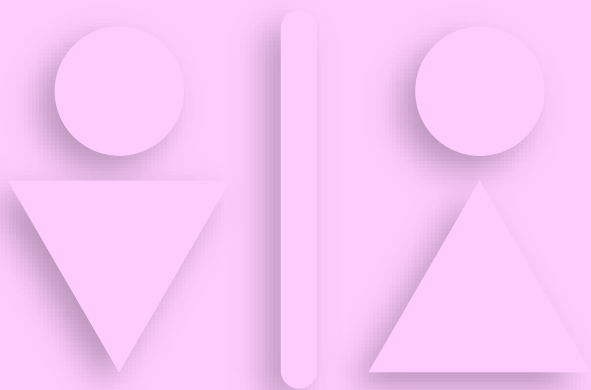


HUMAN ATTIRE

and Sex Discrimination



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W. F. Bell

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FOREWORD

The content of this booklet first appeared in the quarterly magazine 'The Link'. The articles met with considerable interest and requests for them to be printed as a separate publication, which has now been done. This booklet goes out with the prayers of the church meeting at North Road Chapel, that it might be of help to many Christians who are ill-informed on these matters, and that God's name might be honoured thereby.

HUMAN ATTIRE

are there Divine regulations?

Why examine such a subject as this when there are far weightier matters to deal with? A question of this nature must be immediately dismissed, as no ruling set out in Scripture is to be regarded as trivial. To do so is to treat the inspired Word of God as containing primary and secondary truth, with mortal man as the arbiter; a blasphemous practice which is all too common today. If a precept is laid down in Holy Scripture, that precept is authoritative, for it is the Word of Almighty God Himself; to treat it with contempt is open defiance of Him before Whom, one day, we all have to give account.

The matter of human attire is hardly ever dealt with from the pulpit in this day and age, and yet the Bible contains a tremendous amount of information on the subject. From the aprons of fig leaves made by our first parents, recorded in the early chapters of Genesis, to the Mother of Harlots arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with precious stones, gold and pearls in the closing chapters of Revelation, clothing is constantly referred to, thus showing the great importance attached to this matter.

Among the vast range of topics dealt with in our Lord's profound sermon recorded in Matthew chapters five, six and seven, He asked this question: "*Why take ye thought for raiment?*" (Matthew 6:28). Whilst the immediate context of this statement is 'anxious care', it presents a much wider application and poses a number of other queries, such as: should a Christian be concerned with clothing and appearance? And if so, why?

It is incumbent upon both male and female Christians to dress in a manner which is becoming to their Divinely-allotted station in life. The Word of God does not state that a heavy, serge suit must always be worn by men; to so dress in a hot country could make him appear foolish. It

would not be appropriate for a trawlerman to dress the same as a bank clerk, nor for a doctor to attend his patients in the attire of a farm worker. There is nothing wrong for a man to wear modest khaki shorts and a lightweight shirt in warm weather, on appropriate occasions. Nowhere in Scripture are Christians required to be oddities, and in this sense alone they should be judicious regarding dress; they should not set out to appear eccentric.

Biblical teaching however, runs far deeper than this. The believer must be circumspect to see that his or her dress “*becometh Godliness*” (1 Timothy 2:10). What must concern the Christian is Scriptural correctness. An inordinate desire and a carnal yearning for fine array is contrary to the mind of God. To some people in today’s society, ‘**Fashion**’ is all important – what other people do and what is worn by them – is vital. On this subject the child of God has to be very careful, for whereas the world has its style, so has the Church of Jesus Christ. Every Christian needs to be guarded as to which style they copy.

