

Is The Faithful Saint Continually Cleansed By The Blood Of Jesus Christ?

Hiram Hutto

(Editor's Note: The following excellent article by brother Hiram Hutto appeared in the 30 June 1987 issue of Sentry Magazine without editorial comment or review. We reproduce it here as one of the clearest statements on the "continuous cleansing" issue yet written and commend it to our readers.)

First of all, it should be pointed out that the question is self-contradictory. How? It speaks about the blood continually cleansing. 1 John 1:7 tells us that his blood cleanseth us from sin. So, if the blood is continually cleansing, it is continually cleansing from sin, which means that there is sin present that needs cleansing. That being true, the person who is being continually cleansed must be continually sinning. Now, how can a person be called a faithful saint (both terms) while at the same time he is continually sinning? Clearly, the question contradicts itself.

Further, to imply that a Christian is one who continually sins is to contradict the Bible. It says that a Christian does not practice sin (1 John 3:9, NASB; the same tense and idea is in 3:6 and 5:18). If a person who is continually sinning isn't practicing sin, what on earth would he have to do to practice it? Again, when Paul asks, "***Shall we continue in sin?***", he answers "***God forbid***" (Rom. 6:1). According to the position we are examining, he should have said, "*Not only may we continue in sin, but we will be faithful saints while so doing*"! The fact is, this passage and others show that sin is not the norm for the Christian, it is the exception.

What is frequently meant by such questions as heads this article is: Is the faithful saint automatically cleansed of sins of ignorance and/or weakness. 1 John 1:7 is cited to prove that he is. Not only does 1 John 1:7 not teach that doctrine, the passage says absolutely nothing per se about sins of weakness or ignorance. It says the blood of Jesus cleanses us "***from all sin***." Whatever the passage says about sins of ignorance and weakness, it says the same thing about sins of rebellion and disobedience. It says "***all sin***." But someone might respond (and the idea is current), the person under consideration in 1 John I is said to "***walk in the light***" and a person who is walking in the light will not be guilty of

sins of rebellion and disobedience, only sins of weakness and/or ignorance. Who said so? Did God? If so, where? Obviously, a person who is guilty of rebellion and disobedience is not "*in the light*" at the point at which he is guilty of rebellion or disobedience, but no sin is "*in the light*." After all, "*God is light and in him is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5), and if sin is not darkness, what is? There is no sin (rebellion, disobedience, or whatever) in the light.

Consider another point. In Hebrews 3:2 God says that Moses was "*faithful in all his house*"; yet at Meribah God said that Moses "*did not believe in me*" (Num. 20:12) and that he "*rebelled against my rod*" (v. 24). Although, in general, Moses was described as faithful, he certainly was not faithful there, neither did God approve nor automatically forgive him. Instead, God was wroth (Deut. 3:27) and would not hear Moses, but rebuked him. I cannot conceive of anyone's thinking that he was faithful in the point where God said he did not believe, and that he was rebellious. To say otherwise is to say that a person can be full of faith (faithful) in a point where he is lacking in faith. A person might be faithful in a number of areas, and yet be unfaithful at some particular point, and as it was in Moses' case, a very vital point. Surely nobody would claim that Moses died still impenitent and rebellious about the matter but God forgave him anyway. The idea that the only kinds of sins that a faithful Christian (one who walks in the light) commits are sins of ignorance and weakness is not taught in the Bible, nor does it teach that God automatically forgives those (or any other) sins.

To say that a person is automatically cleansed, like the windshield wiper (or that he benefits; i.e., is forgiven, even as he sins), sounds too much like the Baptist preacher who said that he could seduce some woman but God would work it out for his good (benefit). It reminds me of the Baptist who affirmed in a debate with me that a child of God could get drunk, that he could die drunk, and would go to heaven anyway; that a child of God could lie, that he could die with a lie on his tongue (as did Ananias and Sapphira), and he would go to heaven anyway; that a child of God could commit adultery, that he could get killed in the act, and the child of God could commit adultery with a person who was not a child of God, that both of them get killed in the act, and the child of God would go to heaven but the one who was not a child of God would go to Hell. Frankly, it surprised me when he affirmed this publicly and openly, but it shocked me to learn that some brethren evidently believe

it and some teach that which logically leads to the same conclusion. I did not believe it then, and I do not believe it now.

The Bible clearly teaches that a child of God can sin. John says, "***If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us***" (1 John 1:8). But it just as clearly teaches that a child of God does not have to sin. In fact, John wrote his first epistle so that his readers would "***sin not***" (2:1). If a Christian cannot keep from sinning, he has to sin, and John wasted his letter. Such a claim impugns the wisdom of God. And Peter says, "***If ye do these things, ye shall never stumble***" (2 Pet. 1:10) that a child of God can not fall (note the important difference between "cannot" [impossible] and "can not" [possible not to]). He doesn't have to fall. If a Christian must sin ("man, because he is man, sins" is as false when taught by "conservative" brethren, as it is when taught by Edward Fudge or John Calvin), why does God hold him responsible for doing something he could not keep from doing anyway?.Such does away with man's being a creature of choice. Man sins all right enough, not because he must sin, but because he chooses to sin, and therefore is guilty. The idea that a faithful Christian saint is continually cleansed because he is continually sinning is not in the Bible.

Some have even claimed that when a person unknowingly violates God's law, God automatically forgives him (like the windshield wiper), then later when man learns that he has broken God's law he must repent, etc. Why should he repent? What does he have to repent of? After all, if God forgave him at the time he sinned, the sin isn't on his record; he doesn't need to repent. What he should do, if the argument is correct, is thank God for having already forgiven him without repentance and before he ever learned about it! Still others claim that a person who unwittingly violates God's law is not then guilty (they need to read Lev. 4:13,22,27) but when he later learns that he has violated God's law, if he does not then repent, he is guilty. Among the many problems with this argument is, it changes God's definition of sin. God said, "***Sin is the transgression of the law***" (1 John 3:4). This doctrine says, "No, this is wrong.

Sin is not the transgression of the law. Sin is the awareness of the transgression of the law." But the Bible doesn't teach that either.

Yes, Christians sin, and God has made provisions for them when they do, but he has made no provisions for them to live in sin. When John

states that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, he does what is frequently done in the Scriptures - he is simply stating a truth without giving all the details of the matter. Just as Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**" (Luke 23:34), he did not give any conditions for forgiveness, and it was several days later when Peter told them what those conditions were (Acts 2:36-38). So the blood cleanses us from all sin (v. 7), but it is verse 9 that mentions one of the conditions man must meet for that forgiveness; it does not mention all of them for it says nothing about repentance. That is learned, elsewhere. The passage also says that we must confess our sins. It does not say we are to confess that we are sinners, nor does it say that if we confess that we are sinners, God will forgive. That may or may not be true, but 1 John 1:7-9 does not say so. It says that we are to confess our sins to be forgiven. Instead of teaching one to be confident of his salvation and feel secure about it because the blood of Christ will automatically or continually cleanse our sins, we need to teach people as Peter did Simon, "**Repent . . . of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee**" (Acts 8:22).

No, the faithful saint is not continually cleansed by the blood of Christ because a faithful saint is not continually sinning. But a saint may be often cleansed by the blood, just as often as he meets the conditions given by God.

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Differences in Modern "Miracles" and Bible Miracles

Hiram Hutto

While Jesus was on earth he made some very startling claims. He claimed to be divine, and the Jews so understood him (Jn. 5:18; 10:33). He claimed to be the Son of God (Jn. 10:35-37). He claimed to be the Messiah (Jn. 4:25-26) and the Savior of the world (Jn. 14:6). But anyone could make these claims. We were on a call-in radio program where a man would occasionally call denying that Jesus was the Messiah, and claiming instead that he was the Messiah. However, Jesus did more than simply claim to be the things noted, he proved that claim by the miracles he performed. Let's consider these.

- 1. Power over nature. He stilled a storm (Matt. 8:26-27).**
- 2. Power over material things. He fed 5,000 men with a few loaves and fishes (Luke 9:10-17).**
- 3. Power over all manner of diseases (Matt. 8:16).**
- 4. Power over the spirit world (Matt. 8:16).**
- 5. Power over life and death (Jn. 11:14-44).**

These are not merely powers, but ones performed in a confirmation of his claims (Jn. 20:30-31).

The apostles, too, were able to perform miracles, not to prove that they were divine, etc. - for they never claimed such but, in fact, they denied it (Acts 14:11-15). Their miracle-working power was given to them to confirm the word which they were preaching. *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation; which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will"* (Heb. 2:34). The Bible shows that after the apostles received the commission to *"go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15), *they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"* (Mk. 16:20).

From these facts and many more, it may be safely concluded that there is no need for miracles today. The Bible has sufficient proof in writing

that "*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (Jn. 20:30-31), and the word of God having been adequately confirmed is sufficient. Anything we need to know about life and godliness is furnished completely when we take all the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Although this is true, it does not keep many people from claiming to perform miracles today. But there is a vast difference between what is done in our day and the miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles. Let us consider some of these differences.

1. The miracles of the New Testament were not limited to healing. As already noted, there was power to still the tempest. Yet in 1950 a storm blew Oral Roberts' tent down injuring 50 people, most of whom were treated at local hospitals, not by Roberts. Where have you heard reliable evidence of turning water into wine? Not even A. A. Allen, noted healer, could have done this, though he died of acute alcoholism. Who today is feeding 5,000 men with a few loaves and fishes? For the most part, today's "miracles," in sharp contrast to these, are limited to "healings" and these are not of any organic illness. We are told by those who are supposed to know that most of these illnesses are in the mind, so when Roberts or others convince those who think they are ill that they are not sick, they are "healed" but not miraculously.

2. The apostles were not "selective" in their miracles or in their healings. An advertisement for an Oral Roberts campaign states "Prayer Cards Given Out at Afternoon Service ONLY" (emphasis his, HH). Anyone who has attended such services should know why this is done - to screen out the undesirables. Whoever read where those who were healed by the apostles needed a prayer card?

3. Miracles in the New Testament were not conditioned on the faith of those being healed. How much faith did dead Dorcas have (Acts 9:36-40)? The lame man who was healed by Peter in Acts 3 was not even expecting to be healed, much less believing that he would be. Yet today, those who are not healed are told that they do not have enough faith. What a compound tragedy this is! The sick are not only left with their sickness, but are made to feel guilty because they are the ones to blame for lacking in faith!

