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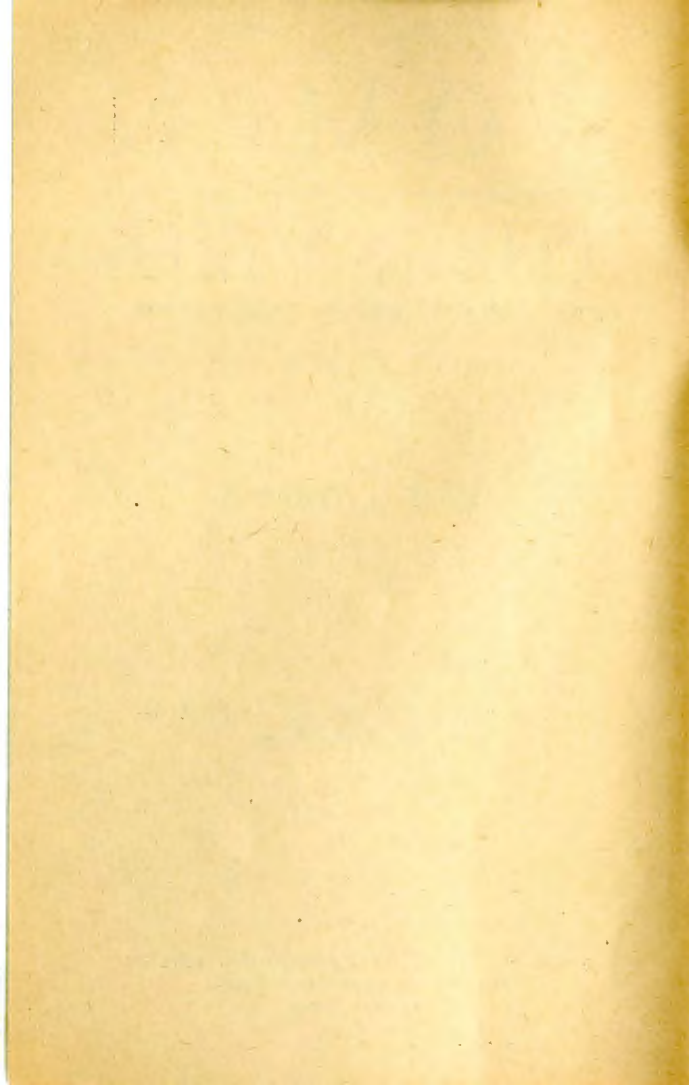
AND

THEIR VEILS

BY
LESLIE G. THOMAS

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Women and Their Veils

By LESLIE G. THOMAS

In First Corinthians 11:2-16 the apostle Paul discusses the rules and principles respecting the covering of the head by the women when they meet in the public assemblies to worship God. The question is not an academic one to be settled by the wit and reason of men, but one that is deeply embedded in the principles by which God governs the human race. Neither does it owe its authority to the customs of the people who lived when Paul wrote these words. Even a casual reading shows that God intended that the regulations given in the passage should be observed by his people at all times, and surely no one thinks that God bound a heathen custom on his church. It would be more nearly correct to say that the heathen customs grew out of a misunderstanding and a perversion of those divine principles, otherwise it might be difficult to account for the origin of many pagan customs. Again, the point at issue is not whether a woman should wear her hair in its natural length or whether she may have it cut to conform to current style, but instead, it deals directly with her attitude toward the authority of God. It is safe to assert that a large number of those who give this passage any consideration, do so with more or less bias in their approach to it. Speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah says, "Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idol into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of

his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols" (Ezek. 14:4). When people do not make the learning of God's will their first consideration, but come to his word with their preconceived ideas (it matters little how they came to have those ideas), seeking confirmation for them therein, they usually find what they are looking for, because God said that he would answer them according to the multitude of their idols, that is, he would answer them according to what they themselves desire. It will not suffice to say that this is an Old Testament doctrine and therefore it is not applicable to us, for Paul said that the coming of the lawless one would be "with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (cf. John 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22). And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:8-12). God expects every one to approach his word with an open mind, make an honest effort to find out exactly what he said, and then, out of a sincere love for him and his truth, to endeavor to the best of his ability to do precisely what he commands. Nothing short of this can be pleasing to him.

