God's Way of Dress in the Sanctuary – Part 1

In studying the sanctuary we are actually studying God's way. And His ways are different to our ways. To help our minds grasp what the sanctuary is actually trying to teach us, we read the words of the psalmist as he is exonerating the Lord,

Psalms 63:1 O God, thou [art] my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 To see thy power and thy glory, so [as] I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

David wants to see His power and His glory as he has seen Him in the sanctuary, and then he reflects on that by saying,

Psalms 63:3 Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

What a statement, thy lovingkindness is better than life. It is this glory of God that he wants to see, the glory of God's character. This is what we are focusing on in the sanctuary.

Psalms 77:13 Thy way, O God, [is] in the sanctuary: who [is so] great a God as [our] God?

A High Way to Travel

We identify this way. What is it called? Thy way, O God, thy glory, O God. Thy way, thy character. Here it brings out the way, and it is identified here as a high way, a way to travel.

Isaiah 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it [shall be] for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err [therein].

The way of God, as it is distinctive in the sanctuary, is the way of holiness. As we come to this subject of not erring in that way of holiness in reference to dress, is there something in the sanctuary which has to do with dress and which reflects the way of holiness? If you were standing on the outside of the courtyard, and you were looking at the sanctuary, you wouldn't be able to see into the sanctuary, it was all surrounded by white linen. The sanctuary had to do with us, the very throne room of God. Our body is the sanctuary. And in the body sanctuary the brain, the frontal lobe, is the second apartment. The rear part of the brain where the intellectual areas are, is the first apartment. The message has to travel from the intellectual into the frontal lobe, where the throne of God is to rule. That is where the heart of man is to be ruled from. The body was actually the courtyard. Around the courtyard is a white linen so that you can't see into the courtyard, or into the sanctuary. The sanctuary itself was covered over with different veils and skins so that you couldn't see into the sanctuary. There you have a vivid display of God's way of covering the sanctuary, which is a symbol of covering our body. This is a demonstration of

God's way of dress, so that what was behind that white linen could not be seen. But there is something even higher than that observation in the sanctuary. That is what was given to the priests. As we look at the priests in Leviticus, we see that the instruction was given to them, because they were to represent God's way.

The Priests of the Sanctuary

Leviticus 10:9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; 11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Where in the sanctuary do we receive the understanding of God's way? It is from the priests. They were called upon to behave in such a way so that they don't drink wine or strong drink so they can clearly represent God's way of holiness, to make difference between holy and unholy, and to clearly distinguish it. Therefore the priests portray and represent by their practical activity – Jesus the way. "I am the way the truth and the life, nobody comes to the Father but by me." The priests in the Old Testament, were to portray that. What does the way of dress of the priest reveal regarding God's way of dress? In this particular study, we are honing in on the very kernel of dress, not merely the external. We will go into greater detail of the external, but we are honing in on the true understanding of dress that comes from the sanctuary, the motivation of dress, the very heart message of it. It is what we have identified as holiness. God's way of *holiness* is to be considered in reference to this subject. God gave instructions in regards to the priest's garments that were to be placed upon him. We see the principle that the sanctuary service lays out before the mind, here is God's instruction for the priesthood:

Exodus 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, [even] Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

Here is our guide. God, in dealing with the dress of the priests, is going to demonstrate to the student what dress is meant to convey. Garments that are *holy*. Holy garments, for glory and for beauty. But that was not just for Aaron. There were Aaron's beautiful garments.

Exodus 28:5 And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. 6 And they shall make the ephod [of] gold, [of] blue, and [of] purple, [of] scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

When you look at the high priest there was beautiful colour on top of the white garment. That can be understood as beauty. But then God is still calling upon them to realize that Aaron's sons would wear only coats of white linen, which were also 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. 41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy [place]; that they bear not iniquity, and die: [it shall be] a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

Here you can see that the priests wore linen coats with just plain white linen with a girdle down to the feet. This was what was identified by God as garments for glory and for beauty and holiness.

Breeches

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

Under the coats there were breeches to cover their nakedness, and there was another distinction made in chapter 20. Why were they to cover their nakedness under the garments? We can see from the following scripture how God views nakedness:

Exodus 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Think about what He is saying. They were to wear these coats, and under these coats they were to wear breeches from the loins to their thighs, and still they were not go upon on the stairs because their nakedness would be revealed. You can see what God's mind is. From the top of their shoe to the breeches, the thighs, they would be naked, and that was not be seen. We are getting here a principle. That is what God calls holy garments, garments for beauty and for glory. God wants us to seek to understand what is in this for us in reference to God's way of dress.

