed against the power of the man in the community, in the family and in the Church itself – it is a subtler form of Pharaoh's action against the children of Israel (Exod. 1:22). The promoters of this error are "chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (I Peter 2:10). Their dogma is permeating the length and breadth of this continent, eroding our culture, and unless the Lord has mercy on us the literal fulfilment of His word spoken by the prophet Isaiah will continue its progression in Australia: "As *for* my people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them" (Isa. 3:12).

This artful device the devil has used since the Garden of Eden to degrade and destroy our race. Persuading the woman to rule and the man to obey her, he assaults the doctrine of Scripture which teaches the primacy of the man over the woman. The Inspired Record teaches that while equal in value, men and women are different in rank: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God" (I Cor. 11:3). The Lord's will is that these differences be always observed in human society, and that men and women behave themselves in such a manner as not to confound the distinctions by introducing new inventions, contrary to sound doctrine. Distinctions are necessary in the clothing of men and women (Deut. 22:5), and the respective places accorded

⁴ Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (Banner of Truth, 1996), p729.

to them in society provide foundations upon which to build an understanding of such differences.⁵

It is crucial that the Church not accept any practice or doctrine which is contrary to God's revealed will, and error must be assailed with spiritual weapons, with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. John Knox (c. 1505-1572), Protestant Reformer and one of the fathers⁶ of the Scottish church, said:

If fear, I say, of persecution (I Cor. 9), of slander, or of any inconvenience before named might have excused, and discharged the servants of God (Matt. 26; Acts 18, 21), from plainly rebuking the sins of the world; just cause had every one of them to have ceased from their office. For suddenly their doctrine was accused by terms of sedition, of new learning, and of treason: persecution and vehement trouble did shortly come upon the professors with the preachers (Psalm 2; Acts 4): kings, princes and worldly rulers did conspire against God and against his anointed Christ Jesus. But what? Did any of these move the prophets and Apostles to faint in their vocation? no. But by the resistance, which the devil made to them by his supporters, were they the more inflamed to publish the truth revealed unto them and to witness with their blood, that grievous condemnation and God's heavy vengeance should follow the proud contempt of graces offered. The fidelity, bold courage, and constancy of those that are passed before us, ought to provoke us to follow their footsteps, unless we look for another kingdom than Christ hath promised to such as persevere in profession of his name to the end.

If any think that the empire [*i.e.*, rule] of women, is not of such importance, that for the suppressing of the same, any man is bound to hazard his life, I answer, that to suppress it, is in the hand of God alone. But to utter the impiety and abomination of the same, I say, it is the duty of every true messenger of God, to whom the truth is revealed in that behalf. For the especial duty of God's messengers is to preach repentance, to admonish the offenders of their offences, and to say to the wicked, thou shalt die the death, except thou repent.⁷

As man was created male and female, in the image of God, there is a moral and spiritual equality between all men and women, and this is most wonderfully manifested when fallen sinners of mankind are created anew in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). All believers – men and women, parents and

⁵ History shows that as woman began to usurp man's authority she ventured to wear his apparel. As early as the 16th century Reformation there was protestation against "a woman clad in the habit [*i.e.*, clothing] of man, yea, a woman against nature reigning above man" (John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, 1558 – "monstrous regiment" meaning *unnatural rule*). See endnote [2].

⁶ On the Scriptural use of the term "father" for such men see passages such as II Kings 2:12, 13:14 and Gal. 4:19.

⁷ John Knox, 'Preface', *The First Blast of the Trumpet* (cited above).

children, masters and servants – have equal and glorious access to the throne of grace. In another respect, though, we are not all equal: the man is the head of the woman, he is above her, and she is his subordinate. God created the man first, in His own image, and the woman afterwards, for the man.

For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels (I Cor. 11:7-10, cf. Gen. 2:7, 22).

“It is an unseemly thing”, says John Bunyan (1628-1688), “to see a woman so much as once in all her lifetime to offer to overtop her husband; she ought in everything to be in subjection to him, and to do all she doth, as having her warrant, licence, and authority from him. And indeed here is her glory, even to be under him, as the church is under Christ.”⁸ God, having distinguished the woman from the man and made her subject to him, calls her “the glory of the man” (I Cor. 11:7). The French Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) comments:

There is no doubt that the woman is a distinguished ornament of the man; for it is a great honour that God has appointed her to the man as the partner of his life, and a helper to him, and has made her subject to him as the body is to the head. For what Solomon affirms as to a careful wife – that *she is a crown to her husband*, (Proverbs 12:4,) is true of the whole sex, if we look to the appointment of God, which Paul here commends, showing that the woman was created for this purpose – that she might be a distinguished ornament of the man.⁹

2. The Duties of Men and Women

God’s Word, which “lives on in defiance of every assault made upon it”,¹⁰ is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him¹¹ (II Tim. 3:16, 17). The clear pattern presented there for the various duties of men and women, written for our benefit, is binding upon all mankind (I Tim. 2:8-15). Unregenerate persons are under the fatal curse of the moral law (Gal. 3:10), which is revealed by God to condemn them and drive them to seek deliverance in Christ from the guilt and poison of sin (Gal. 3:24). Nevertheless, the same law remains a guide to direct believers in the way of

⁸ John Bunyan, ‘Christian Behaviour’, *Works*, vol. 2 (Banner of Truth, 1991), p561.

⁹ John Calvin on I Cor. 11:7, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians*, vol. 1 (Baker Books, 2003), p357. Note that in this sense an ornament confers lustre.

¹⁰ James Scott, *The Story of Primeval Man*, (Hobart, Australia, 1890), p6.

¹¹ ‘Shorter Catechism’, Q2, *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian Publications, 1997), p287.

holiness as they strive in the strength of Christ to keep His words. “But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully” (I Tim. 1:8, cf. John 15:5). Thomas Boston (1676-1732) says that for those who are in Christ, the law serves:

1. To magnify Christ in them, shewing them their obligation to him for fulfilling it in their stead . . . 2. To be a rule of life unto them, wherein they may express their gratitude by obeying the law of Christ. So the law leads to Christ as a Redeemer from its curse and condemnation, and he leads back to the law as a directory, the rule and standard of their obedience to him.¹²

And this unchangeable rule of obedience teaches us that the father is to be master in his family, the head of the wife and custodian of his children:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body (Eph. 5:22, 23); And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her . . . And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac (Gen. 17:15, 16, 19, cf. Gen. 24:34-38; Exod. 21:22).

Furthermore, we are taught to grant women a privileged position in society, ensuring that they are kept under manly protection: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). And so Mr Boston says, “Husbands sin against their wives in dealing untenderly with them, . . . most of all in beating them, a thing in use only with furious or mad men, Eph. 5.25, 29.”¹³

And we are taught to see that the lives and occupations of women be based in the safety and privacy of the home and its environs, according to the word of God spoken by King David: “The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*. Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil” (Psalm 68:11, 12, cf. Micah 2:9). In like manner the apostle Paul ordains that women occupy themselves as “keepers at home”, or homemakers, giving Titus this exhortation:

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that

¹² Thomas Boston, ‘The Moral Law, The Rule of Man’s Obedience’, *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*.

¹³ Thomas Boston, ‘Of the Fifth Commandment’, *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*.

the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded (Titus 2:1-6, cf. Prov. 14:1).

“*Discreet* and *chaste* stand well together”, observes Matthew Henry (1662-1714), the famous Bible commentator and son of the Puritan Philip Henry;

many expose themselves to fatal temptations by that which at first might be but indiscretion. Prov. 2:11, *Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee from the evil way. Chaste, and keepers at home, are well joined too.* Dinah, when she went to see the daughters of the land, lost her chastity. Those whose home is their prison, it is to be feared, feel that their chastity is their fetters. Not but there are occasions, and will be, of going abroad; but a gadding temper for merriment and company sake, to the neglect of domestic affairs, or from uneasiness at being in her place, is the opposite evil intended, which is commonly accompanied with, or draws after it, other evils. 1 Tim. 5:13, 14, *They learn to be idle, wandering from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*¹⁴

Thus the Christian woman’s occupation is homemaking, “her business lying within-doors”.¹⁵ She rises early to give food to her household, and a portion of labour to her maidens (Prov. 31:15), and “her candle goeth not out by night” (v. 18). Her husband, however, “goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening” (Psalm 104:23), and he “is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land” (Prov. 31:23). Mr Henry remarks that when this man “goes abroad to attend the concerns of the public, he can confide in her to order all his affairs at home, as well as if he himself were there”.¹⁶

The very accounts of the creation and fall of our first parents show us the same divisions of labour; and in our technological age such biblical principles still guide us in the lawful use of occupational opportunities. The Lord God placed our father Adam in the Garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15), and brought him a wife as “an help meet for him” (v. 18, cf. vs. 20, 22). When they sinned in eating the forbidden fruit their temporal punishments were meted out according to their differing roles. The woman, as homemaker, was accorded sorrow in childbirth and a stricter subjection to her husband (Gen. 3:16), while to the man was assigned rigorous labour in a harsher and less fruitful environment. As the first man, Adam was of necessity a farmer, a primary producer, and he would now till the cursed soil until he returned to it in death (vs. 17-19). By the promised Messiah (v. 15) all is turned to our good (vs. 20, 21; Rom. 8:28), and the distinctive roles of men and women, established at the time of creation and decisively reinstated after

¹⁴ Matthew Henry, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6 (Ward, Lock & Co.), p1225.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, on Prov. 31:18, vol. 3, p578.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, on Prov. 31:11, vol. 3, p578.

the fall, are not altered. Rather, gospel blessings include the unequivocal proclamation of such distinctions, with the promise of strength to keep them by faith in Jesus Christ. “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

Young girls should be raised in preparation not for professional life but for the blessing of marriage and raising godly children (Mal. 2:15), because woman was made to be a helper and companion for man and because children are a gift from the Lord:

Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them (Psalm 127:3-5, cf. Gen. 1:28 & 5:4, 9:1; Psalm 113:9; Psalm 128:3; Prov. 17:6).

The inspired apostle wrote, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (I Tim. 5:14). The English Puritan Matthew Poole (1624-1679) makes the following remarks on this passage:

guide the house, and take care of the government of families within doors (which is the woman’s proper province); *give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*; and give no occasion to Jews or pagans (the adversaries of Christian religion) to speak of the church, or any particular members of it, reproachfully, as living beneath the rules of morality and decency.¹⁷

Consider whether the evil predicted by Paul has not come to pass this day. Is not the Word of God greatly blasphemed among the heathen, and have we not given the adversary an occasion to speak reproachfully? Even a little folly in the Lord’s people sends forth a stench, causing sinners to despise the name of Jehovah, to stumble and perish, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Eccl. 10:1; Rom. 2:23, 24; Jude, verse 7). Out of love therefore to God our Father, who visits His children’s transgression with the rod (Psalm 89:32), and to the brethren, and also out of compassion for guilty sinners, let us heed the advice of Scripture in which Christian women are counselled to be discreet and modest, not improperly wandering about “from house to house” or “in the streets” (I Tim. 5:13; Prov. 7:12), but “keeping”, says Matthew Henry, “a pious decency and decorum in clothing and gesture, in looks and speech, and all their deportment, and this from an inward principle and habit of holiness, influencing and ordering the outward conduct at all times”.¹⁸ They are to keep the place and occupation of women, as Mr Henry further explains when elucidating the situation of Abraham’s wife:

¹⁷ Matthew Poole, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol. 3 (Macdonald Publishing Company), p785.

¹⁸ Matthew Henry on Titus 2:3, *Commentary*, vol. 6, p1224.

Where is Sarah thy wife? say the angels. Behold, in the tent, said Abraham. Where should she be else? There she is in her place, as she uses to be, and is now within call. Note, 1. The daughters of Sarah must learn of her to be *chaste, keepers at home*, Titus 2:5. There is nothing got by gadding. 2. Those are most likely to receive comfort from God and his promises that are in their place and in the way of their duty, Luke 2:8.¹⁹

It follows that as unmarried men work in the same professions with their married peers and not among women in the home, so should the employment of unmarried women be within the sphere of women. The status of a married woman is higher than that of a maiden, whose own employment should not elevate her above her allotted and rightful position among women. A virgin has “no distinct estate, being yet in her father’s house”.²⁰ And whether a woman be married or not, her business differs from men’s (cf. Exod. 1:15-21; Lev. 26:26; I Sam. 4:20). Matthew Henry distinguishes between the two spheres of labour in his exposition of Proverbs 31:

She applies herself to the business that is proper for her. It is not in a scholar’s business, or statesman’s business, or husbandman’s business, that she employs herself, but in women’s business: *She seeks wool and flax . . . she lays her own hands to the spindle, or spinning-wheel, and her hands hold the distaff;* (v. 19.) . . . and she does not reckon it either an abridgment of her liberty, or a disparagement to her dignity, or at all inconsistent with her repose.²¹

Even Tamar the princess, the unmarried daughter of King David, was employed in her father’s house, from whence he sent her on an errand: “Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon’s house, and dress him meat” (II Sam. 13:7). Matthew Henry says of this lady:

Though she was a king’s daughter, a great beauty (v. 1), and well dressed (v. 18), yet she did not think it below her to knead cakes and bake them, nor would she have done this now if she had not been used to it. Good house-wifery is not a thing below the greatest ladies, nor ought they to think it a disparagement to them. The virtuous woman, whose husband sits among the elders, yet *works willingly with her hands*, Prov. 31:13. Modern ages have not been destitute of such instances, nor is it so unfashionable as some would make it. Preparing for the sick should be more the care and delight of the ladies than preparing for the nice, charity more than curiosity.²²

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, on Gen. 18:9, vol. 1, p68.

²⁰ Matthew Poole on Exod. 22:17, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p166. Matthew Henry says: “*Many daughters, in their father’s house, and in the single state, have done virtuously, but a good wife, if she be virtuous, excels them all, and does more good in her place than they can do in theirs. Or, as some explain it, A man cannot have his house so well kept by good daughters, as by a good wife*” (on Prov. 31:29, *Commentary*, vol. 3, p580).

²¹ *Ibid.*, on Prov. 31, p579. See Charles Bridges on the “virtuous woman” in endnote [3].

²² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p811.

Thus virgins, too, are to be keepers at home under their father's protection and authority (I Cor. 7:37), as wives rest under their husband's rule and protection²³ (Ruth 1:9; Gen. 20:16, cf. Ezek. 16:38). For the welfare of both man and woman it is ordained that heads of families – husbands and fathers – have power over their wives and daughters (I Cor. 11:10). The Bible speaks of fathers giving away their daughters in marriage, though not without consent (Gen. 24:58), and taking daughters for their own sons. The godly remnant of Israel vowed “to walk in God's law . . . and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons” (Neh. 10:29, 30). And Abraham's servant told Rebekah's father and brother, “And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son” (Gen. 24:37, 38, cf. Deut. 7:3; I Cor. 7:38). This system provides an analogy of God the Father's electing and effectual calling of sinners (cf. John 6:37), and of the Church's being presented to Christ “as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2).

The dominion entrusted to men carries with it a weighty responsibility to see to the welfare and protection of their women:

If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind *herself* by a bond, *being* in her father's house in her youth; And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. And if she hath at all an husband . . . and if she vowed in her husband's house . . . Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void . . . But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity. These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house (Num. 30:3-6, 10, 13, 15, 16).

In this passage we see also that it is normal and preferable for virgins to be employed under their father, in his house, as the wife labours in her husband's house. Accordingly those women without husbands or fathers had to be especially cared for as they were defenceless and without a provider or breadwinner:

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the

²³ See endnote [4].

fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands (Deut. 24:19, cf. Lev. 19:10; Isa. 1:17; Acts 6:1; I Tim. 5:3, 5; James 1:27).

When a widow, Ruth laboured according to this law, gleaning and gathering after the reapers among the sheaves and staying close by the maidens of Boaz,²⁴ rather than working for men's wages alongside the young men; and after harvest, she kept at home. "So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law" (Ruth 2:23, cf. I Tim. 5:16). Matthew Henry shows how such actions befit an industrious and humble woman:

She also kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, with whom she afterwards cultivated an acquaintance, which might do her service, v. 23. But she constantly came to her mother at night in due time, as became a virtuous woman, that was for working days, and not for merry nights. And when the harvest was ended (as Bishop Patrick expounds it) she did not gad abroad, but kept her aged mother company at home. Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land, and we know what a disgrace her vanity ended in. Ruth kept at home, and helped to maintain her mother, and went out on no other errand than to get provision for her, and we shall find afterwards what preferment her humility and industry ended in. *Seest thou a man diligent in his business?* Honour is before him.²⁵

Though some widows were destitute of all family and therefore able to spend time in "supplications and prayers night and day" (I Tim. 5:5), such were honoured and sustained by the Church (I Tim. 5:3, 9, 10) and were not employed in a domain markedly different from that of mothers. Dorcas made clothes for the poor:

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them (Acts 9:39).

In ordinary circumstances both unmarried women and younger widows lived in the house of their father, who was responsible for their protection and provision until they were given in marriage:

Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown . . . And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house (Gen. 38:11); And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me (Ruth 1:8, cf. Gen. 24:23, 28); But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned

²⁴ "Abide here fast by my maidens; for those of her own sex were the fittest company for her" (Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 2, p669).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p671.

unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat (Lev. 22:13, cf. I Cor. 7:37).

Though the law in Leviticus 22:13 refers specifically to priests' families and the eating of holy things, the case was that only those who were in the priest's family, those for whom he normally provided (whether as husband, father or master), were allowed to eat of such things. The widows partook of their fathers' provisions because they had been re-incorporated into their fathers' families. John Calvin explains:

The prohibition, therefore, that the meats offered in sacrifice should be eaten by strangers, was not made so much with reference to them as to the priests, who would have else driven a profitable trade with the offerings, or, by gratifying their guests, would not have hesitated to bring disrepute on the whole service of God. The Law consequently prohibits that either a sojourner, or a hired servant, should eat of them; and only gives this permission to their slaves, and those who were incorporated into their families. Moreover, He counts the priests' daughters who had married into another tribe as aliens. The sum has this tendency, that whatsoever depends on the service of God should obtain its due reverence; nor could this be the case, if what was offered in the temple were not distinguished from common food. Inasmuch as they were human beings, they were allowed to subsist in the ordinary manner; yet was this distinction necessary, which might savour of the sanctity of Christ.²⁶

Matthew Henry's comments also help to cast light on this law, showing that not only wives but daughters also are exempt from earning their own living:

As to the children of the family, concerning the sons there could be no dispute, they were themselves priests, but concerning the daughters there was a distinction. While they continued in their father's house they might eat of the holy things; but, if they married such as were not priests, they lost their right (v. 12), for now they were cut off from the family of the priests. Yet if a priest's daughter became a widow, and had no children in whom she might preserve a distinct family, and returned to her father's house again, being neither wife nor mother, she should again be looked upon as a daughter, and might eat of the holy things. If those whom Providence has made sorrowful widows, and who are dislodged from the rest they had in the house of a husband, yet find it again in a father's house, they have reason to be thankful to the widows' God, who does not leave them comfortless.²⁷

So if a woman loses her husband who had provided for her (Exod. 21:10), she may return to the house of her father, whose duty it is to extend his protection over her once more. If her father has died or if she has her own

²⁶ John Calvin, *Harmony of the Law*, vol. 2 (Baker Books, 2003), pp243, 244.

²⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 1, pp311, 312.

family, the duty of care and provision falls to another near relation such as a son, usually the eldest (I Tim. 5:4; Deut. 21:17).

Now when [Jesus] came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother (Luke 7:12-15, cf. Matt. 8:14, 15).

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home* (John 19:25-27).

The case is similar concerning women who never marry. Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha lived in the town of Bethany at the time of our Lord's sojourn here on earth, and they were beloved of Him (John 11:5). Lazarus being the man of the house, his premature death must have been on that account all the more traumatic for his sisters (vs. 21, 31), who nonetheless believed our Lord to be faithful in all things (v. 22). After the miraculous resurrection of Lazarus from the dead (v. 44), the division of responsibilities in the family continued on in the biblical pattern:

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him (John 12:1, 2, cf. Mark 1:31).