James 2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point (to stumble in i. e. sin against, one law—Thayer), he is become guilty of all." Of

course, it makes no difference as to which law is thus deliberately set aside or rejected, as long as God is the author of it. See Matt. 5:19; Heb. 10:28, 29. In this connection it should be remembered that a refusal to study his law—any part of it that concerns us—will in the end amount to a rejection of it. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 2:1-3. When one item—any item—is thus disregarded, God's authority is challenged. One cannot justly expect to plead ignorance for his lack of obedience unless he has done his best to learn the truth. But if one does his best and lives up to whatever light he has, he may look for further opportunities of increasing his knowledge of God's will, "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. 13:12). Jesus further insisted that "if any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17).

A principle that should govern Christians in all their efforts to please God—always remembering that "whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17); and "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31)—is set forth in Romans 14:23, viz., "But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Moses E. Lard, commenting on this passage, said, "He is

condemned, not so much for his act, but for eating before feeling sure that he is right. We must not do a thing till we know it is right But how is it that such an act can be a sin? It is a sin because it is reckless and presumptuous—reckless, in being rash and careless—presumptuous, in being performed as to God without conviction that it is right.” In his Exegetical and Analytical Commentary on Romans, I. B. Grubbs says, “The statement ‘Whatsoever is not of faith is sin’ was quoted by Augustine as having reference to faith in the gospel—to faith as a fundamental principle and element of Christian life, and this mistake has been repeated in a vast multitude of instances. It is found in commentaries, sermons, tracts, disquisitions, etc. That it is an error, however, is perfectly clear from a mere glance at the context. ‘He that doubts is condemned if he eats.’ Surely the doubt, the lack of faith in this case is not a doubt or lack of faith as to the gospel, or the truth as it is in Jesus, but simply and alone a distrust or doubt as to the religious propriety or rightfulness of the doubter’s own act.

“It is absolutely certain, then, that the apostle condemns as sinful a lack of conscientiousness even in those matters that are regulated by mere opinion touching their moral and religious attributes. And it matters not in the least whether these opinions be theoretically correct or not, as far as the need of conscientiousness in their practical observance is concerned; for it is universally true that ‘Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.’”

In speaking of the attitude some take toward ideas which conflict with their own, C. R. Nichol says, "There is a disposition on the part of some, when they hear a doctrine which conflicts with the position they have accepted, to reject it without giving it any special attention. Others attempt to refute everything they hear that is counter to their position, without allowing the question to arise in their minds, that it is possible for them to be wrong in their views. Some, when they are unable to show that a mistake has been made in deductions from certain passages of Scripture, and in this way prove the position to be incorrect, make an effort to show that it conflicts with some other passage of Scripture. It should be remembered that a position which contradicts the teaching of the Bible cannot be true. Not a few, when they find they are wholly unable to meet an argument, and their doctrine is out of harmony with it, attempt to discredit it by filing objections and subjecting it to ridicule—ridicule is a trenchant weapon."

For one to act, then, on any given point without trying to learn God's will respecting it is to sin, just as much so as it is to reject what one knows that God said. The passage under consideration is a part of the inspired record addressed to Christians, and it is certain that by means of it God meant to convey some sort of information to his people. The Holy Spirit gave no meaningless instructions. Can we be right in our attitude toward God's word and not make some effort to learn what he intended to teach? Let us look at the passage then, carefully and prayerfully, and

try to learn what he purposed for us to know.

In the analysis which follows several Greek words have been transliterated for the convenience of those who may want to find them easily in their original setting and study them at greater length. Transliteration is employed because the average student finds it difficult to read with ease when only the Greek letters are before him. Those who know no Greek, or those who do not care to make a special study of the terms used can read straight ahead and get the point by simply skipping the Greek words.

The Passage Analyzed Conciliatory Preamble

2 Now I praise (epaineo: to approve—Thayer) you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions (paradosis: a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing—T.), even as I delivered them unto you.

Basis of the Ensuing Instruction

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head (kephale: metaph. anything supreme, chief, prominent: of persons, master, lord: tinos, of a husband in relation to his wife—T.) of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Corollary A.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head (bodily head) covered (kata kephales echo: a veil hanging down from his head—T.), dishonoreth (kat-aischuno: disgraceth—T.) his head (Christ.)

Corollary B.

5a But (de: denotes a contrast) every woman praying or prophesying with her head (bodily head) unveiled (a-kata-kaluptos: not covered—T.) dishonoreth (katischuno: disgraceth—T.) her head (man);

Reason Assigned for Corollary B

5b for (gar: because—T.) it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven (xurao: to get one's self shaved—T.)