4. As in Acts 3:7 the lame man was healed "*immediately*." If you have attended many "healing" campaigns, no doubt you have witnessed

people, being "worked into a lather" with much emotion, exertion, and sweating over the ones to be healed. Not so in that done by the apostles.

5. The miracles of the New Testament were so powerful that even the enemies of the apostles admitted "***that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest unto all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it***" (Acts 4:16). In our day, numerous ones could deny the "miracles" that were supposed to have been wrought, and they have denied them and that publicly. From the Alabama Baptist (9/12/74), there is this headline: "Noted Surgeon Follows Up Reports on Faith Healings, Says He Found None." The article tells how Dr. William A. Nolen of Litchfield, Minn., noted surgeon and author of the book, *Healing: A Doctor In Search of a Miracle*, wrote, "After following up on the cases of 26 patients who thought they had been 'healed' at a famous faith healer's religious service here, says he couldn't find a single cured patient in the group." The book is even more extensive than that with the same results.

At various times some of our brethren have offered high financial rewards for proof of any genuine healing of organic illnesses. To my knowledge, they have never had to pay off.

6. After the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, there were no failures. Acts 5:16 is typical, "***they were healed every one***." Instances could be multiplied where Oral Roberts and others failed frequently, some even dying after they had been pronounced "healed." Jack Coe had an ingenuous reply to this. He claimed that he had healed many people who did not know they had been healed for they still had the same symptoms!

7. No collections. One of the most obvious differences between today's "healing campaign" and those in the Bible has to do with money. One does not read in the New Testament where the apostles or others took up a collection as a part of their "healing campaign." (In fact, one does not read in the New Testament of "healing campaigns" with all the self-produced publicity and high-pressure propaganda that is so characteristic of today's "miracle worker"). If memory serves me correctly, several years ago I attended one of these and, before the meeting was over, collections were taken-up 9 times! On the other hand,

the Bible tells us that Peter said, "***Silver and gold have I none***" (Acts 3:6), but he did not follow it up with a collection. Quite a contrast.

8. In the New Testament the apostles performed miracles which confirmed that their teaching was God's revelation. I have never heard a modern miracle worker claim that his teaching is a new revelation that is to be considered as a part of the word of God. But if they are doing what the apostles were doing or if they believe that they are doing what the apostles were doing, their teaching should be considered as much a part of the Bible as that which John or Paul wrote. In this case we would need a "loose-leaf Bible" to which we would continue to add their revelation. After all, Paul is emphatic when he says, "***the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord***" (1 Cor. 14:37).

From these considerations and many more, it can be readily seen that when today's miracles are compared with what we read in the Bible, there is no comparison.

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Fathers: Principal Trainers of Children

Hiram Hutto

"Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Ps. 127:3) and as such should be considered gifts from God who have been placed in our hands to mold and fashion into worth-while citizens in his kingdom. Thus is laid on us the responsibility to **"train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it"** (Prov. 22:6). Note the word *"train."* Far too many times this is thought to be accomplished simply by telling how to act, etc. However, even a dictionary recognizes that such is not the case. It says, "to bring to a desired standard of efficiency or condition or behavior, etc. by instruction and practice" (Oxford American Dictionary).

Telling is definitely important. **"These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"** (Deut. 6:6-7). But practice and application are also required. This can be seen even in secular matters. One may attend school where he is told the information he needs, but then he needs on-the-job training, and some are hired as trainees. He needs the experience. Churches have training classes in which instruction is given, but training is gained by practice and experience.

This is brought out in the New Testament in Ephesians 6:4. It says, **"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** There are several important points made in this passage:

1. Of utmost importance is the expression *"of the Lord."* This has religious and spiritual application. It is "the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6). It is not just nurture and admonition, but is nurture and admonition of the Lord.
2. The synonyms nurture and admonition are not easily defined but most seem to agree that the word "nurture" deals with training by act and discipline and the expression "admonition" is training by word (Expositor's Greek Testament). In his discussion of *paideia* (nurture) Thayer says: *"1. the whole training and education of*

children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now re-proof and punishment)."

3. Usually we husbands leave this to mothers, but in doing so we have neglected the fact that the passage explicitly gives this to the father! Thus, it is his responsibility to do the "nurture and admonition." He can do this by reading the Bible and Bible stories to and with his children and enabling them to make application of its truth to various aspects of life. He doesn't merely tell them but helps them in preparing their Bible class lessons. He is involved in training them when he sees to it that they go with him to church services and participate as much as possible in its activities. It is his responsibility that they are taught the word of God, to train them in proper behavior, and when needed he is to administer discipline, correction, and punishment, as he "***chastens them betimes***" (Prov. 13:24). If a father is not actively involved in this, he is neglecting his role as father. Thus he is the principal trainer of his children.

To be sure, his wife has a part in this. She is told to "***guide (or rule, ASV) the home***" (1 Tim. 5:14). Nevertheless, "***the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is head of the church***" (Eph. 5:23). So, in addition to being involved in the actual teaching and training, it is his responsibility and God has given him the authority to see that all such, though done by others, is done properly. The following quotation from the Pulpit Commentary brings this out very well. In discussing the synonyms "nurture" and "ad-monition," it says, "*It is difficult (but apparently impossible) to get words in the English language to represent the two words that are in the Greek original. They are in a general way to be distinguished as discipline by power and discipline by reason . . . It is rather all that drilling which a parent gives his children in virtue of the executive (magisterial) power which is placed in him. He has certain rules by which he goes in training his children, and he has got the power to enforce them. He makes them say 'grace before meat' that they may learn betimes from whom all table comforts come. He makes them attend to their lessons, that they may know that they have got to work and not be idlers. He makes them be selective as to their companion-ships, that they may not get out in evil associations. He appoints certain hours for the house, that they may learn order and punctuality. He does not ask them if they will go to church, but he makes them go to church with him. That is the kind of drilling that is meant*

here, and when it is necessary it must be backed up by chastening, or judicious punishment for good." It is interesting that in discussing admonition it says, *"It is not necessary that a parent should always explain to a child the reasons of his procedure. But it is important that, as a rule, children should have explained to them the evil of the course they are asked to avoid, and the advantages of the course they are asked to follow."* Again observe that the text places the responsibility to do this on the fathers.

The wording of this may seem somewhat harsh, but re-member the same verse (Eph. 6:4) lets us know that it is to be administered in such a way as not to provoke the children to wrath.

Conclusion

It seems fair to say that, in this regard, the Bible shows:

1. Children need the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
2. This involves much more than mere telling; it requires training.
3. God has specifically given this responsibility to fathers.

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Have You Heard?

Hiram Hutto

Have you heard about the group of Christians in this community that is not at all like the denominations so often encountered? Some have wondered about this difference and even remarked about it. This group is different in a number of ways but space permits us to consider only a few, and that but briefly.

1. **Different, in attitude toward the Bible.** These Christians believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, complete, authoritative word of God, and that the New Testament is the final expression of that word. This faith is based upon such scriptures as 2 Tim. 3: 16; 2 Pet. 1:3,4,21; Rev. 22:18,19; Jno. 10:35. But, do not all Protestant denominations believe this? There was a time when they did, but now many of them will tell you unhesitatingly that they no longer do. Even those denominations which are known as “Fundamentalists” are guilty of dividing the commandments of Christ into “essential” and “non-essential” commands. This, in effect, nullifies the authority of the scriptures because it will let every man decide for himself what is essential and what is not. But not these Christians! They believe that man shall live “*by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” (Matt. 4:4). Is this what you believe?
2. **Different, in attitude toward how to become a Christian.** Since their faith in the scriptures is such that it will not allow them to divide the commandments of Christ into essential and non-essential commands, this group of Christians insists that because every man has sinned and separated himself from God (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 59:1,2) man’s only hope of benefiting from the blood of Christ is to do all that Christ has commanded men to do in order to reap these benefits. This, of course, involves faith in Christ as the Son of God (Jno. 20:30,31; Mk. 16:16). But since the scripture says that our faith avails only when it works by love (Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:24) they also repented of their sins (Acts 17:30), confessed with their mouth what they believed in their heart (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10) and gladly obeyed the command of Christ to be baptized, i.e. immersed (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12), in water (Acts 8:36) for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) or to be saved (Mk. 16: 16; 1 Pet. 3:21). When one has done all these things—and not until then—the Bible reveals that he is saved, a child of God by faith (Gal. 3:27), and a member of the Lord’s church (cf. Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:1,2). Is this what you did?
3. **Different, in insisting on being simply a Christian — nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else.** Every religious group teaches that a person can believe all the truth, obey every command of God, be a Christian while he lives, and go

to heaven when he dies without ever belonging to any denomination whatsoever. Since this is true, this group of Christians sees the unimportance of every denomination and hence have not joined any denomination and are not a part of any denomination, but are simply Christians— nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else! Furthermore, since the Bible reveals that it is wrong and sinful to divide the people of God into different categories, and be called by different religious names (1 Cor. 1:10-13) this group is satisfied with the name given in the New Testament, i.e., the name Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28 1 Pet 4:16), and pleads for all believers to be one even as Christ prayed (Jno. 17:20,21). They are satisfied to be simply members of the Lord's church and just Christians. Can this be dangerous? Can it be anything but safe? Is that what you are; or are you a "Christian plus another name"?

4. **Different, in its attitude toward church worship and work.** Since the New Testament commands Christians to assemble together (Heb. 10:25) these do so, but such does not make them a denomination in any sense of the word. Such is simply the congregation of the Lord's people; the congregation devoted to and belonging to the Lord; or the church that belongs to the Lord, hence the church of Christ or church of God (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16).

Since these Christians have the confidence in the scriptures already mentioned, they accept the New Testament as the divine, verbally inspired, and authoritative blueprint for the church throughout all ages. Whatever acts this blueprint reveals that Christians did when they thus assembled is the pattern for them and to it they cling tenaciously. Since the New Testament reveals that Christians are to assemble on the first day of the week to break bread or eat the Lord's supper, to give of their money, to sing, to teach the apostles' doctrine, and pray together (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Eph. 5:19), that is exactly what this group of Christians does. Since the Bible forbids adding anything to what is revealed (Rev. 22:18,19) these Christians do not do anything else in church worship. Is this unreasonable? Can it be anything but right? Is this what you do?