One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. {6T 96.1}

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}

Now, in the light of what she has just said, she points to the tabernacle:

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. {Ibid.}

God actually has some very strong preferences. He says, I want you to make holy garments, I want you to make garments for my priests for beauty and for glory. According to E. G. White God has a preference in reference to those who serve Him.

Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. {6T 96.2}

What was his dress symbolic of?

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.}

Holy garments, neatness, modesty, and purity.

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}

A lot of people don't stop to think about that. They just get their clothes on and forget about it. "What's important about my dress?" God appreciates even the dressing of the body. We need to study that.

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.}

Ponder carefully about it. Even the style of dress will express the truth of the gospel. God has a preference. He has an appreciation of dress. We want to get to the bottom of that.

When he says garments that are holy, garments for beauty and for glory, we want to ask Him, Alright Lord, what is it? We are not merely talking about those who are serving God in the ministry. Some people tell me, That's alright when we come to worship God and we have to dress in the ministry like this; but notice here that it is not only the ministers who are here addressed, because every person who becomes a child of God is identified in 1 Peter 2:5. He is speaking to every believer:

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house [the sanctuary], an holy priesthood,

Have you ever stopped to realise that we are all a holy priesthood?

1 Peter 2:5 ... to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

All those who are followers of Jesus are a royal priesthood to give spiritual sacrifices to God. It is what we do that is acceptable or not acceptable to God as priests.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The priesthood is to show forth God's glory. As we are studying the Old Testament priests and the garments that God has given them, those garments were symbolic and so our dress is symbolic because we as Christians are to be those royal priests.

Let us examine a powerful statement, by which we can really appreciate what we have been covering in these scriptures:

A person's character is judged by his style of dress. {Ed 248.5}

Is that right? God's character is demonstrated by the style of dress that He has delineated to the priesthood, and the priesthood was to represent God's character. What is character? Glory. The glory of God was His lovingkindness and everything that was described when Moses said, Show me thy glory. He showed him His character.

A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils. {Ibid.}

Dress – holy, character-revealing.

It is right to love beauty and to desire it; but God desires us to love and to seek first the highest beauty—that which is imperishable. The choicest productions of human skill possess no beauty that can bear comparison with that beauty of character which in His sight is of "great price." {Ed 249.1}

The external beauty must be a representation of something higher. Garments that were really just coats of linen, plain white coats covering their nakedness in every respect, is that beautiful? Don't we usually look for beauty in something a little bit more colourful and a little bit better fitting than a coat? We have an appreciation of beauty which is not the beauty of holiness. Holiness is a character that is demonstrated by the dress we wear. We can slowly pick up the concept that God's preference of dress is not mere external glamour, it is the hidden beauty of the heart. A meek and quiet spirit is to God of great price, a character. And that character is going to be demonstrated in the dress, that meek and quiet spirit.

....a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils. {Ed 248.5}

Of course that is to be also for men, because the priests carried that as well. The linen garments have to do with character. The priests were wearing a demonstration of the character of God, for glory and for beauty. Garments of white linen are equated with something:

Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Jesus is showing to the Laodicean people that His attitude in regard to dress is that their nakedness should not appear. That is the white raiment that He is wanting them to be clothed with. That is exactly how the priests wore dress, with white coats, that their nakedness should not be revealed. Can you see how the Scriptures interact with each other? God's appreciation of dress has to do with holiness which is *covering* so that the shame of nakedness is not revealed.

God identifies again in chapter 16 how He presented it to the priests, that they should not even be up on the steps at the altar of sacrifice because that which the breeches didn't hide would be unveiled.

Don't Be Found With Your Nakedness

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

God says, Don't be found with your nakedness revealed in shame.

In the following scripture, He connects righteousness and holiness with our personal righteousness and the garment we wear. What is our righteousness equated with when we think that we are alright in what we are doing and we come to God and say, Can't I please you as I am? How does God look upon it?

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags;

If you are dressed in rags, is that beautiful? God wants us to be dressed in clothing that covers not just in certain areas, because rags are torn and dirty, and the nakedness is not properly covered. Our righteousness is connected with the clothing we wear.

Webs

People try to cover themselves, and they just do what Adam and Eve did.

Isaiah 59:6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is] in their hands.