Ground for the Statement of 5b.

6 For if a woman is not veiled (kata-kalupto: to veil or cover one's self—T.), let her also (kai: in addition to) be shorn (keiro: absolutely of shearing or cutting short the hair of the head—T.): but if it is a shame (aischros: base, dishonorable—T. Cf. 1 Cor. 14:35; Eph. 5:12; Tit. 1:11) to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled (kata-kalupto).

Reason for this Difference Between the Sexes

7 For a man indeed ought (ophello: to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity to do something—T.) not to have his head (bodily head) veiled (kata-kalupto), forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Explanatory Justification for v. 7.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: 9 neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man:

An Additional Reason for Covering the Head

10 for this cause (dia touto: on account of this truth) ought (ophello: see note in v. 7) the woman to have a sign of authority (exousia: a sign of the husband's authority over his wife, i. e. the veil with which propriety required a woman to cover herself—T.) on her head (bodily head), because of the angels.

Interdependent Relation of the Sexes: a Caution

11 Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God.

The Voice of Nature: An Appendix

13 Judge ye in yourselves: Is it seemly (prepo: to be becoming, seemly, fit—T.) that a woman pray unto God unveiled (akata-kaluptos)? 14 Doth not even nature (phusis: the nature sense of propriety—T.) itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair (komao: to let the hair grow, have long hair—T.), it is a dishonor (atimia: dishonor, ignominy, disgrace—T.) to him? 15 But if a woman have long hair (kome: hair, head of hair—T.), it is a glory to her: for (hoti: because) her hair is given her for (anti: instead of, cf. Luke 11:11; James 4:15—T.) a covering (peri-bolaion: a veil, cf. Heb. 1:12—T.).

A Warning Against Controversy

16 But if any man seemeth (dokeo: by way of courtesy, things certain are some-

times said *dokein* (to seem), as in Heb. 4:1—T.) to be contentious (*philo-neikos*: fond of strife, contentious—T.), we (I and those who are like minded with me—Meyer) have no (do not permit or allow—see Conybeare and Howson) such custom, neither the churches of God (that is, the churches do not act differently from us, possibly the apostles).

A letter from the church in Corinth regarding some prevailing conditions in the congregation there had been sent to Paul. See 7:1. This letter must have contained an inquiry on the subject which is discussed in the passage now before us. See Meyer. They also must have said something about how they regarded his teaching. See verse 2.

As has already been stated, the question under consideration is not respecting the length that a woman should wear her hair, but the manner in which she should appear, insofar as her head-dress is concerned, when she comes into the public assembly for worship. "For that Paul," says Meyer, "is giving instruction for the sphere of church-life, not for family worship (Hoffman), is quite clear from *propheteuein* (to prophesy) added here and in verse 5, which does not suit the idea of the private devotions of a husband and wife. . . . Moreover, vs. 5f and 10 presuppose publicity; as indeed a priori we might assume that Paul would not have prescribed so earnestly a specific custom for the head with a view only to the family edification of a man and his wife."

Every careful Bible student has, doubtless, observed that the New Testament con-

tains principles, the application of which will solve every problem that can confront a Christian. It is not possible to find specific instructions in the Scriptures for every individual situation that may arise in life, but there is no circumstance that can come before a child of God that cannot be met by the principles of the Bible. Of course, one may not always know in just what part of the Book to look for the principles that will cover a given case or how to apply them when he finds them, but they are there nevertheless. Accordingly, before Paul answered the question the Corinthian brethren asked him, he laid down a principle which covered in detail every item involved in the query submitted. "St. Paul," remarks Archdeacon Farrar, in the *Pulpit Commentary*, "as was customary with him, applies the loftiest principles to the solution of the humblest difficulties. Given a question as to what is right or wrong in a particular instance, he always aims at laying down some great eternal fact to which the duty or decision is ultimately referable, and deduces the required rule from that fact." The principle laid down by Paul in this case is stated in verse 3: "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."