‘**Modesty**’ is an overriding principle in Scripture concerning the dress of a Christian, meaning ‘restraint’, ‘pure in style’, ‘chaste’, ‘not extreme’; and this applies to men as well as to women. Very many of the dress styles today are designed by men and women whose morals are notoriously corrupt; tight fitting garments, low-cut necklines, skirts slit to the thighs, clothing purposely designed to reveal as much of the human anatomy as they dare; all being explicitly modelled and graphically advertised. This may be the attire depicted on television screens and generally looked upon as the ‘in thing’ in dress, but this most certainly is not the fashion for the people of God.

Costly apparel and exquisite attire befitting those of royal dignity is also dealt with in Holy Writ. Nowhere does the Bible condemn dress of this nature for those of high rank; it is not extravagant nor is it vanity for a queen to be so clothed, for such becomes a God-ordained monarch; but

fabulous garments for an ordinary child of God is not pleasing to Him and it is the negation of a Divine precept. At the other extreme, slovenly attire is also not in order. How many in this generation make no distinction in dress between attending the House of God and going to the beach? What respect do these people show for God, His day, or for holy worship? A generation or two ago, the fashion of the world was toward finery; today, for many, it is the reverse. The more ragged and casual some can look, the happier they are. We read in Holy Scripture of great worthies of the faith washing and changing their garments before sacrificing, or going into the sanctuary (cf 2 Samuel 12:20). These things are written for **our** learning and admonition.

A pastor's wife recently bemoaned the fact that young women were attending the house of God in jeans. Sadly, this is not uncommon; but what is worse is the example set by some adult female church members who will sit unashamedly at the communion table in trouser suits. Whilst ministers and elders may not approve, they remain silent on the matter. Here lies the trouble! Those who expound the Word of truth must keep back nothing, for there are no minor matters in the Divine Mandate; all is for the believer's profit and for God's glory. What saith the Scripture on this issue? "*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). That command did not just forbid unisex garments in the tabernacle: it was a total prohibition. It still is today. The clear instruction of God is that neither male nor female must wear garments that pertain to the opposite sex.

In the society in which we live, for many generations, trousers have, without question, denoted a male. Certain exceptions could be regarded as lawful for a female to wear such attire in order not to impinge upon modesty. In this case, 'lawful' does not refer to the civil law, but how the Divine Lawgiver views the situation. For example, a female

may, of necessity, be involved in physical work or activity, when for both safety and modesty reasons, her normal attire of a dress or skirt would be wholly inappropriate. The need to take account of safety and modesty has increased as females have taken on roles which, until recently, have been the domain of men. The following article in this booklet by W. F. Bell, rightly identifies the **cause** of this, as the desire to be ‘liberated’ from the shackles of a bygone age. Equal opportunity for male and female is demanded by the civil law, but the Creator God made them male and female; equal in His eyes, but with distinct and separate roles to fulfil in His order of society.

The reader may consider this to be a digression from the content of this article, but it is not, as the departure from **God’s order** has necessitated, for safety and modesty reasons, the increased use of male attire by females. This desire for freedom of choice has led to many consequences, not least the unwarranted wearing of trousers by females when there is no lawful reason to do so. It is no wonder that this present generation sees nothing wrong with women wearing men’s attire when the world sees nothing wrong with equality in all things between the sexes. There is no section of society that has not been affected by the ‘liberation’ movement; consequently employment, sport and leisure have also become involved in this issue. The true Christian needs to ponder the **cause** and identify the **effects**, one of which is the wearing of men’s garments by women.

If in the will of the Lord, time continues, the rising generation will see these circumstances as normal. But it will make no difference to a holy God; He created them male and female, separate and distinct. No change in society will affect **His ruling**. *“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). The drift commenced under the guise of safety and modesty, but this soon became **personal choice** for all, and for any occasion.