"Here was a decent, happy, well-ordered family," says Matthew Henry with typical warmth, "and a family that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife (for aught that appears,) but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters dwelling together in unity."²⁸

Mark the contrast between this loving co-operation in which each family member fulfils his duty, and the behaviour of the woman in the attire of a harlot, who "*is* loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now *is she* without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner" (Prov. 7:11, 12, cf. Jer. 3:3, 20; Ezek. 16:30). See also the (now abrogated) judicial law of the betrothed damsel (Deut. 22:23-27), and Matthew Henry's observations on the passage:

²⁸ *Ibid.*, on John 11:1, vol. 5, p603. Henry says that the two sisters "seem to have been the housekeepers . . . while perhaps Lazarus . . . gave himself to study and contemplation".

Nay, her being found in the city, a place of company and diversion, when she should have kept under the protection of her father's house, was an evidence against her that she had not that dread of the sin and the danger of it which became a modest woman . . . Now if it were done in the field, out of the hearing of neighbours, it shall be presumed that she cried out, but there was none to save her; and, besides, her going into the field, a place of solitude, did not so much expose her.²⁹

Chapter 34 of the book of Genesis contains the sad narrative of the defiling of Jacob's daughter, and the retaliatory massacre of the men of Shechem by two of her brothers. Simeon and Levi, having failed to protect their sister from the wicked and enclose her, as it were, with "boards of cedar" (Song 8:9), added blood-guiltiness to their record and increased their father's suffering. But notice the "little" folly that let loose such mischief: "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land" (Gen. 34:1). John Calvin observes:

This chapter records a severe contest, with which God again exercised his servant. How precious the chastity of his daughter would be to him, we may readily conjecture from the probity of his whole life. When therefore he heard that she was violated, this disgrace would inflict the deepest wound of grief upon his mind: yet soon his grief is trebled, when he hears that his sons, from the desire of revenge, have committed a most dreadful crime. But let us examine everything in order. Dinah is ravished, because, having left her father's house, she wandered about more freely than was proper. She ought to have remained quietly at home, as both the Apostle teaches and nature itself dictates; for to girls the virtue is suitable, which the proverb applies to women, that they should be οἰκουροὶ, or keepers of the house. Therefore fathers of families are taught to keep their daughters under strict discipline, if they desire to preserve them free from all dishonour; for if a vain curiosity was so heavily punished in the daughter of holy Jacob, not less danger hangs over weak virgins at this day, if they go too boldly and eagerly into public assemblies, and excite the passions of youth towards themselves. For it is not to be doubted that Moses in part casts the blame of the offence upon Dinah herself, when he says, 'she went out to see the daughters of the land;' whereas she ought to have remained under her mother's eyes in the tent.³⁰

Thomas Boston, too, speaking of honest employment as a guard against breaking the seventh commandment, deems homeliness to be the distinguishing feature of women's work:

Honest labour and business cuts off many temptations that idle persons are liable to. Had David been in the field with his army, when he was rising from off his bed in the evening-tide, II Sam. 11.2, he had preserved his chastity when he

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p476.

³⁰ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 2 (Baker Books, 2003), p218.

lost it, and so had Dinah, if she had been at her business in her father's house, when she went out to see the daughters of the land, Gen. 34.1.³¹

Women must endeavour to see that their occupation, dress, behaviour and company is chaste, and men have an obligation to keep away from loose women (Prov. 5:8), and to respect the chastity of virtuous women. Indeed, both men and women must always be looking to the preservation of their own and others' purity in heart, speech and behaviour³² (Matt. 5:28; I Cor. 7:1, 2; I Thess. 4:1-7). "I made a covenant with mine eyes", said God-fearing Job; "why then should I think upon a maid" (Job 31:1). John Bunyan saw the grace of God in his own reticence with women, saying,

And in this I admire the wisdom of God, that he made me shy of women from my first conversion until now. These know, and can also bear me witness, with whom I have been most intimately concerned, that it is a rare thing to see me carry it pleasantly towards a woman; the common salutation of women I abhor, it is odious to me in whomsoever I see it. Their company alone, I cannot away with; I seldom so much as touch a woman's hand, for I think these things are not so becoming me. When I have seen good men salute those women that they have visited, or that have visited them, I have at times made my objection against it; and when they have answered, that it was but a piece of civility, I have told them, it is not a comely sight: Some indeed have urged the holy kiss; but then I have asked why they made baulks, why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favoured go? Thus, how laudable soever such things have been in the eyes of others, they have been unseemly in my sight.³³

The Word of God ordains that the man's occupation, behaviour and appearance are to differ markedly from the woman's, so that while he was made the governor, provider and protector of the family, the weaker vessel was created to be his honoured companion, a fruitful and submissive enrichment to him: "Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (Psalm 128:3). As we see in this passage not only the wife but the children also are to be

³¹ Thomas Boston, 'Of the Seventh Commandment', *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*. Here Boston also condemns "Promiscuous dancing, or dancing of men and women together. This entertainment, however reckoned innocent among many, is evidently an incentive to lust, Isa. 23.15-17 . . . This practice seems to be struck at by these scriptures, Rom. 13.13; 'Let us walk—not in chambering and wantonness', I Pet. 4.3, where mention is made of 'walking in revelling'. It is offensive to the grave and pious, is condemned by our church, yea, and has been condemned by some sober heathens".

³² See 'Shorter Catechism', Q71, 72, and 'Larger Catechism', Q138, 139, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, pp306, 307, 222, 225.

³³ John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier), p127. The same author describes feminine impropriety in his depiction of worldly lust, or *Madam Bubble*: "She is a bold and impudent slut; she will talk with any man" (*The Pilgrim's Progress – The Second Part*, The World's Classics, 1963, p300).

nurtured and protected. Children exist wholly from and by their parents, making “their dependence and subjection absolute and universal”.³⁴ The fifth commandment is binding for life: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (Exod. 20:12). Nonetheless, we know that as sons and daughters grow up their distinctive positions as men and women begin to reflect those of their parents. This is indicated in Psalm 144: “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” (v. 12). The sons of the people of God grow to be healthy and fruitful in all their business, especially the Lord’s business, and in the inspired psalmist’s imagery they are placed outside the house. On the other hand the daughters, equally precious, are the stays of the house, beautifully polished. In the words of John Calvin, the psalmist “speaks of the girls as being like corners skilfully and ingeniously cut out, to make the building beautiful; as if he would say that they adorned the house by their comeliness and elegance”.³⁵ David Dickson (1583-1662), the Scottish preacher and Covenanter, says:

Godly magistrates are a special means of peace and prosperity to the subjects, and should be careful, as in training up young men in grace and virtue, so they may be fruitful instruments of the public good, *as plants grown up in their youth*; so also in training young women, that they may be beautified with all endowments that may make them godly mothers of the succeeding age: our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.³⁶

Observe, besides, how Thomas Boston in 18th century Scotland advised believing parents to train up children in their respective roles:

They should give them learning according to their ability, and see that at least they be taught to read the Bible, II Tim. 3.15 . . . Christians should train up their daughters to do virtuously, [Prov. 31:29]. For their own sakes, let them be capable to make their hands sufficient for them, seeing none knows what straits they may be brought to. And for the sake of others to whom they may be joined, let them be virtuously, frugally, and actively educated, otherwise what they bring with them will hardly quit the cost of the mischief that their unthriftiness and silliness will produce, Prov. 14.1. Whether ye can give them something or nothing, let them not want Ruth’s portion, a good name, a good head, and good hands, Ruth 3.11. Sons should be brought up to some honest employment, whereby they may be worth their room in the world, Gen. 4.2. This is such a

³⁴ John Owen, ‘The Origin of the Priesthood of Christ’, *Works*, vol. 18 (Banner of Truth, 1991), p18.

³⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 5 (Baker Books, 2003), p268. Spurgeon quotes Daniel Cresswell (1776-1844) on this passage: “It is remarkable that the Greeks made use of pilasters, called Caryatides, (carved after the figure of a woman dressed in long robes,) to support the entablatures of their buildings” (*Treasury of David*, 1885).

³⁶ David Dickson, *A Commentary on the Psalms* (Banner of Truth, 1985), p507.

necessary piece of parents' duty to their children, that the Athenians had a law, That if a son was brought up to no calling at all, in case his father should come to poverty, he was not bound to maintain him, as otherwise he was.³⁷

When their family's poverty compelled unmarried girls to work outside their father's house, until the late nineteenth century they were almost invariably given domestic duties – even when working for wages – which overlapped the tasks of wives and mothers.³⁸ Among mothers, who have greater responsibilities in the family, even the poorest normally worked in and around their husbands' homes: “And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it” (Exod. 2:9, cf. Prov. 31:10-31).

In rural settings also, the tasks of mothers, daughters and maids differed from those of the men; and we see in Scripture that on the whole, men obeyed their masters while a maiden served her mistress: “Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us” (Psalm 123:2, cf. II Kings 5:2; Prov. 31:15; Isa. 24:2). James the son of Zebedee and John his brother were in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, when came the call of the Lord Jesus to follow Him (Matt. 4:21), and they presently “left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him” (Mark 1:20). Their mother did not appear at this time because, as an Israelitess, she was a homemaker, blessed with opportunities to minister unto Jesus with other godly women: “And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children” (Matt. 27:55, 56). *Davis Dictionary of the Bible* details the place of women among the people of God:

The younger women of the family, especially in the earlier times and among the nomads, tended the sheep (Gen. 29.6; Exod. 2.16), and they went to the harvest field and gleaned (Ruth 2.3, 8); but the main duties of women were about the household. They brought water from the well (Gen. 24.13; John 4.7), ground the grain for daily use (Mat. 24.41), prepared the meals (Gen. 18.6; II Sam. 13.8; Luke 10.40), spun wool and made clothing (I Sam. 2.19; Prov. 31.13, 19; Acts 9.36-39), taught the children religious truth (Prov. 1.8; 31.1; cp. II Tim. 3.15), and directed the household (Prov. 31.27; I Tim. 5.14).

The Mosaic law and also public opinion among the Hebrews secured to women the enjoyment of many rights . . . The spirit of the N. T. was equally hostile to woman's degradation. It insisted that man and woman shall occupy their

³⁷ Thomas Boston, 'Of the Fifth Commandment', *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*.

³⁸ See endnote [5].

respective spheres as indicated by the Creator in mutual respect and dependence (Mark 10:6-9; Eph. 5:31; I Tim. 2:12-15). The sanctity and permanence of the marriage relation were taught, and divorce permitted only for extreme causes (Matt. 19:8, 9; I Cor. 7:15; Eph. 5:22-33).³⁹

The private instruction of children in the doctrine of Christianity is vital for every family. Fathers must raise their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4, cf. Deut. 6:7), leading the family in worship morning and evening (II Sam. 6:20; Jer. 10:25, cf. Num. 28:3-6; Heb. 13:15). And God has greatly honoured mothers in giving them a significant share, under their husbands’ guidance, in teaching their children the truth as it is in Jesus (Prov. 1:8, 31:1; II Tim. 3:15, cf. 1:5). Thomas Manton’s “Epistle to the Reader” in the *Westminster Confession* says: “Especially women should be careful of this duty; because as they are most about their children, and have early and frequent opportunities to instruct them, so this is the principal service they can do to God in this world, being restrained from more public work.”⁴⁰

Private work in the family, and the “duties of the kitchen and farmyard”,⁴¹ remained the domain of women until Christianity gave way to *equal opportunity*. Indeed, similar patterns continue today, though some of our newsmen would have the nation think otherwise. Conversely, the man’s duty, along with governing his household in the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19; Eph. 6:4), is usually to earn a living for himself and any dependents. Men’s callings include working for wages (Gen. 29:15; Lev. 19:13; Luke 3:14), running farms or businesses (Gen. 13:2; Mark 6:3; Col. 4:14), labouring on behalf of the people as ministers of the crown or as monarch (II Chron. 19:5; I Peter 2:13, 14; II Sam. 5:3), and serving the Church as elders or ministers of the gospel (Jer. 3:15; I Tim. 5:17, 18; I Pet. 5:1, 2). It is clear from Exodus 21:10 that “by the law the husband was obliged to provide food and raiment for his wife”,⁴² and so Thomas Boston writes:

Now the husband as the head of the wife owes her, 1. Protection, so as she may be as safe and easy under the covert of his relation to her as he can make her. For this cause God has given the husband as head to the weaker vessel: and therefore it was an ancient ceremony in marriage for the husband to spread

³⁹ John D. Davis, *Davis Dictionary of the Bible* (Baker Book House, 1990), p870.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Thomas Manton (1620-1677), ‘Epistle to the Reader’, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, p10. The writer continues: “And doubtless many an excellent magistrate hath been sent into the Commonwealth, and many an excellent pastor into the Church, and many a precious saint to heaven, through the happy preparations of a holy education, perhaps by a woman that thought herself useless and unserviceable to the Church.” See endnote [6].

⁴¹ Thomas McCrie, *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Free Presbyterian Publications, 1988), p349.

⁴² Matthew Henry on Isa. 4:1, *Commentary*, vol. 3, p668.

his skirt over his wife, Ruth 3.9 . . . 2. Provision, 1 Tim. 5.8. The husband ought to provide for his wife, and cheerfully furnish her with what is needful and convenient according to his station and ability; and lay out himself by all lawful means for her comfortable through-bearing . . . And on the other hand, the wife ought to be helpful to her husband by her frugal management, Prov. 31.27. And God's word and frequent experiments plainly shew, that a man's thriving or not thriving has a great dependence on his wife's management, Prov. 14.1. While he, then, is busy without doors, she should be careful within; and therefore it is recommended to women to be much at home, Titus 2.5. Yet she may well go abroad when her business calls her, as Abigail did, 1 Sam. 25.⁴³

Along the same lines is C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) in his monthly magazine, where he compares the believer, the spouse of Christ, with an earthly wife who is diligent in her husband's house:

But a third position, which I think will be recognised by every wife as being correct, is not simply dependence upon her husband's care and delight in her husband's love, but also *diligence in her husband's house*. The good housewife, as Solomon tells us, 'looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' She is not a servant, her position is very different from that, but for that very reason she uses the more diligence . . . The making of her husband happy, and the training up of her children in the fear of God, that is her business. The good housewife is like Sarah, of whom it is written, that when the angel asked Abraham, 'Where is Sarah thy wife?' he answered, 'Behold, she is in the tent.' It would have been well for some of her descendents had they been 'in the tent', too, for Dinah's going forth to see the daughters of the land cost her dear. Now, this is the position, the exact position of the chaste lover of Jesus, he dwells at home with Jesus, among his own people. The Christian's place with regard to Christ is to be diligently engaged in Christ's house . . . To neglect our holy life-work is to wrong our heavenly Bridegroom. Put this matter in a clear light, my brethren, and do not shut your eyes to it. Have you any right to mind earthly things? Can you serve two masters? What, think you, would any kind husband here think, if when he came home the children had been neglected all day, if there was no meal for him after his day's work, and no care taken of his house whatever? Might he not well give a gentle rebuke, or turn away with a tear in his eye? And if it were long continued, might he not almost be justified if he should say 'My house yields me no comfort! This woman acts not as a wife to me!' . . .

May you rise up and open to him, and then your hands will drop with myrrh, and your fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock. But remember if you neglect him now, it will cost you much to find him when you do arise, for he will make you traverse the streets after him, and the watchmen will smite you, and take away your veil. Rise and admit him now.⁴⁴

⁴³ Thomas Boston, 'Of the Fifth Commandment', *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*.

⁴⁴ C. H. Spurgeon on Jer. 2:36, 'Gadding About', *The Sword and the Trowel* (Sept. 1870).

In his first epistle to Timothy, the apostle Paul, ordained a preacher and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth, makes a marked distinction between the public role of Christian men and the modest, quiet role of their women: “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (I Tim. 2:8, 9). Men lead in prayer, lifting up pure hands to God (cf. I Kings 8:22; Psalm 24:4; Psalm 28:2), and “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” (I Tim. 2:9, 10). The apostle teaches that shamefacedness (or modesty, the root word implying downcast eyes) is to be a characteristic of godly women, and modest apparel the clothing of humble women, as opposed to the pride, impudence and ostentatious finery that characterise the woman in harlot’s attire (Prov. 7:10, 16, cf. Jer. 3:3). He then proceeds to elaborate on the submissive and homely duties of women, saying,

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (I Tim. 2:11-15).

Writing to the Christians in Corinth likewise, Paul decrees that women keep silence in the public assemblies, and that they ask any questions of their husbands in the seclusion of the home:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (I Cor. 14:34, 35).

Irish commentator Andrew R. Fausset (1821-1910) analyses I Corinthians 11:5, and says of women:

The ordinary rule to them is: silence in public (I Cor. 14:34, 35; I Tim. 2:11, 12). Mental receptivity and activity at home are recognized in Christianity, as most accordant with the destiny of woman . . . Scripture sanctions not the emancipation of woman from subjection: modesty is her true ornament. Man rules; woman ministers: the respective dress should accord.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments* (1871). Deborah the wife of Lapidoth is sometimes cited as evidence that women may hold public and dominant positions. However, she judged only by divine inspiration (Judges 4:4, 6, 9) and did not mingle with the civil or religious rulers. Rather, she “dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah” while the Israelites “came up to her for

3. Necessity of Modest Clothing

Apart from such regulations as belonged to the ceremonial or judicial laws of Old Testament Israel⁴⁶ (Dan. 9:27; I Cor. 9:8-10), all precepts ordained by God are binding upon the New Testament church (Matt. 5:17). Enshrined in the moral law is the directive that mankind must “hide the shameful nakedness of the body from the sight of men”⁴⁷ (Gen. 3:7-11, cf. Isa. 20:4; Ezek. 23:29; II Cor. 5:3). Clothing has been essential for mankind ever since the fall, and a hearty assent to modest clothing is a sign of true godliness.

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel . . . And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them (Gen. 3:9-14, 15, 20, 21).

This passage shows us that clothing has become necessary because of Adam’s fall into sin. All men, women and children descended from Adam⁴⁸ have guilty, corrupt natures, from which emanates all actual sin (Rom. 5:12, 19; Matt. 15:19), and so the human race is destitute of spiritual clothing, our own righteousnesses being now but filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Unless provided with a spiritual coverture (Isa. 61:10; Eph. 5:25), every human being will be compelled to answer for his own wicked works on that day of wrath (Job 21:30; Matt. 25:41, 46; Rom. 2:5, 6). Guilt, and the shame of nakedness both spiritual and physical, are results of sin. The more the knowledge of one’s

judgement” (Judges 4:5). But ordinary judges, always men, sat with the elders in the gate, in the public thoroughfare of a city (Gen. 19:1; Deut. 16:18; Ruth 4:1, 2; Amos 5:15). In the New Testament also, women who prophesied were to maintain the proper distinctions between the sexes (I Cor. 11:5, 9, 10). Andrew Fausset says: “This instance of women speaking in public worship is an extraordinary case, and justified only by the miraculous gifts which such women possessed as their credentials; for instance, Anna the prophetess and Priscilla (so Acts 2:18) . . . This passage does not necessarily sanction women speaking in public, even though possessing miraculous gifts; but simply records what took place at Corinth, without expressing an opinion on it, reserving the censure of it till I Cor. 14:34, 35” (on I Cor. 11:5, *Ibid.*).

⁴⁶ See ‘Of the Law of God’, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. 19:3, 4, pp80, 81.

⁴⁷ William Perkins, ‘On the Right, Lawful, and Holy Use of Apparel’, *Cases of Conscience*.

⁴⁸ ‘Shorter Catechism’, Q16, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, p290. Christ was not descended from Adam by ordinary generation.

guilt before God is suppressed, the more one's conscience becomes seared, and the sense of the shame and depravity of physical nakedness is stifled.