After stating the principle, Paul proceeds with its application to the present question. M. C. Kurfees observes that "verse 3 states, in general terms, the divine order as to headship and dominion in the case of woman, man, Christ, and God, and verses 4-16 show

how that order should be respected and how it may be disregarded." While we do not have the exact form of the question the Corinthians asked Paul, yet from his answer we can draw a very good idea as to what it contained. It seems that at least some of the women in the church in Corinth had adopted the habit of attending the public assembly and engaging in the worship without their customary head-dress. This practice was such a radical departure from the common method of procedure that certain ones in Corinth felt justified in addressing their query to Paul. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown think that "the Christian women on the ground of abolition of distinction of sexes in Christ, claimed equality with the male sex, and, overstepping the bounds of propriety, came forward to pray and prophesy without the customary head-covering of females. The gospel, doubtless, did raise women from the degradation in which they had been sunk, especially in the east. Yet, while on a level with males, as to the offer of, and standing in grace (Gal. 3:28), their subjection in point of order, modesty, and seemliness, is to be maintained."

In verse 4 the apostle presents a corollary, viz., "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head (bodily head) covered, dishonoreth his head (Christ.)" It is obvious that the first head mentioned is man's bodily head, for that is the only one he has the power to cover. It is equally plain that the second head in this verse is Christ, for if not, then the headship of Christ set forth in verse 3 has no application in the lesson. A veil

was the symbol of subjection, and therefore for a man to wear a covering on his head in the public assembly would be equivalent to recognizing human headship. But since he owes allegiance to no head lower than Christ, to wear the symbol of authority would be to dishonor his head, that is, Christ. "The man who prayeth or prophesieth in the presence of women with a veil upon his head, by wearing that sign of inferiority on such occasions, dishonoreth his head, Christ, who hath subjected women to men, and in particular hath authorized men to teach them" (James McKnight.) In commenting on this verse, Adam Clarke says, "With his cap or turban on, dishonoureth his head; because the head being covered was a sign of subjection; and while he was employed in the public ministration of the word, he was to be considered as a representative of Christ, and on this account his being veiled or covered would be improper."

The second corollary is in direct contrast with the first one. "But every woman praying or prophesying with her head (bodily head) unveiled dishonoreth her head (man)." (Verse 5a). Thus, observes Albert Barnes, she "shows a want of proper respect to man,—to her husband, to her father, to the sex in general. The veil is a token of modesty and of subordination. It is regarded among Jews, and everywhere, as an emblem of her sense of inferiority of rank and station. It is the customary mark of her sex, and that by which she evinces her modesty and sense of subordination. To remove that, is to remove the appropriate mark of such

subordination, and is a public act by which she thus shows dishonour to man. And as it is proper that the grades and ranks of life should be recognized in a suitable manner, so it is improper that, even on pretense of religion, and of being engaged in the service of God, these marks should be laid aside."

The reason assigned for the second corollary is given in the remaining part of verse 5: "For it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven." That would be a sign of disgrace. Vincent says that "among the Jews a woman convicted of adultery had her hair shorn, with the formula: 'Because thou hast departed from the manner of the daughters of Israel, who go with their head covered, therefore that had befallen thee which thou hast chosen.' According to Tacitus, among the Germans an adulteress was driven from her husband's house with her head shaved; and the Justinian code prescribed this penalty for an adulteress, whom, at the expiration of two years, her husband refused to receive again. Paul means that a woman praying or prophesying uncovered puts herself in public opinion on a level with a courtesan."

The ground for the statement in verse 5b is next presented. "For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled" (Verse 6). The word "also" in this verse plainly shows that two vells are under consideration, viz., the natural hair and the veil with which the head was covered. "If her head be not covered with a vell," says Albert Barnes, "let her

long hair be cut off. Let her lay aside all the usual and proper indications of her sex and rank in life. If it be done in one respect, it may with the same propriety be done in all." In saying this, Paul does not tell them to put themselves on a level with the courtesan. Meyer calls it a demand for logical consistency, serving only to make them feel the absurdity of this unseemly emancipation from restraint in public worship.

Verse 7 gives the reason for the difference in the head-dress of the man and the woman: "For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." A proper consideration for man's relation to man, and God's will regarding them both will reveal the reason for the two veils or coverings which women are required to wear. By reading 1 Tim. 2:11-14 it will be seen that Paul told the women to "learn in quietness with all subjection" for two reasons, viz., 1. "Adam was first formed, then Eve." 2. "Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." In other words, when woman was created, she was created for man (1 Cor. 11:8, 9), and was subjected to him (Eph. 5:22-24), not as a slave, but as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). Then when Eve sinned, God said to her, "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Thus twice was woman subjected to man—at creation and at the fall. She had nothing to do

