

God's Covering Glory (Dress Reform)

Scripture reading: Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

God's covering glory is inseparably connected with the words of 1 Corinthians 10:31.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

These words, Give God the glory in whatever you do, are what the first angel's message is about (Revelation 14:6-7). The everlasting gospel is presented and then it says, *Fear God, and give glory to him*. Whatever you do, give Him the glory. God's glory is His character. To give Him the glory we are to uplift His character. There are many aspects of His character, His glory. There are many facets to this subject of glory. The scripture of Isaiah makes an interesting point. In the darkness in which we dwell in these last days we are told to arise and shine, because our light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

The glory of God is to be seen upon us. That is something to think about. In the midst of the darkness which is described in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 – a darkness of relationship anomalies, a peril of relationships, with people being full of themselves, incontinent, and disobedient to parents. Amid this darkness of human depravity, there is something else about glory.

Philippians 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly,

The food that people eat is to satisfy and worship their god, their belly. We are to be different to that.

Philippians 3:19 ... and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Whose glory is in their shame – in this peril, in this darkness. That is what Jesus said, If the light that is in you, if what you are glorying in, is darkness, how great is that darkness! These people in these last days, in these perilous times, their darkness is so great because they *glory* in their shame. This is the atmosphere that surrounds us and that we have grown up in. When I reflect on the writings of E.G. White as she identifies the darkness of her day, I think to myself, If she lived after the Second World War, what would she write then? And we have grown up in that.

In the prevailing atmosphere about us that we have grown up in, we have been conditioned to the exposure of people glorying in their shame, and we need an illumination that will be opposite to that which we have been conditioned to.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels.

The bridegroom and the bride are gloriously covered in their day of wedding. It is this glory, to be clothed with garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, that we need to understand in reference to the prevailing influences that we are exposed to in the world we live. In this divine hour we want to consider the robe of righteousness – the robe of glory.

For God to illuminate us in reference to the robe that is glory, we want to understand the different facets of this. We know already that the robe of righteousness, the garments of salvation, is what is meant in this scripture. God deals with the covering of our sinful character by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Zechariah we read the story of Joshua standing before God with filthy garments, and he is covered with new garments. It is the garments of character, of glory, that he is covered with – changing his ways, walking in the ways of God instead of his ways, which is referring to us not walking in our own ways, but in the ways of God – and if we will walk in His way we will be prepared to walk amongst all those that stand by in the heavenly glory.

In the sanctuary message God gave to the Hebrews the indication of what is to Him the covering of glory.

The Covering of Glory

Exodus 28:2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

The garments for the priests were identified by God to Moses as garments that are holy – *holy garments, for glory and for beauty.*

Exodus 28:40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.

Garments for glory, holy garments.

Exodus 28:42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

Glory to cover nakedness. We are thankful for the Spirit of Prophecy, because here is something interesting about God's attitude to clothing:

There should be no carelessness in dress. For Christ's sake, whose witnesses we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. {6T 96.2}

Mark these thoughts. *For Christ's sake*, we should make the best of our appearance.

In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. {Ibid.}

God has a preference in reference to the dress of those who serve Him. Their garments are to be like Aaron's – symbolic.

So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. {Ibid.}

In the dress reform sometimes we make a lot of modesty and purity, but not very much of neatness. This is part of God's preference – neat clothing.

But the word of God gives no sanction to the making of changes in apparel merely for the sake of fashion, that we may appear like the world. Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments. {Ibid.}

The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. {6T 96.3}

What is this saying? We need to carefully consider the dressing subject to understand what the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body.

All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel. {Ibid.}

You can see that to give God the glory, and for the glory of God to be seen upon us, our clothing has to do with it, so that when people see us, God's glory will be seen upon us.

Having already learned that God's glory is His character, how is this glory manifest upon Him, so that then we can get the appreciation of how it is to be seen upon us?

God's Covering Glory

Psalm 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

Clothed with what? Glory – honour, majesty.