The New Testament also tells that the church is to preach the gospel, edify itself, and care for its needy (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; Acts 6:1-6). This group is glad to do just that.

5. **Different, because it has no ecclesiastical or denominational hierarchy.** Since this group accepts the New Testament as its blueprint for the church, it is happy to follow the pattern therein given for church organization. The New Testament reveals no ecclesiastical authority higher than the local congregation, except Christ the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23). The local congregation being overseen by elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7) with deacons to serve (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10) and is not

governed by any conference, association, synod, pope, or council, but is simply free under God to do the will of Christ. It has no denominational machinery or earthly headquarters but is a free, independent, and autonomous body of Christians. Is the church of which you are a member like this?

This group occupies a unique and enviable position, indeed! It is a position based upon and produced by the infallible word of God. This group does not occupy this position merely as their opinion but because the word of God tells them and all others to do so. Wouldn't you like to do the same? For more information about this group of Christians who insist on calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways, you are cordially invited to attend a conservative church of Christ in your area. Why not check it out? You'll be glad you did.

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What Saith the Authorities?

Hiram Hutto

Once while two Christians were discussing a Bible subject, one of them asked, “What do the authorities say about it?” No doubt he had in mind such things as lexicons, Bible dictionaries, historic, and geographic. Yet I feel that sometimes (though not with the one who raised the question) there is the all too prevalent attitude to depend on what men may say about a certain Bible subject or passage. It may be a lexicon; it may be a dictionary, or it even may be a preacher, but such is surely to be deplored. Paul said that we ought “*not to think of men above that which is written.*” (1 Cor. 4:6).

None of the foregoing is meant to disparage the use of tools in Bible study. I am persuaded that it would be good if more members of the church would invest a little more money in such aids as dictionaries, lexicons, and the like. What I am trying to say, however, is that such should be kept in their proper place; namely, that of an “aid” or a “tool”. A Bible dictionary can be a good thing. Nevertheless it is not the Bible; it is not the word of God; it is a dictionary. It ought to be merely an aid that does just that aid; aid in understanding the Bible, not replace it.

And the same goes for commentaries. I am not opposed to the proper use of good commentaries. I use them frequently. I fear, though, that many times, the joke “A good commentary is one that agrees with what I already believe” is far more than a joke. It’s a fact! Just because Johnson’s Notes may say a thing does not mean that it is so. Just because Adam Clarke may be quoted does not mean that such is the truth. More seldom than somewhat one meets such expressions as: “This passage means so and so.” Proof? “See Albert Barnes, page 22!” or “What happened then was thus and thus.” How do you know? “See MacKnight, page 38!” Such does not prove anything other than that is what Albert Barnes or somebody thinks. And, frankly, that is not the word of God.

What is an authority? What is a scholar? Well, oftentimes it depends upon whom you ask. Webster says that a scholar is “one who has engaged in advanced study and acquired knowledge in some special field”, and I suppose that is the usual way in which the word is used. Nonetheless, we need to remember a few things:

Scholars are not divine; they are human beings. Their opinions may be weighty but they are not inspired. They may be skilled in some special field but they do not know everything in that field. They may have acquired some knowledge but they have not

acquired all knowledge. Just because a man may know a few things in one field does not mean that he is skilled in another field. Scholars may be learned but they are not infallible.

Sometimes scholars, being human beings, are prejudiced. A fellow doesn't have to read very many of them to discover this. At times scholars allow previous practice and previously held positions of their own to influence their thinking. It's not a bad idea to know something about a given scholar's background.

Oftentimes scholars disagree. If you look long enough you can find some scholar or authority to substantiate nearly any position imaginable. This might be a good place to point out that the oft heard expression "all scholars agree..." is a figment of an imagination; it just ain't so unless you have a pretty limited definition of the word "scholar". Which reminds me of the debate I heard between two college students from England and two from the University of Florida. One of the Florida students chided the English for not quoting any authorities to substantiate their position. To which one of the English debaters replied, "You can quote authorities on any side of any question. But if you want an authority, here is what one noted authority has written...." Then he concluded, "If you want to know who that authority is and where he wrote such, I made the statement, I wrote it, and that's pretty good authority, at least to me." Well, since scholars disagree it is a good idea to consult several; don't take one man's word.

Let us **never get to the point that we feel that because a scholar or even many scholars may say a thing then that must be the way it is.** Their thoughts may be valuable. but they are not absolute. Before such we may bend, but we must not bow. Remember, we are to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). We are to "try the spirits", so 1 John 4:1 says. The place to do the proving and the trying is in the word of God. Again let it be noted that we may respect men, and we may study them, but we must not "think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). When we say, "What saith the authorities?" let us mean "what saith the scriptures".

Elon Challenger, Volume 8, Number 12

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Command

ARTICLE 6 OF 6

or

Custom

An exposition of I Corinthians 11:1-16

H.O. Hutto

The first sixteen verses of the eleventh chapter of Paul's letter to the church at Corinth have been the subject of much controversy. Some say the passage has to do with customs and/or circumstances of a people long since dead and is not binding today. Still others insist the passage does not deal simply with customs and circumstances of days gone by, but rather constitute a command to be observed throughout this dispensation. Since this is in the word of God, it cannot teach both. Let our study always be to let God be true no matter what man may say. As we study the passage, let us keep some things clearly in mind.

1. This is a discussion concerning men and women as they pray or prophesy. This discussion does not concern men and women *in their everyday activities* nor how they ordinarily appear in public, but *how they appear when they pray or prophesy*. It may be, as some contend, that women of Paul's day when appearing in public always wore a veil, [though Smith Bible dictionary says "*Much of the scrupulousness in respect of the use of the veil dates from the promulgation of the Koran*", and that was not in the 1st century but in the 7th HOH] still this is not the subject the apostle discusses in these verses. His discussion concerns *praying or prophesying*. Hence any reference to what men and women did or did not in their ordinary activities of life is completely beside the point and a reference to such is not pertinent to the issue. This passage discusses worship-life, not everyday life.

2. All we know about the subject of covered and uncovered heads while praying or prophesying is found in these sixteen verses. It may be that other passages deal with the headship of Christ, the relationship of man and woman, the wearing of veils, and numerous other things, but no other passage in the Bible deals with the subject of covered and uncovered heads while praying or prophesying except 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Hence to this passage we must go to find the truth on the subject.

With this brief introduction in mind, please read I Corinthians 11:1-16 in your Bible.

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VERSE ONE

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." In all probability this verse belongs as the last verse of the argument in chapter 10, and the American Standard Version (ASV) so places it.

VERSE TWO

"Now I praise you, brethren that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." The ordinances here spoken of are "the particular injunctions of Paul's instructions" (Thayer), hence the will of God as expressed through the inspired apostle. Certainly those who keep such should be "praised".

VERSE THREE

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." The relationships here described are as unchangeable as God himself. They are not based on "custom" nor upon anything else except the word of God Almighty. Christ is not man's head because *custom* made it so, but because *God* made it so. Man is not woman's head because *custom* so ordered, but because *God* so ordered. This is the divine order and has nothing to do with custom. Custom did not make these relationships, and custom cannot change them with God. Yet it is upon the high doctrine here asserted that the rest of the argument is based. This is the very *foundation* of the apostle's argument and without it the rest is meaningless. Since then the very foundation *transcends* custom, would it not be passing strange if all the rest is *completely* custom?

VERSE FOUR

"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered dishonoureth his head". This verse grows out of and is based upon the relationship laid down in verse 3, viz. "Christ is the head of man". But verse three is not founded on custom, and therefore neither is this verse. *Just as long as Christ remains the head of man, just that long will man dishonor Christ by praying*

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with his head covered. Since man has no head between himself and Christ, for a man to cover his physical head while praying or prophesying would be to dishonor his spiritual head, Christ. As will be seen in subsequent verses, the *covering* under consideration is an *artificial* one, such as a veil, a turban, a shawl, a hat, etc. Man may not cover his head with any of these when he prays to God. He may have it covered at other times, but not when he prays or prophesies. This in itself suggests a covering that it to be "on" at certain times (when praying or prophesying), but may be "off" at other times.

Just why the covering is required at these two specific times but not at other times, the passage does not say. A number of possibilities suggest themselves: A. It may be that prayer and prophecy are elliptical expressions for the whole of public worship, in which case only two acts are mentioned but all acts are included (as in Acts 20:7 only one, the breaking of bread, is mentioned by synecdoche and includes the cup; or as in

I Cor. 13:8-10 only three spiritual gifts are said to cease, yet all are meant). When Jesus cast those out of the temple who were selling, he said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13). Isn't prayer here simply an elliptical expression for worship? Would Jesus have driven them out if they had been studying God's word or singing his praise? Also, the Pulpit Comm. Vol. 6 page 399 says of prophecy, "*sometimes, it seems to stand, in a very general way, for sharing in religious worship*". B. If it is assumed that prophecy always means inspired speech, another possibility is that in prayer and prophecy, a person is in direct communication with God (in prophecy, God speaks to man; in prayer man speaks to God, hence the special need for significance during such. C. If prophecy always means inspired speech, another possibility would be: the covering applies whether in inspired activity (prophecy) or uninspired (prayer). D. Still another: some are of the opinion that the women, thinking that since they are one in Christ with the men are not therefore in subjection to him, were removing the covering at these specific times. All of these are inter-

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esting, but the fact is: we are not told why at these times but not at other times.

It is important to note that the injunctions of the passage do not deal with women only but include men as well. As can be seen from the next verse, whatever covering that this verse *forbids a man's* wearing, verse five *commands a woman* to wear. Whatever covering a man must leave off, a woman must put on.

[For a discussion of whether or not the word "prophecy" limits the application to people with inspired gifts, see page 16 Objection No. 3]

VERSE FIVE

"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is all one as if she were shaven". Again, we make the observation: This verse grows out of and is based upon verse three, and since the relationship described there is not custom, neither is the statement made here. *And as long as man remains the "head of woman" just that long will woman dishonor man when she prays with her head uncovered!* And not only so, but in dishonoring her "head" (man), woman dishonors herself and God who made man the head of woman. So the woman who "prays or prophesies with her head uncovered" dishonors herself, man, and God. It is a much a shame for her to pray uncovered as it would be for her head to be shaved. So says the word of God in this verse, Woman, think it over. If you would be ashamed to have your head shaved, God says in this verse, you ought to be ashamed to pray uncovered. Please read this verse again.