with the order of her creation, and so, instead of an artificial veil (the word "artificial" is used in contradistinction to "natural," because the former is the one that may be put on or left off at will). God gave her a covering of glory to symbolize her first subjection to man, but when she yielded to the tempter and fell, she exercised her own free moral agency and sinned against her Maker, and because of this sin, she was subjected to man a second time. The artificial veil, to be worn in the public assembly, is a memorial of her transgression, that is, her transgression through Eve as her representative. As already indicated, in Bible times a veil on the head of a woman in the presence of men was a symbol of subjection or subordination. Cf. verses 3-5 and the following note from Dean Alford. "The head of the man in this respect of honoring or dishonoring has been (3) explained to be Christ. Him he dishonors by appearing veiled before men, thus recognizing subjection to them in an assembly which ought to be conformed to Christian order. The case of the woman is just the converse. She, if she uncovers herself in such an assembly dishonors her head (the man) by apparently casting off his headship; and if this be so, the apostle proceeds, why not go further and cut off her hair, which of itself is a token of this subjection?" Let it be noted that this learned scholar says that both the artificial veil and the hair, the natural veil, symbolize woman's subjection to man. Bloomfield, in his Greek New Testament with English Notes, says, "The custom was for all

married women, as well as single ones, to wear veils in public. Hence, to depart from that custom (which was regarded as symbolical of subjection to her husband and among the Jews as a token of modesty) would be to act out of character, and thus occasion disgrace to the husband and scandal to the church in the eyes of the heathen."

An explanatory justification for verse 7 is contained in verses 8 and 9: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." "This is a simple statement," says Albert Barnes, "of what is expressed in Genesis. The woman was made for the comfort and happiness of the man. Not to be a slave, but a help-meet; not to be the minister of his pleasure, but his aid and comforter in life; not to be regarded as of inferior nature and rank, but to be his friend, to divide his sorrows, and to multiply and extend his joys; yet still to be in a station subordinate to him. He is to be the head; the ruler; the presider in the family circle; and she was created to aid him in his duties, to comfort him in his afflictions, to partake with him of his pleasures. Her rank is therefore honourable, though it is subordinate. It is, in some respects, the more honourable because it is subordinate; and as her happiness is dependent on him, she has the higher claim to his protection and his tender care. The whole of Paul's idea here is, that her situation and rank as subordinate should be recognized by her at all times, and that in his presence it was proper that she should wear

the usual symbol of modesty and subordination, the veil." This will help to understand some things mentioned earlier in this study, that is, to the effect that this injunction was based on principle rather than on custom or even precept, and therefore, for one to disregard it is to despise the authority of God. Divine authority and not current style is the standard by which conduct is to be determined.

Verse 10 gives an additional reason for wearing the veil, viz., "because of the angels." The verse reads: "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels." In the Greek text of Westcott and Hort verse 10 is an independent and complete sentence, and not a part of the sentence beginning with verse 8, as in the American Standard Version. A. T. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, observes that a "moral obligation therefore rests on the woman in the matter of dress that does not rest on the man." The word "sign" means "symbol." A crown on the head of a king is the symbol of his regal authority. "The veil on the woman's head is the symbol of the authority that the man with the uncovered head has over her" (Robertson). Just what is meant regarding the angels is not clear, though the Corinthians evidently understood it. Since both the Jews and early Christians supposed that angels were present in the worshipping assembly (Robertson, Farrar, et al), it is possible that that was what Paul had in mind. See Heb. 1:14. Bengel remarks that "as the angels are in relation to God, so the woman

is in relation to man. God's face is uncovered; angels in his presence are veiled (Isaiah 6:2). Man's face is uncovered; woman in his presence is to be veiled. For her not to be so, would by its indecorousness, offend the angels (Matt. 18:10, 31). She, by her weakness, especially needs their ministry; she ought, therefore, to be more careful not to offend them." Vincent thinks that more is meant by the apostle's statement than merely to avoid exciting disapproval among the angels. He continues: "The key-note of Paul's thought is subordination according to the original divine order. Woman best asserts her spiritual equality before God, not by unsexing herself, but by recognizing her true position and fulfilling its claims, even as do the angels, who are ministering as well as worshipping spirits (Heb. 1:14). She is to fall in obediently with that divine economy of which she forms a part with the angels, and not to break the divine harmony, which especially asserts itself in worship, where the angelic ministers mingle with the earthly worshippers; nor to ignore the example of the holy ones who keep their first estate, and serve in the heavenly sanctuary." (Word Studies in the New Testament.)