Psalm 104:2 Who coverest [thyself] with light as [with] a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who coverest Thyself – this is our subject, God’s covering glory. His garment is honourable and majestic. What is it? A light that covers Him. When Isaiah looked into the throneroom of heaven, this is what he saw:

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

The margin reads, *His skirts filled the temple*. He covers Himself with light, a robe. As Isaiah looks at that scene and he sees the glory of God, the covering of God in light, and the angels worshipping there, notice what he says:

Isaiah 6:5 Then said I, Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

When you behold the glory of God and what He has covered Himself in, in all its reality and enormity, you will feel like Isaiah. Oh, I can see myself as an unclean person. This is the kind of meditation that is essential for us as we consider what is God’s preference for us in our attire and garments. An external manifestation of God’s glory, of God’s character, is His garment. He is covered with light as with a garment. It is an honourable garment. He covers Himself with glory. The external manifestation of God and of human beings who want to give Him glory, is very much interconnected.

Dress an Index of the Heart

Dress is an index of the mind and heart. That which is hung upon the outside is the sign of what is within. {1MCP 289.2}

God’s character is within Him. What He covers Himself with is a sign of what is on the inside. So it is with us. If we are going to give God the glory, then His glory is going to be seen upon us. What is on the inside will be reflected by the garment we wear, the covering. This is what we read in Isaiah 60:1, 2, My glory will be seen upon you; because what is inside of us will be seen on the outside of us. Therefore whatever you eat, or drink, or *dress*, or whatever else you do, do it to God’s glory – His character.

You want to glorify God? You want to honour Him?

In dress, as in all things else, it is our privilege to honor our Creator. He desires our clothing to be not only neat and healthful, but appropriate and becoming. {3SM 241.1}

He desires it. In our meditation of God's glory, and of how He manifests His glory in His covering, we see that God desires this for His creatures, those that were made in His image. He desires our clothing to honour Him by being neat, healthful, appropriate, becoming, and modest.

We are seeking to grasp in our mind God's desire, God's glory, in reference to what we hang upon our body. For all who receive God's word, who open their hearts to receive that word, what is that word actually communicating?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word is Jesus. It is the word that comes to us in written form, but it is more than just words on a page. As we receive that word, the words on the page, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what is our experience?

The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. {COL 38.1}

This word of God has a germinating principle.

In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

God's glory, His character. As we receive the word we receive the character of God inwardly, and it is to grow like a plant. It is to germinate and grow.

Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God. {COL 38.2}

As we read and study God's word, it is to germinate and produce in us the character of God, and grow as the character and life of God. The reception of God's character, God's glory, will be manifest externally, including in the dress. It can't be separated. The following quote helps us to see how the Spirit of Prophecy actually shows the dress and the character connected, and how the dress, if it is not according to God's design, is going to affect my character.

It is a shame to our sisters to so forget their holy character and their duty to God as to imitate the fashions of the world. {4T 641.1}

The holy character that we have been given by receiving the word – it is a shame to forget that holy character as we imitate, in any way, the fashions of the world.

There is no excuse for us except the perversity of our own hearts. {Ibid.}

Think about we are reading here. My heart is desperately wicked; I have a heart that needs to be continually purified and cleansed. And if I focus and pay attention to that which I am exposed to in this dark age where people glory in their shame, then as I accept the glorying of the fashions of the world, the glorious character that I have and that has been given to me through the word, I will forget.

We do not extend our influence by such a course. It is so inconsistent with our profession of faith that it makes us ridiculous in the eyes of worldlings. {Ibid.}

The people in the world know that when we dress the way that God wants us to, that is genuine Christianity. If the Christian claims to be a Christian and dresses like the world, it makes him ridiculous in their eyes.