VERSE SIX

"For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered". In other words, if a woman will not cover her head, she might as well get her hair cut off, for to be uncovered is just as much a shame as to be shorn. Paul is not actually urging these women to get their hair cut off. He is saying that *logically* they might as well do that. He knew that they would not

think of doing the later (cutting off their hair), so they ought not to think of doing the former (being uncovered). Why? Because one is as much a shame as the other.

Let us pause here for a moment. God is saying that a woman who is not covered might as well get her hair cut off or get her head shaved. He also says, though that if a woman would be ashamed to be shorn or shaven she ought to be covered. Now women, ask yourselves this question: "*Would you be ashamed to appear with your head shaved?*" Be honest, now. Would you be ashamed to appear with all your hair cut off or shaved? *A bald-headed woman!* If you would be ashamed, God says you ought to be just as ashamed to pray with your head uncovered. Think it over and I am sure you will know what to do.

Again, this passage deals with men and women when they pray or prophesy. Women must not be uncovered then. They may be uncovered at other times, but not when praying or prophesying. The covering under consideration therefore is "put-on-able" and "take-off-able". It is removable or an artificial one.

[For a discussion of what is meant by 'cover' and whether the covering must be a veil or something that hangs down from the head, see pages 19-21, Objection No 6.]

The word *shear* means "cut short" (Thayer), or "crop" (Expositors' Greek Testament).

VERSE SEVEN

"*For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man*". Please observe the *God-given reason* for a man not to cover his head: "he is the image and glory of God". Paul does not say *nor ever hint* that a man ought not to cover his head because of some *custom* of the day. Note this contrast between what man says and what God says.

WHY SHOULD A MAN NOT COVER HIS HEAD?

Man: Forasmuch as it is a custom.

God: Forasmuch as man is the image and glory of God.

See the difference between those two statements? Which will you accept? Which will you believe? One is in the Bible, the other is not. Since Paul did not base his statement on "custom", why would men today do what Paul did not, and say what Paul said not? Was man's being in the image and glory of God a custom? Is not man still TODAY in the "image and glory of God"? If he is, God says he ought **not** cover his head because of it.

VERSES EIGHT, NINE, AND TEN

"For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels". In the creation, God made woman from man's rib. She was made for him, and Paul uses this as "cause" for the woman to be covered. For what cause? Does Paul say, "because of custom"? He does not! He says because of the situation that existed when God created woman she ought to have "power on her head" or "a sign of authority on her head" (ASV). Again, notice the contrast between what man says and what God says:

WHY SHOULD A WOMAN BE COVERED?

Man: Because of custom

God: Because woman was created for man.

See the difference between these two statements? One of them is based on the authority of man; the other is based on a plain, positive statement in the word of God. Which will you accept? Which will you believe? Why should a woman be covered? Not simply because a covering may be pretty, but because of her God-ordained station in creation — "for man". Such is an expression of her very woman-hood, and she should understand that to the extent that she fulfills her role as a woman, she is honored. There is nothing degrading about being subjected to someone. Christ is subject to God. Man is subject to

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Christ. A woman may rule the home (1 Tim. 5:14). And all of us are to be subject to the powers that be (Rom. 13:1). There is nothing belittling about being subject. She best serves herself and God (and so does man) by delighting in the proper role that God has assigned. After all, it is He that made both, and knows what each is best suited for. A proper appreciation of this will surely make happier people. On the other hand, for either to despise his or her proper sphere and seek to nullify it is an effort, however unwitting it may be, to frustrate the will of God. And this may well serve to introduce the next phrase.

Because of the angels. While one may not know everything connected with this statement, it is given nonetheless as an inducement for a woman to cover her head when "praying or prophesying". One explanation that seems plausible is this. Paul had been urging man to respect his proper sphere and for woman to respect hers. And in connection with people keeping their proper roles, notice Jude 6. *"And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day"*. When the angels left their proper place they got into trouble, and when man or woman leaves his or her proper place, they too will get into trouble. A woman leaves her place when she is not in subjection to man. A sign that she is in subjection is for her to be covered. If this is not what "because of the angels" means, this explanation certainly does no violence to the context.

Another explanation that has been given is this: Angels, who "*minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*" (Heb. 1:14), are interested in the affairs of this life and are offended at any breach of the ordinances.

In any case, Paul said that a woman ought to be covered "because of the angels". This certainly was *not* a custom. Angels existed then, and angels exist now. Luke 20:36 shows that angels cannot die. Whatever the expression "because of the angels" means, it meant for a woman to cover her head, and since angels exist today

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it should compel women now to cover their heads. If not, why not?

VERSES ELEVEN AND TWELVE

"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man by the woman; but all things of God". Some men get the idea that they are more important than women; that she is some kind of second-class citizen. This verse shows that neither man nor woman should think of themselves too highly nor become egotistical. God deems one just as important as the other, and they are mutually dependent on each other for existence and sustenance. There is neither male nor female in Christ (Gal. 3:28). God took a rib from man and with it he made woman (Gen. 2:21-22), hence woman is "of the man", but now in the natural order of things, man is "born of woman" (Job 14:1), hence he is "by the woman". But "all things are of God".

VERSE THIRTEEN

"Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" Having established positively what God's will is in this matter, he now appeals to them to corroborate that revelation by their judgement of what is comely. Later (pages 24-26) it will be shown that the word here translated "comely" is not dealing with custom or good taste. Rather, the word has to do with what is appropriate and fitting depending on the nature and character of the person or thing involved. Notice, Paul does *not* say it is uncomely to pray uncovered. In fact, he requires some to pray uncovered – the men. What he does say is: It is comely that *a woman pray* uncovered. What is there about the nature and character of a woman that makes her praying uncovered uncomely? She was created for man (vs. 9); she is of man (vs. 8); she is the glory of man (vs. 7); man is her head (vs. 3). The covering of her head in prayer is an expression of that relationship, *an expression of her very womanhood*. Do these facts **of themselves** require a woman to be covered? Well, we do not have these facts merely "**of themselves**". We have them used by an inspired apostle to teach her to be covered. Hence, from **his** teaching and conclusion based on on these facts, she ought to be covered. The passage does not mention custom in this regard. With that impression having been made on their minds, they could be expected to "judge" her praying

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uncovered to be an uncomely act. But if God expected them to judge such to be uncomely — and surely he did; since women *today* have the same fundamental nature and character of relationship to man (man is still her head, etc.), does he not expect us to make the same judgement *today*: It is uncomely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

[For an extended discussion of whether their being called upon to "judge the comeliness of the covering" was based upon custom, see pages 24-26, Objections No. 8 & 9].

VERSES FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering". First of all, it should be noted that "nature" is not introduced to *establish* the practice of covering the head when praying or prophesying. Revelation has already don't that in verses 5-12. Rather, nature is called upon to *confirm* what revelation is saying; namely, that it is a glory for a woman to be covered, and a shame for her to be uncovered. Nature confirms revelation's teaching about the glory of a covered woman. And how does nature do that? By her glory, which is long hair. And why is long hair a glory? *Because it is a covering.* Note: if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her; for (*because*, Gk. *hoti*) it is a covering. Since her hair is a glory because it is a covering, it follows necessarily that it is a glory for her to be covered. And that is what both nature and revelation teach. They teach it, however, with two different coverings: Revelation's covering to be "on" when praying or prophesying; and nature's covering (her hair) to be "on" all the time.

Sometimes it is thought that the statement "her hair is given her for a "covering" means that her hair is the *only* covering that is required or that it being discussed in this passage. It might be well to point out that the word in this verse that is translated "covering" is a completely different word from the word that is trans-

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lated "cover" in the rest of the passage. This suggests that there are two covering being discussed, does it not? Although the subject of length of hair is brought up as a matter of confirmation of the glory of a covered woman, nonetheless the passage shows plainly that there should be a distinction made in the length of hair for men and women. A person ought to be able to look at the hair of another person and tell whether he is looking at a man or woman. The practice of long hair on men and short hair on women is not approved by God. It ought also to be apparent that the pictures so often seen in which Jesus is portrayed with long hair are certainly in error. Would he do that which was said here to be "a shame?" Of course, not.

[For further discussion of whether the hair is the only covering that is needed to carry out the requirements of the passage, see pages 21-23, Objection No. 7].

VERSE SIXTEEN

"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God". – Consider the word "contentious". [The word that is here translated "contentious" appears in Ezek. 3:7 where it is translated "stubborn" in Bagster's Sept.] Suppose someone at Corinth insisted, *in agreement with Paul*, that women were to be covered and men uncovered. Would *this* person have been contentious? Of course not. On the other hand, suppose someone had insisted, *in opposition to Paul*, that it was right for women to pray uncovered and men to pray covered. Would not *this* person have been contentious and caused contention? Of course he would? So Paul is saying: If any man seem to be contentious (by contending for uncovered women and covered men), we have no such custom *as the one he is contending for*. Neither do the churches of God have this custom of uncovered women and covered men. He has no apostolic precedent, nor do any of the churches of God condone his custom. He is alone in his contention.

Since Paul has shown that none of his associates nor any church of God would agree with the man who

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contended for uncovered women and covered men, should we not still today say of that man's contention (bareheaded women and covered men), "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God"?

[For a consideration of the argument that "we have no such *custom*" means that the whole discussion, see OBJECTION 11, pages 31-35]

SUMMARY

The doctrine of the passage is clear. In the divine arrangement, there are different levels of service and authority. This is true both in Deity (*God is the head of Christ*) and in humanity (*Christ is the head of man; man is the head of woman*). In humanity, these different levels are to be appropriately designated when engaged in certain activities; namely, while praying or prophesying. For man, he is to pray or prophesy with his head uncovered. The woman, on the other hand, is to be covered. For either to do otherwise is to dishonor their respective heads. While there is no particular shape or size of covering specified, as long as it covers, it is one that may be put on at times (while praying or prophesying), but is not required to be on all the time. Hence, not just the hair nor even long hair. There are many articles that will cover.

