

Death of Modesty

Every succeeding generation of world history has been distinguished by some mark of outstanding sin or depravity. The Bible assures us that mankind is depraved by nature and, therefore, will certainly follow paths of disobedience and rebellion. In order to appeal to the natural carnality which abides in every human heart, the devil invents various techniques and approaches for sin. Without doubt, the devil has developed through the long six-thousand year period of human history quite a long list of refined and sophisticated appeals to draw away people into transgression. I can imagine that some temptations were tailor-made to meet the particular circumstances that prevailed in certain periods of world history.

On the other hand, there are some fascinating and alluring evils that have been used as deadly sin-bait in every age of man's existence. Satan has always been quite successful in perverting the emotions of an individual, which throws the reasoning powers out of operation completely.

One manifestation of this most malignant perversion of man's emotions is revealed in the terrible scourge of immorality which now sweeps over the world. This is nothing new, of course, because we have records of such incidents from the earliest history of man. The book of Genesis tells us a great deal about the moral perversion of men and women who lived back very close to the creation of the world.

Obviously, Satan began to make his powerful appeals to sexual instincts as soon as man opened the door by the original transgression. Jesus indicated that the great consuming sin of the antediluvian world was indulgence in fleshly excesses. Genesis tells us that the very imaginations of their hearts were only evil continually. Christ also said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the coming of the Son of man." Matthew 24:37. It should not surprise us to see the world involved in a great carnival of sinful pleasure.

Paul assured us in his prophecy that men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Everywhere we look today we see the same kind of evils that marked those days before God destroyed the world with a flood. Immodesty, immorality, and sexual perversions are permeating our society with incredible boldness.

Many modern writers have felt that the saturation point is almost reached and that some change must soon take place in the other direction. Even non-Christians are alarmed and concerned over the fearful results that these departures from principle have brought on us. Sometimes the question is asked, "What has triggered this tide of evil? How did sex become such an obsession with the American people?"

One of the phenomena of our times is the mushrooming growth of look-alike boutiques and hair salons. Unisex shops and signs are appearing all across the country offering exactly the same clothes and hairdos to both men and women. What is the significance of this development? Are there any spiritual dangers inherent in this growing trend?

First we need to take note of the astronomical rise in homosexuality in the last few years. America has been literally swamped in a blitz of newspaper and magazine stories about the gay movement and how it has proudly come out of the closet to demand its rights. Gay marches and demonstrations attract great crowds and wide publicity. Television forums have openly discussed the matter before millions of viewers with both lesbians and homosexuals taking part.

Psychiatry has given formal recognition to the practice as normal sexual behaviour. Great Protestant church organizations are not only opening the doors to membership but are ordaining self-professed homosexuals to the ministry. Churches have been established exclusively for the worship of

Death of Modesty

homosexuals, and some marriages have been performed and legally registered between two persons of the same sex.

Much has been written about the possible causes for this spectacular escalation of a very old perversion. Very few seem to understand exactly why it has made such a sudden resurgence, but I believe we can discover the reasons by examining some parallel social developments which have given explicit encouragement to the gay movement. There is a cause for every effect, and through the centuries of time, the same conditions have produced similar results.

All Bible students are acquainted with the strong condemnation of sodomy which is woven throughout both Old and New Testaments. God labels it as one of the worst abominations, a sin which will utterly deprave and destroy. The ancient pagan world was riddled with the vice. The very name is derived from the city of Sodom which harbored a host of militant homosexuals. Paul speaks in Romans 1:26, 27 of "vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." The reprobate minds "which commit such things are worthy of death," Paul stated in verse 32.

The land of Canaan, which the Israelites were to possess, was filled with the perverse iniquity of sodomy or homosexuality. This was one of the reasons God gave such explicit instructions for them not to intermarry or intermingle with the inhabitants of the land. They were to avoid any contaminating contact which could lead Israel to join their debased practices. Furthermore, they were given specific instructions against dressing in a way that could create the climate for committing this sin. "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.

Because sodomy involves a changing of sex roles which is usually accomplished by a pattern of acting and dressing like the opposite sex, God warned His people not to open any door of temptation on this matter. They were to maintain clear lines of distinction between the dress of men and women. The New Testament reaffirms this principle of separation in appearance. Paul wrote, "Doth not nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her." 1 Corinthians 11:14,15.