You see that in providing Adam and his wife with clothing from the skins of slain animals, God gave a symbol of the Sacrifice for sinners who would provide spiritual robes of righteousness for those who "come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). Says Matthew Henry:

Thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. These sacrifices were divided between God and man, in token of reconciliation: the flesh was offered to God, a whole burnt-offering; the skins were given to man for clothing, signifying that, Jesus Christ having offered himself to God a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, we are to clothe ourselves with his righteousness as with a garment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to *wrap themselves in*, Isa. 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skins; large, and strong, and durable, and fit for them; such is the righteousness of Christ. Therefore *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.⁴⁹

The covering of righteousness for sinners was devised in eternity when God made a covenant with His Son (Psalm 89:3), and being of God's design it was appropriate that it be represented by the material clothing made by God to cover the shame of physical nakedness. Not only is physical clothing absolutely required of God, but from the beginning it was bestowed upon men and women to be worn in the way that He sees fit, in a manner that fulfils the purpose of clothing. In his commentary on Ezekiel 16, William Greenhill (1591-1671) analyses the rich apparel given by the Lord to the Jewish church, which is represented as a woman; and in order to "discern more clearly of the lawful use or sinful abuse of these things", Greenhill considers "for what ends the Lord hath given apparel and ornaments":

(1.) To cover man's nakedness. God set man and woman naked in the world at first, that they might see they had nothing of their own, that all was the Lord's who created them; but when they sinned in eating the forbidden fruit, they were ashamed of their nakedness, and sought to cover it, Gen. 3:7, 21; yea, God made them 'coats of skins, and clothed them,' ver. 21, that so their nakedness and shame might not be seen, that so modesty and chastity might be preserved: Hos. 2:9, 'I will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.'

(2.) To arm and defend them against the injury of the air, the violence of wind and weather, heat and cold [Prov. 31:21; 25:20; Job 24:7] . . .

⁴⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p20.

(3.) To distinguish one sex from another. God would not have men and women dressed and adorned alike; Deut. 22:5, 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment:' God would not have men to be effeminate, nor women to be mannish . . .

(4.) To preserve the healthiness of our bodies. 'Man is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward,' Job 5:7; and man labouring, his body sweats . . . which our vestures receiving are to be changed, and so health preserved: so in time of sickness, Job 30:18 . . .

(5.) To notify the conditions, ranks, and places of men [Gen. 41:42; Esth. 6:8; Acts 12:21; Psalm 45:13, 14; II Sam. 13:18; Lam. 4:5; Matt. 11:8; 27:28] . . .

(6.) To adorn the body [Gen. 27:15; Isa. 52:1; Hos. 2:13] . . . Jer. 2:32, 'Can a maid forget her ornaments?' Exod. 28:40, Aaron's sons must have coats, girdles, bonnets, 'for glory and beauty' . . .

(7.) To testify grief or joy. Mordecai put on sackcloth in a time of mourning [Joel 1:13; Luke 15:22; Isa. 61:10; Eccl. 9:8] . . .⁵⁰

It is not therefore merely for a covering of shame – for modesty – that we wear clothes, but also, notably, for the “honouring of the body”⁵¹ (I Thess. 4:4), for protection from the elements, and “to distinguish sexes”.⁵² Holy Scripture dictates that women's clothes are to be distinct from those of men: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 22:5). The distinctive features of men's and women's apparel complement their respective roles in society, and those who transgress these laws, wearing forbidden garments, display the wantonness and covetousness of their hearts. Women in particular add rebellion to these sins, breaking the fifth as well as the seventh and tenth commandments (cf. Exod. 20:12, 14, 17). “The distinction of sexes by the apparel is to be kept up,” notes Mr Henry,

for the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, v. 5. *Nature itself teaches* that a difference be made between them in *their hair* (I Cor. 11:14), and by the same rule in their clothes, which therefore ought not to be confounded, either in ordinary wear or occasionally . . . It forbids the confounding of the dispositions and affairs of the sexes: men must not be effeminate, nor do the women's work in the house, nor must women be viragos, pretend to *teach*, or *usurp authority*, I Tim. 2:11, 12.⁵³

⁵⁰ William Greenhill, *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (Banner of Truth, 1994), p358.

⁵¹ William Perkins, 'On the Right, Lawful, and Holy Use of Apparel', *Cases of Conscience*.

⁵² Thomas Boston, 'Of the Seventh Commandment', *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*.

⁵³ Matthew Henry on Deut. 22:5, *Commentary*, vol. 2, p475.

John Gill⁵⁴ (1697-1771), a predecessor of C. H. Spurgeon's at New Park Street Chapel, comments:

*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man . . . It being very unseemly and impudent, and contrary to the modesty of her sex; or there shall not be upon her any 'instrument of a man', any utensil of his which he makes use of in his trade and business; as if she was employed in it, when her business was not to do the work of men, but to take care of her house and family.*⁵⁵

In the use of the word *abomination* (תועבה, *tow'ebah*, in Hebrew) to describe the woman who wears "that which pertaineth unto a man", and the man who puts on "a woman's garment", the immorality of such confusion is powerfully and decisively expressed, the same word being used in Leviticus 18:22 to denounce the sin of the Sodomites. And without doubt, those crimes denounced by God as abomination cannot be avoided by using merely arbitrary rules of human invention. This would be to follow the practices of our rebellious and perverse generation, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The Sacred Volume is our rule, and while giving little information on precise details of articles of clothing – replication of ancient garments being needless – it provides the principles necessary for appropriate and modest covering. These may be learned by searching the Scriptures and observing the standards of the godly. The apostle Peter exhorts us to follow faithful examples:

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: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous (I Peter 3:1-8, cf. Heb. 11).

We do well, too, if we eschew the bad example of those set forth as warnings (Luke 17:32). Matthew Henry, expounding the prophet Isaiah's warning to the daughters of Zion, says:

⁵⁴ Unfortunately some of Dr Gill's writings exhibit a tendency towards Hyper-Calvinism.

⁵⁵ John Gill on Deut. 22:5, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

The prophet's business was to show all sorts of people what they had contributed to the national guilt and what share they must expect in the national judgments that were coming. Here he reproves and warns the daughters of Zion, tells the ladies of their faults; and Moses, in the law, having denounced God's wrath against *the tender and delicate woman* (the prophets being a comment upon the law, Deut. 28:56), he here tells them how they shall smart by the calamities that are coming upon them. Observe,

The sin charged upon the daughters of Zion, v. 16. The prophet expressly vouches God's authority for what he said, lest it should be thought it was unbecoming in him to take notice of such things, and should be resented by the ladies: *The Lord saith it.* 'Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, let them know that God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the folly and vanity of proud women, and his law takes cognizance even of their dress.' Two things that here stand indicted for – haughtiness and wantonness, directly contrary to that *modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety, with which women ought to adorn themselves*, I Tim. 2:9. They discovered the disposition of their mind by their gait and gesture.⁵⁶

4. Men's Clothing

Since the role and physical structure of men is by God's ordination different from that of women, men's clothing should be distinctively adapted for manly physique and activity. In Scripture the man's dress was more suited to outdoor life, travelling and hard physical work than that of women, as evidenced by the practice of girding up the loins:

And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel (I Kings 18:46); Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me (Job 40:6, 7, cf. Exod. 12:11; II Kings 4:29, 9:1; Jer. 1:17; Luke 12:35-37; I Peter 1:13).

The latter statement is repeated in Job 38:3, which Matthew Poole explains as follows: "*Gird up now thy loins*; as warriors then did for the battle. Prepare thyself for the combat with me."⁵⁷ As indicated in God's words to Job on this occasion, girding up the loins was invariably a custom pertaining to men alone, by which they would have "their long garments tucked up (which otherwise would hang about them, and hinder them)";⁵⁸ whilst on the other hand we infer from Isaiah 47:2, 3 that for women, any raising of the skirts was a disgrace. The word used in Job 38:3, 40:7 and Deuteronomy 22:5 for "man"

⁵⁶ Matthew Henry on Isa. 3:16, *Commentary*, vol. 3, p667.

⁵⁷ Matthew Poole on Job 38:3, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p1018.

⁵⁸ Matthew Henry on Luke 12:36, *Commentary*, vol. 5, p412. Note that "to gird" can mean simply "to clothe" oneself (Prov. 31:17; John 21:18).

is גִּבּוֹר (*geber*), which tends to denote a “valiant man or warrior”,⁵⁹ whereas the word used in Deuteronomy 22:5 for “woman” is אִשָּׁה (*ishshah*), which is the feminine of אִישׁ (*iysh*), the ordinary word for any man. Hence, the Hebrew grammar in the phrase, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man”, shows us that especially forbidden to women is the costume of an active man: the “long garments which they tucked up when they went about earnest business”,⁶⁰ the shorter robe, and the trousers worn as an outer covering by workmen, soldiers, sailors, horsemen, etc., in many ancient and modern cultures.

Men’s robes being of such a style, and being worn in such a manner, as was conducive to their being girt up to free the wearer for action is one of the most frequently cited distinctives of men’s apparel in Scripture, and it contradicts the common argument for “women’s trousers”, which is as follows: “As men and women of Bible times all wore robe-like garments, so modern women may wear trousers as men do, so long as the trousers are different in style from men’s.” It should firstly be noted that the current “differences” in apparel are so minor as to be generally unobservable, except that women’s outfits tend to be closer-fitting and altogether less concealing. But secondly, until after the entrenchment of Higher Criticism and other heresies in the churches, and the loss of faith in God’s Word, the distinctive clothing of women was never merely a modified imitation of whatever men might be wearing, but a full-length robe, so styled as to conceal the body and provide proper covering down to the ankles or feet, as we shall see.

Conversely, very long robes worn by men were an addition to the essential garments (Luke 20:46) and were, along with other flowing, outer garments worn in those Eastern lands, considered an encumbrance to a man on a serious errand. This is seen in the actions of blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, who, “casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus” (Mark 10:50, cf. Acts 7:58). Matthew Henry explains: “The poor man, hereupon, made the best of his way to Christ; He *cast away his* loose upper *garment*, and came to Jesus (v. 50); he cast away every thing that might be in danger of throwing him down, or might in any way hinder him in coming to Christ, or retard his motion. Those who would come to Jesus, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency . . .”⁶¹ Mr Henry then proceeds to speak of “the sin that, like long garments, doth *most easily beset them*, Heb. 12:1”.

⁵⁹ James Strong, ‘Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary’, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* (Baker Book House, 1982), p25.

⁶⁰ Note on II Kings 9:1, *Geneva Bible* (1599).

⁶¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 5, p302.

By the same token John Calvin says, “We know that orientals use flowing tunics and long robes, so that they cannot execute any business without putting off their garments.”⁶² Although the nobler sort of men often wore long robes (Mark 16:5), these were not essential as a covering and were different from the woman’s outer robe. Even in our day, the long ceremonial robes worn by a prince, and the gown of a judge, are quite distinguishable from a woman’s dress or long skirt and blouse. Our Lord warned the disciples, “Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces” (Mark 12:38, cf. Luke 20:46). Matthew Henry says of such men:

They affect to appear very great; for they go in long clothing, with vestures down to their feet, and in those they walk about the streets, as princes, or judges, or gentlemen of the long robe. Their going in such clothing was not sinful, but their loving to go in it, priding themselves in it, valuing themselves on it, commanding respect by it, saying to their long clothes, as Saul to Samuel, Honour me now before this people, this was a product of pride. Christ would have his disciples go with their loins girt.⁶³

Long garments, as well as the rest of the wardrobe, are misused by men who indulge in excessive elegance, luxury and softness. Such vices are to be shunned – in men they are breakages of the rule of Deuteronomy 22:5. James Durham (1622-1658) elaborates:

There is in clothes a base effeminate-ness amongst men (which some way emasculateth or unmanneth them) who delight in those things which women dote upon, as dressing of hair, powderings, washings, (when exceeded in), rings, jewels &c. which are spoken of, and reprov’d in the daughters of Zion, Isa. 3. and so must be much more unsuitable to men. Also interchanging of apparel is condemn’d; men putting on women’s, and women men’s clothes, which is unsuitable to that distinction of sexes which the Lord hath made, and is condemn’d in the word, as a confusion, an absurd, unnatural thing, and an inlet to much wickedness. Whereof the Dutch annotators, as several fathers did long before them, on I Cor. 11:14. make men’s nourishing and wearing of long hair to be some degree [*i.e.*, crime], it being given to women, not only for an ornament and covering, but also in part for distinction of the female sex from the male.⁶⁴

Though men are cautioned against pride in the wearing of dignified long garments, such are the standards of modesty required in the Sacred Records that a man wearing only an inner garment is said to be naked. *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* describes this inner tunic:

⁶² John Calvin on Ezek. 4:7, *Commentaries on Ezekiel*, vol. 1 (Baker Books, 2003), p181.

⁶³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 5, p309.

⁶⁴ James Durham, ‘The Seventh Commandment’, *The Law Unsealed* (Edinburgh, 1676), p308.

It was a closely-fitting garment, resembling in use and form our shirt (John 19:23). It was kept close to the body by a girdle (John 21:7). A person wearing this 'coat' alone was described as naked (I Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2; II Kings 6:30; John 21:7).⁶⁵

According to the same dictionary, a Hebrew man would also wear another, longer tunic over the inner "coat" (I Samuel 2:19, 24:4, 28:14; Matthew 10:10; Luke 9:3), and over that an outer garment consisting of a "piece of woollen cloth like a Scotch plaid . . . confined to the waist by a girdle, and the fold formed by the overlapping of the robe served as a pocket (II Kings 4:39; Psalm 79:12; Hag. 2:12; Proverbs 17:23, 21:14)".⁶⁶ Thus biblical truth teaches us that, while taking account of the climate and customs of each land, men must be decently dressed in clothing that covers the body and is not tight-fitting. Although God's Word emphasises the virtue of modesty in women, there is also, without doubt, great shame in the uncovering of a man (Gen. 9:23; II Sam. 10:4, 5; I Chron. 19:4, 5; II Cor. 5:3; Rev. 16:15). For this reason the Lord commanded Moses to make linen breeches for Aaron and his sons, which were a form of trousers worn under the robe, to cover the body "from the waist to a little above the knee".⁶⁷ The Lord appointed the priests' trousers in these words:

And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him (Exod. 28:42, 43).

"They are particularly ordered, in their ministration," notes Matthew Henry of these priests of the Lord,

to wear *linen breeches*, v. 42. This teaches us modesty and decency of garb and gesture at all times, especially in public worship, in which a veil [for women] is becoming, I Cor. 11:5, 6, 10. It also intimates what need our souls have of a covering, when we come before God, that the *shame of their nakedness may not appear*.⁶⁸

While the various robes and turbans of the priests were made "for glory and for beauty" (Exod. 28:40), the breeches were necessary for decency, being given "to cover their nakedness" (v. 42). John Gill says that these breeches "were to reach above the navel near the heart, and to the end of the thigh, which is the knee, as Maimonides says; who also observes, that they had

⁶⁵ M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Thomas Nelson, 1897).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p231.

strings, but had no opening before or behind, but were drawn up round like a purse; they were a sort of drawers, and somewhat like our sailors' trousers."⁶⁹

Ezekiel, too, was told that the priests “shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins” (Ezek. 44:18, cf. Exod. 39:28; Lev. 6:10, 16:4). The bonnet mentioned here “denotes properly a turban worn by priests”,⁷⁰ turbans being the typical headgear or hat of Hebrew men. So, in compliance with the divine order, the priests of the Lord wore linen turbans, and trousers made of the same material. Also, in common with all men not under vows, the priests were commanded neither to shave their heads nor to grow long hair: “Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads” (v. 20). Matthew Henry observes that “they must be grave and modest, must *poll their heads* and keep their hair short. If a *man*, especially a minister, wear *long hair*, it is not becoming (I Cor. 11:14); it is effeminate.”⁷¹

Therefore the priests' costume was to be in the form of men's garb; different from ordinary wear, and hallowed, but still of a manly style. By God's ordination the priests wore short hair, turbans and robes in common with other Israelite men (cf. I Cor. 11:14; Ezek. 24:17; Luke 15:22), and although ordinary Jews were apparently not compelled to wear breeches, it is probable that those consecrated for the priests had their equivalents in the garments worn by common men. Such appears to have been the view of John Calvin, who remarks in his comments on Jeremiah 13:1-5, that the Hebrew word אָזוּר, *asur*, or *girdle* in the *Authorised (King James) Version*, “means not only the breeches which they then wore, but also a girdle or belt, according to what Isaiah says, when, speaking figuratively of Christ's kingdom, that faithfulness would be the girdle of his loins (Isaiah 11:5). It may here, however, be taken for breeches as well as for a girdle.”⁷² Knee breeches well accommodated the custom of girding up the loins and the practice of horse-riding, ensuring that the wearer would remain covered above the knee.

Further, it appears from the account of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in Daniel 3:21, “Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace”, that Jewish men were not averse to wearing trousers as an outer garment after the manner of the Persians. “Hosen” is an old word for trousers or breeches; Matthew Henry says, “They were bound in their coats or mantles, their hosen or breeches, and their hats or turbans, as if, in

⁶⁹ John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*. Maimonides, or *Moses ben Maimon* (AD 1135–1204), was a Jewish scholar and physician.

⁷⁰ M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*.

⁷¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 4, p1226.

⁷² John Calvin, *Commentaries on Jeremiah*, vol. 2 (Baker Books, 2003), p160.

detestation of their crime, they would have their clothes to be burnt with them.”⁷³ Again, it is apparent that men outside of the priestly order also wore trousers, whether under robes or as outer garments with their cloaks. Such styles are still in use in the Middle East, and have also been a tradition for millennia in much of Europe and Asia – men’s trousers playing a more prominent role in the costumes of those who relied on the horse for transport – while full-length dresses remained the garment of women.

Also exclusive to men was the cloak, an outer garment, which was different from the woman’s shawl and head covering. The apostle Paul told Timothy, “The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*” (II Tim. 4:13, cf. Exod. 22:26, 27; Matt. 5:40; Luke 6:29). In an age when men wore robes, John Chrysostom (AD c. 347–407), the Church Father born in Antioch, Syria, used the cloak as an example of a man’s article of clothing:

For if exchange of garments be not lawful, so that neither she should be clad with a cloak, nor he with a mantle or a veil: (‘for the woman,’ saith He, ‘shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garments:’) [Deut. 22:5] much more is it unseemly for these things to be interchanged.⁷⁴

Finally, the Lord reveals through Scripture and by nature itself that grown men are usually given a sign of their status in the form of a beard. While bearing in mind the obligation to neatness and common civility, it is worth considering that the men of the Old Testament church knew to appreciate the beard and understood its marring or removal to be shameful (Lev. 19:27, 21:5; I Sam. 21:13, 14; II Sam. 10:4, 5, 19:24, 20:9; I Chron. 19:4, 5; Ezra 9:3; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 41:5, 48:37). Note the pleasant and solemn references to Aaron’s beard in Psalm 133, a song that extols unity and brotherly love in Christ: “*It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments*” (Psalm 133:2, cf. Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9; John 3:34). Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) – the Church Father renowned for his defence of the doctrines of grace – wrote a commentary on the Psalms, and on this passage he says:

What was Aaron? A priest. Who is a priest, except that one Priest, who entered into the Holy of Holies? Who is that priest, save Him, who was at once Victim and Priest? save Him who when he found nothing clean in the world to offer,

⁷³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, vol. 4, p1250. In the AV the Aramaic סַרְבַּל (*sarbal*) of Dan. 3:21 is translated as “coats”, and פַּטִּיִּשׁ (*pattiysh*) becomes “hosen” or “trousers”. However, as this description of Persian costume has no equivalent in Scripture with which it may be compared, scholars have varied in their translations, some understanding *sarbal* to be “trousers”. Cf. Persian *sherwal* and Arabic *sarwal*, “trousers” – a traditional, commodious men’s outer garment worn in the Middle East.

⁷⁴ John Chrysostom, Homily 26, *On the Veiling of Women*.

offered Himself? The ointment is on his head, because Christ is one whole with the Church, but the ointment comes from the head. Our Head is Christ crucified and buried; He rose again, and ascended into heaven; and the Holy Spirit came from the head. Whither? To the beard. The beard signifies the courageous; the beard distinguishes the grown men, the earnest, the active, the vigorous. So that when we describe such, we say, he is a bearded man. Thus that ointment descended first upon the Apostles, descended upon those who bore the first assaults of the world, and therefore the Holy Spirit descended on them. For they who first began to dwell together in unity, suffered persecution; but because the ointment descended to the beard, they suffered, but were not conquered.⁷⁵

Aaron was a type of our Messiah who was in all things made like unto his brethren (Heb. 2:17), and of whose words Isaiah prophesied, saying, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isa. 50:6). It was a part of the open shame suffered by our Lord Jesus Christ that His face was spat upon, and His beard torn out.