This text now only inculcates this practice and attaches this stigma to those who violate it, it also gives a number of reasons underlying the whole. In the case of man: (1) He is the image and glory of God. (2) He was first in creation; she was created for him. In the case of woman: (3) She is the glory of the man. (4) She was created for him. [Both of these are aspects of her relationship to man, or her very womanhood]. (5) Because of the angels. The Corinthians are called upon to confirm this teaching in that they would (6) judge a praying woman to be uncomely if uncovered. (7) Nature itself confirms the correctness of the requirement. Finally, (8) there is no sanction for the contrary practice, either from an apostle or any congregation of God's people.

Perhaps it should be noted that Paul did not give these reasons to establish the principle of headship and subjection. No, he gave these reasons to prompt an action, and that action was the covering and the uncovering of the head. It should be further noted that in obtaining this action, Paul had made no appeal to transitory custom. Instead he appealed to such basic and fundamental things as the very constitution of manhood and womanhood. Men are to be uncovered because of the very nature of man. Women are to be covered because of their very nature as women. Paul could have said: *Corinth has a custom about the covering of the head, and we don't want to offend their custom.* Instead, he said: *Man ought not to be covered because he is the image and glory of God. Woman ought to be covered because of the nature of her creation; because of the angels.* It cannot be proved that he based a single argument on custom.

OBJECTIONS

Objections have been made against almost every Bible teaching, and this one is no exception. We notice some of the ones we have most often heard.

OBJECTION NO. 1: *God chose the covering to show subjection – NOT because of His universal law, but because of local usage and custom the covered head already signified subjection, and the lack of it was a shame. Today, an uncovered woman is not considered shameful nor out of subjection. A hat today just does not mean to a woman what a veil meant when Paul wrote these lines.*

ANSWER: It is purely an assertion that by local usage and custom the covered head already signified subjection (See the next section). Second, it is not being taught that a woman must wear a hat. The Bible says "cover", and there are many articles that will do that. Third, perhaps a covering does *not* mean to some people what it did when Paul wrote, *but the reason it does not is because people have failed to teach what a covering should mean.* The fault does not lie in changing times

and customs, but in the failure to teach faithfully God's Word on the subject.

But on the basis that a covering does not mean today what it meant in Paul's days, most every Bible doctrine could be set aside. For example, a Methodist Bishop has endorsed the use of a hamburger and Coca-Cola in the Lord's Supper because he says that the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine had significance then, but not now. Who believes that? None of my brethren. Yet it is the same argument. And marriage does not mean today, to some people, what it meant then, nor does baptism, discontinue these because "they had meaning then that they do not have to many people today"? No! What we should do is teach the truth on these and the covered head as well. To the properly informed person today, the covered head of a woman as in I Cor. 11 still means today what it meant then, assertions to the contrary not withstanding.

OBJECTION 2: Most scholars say that the instructions here are simply the customs of that day and are not binding on us today since we do not have that custom.

ANSWER: No doubt there are some scholars who say that Paul is simply teaching the customs of the day, and that women always appeared in public with heads covered. On the other hand, there are other scholars just as weighty, if not more so, who definitely do not say this. In fact, I am convinced that the preponderance of the evidence is otherwise. Consider these quotations:

Cambridge Bible for Schools and College: *"N. The remarkable fact that the practice here enjoined is neither Jewish, which required men to be veiled in prayer, nor Greek which required both men and women to be unveiled, but peculiar to Christians."*

Morris in Tyndale Series: *"Jewish men always prayed with their heads covered (as they still do). Greek women, as well as their menfold, prayed with head uncovered."*

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Expositor's Greek Testament: *"Paul's directions do not agree precisely with current practice. Jewish men covered their heads at prayers with the Tallith . . . Amongst the Greeks both sexes worshipped with uncovered heads."*

Vincent's Word Studies: *"The Romans, like the Jews, prayed with the head veiled . . ."* (Vincent is speaking of men.)

Pulpit Commentary: *"Having his head covered . . . The Jewish worshipper in praying always covers his head with his Tallith".*

Moffat Series: *"Men and Women worshipped bareheaded in Greek rites".*

Robertson in Word Pictures: *"The Greeks (both men and women) remained bareheaded in public prayer".*

W.E. Vine, Commentary on 1 Corinthians: *"Among the Jews the heads of the men were covered in the synagogue. Among the Greeks both men and women were uncovered".*

Others, like Kittle's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, could be quoted to the same effect. From this information, please note the following chart.

CHURCH AT CORINTH			
	"Custom"	I Cor. 11:1-16	Conclusion
Jews	Men-covered	Men-Uncovered	Contrary to custom of Jews
Acts 18:8	Women-covered	Women-covered	
I Cor. 10:1			

Greeks	Men- uncovered	Men- uncovered	Contrary to Custom of Greeks
Acts 18:8	Women- Uncovered	Women- covered	
Rom. 15:26-27			

What shall we say to these things? According to these scholars, the chart shows clearly that even though there were both Jews and Greeks in the church at Corinth, *Paul's instructions were contrary to the custom of both*: contrary to the Greeks, in that he required women to pray with covered heads, whereas they "customarily" prayed with uncovered heads; and contrary to the Jews, in that he required the men to pray with uncovered heads, whereas they "customarily" prayed with covered heads. Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 11 is definitely

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not the customs of the day but is contrary to it, if these scholars are correct. It will take more than just an *assertion* that Paul is appealing to a local custom which exemplifies the principle of subjection, or an assertion that all scholars agree that the practice here enjoined was in keeping with the customs of Paul's day. Again, I am not saying that NO scholar says these were just the customs of the day. What is being said is that there are many, and just as important as the others, who do not so state. And I am made to wonder why it is that people who often make such an appeal to scholars on this point never appeal to the scholars here quoted. Why not quote them? In this connection, we could be content to stay with the Bible text, and it does not base a single argument on custom. He who teaches that it does deal with custom will have to get that idea from somewhere other than the text. And he won't get it from scholars, if he will take *all* of them.

It is often claimed that the "custom" of covering the head was just like that of foot-washing and greeting with a holy kiss: the kiss was a custom to show cordiality, and foot washing was a custom to show hospitality, and covering the head was a custom to show subjection. I raise this question: "Who said covering the head was a custom just like foot-washing and the holy kiss?" Did God say so? If so where? There is no such scripture. But what about foot-washing and the holy kiss. From the following scriptures (Gen. 27:26-27; 45:15; Ex. 4:27; 18:7; 2 Sam. 14:33; 20:9; Luke 7:45; 15:20) it can be seen that "kissing" had been a practice for thousands of years before New Testament times. And from these scriptures (Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Judges 19:21; 1 Sam. 25:41; 2 Sam. 11:8; Luke 7:36-44), it can be shown that "foot-washing" was practiced (a "custom") for thousands of years before Paul said "Salute one another with a holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16). Yet no man can take the scriptures and show that the matter of covering the head was a practice (a "custom") when paying or prophesying for any years before Paul wrote I Cor. 11:1-16. Therefore, they are not just alike.

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OBJECTION NO. 3: *The passage did not require ALL women to cover their heads THEN, only those who were inspired (pray or prophesy), and it does not require ANY woman to cover her head now, for none are inspired today – and that is what the word prophesy means. The passage is limited to inspired people.*

ANSWER: The passage *does* include all women and all men, for it says, "every man . . . every woman". Also, the passage does not say pray AND prophesy, but pray OR prophesy, that is, a person who does either one, not a person who does both. Look at this comparison:

1. *Every person riding in or driving a car with seat-belt unbuckled breaketh the law.*
2. *Every woman praying or prophesying with head uncovered dishonoreth her head.*

Sentence 1 applies to a person even if he is unable to drive. He need not be able to do both. *If he does either one, he must be buckled.*

Sentence 2 applies to a woman (and conversely to a man) who prays even if she is unable to prophesy. *If she does either one, she must be covered.* And surely ALL WOMEN and ALL MEN prayed whether they were inspired or not. If women did not pray because they did not lead the prayers, then no man prayed unless he led the prayer. No; all prayed, both men and women, inspired or uninspired, leaders and followers. If all do not pray, we should quit saying "Let US ALL pray". Furthermore, if the passage had no application to uninspired persons, then a man at Corinth could have preached (uninspired) and prayed (uninspired) with his head covered! And the women could have attended bareheaded, just as long as they did not pray or prophesy! Who believes that?

INSPIRED PRAYERS: Sometimes it is claimed that since praying and prophesying are here mentioned together, then both of them must be inspired because prophecy was. No so. In Rom. 12:6-8 prophecy is mentioned in connection with "giving, ruling, exhorting, and ministry". Are we to conclude that all these were in-

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spired just because prophecy may have been? Inspired giving? Inspired ruling? Certainly not. There are other passages where prophesy is mentioned in the same verse with other acts that are clearly uninspired; e.g. Amos 7:12 "go. . . into. . . Judah, and there *eat bread, and prophesy*". Was this an inspired "bread-eating"? Surely not. Just because the two are mentioned together does not mean that both are inspired or uninspired.

1 Cor. 14:13-17 is often cited as an example of inspired prayer, but in that passage was not the prayer content furnished by the man doing the praying ("my spirit prayeth" vs. 14), and only the "tongue" provided by God, so that this passage would not speak of an inspired prayer, but of an example of God furnishing the tongue in which to pray? Even so, it could be granted that "inspired praying" might take place, and it still would not mean that inspired praying is what is discussed in 1 Cor. 11. *There is not one*

word or hint in 1 Cor. 11 about inspired prayers or praying in the Spirit! It says "pray" but says nothing about "inspired praying". It says "every man praying. . . Every woman praying". It includes all people who pray, and praying was not limited then to inspired people. Since both men and women still pray today (though only one man leads in the assembly) the passage applies to both today.

PROPHECY ALWAYS MEANS INSPIRED SPEECH. Again, this could be granted and still not mean the passage does not apply today as he has just been shown, for praying is mentioned, too. But is it true that prophecy always means inspired speech. No doubt it does practically every time it is used in the Bible. However, there are some places that make me reluctant to say it always means inspired speech (I Kgs. 18:29; Jer. 23:21; Is 30:10, and Titus 1:12 to mention a few.). Also there are scholars who do not define prophecy as always meaning inspired speech (See Lenski on I1 Cor. 12:10; Willis Beecher in the Prophets and the Promise, page 103, Pulpit Commentary Vol. 6 page 399.). [For a thorough treatment of this question write for a free copy of Windell Wiser's booklet, "A Reply To Bill Cavender's "THE

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WOMAN AND HER COVERING", Rt 2, Box 417, Athens, AL 35611 OR [click here to read the web version at this site - mjw](#)]. Remember, even if prophecy always means inspired speech, it is clear that prayer is not so limited, and the passage deals with men and women who may do either. So the passage is not limited to inspired people.