The Jewish Law is put forward by unisex protagonists as a defence. They state that the Scripture quoted from Deuteronomy pertains to the Mosaic economy and is now abolished; it was part of the Judicial Law given to the nation of Israel and has now passed away; it does not form a part of the abiding Moral Law. Superficially this may appear a reasonable comment; but it needs careful investigation. Did the Judicial Law given to Israel in any way conflict with the Moral Law? The Decalogue is the very foundation of all laws and regulations that are honouring to God. The Judicial Law given by God, through Moses, to Israel as found in the Book of Deuteronomy contains stern warnings and exhortations; for example, concerning the misappropriation of property, lying and false witness, rebellion against parents, adultery and fornication, rape and incest (cf Deuteronomy 19:14,15; 21:18-21; 22:13-30). All these things were part of the Mosaic order, but were never revoked by God. They are as wrong today as they were in the days of Moses. So why should Deuteronomy 22:5, which is part of the **same section** of Scripture, be any different? These are Divine principles laid down by an immutable God, based upon His **eternal law**, of which the Decalogue is the transcript. The disobedience of Adam, the murder of Cain, the drunkenness of Noah, were all wrong hundreds of years before the days of Moses and the actual giving of the Law in writing. The mind of God in **all** these matters was made known at the first, and that mind **never** changes. It is the deliberation of the eternal God.

It is argued that in Eastern lands, trousers were unknown centuries ago. Both male and female wore the same kind of dressing-gown type of garment, tied in with a girdle. This may appear convincing, but if it is, it has completely eroded a definite command of Almighty God. The exact form or design of attire worn at the time of Moses is not the issue; the whole point is, there was a **God-appointed distinction** to be maintained between the attire of male and female.

Similar arguments are put up concerning a woman having her head covered and a man having his head uncovered, in all church gatherings. Many will tell us it is not the custom today, that, is an outdated and misguided tradition. ‘What is more’, they say, ‘are we to believe that God is concerned whether or not our head is covered when we come to worship?’ ‘The Bible says God looketh upon the heart’. Yes, it does; but let none deceive themselves. If there is disobedience to Divine regulations, how do we think God views the heart then? Ever must it be remembered that apart from the **guidance** that Scripture alone can give, the heart is still “*deceitful above all things*” (Jeremiah 17:9). In the first sixteen verses of 1 Corinthians 11, Paul, under Divine inspiration, dealt at length with this very important matter, which is the physical demonstration of the **Headship of Christ** amongst His people. He concluded by saying: “*If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God*” (1 Corinthians 11:16). By these Holy Ghost inspired words, it is made clear that there was, and is, only **one** fashion or custom in the church of God; namely, covered heads for women and bared heads for men.

One is well aware that most preachers today, in their desire to be popular and not offend their listeners, by-pass completely the many sections of Scripture that deal with the Christian’s attire. Under a guise of piety, many ministers say they have more important issues to consider rather than deal with such lesser matters. This immediately identifies a serious flaw in their ministry and marks them out as being men of partial truth, treating portions of God’s Holy Word as of no consequence. Do not domestic and every day matters continually crop up in the Word of God? Are they not **vital**, and the very things that mark us out as being citizens of heaven? By our adherence to the lifestyle set for us in Holy Writ, we show ourselves to be the children of God, and are **examples** unto all of true Godliness; which in a nutshell, is **obedience**. As a result of this lack of teaching, it is no wonder that the average congregation in a place of worship today appears little different in attire from a crowd in the local

supermarket. Neither should we be surprised at the very large percentage of women who are dressed in replicas of men's attire. Is it possible that before long, men will be seen on the streets and in business offices, in women's skirts? If not, why not, for exactly the same principle obtains? "*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).

This clear Biblical teaching is the charge of the Church, to be sounded forth from pulpits by preaching, and by example in the pews. The tragic disregard for these issues has resulted in the God-dishonouring standards now prevalent. In **all** matters of belief and conduct in the Christian's life there are two basic questions to be answered: (1) Is it Biblical? (2) Am I going to obey?

Human Attire – are there Divine regulations? **Yes!** "*Why take ye thought for raiment?*" **Because God does!**

W. H. Molland (1920 – 2012)

"Inasmuch as the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, it should be clothed in such a manner as will glorify God."