As nature itself teaches us (cf. I Cor. 11:14), this manly, paternal or patriarchal⁷⁶ bearing is not confined to the Levitical priesthood or the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace. C. H. Spurgeon once gave his theological students a lecture “On the Voice”, and touching on the necessity of taking care of the throat he advised the young men against wrapping their necks in scarves, adding, “If you feel that you want something else, why, then grow your beards! A habit most natural, scriptural, manly, and beneficial.”⁷⁷

5. Women’s Clothing

As men’s garments suit their work and station, so women’s garments complement the protected place of women, who are given to be cornerstones of the home and guides of their children in the way of life (Prov. 31:1; II Tim. 1:5). Co-heirs of the grace of life and joint-heirs with Christ (I Peter 3:7; Rom. 8:17), women in particular are enjoined to be discreet and chaste (Titus 2:5). Young men are to be sober minded (v. 6) and to guard against the lusts of youth (II Tim. 2:22), but divine revelation emphasises the need for women to be modestly covered and careful to see that their attire is in every way agreeable to the will of God:

⁷⁵ Augustine of Hippo, *Expositions of the Psalms*.

⁷⁶ The Hebrew word for ‘beard’, זָקָן (*zaqan*), is derived from זָקֵן (*zaqen*), an ‘elder’ or ‘old man’ (see ‘Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary’, no. 2206, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, p36).

⁷⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, First Series, Lecture 8 (Baker Book House, 1981), p134.

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety (I Tim. 2:8, 9).

The godly women of old were adorned with full-length dresses which covered them approximately down to the ankles or the feet (Isa. 47:2; Jer. 13:22, 26), and which were sometimes richly embroidered, particularly among royalty (II Sam. 13:18; Psalm 45:13, 14; Ezek. 16:10). Such garments served as reminders of the perfect righteousness of Christ, as did the long robes once worn by men at weddings and other occasions (Matt. 22:11).

We have already seen that one great difference between noblemen's long robes and the ordinary attire of women is that the woman's dress was the guardian of her modesty; thus in public she invariably wore a long robe and that at full length on every occasion. Her "outer garment", says *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, "terminated in an ample fringe or border, which concealed the feet (Isaiah 47:2; Jeremiah 13:22)".⁷⁸ *Smith's Bible Dictionary* states that although the costumes of men and women were very similar, there was sufficient difference to mark the sex, and

it was strictly forbidden to a woman to wear the appendages, such as the staff, signet-ring, and other ornaments, of a man; as well as to a man to wear the outer robe of a woman. Deut. 22:5 . . . The dress of the women differed from that of the men in regard to the outer garment . . . Among their distinctive robes we find a kind of shawl, Ruth 3:15; Isa. 3:22, light summer dresses of handsome appearance and ample dimensions, and gay holiday dresses. Isa. 3:24.⁷⁹

As long hair is comely, indeed essential for women (I Cor. 11:15), so the long skirt is modest, attractive and ladylike, and these facts are detected even by the natural senses; whereas it is patent that trousers, while acceptable for men, are neither fitted nor suited for ladies. Trousers are not mentioned in the Bible as part of the woman's wardrobe; they were never worn by women as an outer garment and are not to be considered an adequate substitute for the long skirt.⁸⁰ In Scripture the uncovering of the woman's skirt is a euphemism for adultery: "A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt" (Deut. 22:30). Matthew Poole remarks as follows:

His father's skirt, i.e. the skirt of the mother's garment, i.e. the nakedness, which is here called *his father's skirt*, because his father and mother were one flesh, or because his father alone had the right to uncover it. The phrase is taken from the ancient custom or ceremony of the bridegroom's spreading the skirt of his

⁷⁸ M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*.

⁷⁹ Dr William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (1884).

⁸⁰ However, trouser-like undergarments such as pantalets have long been in use among modest women in the East and West.

garment over the bride, to signify his right to her, and authority over her, and his obligation to the marriage duty. See Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8.⁸¹

Isaiah prophesied of the spiritual captivity and humiliation of the Roman abomination – which is represented as the “virgin daughter of Babylon” (cf. Rev. 14:8, 17:5, 9) – and made reference not only to the shame of uncovering the thigh, but of making bare the leg (that is, between the knee and ankle), the Hebrew words speaking of the removal of the skirts which cover this area:

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: *there is* no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee* as a man. *As for* our redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* his name, the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 47:1-4).

The reason the woman’s leg is mentioned with shame is that it should have been covered with the modest apparel appropriate for women, unlike the “legs of a man” (Psalm 147:10), which represent the strength of one who girds up his loins for battle. Women’s skirts are meant to be long and relatively spacious – not so tightened as to hinder a modest gait (Isa. 3:16) – and are essential for feminine modesty and dignity:

For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, *and* thy heels made bare . . . Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear (Jer. 13:22, 26).

To the same end is the Lord’s denunciation of the city of Nineveh, which is represented as a harlot (Nahum 3:5, cf. Deut. 22:30; Isa. 47:2; Ezek. 16:37).

Thus the whole outfit of godly women should be long, relatively loose and flowing, and evidently composed of opaque material, not indecently thin or adhesive. It should be completely different from the attire of the woman in Proverbs 7:10, who, as John Gill thinks, was wearing “showy gaudy garments, such as the Athenian whores wore, or short ones, as the Romans; the word signifies one fitted to her body, neat and well shaped, to recommend her: so the woman, the whore of Rome, is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet colour”.⁸² But the beauty seen in the godly women of Scripture was not so much of bodily form as of the face, indicating that their clothing was not formfitting but graceful: “Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance” (I Sam. 25:3, cf. Gen. 24:16, 29:17; II Sam. 14:27). Note that the same Hebrew words as used for Abigail’s “beautiful

⁸¹ Matthew Poole, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p380.

⁸² John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

countenance” are used in Genesis 29:17 for Rachel, who “was beautiful and well favoured” – yet some modern translations indicate that the phrase in Genesis makes a reference to bodily form or figure. Such an interpretation introduces a new slant on the text which tends to the impression of a modern fashion, alien to the commodious dress in use among Abraham’s kinswomen (cf. Gen. 31:34, 35).

In the New Testament the apostle Paul enjoins women to “adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (I Tim. 2:9). The word translated here as “apparel” is καταστολή (*katastole*), which combines στολή (*stole*),⁸³ the common New Testament word for a dignified long robe (Mark 12:38, 16:5; Luke 15:22, 20:46; Rev. 6:11, 7:9), with the prefix κατά (*kata*), which means “down” or in some instances “covered down” (cf. I Cor. 11:4). Elsewhere in Scripture, where garments in general are intended and not dignified long robes in particular, the word is usually ἱμάτιον (*himation*), and *stole* or *katastole* are not included. Thus, using the word *katastole*, Paul commands Christian women to wear garments in the form of long robes – *modest apparel*, or *modest long robes* – in keeping with the custom of the godly women in Old Testament times. So John Gill:

*that women adorn themselves in modest apparel: the word rendered ‘apparel’ signifies a long robe, which reaches down to the feet; and the word translated ‘modest’ signifies that which is clean, neat, and decent, yea, beautiful and ornamental . . . The apostle adds, with shamefacedness and sobriety: these are the two general rules by which dress is to be regulated; it is right and proper, when it is consistent with chastity, when it is not immodest and impudent, and more like the attire of an harlot than of a woman professing godliness; and when it is moderate as well as modest, and suitable to a person’s age and station, and is not beyond the circumstances of life in which they are. There is no religion or irreligion in dress, provided pride and luxury are guarded against, and modesty and moderation preserved.*⁸⁴

So the argument that women in modern, Western-style trousers may be as biblically modest and distinctively feminine as the ladies of the era when both sexes wore Eastern robes is groundless, the Eastern woman’s garment having always been a full-length, feminine dress,⁸⁵ similar to the traditional

⁸³ Definition in James Strong’s ‘Greek Dictionary of the New Testament’: “στολή, *stol-ay*’; from (στέλλω); *equipment*, i.e. (special) a ‘*stole*’ or long-fitting *gown* (as a mark of dignity): – long clothing (garment), (long) robe” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, p67). Compare with definition of the English word ‘*stole*’ (taken from the Greek στολή via the Latin ‘*stola*’) in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*: “*Stole*¹ *n.* 1. (Rom. Ant.) Woman’s long loose outer dress” (Oxford University Press, 1978, p1133).

⁸⁴ John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

⁸⁵ The woman’s costume also made use of sleeves. In Scripture, baring the arm was comparable with girding up the loins, symbolising manly action and fighting strength

attire of Christian women in the West.⁸⁶ An interesting quotation from Tertullian (AD c. 155–c. 220), the Church Father from Carthage in modern Tunisia, demonstrates that a major factor in the distinctiveness of women’s robes from those of men was their elegance and their modest, concealing nature – they “were the evidences and guardians of dignity”:

Just so, if a man were to wear a dainty robe trailing on the ground with Menander-like effeminacy, he would hear applied to himself that which the comedian says: ‘What sort of a cloak is that maniac wasting?’ . . . Turn, again, to women. You have to behold what Caecina Severus pressed upon the grave attention of the senate – matrons stoleless in public. In fact, the penalty inflicted by the decrees of the augur Lentulus upon any matron who had thus cashiered herself was the same as for fornication; inasmuch as certain matrons had sedulously promoted the disuse of garments which were the evidences and guardians of dignity . . . But while one extinguishes her proper adornments, another blazes forth such as are not hers.⁸⁷

The femininity of the woman’s dress is also manifested in its simple delicacy and ornamental features. Charles Bridges (1794-1869) writes:

The primary respect inculcated to the inward ‘adorning’ [I Pet. 3:4; I Tim. 2:10] in no way renders the exterior grace a nullity. Even in isolated seclusion some regard would be due; much more, as suited to the gradation which Providence has assigned; and as commanding an husband’s respect, who justly claims, that his wife’s exterior, *so far as she is concerned*, should continue to be not less pleasing, than when at first his heart was drawn to her.⁸⁸

Thus in kings’ houses, where “soft clothing” is worn (Matt. 11:8), the woman’s dress is especially ornamented, according to her sex and station:

(Isa.52:10; Ezek. 4:7). William Greenhill comments on Ezekiel 4:7: “Thine arm shall be uncovered.’ Soldiers of old were wont to have their arms naked in fight; the pictures of the ancient warriors and worthies are so painted; and P. Africanus upbraided Sulpicius Galbus, *quod tunicis uteretur manicatis uti foeminæ*, because he made use of robes with sleeves after the fashion of women; and some interpreters say, that the Indians and Africans do it to this day, they fight with their arms naked . . . A like phrase to this you have in Isa. 52:10, ‘The Lord hath made bare his holy arm:’ as servants strip up their sleeves, make their arms bare, and ready for service; so the Lord made bare his arms, and put forth his power to do some choice service for his people. In this manner was the prophet to prophesy unto the people” (*An Exposition of Ezekiel*, p131).

⁸⁶ Assyrian bas-reliefs of Sennacherib’s siege of Lachish in Judah (cf. II Kings 18:14, 17, 19:8; II Chron. 32:9; Isa. 36:2, 37:8) depict local women in ankle-length dresses, and men with shorter robes and short hair. For an example of the women’s dress, see ‘Cart with women of Lachish’, *Davis Dictionary of the Bible*, p128.

⁸⁷ Tertullian, ‘Change Not Always Improvement’, *On the Pallium*, chap. 4. Menander (c. 342–c. 292 BC) was an Athenian dramatist.

⁸⁸ Charles Bridges, *A Commentary on Proverbs* (Banner of Truth, 1987), p624.

I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck, And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head (Ezek. 16:10-12, cf. Gen. 24:22; II Sam. 1:24, 13:18; Isa. 49:18; Jer. 2:32).

Nonetheless, unnatural extravagance is condemned throughout the Word of God: "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" (Jer. 4:30, cf. II Kings 9:30; Isa. 3:18-23; Ezek. 23:40; I Tim. 2:9; I Peter 3:3). Clement of Alexandria, the Church Father born in Egypt around AD 150, said in his comments on clothing:

Let the women wear a plain and becoming dress, but softer than what is suitable for a man, yet not quite immodest or entirely gone in luxury. And let the garments be suited to age, person, figure, nature, pursuits. For the divine apostle most beautifully counsels us 'to put on Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the lusts of the flesh.'⁸⁹

Such articles of clothing as the headscarf or veil are not ordinarily appropriate for men – whose veiling the head for pagan worship⁹⁰ is probably alluded to in Ezekiel 13:18, 21 – but well suited to ladies. The English-born Puritan John Cotton (1585-1652), who immigrated to the colony of New England, wrote, "The vail is for a sign, 1. Of subjection, I Cor. 11.10. 2. Of protection, Gen. 20.16. 3. Of ornament, Isa. 3.23. The same word."⁹¹ Similarly, James Durham explains the biblical usage of women's veils in his work on the Song of Solomon, a commentary highly commended by John Owen:

The last step is, 'they took away my vail from me;' the word that is rendered 'vail,' comes from a root that signifieth to subdue, it is that same word which we have, Psalm 144:2, 'who subdues the people,' &c. It hath a threefold use, 1. For

⁸⁹ Clement of Alexandria, 'On Clothes', *The Instructor*, Book 2, chap. 11. Clement died between AD 211 and 215. For John Owen's warning on Tertullian and Clement (among others), see endnote [7].

⁹⁰ John Calvin on Ezekiel 13:18: "Then they had veils or coverings which they put over their heads. In this way imposture flourished with the Roman augurs; for they veiled their head when they wished to begin their incantations. Livy says, that the augur stood at the threshold with his head covered, and uttered these words, 'O Jupiter, hear;' so that it is probable that veils covered the heads of those who wished to consult God" (*Commentaries on Ezekiel*, vol. 2, p30). Said Cyprian of Carthage (AD c. 200–258), the North African Church Father and martyr, to those men of God who had endured the fierce Decian Persecution of AD 250: "Your head has remained free from the impious and wicked veil with which the captive heads of those who sacrificed were there veiled" ('Treatise 3 – On the Lapsed', *The Treatises of Cyprian*).

⁹¹ John Cotton, *A Brief Exposition with Practical Observations Upon the Whole Book of Canticles* (London, 1655), p138.

decoration, as Isa. 3:23. 2. For a sign of modesty, pleaded for by the apostle, I Cor. 11:6. 3. And mainly, for a sign of women's subjection to their own husbands; for which cause Rebekah puts on her veil, when she meets Isaac, Gen. 24:65. And therefore it is called power, as being the sign of the wife's being under the power of her husband, I Cor. 11:10. Here her veil is the tenderness of her profession, whereby, in a decent, modest and humble way, she professed herself to be a believer, seeking after Christ Jesus, as one bearing the badge of subjection to him as her Husband.⁹²

In his famous allegory, John Bunyan describes the conduct of the unescorted believing women when approached by two villains: "Now, by that they were gone about two bow-shots from the place that let them into the way, they espied two very ill-favoured ones coming down apace to meet them. With that, *Christiana* and *Mercy*, her friend, covered themselves with their veils, and so kept on their journey; the children also went on before; so that at last they met together."⁹³

So the woman's head-covering is useful in many situations, and was part of the traditional woman's costume in Australia and the home countries until the late nineteenth century, being worn for decoration, modesty and submission, and to protect the head and long hair from the elements. (In order to shelter the face from the hot sun, rural women sometimes wore a larger, broader veil, or put on a brimmed hat over their headscarves; and the "poke bonnet" popularised late in the reign of King George IV afforded similar protection.)

But it is not the purpose of this booklet to prove that the veil is required for all public appearances of women. What is certainly a moral duty is that women be covered up with a closed neckline. When the backsliding Church was condemned in Isaiah's prophecies, the daughters of Zion were described as haughty, walking "with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go" (Isa. 3:16). James Durham in *The Law Unsealed* (also commended by Dr Owen) says:

And therefore we say, that in men and women both there is condemned by the Lord, 1. Costliness and excessive bravery [*i.e.*, showiness] of apparel, I Tim.

⁹² James Durham on Song 5:7, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. For further biblical reference with regard to the veil (which could be drawn across to cover the face to varying degrees), see Genesis 38:14, 19; Numbers 5:18; Ruth 3:15; Song of Solomon 1:7 (AV margin), 4:1 (Hebrew), 6:7 (Hebrew); Isaiah 47:2; Ezekiel 16:10.

⁹³ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress – The Second Part*, p191. It should be noted that when the villains refused to move on peaceably, the two women "both shrieked out . . . and so put themselves under those laws that are provided for the protection of women"; their reliever marvelling that as they were "but weak women", they had not petitioned "the Lord there for a conductor" and so "avoided these troubles and dangers" (*ibid.*, p192). Engravings for editions published in Bunyan's lifetime depict these women in long veils and ankle-length dresses (see *Works of John Bunyan*, vol. 3, p84).

2:9. which saith not that we are to foster sordidness or baseness, or that men in all places or stations, and of all ranks, should, as to their apparel, be equal, but that none should exceed . . . 4. Wantonness and lightness in them [*i.e.*, clothes and dressings], which is especially in nakedness, as to such and such parts of the body, which in modesty are to be hid; for women having clothes for a cover, ought to make use of them for that end; and it is more than probable, that that *walking with stretched-out necks*, there reproveth, relateth to women, their making more of their necks, and their breasts bare, than should be, or is decent, they affected to discover or raise their gorgets⁹⁴, when God commendeth modesty, and nature is best pleased in its own unaffected freedom, yet they stretched them out: It is both a wonderful and sad thing, that women should need to be reproveth for such things, which are in themselves, 1. So gross, that let the most innocent be inquired, whence these more than ordinary discoveries do proceed: and they must at least grant, that the first practisers of such a fashion, could have no other design in it, than the more hereby to please and allure men's carnal eyes and regards: And, 2. So impudent; for if to be all naked be shameful and exceeding ready to provoke lust, must not nakedness *in part*, more or less, be, and do the same? So that this will be found a glorying in their shame; for nakedness hitherto was always looked upon as a reproach: We read of old of such as were grave, that they covered themselves with a vail: And, I Cor. 11. married women's going abroad uncovered is looked on as unnatural: What would such say if they lived in our times? We are persuaded the gravest among women are most averse from this evil, and the lightest are most prone and given to it: And seeing all women should be grave, it must import a disclaiming of that qualification where this lightness is delighted in: If therefore there be any shame, if there be any conscience, we will expect to prevail with some who are touched with the sense of gravity, that they may be good examples to the rest, at once endeavour effectually to bring gravity and modest shamefacedness in fashion again.⁹⁵

Mr Durham had no need in his generation to emphasise the woman's duty to wear long garments, because the world was not then so far out of order. This fact is demonstrated in the treatise of William Ames (1576-1633) against human ceremonies in God's worship. In this work, long garments are equated with "women's proper apparel" – the claim that the woman's veil of I Corinthians 11 was an introduction in worship is here met with the argument that the veil was "a civil order of decency, used as well out of God's worship as in it . . . which will bear well this conclusion: that it was no more religious, than women's proper apparel, long garments, &c."⁹⁶ Such an argument

⁹⁴ Part of the woman's collar or veil covering the throat and chest. Old French *gorgete*, diminutive of *gorge*, throat.

⁹⁵ James Durham, 'The Seventh Commandment', *The Law Unsealed*, pp306-308. Durham goes on to speak of excess in "the light and wanton manner of adorning houses and buildings with filthy and immodest paintings, pictures, and statues, and such like, which, with other things, is spoken of and condemned, Ezek. 23:14" (p310).

⁹⁶ William Ames, *A Fresh Suit Against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship* (1633).

evinces the orthodox belief that it was not merely contemporary fashion that compelled women to wear long garments, but “a civil order of decency”. As is clear from the context, Dr Ames was not attempting to convince his opponent of the virtues of long garments for women (which are complemented by long hair and other coverings) – he was simply using the example, as being obvious even from nature itself and approved of by all churches, to persuade his opponents in a more controversial dispute, one that concerned human ceremonies in the worship of God. Dr Ames continues: “modesty, shamefacedness, gravity, and care of not offending, are professed by all apparel of modest honest fashion. And yet I never heard of modest apparel called a mystical religious ceremony.” So it is the age-old conviction among Christians that, aside from what men may wear, the long gown has always been, and still is, the garment which for women is indispensable. In fact, it seems that no Protestant reformed church prior to the late 20th century ever considered the long dress not to be essential to feminine modesty, and the teaching that such covering is morally required of women was not disputed among Christians in past ages.