Now we are ready to make some observations about the modern social scene which could explain why we see the alarming rise of homosexuality. If God saw that the blurring of sexual identity could cause problems, then we must admit to having a great problem. We are seeing three factors at work today which have never operated before in human history at the same time. Taken alone, none of these three things would be too impressive; but, when we see the combined effect of their influence, it is frightening even to contemplate. The three contemporary conditions are these:

- (1) The Women's Lib Movement, whose declared purpose is to interchange the roles of men and women in much of our social, economic, and religious life.
- (2) The fashion revolution which has led the majority of women to abandon the traditional feminine dress styles for slacks and jeans.
- (3) The growing tendency of men to dress in frills, with feminine hairstyles, and accompanying demasculinization.

This combination of related circumstances has probably been responsible for pushing thousands of borderline homosexuals over the line into perversion. Many of them only needed the little bit of psychotic confusion that the three popular movements thrust upon them.

Death of Modesty

Dr. Charles Winick, Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York, is one leading authority who feels that the current vogue for interchangeable clothing is leading us to ultimate disaster. In his provocative book, *THE NEW PEOPLE*, he delineates the numerous ways that unisex is desexualizing the American people. He believes that even the over-thirty group has been critically affected by the radical changes around them, although they don't fully realize how it is happening.

Dr. Winick points out that even the staid businessmen are edging into patterned, pastel-hued shirts and pants. Men's departments are doing a brisk business in jewelry, scented grooming aids, hair pieces, manicures, face creams, and colognes. Hair nets and permanent waves are discreetly labeled with terms like "trainers" and "hair processing."

In his book, Dr. Winick catalogues several hundred pages of items in our culture that have become neutralized, bland, and consequently boring. For example: parents are giving more and more interchangeable names to their children such as Kim, Chris, Leslie, Gene, Lee, and Dana. He believes that the blurring of masculine and feminine distinctions is leading our society into deep trouble, because people cannot cope with critical life situations until they are certain of their sexual identity. Unisex clothing is confusing them and creating serious emotional crises for many.

In view of the scriptural statements, and in view of the increasing tendency to have women dress as near like the other sex as possible, what can we say concerning the modern situation? The effects of this defeminizing of the women of America is seen in many ways.

In the last ten years there has been a 50% increase in the female crime rate. We always used to count on females committing 3% of the total crimes, now it is up to 15%. "It has been steadily rising," an FBI spokesman in Washington reported. Many authorities believe that the unisex avalanche has encouraged the participation of women in more masculine activities such as crime.

It is now almost unusual to meet a woman in a supermarket who is wearing a dress. The Bible seems to recognize that dress holds a tremendous power for good or evil, because we read these words in 1 Timothy 2:9: "In like manner also the women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (vs. 10)

Here we find not only the immodesty condemned, but also the wearing of gold and pearls and artificial adornment. Add to that text another in 1 Peter 3:3,4 as in Phillips translation: "Your beauty should not be jewelry or fine clothes, but on the inner personality, the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a thing very precious in the eyes of God."

Some time ago Eloise Curtis, a designer of junior dresses and gowns, struck an alarming note when she said, "In many homes there is no longer an externally visible difference between the sexes. A woman donning pants subconsciously dons a few masculine characteristics in her approach to her own baby. The baby, seeing nothing but pants around, becomes confused as to where his mother begins and his father leaves off."

In our last broadcast we introduced the delicate subject of modern dress and undress, and how the principle of Christian modesty has been violated and destroyed. I'd like to introduce today's broadcast with a most revealing statement about feminine pride. The professional woman who made this statement had been in sales, and served as a newspaper fashion editor. Here's what she said: "More and more American women pursue fashion's far-out follies. Kooky clothes and mad make-up are no longer confined to a screwball few; they are being sold to millions. Women have gone crazy. The fantastic world of women's fashion has grown into one of the greatest con games ever devised.

Death of Modesty

"Take hair, for instance; if it isn't striped, it may be spotted with gold or silver flecks dusted on like visible fallouts. Or a woman's whole head may be dipped into the dye vat.

"Then there are green eyelids. No longer merely a stage make-up for a spooky thriller, this fungus-like look can be seen at any P.T.A. meeting. Eye-shadow kits in all colors of the rainbow sell at department stores, discount houses and dime stores.

"Fashion has turned into a relentless campaign to encompass every American female from the cradle to the grave. . . . The old are made to look infantile, and the young are high-pressured into the femme-fatale market before they are out of diapers.

"Women have been so bewitched, bewildered and brainwashed that they seem incapable of resisting the most arrant nonsense. Anything wacky can be sold in the name of fashion. . . . The tab for fuss and feathers is now close to \$25 billion a year."