H. Hitchman

FEMINIST WOMEN AND EFFEMINATE MEN

We are living in a time when many women are not satisfied with their lot in life. Many have found no real happiness in being ordinary mothers, wives, and housekeepers. They want freedom, liberation and equality with men. Some have even united to form a vocal minority called the Women's Liberation Movement. This group is also known as the New Feminists.

What is the woman's role in life? It would seem few modern women really, logically, and scripturally know. The Bible is an out-dated book for most people today; the average woman never reads it, for if she did, her God-given role in life would be known. Here lies the root of all the feminist woman's problems – most women are ignorant of the teachings of the Word of God. Because of this, women today are complaining, grumbling, and upset over a situation they do not have any spiritual discernment about.

The Bible is clear: God made the first man "*of the dust of the ground*" (Genesis 2:7), then later "*caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man*" (Genesis 2:21,22). All of this occurred because the Lord had said, "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*" (Genesis 2:18). Notice, God did not give Adam a woman to be a boss over him! Nor was the woman given to nag him or be a hindrance to him (which often is the sad situation today), but one given to Adam to "*help*" him. Concerning the woman coming from Adam's rib, the wise commentator, Matthew Henry, made these comments:

"The woman was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side

to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

That says it all! But look at many a modern woman: she has come a long way since Eden, for now twentieth century women smoke cigarettes, paint up like Jezebel, and wear skin-tight clothing which cause men to lust. The immodest way so many women dress today is unbelievable. The Bible commands God-fearing women to “*adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety*” (1 Timothy 2:9), so there must be few God-fearing women left, judging from their appearances. This is not just an ‘appearance judgment’, but a ‘righteous one’ (cf John 7:24).

This sounds Pharisaical to some, but those who are really “*holy women*” (1 Peter 3:5), will bow to the authority of God’s Word, simply because they fear God and seek to please Him, not man. If the Bible spells out that a woman should dress modestly, why do some preachers say it is unimportant? (True, our interpretations of modesty vary, but conscience and the Holy Spirit, guided by the Bible, will lead us right in this matter). If the Bible spells out that “*the husband is the head of the wife*” (Ephesians 5:23), why do some preachers say that women do not have to submit to their own husbands? Paul compares Christ and the Church with the relationship of husbands and wives, and plainly declares: “*Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything*” (Ephesians 5:24). A rejection of this teaching has brought great disorder into the world, and reveals that the Word of God has been cast aside for the whims and fancies of men and women.

The Old Testament describes a holy woman as one who works at home, provides for her family their necessities, is kind, knows nothing of idleness, appreciates her husband, and above all, fears God. See Proverbs 31:10-31: “*Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her*” (v.28). Indeed, such a woman needs praising! The New Testament verifies that nothing has changed from the old

dispensation regarding the woman's role in the home and in marriage. Aged women in the early church were to teach younger 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 the Word of God be not blasphemed*" (Titus 2:4-5). This is straightforward language and must not be compromised for the sake of modern society, if we desire to live unto the Lord and please Him. That is the whole question: who is it we are living for: ourselves or God?

Even churches encourage rebellion against the Word of God by allowing women leadership in the church, which the Bible forbids. The Bible forbids a woman to teach a man; she is not "*to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*" (1 Timothy 2:12). (That must be a very difficult verse for the women preachers and teachers of our day to proclaim; as a matter of fact, they evidently totally avoid the subject!) The apostle says all of this is to be done "*with all subjection*" (1 Timothy 2:11), not in arguing, disagreement and self-centredness.