Do you see the connection between garments and characteristic activities / works? It is inseparable in God's eyes. What you wear on the outside is an indication of what is inside. You can't separate it. A person's character is generally recognized by the garments that they were. People try to cover themselves by their own works, it is the webs that they wish to weave for their garments. Some women even have some web-like clothing. Do they think that they are covered? I can't get over the thought that people have become so conditioned to think that sheer nylon stockings are a covering, but they think it is. It is a perfect example of that, webs that will not cover them.

When God says, This is your righteousness, it is as filthy rags and you cannot cover yourselves with your webs, He comes into the life of a believer and He replaces his garments with God's garments. When God cleans up the sin out of our life and brings His beautiful character into our life, it is immediately connected with the garments.

Joshua the High Priest

Zechariah 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

Here is a priest with filthy garments, which is a symbol of sin, and God says, I'm going to take away your iniquity and as I take away your iniquity, the symbol of your iniquity is also changed. What a meditation. When we become true followers of Jesus our garments will change. This is part of God's arrangement. The garment that is for glory and for beauty and which are holy garments, are totally different to our sinful garments.

The Beautiful Glorious City Of God

Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

When God's people have been made pure, clean and righteous, the fine linen, clean and white garment that we studied in reference to the priests, is the connecting link with that. Fine linen, clean and white, is the righteousness of the saints.

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.

A Robe of Righteousness

He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. Again we see vividly that salvation is revealed by clothing. All the way through these Bible texts are communicating that. If a person is in darkness and iniquity and uncleanliness, he is partially exposed and covered with webbings and filthy rags. A person who is in the light is covered with garments of light. There is covering versus uncovering, and there is light versus darkness.

How is God Covered?

This is precisely the way it is with God. God the Creator of the universe is actually depicted in the Bible in His majesty and in His glory with a garment.

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

Holy garments?

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

When God sits upon his throne He is covered. His nakedness is not seen. Why not? Because He is covered in light. Now see how light is directly connected with His covering:

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.

His train filled the temple. The temple was filled with light, but what is the train? Like a bride with her train. In the Bible margin in the place of train it says, the skirts thereof filled the temple. His skirts, He covers Himself with light as with a garment. God's light train is His skirt and it covers the sanctuary, it is His light. That is what He is covered with, so that people couldn't see God because light was so bright around Him that He was covered. He was covered by light. In seeking to understand God's way of dress we discover the principle of His righteousness. We discovered His covering.

Eden

When He created man we discover the same principle. When you come to Genesis, you see God creating man. Remember what we have just described about God in His position.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

When God made them in His own image and He was dressed in majesty and light, would that be the same for Adam and Eve?

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

Most people read this to mean that the shame of their nakedness was there but they weren't ashamed. That's the way they think when they read that. But why were they not ashamed? If the shame of your nakedness is visible it is a shame, but they weren't ashamed. It makes common sense then that, even by the use of that language, the shame of their nakedness was not seen. Why? Because God covered Himself with light as with a garment, and if He made Adam and Eve in His own image He did the same with them.

The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them. {PP 45.3}

These words are to govern our understanding. Thou coverest me with the robe of righteousness. To be robed means to be enshrouded. Is that something that is tight or loose? It's loose, isn't it? It's not on the contours of the body. It is an enshrouding. Light enshrouded them. Here we see the majestic appreciation of God's covering. As we look at that and study it, we can correctly appreciate what clothing was afterward replaced when they sinned. When Adam and Eve sinned their sinfulness left them shameful and naked. What did they do? Now they became ashamed because the shame of their nakedness was seen. Before that they weren't ashamed because they didn't see the nakedness.

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.

Aprons, or girdles.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I [was] naked; and I hid myself.

Were they naked? When you see people nowadays with the fig leaf garment principle, they have clothes around them, but still, even though Adam and Eve made fig leaf garments, aprons, to cover themselves, they still ran away from God because they were naked. What was showing? The other parts of the body. They had not seen that before but now it was visible, so they ran and hid themselves. This is a reiteration of the principles that underlie the garments we should wear for glory, for beauty and for holiness.

When Adam and Eve had Sinned, 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.

