

Just One Standard



Preston Talbot, Sr.

The Church of God is a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27). Every member has come through the blood and has been cleansed from all sin and every taint of the world. God's church—the redeemed—have no fellowship with unrighteousness and is not yoked with unbelievers. God dwells in her midst and the church is God's people and He is their God. God has said to the church, "Be ye separate ... and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). The church is a walled-in city with the world walled out. Jesus said in John, Chapter 17, speaking of His disciples, God's chosen, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The church sits at the Lord's table and eats heavenly food—that bread that cometh down from the Father, the true sayings of God. The church eats the flesh of Jesus—His Word. The world eats the flesh of men—their word.

When earthly ingredients become mixed with the church's food, it causes pain, and if continued, will surely bring death. If it makes the church sick enough to spit up and throw it out, recovery is assured. The church cannot afford to assimilate anything into her system other than heavenly food. Earthly diets cannot supply the fuel to develop the energy to keep a spiritual soul on fire for God. It will rather cause the fire to die down—the energetic zeal will soon reach the lukewarm stage; then, God will spit the whole thing out.

When God spoke in Revelation of opening the temple in heaven, He was speaking of the glorious church here on earth living so pure and holy—totally separate from the world and its fads and fashions, independent of worldly traditions and any such thing—that it is easily seen and

revealed. It is opened in such a way that the world can see it as something grand—pure and peculiarly separated from the worldly atmosphere.

The church's outward conduct (that of each individually born-again person) is the manifestation of that which is really in the heart of the individual. When we are born again, we become a new creature and all old things pass away. We do not act like we used to. We have new desires and a new purpose in life. We have been translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. Therefore, we no longer look to the world for help, satisfaction, counsel, or any such thing. Since we are not subjects of the worldly kingdom any longer—we have left its jurisdiction—we are no longer entitled to its help, nor should we look for it.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord [in our born-again experience, we are to continue to walk in the same truth and in the same spirit], ... Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith [being carefully on guard], ... lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:6-10).

The Church of God does not have to go outside of Jesus Christ for anything. All wisdom and knowledge, power and glory, and gifts and grace are found in Him. All this is obtained by being fully obedient to Christ's commandments and having a healthy appetite to eat that heavenly food. Christ teaches us that we will be fed if we are hungry. Fully satisfied, our every longing is being filled in Him.

We do not look to the world for approval of our life or what we do. We are not seeking to build any reputation. We are not trying to satisfy people. We are not seeking to make an impression on anyone except the Lord. The church is fully in love with her husband, Jesus Christ, and cares not what others think. The Apostle Paul exhorts us that we ought to walk and to please God, so that we might abound more and more (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

Therefore, if the saints will be saints, then the church will be the church. It is the life that we live in Christ that makes us the church. We have been born again and sanctified for the Master's use, being set aside from the world. We are no more of the world than Jesus was. God sends the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts, the seat of

the temple of God. Henceforth, we walk in the spirit and are taught and directed by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher, our Comforter, our Guide, and the power of our inner being.

We are *one body* and *one spirit*. We have *one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all* (Ephesians 4:1-6). We, therefore, have *one standard*, and the church stands in need of presenting that *one Bible standard to the world*. I know that God sees our hearts, but the world cannot look that deep, so God has ordained an outward standard built upon an inward experience that the world might know that we are of God. We do not need any earthly headquarters to dictate any set of rules. Nor am I writing this that anyone should think that they need to measure up to my thoughts or standards. I have refused to set up a human standard to please anyone. The standard is in God's Word, and if we love Jesus, we will keep His word (His commandments) and not overlook some of it or consider any of it lightly.

The Word of God teaches us that we ought to dress modestly (1 Timothy 2:9-10). In as plain a way as I know how to put it, modestly means to dress modestly. We cannot look to the world to determine what modesty is, for some who wear dresses up to their hips would consider a mini-skirt modest. Many women around the church these days feel that they are modest because they do not wear a mini-dress, but bring their dress down a little further, almost to the knee. Such are looking to the world to gauge their modest apparel. We cannot compare God's standards with the world's standards. Modesty for the woman is simply to dress as a woman pertaining to holiness. Modesty for the man is simply to dress as a man pertaining to holiness.

A Christian man should be fully dressed at all times, and not running around his yard in the summer cutting grass, etc., without a shirt on or in shorts. He should have his hair cut according to the Word and not styled or patterned after the present day fads. A man of God should not even want to wear anything that would cause one to think he was influenced by the hippy generation or other rebellious characters of our times. We should shun the very appearance of evil. The world is the enemy of God, and its ways are evil.

For the woman, spelled out in detail, it means that she should dress as a lady who claims to be holy. God is not pleased with the attitudes of so many in that they do not want to go all the way with the world, and yet they do not want to go all the way with the Lord. So they compromise by bringing their dresses down just to the knee or a little above. Then, when they sit down they are pulling, pulling, pulling—and that tells on them right there that they know their dresses are too short. I know this: Let the worldly fashion bring the dress down six inches below the knees and everyone will do the same.