True modesty is pleasing to God and springs from a heart consent to His holiness, obtained by union with Christ, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Peter 1:3). And good works, performed in obedience to God’s commandments, “are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith”,⁹⁷ as the apostle James teaches (James 2:18, 22). “But he that lacketh these things”, says Peter,

is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:9-11).

6. Worldliness in Dress

Today the result of Higher Criticism may be seen throughout Western society. Witness the barrenness in the Church, the dearth of gospel preaching and the tremendous surge in crime, corruption and filth.⁹⁸ These scourges are due to the undermining of the books of the Old and New Testaments – “all which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life” – and to the resulting rejection of the authority of this Holy Scripture, which “is to be

⁹⁷ ‘Of Good Works’, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. 16:2, p68.

⁹⁸ See endnote [8].

received”, said our ancestors, “because it is the word of God”.⁹⁹ The assault on the Biblical distinctions between man and woman is now so widespread that in many places it has become necessary for the Lord’s people, as righteous Lot in Sodom, to differ openly from the general population in matters pertaining to the place of men and women, even in our dress. “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). Paul became as a Jew in order to gain his brethren – his “kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:3) – and as one without law to gain those who were not under the law of types and shadows; yet he remained “not without law to God, but under the law to Christ” (I Cor. 9:21).

Because the directive in Deuteronomy 22:5 does not elaborate on the differences required in garments, it is argued by many Christians today that the Bible does not teach anything specific about men’s and women’s apparel and that the instruction may be interpreted and obeyed by looking to contemporary fashions. Hence, with fashions changing according to the desires of ungodly yet influential men and women, Christian women are being allowed to wear men’s clothes, only of a “different style”. In the 20th century this worldly doctrine infiltrated Christendom, and it has almost eliminated the influence that godly and experienced men and women once had on fashion, leaving young women and children in particular to be swayed by the whims of perverse sinners.

The “women’s rights” movement of the 19th century, which, along with Darwinism, was exacerbated and fuelled by the Higher Critical erosion of faith in Scripture, was itself a catalyst for the disorder in families which is still reverberating across the globe.¹⁰⁰ The ringleaders of this movement called for an upheaval of the system instituted by God at the creation of the first man and woman: they decried the sheltered life accorded to women since the foundation of the world and they demanded the abolition of patriarchal headship. Seeking to destroy the mutual exclusiveness of the roles of men and women, they campaigned for the woman’s right to participate in men’s professions, and even to wear men’s clothes. Some, repeating the errors of Théroigne de Méricourt (1762-1817) – a pitiful woman who called for “rivalry with the men” during the French Revolution – drew much attention to themselves by wearing trousers¹⁰¹ and other articles of men’s clothing, while

⁹⁹ ‘Of the Holy Scripture’, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. 1, p21. See II Tim. 3:16.

¹⁰⁰ See endnote [9].

¹⁰¹ While Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919) was arrested for wearing standard men’s clothing, other early American feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818-1894) and Susan Brownell Anthony (1820-1906) publicly wore harem trousers “under a short skirt” (*Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2002). Although Mormon leader Brigham Young “warmly approved of it” (Ann-Eliza Young, *Wife*

others resorted to more violent criminal tactics. Although it may be proved from Scripture that the clothing known in Western history as men's apparel is indeed prohibited to women, the very nature of the 19th century women's movement indicates the rebellion inherent in the wearing of trousers by women. And the immorality of the 20th century¹⁰², during which unbelieving actresses¹⁰³ and fashion designers popularised the practice, reveals that it began in evil times among evil people. If the practice has not sprung from rebellion against paternal authority, but is merely a harmless change in style, why does society retain a general prohibition against men's wearing of women's garments? Women who "wear the trousers" (or at least the trendsetters of such behaviour) do so in defiance of the God who ordained for all women a domestic role. By the evidence of history alone it is clear that the new dress code did not come out of a faithful study of Christian principles, and that it is a code to be avoided by those who have been called not "unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thess. 4:7).¹⁰⁴

Such a profound revolution in fashion could not have happened apart from the openly rebellious and independent spirit which has been increasingly manifest since the rise of Higher Criticism, and which has encouraged the scorning of the apostolic command, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph. 6:1). It is well pleasing to the Lord that children obey their parents in all things lawful (Col. 3:20, cf. Acts 5:29), and that they follow their parents' judicious guiding in matters of dress and deportment. William Gouge (1575-1653) told the people of his day that "parents must have the ordering of their children's apparel":

A fourth branch of the foresaid subjection of children is about their apparel, that it be no other, than may stand with their parents' good liking. It is noted that *Israel made Joseph a coat* (Gen. 37:3). Doth not the particular mentioning of that circumstance shew, that parents must have the ordering of their children's apparel? Which is also intimated in the reason given of *Tamar's garment of divers colours* (II Sam. 13:18), namely because *with such garments were the king's daughters, that were virgins, apparelled*. And whereas *Rebekah* had the

No. 19, Dustin, Gilman & Co., 1875, p129), this imitation of the dress worn by women in Ottoman harems was much ridiculed by the public and condemned from Christian pulpits. Mrs Stanton once wrote, "The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women's emancipation" (*Free Thought* magazine, Sept. 1896).

¹⁰² See endnote [10].

¹⁰³ German-born Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992) was one of several Hollywood actresses noted for lasciviousness – and lesbian perversion – who encouraged women to wear trousers in the 1930s: "[Marlene] Dietrich's great popularity made her a trendsetter; her adoption of trousers and other mannish clothes helped launch an American fashion craze" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2005). By this time "bobbed" hair and the controversial "V-neck" top had already been introduced to Western women.

¹⁰⁴ See endnote [11].

keeping of her son *Esau's* clothes, it appeareth that his clothes were to the mind of his parents (Gen. 27:15): else he would have hid them from them: for further confirmation whereof it is noted that his apparel was pleasing to his father.¹⁰⁵

Unlike many leaders in the Church today, our forefathers in the faith considered the traditional form of clothing passed down to them, and the godly practice of their elders, to be guides for the young Christian in understanding the biblical rules of dress and conduct (Prov. 24:21; Jer. 6:16; I Peter 3:3-6, cf. I Cor. 11:1). James Durham speaks against ever-changing fashions¹⁰⁶ in his work, *The Law Unsealed*:

And therefore we say, that in men and women both there is condemned by the Lord, . . . 2. Strangeness in the ever-changing fashions, and extravagant modes of apparel, while as the Lord by nature hath continued the shape of men's bodies to be the same; for what is meant else by strange apparel, so often forbidden in the scripture, but that which is commonly called *the fashion, or new fashion*, a new and uncouth garb? And certainly men's minds are often infected with lascivious thoughts, and lustful inclinations, even by the use and sight of gaudy and vain clothing; and we will see light, loose, conceited minds discover themselves in nothing sooner than in their apparel, and fashions, and conceitedness in them.¹⁰⁷

William Gouge concurs; upon listing women's clothing among the "evident and undeniable proofs" of a husband's superiority over a wife, he adds, "The very attire which nature and custom of all times and places have taught women to put on, confirmeth the same: as long hair, vails, and other coverings over the head: this and the former argument doth the Apostle himself use to this very purpose, I Cor. 11.7 &c."¹⁰⁸ And William Perkins (1558-1602) says:

In apparel we must observe a holy comeliness . . . a man hath his set attire, a woman's hers, a young man is apparelled on this fashion, and an old man on that. And therefore it is unseemly for a man to put on a woman's apparel, or a woman the man's. Deut. 22:5, 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.' To set down precisely out of God's word, what apparel is decent is very hard; wherefore in this case, the judgments and practice of modest, grave, and sincere men, in every particular estate, is

¹⁰⁵ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622).

¹⁰⁶ "Back in Shakespeare's day, only upper-class people dressed fashionably; the mass of the rural peasantry wore simple clothing that hardly changed over many generations. Since the beginning of the 20th century, however, fashions have changed rapidly" (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2004).

¹⁰⁷ James Durham, 'The Seventh Commandment', *The Law Unsealed*, pp306, 307.

¹⁰⁸ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*.

most to be followed and men must rather keep too much within the bounds of measure, than to step one foot without the precincts.¹⁰⁹

In the same vein is David Dickson (a close friend of James Durham's), who speaks of "common sense" and "settled custom, . . . agreeable to nature in respect to what is comely", as dictating "that it is unseemly for a woman to pray uncovered, or that a man should wear long hair, and the contrary is decent".¹¹⁰ Yet the Puritans approved of long-established custom not simply for its own sake, but because the style of clothing passed down through the generations was generally in accordance with the rules of Scripture and the light of nature, being morally and practically acceptable. They condemned new fashions for their immorality or for their failure to accord with common sense, as William Perkins demonstrates in his seven rules of decency and comeliness which guide us in framing and fashioning our attire:

Firstly, that it be according to the sex: for men must prepare apparel for men, women for women. This rule is not ceremonial, but grounded upon the law of nature, and common honesty, *Deut. 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to unto man, neither shall a man put on woman's raiment; for all that do so, are abomination to the Lord thy God . . .*

Secondly, Our apparel must be made according to our office; that is, such as may be fit and convenient for us, in respect of our calling; that it may not hinder or disable us, in the performance of the duties thereof. Whereupon comes justly to be condemned the kind of apparel (specially of women) that is used in this age. For it makes them like to an image in a frame, set bolt upright; whereby it comes to pass, that they cannot go well, and with ease or conveniency, about any good business, but must of necessity either sit, or stand still.¹¹¹

A sign that our modern confusion of apparel is in opposition even to nature's light is the fact that the biblical pattern of distinction in the garments of men and women may be seen in traditional clothing not only in lands with a Christian heritage but throughout most of the world. A law that has a near universal adherence is generally one that is taught by the light of nature,¹¹² because the remnants of God's laws are still found written in the hearts of the heathen (Rom. 2:14, 15). Nature itself teaches man what is comely, and generally only the most degraded of people – for example, those who thought little of the institution of marriage or indeed of the lives of their own children – have not insisted that their women wear long dresses or skirts. A study of the many civilisations and peoples of the world will show that women have

¹⁰⁹ William Perkins, 'Concerning the Seventh Commandment', *The Order of Salvation and Damnation*.

¹¹⁰ David Dickson on I Cor. 11:13-15, *A Commentary on the Epistles* (1659). Regarding long hair on men see endnote [12].

¹¹¹ William Perkins, 'On the Right, Lawful, and Holy Use of Apparel', *Cases of Conscience*.

¹¹² "Murder is a recognized crime in all civilized societies" (*Britannica*).

generally worn long dresses, while most men, except on important occasions, tended to wear shorter tunics and sometimes trousers. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Britons and Vikings from Europe; the ancient Egyptians and Berbers from Africa; the Indians of the Subcontinent; the Japanese, Thais, Koreans and many of the Chinese from Asia; the Phoenicians, Ottomans, Arabs and Kurds from the Middle East; and the Pueblos, Aztecs, Incas and Plains Indians from the Americas are but a sample of those cultures which have, as a rule, attested to this statement.¹¹³ Of the nations who valued clothing there were but few that allowed ordinary women to wear trousers as an outer garment,¹¹⁴ or short tunics – this sort of dress was rarely accepted as appropriate for women even among the heathen (cf. I Cor. 5:1).¹¹⁵ And when the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached among the Gentiles the beauty of modesty was seen in a clear light, and modest long garments were recognised as the only attire ordained of God for even the poorest of women.¹¹⁶ Even those nations who formerly were most degraded, and for centuries forgot nearly all sense of shame and modesty, now have an abundance of wonderful accounts of men, women and children whom God rescued from the depths of heathen depravity and who joyfully covered themselves with clothing suitable to their sex and place.¹¹⁷

In his autobiography, the 19th century Scottish missionary John Paton tells of the young men and women of his classes in Glasgow, who “would, if it had been possible, have gone with me, to live and die among the Heathen”, and who, though extremely poor – they were “chiefly working girls and lads in trades and mills” – were led to “unite their pennies and sixpences, and to buy web after web of calico, print, and woollen stuffs, which they themselves shaped and sewed into dresses for the women, and kilts and pants for men,

¹¹³ See endnote [13].

¹¹⁴ There are exceptions to this rule, some traditional Chinese peasants for instance – though it was the Communist revolutionaries who enforced the wearing of trousers for all men and women (see endnote [14]) – and the Eskimos of Greenland: “Greenlandic dress is one of the few national costumes that involve trousers for women” (*Encyclopedia of People*, Dorling Kindersley, 2003).

¹¹⁵ Not that this sin is as heinous as that condemned in I Cor. 5:1, but by the light of nature both are censured. The apostle in I Cor. 5:1 demonstrates the aggravation of that sin “by saying, that the Gentiles by the light of nature discerned and declined such an abomination; by whom is not to be understood the more brutish part, but the more civilized part of the heathen, such as the Romans, &c. were” (Matthew Poole, *Commentary*, vol. 3, p552). Such heathen also condemned cross-dressing. A Roman woman, whose “stola hung to the floor” (*World Book Encyclopaedia*, 2005), was forbidden by law from wearing a man’s toga – unless convicted of adultery, in which case she was to be humiliated in this way.

¹¹⁶ See endnote [15].

¹¹⁷ See endnote [16].

on the New Hebrides.”¹¹⁸ Once settled on the cannibal island of Tanna in that archipelago, Mr Paton defied in the name of God the sorcery of the Sacred Men trying to kill him, and his bravery quickly opened the way to putting some of the kilts and shirts to good use. He tells of some of those witchdoctors:

If not truly converted, the two Priests were fast friends of mine from that day, as also another leading man in the same district . . . These two and a number of others began to wear a kilt, and some a shirt also. Three of them especially, if not Christians, appeared to be not far from the Kingdom of God, and did all that was in their power to protect and assist me. A few began to pray to Jehovah in their houses, offering a kind of rude Family Worship, and breathing out such prayers and desires as I had taught them for the knowledge of the true God and only Saviour. And these, as my companions, accompanied me from place to place when I visited their district. But let us return to the war. Many Chiefs and villages were now involved in it . . .¹¹⁹

He later tells of the conversion of a young warrior chief on the island of Aniwa (also in the New Hebrides), at a time when the Holy Spirit was poured out from on high, a time when many were being brought down in conviction of sin and regenerated by the power of God. Mr Paton continues:

Like those of old praying for the deliverance of Peter, and who could not believe their ears and eyes when Peter knocked and walked in amongst them, so we could scarcely believe our eyes and ears when Youwili became a disciple of Jesus, though we had been praying for his conversion every day. His once sullen countenance became literally bright with inner light. His wife came immediately for a book and a dress, saying, ‘Youwili sent me. His opposition to the Worship is over now. I am to attend Church and School. He is coming too. He wants to learn how to be strong, like you, for Jehovah and for Jesus.’¹²⁰

The conversions continued and the natives of Aniwa began to prosper, participating in the worship of God and hearing His Word expounded. “As their knowledge and faith increased,” says Mr Paton,

we saw their Heathen practices rapidly passing away, and a new life shaping itself around us. Mrs. Paton taught a class of about fifty women and girls. They became experts at sewing, singing, plaiting hats, and reading. Nearly all the girls could at length cut out and make their own dresses, as well as shirts or kilts for the men and clothing for the children. Yet, three short years before, men

¹¹⁸ John G. Paton, *Missionary to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu)* (Banner of Truth, 1995), p60. Observe that grim 19th century economic policies, which, much to John Paton’s sorrow, forced “healthy, happy, peasant boys and girls” into city slums (*ibid.*, pp3-5), also forced women out of homes and into the mills, etc.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p143. New Hebridean converts wore a *lava lava*, or kilt, “reaching to about their knees, and a shirt . . . Women and girls wear skirts and a loose jacket . . . or a long gown” (Mrs Fraser to Mrs Scott, *Tasmanian Presbyterian Mag. & Missionary Record*, Oct. 1882).

¹²⁰ John G. Paton (cited above), pp372, 373.

and women alike were running about naked and savage. The Christ-Spirit is the true civilizing power.¹²¹

Needless to say, these ladies' dresses were full-length, and commodious enough to satisfy modesty and comfort in their tropical climate,¹²² and the kilts and shirts also were admirably suited to the men's occupations and environment. Godly practice is indeed "profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). And as believers have been created anew in the image of God incarnate – the Man who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners (II Cor. 5:17; Heb. 7:26) – they cannot but see the beauty of His holy commandments from the least to the greatest (Matt. 5:19; 22:37, 38). "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind" (Mark 5:15). Converted savages worldwide will doubtless rise up in judgement against wanton professing Christians of this generation, and will condemn them.

Our Lord Jesus Christ counsels lukewarm Christians to buy of Him gold tried in the fire that they might be rich, and white raiment that the shame of their spiritual nakedness might not appear, and to anoint their eyes with eyesalve that they might see (Rev. 3:18). It is possible for one who is born again of the Holy Spirit to comprehend His inspired words, and also to see that many issues considered by worldly churchmen to be paltry matters, mere trifles (cf. Prov. 14:9), belong to the beauty of holiness in the kingdom of God. And the glorious liberty of the sons of God includes no licence to take away anything – not one jot or tittle – from either the gospel or the moral law (Deut. 4:2; Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18, 19). Thomas Boston rightly says:

As ye will not be libertines in your life and practice, being dead to sin and the world with Christ; so ye will not be legalists in your life and practice neither, being also dead with him to the law as a covenant of works. Your obedience will run in another channel than it did before your union with Christ, even in the channel of the gospel. Ye will serve in newness of spirit, in faith and love. The frowns of a merciful Father will be a terror to you to frighten you from sin; love and gratitude will prompt you to obedience. The grieving of the Spirit of a Saviour will be a spring of sorrow to you; and his atoning blood and perfect righteousness will be the spring-head of all your comfort before the Lord; your good works but streams thereof, as they evidence your saving interest in these, are accepted through them, and glorify God your Saviour.¹²³

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p377.

¹²² They preferred "a loose flowing dress" (Robert Fraser, *Tasmanian Presbyterian Mag. & Missionary Record*, March 1883). Mrs Paton wrote from Aniwa, "If ladies prefer to make the natives clothing, before sending let the shape be loose . . ." (*Ibid.*, Oct. 1882).

¹²³ Thomas Boston, *A View of the Covenant of Grace* (Focus Christian Ministries, 1990), p87.

It may be helpful to remember, as we endeavour to live as believers set apart from the ways of this world, that Christians of the 21st century are not the only ones who have had to dress differently from those around them. John Owen (1616-1683), the great British theologian, wrote at a time when the confusion of the attire of men and women was rare, yet he did see worldliness in dress as a serious problem in his age:

The habits and attire of the world are the things wherein the world doth design to show itself what it is. Men may read what the world is by evident characters, in the habits and attire that it wears. They are blind that cannot read vanity, folly, uncleanness, luxury, in the attire the world putteth upon itself. The declension of professors [*i.e.*, those who profess to believe] in imitating the ways of the world in their habits and garb [*i.e.*, styles of clothing], makes a season perilous: it is a mixture wherein we learn their manners; and the judgments of God will ensue upon it. – In this, likewise, we are grown like the world, that upon all occasions we are as regardless of the sins of the world, and as little troubled with them, as others are. Lot lived in Sodom, but ‘his righteous soul was vexed with their ungodly deeds and speeches.’ Live we where we will, when are our souls vexed, [so] that we do not pass through the things of the world, the greatest abominations, with the frame of spirit that the world itself doth? Not to speak of voluptuousness of living, and other things that attend this woeful mixture with the world that professors have made in the days wherein we live, – corrupt communication, gaiety of attire, senselessness of the sins and abominations of the world round about us, are almost as much upon professors as upon the world. We have mixed ourselves with the people, and have learned their manners.

But, – 2. Such a season is dangerous, because the sins of professors in it lie directly contrary to the whole design of the mediation of Christ in this world. Christ gave himself for us, that he might purge us from dead works, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, Titus 2:14. ‘Ye are a royal nation, a peculiar people.’ Christ hath brought the hatred of the devil and all the world upon him and against him, for taking a people out of the world, and making them a peculiar people to himself; and their throwing themselves upon the world again is the greatest contempt that can be put upon Jesus Christ. He gave his life and shed his blood to recover us from the world, and we throw ourselves in again. How easy were it to show that this is an inlet to all other sins and abominations, and that for which I verily think the indignation and displeasure of God will soonest discover itself against professors and churches in this day! If we will not be differenced from the world in our ways, we shall not long be differenced from them in our privileges. If we are the same in our walkings, we shall be so in our worship, or have none at all.¹²⁴

He speaks elsewhere of the sins polluting his own nation in the 17th century, including gluttony, drunkenness and immodest dress and behaviour:

¹²⁴ John Owen, ‘Perilous Times’, *Works*, vol. 9, p330.

