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## The Sin of Bath-sheba

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This anonymously published "Address to Christian Women" is included in this men's magazine for obvious reasons. Men need to instruct their wives and daughters concerning modesty in dress and the effects their dress has upon men. Read it carefully and be honest with yourself. Is not 90% (at least) of what this brother writes right on target? If so, we Christian husbands and fathers have a big job to do in correcting the dress of our women. Most of us will find some things in what follows to quibble over. (I don't enforce everything he suggests with my wife and girls-though I'll think about it more carefully now!) Let's listen to this appeal not in order to find points of disagreement or to practice self-justification. Let's discuss these things with our wives and daughters. Let's all ask the Lord to help us learn what honors him in the area of clothing. (This article may be freely distributed and reprinted.)

We hear a great deal about the sin of David, but seldom does anyone mention the sin of Bath-sheba. And it is true enough that David's sin was very great, and Bath-sheba's very small. David's sin was deliberate and presumptuous, Bath-sheba's only a sin of ignorance. David committed deliberate adultery and murder; Bath-sheba only carelessly and undesignedly exposed herself before David's eyes. We have no doubt that David's sin was great, and Bath-sheba's small. Yet it remains a fact that Bath-sheba's little sin was the cause of David's great sin. Her little sin of ignorance, her little thoughtless and careless exposure of herself, was the spark that kindled a great devouring flame. "Behold how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!" On the one side, only a little carelessness-only a little thoughtless, unintentional exposure of herself before the eyes of David. But on the other side, adultery and guilt of conscience; murder and the loss of a husband, besides the death in battle of other innocent men; great occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; the shame of an illegitimate pregnancy, and the death of the child; the uprising and the death of Absalom; the defiling of David's wives in the sight of all Israel; the sword never departing from David's house (2 Sam. 12:11-18). Again I say, "Behold how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!" None of this great evil would ever have taken place if Bath-sheba had only been careful to not display her body in the sight of a man. Observe: she neither designed nor foresaw any of this evil, yet she was the occasion of it all. She did not display herself purposely or wantonly: she only did it ignorantly and thoughtlessly. Yet the results of her little sin of ignorance were just the same as if it had been purposeful wantonness. Now the reason for my writing all of the above is this: there are many Christian women today who are guilty of the same carelessness as Bath-sheba was. Godly women, who would recoil with horror from the very thought of wantonly displaying their bodies, do nevertheless carelessly and thoughtlessly display themselves habitually, by the manner in which they dress. I do not write to accuse them of intentional wantonness. I believe they are as innocent of that as Bath-sheba was. But neither can I altogether excuse

them from blame in the matter. The whole world is well aware that certain kinds of feminine dress are provocative and tempting to the eyes and heart of a man-and are Christian women alone altogether naive and ignorant? This can hardly be; and yet I do not write to blame you, but to instruct you-to provoke you to love and good works, to make you thoughtful where you have been thoughtless before, to make you careful for the spiritual welfare of the weakest of your brethren, where you were careless about it before, to make you wise where before you were simple.

### **Nakedness Before Others Is Wrong**

The first thing which must be understood is that nakedness before the eyes of others is wrong. It is wrong in a man, and it is wrong in a woman. When Adam and Eve sinned, God made "coats of skins, and clothed them." The sole reason for his clothing them was to cover their nakedness, as the Genesis account makes plain. Observe, he clothed them with coats. They were already wearing aprons, which probably covered as much as, or more than, much of the clothing which is worn today, yet in spite of their aprons they were still naked in their own eyes and in God's. And God did not clothe them with shorts, or swimming suits, or tank tops, or halter tops, or anything of the sort-nor with jackets, either, but with coats, long coats, or robes as the word might properly be translated. Observe further, he clothed them with coats. He did not clothe Eve with a coat, and Adam with a pair of shorts. He clothed them both with coats-whence we may assuredly gather that nakedness is just as wrong in a man as it is in a woman. But if it is equally wrong for a man to expose his nakedness as it is for a woman, it is not equally dangerous, for the passions of women are not so easily or thoroughly aroused by the sight of a man's body-and many women affirm, that the sight does not arouse them at all. A man therefore may (though he ought not to) go three fourths naked, and not do much damage by it. But when a woman exposes herself only a little, she becomes a fiery dart to tempt the heart of every man who sees her. Like it or not, this is the plain fact. And because this is a fact, you are not at liberty to dress any way you please. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: Therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). But if you dress in such a way as to expose your body, and if you fear God and love your neighbor, your dare not use the temple of the Holy Spirit as an instrument of unrighteousness to allure the eyes and tempt the hearts and tantalize the passions of men.