Some authorities have raised the question as to whether modern dress styles have anything to do with the rising tide of sexual assaults and immorality. We must all agree that there has been a tremendous moral decadence in society. The facts and figures concerning illegitimacy are simply staggering.

The FBI statistics for the United States reveal the fact that 224 rapes are reported to police every 24 hours. When I began this broadcast ministry in 1966 the figure was only 55 rapes per day.

Now listen, friends, I know that there are many, many factors involved in this lowering of moral standards, but I'd like to remind you of something here that could be very, very significant. During these same years in America, when things have almost reached rock bottom, there has been a radical departure from the dress fashions, customs, and taboos of a few years ago. Now, this will be granted by all who were adults when this period began. The present popular near-nude attire at the bathing beaches, of our streets and homes, and on parading drum-majorettes and festival queens has been arrived at garment by garment, inch by inch.

The voices of protest that were raised a few years ago have become well nigh inaudible. People just aren't saying anything about these things anymore, friends, not even the preachers or the religious institutions. Now I'm sure the reason for this is that it's such a prickly issue to deal with. If anybody says a word of criticism about these styles of near-nudity, someone is sure to accuse the person of being evil minded. The time has come when somebody should stand up and have the courage to tell the truth about this monstrous evil.

While men and women are equally blameworthy, it's a fact that women are in a greater degree displaying the body for the sake of display and being exploited at every possible opportunity. No popular festival occasion is complete without a half-naked queen chosen largely for her curvaceous figure from a number of equally unclothed contestants. We are living in a day when the virtue called "modesty" is almost a memory of yesteryear. Modesty is no longer considered necessary to the protection of virtue. What place can it find in all the present freedom and sex appeal and the free mingling of the sexes in nearly all situations of life. Scanty clothing is considered a mere matter of choice, and sex appeal is regarded as legitimate for both Christian and non-Christian.

A minimum of clothing is deemed sufficient for both sinner and saint. Near-nude queens are encouraged by half-nude church members. Who would be so blind as to say that there is no relationship between the present styles of undress and the rapidly rising incidents of rape in the United States?

The warden of one of the most famous prisons in America worked personally with and interviewed 170,000 prisoners in the last 12 years. This is the statement he made after those interviews: "Crimes of passion are increasing alarmingly, they will continue to increase until the principle cause of their

Death of Modesty

increase is eliminated, and that cause is our present styles of dress in America, which to say the least, is immodest. Immodest dress has a direct bearing on crime incitation."

Now that's the opinion of the man who interviewed 170,000 prisoners; but you don't have to take his word for it. Just read the daily newspaper. What is the reason for this skyrocketing of sexual assaults against women? Please don't misunderstand me, I'm not trying to excuse the offenders in this case at all, but I am saying that a return to the modesty which once characterized this country would eliminate a large measure of crime today.

The 10% increase of sexual assaults is going to be reported again next year, and the next and the next, as long as the present trends of immodest dress and style are continued. Satan himself has devised many of these fashions to corrupt the imagination of the world. As we read a moment ago, the imagination of the hearts was only evil continually in the world before the flood. Jesus said that as it was in the days of Noah, so it would be at the end of the age.

Today we see a world simply filled with evil imaginations. Ancient Rome had no more brazen infatuation with sex and vulgarity than we do. America has gone mad over the unholy attempt to glorify and glamorize sexual perversion. It assaults the eyes and ears on every side; television, radio, music, and advertising is so thoroughly saturated that even worldly people are complaining about it. This generation can truly be said to worship the cult of the female body.

Almost invariably, a new product introduced on the market is first advertized by some seductively clad woman. Physical impurity is the cursed sin of our day. The ungodly, unnatural obsession of our society with sex is the root of many of the social problems we are now having to meet. Satan has always worked through nakedness or suggestive dress. There is absolutely no question but what he has designed this gradual breaking down of inhibitions, especially on the part of women. Sights and sound which would have shocked the most carnal people a few years ago don't even cause any alarm now in the saints of God. The stage has been set, conditions have been created which mark this as the final moment before Jesus comes.

My friends, we don't have to look far to know exactly how God looks upon these conditions. If some of the complacent, compromising Christians of today would take a look in the Bible, they would know how God considers this matter of immodest dress. I want you to notice from the Word of God that one of the first things He did after sin came into the world was to clothe the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Oh yes, they tried to clothe themselves first of all, because they were ashamed and realized that they were naked. But let's read the account as it is in Genesis 3:7: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

Notice what the margin of the Bible says concerning those aprons; "Things to gird about." Now friends, if you wanted to come right down to it, I suppose we could say that this was the first example of topless dress, because this is apparently what it was. It was a kind of apron that wrapped around and covered only a part of the body.