My sisters, your dress is telling either in favor of Christ and the sacred truth or in favor of the world. Which is it? Remember we must all answer to God for the influence we exert. {4T 641.4}

As we were singing,

*Father, lead me day by day,
Ever in Thine own sweet way;
Teach me to be pure and true;
Show me what I ought to do.*

Adam and Eve's Covering

What was it with Adam and Eve when God created them in His own image? He said, “*Let us make man in our image.*” When God created man He created him and covered him as He Himself is covered. This is written in Genesis. God’s design of glory is played out here:

Genesis 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Most people think, Well, then on the pictures we’ll put them naked in the Garden of Eden. But while they were naked in regards to not having any physical clothing, God covers Himself with light as with a garment; so what did He do with Adam and Eve?

As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. ... The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; {PP 45.3}

This is what is meant by, *they were both naked*. They wore no artificial garments.

...they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear [and God Himself]. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them. {Ibid.}

Now you can get the picture of what Isaiah saw when God was upon His throne and His skirts filled the temple – He was *enshrouded* in light. These words are carefully inspired to give us the correct appreciation: there is an enshrouding of the body so that nakedness is not revealed. We know well what happened after the fall. That light departed from them. And they suddenly saw, We are naked. What did God do for them?

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

God Himself covered them according to His understanding of glory and covering; not the way that we see it on the pictures. You know this semi lap-lap kind of thing that we see Adam and Eve wearing on the pictures. No, they were coats of skins that enshrouded them from their shoulders to their feet. The clothing that God provided for Adam and Eve after the fall is for us to examine, because the same God also provides covering for us. He provided for them a covering, and He provides for us His children a covering. He speaks to us today to make us understand what His covering is; but not only in the Bible, because people seem to read the Bible and interpret it according to their own concepts. So God has made provision for this darkness in which we live. God, being particular about His people in these last days, speaks to help us understand all the different points and especially this one today.

God's Provision for These Last Days

Jesus is here speaking to Sister White whom He has chosen to be His messenger:

My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. "Your work," He instructed me, "is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and with pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. I will make My Word open to you. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you. {1SM 32.2}

Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil." {1SM 32.3}

Because of what? *The seductive influences of evil.* We have been surrounded by the seductive influences of evil today. It is now three, four generations after Sr. White's time, and people have

drifted under the seductive influences. So what will the things written in the books do? They will correct us if we are interested to hear, or they will condemn us. The God who provided the covering for Adam and Eve is speaking to us today to provide us with the covering we should have to give God the glory.

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

What does modest mean? In the original the words *modest apparel* read: *flowing garments*. This is the same concept to the skirts that cover God, the light that enshrouds Him. Women are told to wear a modest apparel – an enshrouding. In the Spirit of Prophecy we are told that the garment should be so upon the body that whatever position you find yourself in, you will always be modestly covered. Whether you're bending over, whether you're walking high on a ladder; whatever position you are in, your nakedness will always be covered. That is modest. This is meaning of modesty.

Detailed Counsels on Dress

There are certain details that God has delineated for the sake of the people in these times in which we live. I want to emphasise very firmly here for whoever hears these messages that I am sharing, These are not my ideas! This is not my opinion. This is the way we read it, and it is God's direction that we are seeking to follow. If anyone ever says, It's what John says; remind them that I am just reading. It is not what John says. It is God to whom we have been singing, *Father, have Thine own sweet way; show me what I ought to do*. The following quote is a mere excerpt, but you can read the whole article in Testimonies Vol. 1, pp.456-465. Sr. White says in many places that women's limbs should be as well covered as men's. Today, in this modern society, you see men dressed with their sleeves and trousers, covered, but the woman is always uncovered somewhere. That is why there is address made on this in the Spirit of Prophecy.