Many men are wicked, and will lust after you in spite of anything you can do to prevent it. They have "eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin" (2 Pet. 2:14). Should you therefore help them to sin? Should you put further temptation in their way? Will God excuse you if you do? Other men, godly men, are not wicked, but only weak. David was not wicked. He was a man after God's own heart. But in the presence of an unclothed woman, he was weak-and it would be a rare man who was not. Your brethren in Christ are not wicked, but they may be weak. And the devil does all he can do to weaken them further. They are forced to live in a world where they are continually bombarded with sights which are designed by the enemy of their souls to weaken their morals and destroy their purity of

heart. And must Christian women help the devil to do his work? Must they make themselves a temptation to their brethren even in the Congregation of God? Oh, that you could understand the fierce and bitter conflict in the souls of your brethren, when you arouse their desires by the careless display of your feminine beauty. Oh, that you could hear their pleadings with God for help and deliverance from the power of those temptations. Oh, that you could see their tears of shame and repentance when the temptation has overcome them, and they have sinned with eyes and heart and mind. Never again would you plead for your right to dress as you please. The fact is, you have no such right. You have no right to destroy by your careless dress the brother for whom Christ died. You are bought with a price and are not your own. You are duty-bound to glorify God in your body, to clothe that body, not as you will, but as God wills. And a little real love for the souls of your brethren would remove forever from your heart the desire to dress as you please. "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell upon Me." (Rom. 15:1-3). Christ was willing to deny himself all of the glories of heaven, and bear the reproaches of the ungodly for your sake, in order to save your soul, and will you plead for your right to please yourself in your dress? Can you not deny yourself a little comfort to save another man's soul? Can you not bear a little reproach for being "old-fashioned" or "out of style," in order to help your brother in his battle against sin?

### Take a Man's Word for It

You may think I'm making too much of too little. You may suppose the case is not so serious as I have represented it to be. But consider: you are a woman and cannot experience the passions of a man. You have your own passions, but they are not the same as a man's. They are (generally speaking) not so strong as a man's. Neither are they so easily excited or inflamed as a man's. Nor are they excited in the same manner as a man's. If you would understand the workings of a man's passions towards a woman, you must take a man's word for it. You cannot experience it yourself. And the plain fact is, a man's passions are easily excited by the sight of a woman's body, as was plainly the case with David and Bathsheba, when he beheld her washing herself. Most men, it is true, will be better able to resist your allurements than David did Bathsheba's. They will not go so far as to seduce or rape you. But how do you know that they can resist the thought and desire of it? How do you know that they do not sin with their eyes and heart and imagination? There is great pleasure to a man in merely looking and lusting, even though he goes no further. You know very well that the Bible says, "... everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28), and will you say that this is not a serious matter? It is serious, for it is sin and sin is serious. Sin blights and deforms and ruins and destroys and damns. And if you would know just how serious a matter this is, you need only read the very next verse, which says, "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish,