Thus the sin of this nation hath been always esteemed *sensuality of life, in an excess of eating and drinking*, with the consequents thereof. Hereunto of late have been added vanity in apparel, with foolish, light, lascivious modes and dressings therein, and an immodest boldness in conversation among men and women. These are corruptions, which, being borrowed from the neighbour nation, and grafted on crab-stocks of our own, have brought forth the fruit of vanity and pride in abundance. And it is the most manifest evidence of a degenerate people, when they are prone to *naturalize the vices* of other nations among them, but care not to imitate their virtues, if in any kind they do excel.¹²⁵

Naturalisation of degenerate styles of clothing is very common today, and the influence of the feminist revolution on female costume is now seen almost worldwide, not least in our own land.¹²⁶ Cultural revolutionaries throughout the West have, in the 20th century, conducted a long, vindictive campaign for “equality” with men in the dress, behaviour and work of women, as part of an attempt to usurp authority over the man.¹²⁷ Despite the rarity of cross-dressing in past ages, signs of such confusion were observable from time to time. John Calvin warned his congregation concerning scandals that are immeasurably more prevalent in our day:

But what? women are nowadays more out of square, than ever they were: especially if a man go to these great courts, hardly shall he be able to find any difference betwixt men and women. Indeed men for their part do also abuse themselves in this behalf. For they clothe themselves in women's apparel, and women in men's, so that there is an horrible confusion amongst them, as if the world had conspired to turn the order of nature upside-down: and beside this, there is a certain gorgeous bravery [*i.e.*, showiness] amongst them which they lust after. And why so? Surely to be as it were an ale pole. Men use not to hang out a sign at a tavern, unless they meant men should come in who list [*i.e.*, desire]. And while women deck and trim themselves after this sort, to draw men's eyes to them, and to have men stand gazing at them, what is this else but a spreading out of their nets? . . . And if this affection and perverse desire were well purged, no doubt women would deck themselves modestly, and we should see no more of these disguisings . . .

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘The Nature and Causes of Apostasy from the Gospel’, vol. 7, p207.

¹²⁶ In the Australia of the 1930s, “Fashion in general was impressed by the glamour of the American film industry” (*Webster's Encyclopaedia of Australia*, 1996). Films (movies) and other fictional productions have done great damage to the beliefs and morals foundational to Australia's Puritan heritage. Edward Fisher (1627-1655) in his *Marrow of Modern Divinity* depicts the Evangelist as saying: “That we may not stir up and nourish inward uncleanness in our hearts, is forbidden . . . the wearing of lascivious, garish, and new fangled attire, Prov. 7:10; I Tim. 2:9 . . . and so also is idle and curious looking of men on women, or women on men, Gen 6:2, 39:7; and so also is the beholding of love matters, and light behaviour of men and women represented in stage plays, Ezek. 23:14; Eph. 5:3, 4” (‘Commandment 7’, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity – Part Second*).

¹²⁷ See endnote [17].

There is moreover, and besides this, ambition and pride. For women may apparel themselves as harlots, and yet not very sumptuously neither. A woman may have a gown that shall not be very costly, she may have no gold nor precious stones about her, and yet it is not to be said that she is not excessive, and wanting measure or superfluous. And why so? because her fashion may be unchaste, whorish, and enticing. And this is the first fault. But yet there is another, and it is this, women may apparel themselves modestly, without this shameless and impudent gorgeousness which I have spoken of, and yet we may see a bravery and pomp in them . . . ¹²⁸

Not only do we see at present the appropriation of men's clothing by women, but also the uncovering of women to an extent that has previously been rare in all but the most degraded societies.¹²⁹ Although John Calvin went further than some of the more recent Calvinistic ministers in his insistence that women should always veil their hair in public, his prediction of the result of any sort of slackness regarding modesty should be noted, as it has evidently come to pass. In a sermon on I Corinthians 11 he warned that

when it is permissible for the women to uncover their heads, one will say, 'Well, what harm in uncovering the stomach also?' And then after that one will plead [for] something else: 'Now if the women go bareheaded, why not also [bare] this and [bare] that?' Then the men, for their part, will break loose too. In short, there will be no decency left, unless people contain themselves and respect what is proper and fitting, so as not to go headlong overboard.¹³⁰

Such indecencies have become prevailing vices in many countries. But there is wisdom in many counsellors (Prov. 11:14), and we may learn from the leaders of the Church in past eras that similar evils have long existed (albeit in varying degrees), and that they may certainly be overcome. Martin Luther (1483-1546), the German champion of the Reformation, declares:

A Christian can have clean and pure clothing, as the Jews do . . . Formerly women walked about with neck bared all the way to the middle of the back. This was immodest dress. Elsewhere half the breast is seen. They have high-heeled shoes, etc., so that they can show off their bodies. Rather, they ought to have

¹²⁸ John Calvin on I Tim. 2:9-11.

¹²⁹ See endnote [18]. Note that in the face of moral decline in Australia it is especially Aboriginal communities, influenced by Christianity, that have retained a more biblical approach to modesty. An Australian university study guide advises: "The kind of dress and appearance that is suitable for young people in the city may not be suitable for rural communities. For example, short shorts and make-up is not appropriate for working in an Aboriginal community. Women, in particular, should dress modestly." A further caution is offered: "Clothing should be modest, especially for women. Aboriginal women usually wear long dresses . . . Due to modesty issues, women should bring a summer dress to wear over bathers for swimming and men should bring shorts and t-shirt" (*Ethnoarchaeology in Aboriginal Australia*, Flinders University, 2004, pp6, 9).

¹³⁰ John Calvin on I Cor. 11:2-16.

clothes to conceal themselves, to cover the neck. Our women walk about with their faces nearly veiled and everything covered very neatly, with their furs, so that almost nothing of their limbs or skin is seen. All this ought to be hidden in church in order that they may walk modestly . . . Thus I praise long coats and furs highly. Also young unmarried women ought not wear their locks braided but have a veil when they participate in the Sacrament. I find no fault in our women.¹³¹

Published abroad with divine power, the same cure which vanquished such evil in Luther's Germany will prove effective in our time. This remedy, offered freely to all (Isa. 55:1-3), is the grace of God in Jesus Christ, which cannot fail to save and sanctify the sinner: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). Hence those who show little sign of sanctification show little sign that they are among the redeemed. John Bunyan, the penman of the *Pilgrim's Progress* and other works, says:

The attire of a harlot is too frequently in our day the attire of professors; a vile thing, and argueth much wantonness and vileness of affections. If those that give way to a wanton eye, wanton words, and immodest apparel, be not whores, &c., in their hearts, I know not what to say. Doth a wanton eye argue shamefacedness? Doth wanton talk argue chastity? And doth immodest apparel, with stretched-out necks, naked breasts, a made speech, and mincing gaits, &c., argue mortification of lusts? . . .

My friends, I am here treating of good works, and persuading you to fly those things that are hindrances to them: wherefore bear with my plainness when I speak against sin. I would strike it through with every word, because else it will strike us through with many sorrows. I Tim. 6.9, 10. I do not treat of good works as if the doing of them would save us, for we are justified by his grace, according to the hope of eternal life; yet our sins and evil works will lay us obnoxious to the judgments both of God and man. He that walketh not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, is like to have his peace assaulted often, both by the devil, the law, death, and hell; yea, and is like to have God hide his face from him also, for the iniquity of his covetousness. Isa. 57.17 . . .

It is true, faith without works justifies us before God: Rom. 3.28; 4.5. yet that faith that is alone, will be found to leave us sinners in the sight both of God and man. James 2.18. And though thou addest nothing to that which saveth thee by what thou canst do, yet thy righteousness may profit the son of man; as also saith the text: but if thou shalt be so careless as to say, What care I for being righteous to profit others? I tell thee, that the love of God is not in thee. Job 35.8. I John 3.17. I Cor. 13.1-3. Walk therefore in God's ways, and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which

¹³¹ Martin Luther on I Tim. 2:9, *Luther's Works*, vol. 28 (Concordia Publishing House, 1973), pp274-275.

shall hear of all these statutes, and say, 'This great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.' Deut. 4.6.¹³²

The tide of this world often flows strongly against this way of holiness, and then the Christian is persecuted as a fool and a stranger; but Christ Jesus says to His servant, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9, cf. Psalm 20:2). Looking in faith to the crucified and risen Saviour a sinner will receive free justification, and strength to live in that true holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

May it be that in studying God's laws unbelievers will be stirred by the Spirit to sorrow for sin and to saving faith in Jesus Christ, and that believers will be moved to renewed repentance, and to flee again to the blood of Christ to be cleansed of sin (I John 1:7; cf. Rev. 12:11). "Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hos. 14:2).

7. Conclusion

We know from the Word of God that our bodies must be clothed, that they must be covered according to the will of God expressed in Scripture and taught by nature itself, and that women must be clothed distinctively from men. We must therefore, in love to God and our neighbours, endeavour in the strength of Jesus Christ to set a holy example in wearing only such clothing as we know to be pleasing to Him. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). That the man may not wear dainty, effeminate styles of clothing, and that the woman, created for the domestic sphere, ought to be covered with modest long dresses (or equivalent garments such as skirts and blouses), is seen in Scripture, the example of our godly forebears, and from the light of nature itself. "The purity of the heart will show itself in the modesty of the dress, which *becomes women professing godliness*",¹³³ observes Matthew Henry. Moreover, far from procuring any advantages and dignities that pertain to men alone, the woman who behaves and dresses like a man loses that comeliness, those graces and benefits peculiar to the tender sex, that are too rare in these times.¹³⁴

¹³² John Bunyan, 'Christian Behaviour', *Works*, vol. 2, p569.

¹³³ Matthew Henry on Prov. 7:10, *Commentary*, vol. 3, p492.

¹³⁴ John Chrysostom: "But if any say, 'Nay, how can this be a shame to the woman, if she mount up to the glory of the man?' we might make this answer; 'She doth not mount up,

These things should be carefully weighed up by those whose hearts' desire is to please their Lord and Saviour. If we love God because He first loved us, let us demonstrate our heart's love for Him and, being clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, let us put off the body of sin and live in holiness, as doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves (James 1:22). Instead of succumbing to the wiles of our adversary we must believe Him to be faithful who promised to our father Abraham so long ago, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75).

But are you an unbeliever, still in slavery to sin and Satan? Are you afraid to die and meet Jesus, your Maker, as Judge? Then come to Him for safety from the wrath of God; come now and be reconciled, be justified by faith in His blood and not by the law which you have broken (Gal. 3:11). Faith alone will justify and sanctify a man, so that he may say, "Surely . . . in the LORD have I righteousness and strength" (Isa. 45:24). God has graciously chosen multitudes to be saved through His Son, and none who comes to Him will be cast out (John 6:37). So may the Lord pour out His Holy Spirit upon this generation, plucking sinners as brands from the burning, converting them from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18). Then will the tide turn on the curse of doctrinal liberalism and theological scepticism, and men will look to Mount Zion, to the Church of the living God and sing,

Great is the Lord, and greatly he is to be praised still,
Within the city of our God, upon his holy hill.

Mount Sion stands most beautiful, the joy of all the land;
The city of the mighty King on her north side doth stand.

The Lord within her palaces is for a refuge known.
For, lo, the kings that gather'd were together, by have gone . . .

Walk about Sion, and go round; the high tow'rs thereof tell:
Consider ye her palaces, and mark her bulwarks well;

That ye may tell posterity. For this God doth abide
Our God for evermore; he will ev'n unto death us guide.

(Psalm 48:1-4 & 12-14, *Scottish Psalter*, 1650)

but rather falls from her own proper honour.' Since not to abide within our own limits and the laws ordained of God, but to go beyond, is not an addition but a diminuation. For as he that desireth other men's goods and seizeth what is not his own, hath not gained any thing more, but is diminished, having lost even that which he had, (which kind of thing also happened in paradise:) so likewise the woman acquireth not the man's dignity, but loseth even the woman's decency which she had. And not from hence only is her shame and reproach, but also on account of her covetousness" (Homily 26, *On the Veiling of Women*).

Endnotes

[1] (for page three)

Iain Murray vividly describes this tragedy:

“For many years before the First World War the traditional Christian view of history had in large sectors of Protestantism merged with a worldly philosophy of the certainty of progress. It was a disastrous change for it obscured the fact that the Church cannot advance without the favour of her God. The authentic Puritan hope had regarded confidence in the progress of the gospel as mere presumption where there is not an earnest regard to the rule of God’s Word. The Puritans knew that lack of faithfulness to Scripture would grieve the Spirit and bring barrenness upon the Church or even that same judicial blindness in which Israel had been cut off. Nor did they forget that Israel’s desolation is held up in Romans 11 as a warning to Gentile churches lest they fall into the same unbelief; their convictions about the bright future of Christ’s kingdom thus provided no cushion upon which complacent Gentile churches can rest.

“In contrast to this attitude the Christian Church, by and large, entered the twentieth century with a large measure of false hope and little sense of her danger. Even by the mid-nineteenth century commitment to the doctrinal Confessions of the Reformation was on the wane, though it was represented as the growth of a healthier outlook. Disbelief in ‘Calvinism’, however, was soon followed by the rise of unbelief in the inerrancy of Scripture, and then the gospel itself – the incarnation of the Son of God to bear vicariously in his death the wrath sin deserves – was made a subject for legitimate doubt within the Church. Intellect replaced faith and ‘scholarship’ gave her support to the spreading delusion. Thus Dr. John Duncan, speaking on the Christian future of the Jews in the Free Church [of Scotland] General Assembly in 1867, warned his hearers: ‘Do not both indications of Scripture and the signs of the times lead us to think that a new epoch is approaching, when a great Gentile apostasy shall be accompanied or followed by the recall of Israel to Jehovah their God, and David their king? Wondrous, without doubt, will be the results of that event . . . Dark days, I fear, are to intervene’” (Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, Banner of Truth, 1984, pp226, 227).

[2] (for page five)

“Rebellion against the established or dominant fashion has been a constant theme in the history of costume. The reasons prompting such rebellion are various: to shock, to attract attention, to protest against the traditional social order, to avoid current trends and thereby avoid dating oneself. One of the earliest forms such rebellion has taken – and continues to take – has been that of women adopting male dress. By donning men’s clothing, women have been able to challenge the status quo and participate in activities or roles traditionally perceived as masculine.”

“From 1910 important changes began to take place in feminine attire . . . Women were beginning to question their status in a man’s world. Some became suffragettes, some went to work outside the home. A more practical form of dress became popular, with the blouse and skirt replacing the ruffled tea gown. During the war years of 1914-18 these changes accelerated. A minority of women were in uniform, but far more worked in factories, in offices, as postal carriers and in other jobs previously performed by men . . . the skirt hemline rose to eight inches above the ground, revealing the ankles for the first time . . . For women in the 1920s, freedom in dress reflected the new freedoms opening up for them to take up careers, to study at college, to enter professions. Only a small percentage of women took up such opportunities, far fewer than today, but the revolutionary changes nonetheless affected the type of clothes

worn by most women in the Western world. The skirt hemline rose steadily to become, at its shortest in the years 1925-27, knee-length” (*Britannica*).

“The successful revolt by women against social and political restrictions was accompanied by the disappearance of the corset and the physical restrictions it inevitably caused. After World War I, almost for the first time in five centuries, the natural shape of women reappeared in clothing, as did the practice of revealing the legs. The inconvenience of working in long dresses dictated the change, starting during the war. As with all sudden changes, the adjustment was extreme; by the mid-1920s skirts had risen to the knee. By the 1930s women were wearing trousers. Since that time, almost any experiment in style has been labelled fashion” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 1999).

“A fashion revolution in the second half of the 20th century made trousers acceptable women's wear for almost all activities” (*Britannica*).

[3] (*for page ten*)

“This lovely character is drawn according to the usage of ancient times; though the general principles are of universal application. It describes not only the wife of a man of rank, but a wise, useful, and godly matron in her domestic responsibilities. It is ‘a woman professing godliness,’ adorned ‘with good works’ (I Tim. 2:10); a Mary no less than a Martha . . .

“Her whole soul is in her work – *girding her loins with strength, and strengthening her arms* – ready to do any work befitting her sex and station. The land has also her due share of attention. Ever careful for her husband’s interests, she *considers* the value of a *field*; and, if it be a good purchase, she *buys* it, *and plants the vineyard* for the best produce . . .

“*We now again observe her conduct as a mistress*. And here also her praise is not, that she spends her time in devotional exercises (though these, as ‘a woman that feareth the Lord’ (Verse 30), she daily prizes); but that, according to the Scriptural canon, ‘she guides her house’ (I Tim. 5:14), watching carefully over her charge, distributing both her meat and her work in due proportion, and ‘in due season.’ This is her responsibility. If ‘man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour till the evening’ (Ps. 104:23), the woman finds her work as ‘a keeper at home.’ (Tit. 2:5.) And beautiful indeed is it to see, how by her industry, self-denial, and heartiness she ‘buildeth her house.’ (Chap. 14:1.) *She rises while it is yet night*, not for the sake of being admired and talked of, but to *give meat to her household*. The delicacy also, with which she preserves her own sphere, is remarkable. For while she provides food for the whole *household*, she *giveth the portion* – that is – of work – not to the man-servants (these with great propriety she leaves to her husband), but to *her maidens*. Their clothing is also provided with every regard to their comfort . . .

“But never let the mistress contract her inspection within the sphere of a mere housekeeper, with her whole time and mind employed in the external routine of her household. While she exercises sound discipline and maternal anxiety, her primary principle is a Christian conscience for their highest interests; *looking well* to their moral habits, their religious instruction, and attendance on the means of grace; giving them time for secret prayer, and reading the word of God, bringing them to the daily ordinance of family worship; inculcating the careful observance of the Sabbath; anxiously watching over their manners, habits, and connections. While we would be careful not to over-work them, yet never let them *eat the bread of idleness*. If they have nothing to do for us, let them work for God. In short – let us consider them, not as beasts of burden, not as mere mercenaries; but as a solemn and responsible trust for God and for eternity. Who can have the claim to a *virtuous woman*, who does not feel

this weight of family responsibility?” (Charles Bridges on Prov. 31:13-27, *A Commentary on Proverbs*, pp622-625).

[4] (*for page eleven*)

This biblical principle was incorporated into our common law: “Under the principle of coverture the married woman became a non-person and for all legal purposes her existence was suspended. Under the principle of coverture the wife was under the protection and influence of the husband. All her property passed to her husband. As divorce was virtually impossible this was not as bad as it might at first appear as, by law, the husband was required to provide his wife with the necessities of life” (Stephen Marantelli, Jim Brennan, Roger Hawthorn, *Legal Studies for year 12*, Edward Arnold, Australia, 1985, pp377, 378).

Compare with Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754), a renowned Scottish minister: “You know the wife is not sueable at law while clothed with a husband, he answers for all. Just so when you close with Christ, the better Husband, who is raised from the dead, you become dead to the law, Rom. 7.4. *i.e.* you have no more concern with the law, and the debts you owe to it as a covenant, either for obedience or punishment, than if they had never been; insomuch that, with joy and triumph you may lift up your heads in the presence of all your creditors or accusers, and say, ‘Who can lay anything to my charge? for it is Christ that died for my offences, and rose again for my justification and acquittance; I am under his covering, I am with him in the bride-chamber, where law and justice have no action against me’” (6th Sermon on Matt. 25:6, ‘The Wise Virgins Going Forth to Meet the Bridegroom’, *Works*, vol. 3, Free Presbyterian Publications, 2001, p237).