OBJECTION NO. 4: *Since the passage discusses women, who prophesy, and such could not be done by them in the assembly (I Cor. 14:34-35), then the passage is not discussing what takes place in the assembly.*

ANSWER: In the first place, the passage discusses both men and women. Since men could pray or prophesy in the assembly, it will not do to say that the assembly is excluded from the discussion. Also, both men and women pray. Prayer takes place in the assembly. Hence the assembly is included in the passage. Again, we say if women do not pray because they do not lead the prayers (and the passage says nothing about "leading prayers") then men do not pray either, unless they are the one leading the prayers! And we should quit saying, "Let US ALL pray" in the assembly, if only the speaker is praying, and the women and other men do not pray. Who believes it?

Also, if the passage is not dealing with the assembly, then it requires women to cover their heads when praying in private, but allows them to be uncovered when praying in the assembly! Imagine, she must be covered when praying in her closet, but may be bareheaded when praying in the assembly! Who believes it?

Is there any possibility that a woman could have prophesied (in the sense of inspired speech) in the assembly? According to 1 Chronicles 25:1-7, prophesying could be done by singing, and according to 1 Sam. 10:5-6; 9:13; 19:18-24, an entire group could prophesy simultaneously, perhaps even a whole church (1 Cor. 14:23-24). It is not being claimed they did, only that it was *possible*. If it ever happened, Paul said "let her be covered".

OBJECTION NO. 5: Women have always been in subjection to man; not only in the New Testament (Pet.

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3:1-6; Tit. 2:3-5; 1 Tim. 2:12-15; Eph. 5:22-23), but also in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:15) and even at creation, yet nothing is said in any of these passages about her wearing a covering on her head to show this subjection, except 1 Cor. 11:1-16. This shows that the covering was for a limited people (prophetesses) and/or for a limited situation (where her covered head was the customary sign of subjection).

ANSWER: It is true that the woman has been subjected to man in all ages, and there is no scripture that says her head was to be covered in prayer under the Old Testament. However, it does not follow from this that the covered head was limited to prophetesses, for there were prophetesses (Miriam Ex. 15:20; Deborah Jdg. 4:4) under the Old Testament but these prophetesses were not required to cover their heads. Hence, the claim that this requirement is limited to prophetesses is not so. There must be another explanation

There are many things that God requires under the New Testament that he did not require under the Old Testament. The covered head is one of them. God did not allow the Jews to eat all kinds of meat, yet they were *created* to be eaten (hence, from creation) (1 Tim. 4:3). God allowed the Jews to divorce and remarry but "from the beginning" (creation), it was not so (Matt. 19:8). Just because a thing (the covering) may be required now, but was not required under previous dispensations, does not mean that such is a custom. If it does, then eating or not eating meats was just a custom for the Jew, and marriage and divorce is just a custom. This should show that though God required woman's subjection to man in all ages, while not requiring her covered head to show this as He does under the New Testament, such a matter is not just a matter of custom. If it is, so is it with marriage, the eating of meats and many other things.

OBJECTION NO. 6: The word for cover (katakalypto) in I Cor. 11 requires a specific type head-covering, namely, a veil. It must cover the entire head including the face, and it must hang down from the head. Anything

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less than that, such as hats, turbans, kerchiefs, mantillas, do not cover and are substitutions, as much as sprinkling is a substitute for baptism.

ANSWER: First, of all, let it be noted that even if such a covering is intended, this does not nullify what Paul says. It would simply require such a covering. What is often done is to argue as though this is the kind of covering required, and since nobody does that today, then the rest of the passage is not binding either. No, if the passage means a "veil that covers the head and hangs down from it" that it what woman ought to wear. And in spite of the assertion to the contrary, there are many articles which will do this; scarves, shawls, mantillas, and even some hats.

The idea that the word *katakalupto* requires "to hang down from" is theoretically derived from the etymology of the word: *kata* meaning "down" hence "hang down from", and "*kalupto*" meaning "to cover"; thus *to cover by hanging down from*. Some scholars says this. Still others say differently, such as "come down upon". The next paragraph gives instances where the word is used and the meaning cannot be "hang down from". If we are going to insist on etymology, the word translated cover in 11:15 is from the Greek word *periballo*, which etymologically means *to throw or cast (ballo) around (peri)* hence "*to wrap*". This is just as specific as *katakalupto*. To be consistent, he would argue that a woman's covering must specifically be a veil that covers and *hangs down from* the head, that man ought also to argue that her hair just as specifically must cover her head by being thrown or cast (*wrapped*) around it? Who believes it? Strangely, even those who argue that the covering of vss. 5-6 must hang down from, will not say that her hair must be wrapped around her head. No! They will let her hair hang down !! If they are going to let that which should be wrapped around hang down from, why to they object when others want to let that which they say should hang down from be wrapped around?

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While I Cor. 11 is the only New Testament passage where *katakalupto* is used, it occurs at least 22 times in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint). In Num. 22:5 Balak sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites and said, "they *cover* the face of the earth". Did they "hang down from" it? And did they completely cover it so that none of it could be seen? No. In Ezek. 38:9 a cloud is said to *cover* the land. Did it hang down from it? In 38:16 the same expression "cover the land" is found, but here the word is *kalupto* without the *kata* prefix. If it be argued that the preposition *kata* requires the meaning "hang down from", how can it be explained that in these two verses the two words (*kalupto* and *katakalupto*) are used interchangeable? A number of other passages could be given, both in the Septuagint and in classical authors, but these should suffice to show that *katakalupto* does not *necessarily* mean "cover so as to hang down from". However, I surely agree that the import of the word is "to cover", but even the English says that. Bobby pins do not cover, a one inch strip of ribbon does not cover, unless it is an unusual head! Yes, it should cover, but the passage does not specify with what. There are many articles that will do that: shawls, scarves, mantillas, veils, and even some hats. And the passage does not simply say "a sign". Rather it teaches a covering for a sign, but it is a covering, not just a sign. The passage says nothing about the face being covered. After all, her hair is given for a covering, but it does not cover her face, does it (vs. 15)?

If as some claim, the covering here discussed is specific that it must be a veil and nothing but a veil, why do translations vary: KJ "covered"; ASV "veiled"; Berkley "veiled" and "headcovering"; Wuest: "shawl"? I have seen **katakalupsis**, the noun form of the word, described as a **mitra**, and this latter word is variously translated turban or snood. Thus: her head-covering (**katakalupsis**) consisted of a **mitra** (turban or snood). It must not be quite as specific as some claim. It says cover. It does not specify with what. Neither should we.

OBJECTION NO. 7: 1 Corinthians 11:15 says a woman's hair is given her "for a covering", so if a woman has long hair, it is the only covering she needs.

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ANSWER: There can be no question that a woman's hair is a covering. The text says that. But that the hair is the *only* covering discussed in these verses is another matter. For example, in this verse which says "her hair is given her for a covering", the word translated "covering" is a completely different word from the one that is used in the rest of the passage. This in itself suggests that there are two coverings involved: one needed when praying or prophesying; the other is the hair mentioned in verse 15 which is "on" all the time.

In this later regard, please notice that the passage requires a covering for a woman *when she prays or prophesies*. This passage does not concern itself with how they appear when they go to town, or how they appear when they plow in the field. As far as the Bible is concerned, a man may cover his head when he plows but he may not cover his head when he prays. As far as the Bible is concerned, a woman may go to the store with her head uncovered, but she may not pray uncovered. The covering, then is one that must be "on" at certain times, and may be "off" at other times. The covering under consideration, then, is "put-on-able" and "take-off-able"; it is removable. This cannot be said of a person's hair. Man cannot cut his hair off when he prays, and then quickly grow him some more when he goes to plow. A woman cannot cut her hair off when she goes to the store, and then quickly grow herself some more when she gets ready to pray. Thus it can be seen that the covering discussed when praying or prophesying is a removable one; or as it is sometimes called, an artificial one, such as a veil, a scarf, a bonnet, even some hats, etc. It is not th hair, nor even long hair. If it were, then the covering would be on all the time, and there would have been no need for Paul to have limited it to the time when "praying or prophesying". But that is the very thing he does. The hair, therefore is *a* covering, but it is not *the only* covering discussed in this passage.

Also, according to this passage, a woman's hair may be long (vs. 15); it may be shorn (vs. 6); or it may be shav-

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en (vs. 5). When her hair is grown long, it is a covering (15), and when it is shorn or shaven it is a shame (5-6). Paul says for her to be uncovered is the same as for her to be shorn or shaven. This certainly does not mean "to be uncovered" is the same *action* as to be "shorn or shaven", for he says it is the same *as if* she were shaven. Therefore to be uncovered is *not* the same *act* as being shorn or shaven (which takes the hair off), then covering the head (vs. 5-6) is not the same act as letting the hair grow long (vs. 15). But if covering the head (vs. 5-6) is not the same act as letting the hair grow long (vs. 15), then the head is not covered as required in vss. 5-6, when the hair is grown long. This being true, letting the hair grow long (long hair) does not do the covering required in verses 5 and 6. Long hair *signifies* to a woman what the covering of verses

5 and 6 signifies (it is her glory), *but it is not the same act*. Therefore, the covering of vss. 5-6 is one act, and letting the hair grow long is a different act. Both signify the same thing, but they are not the same action. Long hair is one covering, and verses 5 and 6 another covering.

But someone might say, "If the hair is not the covering that is required, why did Paul say her hair was a covering"? The fact is: the matter of long hair was not brought up to *establish* the practice of covering the head when praying or prophesying. Revelation had already done that in verse 5-12; namely *it is a glory for a woman to be covered*. How did nature say it was a glory for a woman to be covered? Why, nature gave her long hair, and that is a glory. Why is her hair a glory? Her hair is a glory *because* (Gk. *hoti* for) it is a covering (vs. 15). A covered woman is a glory. Who said so? Nature did (vs. 15), and so did revelation (vss. 5-13). But they said so with two different coverings. Nature's covering (her hair) "on" her head all the time, and revelation's covering required to be "on" only when "praying or prophesying". The hair is a covering, but it is not *the only* covering required. Two are required.