than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." Here is probably the most solemn statement in the Bible concerning the seriousness of sin, and it is spoken with reference to the very sin which you may so lightly and thoughtlessly occasion by your careless dress. This is not a light matter, and you dare not treat it lightly. At this point you may say, "Amen: all true; but I do not need to hear it, for I dress modestly." Are you quite sure of it? If you follow the fashions and practices of this age, you assuredly do not dress modestly, for modesty is ignored by many of them, and purposely thrown to the winds by many others. And it may be that you, being a woman, and not able to see yourself through a man's eye, are unable to perceive that which may really be tempting and provocative in your own dress. God would have you to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). But if you unthinkingly dress as the rest of the world does, you are assuredly neither wise nor harmless. Not wise, for however ignorant and innocent you may be, you are following a system of fashion which is designed by wicked men and devils to break down and destroy the morals of men. Not harmless, for however little you may intend it, you make yourself a fiery dart in the hands of the wicked one to tempt every man who sees you. You will pardon my plain speaking, then, if I give you some specific instructions in order to make you wise. That being done, I have confidence that the godliness of your own heart will make you harmless. As said before, the obvious design of God in making clothing for Adam and Eve was to cover their nakedness, and any clothing which fails to do so cannot be right. Bare backs, bare midriffs, bare legs and thighs, are wrong-wrong in the sight of that God who clothed Adam and Eve with coats to cover their bare bodies. Shorts, halter tops, swimming suits, and anything and everything else which intentionally leave you partially nude, have no place in the dress of a woman professing godliness. Whatever the rest of the world may do, you are bound to do right. And whatever the rest of the church may do, you are bound to do right. And the things which I have just mentioned are so obvious and so flagrant a violation of the purpose of God in clothing you, that there ought not to be a moments question as to what is right. But (alas) the standards of the church are sunk so low in our day that there are actually Christians and preachers who will defend such things. They will actually defend what they call "mixed bathing"-that is, men and women freely mixing together in a state of almost nudity. Have they no shame? Have they no sense? I do not believe they will defend such things when they stand before the judgment seat of Christ. If they have no shame now, they will have some then. Meanwhile we need say no more about forms of dress which so obviously thwart the purpose of God. Let us turn our thoughts to some things which, while less flagrant, nevertheless violate the evident purpose of God. Let us turn our thoughts to some things which, while less flagrant, nevertheless violate the evident purpose of clothing.

### Short Dresses

You need no one to tell you that these are wrong. The whole world knows that they are provocative to a man's eyes. But women who profess godliness, women who ought to know better, will simply follow the current fashions of the world, whether long or short, without any reference to what is right. Others will quibble about how short is too short.

Rather than making very sure their dresses are plenty long, they will make them as short as they dare, while still persuading themselves that they are long enough. You may stand at attention in front of your mirror, and persuade yourself that your too-short dress reveals nothing, but only let you sit down, only let you bend over, only let you get in or out of a car, and what a spectacle of nudity you present. And whether you design it or not, and whether you like it or not, those nude legs and thighs of yours are provocation to lust in the eyes of men. For the same reason you ought to have nothing to do with those skirts which are slit half-way up the sides. Who cannot see that the design of such a fashion is to expose your thighs to view? Or is it to enable you to walk? So much the worse if it is. If your skirt is so tight that you cannot walk without cutting the sides, by all means throw it away, and get something with a little more material. We shall have more to say about tight clothing further along. Do you ask how long your dresses ought to be? See that your legs are well covered below the knee, front and back, while you are bending over or sitting down, and you will be safe enough. But be careful here: it is not enough that your legs should be covered only from the vantage point of your own eyeballs. When you bend over or sit down, the front of your dress will naturally hang lower, so as to cover more of your legs, but the back will be drawn up so as to expose more of your legs. If you would be safe, your dresses should cover you well below the knee in all postures.