[5] (*for page eighteen*)

The era of the entrenchment of liberal doctrine in the churches was the time in which many women began to leave the guidance and protection of fathers and husbands, to undervalue the domestic sphere and consequently to discard chaste behaviour and dress. The following extracts concern the progress of feminism in America and are drawn from a work which supports that philosophy:

“By the 1850s schoolteaching became a major woman’s vocation, with women teachers in the majority in most large cities. The employment of female teachers served to enlarge the work opportunities open to educated women . . . While woman’s work outside the home remained limited, family size was shrinking . . . in the 1830s surgical abortions became common. Abortionists advertised their services in large cities, and middle-class and elite women asked their doctors to perform abortions. One sign of the upswing in abortions was the increase in legislation against it . . . by 1860, twenty states had outlawed it. Only three of those twenty punished the mother, however, and the laws were rarely enforced . . . smaller families and fewer births changed the position and living conditions of women . . . The beginnings of public education in the 1830s and the policy of grouping school children by age tended to reinforce this trend . . . At the same time, working women were pioneering new roles for women beyond the home. Many found teaching a rewarding profession and preferred it to marriage and domesticity. Mill girls forged new roles for women, as did the women who assembled at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Modeling their protest on the Declaration of Independence, they called for political, social, and economic equality for women” (pp278-280).

“Unlike the First Great Awakening [in Britain and America, c. 1720-1750], when converts were evenly divided by sex, more women than men – particularly young women – answered the call of Christianity during the Second Great Awakening [in

America, c. 1795-1835] . . . Young women's roles changed dramatically at the same time, as cloth production began to move from the household to the factory" (pp203, 204).

"When [Charles G.] Finney led daytime prayer meetings in Rochester, New York, for instance, pious middle-class women visited families while the men were away at work . . . The organized prayer groups and female missionary societies that preceded and accompanied the Second Great Awakening were soon surpassed by greater organized reform and religious activity. Thus revival prompted and legitimized woman's public role, providing a path of certainty and stability amidst a rapidly changing economy and society" (p327).

"In 1800 there were no public schools outside New England; by 1860 every state had some public education . . . Massachusetts established a minimum school year of six months, increased the number of high schools, formalized the training of teachers, and emphasized secular subjects and applied skills rather than religious training. In the process, teaching became a woman's profession . . . Many traditionalists, including New England Congregationalists, fought to maintain the old ties between education and religion . . . A more controversial reform movement was the rise of American feminism in the 1840s. Ironically, it was women's traditional image as pious and spiritual that brought them into the public sphere" (p331).

From 1865 (after the Civil War): "As a result of these changes southerners adopted new values. Women, sheltered in the patriarchal antebellum society, gained substantial new responsibilities. The wives and mothers of soldiers became heads of households and undertook what had previously been considered men's work . . . In the cities, white women, who had been virtually excluded from the labor force, found a limited number of new, respectable, jobs. Clerks had always been males, but now the war changed that, too. 'Government girls' staffed the Confederate bureaucracy, and female schoolteachers became a familiar sight for the first time" (pp388, 389).

"Northern women, like their southern counterparts, took on new roles . . . The professionalization of medicine since the Revolution had created a medical system dominated by men; thus dedicated and able female nurses had to fight both military regulations and professional hostility to win the chance to make their contribution . . . Even Clara Barton, the most famous female nurse, was ousted from her post during the winter of 1863" (p397).

"As machines and assembly-line production reduced the need for skilled workers, employers cut wage costs by hiring more women and children. Between 1880 and 1900, the numbers of employed women grew from 2.6 million to 8.6 million, and their employment patterns underwent major changes. First, the proportion of working women engaged in domestic and personal service jobs (maids, cooks, laundresses), traditionally the most common form of female employment, dropped dramatically as jobs opened up in other economic sectors . . . By 1920 nearly half of all clerical workers were women; only 4 percent had been women in 1880" (pp495, 496).

"Moreover, men feared that entry of women would transform many jobs from all-male to all-female ones, just as clerical jobs were changing. Male workers, accustomed to sex-segregation in employment, could not recognize or accept the possibility of men and women working side by side" (p503).

"In the rural society that the United States was in the nineteenth century, women and children worked at tasks that were important to the family's daily existence – cooking, cleaning, planting, and harvesting. Their jobs were often hard to define, and they seldom appeared in employment figures because they earned no wages" (p539).

“In 1930 over 10.5 million women were in the work force, composing 22 per cent of all workers. Despite these statistics, most Americans believed that women should not work outside the home, that they should strive instead to be good wives and mothers, and that women who worked were doing so for “pin money” to buy frivolous things. Moreover, the depression invigorated the longstanding charge that women in the labor force necessarily displaced male breadwinners. One Chicago civic group protested that women ‘are holding jobs that rightfully belong to the God-intended providers of the household.’ Married women workers received the most criticism; some states even passed laws forbidding the hiring of married women for civil service positions” (p. 717). “Well over 6 million women entered the labor force during the war years, increasing the number of working women 57 percent in less than five years. Two million took clerical jobs; another 2.5 million worked in manufacturing . . . There was a change in attitude toward heavy labor for women. Up to the early months of the war employers had insisted that women were not suited for industrial jobs. If women were allowed to work in factories they would begin to wear overalls instead of dresses; their muscles would bulge; they might even drink whiskey and swear like men. As labor shortages began to threaten the war effort, employers did an about-face” (pp804, 805).

“In the 1970s . . . increasing numbers of women were committing themselves to the struggle for equality with men. In 1974 Congress passed the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, which enabled women to get bank loans and obtain cards on the same terms as men . . . To take advantage of new opportunities, many women delayed having children until they were in their thirties and had established themselves in their careers. Still, women continued to encounter barriers in their quest for equality. One of the most formidable was the antifeminist, or ‘profamily,’ movement, which contended that men should lead and women should follow, particularly within the family. The backlash against feminism became an increasingly powerful force in the 1970s. In defense of the family – especially the patriarchal, or father-led, family – antifeminists campaigned against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the gay rights movement, and abortion on demand” (p988). [Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Paul D. Escott, Howard P. Chudacoff, Thomas G. Paterson, William M. Tuttle, Jr., *A People and a Nation - A History of the United States*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986].

Similar changes occurred in the other Western countries, including Australia:

“There were also major changes in the sex composition of the workforce. In 1857 women made up less than a quarter of Melbourne’s employees, with two-thirds working as domestics and the rest in manufacturing. By 1901 female employment opportunities had widened and almost a third of the city’s workers were women. Forty out of every hundred working women remained in personal service, but often now outside the home as a hairdresser rather than in it as a maid . . . In the half century after 1871 two in every five Melbourne women between the ages of fifteen and sixty years earned wages. Mostly they were single, with perhaps only one married woman in ten going out to work” (pp167, 168).

“In 1954 only one married woman in eight worked for wages but by 1970 one in three did so; furthermore over half the women in Melbourne aged between fifteen and sixty were in paid employment” (p225). [Tony Dingle, *The Victorians Settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates 1984].

[6] (for page nineteen)

The late 19th century replacement of biblically-based education in schools by secular (atheistic) philosophies coincided with the large-scale introduction of women as public teachers of children. The blasphemous *Woman’s Bible* (Elizabeth Cady Stanton & “Revising Committee”) says of the inspired apostle: “Could Paul have looked down to

the nineteenth century with clairvoyant vision . . . he might, perhaps, have been less anxious about the apparel and the manners of his converts . . . Or, could he have had a vision of the public school system of this Republic, and witnessed the fact that a large proportion of the teachers are women, it is possible that he might have hesitated to utter so tyrannical an edict: 'But I permit not a woman to teach'" ('Epistles to Timothy – Further comments by Lucinda B. Chandler', *The Woman's Bible*, 1898, p163). Compare such sentiments with the historic Protestant teaching: "According to St. Paul, women must be learners, and are not allowed to be public teachers in the church: for teaching is an office of authority; whereas she is not to usurp authority over the man, but is to be in silence. But, notwithstanding this prohibition, good women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of true religion" (Matthew Henry on I Tim. 2:11, 12, *Commentary*, vol. 6, p1196).

[7] (*for page thirty-seven*)

Although the writings of Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria (Clemens) contain much godly wisdom, there are also many unscriptural elements in their works. The famous Puritan John Owen wrote: "It cannot be denied but that many of the principal teachers in the first ages of the church after the apostles, especially among those whose writings remain unto posterity, did, in a neglect of the gospel and its simplicity, embrace and teach sundry things, perverse, curious, and contrary to the form of wholesome words committed unto them; whilst, for any thing that appears, they were not so duly conversant in evangelical mysteries, with reverence and godly fear, as it was their duty to have been. It is known how instances hereof might be multiplied out of the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clemens, Origen, Tatianus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Lactantius, and others; but I shall not reflect with any severity on their names and memories who continued to adhere unto the fundamental principles of Christian religion, though, what by curious speculations, what by philosophical prejudices and notions, by wrested allegorical expositions of Scripture, by opinions openly false and contradictory to the word of God, they much corrupted and debased the pure and holy doctrine of Jesus and his apostles" ('The Nature and Causes of Apostasy from the Gospel', *Works*, vol. 7, pp68, 69).

[8] (*for page forty*)

Since the acceptance of liberal Christianity in the West there has been a colossal and continual rise in the rates of murder, adultery, theft, drunkenness, drug abuse, perversion, assault on women, and crime perpetrated by women: "Increasing crime appears to be a feature of all modern industrialized societies, and no developments in either law or penology can be shown to have had a significant impact on the problem . . . Crime is least likely to be a serious problem in a society that is economically undeveloped and subject to restrictive religious or similar restraints on behaviour. For modern urbanized society, in which economic growth and personal success are dominant values, there is little reason to suppose that crime rates will not continue to increase" (*Britannica*). [Note that prosperity is only linked with depravity when men "make haste to be rich" (Prov. 28:20), and curse God in their hearts and say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). Capitalist economies were developed among devout Protestant peoples; see 'Shorter Catechism', Q74, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, p307.]

"In most Western societies the incidence of recorded crime by women, and the number of women passing through the penal systems, is on the increase; in the United States, for instance, the number of women arrested for property crimes between 1960 and 1976 increased by 276 percent – a significantly higher rate of increase than that

exhibited by other groups. A similar trend is shown in English prison statistics: the number of women in prison under sentence rose from 538 in 1974 to 941 in 1984, an increase of 75 percent in 10 years. A number of explanations have been offered for this trend. One suggestion is that it reflects a real trend in the commission of crimes by women – that the changing social role of women, with more women leaving the home and taking employment, expecting and achieving financial independence, leads to greater opportunity for crime and to greater temptation. An alternative explanation is that the change in the apparent rate of female criminality merely reflects a change in the operation of the criminal justice system – that crimes committed by women are less likely than was previously the case to be ignored by law enforcement agencies out of a sense of chivalry. Even though female criminality appears to be increasing faster than male criminality, it will be many years before women reach the same level of crime as men” (*Britannica*).

It is easy to mark the steps taken in Victoria, and Australia as a whole, toward the eradication of biblical morals – including male headship – since the late nineteenth century. For example, in 1880 the University of Melbourne became the first Australian university to admit women to lectures and examinations; by 1901 women became eligible to vote in federal elections; and in 1908 women in the state of Victoria were given the vote, being granted the right to sit in State Parliament by 1923. These seemingly innocent manoeuvres only came about through the triumph of humanistic dogma over Scriptural truths; they coincided with a host of other unbiblical innovations in society, and God’s judgement followed. Note that the First World War interposed between the emancipation of Victoria’s women in 1908 and their being granted the right to stand for election to State parliament in 1923. Further, in 1933, about six years before the outbreak of the Second World War, the ‘Racial Hygiene Association’ began the first Australian birth control clinic, and in 1966 – two decades after the war’s end – married women were accepted as permanent employees of the Public Service in Australia, and in banks the following year. 1967 was the year in which Victorian women were first permitted to serve on juries. A Victorian judge ruled in 1969 that abortion to save the life or health of the mother was permissible, despite the fact that abortion had been proclaimed illegal in 1958 by the Victorian crimes act. In 1971 the Bank of New South Wales became the first bank in Australia to grant loans to women without a male guarantor; and in 1975 the “Family Law Act” was introduced into Australia. This Act abolished the rights of the father as legal head of the family (taking sole custodianship of children from him), removed the husband’s responsibility for his wife’s maintenance, and introduced ‘no-fault’ divorce. Also in 1975, Victorian women lost the right to exemption from jury service on the basis of their sex. 1980 was the year of decriminalisation for sodomite (homosexual) practices in Victoria; and capital punishment (cf. Gen. 9:6) was officially abolished by the Federal Government in 1985.

Compare with the following extract from *Senior Legal Studies*: “In the last [19th] century it was considered immoral for ladies to use face-powder or to ‘paint their faces’. If skirts allowed a glimpse of leg, this was immoral . . . Obviously, we now laugh at nineteenth-century ideas of immorality as mere prudishness . . . At one time a strict censorship existed in Australia on books and films. Works of literature, not at all pornographic but considered to be indecent or obscene because of certain words or situations in them, were readily available overseas but not in Australia. In recent years this censorship has relaxed to such an extent as to be almost non-existent. Standards have changed radically as to what is permissible on stage, film and television. Words that once would have led to prosecution for indecency are now almost commonplace in the media. Moral standards change with the passing of time, and can change

rapidly, leaving once-relevant laws lagging behind social attitudes. This leads such laws into a position of being ridiculed or ignored, which is detrimental to law as a whole” (Daphne Anzarut, *Senior Legal Studies*, The Macmillan Company of Australia, 1984, pp257, 258).

[9] (*for page forty-one*)

Australia’s rising divorce rate is example of this disorder: “While divorces were rare in the past, their occurrence has become more widespread and accepted” (Marantelli, S. E., *et al*, *Legal Studies for year 12*, p373). But child murder – in the form of “abortion” – is one of the most horrific examples of the chaos in modern families. South Australia was the first state to legalise abortion: “Abortion in South Australia has shown a three fold increase during the last 30 years. In 1999 there were 18 abortions for every 1000 women between 15 and 44 years, compared to 6 abortions for the same age group of women in 1970. Abortions have been legal in South Australia for the past 30 years [*i.e.*, since 1970] . . . The committee appointed to examine and report on abortions notified in South Australia, recently reported that there were 5660 abortions in 1999. These statistics are only for surgical abortions . . . A substantial majority (98%) of S.A. abortions in 1999 was based on the mental health of women, with only 2% of abortions claimed to be for fetal abnormality. For those abortions for fetal abnormality, about half were because of chromosomal abnormalities, with the rest for other reasons such as drug use . . . Significantly half of the aborting women have never been married, about one quarter are presently married and the remaining quarter are divorced, separated or in a defacto relationship. Evidence about abortions indicates that relationships rarely hold together after an abortion so that the prospects of happiness for these 5660 women would appear to be remote . . . What this report highlights is that not only is the abortion rate increasing in Australia but that we have one of the highest abortion rates in the world. The social implications of an increasing number of women involved in an abortion, at ages commencing at 14 and repeated throughout their reproductive years can only be guessed at. But as the South Australian report indicates, we as a community can expect an increasing number of women (and men) who are badly affected by abortion and can expect an increasing number of cases of breast cancer, broken families and traumatised women who find it hard to have normal relations with men” (David Perrin, ‘Family Update,’ *The Australian Family Association*, March-April 2001, p7).

[10] (*for page forty-two*)

“In Europe, many people feared that morality had crumbled completely. Before World War I (1914-1918), women had worn long hair, ankle-length dresses, and long, cotton stockings. But in the 1920's, many wore short, tight dresses and rolled their silk stockings down to their knees. European women abandoned their corsets and some even wore trousers. On both continents, women cut their hair in a boyish style called the bob and wore flashy lipstick and other cosmetics. Couples danced cheek-to-cheek to blaring jazz music. The United States and the United Kingdom experienced the age of the flapper (young women who flaunted new styles of dress and unconventional life-styles). A serious French periodical blamed that country's economic problems on France's dance craze. It argued that the nation's postwar reconstruction lagged because the French were dancing instead of working. In France and Italy, young women went out by themselves, and some got engaged to marry without seeking their parents' permission. In popular literature, sex became a common topic. Talk of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories spread from Austria to other countries” (*World Book*, 1999).

The following extracts are from *A People and a Nation - A History of the United States* (Norton, M. B., et al):

“By 1900 mass-produced clothing had also enabled a large segment of the population to become concerned with style . . . Long sleeves and skirt hemlines receded . . . At the turn of the century, long hair tied at the back of the neck was the most popular style. But by the First World War, when many women worked in hospitals and factories, shorter, more manageable styles had become acceptable” (p542).

“Whether they worked or not, all types of women were exposed to alternative images of femininity. Short skirts and bobbed hair, regarded as signs of sexual freedom, became common among office workers and store clerks as well as among middle-class college coeds. Several studies claimed that sexual experimentation, including premarital sex, increased among young women during the decade [1920s]. The most popular models of female behavior were not chaste, sentimental heroines but movie vamps . . . And though not everyone was a flapper, as the young independent-minded woman was called, many women were clearly asserting their equality with men” (p694).

[11] (for page forty-two)

The following account details some of the reversions to primitive culture, and the brazen advances in sin, committed in the name of fashion during the 20th century: “Hemlines remained at the ankle, but so-called hobble skirts, which were very narrow at the bottom, briefly became the fashion shortly before World War I (1914-1918) . . . Other designers also created hobble skirts, but Poiret [a Parisian fashion designer] made some that were so tight they had to be slit from the hem to the knee. These slit skirts were criticized as being immodest because they showed women's legs. Young women were becoming less shy about defying conventions, however. Poiret also created extravagant costumes influenced by the East, including *harem pants* (baggy pants gathered at the ankle). Most women wore these trousers only at home. Still, it was the beginning of the end for rules that prevented women from wearing masculine clothes . . . After World War I young women increasingly adopted radical new fashions, including short skirts, short hair, and makeup. Hemlines had begun to rise noticeably in 1915 but then stabilized at mid-calf. Slowly creeping upward, skirts reached the knees only for a brief period, from about 1924 to 1928. Stockings went from black or white wool or cotton to flesh-colored silk or rayon—all very noticeable as skirts grew shorter. By 1929 hemlines had begun to fall. But the exposure of the female legs was one of the most revolutionary developments in 20th-century fashion. In the United States and Canada the 1920s was the era of the flapper, a young woman who embraced the radical new clothing fashions. Flappers wore short dresses that were straight up and down . . . Many women cut their hair short in a chin-length, straight hairstyle known as a bob. Over their bobbed hair, they wore a close-fitting, helmet-shaped hat called a cloche. A frequently heard complaint was that women looked like boys. But the facial makeup that flappers adopted with enthusiasm contradicted this view . . . Pants had long been acceptable for women as sportswear or informal party wear, but only in the late 1960s and especially the 1970s did women adopt them for daily wear in the business world. The acceptance of the pantsuit by the business world reflected women's increasing social and economic power. In the 1970s Halston, Calvin Klein, and other North American designers made trousers an integral part of the working woman's wardrobe. In France Saint Laurent also emphasized tailored pantsuits for daywear” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2004).

[12] (for page forty-four)

Puritan men were often distinguished as “Roundheads” because of their short hair: “. . . like the men of late years, since long hair has been so much worn in this nation, about fifty years ago, the Christians that walked by the rule of God's Word, and wore their hair agreeable thereto, were by the rude rabble mocked and called *Roundheads*, and hunted after by pursuivants; so that on a Lord's Day, where they saw men with short hair go into a house, then they like the *Sodomites*, old and young from every quarter compassed the house to take them and abuse them; some they imprisoned, some were banished, and some afore in Queen *Elizabeth's* days they hanged, namely Mr. *Henry Borrow*, Mr. *Greenwood*, Mr. *Penry*; so that he that departed from this evil, long hair, of later years, for this cause made themselves a prey” (Thomas Wall, *To Defend the Head from the Superfluity of Naughtiness*, London, 1688).

[13] (for page forty-five)

The following is a selection of costume descriptions from around the world:

Africa –

Arab lands (Middle East and North Africa): “Women's garments usually consist of a floor-length dress and a headscarf or hood. In areas where Islam is a strong force, women may wear a veil in public. Many women wear Western-style dresses or slacks. They rarely wear short or sleeveless dresses or let their hair hang free. Traditional men's clothing might consist of a full-length robe, or a cloak over some combination of shirt, vest, skirt, and loincloth. Some farmers wear baggy trousers. Many men also wear a turban, skullcap, or kaffiyeh – a loose, folded headscarf, often held in place by a decorative cord called an agal, also spelled iqal. Today, many men wear Western-style clothing, especially in the cities. Some men combine elements of Western and traditional dress” (*World Book*, 1999).