But this was not sufficient, and God did not approve it, because in verses 20 and 21 we find God coming to them and saying, "Unto Adam and also unto his wife, the Lord made coats of skin and clothed them." Now we have found in the same chapter two descriptions of the original dress that was made for Adam and Eve after they sinned. They designed for themselves certain clothes that were mere aprons, but God came along later and made coats for them so they were completely covered.

There, friends, you have a perfect example of what pleases the Lord. If you want to know what Satan's program is, as far as clothes are concerned, go into some of the heathen lands of the world. The farther back you go into the bush country and jungles, you find people who are wearing nothing. After he gets

Death of Modesty

control of an individual, one of the first things Satan does is to try to get him to take his clothes off. The proof for this is found in Luke 8:27 concerning the poor man who had been possessed of a devil. Jesus had come to the land of the Gadarenes to visit, and the text says: "When he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." The devil had full possession of this man's faculties and he had taken off all his clothes.

Now go down to the 35th verse and read about this man after Jesus cast out the devils. "Then they went out to see what was done: and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid." Just as soon as this poor man had been delivered from the influence of evil spirits, immediately he put on his clothes again. What a tremendous example of what God would have us do in seeking to live for Him and serve Him! When the Holy Spirit dwells in an individual, he is going to be possessed of the high principles of true modesty. Now it is true that we were created male and female, but God expects us, having become conscious of the fact, to clothe our bodies as inconspicuously as possible. If we want men to see the image of God in our faces, we will have to keep our bodies clothed.

Some voices have been bold enough to speak up from certain quarters about the disgraceful situation, but actually very, very few Christian voices are speaking very loudly about it. Here is a statement from the American Quarterly of Papal Documents: "The current mode of dress constitutes a serious offense against decency and decency as a companion of modesty and in whose company chastity herself is safer."

Greek Orthodoxy has spoken indirectly through its organized youth. The secular press states that an attempt was made to stage a popular bathing beauty contest in Athens. Cries of "Shame, shame!" from the Orthodox youth actually caused the contest to be called off. It's too bad we don't have enough strong Christian young people in this country to exercise such bold influence for good.

The feeble, low voice of Protestantism has scarcely been heard, but there are some exceptions. The WATCHMAN EXAMINER has spoken emphatically upon the immodesty of bathing beauty contests. According to that magazine, one Baptist state assembly for years has enforced rules against the wearing of shorts and also against mixed bathing. Well, that's the way it is, friends. With a few, very few, exceptions, the issue is entirely untouched in religious circles. Criticism of the existing order is not wanted, and the existing order is that of the world.

I say it's about time for somebody to speak up. The WATCHMAN EXAMINER minces no words. Listen to this statement: "Let professing Christians drop the naive assumption that the bare body no longer rouses a response in the minds of the opposite sex, or the equally naive assumption that if the body does arouse such response, it is the legitimate and harmless thing to do." Having admitted that here is an issue, every Christian now can have a part in striving to rectify the wrong. Knowing that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, we can keep from wantonly exposing them to public view. Let those who have seen this insidious change take place help our young people to formulate standards that are consistent with their Christian profession.

I say that it's time for our pulpits to break the unholy silence that has allowed modern undress to be adopted by a large part of the constituency of our church. Let us hear some sermons from Revelation 16:15, "Blessed is he that keepeth his garment lest he walk naked and they see his shame." Let the religious press help to stem the tide that is now flowing against the restraints of proper dress standards. The history of moral movement shows that public opinion in its tolerance of evil has swung like a pendulum and that an awakened conscience in the church can start the swing toward the right in any issue. Let's no longer leave this issue untouched.

Death of Modesty

Friends, the problem for the Christian becomes very simple when one spiritual principle is kept in mind. We find that principle in Ephesians 5:10 (20th Century Translation); "Always be trying to find out what best pleases the Lord." When we search the Bible constantly to discover the way He would have us go, there will be modesty and circumspection in the way we walk. God wants us to be neat, clean, and well appearing. There is nothing wrong with being in style as long as the styles are in harmony with the principles of modesty laid down in God's Word. But when the current fashions of the world depart from the principles of true modesty as revealed by God, then the true Christian must stand firmly and independently for that which is true and right.

May God help you to do that as you seek to find from His Holy Word what pleases the Lord.