### Low Necklines

Again, the whole world knows very well that these are a great temptation to the eyes of a man. And if you are a godly woman, no doubt you would never dream of purposely wearing a neckline too low. But you may be doing it nevertheless, through thoughtlessness or ignorance. It is not only low necklines which offend, but also large or loose ones. You may stand erect in front of your mirror wearing a large or loose neckline, and think it perfectly modest. But only bend over a little, so that the material of your blouse falls away from your body, and immediately the most provocative and tempting part of your anatomy is exposed to the view of any man who happens to be standing in front of you. The same is true, of course, when you dress with the top two or three buttons of your blouse unbuttoned. This looks provocative, even if nothing were actually exposed by it. It looks seductive. It looks to a man as though you must design to expose yourself and tantalize his passions. What else can he think? For what other purpose could you leave two of three buttons of your blouse unbuttoned? Do you say it is for comfort? Because you cannot bear a tight choking collar? I believe you could learn to bear it, as the men of the world do in order to display their stylish neckties. But waive that. It may be legitimate to leave your blouse open at the neck for comfort's sake, and it may even be modest (depending upon the garment), provided you unbutton one button only. There can be no possible reason of excuse for leaving two or three buttons open. It will add nothing to your comfort. It is simply following a wicked fashion of a wicked world. Your collar will no more choke you with one button open than it will with three. One button open will always be a great plenty for comfort's sake, and with some blouses it will be too much. If you can leave your top button open, yet not expose your breasts when you bend over and the material of your

blouse falls away from your bosom, very well. This may depend upon the nature of the blouse, as well as the size of your bust. But if there is any danger of exposing yourself, you had better button all your buttons. You can scarcely be too careful here, for there is no part of a woman's body so alluring to a man as her breasts, and when a man sees a woman with the top two or three buttons of her blouse open, he will probably conclude that it is her intention to tempt and tantalize men. Is this the impression you wish to give? If not, button your buttons, snap your snaps, and zip your zippers. And if you happen to bend over a little in front of a man, and he sees your breasts actually exposed because of your large, loose, low, or open necklines, unless he is a very rare man, he will be tantalized by the sight, whatever you may think or intend. Therefore you cannot do as the rest of the world does. Let your neckline be high enough and small enough to be in fact a neckline, and not a chest or shoulder line, and you will be safe. Note well: this means that if the neck hole of your garment is large enough to slip over your head, it is probably too large.

### Sleeveless Blouses

Sleeveless blouses always reveal too much. Little as you may be able to understand it, you underarms, and the parts of your chest and of your back which immediately adjoin them, are very attractive to a man; and a sleeveless blouse cannot help but display these parts. You must also bear in mind that others will see you from all angles and in all positions, and the armholes of a sleeveless blouse will often allow a man to see inside the blouse, especially when your arms are uplifted or outstretched, thus displaying part of your chest, and probably some of your breast. The same is true of a short-sleeved blouse which has very large or loose sleeves. This may be perfectly modest as long as you keep your elbows at your sides, but as soon as you raise your arms you create an opening through which a man may see inside your blouse, and this is a great snare to his heart. Remember you are a woman, and cannot see yourself as a man sees you. I am a man, and know what it is to be tempted by such sights. And if only the weakest of your brethren might be tempted by your sleeveless or loose-sleeve blouses, ought you not to deny yourself a little comfort or fashion, and conceal your body a little better for his good?

### Sheer Clothing

It ought to be unnecessary to say anything about clothing which is so light or so sheer that a man may see through it. The obvious and undeniable design of such clothing is to thwart the purpose of clothing, and expose your body rather than covering it. This you cannot help but realize. Everyone else knows it also, and when a man sees you thus attired, what can he think but that it is your intention to display your body to his sight? And yet so low are the standards in the church today that it is not uncommon to see Christian women wearing see-through clothing. If you have been guilty of this, your first business is to repent, to reject at once everything which is obviously and purposely sheer. You ought to be careful also not to wear any material which is so light or so thin that it may be seen through when you are in direct light, such as in front of a window. Finally, reject any material of a very coarse weave: wear clothing not netting.

