

B R O I D E D A N D P L A I T E D H A I R

Through use of symbols, inspired writers have beautifully set forth several principles which clearly express the Father's will. One of these symbols is found in Romans 6, where baptism is likened unto a burial. The old man we used to be is symbolically buried in baptism, from which we are resurrected a clean, new person. It is thus in baptism that Christ's death is contacted and its benefits realized.

Another most impressive symbol is that demonstrated in the communion on the first day of the week. Of the bread Jesus said, "This is my body" (Mt. 26:26). Of the fruit of the vine He said, "This is my blood" (Mt. 26:28). These symbols bring to our remembrance as we partake, the Lord and His sacrifice.

Another principle demonstrated through symbol is that of subjection. The order of subjection is noted in 1 Cor. 11:3, where God is listed as Supreme, followed in succession by Christ, then man, and then woman. God's people are taught in the following verses to observe their role in this subjective chain by the manner in which they wear their hair. Men are to have their hair short as a symbol of subjection to their head, Christ (v. 4, 14). Women, on the other hand, are to have their hair long (v. 5, 15) as a symbol of subjection to their head. It is to be noted that a distinction in the heads (man as opposed to Christ) requires a distinction in the symbol (short hair as opposed to long hair).

But in addition to this teaching about the hair and its covering, women who wish to please God often ponder instructions about the hair found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-6. Their concern is most commendable. The difficult question likely arises from Paul's use of the term, "not with broided hair," and Peter's, "not...plaiting the hair."

Symbolism relating to the woman's hair is found in its longness - not in its arrangement. Should the hair be rolled in a ball, plaited, worn as a pony-tail, or allowed to flow freely - none of these arrangements violate God's intent. What is condemned by both Paul and Peter is wearing of the hair or ANY of the other items mentioned (apparel, gold, pearls, and costly array) in such a manner as to serve as the object of attraction. Contrarily, the Christian woman is to adorn herself with:

- Modest apparel
- Good works
- Shamefacedness (bashfulness, innocence, not brazen)
- Sobriety (soundness of mind)
- A chaste (clean, pure) conversation (manner of life)
- Fear (Godly fear, no doubt)
- The hidden man of the heart (genuine, unpretended devotion)
- A meek and quiet spirit (humble and submissive).

She is to avoid those things which appeal to the flesh and do not become (or would not be appropriate for) the Christian woman. Her appeal is not to be outward, but from within. Things which fall into this category, in my opinion, are such as gaudy and flashy jewelry, tight and inappropriate

clothing, and make-up which follows the trend of the world. There is no Scriptural condemnation of a woman being pretty and attractive. To the contrary, there is every reason why she should wish to be. But she is to avoid presenting herself in such a way as to suggest evil thoughts and attract attention from men of the world.

Entwining the hair with gold or other material for the purpose of attracting improper attention would certainly fall under condemnation, as would any of the other items mentioned. The condemnation, however, is not in the arrangement of the hair itself. This could not have been the intent of these inspired writers, for in the same verse in which he mentioned plaiting of the hair, Peter also mentioned "putting on of apparel" (v. 3). If we reason that it is wrong to plait the hair, then of necessity we must also reason that it would be wrong to wear clothing. It is not the putting on of apparel (clothing) itself which is condemned, but rather the doing so in such a way so as to attract improperly attention. Such is also the principle regarding plaiting the hair.

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