Someone wrote that the evil is in the eye of the beholder. Well, that may be so with the sinner; but the saint is still human, and unnecessary exposure of the flesh will be used of the devil for an unnecessary temptation. Also, it is difficult, when in a service, and you are facing the platform, to keep your eyes focused so that they eliminate all of that which ought not to be seen.

As Christians, we ought not to wear clothes of the opposite sex. God expects a man to be a man and to look like one—and the same for the woman. We are living in an era when men are becoming more effeminate. Paul warned us that such shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9). We have seen some men with long hair in pony tails, some with barrettes or ribbons in their hair, and some men carrying women-type pocketbooks with shoulder straps.

On the other hand, many women are wearing men's clothes of every description—blue jeans, men's work shirts, suits, and such. A Christian woman ought not even have a desire to wear anything that remotely looks like men's clothing, though they have been made for women, because there is an influence that goes with such.

The original pantsuits were designed to promote unisex (to eliminate the preference of either sex). The first pantsuit was first put on display in the United States in the state of California and was presented to a select audience (according to *Time* magazine). A man and woman appeared on stage normally dressed. Then they went behind the curtains and reappeared with all the hair removed from their bodies and were viewed by the audience. They again went behind the curtains, and this time they appeared in identical pantsuits, and it was difficult to tell which was male and which was female. The devil is trying to destroy the separate sexes as God designed us to be. The male and the female are to lose their identity and we are to have a one sex (unisex) society.

Laws have been considered making it unlawful to call the presiding officer of any meeting the "Chairman." Now, they must be addressed as "Chairperson."

The length of men's and women's hair is covered in Paul's gospel in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11. It tells us that men's hair should be short and women's hair should be long. Just how a sister should fix her hair is her prerogative, but it should come within the meaning of modesty. First Peter 3:3 says to let it not be the outward adorning, the plaiting of the hair and the wearing of gold. In the Bible days, it was the custom to weave gold or silver into their hair as they plaited it.

The church need not go outside of Christ for its music and its songs. The Church of God should produce its own music and its own hymns. Surely, there is nothing wrong in taking a good message in song that may have been written by someone outside of the church and singing it in the Spirit; but something is wrong when we adapt

the world's style—their mode of music and their professional atmosphere. *It kills the Spirit.* God is not pleased when the church resorts to the unsaved, professional world and its talents to make records for His church. Church of God records should be made with Church of God talent, in the Spirit of God.

It becomes discouraging to a pastor, and often unexplainable to newborn babes (who measure up quickly to God's Word as it is revealed to them) when you take them to another congregation and behold! the piano player has bobbed hair; or in another place, half the professed sisters have their dresses at their knees or even a little above. Then in another place, the choir seeks to imitate the popular singers in their worldly style of presentation.

It has always stirred me to see people of the world willing to be peculiar—sloppily dressed, long haired, patched jeans, and such—not caring one bit what anyone thinks of them. They are dedicated to their cause. They are willing to be oddballs, willing to attract criticism to get their point across, and they rejoice in it. Then, those who profess to be children of God are not willing to be peculiar and to be counted as an oddball, an old fogey, or foolish for Christ's sake. They will go so far, but will not go all the way for Christ. God despises this halfway attitude.

Another outward requirement for God's people is that we should always be cheerful—have a smile on our face that really comes from the heart. Be always thankful, regardless of our circumstances. Be appreciative that we are saved and are in the family of God. Praise the Lord that your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life—if you have nothing else to praise God for, that is enough to make you happy and put a smile of victory on your face. You have eternal life, and all the things you do not have and the problems of this natural world are only for a little while. Praise the Lord for that! God will put peace, joy, and love into every heart that will sell out and mean business with Him—regardless of materialistic standing. Out of such a heart can and will come praises unto Him; and such an attitude will be seen by the worldly (unsaved), and it will have an effect on them.

It is time for the saints to be saints—and the church will be the church, without spot or wrinkle. Why, even the world cannot fully be the world, because the church has so much of the world's material. The church has become so worldly and the world so churchy that people cannot tell the difference between them. Now, if the church will give back to the world those things that it has borrowed and keep all the things that God has for the church, there will be a distinction between the two. Let us return to the world all that we have taken—give them back to the rightful owners, for we have no business with them. When this is done, there will not be anything of the world in the church, and the church will have its own. Then, the temple will be truly opened, and the world can see the church.

The power and the glory of the church is in its separation from the world. Jesus said in John 17:14, "... they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The church will only be separate from the world to the extent that the saints are separate from the world. The church does not make saints—it is the saints that make the church. Just going to church will not make one a Christian anymore than going into a chicken house will make you a chicken. If we, today, are going to be the true disciples of Jesus Christ, we will have to meet the same standard that the disciples of His day met; and Jesus must be able to say of us as He did of them: "... they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (John 17:14-15).

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