Woman, What Is This That Thou Hast Done?

By Carl Ballestero

Gen. 3:13

In the early dawn of man's day, it was the woman who took the lead and led man into sin. Since that time, laws and customs have influenced and affected not just the people of God but also the world, and for many years the man played the dominant role in the drama of sin. But now, on the eve of the Lord's return, we once again see the woman taking the lead on the broad way to hell.

As a Pentecostal minister, I would be the first to rise to the defense of Godly women, whose integrity and virtue are, according to the wise man, far above rubies. Nor do I condone any person who makes it his habit to direct his sermon to women alone. Yet, in a day when man has become so shamelessly corrupt and vile, I must search and see what rectors contribute to his downfall. I am convinced that one reason for the sorry condition of today's man is that foolish women, consciously or unconsciously, dress and act in such a way as to appeal to his base instincts and passions. It is no secret that much emphasis is placed today upon sex, and that dress designers put together their garments neither for beauty nor utility, but for sex appeal. It follows, then, that improper dress throws a monkey wrench in man's moral machinery.

When will people wake up? When our love for a thing becomes intense, we either do not regard or are not conscious of other things about us, harmless or otherwise. After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they were naked and made an attempt to cover themselves. Looking at the sea of bare arms, bare legs, dresses six inches above the knees and half bare breasts, I am reminded of what one young man said when he had witnessed just such a scene: "It seems to me, somebody ought to pass the apples again!"

Today's woman, with the low neck and low-back dress, with no sleeves and the hemline way above the knee, ought not to set the pattern or be the example for our girls and our wives to imitate. The modern, yellow fingered, cigarette-smoking, cocktail drinking female is a far cry from the woman God made. She most certainly bears no resemblance to the model woman and Bible pattern for all Church-goers--Abraham's wife, Sarah. Women have gone away from God's ordinances. They have demanded their freedom and have it. They asked for equal rights and now hold positions formerly obtainable only by men. They have learned to be independent of men. She works, she votes, she strikes, she dresses and acts like a man on the one hand, then undresses to embarrass both ladies and men. She has no time for rearing
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willingly walks down a wrong road. Her moral nature seems to be made of wax instead of flint. The devil shapes her at his will just as a woman kneads her dough. The least temptation along the line of fashion seems to engulf and bear her away.
The twentieth century Eve invites all others to join her in tasting of the forbidden fruit. Her temptations have succeeded in capturing the youth of our land. America walks on pretty thin ice when some of our colleges endorse scandalous attire and improper moral behavior, as our current newspapers point out. We are definitely in trouble when grandma wears a mini-skirt. We have gone too far as a nation when lewdness and nudeness are permitted and sometimes encouraged in the restaurant, in the theater, on our beaches and now in the living room on the television set.

Consider for a moment the case of modern women. Not even among the most degraded beasts of the field is there a thing so perverted. We cannot find among any of the animals a search after lust in itself and for itself. Purity is a natural and a sacred thing, but the fallen woman of today has lost it. She is proud of her impurity and points without a blush to her sinful wardrobe. She has chosen each garment with great care. It is her desire and her design that evil eyes rivet themselves on her every movement, and that sensual and rotten men dip the paintbrush of their thoughts into the colors of evil imagination and place suggestive and forbidden scenes on the walls of memory.

But you say, "Thoughts like that have never entered my mind." You think to excuse yourself by implying that one who would dare accuse today's women of such things must himself be morally deprived. Yes, the devil is always glad when he hears that answer. Gentlemen, whether in or out of the Church, must always salute a good woman. That is what keeps a home and a country together. You can find many instances where children have turned out right even though the father went wrong. But when the influence of a Godly or even a decent mother is absent from that home, the only road left is downhill all the way.

Ours is a time when the unsaved are not satisfied with the normal pattern of sinning, but are experimenting in new and forbidden fields of unspeakable shame. Many species of birds are faithful to one mate, season after season. The higher tribes of monkeys select one companion. Savage tribes designate the age at which their young couples may marry, but the woman of today holds no regard for the marriage vow.

It is an evident fact that among all the lower animals, there is no female creature that can even be remotely likened to a fallen woman. We once used the word "fallen" when we had a prostitute in mind, but today there are many who have chosen to walk that road, which, though it may at first appear harmless, will surely lead one to where the signs point.

Paul said he had "finished his course." He also mentioned another course--"according to the course of this world." Final destinations are determined by the course taken. Sin, like a powerful river, follows its crooked, ever-widening, ever-darkening, course to the lost sea of eternity, carrying helpless wretches in its maddening rush. And decent sinners, along with many church members--who from all outward appearances have some semblance of character and proper intentions--
not long after the launch of their frail human craft upon this savage river, find it driven by powerful currents and soon overturned and battered by treacherous rapids. The rush of the river never lessens and few ever leave its course. When it empties into that black and awful ocean of eternal despair, everyone and everything in it is forever defiled and forever ruined.

Just as in Hosea’s day, tens of thousands are being "destroyed for lack of knowledge." I realize that many do not wish to face up to the truth, and that the person who unMASKs the sources of spiritual and moral destruction will not be very popular, but it is still better to obey God rather than man. The man God uses must not be afraid of public opinion.

It is true that we are living in perilous times, but the Church has come through some very trying times. In fact, it seems to thrive on persecution. The danger we face today is moral decay within. We who stand behind the pulpit must not become "dumb dogs" that cannot bark. Perhaps the notes on our new buildings are so high, we dare not step on anyone's toes, for fear they will go to the other church across town. It just might be that the minister over there "has such a nice spirit." (Especially so, if he doesn't say anything on the subject of holiness.) There has to be something wrong with a spirit, not of the man who preaches holiness, but of the greedy minister, who, with dollar signs in his eyes, looks at a saint in terms of money, and asks no questions where they came from or why, but seeks only a large membership that will support him well.