## Tight Clothing

Dress which explicitly reveals your form is as bad as that which reveals your nakedness. The whole world knows that such dress is provocative-notoriously and proverbially so-and when a man sees a woman dressed in tight clothing that reveals and displays every curve of her form, his passions will certainly be excited by the sight-perhaps not so quickly or so strongly as they would be by the sight of your naked form, but excited nonetheless. The world calls tight clothing "revealing", which is exactly what it is, and as such it is an obvious violation of the purpose of God in clothing you. Every women who professes godliness, therefore, ought religiously to refuse every form of dress which reveals and displays her figure. Specifically, you must be cautious when wearing sweaters, sweat shirts, tee shirts, and anything made of knit, stretchy, or soft, clinging material. It may be revealing unless perhaps it is very loose. Woven material, with some stiffness and body to it, will conceal your form much better. This is of the utmost importance, especially for a woman who is large in the bust. There is no sight on earth which will surely attract a man's eyes, and so quickly inflame his passions, as the sight of a woman's breasts-whether they are actually exposed, or their form displayed by tight or clinging clothing. This is a fact which the world knows very well. Twenty-five years ago the world was singing a popular song about the pleasure of seeing a woman in a sweater and a tight skirt. The natures of man and woman have not changed in twenty-five years. When a man looks at you he should see your clothing, and not the shape and form of everything which is inside it. Sweaters, tee shirts, and knit blouses in their very nature cling to your body and reveal and display the shape and form of it. And you must take a man's word for it that the shape and form of a woman's body, even though it is covered with clothing, will draw his eyes, inflame his passions, or arouse his imagination, just about as quickly and surely as the sight of her actual skin. I do not say that it is impossible for a woman to wear a sweater or knit top which is not too revealing. What I do say is that the sweaters and knit tops which American women usually wear are almost always too tight. They might do better if they would wear their sweater several sizes larger than they usually do. A women who is very small in the bust may fairly easily wear sweaters which are loose enough to conceal her form, but the larger her breasts are, the more difficult this will become. A woman who is large in the bust had best avoid knit clothing altogether. She will have a hard enough time of it to conceal her form without wearing sweaters. I cannot emphasize this too much, or insist upon it too strongly. A woman-especially a woman who is large in the bust-must understand, must take a man's word for it, that the sight of her bust may take away a man's heart in a moment. If she wishes to wear a sweater for warmth, she can easily wear a loose cotton blouse over (not under) it, and be warmer yet. True this will not be stylish, but no matter about that. I am writing for godly women, who would rather please God than the world. Understand also that you will accomplish little by exchanging tight sweaters for tight blouses. A blouse of woven material in its very nature will conceal your form better than a sweater, but it may still be provocative enough if it is too tight. You ladies who are overweight often offend in this, by wearing the same clothes you would if you were twenty or thirty pounds lighter. And it is nothing but foolish pride which keeps you from wearing a larger size. Your blouse

should never be stretched tight across your bosom, but should have slack enough in the fit that when a man looks at you he sees the blouse, and not the form of what is inside of it. For this reason you should also learn to avoid provocative positions and postures. By this I mean any position which makes your bust prominent, or stretches your clothing tight over it-such as standing with your hands on your hips and your elbows thrown back, or yawning and stretching with your back arched. You should likewise refuse dresses with what is called an empress waistline-which girds the garment around your body immediately below the bust, instead of at the waist. The unavoidable effect of this is to prominently display your bust. Again I tell you, I am a man, and know very well what it is to be tempted by such sights-and it may take only a moment's involuntary sight to turn a man's heart or imagination into the wrong channels.