“The form should not be compressed in the least with corsets and whalebones. The dress should be perfectly easy that the lungs and heart may have healthy action. The dress should reach somewhat below the top of the boot, but should be short enough to clear the filth of the sidewalk and street without being raised by the hand. A still shorter dress than this would be proper, convenient, and healthful for women when doing their housework, and especially for those who are obliged to perform more or less out-of-door labor. With this style of dress, one light skirt, or two at most, is all that is necessary, and this should be buttoned on to a waist, or suspended by straps. ... I do not speak unadvisedly when I say that the way in which women clothe themselves, together with their indulgence of appetite, is the greatest cause of their present feeble, diseased condition. There is but one woman in a thousand who clothes her limbs as she should. Whatever may be the length of the dress, their limbs should be clothed as thoroughly as are the men's. ... The limbs and ankles thus clothed are protected against a current of air. If the feet and limbs are kept comfortable with warm clothing, the circulation will be equalized, and the blood will remain pure and healthy because it is not chilled or hindered in its natural passage through the system.” {1T 460.3}

This is of course in reference to the cold atmosphere, and when it is hot there is also something written in reference to that, so that there is still covering, but in such a way that the air can cool us. It says that, “*The dress should reach somewhat below the top of the boot;*” but yet it should be short enough not to trail the ground. Think about what is written here, that it should reach somewhat below the top of the boot.

We cannot, if we would, conceal the fact that women have feet and limbs that were made for use. But in regard to the exposure, this is on the other side of the question. We have traveled extensively the past twenty-five years, and have been eye-witnesses to many indecent exposures of the limbs. {HR, May 1, 1872 par. 18}

Follow carefully what under Inspiration is the indecent exposure of the limbs:

But the most common exposure is seen upon the streets in light snow, or wet and mud. Both hands are required to elevate the dress, that it may clear the wet and filth. It is a common thing to see the dress raised one-half of a yard, exposing an almost unclad ankle to the sight of gentlemen, but no one seems to blush at this immodest exposure. {*Ibid.*}

An almost unclad ankle.

No one’s sensitive modesty seems shocked for the reason that this is customary. It is fashion, and for this reason it is endured. No outcry of immodesty is heard, although it is so in the fullest sense. {*Ibid.*}

I can still hear the mocking people of my age when they made fun of the sisters who had longer dresses. They would say, “Oh, be careful now, don’t expose your ankle. That’s immodest, isn’t it?” They would scoff. I used to think to myself, Where does that come from? Here we see it. Because in those days they had their dresses so long that they didn’t expose the ankles, but then of course they had to raise it high and uncover themselves in order to clear the filth of the streets, as we have just read. Sr. White says that the skirt must never be lifted up to expose a partially unclad ankle. All that they had underneath was what is written here:

I inquire, Is it reasonable, or even modest, to see the limbs of your daughters exposed, to the bend of the knee, without any covering, except a cotton stocking in summer, and flannel, in winter? Why should not mothers clothe their daughters sensibly, modestly, and healthfully, irrespective of prevailing fashions? {HR, November 1, 1870 par. 6}

What was the limb covered by? A cotton stocking, or flannel in the winter – that is immodest. What are we reading here? What is immodesty in reference to the length of the dress? If the ankle becomes exposed with just a cotton stocking, or a cotton sock, that is immodest. That is the reason why the dress is to come a little below the top of the boot. She discusses this very clearly in her counsels. If you read it in its context, she didn’t mean the boot of a man, up to his knee, but the gaiter-boot, or the boot of a woman. The understanding of *gaiter* is that they had their shoes and then they had a leather thing that was attached to the shoes and lifted it up; so her statement that the dress needed to come down below the top of the gaiter was so that the ankle

was covered in the public view. In this lies the issue. A dress must come to a certain length that you can identify from God's inspiration.

Not that I have ever taught in the past that a woman has to wear boots. But I have shown from God's word that, if the dress is to come just a little below the top of the boot, then it will be the right length to cover the ankles. So if people are not going to wear boots, but shoes, where does the length of the dress have to come? Can you see the rationale from God here? So if you wear shoes only, then to cover the ankle the dress has to come a little below the top of the shoe. How close to the ground would that be? This is the counsel from God; not man.

If we are going to wear clothing to cover the ankles, then wear what you can so that the dress doesn't become too long.

Colours and Patterns

The colours and patterns of our dresses are also given by inspiration. I thank God that Jesus doesn't leave anything without clarification.