Lest the man should assume to himself too much superiority, and look with disparagement upon the woman, Paul next cautions them by calling attention to the interdependent relation of the sexes. "Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things

are of God" (verses 11, 12). The design of this passage, according to Albert Barnes, "is to show, that the man and the woman are united in most tender interests; that the one cannot live comfortably without the other; that one is necessary to the happiness of the other; and that though the woman was formed for the man, yet it is also to be remembered that the man is descended from the woman." The phrase "in the Lord," as Robertson notes, is "in the sphere of the Lord, where Paul finds the solution of all problems."

Verses 13-15 form a kind of appendix to the discussion proper (Meyer), and in them the "voice of nature" speaks in corroboration of the things already set forth and discussed. "Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled?" This was an appeal to their natural sense as to what was proper and right. Paul had made several arguments in the application of the principle he laid down at the beginning, and now he calls upon them to give the testimony of their own native sense of propriety, even apart from what he had said by way of revelation. "Doth not even nature itself (that is, their native sense of propriety) teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her." It is well to observe the difference in the words for "dishonor" as used in verses 4 and 5, and in verse 14. See the analysis. The difference in the sexes is made obvious by nature's bestowing on the woman a greater abundance of hair than on the man. Some think that

the hair of a man would grow long and be like that of a woman if he would permit it, but as Adam Clarke remarks, "the hair of a male rarely grows like that of a female, unless art is used, and even then it bears but a scanty proportion to the former. Hence it is truly womanish to have long hair, and it is a shame to the man who affects it." The reason for the difference in the amount of hair granted to each is to be found in the biological or constitutional differences in the sexes. There is something belonging to the constitutional nature of the woman that causes long hair to grow on her head, which is lacking in the nature of the man. This difference may be described as a "secondary sexual characteristic." Some people have dark hair, and others light or red. This is also due to peculiar bodily functions. Left to nature, the colors usually remain the same, and the only way for human beings to change them is by the adaptation of some external means to that end. Left to nature, this sexual difference respecting the hair will always be apparent.

"His fair large front and eyes sublime
declared

Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly
hung

Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders
broad:

She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore."

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

"For her hair is given her for a covering."
According to Thayer, as shown in the anally-

sis of the passage now before us, the second "for" in this clause means "instead of." A similar use of the word anti (for) is found in Luke 11:11. "And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for (anti) a fish (that is, instead of a fish) give him a serpent?" See also the marginal reading of James 4:15, as given in the American Standard Version. The following authorities abundantly sustain Thayer in his rendering of the word. "Instead of a covering: i. e., as a natural head-dress." (Geet.) "This long and rich hair is given to her anti peribolaïou, in place of a veil." (Godet.) "It is here in its common meaning of 'exchange' or 'in place of' (one being set, as it were, over against another)." (Ellicott). "For her hair was given her instead of a veil, in the first constitution of her nature, and before the arts of dress were invented or needed." (Doddridge.) "For her hair is given her for a covering—should be, Because her hair has been given her in place of a covering. The word 'covering' is limited by the connection to a covering for the head, or veil. The apostle's argument is that her long hair is a glory to woman, because it is a natural veil, and that this is therefore a providential indication of the propriety of the veil itself for woman, and of its impropriety for man." (Gould.) "Ground for long hair being an ornament to a woman: because it is given to her instead of a veil, to take its place, to be, as it were, a natural veil. This again implies that to wear a veil, as in the case in hand, is a decorous thing. For if the komee (hair) is an

honor for a woman because it is given her in place of a veil, then the veil itself, too, must be an honor to her, and to lay it aside in prayer a disgrace" (Meyer.)

Let it again be noted that from creation God intended that women should wear a veil as a symbol of her subjection to man, but instead of an artificial covering he gave her a covering of hair. God could (let it be said with reverence) have given man and woman a "head of hair" just like, and required woman to wear an artificial veil as a symbol of her subjection to man, but instead of that he gave her a covering of glory, one in which she could take pride. Later on, when woman sinned, God required her to wear a second (artificial) veil or covering, which is a sign of the authority to which she must submit as a memorial of her transgression. See again Gen. 3:16.