Egypt (Ancient): “Egyptian clothes were generally made of linen and were very light. Men habitually wore short kilts, which were practical both for the climate and for hard work, their skins having adapted to the sun. Women wore clothes that covered most of their bodies. These included long close-fitting dresses and tunics, which became increasingly ornate with time” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2002).

Sub-Saharan Africa: “In western Africa and regions near the Sahara, many men wear a long flowing robe or baggy trousers and a loose shirt or tunic. A small cap or turban is also customary. Many African women take a length of cloth and wrap it around themselves into a dress. They may also wrap a cloth around the head in the style of a turban or scarf” (*World Book*, 1999).

America (North and South) –

Inca Empire (based in Peru, c. 1438-1532): “Inca men wore loincloths and tunics, plus cloaks in cold weather. Women wore long dresses and draped square shawls called mantas over their shoulders” (*World Book*, 1999).

“The actual garments were simple: a basic loincloth for both sexes and, over this, a short tunic for men and an ankle-length dress for women” (*Britannica*).

“Although the quality of clothing varied, poor and rich and even the emperor dressed in the same basic fashion. Men wore breechcloths, sleeveless knee-length tunics, and cloaks or ponchos. Women wore long dresses and capes fastened with a pin of copper, silver, or gold” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

North and South American Indians: “In Mesoamerica and Peru, men wore a breechcloth and a cloak knotted over one shoulder, and women wore a skirt and a

loose blouse; these garments were woven of cotton or, in Peru, sometimes of fine vicuña wool. North American hunting peoples made garments of well-tanned deer, elk, or caribou skin; a common style was a tunic, longer for women than for men, with detachable sleeves and leggings” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2002).

North American Plains Indians: “On the Northern Plains, men wore a shirt, leggings reaching to the hips, moccasins, and a buffalo robe . . . Women's clothing consisted of a long dress, leggings to the knee, and moccasins” (*Britannica*).

North American Plateau Indians (parts of western USA and Canada): “Plateau Indian men often wore robes, and women wore dresses” (*World Book*, 1999).

Asia –

Afghanistan: “Baggy cotton trousers are a standard part of the Afghan villager’s costume. The men wear long cotton shirts, which hang over their trousers, and wide sashes around their waists. They also wear a skullcap, and over that, a turban, which they take off when working in the fields. The women wear a long loose shirt or a high-bodice dress with a swirling skirt over their trousers; they drape a wide shawl around their heads. Many women wear jewelry, which is collected as a form of family wealth” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

Bhutan: “Traditional clothing is worn throughout Bhutan. Women wear the kira, an ankle-length dress made of a rectangular piece of cloth held at the shoulders with a clip and closed with a woven belt at the waist; underneath they wear a long-sleeved blouse. Social status is indicated by the colors of the kira, the amount of decorative details, and the quality of the cloth. Men wear the gho, a wraparound, coatlike, knee-length garment with a narrow belt” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

Cambodia: “Women usually dress modestly in cotton shirts and ankle-length skirts” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

Ancient China: “Rich and poor people in China wore very different clothes. Poor men would wear baggy hemp trousers, with a loose shirt over the top and a fur-lined coat in winter. The women wore simple dresses made from wool in winter and cotton in summer . . . Rich men and women wore robes of silk tied at the waist with a large sash . . . Small babies were carried on their mother’s back in a fold of her dress until they were old enough to walk” (Robert Nicholson and Claire Watts, *Ancient China*, Franklin Watts, 1991, p24).

Hmong peoples (southern China, northern Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Vietnam): “Today the women of each subgroup wear distinctive traditional clothing. White Hmong women wear plain, white skirts. The skirts of Blue or Green Hmong women are highly decorated with needlework. Striped Hmong women wear shirts with blue and black stripes encircling their long sleeves. Differences in men’s clothing are less notable. The traditional Hmong men’s costume consists of a black tunic and black wide-legged trousers” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

India: “Clothing styles were well established in India by 3000 BC . . . The classic Indian clothing styles include the *sari* for women and the *dhoti* for men. The sari, a long piece of fabric, is made of cotton or silk, often elaborately decorated with dyed, woven, or embroidered patterns. It is wrapped around the body and worn with a short, fitted bodice” (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2004).

“Many men wear a dhoti (a simple white garment wrapped around the legs). The dhoti forms a sort of loose trousers. Some men wrap the garment around themselves

like a skirt. In northern India, some men wear long, tight coats with trousers. The trousers are wide at the top and fit tightly from knee to ankle. Many Indian men wear turbans of various shapes. Most Indian women wear a sari (a straight piece of cloth draped around the body as a long dress). They place its loose end over the head or shoulder . . . Many of the women of northern India wear pyjamas (full trousers) with a long blouse and a veil" (*World Book*, 1999).

Ancient Japan: "The earliest Japanese clothing styles are preserved in *haniwa*, earthenware funerary statuettes from as early as the 3rd century AD, which have flared jackets for both sexes, with wide trousers (*hakama*) for men and pleated skirts for women. The nobility adopted Chinese-style court dress during the Nara period (710-794), principally the long robe. In Japanese hands this became the kimono, which perpetuates particularly the women's styles of Tang dynasty China. Dress for the nobility evolved during the Heian period (794-1185) into elaborate multilayered costumes, with hip-length wide jackets and baggy trousers for men and long trailing robes for women which entirely hid the body" (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2002).

Korea (North & South): "Traditional clothing for women consists of a long, full skirt and a tight-fitting jacket. For men, traditional clothing consists of loose-fitting trousers, shirts, and jackets" (*World Book*, 2005).

Turkmenistan: "Traditional dress for men includes a white shirt, dark trousers, and a red robe. Some men also wear a shaggy sheepskin hat. Women typically wear a long, loose dress trimmed with embroidery" (*World Book*, 1999).

Uzbekistan: "Throughout Uzbekistan, people wear both traditional and Western-style clothing. Traditional dress for men includes long robes and black boots. Women sometimes wear bright cotton or silk dresses and silk scarves" (*World Book*, 1999).

Europe –

Britain (Ancient): "About 2000 B.C. [the Bronze Age] a new race invaded England . . . they wore a woollen cap, a loose tunic, and a cloak, while the women wore long dresses . . . But about 500 B.C. came a new race of invaders, the Britons . . . The men wore a loose tunic and trousers, and brightly coloured plaids were common" (I. Tenen M.A., *History of England from the Earliest Times to 1932*, Macmillan and Co., 1935, pp4, 6).

Greece (Ancient): "Ancient Greek clothing consisted of unsewn lengths of linen or wool fabric, generally rectangular and secured with a *fibula* (ornamented clasp or pin) and a sash. Typical of such garments were the *peplos*, a loose robe worn by women; the *chlamys*, a cloak worn by men; and the *chiton*, a tunic worn by both men and women. Men's chitons hung to the knees, whereas women's chitons fell to their ankles. The basic outer garment during winter was the *himation*, a larger cloak worn over the *peplos* or *chlamys*. Women dressed modestly in ancient Greece, and in many areas they wore a veil whenever they left the house" (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2002).

Portugal: "Most Portuguese in both cities and rural areas wear clothing similar to that worn in other countries of Western Europe. But some rural people dress in styles similar to those of their ancestors. Berets, stocking caps, and baggy shirts and trousers are common among men. Many women wear long dresses and shawls" (*World Book*, 1999).

Rome (Ancient): "The Romans wore clothing based chiefly on that of the Greeks. The Greek chiton and himation became the Roman tunic and pallium for men and the stola and palla for women. The tunic varied in length but was short for soldiers. The stola

hung to the floor. It was worn over a long tunic called the *tunica talaris*, a short shirtlike garment called the *camisia*, and a tight, corsetlike band of cloth called the *strophium*. The *pallium* and *palla* were outdoor garments that the Romans could use as blankets if necessary" (*World Book*, 1999).

"A large piece of material wrapped around the masculine body as a cloak, the *toga* served a similar function as the Greek *himation* . . . The basic masculine garment was like the *chiton*; it was called a *tunica* . . . Longer *tunicas* were worn for important occasions . . . Feminine dress was very like the Greek, with the Roman woman's version of the *chiton* called a *stola*" (*Britannica*).

Scandinavia (Ancient): "Most Viking men wore two basic garments – trousers that reached to the knee or ankle, and a long-sleeved pullover shirt that reached below the waist. Viking women wore loose-fitting dresses that were made of linen or wool and hung almost to the ankles" (*World Book*, 1999).

Scottish Highlands: "For at least eight centuries Highlanders, both mainland and in the islands, wore the tartan plaid as their primary article of clothing. It was a great piece of cloth, some six yards by two, and reminiscent of nothing so much as the Roman *toga*. The Highlander wore it over an undershirt – a long light garment, knee-length – and he donned the plaid, *am breacan feilidh*, in rather complicated style . . . Trews [a form of trousers] were favoured for wear at sea or while riding a horse . . . women wore their version of the plaid, a graceful thing called the *arisaid*, usually white, fastened by a high leather belt. A married woman always wore a simple head-covering" (John Macleod, *Highlanders – A History of the Gaels*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, pp103, 104).

"By this ancestry each was a *duine-uasal*, a gentleman of the blood of Angus Og . . . They wore tartan trews and plaid, instead of the simple kilted plaid of the common people . . . A gentlewoman, a *bean-uasal*, wore a linen kerchief on her head, her hair plaited in a single lock . . . her *arisaid*, the white plaid of Highland women, was belted with leather and silver. The *arisaid* reached from her throat to her feet, said Martin Martin [17th century Skyeman]" (John Prebble, *Glencoe*, Penguin Books, 1968, p36).

Middle East –

Iraq: "Most labourers prefer traditional clothes. For men, these garments include long cotton gowns and jackets. Traditional dress for women consists of a long, concealing gown and a scarf that covers much of the head" (*World Book*, 1999).

Kurdistan (comprising parts of Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey): "Kurdish men wear shirts and baggy trousers with sashes. Kurdish women wear trousers but cover them with a dress" (*World Book*, 1999).

Lebanon: "Most Lebanese wear the same styles of clothing as do people in Western nations. But some rural people still wear traditional Lebanese clothes. Some peasant women, for example, wear colourful long dresses with ankle-length trousers underneath. Some elderly Druse religious men wear woven multicoloured jackets and white headdresses" (*World Book*, 1999).

Ottoman Empire (based in Turkey, c. 1300-1922): "Traditional men's dress comprised a shirt, trousers, jacket, and boots. The trousers were of the very full, baggy type (similar to the Middle Eastern *chalvar*), fitting tightly only on the lower leg. A deep waist sash, the *kuşak*, bound the body over the junction between trouser and shirt. The jacket was a short one, worn open, and was decoratively embroidered. In cold weather a *caftan* would be worn on top of these garments . . . The traditional Turkish cap, the

tarboosh, resembles an inverted flower pot and is made of cloth or felt . . . The dress for women in the Ottoman Empire was very similar to that worn by Muslim women in the Middle East. It consisted of a knee-length, white, sleeved chemise (*gömlək*) . . . The usual full trousers (*chalvar*) were accompanied, as in men's dress, by a decorative waist sash (*kuşak*). Over these garments a waistcoat (*yelek*) and long gown (*anteri*) were worn . . . Outdoors the enveloping cloak (*tcharchaf*) and veil (*yashmak*) were obligatory, and decorative pattens (*kub-kobs*) kept the elegant slippers out of the mud of the streets" (*Britannica*).

Yemen: "Some Yemenis, especially those in the cities, wear Western-style clothing. Many others wear more traditional Arab clothing. The men's garments include cotton breeches or a striped futa (kilt). Many men wear skullcaps, turbans, or tall, round hats called tarbooshes. Many of the women wear long robes, black shawls, and veils" (*World Book*, 1999).

[14] (*for page forty-five*)

"In mainland China the communist revolution of 1949 brought strict directives on dress. Styles were to be the same for everyone, whether man or woman, intellectual or manual labourer. This drab uniform was a blend of peasant and military design. It consisted of a military-style high-collared jacket and long trousers. Men's hair was short and covered by a peaked cap. Women's hair was longer but uncurled. Shoes had flat heels. No cosmetics or jewelry was permitted. Traditional Chinese cotton was used to make the garments; colour designated the type of worker. After about 1960 a slow Westernization set in, permitting a variation in colour and fabric. Dresses were introduced for women" (*Britannica*).

[15] (*for page forty-five*)

"It was only with the rise of Christianity, and 600 years later Islam, that modest covering of the female form became compulsory. St. Paul wrote to Timothy that women should not display, 'that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion.' . . . Once Theodosius I made Christianity compulsory in the Roman Empire in 381, Christian views on modesty dominated women's appearance, with the exception of the imperial court . . . Meanwhile, western Rome suffered barbarian invasions and centuries of disorder, until it broke up into separate kingdoms. Once these new courts had established themselves, it was only a matter of time before they, too, started trying to outdress and outshine one another. The Anglo-Saxons, for example, wore loose clothes, but after the Norman Conquest a change followed. By the 1090s members of the Norman court had started wearing tighter-fitting clothes . . . Although abbots and bishops objected vehemently, the new fashion for displaying the physique continued unabashed . . . by 1588 Elizabeth I of England had adopted the open-fronted Medici ruff, and the exposure of the woman's throat returned as a permanent feature of court style. (Puritan ladies of course concealed the neck completely, but they tried to avoid fashion styles and trends)" (*Britannica*).

The laws and customs of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire were strongly influenced by biblical principles – Christianity was officially sanctioned and immorality largely abjured:

"From the Romans the Byzantines inherited their basic clothing forms, the tunic and toga for men, and the stola, a type of long dress, as well as their shoes and their hairstyles . . . By the end of the Roman Empire the toga, which had once been required wear for Romans, was worn only on ceremonial occasions. The Byzantines,

who tended to prefer simple flowing clothes to the winding and draping of the toga, did away with the toga altogether. They chose as their most basic of garments the dalmatica, a long, flowing men's tunic or shirt with wide sleeves and hem, and the stola for women. Unlike the Romans, the Byzantines tended to be very modest about any display of flesh. Their garments were worn close about the neck, sleeves extended all the way to the wrist, and the hemline, or bottom edge, of their outer garments extended all the way to the ground. They layered their clothing, with men wearing a tunic and trousers under the dalmatica, and women wearing a long undergarment beneath their stola and an outer garment called a paludamentum, or long cloak" (p261).

"Byzantine women, in keeping with their culture's modesty, never appeared in public with bare arms" (p266).

"Men tended to wear their hair short . . . Women wore their hair quite long . . ." (p267). [Sarah Pendergast and Tom Pendergast, Project Editor Sarah Hermsen, *Fashion, Costume and Culture*, vol. 2, Thomson Gale, 2004].

[16] (for page forty-five)

The transforming effect of the Gospel on the dress of new converts was especially notable in Africa, Australia and the Pacific islands in the 19th century. In Hawaii, for example, where Calvinistic preaching resulted in many conversions, women adopted modest long-sleeved and loose-fitting dresses, men began to wear trousers and loose, untucked shirts, and the Hawaiian king and his government passed laws prohibiting adultery and enforcing Sabbath observance. According to *Britannica*, "The women [originally] wore short skirts (*pa'us*) and the men tapa loincloths (*malos*). In 1820 New England missionaries compelled the native women to replace their hula skirts with long dresses (*holokus*)." To this day, in Australian Aboriginal communities once touched by mission work, older children even when swimming tend to wear normal clothes, which "appear to be no hindrance to them in the water. Boys usually wear shorts and the girls cotton dresses or skirts and tops" (John and Sue Erbacher, *Aborigines of the Rainforest*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p29).

Although in the early 1900's European and American women "rarely wore trousers, and their skirts almost always covered their ankles", in those places it was no later than the 1920's that "standards of feminine modesty had changed to the point that women began to wear both trousers and shorter skirts" (*World Book*, 2005). Australia followed suit, and the current situation in non-Western countries is often preferable to that in the West:

"People almost everywhere [in Papua New Guinea] wear shorts of European design. Some women retain traditional skirts, but most of them wear simple dresses" (*World Book*, 1999).

"Most Samoan men wear a shirt and a lava-lava, a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist like a skirt. Most of the women wear a long lava-lava and an upper garment called a puletasi" (*World Book*, 2005).

"Western-style dress is common in Apia, but more traditional clothing prevails in rural areas [of Samoa]. This includes the lava lava (wraparound skirt) for men and the puletasi (long dress) for women. Religion dominates much of Samoan life. Almost everyone wears white clothing on Sundays in observance of the Christian day of rest" (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 2005).

"The men [of Fiji] wear skirts called sulus, and the women wear cotton dresses. On ceremonial occasions, the women may wear grass skirts. Most native Fijians are Christians" (*World Book*, 2005).

“Most Indian women wear a sari . . . draped around the body as a long dress. Its loose end is flung over a shoulder or used to cover the head. A sari is usually worn with a blouse. Unmarried women and young girls, especially in northern India, commonly wear long flowing trousers called a shalwar and a long blouse known as a kameez. Tribal women wear long skirts. Many Christian women in the south wear Western-style skirts and blouses. Some young women in cities, especially wealthier women, wear jeans” (*World Book*, 2005).

“Many Guineans, especially those living in cities and towns, wear clothing similar to that worn by North Americans and Europeans. However, most people still wear traditional clothes. For men, the traditional garment is a loose robe called a boubou. Women wear a blouse with a skirt made from a piece of colored cloth tied around the waist” (*World Book*, 2005).

“Zambians disagree about whether women should wear contemporary dress or the traditional long skirts adapted from the garb of 19th-century European Christian missionaries. In cities western clothing is widely accepted, but in rural areas most women wear the *chitenge*, a piece of fabric wrapped around the body to form a long skirt. Such traditions remain strong, even as Zambian women exert greater influence in business, education, and the marketplace” (*Microsoft Encarta World Atlas*, 1998).

[17] (*for page forty-nine*)

Many non-English-speaking peoples are now also capitulating to Western immorality, despite the misery and social destruction wrought by such selfishness. But observe Greece in the 1960s:

“Life in the large towns is changing rapidly and becoming more and more like that in western Europe and North America. But family life throughout Greece is still very close, and few young men or women leave home until they marry. The husband is still very much master in the family home, and it is still unusual, even in Athens, for a woman or girl to go out to the cinema or to a café by herself, or even with a girl friend. Throughout Greece marriages are still often arranged by the parents. The young couple do not go out together, and until they are married they meet only in their parents’ company. This may seem very old fashioned, but families are at least as happy and stable as elsewhere in the world” (Francis Noel Baker, *Looking at Greece*, Adam and Charles Black, 1967, p16).

[18] (*for page fifty*)

“In the 1900’s, women began to wear looser, lightweight clothing. The changing styles – especially in leisure and sports clothes – gradually uncovered different parts of women’s bodies. Legs were bared in the 1920’s, abdomens in the 1940’s, and thighs in the 1960’s. Today, women wear less clothing than in any other period since ancient times. For a few years around 1910, women wore hobble skirts. These skirts were so tight at the bottom that a woman could hardly walk. Clothing became simpler and less formal during World War I (1914-1918). In the 1920’s, women adopted the ‘boyish’ look. Dresses were straight and unfitted, and they ended at, or a little above, the knee. In the 1930’s, some women began wearing slacks (trousers).”

“During the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, men [tennis] players wore long-sleeved shirts and trousers, and women wore ankle-length dresses. Such bulky clothing limited a player’s movements. Today, men wear short-sleeved shirts and shorts. Women wear minidresses or blouses and short skirts.” (*World Book*, 1999).

“The most important moment in the modernization of female dress was when women cut off their skirts for good. That was just before World War I, about a decade before the second most important moment, when they cut off their hair for good. These

two radical acts made irreversible transformations in female appearance . . . No matter how low or high women's hemlines become or how much their hair length varies, the point of all such changes – including those in store for us next fall [*i.e.*, autumn] – is to show that women have the choice to lift their skirts and crop their hair. Before the 20th century, they didn't. Long skirts, like long hair, had been required for women by religious law and general custom since time immemorial. During the 600 years when fashion developed its own history, both skirts and hair were considered immutable, even when fashion went to extremes. There were moments of deviation – the bloomer costume, for example, with full trousers showing below short skirts – but they never lasted long. The arrival of women's legs in the first quarter of this century was a genuine shock” (Anne Hollander, fashion columnist for *Slate* (an American magazine), June 1998).