Taste should be manifested as to colors. Uniformity in this respect is desirable as far as convenient. Complexion, however, may be taken into account. Modest colors should be sought for. {CG 420.2}

What? *Modest colours should be sought for.* What does that mean? Colours that don't draw attention to the body.

When figured material is used, figures that are large and fiery, showing vanity and shallow pride in those who choose them, should be avoided. And a fantastic taste in putting on different colors is bad. {Ibid.}

If you have a dress, or a pair of trousers, or a trousers and suit, and there are flaring colours that draw attention to yourself, that is bad. "*A fantastic taste is putting on different colors is bad.*" The colours should blend, so that everything is in such a way that attention is not drawn to the person, but that the person is covered modestly with colour and taste. This is the way it is written.

Correct taste is not to be despised or condemned. Our faith, if carried out, will lead us to be so plain in dress and zealous of good works that we shall be marked as peculiar. But when we lose taste for order and neatness in dress, we virtually leave the truth; for the truth never degrades but elevates. {CG 419.6}

We are asking God, not man, no human being, What is the "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to dress? and here we have His preference.

Tight Clothing

This is another subject. What is said in regards to tight clothing?

We object to the fashionable style of woman's dress ... because, under certain circumstances, it is, to say the least, not the most modest, on account of exposures of the female form. This evil is greatly aggravated by the wearing of hoops. {HR, August 1, 1868 par. 18-19}

Hoops was just one thing. Now we don't look at the fashion of that day, we look at the fashions of today. God's objection to the fashionable styles of woman's dress is when there is an exposure of the female form. Under God's tuition, as God provided the garments for Adam and Eve, we are seeing here the provision that God has given to us, so that the human form and the nakedness of the body is enshrouded.

Male and Female Clothing

The scripture of Deuteronomy is very clear when it comes to the difference between male and female clothing.

Deuteronomy 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.

God has a preference. He feels urky when women and men exchange their kind of clothing.

In wide contrast with this modest dress is the so-called American costume, resembling very nearly the dress worn by men. It consists of a vest, pants, and a dress resembling a coat and reaching about halfway from the hip to the knee. {1T 465.1}

That's a suit coat like mine. The description here is that of a pantsuit that women wear. That's the American costume. And that, according to the Spirit of Prophecy, is an abomination to God.

"I saw that God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded, by those who adopt the American costume. I was referred to Deuteronomy 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.' God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress. It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ. {1T 457.1}

A pantsuit.

God's Preference

God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. {6T 96.2}

God has a preference. This is no human preference. This is God's preference.

We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. {6T 96.3}

We want to give God the glory. We want to manifest to Him our willingness to submit to His appreciations. Therefore, to give God the glory includes responding to His appreciation of dress.

The people of God should not imitate the fashions of the world. All who do this... {RH, April 8, 1880 par. 5}

What will happen as we slip over into the fashions and expectations of the world?

All who do this will gradually lose that peculiar, holy character which should distinguish them as God's people. {Ibid.}

Glory – *that holy character*. As we begin to slip into anything that is not the revelation of God, but the fashion and the custom of the world, then we will gradually lose that peculiar and holy character which should distinguish us as God's people.

In these last days some of the fashions are shameful and immodest. If God's professed people had not greatly departed from him, there would now be a marked difference between their dress and that of the world. We are living in a time when earth's inhabitants are growing more and more corrupt, and the line of distinction must be more plain between them and the Israel of God, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall on God's professed people. {Ibid.}

In considering the glory of God in His covering, may we pick up on this challenge in these last moments of earth's history to be identified with the angel of Revelation 18, the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

The earth was lightened – the glory of God will be seen upon you.

You must remember that this angel represents the people that have this message to give to the world. Are you among that people? {RH, August 18, 1885 par. 14}

The glory of God is seen upon them. May we not lose sight of the glory of God, His character that has been implanted in us through His word, and that then is to be reflected in the way we

dress, because the dress is the index of what is in the heart. If the character of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the dress. This is my prayer that we will do all to the glory of God.