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OBJECTION NO. 8: *In verse 13 Paul's appeal to JUDGMENT shows that he is discussing custom. He did not say, This is something you learned from the gospel. He said, This is something you can judge in yourselves. He left it up to their judgement. This appeal to judgement proves that this is a matter of custom for we do not judge matters of Divine law or matters of sin, but we can judge in ourselves about the comeliness of custom.*

ANSWER: It is true that Paul appealed to the Corinthians to judge in themselves, but it is NOT true that he "left" it up to their judgement. And it is NOT true that we do not judge in matters of Divine Law or sin. In Acts 4:19 Peter and John told the council, "whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye". They called on the council to "judge" in a matter of "right in the sight of God". But, did they "leave" this up to the council's judgment just because they said, "judge ye"? If the council had judged that it was "right" to harken unto them rather than unto God, would it have been right, and would Peter and John have "left" the matter there? Of course not. And by appealing to them to do the judging, Peter and John did not put the matter in the realm of custom either, did they? Also, these same Christians were called upon to "judge" about a matter (the Lord's Supper) which surely is not a custom but a "thus saith the Lord" — Divine Law. They were told, "judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ" (I Cor. 10:16). Did this mean Paul "left" it up to their judgement, or that the Lord's Supper was a matter of custom. Certainly not. But they were called upon to "judge". This shows that an appeal to "judgement" is not an appeal to custom, and such an appeal to judgement does not mean that Paul is "leaving" it up to their judgement. We do "judge" some things that have to do with Divine Law.

OBJECTION NO. 9: *In verse 13 Paul urged them to judge the COMELINESS of a practice. He said, Is this comely to you. The standard of judgement was to be*

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what the people considered to be comely, and the word comely has to do with what is proper; what is in good or poor taste, with what is the custom. Comeliness varies as the customs vary. There are things that I judge to be comely, that my grandfather would not judge to be comely, because the custom of what is comely has changed. So again, this word COMELY shows that he is dealing with custom. Look at it this way:

A	B
"Judge in yourselves:	is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered" (vs. 13)

So A. The locale's judgement of a practice is the determining factor, if

B. The practice is a matter of what is comely.

So that if in a given locale (Corinth), an uncovered woman is judged by the people of that locale (Corinth) to be uncomely, she must not be uncovered. If, however, in that locale, such is not so judged by them, she is not required to be covered. He leaves it up to the locale's judgement of what is comely – which means custom or good taste.

ANSWER: There are many things that should be said about this, but one of the first ones is: What should she do in a locale where their judgement is what is comely is not uniform: that is, some judge it uncomely, and others judge it comely. What should she do there? If she does not wear one, she will be comely to some, but uncomely to others.

COMELY: The claim that this word means custom, or simply what is good or proper taste, *simply is not so*. The word that is here translated comely appears seven times in the New Testament (Mt. 3:15; 1 Cor. 11:13; Eph. 5:3; 1 Tim. 2:10; tit. 2:1; Heb. 2:10; 7:26), but is NEVER means custom or good taste in any of them. It deals with what is appropriate or fitting based upon the nature and character of the person or thing involved. For example, Heb. 2:10 says that it "became" (the word translated "comely" in 1 Cor. 11:13. It was comely) for God to make Christ perfect through sufferings. Good taste for God to do that! Preposterous. But it

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was comely – appropriate or fitting for God to do that because of the very nature and character of God. Matt. 3:15 says that it "became" (the same word as translated comely in 11:13. It was comely for) Christ to fulfill all righteousness and be baptized. Good taste or custom?! Absurd. But it was appropriate for Him because of the very nature and character of Christ. And look at Eph. 5:3 where fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness are said to be things that are not "befitting" (same word as translated comely in 11:13). Are fornication and covetousness merely poor taste or custom?! Ridiculous. Hence, the claim that the word "comely" shows the passage is dealing with good or poor taste or custom is a false claim. Comeliness has to do with what is

appropriate based upon the nature and character of the person or thing involved. Since woman is created for man, is the glory of man, and man is her head, the covering of her head in prayer is an expression of her relationship to man, her very womanhood, [Do these facts **of themselves** require a woman to be covered? Well, we do not have these facts merely "**of themselves**". We have them used by an inspired apostle to teach her to be covered. Hence, from **his** teaching and conclusion based on on these facts, she ought to be covered. The passage does not mention custom in this regard.] and it is not comely for one of *that* nature and character to pray otherwise. To do so is to reject her very womanhood, and not just a custom.

The idea that comeliness changes as custom changes — that what is comely in one time and locale may not be comely in a different time and locale that idea has some grave consequences — . Comeliness is not just a matter of taste, as some places think a woman is comely if she is plump while other places think she is comely if she is thin, for there are places that think *she is comely if she is bare from the waist up*¹ According to the argument we are considering she should. This shows the argument is not true. Some argue that the modern swim-suit is not uncomely on the beach, while it might be in town. Do you really believe that whatever a locale judges to BE COMELY WILL BE ALL RIGHT FOR THE Christian? Or do you just believe that in relation to the covering? If you say, the scriptures say more about dress than just its comeliness, to this I reply, "True and the scriptures say more about the covering than just its comeliness. They also mention headship, creation, the glory of God an an-

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gels". Just as we are not to be governed solely by what some people might judge to be comely about women's dress, so we are not to be governed solely by what some people might judge to be comely about her being covered.

Sometimes it is claimed that Paul expected the Corinthians to judge her uncomely if uncovered because they were in the habit of seeing her no other way, hence this was a custom. This is purely an assertion, but not proof. For example, I am in the habit of seeing churches of Christ eat the Lord's Supper every Sunday, and I have never seen them do it any other way. Does that mean that such is a custom? Of course not. Paul might well have expected them to judge her uncomely, but that does not mean that he expected it on the basis of their customs. I can think of several reasons other than custom why he might have thus expected. Again, this is just an assertion but no proof whatsoever. It might prove *what* they did, but it does not prove *why* they did it. But when we have positive instructions that such had to do with creation, the relationship between man and women, angels; we can know why it ought to be done today; viz. The same reasons that Paul gave, and none of them was "custom".

OBJECTION NO. 10: *Paul's use of the word NATURE (11:14) shows that he is appealing to custom, for nature means custom in this passage.*

ANSWER: This is often asserted but not yet proved. The fact is, the word here translated nature is not easily defined and limited, and contextually it has different shades of meaning. In proof of this, just look at the following ideas on the word in this

passage. Adam Clarke says it refers to woman's natural ability to grow more hair than a man. Arndt and Gingrich put it under: "3. **Nature as the regular natural order**". McKnight, "*reason and experience*"; Vine, "*the regular law and order of nature*"; Thayer and Edward Robinson both say, "*native sense of propriety* [for a further discussion of these two, see below]. In view of such diversity, it seems somewhat arbitrary and prejudiced to select just one definition (often it is the one

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that is thought to say "custom") and act as though no other is even suggested. Is that really being fair? Most say the verse is saying something like: "It's just *natural* that long hair is a glory to a woman, but a shame to a man". So much so that it is virtually universal for women to have longer hair than men. The passage calls this fact, of longer hair for women, "nature", and says that such teaches that a woman with it is a glory because she is covered. Remember, nature's teaching about hair was not introduced to *establish* the practice of a woman's praying with her head covered. Revelation had done that in verse 4-12. Nature's teaching about hair (one covering) was then introduced in verse 14 to *confirm* and *illustrate* revelation's teaching about the other covering. What is it that prompts so many people in so many places to have women with longer hair than men? Whatever its exact definition may be, the Bible calls it "nature", and shows that tit confirms the requirement for her to be covered in prayer as a right requirement.

Sometimes a part of Edward Robinson's comments on this passage is noted in an effort to prove the word translated nature means custom. I am convinced that, taking all he says on the passage, he neither defines the word for nature to mean custom nor does he use custom as a synonym. Here is that portion of his Lexicon that deals with 1 Cor. 11:4. (The italics are his): "*the nature* of any person or thing, the natural constitution, the innate disposition and qualities. a Of persons, in a moral sense, the native mode of thinking, feeling, acting, as unenlightened by the influence of divine truth . . . Spec. *a natural feeling* of decorum, *a native sense* of propriety, e.g. in respect to national customs in which one is born and brought up; 1 Cor. 11, 14 **TYPE IN GREEK HERE** *doth not your own natural feelings teach you?* It was the national customs among the Hebrews and Greeks, for men to wear the hair short, and women to wear it long", and then he cites the passage for his comments about hair. Please note the following points:

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1. His general definition of the word is "nature" in the sense of what is "natural" or "innate" (and innate means inborn). 2. Specifically of 1 Cor. 11, he says, "Spec. (That is, specially in a special and particular sense, HOH) *a natural feeling* of decorum, *a native sense* of propriety" Note: "*natural*" and "*native*" (Webster says native means inborn). 3. Robinson also gives us his translations of verse 14, "*doth not your own natural feeling teach you?*" Especially notice that Robinson's translation does NOT say, "*doth not your CUSTOM teach you*". Instead it says, "*doth not your own NATURAL FEELINGS teach you*". If he thought our word for "nature" means "custom", why did he not translate it

"custom". Why did he translate it "*natural feeling*". Clearly, he does not think the word translated "nature" means "custom". He plainly says it means *natural feeling* and translated it *natural feeling*. He does say, "in respect to national custom in which one is born and brought up" but he must not mean that these customs would be the correct meaning of the word translated nature or he would have translated it "custom". But he did not; he translated it "*natural feeling*". What then does he mean by the reference to "customs"? His reference to customs is probably in the same vein as A. Barnes who, having said of "nature": "That sense of propriety which all men have and is expressed in any prevailing or universal custom", goes on to add later that nature "refers to a deep internal sense of what is proper and right". In other words, certain customs exist, but the reason they exist is because there is a deep internal sense (*nature, natural feeling* of decorum) that produced the custom is something else. Nature is not custom. Nature produced custom. Thus Robinson would be saying, "*Doth not even nature* (that is, *your own natural feeling*) *teach you in respect to your national customs*". So that with Robinson, as with Barnes, certain national customs sprang from the teaching of nature (their own *natural feeling* of decorum). Not that the customs were the natural feeling, but

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the natural feeling (nature) caused the custom to come to be. Just like godly sorrow is not repentance, but godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). On this basis, not even Robinson says "nature" means "custom". With him "*nature*" means "*natural feeling*" and certain national customs are an effort to express this *natural feeling* of decorum, or *nature*.