Effeminate Men

Then there is the sad subject of modern effeminate men. Not only have women revolted against God's authority, so have men. And assuredly these things are related, for if men are out of their God-ordained places in society, so must the women be. 'Effeminate' is a very descriptive word for 'men' today, as it means, "having unsuitable feminine qualities, unmanly, marked by weakness and love of ease" (Webster's). This being true, we have many weak, soft, spineless 'men' throughout the world. In the first place, men should act and look like men, not the opposite sex. Many do not like it, but the Bible says, "*Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?*" (1 Corinthians 11:14). **Shame.** Who knows anything about shame today? "*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush*" (Jeremiah 8:12).

Long hair on men is not as prevalent now as in the ‘hippie era’, but it is with us still, and is a definite sign of demonic influence in the life, often coupled with bad attitudes, rebellion against parental authority, and a general ‘do-as-you-please’ lifestyle. If you do not believe this, just look at practically all of the hard-core rock groups: there is a definite connection between long hair on men and drugs, immorality and rock music. The forces of evil have been turned loose on society through these sin-crazed people, and all Christians must be up in arms against such diabolical practices. Young boys need teaching on this subject, as many of them are raised in homes not in subjection to the Word of God. Compassion and love should be demonstrated by Christians in dealing with such.

It cannot be proved that the Lord Jesus Christ wore long hair, as many claim, and artists have pictured Him. This is certainly not to concern us; we know that Christ was a real Man, yet fully God (cf Luke 2:52; 1 Timothy 3:16). To be like Him, which the Scripture enjoins, means morally and spiritually. Let us not argue ‘did Christ have long hair?’ neither dispute as to what constitutes being ‘long’, as some Christians do; that is to act like children.

However, it is important to note that Paul teaches a woman should wear her hair long. When women in our day ‘crop’ their hair, making it much shorter at times than some men’s, this is another indication of rebellion against the Scripture. “*But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her*” (1 Corinthians 11:15). ‘Glory’ is the opposite of **shame**! The man does not have a head over him: “*The head of every man is Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:3). It is to Christ the Lord that every man must yield his obedience and worship, not to other men or to a woman. If men would truly bow to the Lordship of Christ, they would assume their God-given role of being ‘head of the woman’; but it seems men today have become so wishy-washy and spineless, that they refuse to carry out this headship. Let us pray that our God would give us more **real** men in the present

hour – men who truly act as men, those who are firm in their convictions, yet loving in their character.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Men must fulfil their responsibility to love their wives, thus assuring that their wives will follow them and “*reverence*” them (cf Ephesians 5:33). If men are out of their place in the home, not loving and leading, neither can the woman and children be in their place.

Fathers must ever realize that it is their solemn duty to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, never provoking them to wrath (cf Ephesians 6:4). It is well and good for fathers to spend time with their children in recreation and family outings; but we fear the typical family in our day spends far too much time in such things as this to the neglect of family worship, where the Bible is read and prayer is offered. It may not be readily admitted, but television and sport have replaced family altars in the nation. To correct this there must be firstly, a recognition of the fact, then secondly, a commitment and determination on the part of fathers to reverse this trend. Let all fathers thus say with Joshua of old: *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”* (Joshua 24:15). ‘Serving the Lord’ should be priority in the home and family life.

In concluding these thoughts on the roles of men and women, let us turn to the helpful insights of Walter Chantry:

“Western society feeds the ego of women. With brazen directness it exerts an influence upon women to fight for their own rights. Educational systems, magazines and advertising spawn self-assertiveness in her. Why should she not seek her own independent career? Why should husbands not be as much helpers to women as wives are to men? The psychological

bombardment is having its self-seeking effects in modern women to the ruin of homes ... Peace and joy will be encountered in any home where there is found a submissive wife and a solicitous husband. How soon marriage counselling sessions would end if husbands and wives were competing in thoughtful self-denial. If the woman was anxious to yield to her God-given head in the home, and the man was ambitious to serve her comfort and welfare as being his own flesh, there would be no room for contention and strife. “*Wives submit*” and “*husbands love*” must be repeated until the message reaches beyond the ears, to the hearts of spouses.”

W. F. Bell (1948 – 2018)

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14)