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5.0 out of 5 stars **An Objective Standard for a Subjective Question**, April 13, 2013

By

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**This review is from: Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America (Paperback)**

One of the women in our congregation picked up this small book at a national Women in the Church Conference for the PCA. I suppose that there are many books that may be considered "must-reading." This book, however, is one of those rare volumes that may threaten to turn your thinking upside-down on the subject that it addresses. It is my hope and prayer that it does, since Pollard challenges practices that have become ordinary, not only in the world, but in the Church.

What makes this little book so powerful is that it takes most of the subjective element away from defining standards of dress that are pleasing to God. This does not mean that the author argues for one style of clothing for every time and every place. It also does not mean that he provides a list of modern attire that is acceptable, and another list of attire that is not. He has not idealized any age in the history of the world as a standard. The true strength of this book is that rather than taking the practical effects, or temptations presented by various styles of clothing as his point of departure, he begins by demonstrating from Scripture that from the day that clothing was invented by God, he designed it to conceal human bodies rather than reveal them. The terms used in Scripture demonstrate that God has always clothed his people from the neck to the knees. Every great book that deals with biblical ethics does not provide an exhaustive list of applications, but it gives us clearly established principles that provide the criteria that is necessary for critical thinking. Because he has done this, in the first chapter the author has noted the fact that some shall consider his work "legalistic," while others shall consider it to be too vague. Both of these accusations reflect a shallow perspective on Christian ethics that negates thought. One option requires no thinking at all, and the other requires someone else to do all of your thinking for you.

In addition to his strong biblical arguments, Pollard provides invaluable historical evidence (particularly in chapter 5) to the effect that clothing manufactures, along with the entertainment industry, have intentionally eroded the remnants of a once biblical standard of modest dress. He has not rested his arguments upon the historical evidence, but upon the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, it is eye opening to uncover the philosophy that lies behind these changes. It should not surprise us that the philosophy that has shaped the modern fashion and entertainment industries are anti-Christian. We live in a world that is under the sway of the evil one (1 Jn. 5:19). If anything is widely accepted in a sinful society, we should assume that there is something wrong with it. In this case, something is dreadfully wrong.

The primary issue that Pollard has placed a discomfiting finger upon is the issue of swimwear. The conclusions of his book are not limited to the issue of swimwear, but the author has used this single issue in order to illustrate what is at root a basically unbiblical attitude towards clothing in general. By the end of the book, he has addressed matters related to style, clothing that accentuates the form, and most importantly, proper motives for selecting clothing that

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honors God. It is a strange anomaly in our society that a woman may walk down the street in her underwear and be arrested, yet she may walk onto the beach in "clothing" that is almost identical to her underwear, and it is considered "normal" (and if you take refuge in the "modest" one-piece suit, Pollard shall not let you escape either).

I must warn you that although the position presented in this book has always been associated with biblical Christianity, it is about as common in the modern Church as the great doctrine of justification by faith alone was when Martin Luther was born. My challenge to you is to read this book, to pray over its contents, and to digest it. It is easy to dismiss arguments simply because they are used to criticize practices that no one questions. It is easy to dismiss a position with terms such as, "strict," "legalistic," "old fashioned," or "impractical." It is one thing to vilify someone or something with labels (which our society loves to do). It is another thing entirely to demonstrate that the Scriptures that have been misunderstood in the attempt to establish a position. Pollard's biblical evidence is a force to be reckoned with. The subject matter in this book is too important to dismiss, ignore, or left to collect dust upon a shelf. We should neither be afraid nor surprised by the fact that the Scriptures often require us to adopt radically different beliefs and practices than those that have been integrated into every level of our society. After all, we are Christians. Christians have no right to submit themselves to any other Master than the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the apostle Paul, we must remind ourselves that if we still seek to please men, we cannot be bondservants of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

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