The struggle today is the contest between the man who is spiritual and the man who is carnal. It is a battle between Isaac and Ishmael, between those who truly belong to the Apostolic message and those who do not. All of our church problems can be traced to this very source. Worldliness is simply "the lust of the flesh" having its way, and when church folk make provision for the flesh, they will eventually fulfill the lusts thereof. Our lives are going to be dominated by either the flesh or the Spirit. That is the reason why some are picking up the cast-off and neglected trumpet of warning and sending forth clear and certain sounds these days. They have been accused of assuming the position of self appointed guardians of the faith. Other have been accused of constantly preaching the "clothesline" message. In fact, it was said of one minister, that he preached on clothes so much that he had lint on his lungs.

That brings us to another point. Don't ridicule the person who feels God would have him take his stand for holiness, either the inward or the outward kind. Have you ever considered that he might be keeping the wrath of God off you as well as himself because of his obedience? I have actually had ministers laugh aloud when I merely read certain scriptures on the subject of holiness and ornamentation when in a fellowship meeting. But is holiness really that funny? The only time some people even mention the subject is in a joking manner. Anything that the Bible declares we cannot get to heaven without is not a laughing matter at all.
The desire for self-decoration is seen in all classes and all races of people both today and throughout the centuries. Not only the rich, who could afford costly luxuries, but even the most humble of all people, destitute of what we term the essentials of life—even these people take great pleasure in ornaments. To the pagan mind, nothing is more fascinating that a glittering and colorful bauble to hang on the body. Feathers, beads, bone, flowers, necklaces, anklets, shells, ear, nose and finger rings—all are used by the heathen to decorate the body.

"Woman, what is this that thou hast done?" Have you acquired the habit of the heathen? Since when have earrings, finger rings, bracelets, gold chains, charms, ankle chains, necklaces, trinkets, broaches, neck and shoulder pins and clasps come to be understood as essential articles of clothing? They do not add one thing to your intelligence or to your beauty. In fact, they tend to made one appear stupid. I have seen all of these ornaments proudly worn within the confines of our group. I realize that some would not think of adorning themselves with certain of the aforementioned items, but remember, if you will but leave a small root to remain, such as a wedding band, all of the these other things will soon grow back again. They all come from the same tree.

Why wear your jewelry? Certainly not because it happens to be comfortable or convenient. It cannot protect a person, unless you regard it as an amulet or charm, and then of course, it would be in the idol category. Your finger ring does not even protect you. In fact, the sinner does not care whether you are married or not. It will be the attitude and proper behavior of Godly women that will make a flirting man keep his distance and not a little ring. And why is it that you will permit the wedding band and condemn those who wear earrings or pearls? What is the difference? You say you wear it to remind you of your marriage vow? I would hope you had more than a little piece of metal to remind you of your obligation. What about the girl who goes to college and never marries, wouldn’t it be all right for her to wear her class ring to remind her of her training? You wear it, you say, because it was given to you by your dear old grandmother? She probably gave you the lie of the trinity doctrine, too. Did you keep that?

What have you done, woman? Where were you when they were preaching on this subject years ago? If they were not doing so, then you had better become acquainted with Pentecost in a hurry. Where were you when your daughter came home from the store with all those brand-new worldly clothes? How can you stand to testify in the house of God when you have so-willingly sacrificed your children on the altars of fashion and worldliness? You offered slight if any protest when that boy of yours began to grow a beard and bangs and trembled at a bar of soap. Didn’t you notice that his hair was not properly combed and that it seemed as if he needed a shoe horn to get into his trousers? And what about that girl of yours with her slacks so tight they looked as though they had been painted on with a spray gun? Where were you when she started in high school and was told that she had to wear abbreviated apparel during the gym exercises? What has happened to your
convictions? If you intend to have any at all, don't forget there will always be a price to pay for them.

I feel sure that any dedicated pastor would be pleased to help any of his flock to take a stand for holiness. Of course, there are those who permit slacks, shorts, slim jims, and swimming suits—not only among their members, but in the parsonage. I wonder why they even bother to go to church at all, because they will never be saved by ignoring what the Lord has said was essential. Some folks would not recognize truth and holiness if it walked in the front door of the church.

Woman, I ask you in God's Name to stop it now. Stop following the ways of the pagan world. Stop it before you drive your husband to wayward paths and influence your children to sin so deeply and so frequently that you will never be able to hold your head up again. Don't say that it does not affect you at all, that your conscience is clear in the matter. Consider those who you may influence to sin: can they stop? Perhaps you have noticed them being absent from God's house lately? Why not rather dedicate your life to spirituality instead of worldliness? Worldliness dulls the edge of modesty and spoils the glory of Christian womanhood.

Don't wait for someone else to raise the standard. Start with yourself, in your own home. Let your hair grow. If you cannot find proper clothes for yourself and your children at the stores, then learn how to sew and make your own clothes.

Finally, consider the passage in I Peter 3:3: "Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel..." The word "adorning" as used here means "world." What world are you trying to live in? The world of fashion, of decoration or pleasure? If your heart is there, you will find small and perishable rewards of compensation; but if your heart is on the promises of God and you walk according to His Word, the Bible declares that your treasure is in heaven. Wait for it, and don't settle for less.