## Slacks

Here we have come to a bone of contention which divides churches, families, and friends. The background is this: historically in our culture, the men have worn pants, and the women dresses. This is an undisputed fact, which is embodied in the proverbial expression that a wife who runs the house "wears the pants in the family." The feminist movement, which is more than a century old, has sought to put the pants on all the women, figuratively speaking. It has sought to "liberate" the woman from her God-anointed place of subjection to the man, and to give her "equal rights" to do whatever the man may do. The spirit of this movement has also put upon the woman's body the man's clothing-namely, slacks. And the church has followed the world in so doing. Many of the older and stricter men of God, less influenced by the world themselves, take a strong stand against women wearing pants. Slacks, they say, are men's clothing, and (on the basis of Deut. 22:5) it is an abomination for a woman to wear them. The younger set, most of whom have grown up with women wearing slacks, and who probably know nothing of the historical background of the question, can see no point in the stand which their elders take, and so regard it as narrow-minded and petty. "The slacks which women wear," they say, "were made for women and are not men's clothing." On the one side it may be argued that God made neither slacks for Adam nor a dress for Eve, but coats for both of them. Yet Deut. 22:5 certainly assumes that the same clothing is not to be worn by both men and women, and it is also certain that historically in our country the slacks have been the men's clothing. It may be argued that the culture has changed, so that slacks are now acceptable clothing for women also. Yet when we consider the sinister forces which have wrought to change our culture, we may plead that the change is no way recognized by God, but is an abomination to him. I say no more than this, for it is outside the purpose of this article to settle this controversy. I do not ask here, is it wrong in the eyes of God for a woman to wear slacks? I ask, What effect are her slacks likely to have on the eyes of men? And first, by their very nature slacks are apt to reveal and display your form. Women contend for modest slacks, but who wears them? In the very nature of the case, it is difficult to make a pair of modest slacks (especially for a woman who has a full figure), and as a matter of fact, it is an extremely rare thing to see a woman in slacks which are not too tight. Why is this? Why may men wear slacks which fit

loosely, while the slacks of women must cling to every inch of their legs and thighs and hips and buttocks and crotch? Truly because it is the god of this world who inspires these styles, and he knows his business only too well. He knows only too well that it is a snare to a man's heart to have displayed before his eyes the form of a woman's thighs and buttocks and crotch. Your crotch-your "private part's"-you ought by all means to keep carefully concealed at all times, and there is nothing that will do it so well as a dress. A loose-fitting skirt or dress, provided it is not too short, is also the best possible clothing with which to conceal all of the tempting parts of the anatomy which reside between your waist and your knees. But some women suppose that because their slacks are not skin-tight, they are therefore modest. Well, now, suppose that your slacks are loose enough that they leave a little space between the material and your skin. Still they basically display the form of your legs and thighs and buttocks. This is the nature of the garment, and can hardly be avoided. And further, as soon as you bend over, or sit or squat, those "modest slacks" of yours will be stretched just as tightly, over parts of your form, as the skin-tight slacks which other women wear. So unless you are so thin that you have no form with which to attract a man, or so fat that your form will only disgust him (and you are no competent judge of this), you had best leave slacks alone. Though you may not be able to understand it (for the sight of a man will probably not affect you in the same way), it is the sight of the form which will arouse a man's passions. What a man's touch is to a woman, the sight of a woman is to a man. This is plain enough in the Bible account of David and Bath-sheba, and every honest man will tell you the same thing. You must believe it on the word of a man, though you may not be able to understand it. The sight of the form of your thighs and buttocks and crotch will tempt the heart of a man, and it is the nature of slacks to display the form of those parts. Some, who believe it is wrong for a woman to wear slacks, but who wish to accommodate their ladies for engagement in the more masculine type of activities, recommend the wearing of culottes, which are sort of a cross between a skirt and slacks. Our only question concerning them is, are they modest or immodest? They may be either, depending upon several things. If they are fashioned so as to look like a loose-fitting skirt, and are long enough, they may be as modest as a skirt. Unfortunately, many of them more nearly resemble slacks, or even shorts, than a skirt. If yours are long enough and loose enough to keep you well covered and concealed in all postures, they may be as acceptable as a modest skirt.

Enough of specific instructions. We must next answer some objections.

Objections

(1) "WHAT RIGHT HAS THIS FELLOW TO PRESCRIBE ALL OF THESE LEGALISTIC RULES FOR WOMEN?"

I answer, if we lived without sin in the garden of Eden, you could dress just as you please, or not dress at all, and hurt no one by it. But in this world you cannot, and if you do you will only be helping to swell the tide of sin. I write for godly women, who want to do what is right, but who are not likely to know how to do right without some instruction from a

man. I seek only to give you some instruction, which only a man can give, concerning the effects your dress will have on the men who see you. And I suppose that truly godly women will be happy to receive such instruction. It is usually the worldly, who are not willing to do right at any cost, who raise the cry of legalism.