But some one may ask, "If the people in Bible times were required to wear a veil, in the commonly accepted meaning of that term, should not women wear a veil now?" It should be remembered that the object of the veil was to cover the head, and it is altogether possible that the idea of the veil was conceived because of its similarity in purpose to that of the hair. They both covered the head and hung down from it. (That is the literal meaning of the Greek term from which we have the word "veil.") It is the thing itself that counts, and not so much the kind. The Bible, in a general way, regulates one's clothing, that is, it lays down certain principles for that purpose. For instance, God does not allow, with his approval, the

sexes to wear each other's garments. "A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God." (Deut. 22:5). He also prohibits the wearing gaudy, immodest clothes, which are calculated to excite impure desires in the spectators; clothes which are worn merely for show; and garments which are more expensive than the wearer is able to afford. (See 1 Tim. 2:8-10 and 1 Pet. 3:1-6. There was a time when many of the women wore "bonnets" to the public meeting places. Surely no one would contend that it was wrong to change from bonnets to hats, so long as the style of the hats does not violate the general teaching of the Bible respecting dress. The head is covered whether a veil, bonnet, or hat is on it. The divine injunction requires that the head be covered in the public assembly, but it does not demand that a certain style of covering be worn. In speaking of the fruit of the vine used in the Lord's supper, we nearly always refer to it as the "cup," because that was the name of the container used at the time of the supper's institution. Because of the association the name of the container was given to the contents. Just so in the case of the veil. It was first used to cover the head, that is, the head was covered with a veil, and for that reason the word "veil" came to be used synonymously with the covering. The covering is the important thing. The kind or style of covering is only secondary.

The question of the length that a woman

ought to wear her hair is only mentioned incidentally. Paul was not discussing that feature of the question. He does, however, plainly tell why God gave her long hair, and mentions its "natural length" and the difference between the nature and length of the hair of men and women. This certainly should be enough to cause women to stop and think before they purposely interfere with the natural design of God in this respect. To act purely from a desire to "be in style," and without regard to God and his will, is to impeach his wisdom and to violate the spirit of Rom. 14:23. Extreme caution should be exercised here. It will hardly suffice for one to say that she wears her hair short for convenience, or comfort, or even "to improve her looks," for such reasons were never thought of, and they would have been wholly inadequate before it became the style to "bob" the hair. Before this custom became general many were severely criticised for conforming to it, even by those who are now its most ardent devotees. If women are going to interfere with the natural length and design of their hair, they certainly should consider God and his will before they do it.

The discussion of the subject proper has been furnished, but before Paul leaves it he gives one word more of warning against all controversy about it. "But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (verse 16). It is not clear as to just what Paul meant by the statement, "we have no such custom." Some have sought to invalidate the whole

passage by saying that he meant that they had no such custom as that of men praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered, and women with their covered. But that view is so obviously wrong that it does not need correcting. That was exactly the custom they did have, and which Paul had just been discussing. See verses 4 and 5. He either meant to say that he and those like-minded with him, possibly the other apostles, together with the churches of God everywhere, did not approve or allow women to engage in the public worship unveiled, or that they did not approve or permit brethren to have a habit or custom of being contentious about the commands of God. So far as the lesson to us is concerned, it does not matter which idea was intended. Meyer is of the opinion that reference is to contentiousness. Most commentators, however, including Vincent, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Farrar, Macknight, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, and Albert Barnes, think that Paul was speaking of the custom of women worshipping with their heads uncovered. They all, including Meyer, agree that that was what he had in mind when he said, "But if any man seemeth to be contentious, that is, contentious about what he had said in the previous verses regarding the manner in which women should appear in the public assembly." Macknight paraphrases the passage thus: "Now, if the false teacher resolves to be contentious, and maintains that it is allowable for women to pray and teach publicly in the church unveiled, we in Judea have no such custom, neither any of the

churches of God." In commenting on this verse, Albert Barnes says, "If any man, any teacher, or others, is disposed to be strenuous about this, or to make it a matter of difficulty; if he is disposed to call in question my reasoning, and to dispute my premises and the considerations which I have advanced, and to maintain still that it is proper for women to appear unveiled in public, I would add that in Judea we have no such custom, neither does it prevail among any of the churches. This, therefore, would be a sufficient reason why it should not be done in Corinth, even if the abstract reasoning should not convince them of the impropriety." And finally, Farrar remarks, "If you Corinthians prefer these abnormal practices in spite of reason, common sense, and my arguments, you must stand alone in your innovations upon universal Christian practice."