Thayer and Robinson both use the phrase "native sense of propriety", and Barnes' wording is virtually the same. What does "native sense of propriety" mean? Webster says that native "commonly heightens the implied contrast with what is acquired and/or artificial, and often denotes, esp. in the case of qualities, that which is inborn and inherent". Thayer says of the word for nature (italics are his), "*nature, i.e. natural sense, native conviction or knowledge, as opp to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training or prescribed by law . . . The native sense of propriety . . . 1 Cor. xi. 14*". Note the comparison: Webster says that native means inborn as contrasted with what is acquired. Thayer says nature means native as opposed to what is learned etc. Aren't they both saying the same thing? Native (nature) means inborn as contrasted with what is acquired through learning and training. So Thayer does not say the word for nature means custom, and most assuredly he does not give custom as the definition of the word for nature.

It is not being claimed that none gives custom as a meaning of the word for nature. I am not even saying that inborn is *necessarily* the meaning of the word for nature here. It is a *possible* meaning. I am saying that neither Thayer nor Robinson define the word for nature to mean custom here.

Sometimes it is urged that nature in this passage could not mean inborn or instinct, because it says nature teaches long hair is a shame to a man, yet there were some cultures where men had long hair, but it was not a shame to them. They wore their

hair long by nature, custom, or current practice, but nature (in the sense of instinct or inborn) did not teach them that long hair was

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a shame, for they were not ashamed of it. In fact, they were quite proud of it. Well, some homosexuals say that they are that way "by nature", and that there is nothing wrong with them. They not only are not ashamed of it but quite forward about it. Is that just custom, too? That's *their* "practice". The fact is, the Bible says that people can change the *natural* . . . Into that which is *against nature*" (Rom. 1:26). This could be true whether in nature's teaching about hair, or in nature's teaching about the sexes. And when such has been practiced by them long enough, it could be said to be their "nature". But it would not be endorsed by God. [Please do not accuse me of saying that people who wear or teach long hair are no better than homosexuals. I say no such thing. I am simply trying to show that people can change what is nature in one area (sex), and people can change what is nature in another area (hair). But neither has God's approval]. Stealing is "natural" in some cultures, but is isn't right. There have been cultures where women rule the men. Such would be their "nature", in that sense, but that doesn't mean that God approves. It just shows how far some people can go from God.

We ask again, What is it that prompts so many people in so many places to have women with longer hair than men? Whatever its exact definition may be, the Bible calls it "nature" and uses it to argue that the requirement for her to be covered in prayer is a right requirement for her to be covered in prayer.

OBJECTION NO. 12: *The word custom in verse 16 shows the passage is dealing with customs. The word translated custom in 11:16 does not mean practice or usage prescribed by law. There is a word (ethos) that means that, and it is translated custom, too. If the passage were discussing a divine law it would have used the word (ethos).*

ANSWER: It is true that there are two words translated custom in the New Testament. However, according to W.E.

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Vine's Dictionary, the word translated custom in 1 Cor. 11 is basically the same word as the other one, except in 1 Cor. 11:16 the word has a prepositional prefix "*sun*". Also in Matt. 27:15 we are told that Pilate was "*wont*" to release the prisoner. The word here translated "*wont*" is *etho*, (**has line over o**) a verb that is akin to the noun *ethos* translated custom in Acts 15:1 where the Jewish law of circumcision is discussed. Yet in John 18:39 we have the *same event* as discussed in Matt. 27:15, but in John it is said to be a "*sunetheia*" (the same word as in 1 Cor. 11:16). In Matt. 27:15 it was Pilate's "*wont*" (*etho*), (**has line over o**) but the same event (John 18:39) uses the word (*sunetheia*). So you might say there is something of an interchangeable use of the words. There must not be all that much difference between them. Also in Josephus' Antiquities (Book X chapter IV, Section 5) he says of the Passover observed during the days of Josiah "*all things were performed according to the laws, and according to the custom*

of the forefathers", which looks considerably like such expressions as Lk. 2:42, Acts 15:1 etc. where the word is (*ethos*), but in Josephus it is "*sunetheia*" (the word in 1 Corinthians 11:16). There just doesn't seem to be all that radical a difference between the two words.

Neither will it do to say that this word puts it all in the realm of custom, as some had a custom of covering and some didn't. It was *all* a custom. On that basis, assembling ourselves together is all a custom (Heb. 10:25) "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom (ASV) of some is*". Some had a "custom" of assembling, and some had a "custom" of not assembling! Is assembling just a matter of custom? If it is in 1 Cor. 11:16, why isn't it in Heb. 10:25? Vine shows that the word in Heb. 10:25 is the same word as 1 Cor. 11:16 except in 1 Cor. 11:16, the word has a prepositional (*sun*) prefix. This should show the fallacy of claiming that the matter of the covering is a matter of custom. Look at the comments already given under verse 16 for a discussion of just what that custom there is.

Recently I heard it asserted that in verse 16 (*if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God*), Paul was not saying that anyone WAS contentious, only that someone might SEEM TO BE contentious, though he really wasn't contentious; the reason that this "any man" might seem to be contentious (but wasn't) was that he required something (the covering) of the Corinthians that was not required of anyone else; the reason it was required of the Corinthians and not of others, was the Corinthians had the covering as their custom, but no one else did; and finally, the "any man" who might SEEM TO BE CONTENTIOUS (but wasn't) was none other than — *mirabile dictu* — (*check this page 33T*) the apostle Paul himself!! This incredible exegesis has the following assumptions.

1. It ASSUMES the "any man" of verse 16 is the apostle Paul.
2. It ASSUMES the word translated "seem" means "appears to be but really isn't".
3. It ASSUMES the expression "we have no such custom" means that "none of the apostles or their associates or any church of God had such a custom as the one the Corinthians had."
4. It ASSUMES that the reason Paul might "seem to be contentious" but really wasn't, was he bound something on the Corinthians that was not bound on Paul, nor on his associates, nor on any other church of God except the one at Corinth.

Let me say first of all that in investigating the particular claim, I have consulted literally dozens of lexicons, grammars, commentaries, and translations. In all this, I have not found even one that agrees with a single one of these assumptions. Yet each of these assumptions is a crucial one if this explanation is to be valid. No lexicon, no grammar, no commentary, no translation know to me agrees with *any* of these assertions. This does not prove nor disprove it, but to take a position for which not one grammar, nor one lexicon, not even one commentary will substantiate a single part of it,

surely makes the whole thing look forced and suspect. Let's consider each of these assumptions.

1. The same construction for "if any man seem to be" appears at least 4 times in 1 Corinthians 3:18; 8:2; 11:16; 14:37). Not one time is the "any man" referring to Paul.
2. I do not know of a lexicon, grammar, commentary or translation that says the expression 'seem to be' in this verse means "appears to be but really isn't". Every one of them says the man *really was contentious*, or was disposed to be contentious, or some expression that denoted certainty. None of these even suggests that he might only appear to be contentious but really wasn't.
3. If the expression "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" means that neither Paul, nor his associates, nor any church except the one at Corinth practice what is here inculcated, we have some serious difficulties. *Paul and his associates let their hair grow long and covered their heads when they prayed or prophesied!!* Furthermore, the women in all the churches except Corinth prayed or prophesied bareheaded; in fact they could be shorn or even get their head shaved, because it was to Corinth (not to the other churches) that Paul said, Women must be covered, must not be shaved nor shorn! Who really believes that Paul and other men actually let their hair grow long, prayed or prophesied with their heads covered, except when they were at Corinth? Who really believes that the women in places other than Corinth went bareheaded and with their hair shorn or their heads shaved. Yet the argument says, We have no such custom about the covering or the hair, but you Corinthians do. Therefore you men must be uncovered, but we (Paul and his associates) and other churches of God cover our heads in prayer and let our hair grow long. You Corinthian women must pray covered and have long hair, but women in other churches may pray uncovered and have their hair shorn or get their heads shaved because they do not have the custom that you do. Is that what "we have no such custom"

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4. means? That's what the argument says, but who really believes these consequences?

5. It is a false assumption that if Paul bound something on the Corinthians that he did not bind on others, that he would thereby "seem to be contentious". He refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:1-5), but he did circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). Yet he was not "contentious" in so doing, nor did he "seem to be contentious" by so doing. Assumption No. 4, like all the others, is not so.

As already noted: How would a person at Corinth be contentious? If he insisted *in agreement with Paul* that women are to be covered and men uncovered, would he be contentious? No. If he insisted *contrary to Paul* that women could be uncovered and men covered, would not that man have been contentious? Certainly Paul says, If any seem to be contentious (by contending for uncovered women and covered men), we have no such custom as the one that man is contending for.

CONCLUSION

It has been our aim to show that the teaching of this passage is still in effect today. The reason for our believing this is that Paul did not base the requirement on custom. Instead he based it upon things that were true then (Headship of Christ to man, man to woman; man the glory of God, angels, and the like) and just as true today. All of the reasons he gave then that should have compelled the action are still valid today. If the reasons he gave *then* compelled the action *then*, since the *same reasons exist today*, they ought to compel the *same action today*. If not, why not? This same conclusion has been well stated by Godet: "Was this conviction solely a matter of time and place, so that it is possible to suppose, that if he (Paul) lived now, and in the West, the apostle would express himself differently? This supposition is not admissible. For the reasons he alleges are taken, not from contemporary usages, but from permanent facts, which will last as long as the present earthly econ-

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omy. The physical constitution of woman (vs. 13-15) is still the same as it was when Paul wrote, and will continue so till the renewing of all things. The history of creation, to which he appeals (vs. 8-12), remains the principle of the social state now as in the time of the apostle; and the sublime analogies between the relations of God to Christ, Christ to man, and man to women, have not changed to this hour, so that it must be said, either the apostle was wholly wrong in his reasoning, or that his reasons, if they were true for his time, are still so for ours, and will be so to the end".

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EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS MATERIAL IS CURRENTLY BEING PROOFED AND POSTED AND IS ABOUT 36 numbered pages in total length. Please check back for remainder. THANKS...mjw

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