(2) "THIS IS A SMALL MATTER, AND NOT WORTHY OF SO MUCH ADO."

We ought to be occupied with the weightier matters of the law, the matters of the heart, and not make such a fuss over little outward things. This may be an outward thing, but it is not a little one. Can you read Matthew 5:28-29 and yet contend that this is a little matter? But suppose it is a little matter: can you therefore lightly pass over it, or ignore it? Not so, for "he who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much" (Luke 16:10). The Lord does not rebuke the Jews for attending to the small matters, but only because they did so to the neglect of the weightier matters. "These [the weightier matters] are the things you should have done without neglecting the others [the small matters]" (Luke 11:42).

(3) "ANY MAN WHO VIEWS WOMEN SO MUST BE PERVERTED."

Yes: be it known unto you that men are perverted. All men. We are sinners. Our pristine purity is lost, and our hearts are natural and strongly inclined to sin, and especially the sin of lust. Sin easily besets us (Heb. 12:1). But understand, though all men are perverted from their original purity, and though the passions of all men (except those who are perverted in a worse way) are alike in this matter, I would not want to leave you with the impression that the practices of all men are alike, or with feelings of uneasiness in the presence of men. If you but dress right, and act right, and associate with the right kind of men, in the right kind of situations, there will be little occasion for you to be uneasy or uncomfortable. But there will be great plenty of occasion for you to be careful, even in the presence of the best men. Why? Because though the godly "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24), and have renounced the unlawful indulgence of those desires, yet the desires themselves remain. It is in the godly that "the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit" (v.17). Men may strive hard to mortify those passions, but it is a matter of plain historical fact, attested also by virtually universal experience, that the most sincere and diligent human endeavors to mortify those passions are usually not very successful. It was a man of God who was overcome by the allurements of Bath-sheba. To return to the original question: whether men are "perverted" or not is really beside the point. To what extent his desires are normal and right, or to what extent they are the result of his sinfulness, may be difficult to determine. But what difference does it make? You must deal with the facts as they are, not as you wish they were. The real fact is: many men are weak, and easily tempted by the sight of the feminine form. Suppose that some men are so strong, that you could not tempt them if you would-what then? The fact remains that many men are weak. With the strong you need not concern yourself, but you are bound by duty (as you ought to be moved by love) to "bear the weaknesses of the weak"-yes, even of the weakest-and not to put stumbling blocks in their way (Rom.15:1; 14:13).

(4) "IF A MAN LOOKS UPON ME TO LUST, THAT IS HIS SIN NOT MINE."

No-"you are no longer walking according to love. ... It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles" (Rom. 14:15,21). David was made weak, David was made to stumble, by Bath-sheba's careless exposure of herself; and your display of your feminine beauty will have the same effect upon your brethren. After reading this article, you can hardly plead that you do not know this, and "to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). If you were completely ignorant of the effects undress might have upon a man, you might dress as you please without sin, but not otherwise. Every man is fully responsible for his own sin, but you will certainly be held in some sense responsible for another man's sin, if you provoke him to it. To Ezekiel God said, "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand" (Ezek. 33:8). The wicked is fully responsible for his own sin, and shall surely die for it. But the watchman is held accountable also, merely because he failed to do what he could have done to turn the other man from his sin. How much more will you be held accountable if you put stumbling blocks in another man's way, and actually provoke him to sin?

(5) "IF I WERE TO FOLLOW ALL OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS I WOULD HAVE TO BUY A WHOLE NEW WARDROBE, AND THAT I CANNOT AFFORD."

My sister, you cannot afford to sin. If you are a real Christian, you came to Christ resolving to forsake every sin, and do the whole will of God, at any cost. If you have a will to do right, you will find a way-or cry to God to provide one. You can afford to change the way you dress. You cannot afford to sin, or to provoke others to sin.