A change of garment. Adam and Eve's sinfulness was one in which they were wearing leafy rags and God said, I will take away your iniquity from you and I will change your garment, and what did He cover them with? Coats, just like He described to Aarons sons. E. G. White writes, *mantle*, and that is the original word in German and in Hebrew. A mantle is something that goes down from your shoulders to the feet. Righteousness before the fall was light covering their body, and after the fall it was coats of skins. With all that we have been reading we appreciate what God's idea of modesty is, and when you read about modesty in the Bible you are reading God's idea, not man's interpretation. This is important because people today read everything in the Bible from their perspective instead of God's. We have been very clear here in reading from text to text exactly what God's preference is in reference to modesty. It is holiness, it is beauty. It has to do with glory of character.

Modest Apparel

In the following scripture is very important language because it has to do with holy garments, beauty and glory, and modesty.

1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 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; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Their works shall not be a covering. It has to be the works of God. It has to be His righteousness. Did you notice that there are here binding expressions? Men should pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, and in like manner. Do you see the connection? Men with holy hands and in like manner women adorn themselves in modest apparel. Can you see the linkage? Men, in holiness, like the priest, are to have holy garments, and in like manner the holiness of women, with modest apparel. This is how the Scripture becomes its own interpreter. From what we have been reading before, now we know what is meant here – holy garments, beauty and glory, a character. Modesty is qualified by God's way, by His character. A person's character is seen by the style of clothing he wears. God has demonstrated what His character is like in the clothing that He has delineated in the Scriptures. It is an enshrouding robe, with body and limbs enshrouded. Think for yourself what those words mean and appreciate what God is trying to do with us. In fact when you read in the scripture, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, in the original language it says, that women adorn themselves in flowing dresses, flowing garments. It is the same principle which we have been reading all the way through. Any exposure of the human body is shame. The shame of thy nakedness. Don't make steps up onto

the altar so that the men's legs from where the breeches came down would not be exposed. Men's legs, let alone womens', it is a shame.

The Old Ways of God's People

If we want to get the message clear we should actually look at the old ways of God's people.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein].

We are to stand in the ways of life and ask which is God's way, which is the good way. Then when we find the old paths which God has established, where is the good way, we are to walk therein. Let us have a look at some old paths of the men of God and how they reacted in regards to the ways of exposure.

Isaiah 47:1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: [there is] no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

He is saying, You were tender and delicate when I worked with you, but now,

Isaiah 47:2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. 3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet [thee as] a man.

The bearing of the leg, the uncovering of the thigh is nakedness. This is the old way of understanding. As you go through the cities of today what do you see? Shame. The shame of people's nakedness and so conditioned have the people's minds become that they don't even blush at the thought.

In the following scripture, you have some men whose thighs were exposed:

2 Samuel 10:4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle,

They had coats there, and Hanun cut off the coats in the middle,

2 Samuel 10:4 ... [even] to their buttocks, and sent them away. 5 When they told [it] unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and [then] return.

Here you have a sense of shame demonstrated by these men. Their garments were like a pair of shorts on men. Their legs were exposed and that together with the ridiculous appearance of one

side shaven and the other not made them feel ashamed. There is the old way of understanding demonstrated. These are the old paths.

When Noah Was Uncovered

This is speaking of Noah:

Genesis 9:21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid [it] upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces [were] backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. 24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

His youngest son Ham came into the tent and he looked at his father's nakedness.

Genesis 9:25 And he said, Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Ham's line was a cursed line because the shame of nakedness was not regarded as shameful. It was something to gaze upon. Whereas Shem and Japheth did not look upon the nakedness of their father but put the garment on their shoulders and walked backwards so that before they looked at him he was covered. This is God's old way. This is the mentality of the good way, to cover nakedness.

When the garments were instructed to Aaron and his sons they were garments for glory and for beauty, and they were holy garments which we see vividly has to do with the true symbol of purity and holiness in the heart. In our worship of God, when it says, *Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name*, what does that mean? To hallow Him is to demonstrate His glory in our daily life. In our daily life we are to worship God, and how? Here is what God wants us to do, and we see exactly what He means. Remember the first angel's message, *Fear God, and give glory to Him*.

Psalms 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Do we see the connection? Garments that are *holy garments*. Worship the Lord *in the beauty of holiness*. Give the glory due to His name. They are to have garments that are holy garments, for glory and for beauty. Worship God, hallow Him like that.

This is the first part of our study, and there will be two more parts. That is such an important subject, which people have totally lost sight of because they do not understand the majesty of God, which is demonstrated in the covering that is part of His throne.

May God help us to tune in to this and to follow carefully the ongoing research on this subject.

Amen.