(6) "I AM NOT ATTRACTIVE OR SHAPELY. NO MAN IS LIKELY TO BE TEMPTED BY A SIGHT OF ME. THEREFORE I MAY DRESS AS I PLEASE."

In the first place, you are no proper judge of what is attractive to a man. It is of course true that a shapely and beautiful woman is more likely to be a temptation to a man than a plain woman, but it is also true that a woman who is not attractive to one man probably will be to another, and even the homeliest will be attractive to somebody. But just suppose that you are actually so ugly that no man would ever look twice at you. What about your example to other women? What about your example to babes in Christ, who have dressed improperly through all their ungodly life, and who may now be looking to you to teach them and lead them in the right way? Do you want them to look at you, and excuse their own improper dress on the basis of your example? Finally, some women are so naive, so ignorant of the nature of men, that they suppose that because no men are actually making advances or propositions to them, they must be no temptation to any man. Let them understand that a man derives great pleasure-sinful pleasure-from looking at women, from looking at any and every attractive woman. Why do you suppose that men spend millions of dollars every year for pornographic pictures? Let the pictures be left out of pornographic

magazines, and see how many copies they would sell! What pleasure is it which men continually purchase at so great an expense? What pleasure can pictures afford them, except the pleasure of looking? It is looking at a woman's body which inflames a man's passions and regales his imagination, and there is great pleasure in that looking. Most men will freely indulge in that pleasure, with little or no restraint. They will feast their eyes upon the feminine form wherever they may find it, and this of course will include your form if you dress so as to expose and display it. Godly men will recognize that pleasure as sinful except when it is confined to their own wife, and they will fight hard to resist the temptation and conquer the sin. But because of the extreme strength and intensity of the male passions they find this to be a very hard fight. The spirit is willing but, in the face of strong temptations, the flesh is weak. To will is present with them, but sometimes how to perform they find not. In spite of all their determination and praying and striving, they may find their eye seemingly involuntarily drawn to the sight of a beautiful and shapely woman, and a moment's involuntary sight may be enough to take the heart away. A man who has gained some mastery over this kind of temptation may easily resist the initial onslaught, but constant exposure to such allurements may weaken even the strongest. Therefore we are told to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22)-to flee from the very presence of such temptations. But whither shall we flee in this wicked world? Must we flee from the very congregation of God in order to keep our hearts pure? Shame! Shame! If we cannot find a safe asylum there!

To conclude: There is nothing at all wrong or evil about your physical beauty. It is the creation of God, and is, like all that God created, "very good." It was designed by God for a specific purpose: the woman was made "for the man" (1 Cor. 11:9). The perfectly obvious design of your beauty is to ravish and satisfy the heart of a man-but a man, not of every man. If God has joined you to that one man, then by all means, give that beauty to him with all your heart, and say to him, "Hurry, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices" (Song of Solomon 8:14). Let him be, as God commands him, satisfied with your breasts at all times, and always ravished with your love (Prov. 5:19). Thus satisfied, he will be less susceptible to the beauty and charms of other women. Thus used, the beauty of your body will glorify the God who gave it to you, and serve the man for whom it was given. But if you put it on display, and prostitute it to the gaze of the whole world, you only glorify yourself and serve the devil.

#### Postscript

If you are as most women are, much of the material in this article may be new and strange to you. You may not be able to understand it, and may be reluctant to believe it. Some of the women who have read the manuscript can scarcely be persuaded to believe that the male passions are as I represented them, but the men to whom I have submitted it have fully endorsed it. One of them (a godly man and a preacher) said, "I wish I had about two million copies." I beg you therefore to believe these things, though you may not be able to understand them. Secondly, I beg you to not be content with a single reading of this paper,

but rather to study it thoroughly several times through, so that you may fully grasp and remember all that it says. Then, by all means, act upon what it teaches you. And finally, do everything in your power to teach these things to your sisters in Christ.

In so doing you will very much oblige,

Your Brother in Christ