**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #32**

**Women Worshipping with Uncovered Heads**

**1 Corinthians 11:1-16**

**1 Corinthians 11**

***1*** *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

***2*** *I praise you because you have been mindful of me in everything and are holding to the traditions, just as I passed them on to you.*

***3*** *But I want you to realize that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.* ***4*** *Every man who prays or prophesies with covered head brings disgrace upon his head,* ***5*** *and every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head brings disgrace upon her head, for that is one and the same thing as her shaved head.* ***6*** *For if a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, then she should cover her head.* ***7*** *A man ought not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but a woman is the glory of man.* ***8*** *For man did not come from woman; but woman from man.* ***9*** *Nor was man created for woman, but woman for man.* ***10*** *For this reason a woman ought to have authority over her head, because of the angels.*

***11*** *In the Lord, however, neither is woman independent of man, nor man of woman.* ***12*** *For just as woman came from man, so man is born of woman; but everything comes from God.* ***13*** *Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with uncovered head?* ***14*** *Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears his hair long, it is degrading for him;* ***15*** *but if a woman wears her hair long, it is her glory? For her hair has been given [to her] for a covering.* ***16*** *If anyone is inclined to be argumentative (about this), we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.*

**Problems at the Church’s Assembly**

What was the Problem?

The church gathers to pray and some members prophesy during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (11:2-23). Verses 2-16 point to a Christian woman taking part in a church service with an uncovered head. It is accepted by many NT historians that the common practice in the Greek Roman life was that women were accustomed to wearing a veil in public and often even at home. This was also the custom among Jewish women in Palestine but may have not been taken seriously in the Diaspora (Jews scattered elsewhere). Married women at times removed their veil in heathen temples and that such a custom was being imitated by Christian women in Roman Corinth in church gatherings was the problem. Let’s examine the various parts of this passage.

First, the problem is addressed in verses 5-6, 10, 13, 15) by Paul of Christian women praying or prophesying with uncovered heads. Paul is indeed concerned with the head covering of women for maintaining the social image of the church.

Second, the problem is about a woman wearing a head-covering or her failure to do so: (verse 5) “with uncovered head,” (verse 6) “let her cover herself” and (verse 13) it is not a way of dressing her hair or a specific hairdo, despite some of Paul’s comparisons that refer to shorn hair (verse 6), shaved head (verse. 6), or long hair (verses 14, 15). It has nothing to do with “disheveled hair” or “flowing and unbound hair” (ibid.), or with “a bare-faced woman” (no veil), or with the oriental face covering as it is today in some Islamic families. It concerns the use of something like a head veil, a mantilla, but could have been part of a garment drawn up over the head.

Third, There is also the homosexual styles of wearing hair. Paul speaks of the degrading case of a man wearing long hair (verse 14). This has been explained by referring to Philo’s negative description of pederasts and their mode of braiding and adorning the hair of their heads (De spec. leg. 3.7 §37).

Fourth Paul is dealing with a specific problem about the activity of Corinthian women during worship. In the Genesis story of creation, woman has been created “for man,” to be his companion and helper; hence as “the glory of man” she should cover her head (verse 7–12). Theologically, the order is God, Christ, man, and woman which is not that of “ranks” but of the successive appearances in the plan of creation and salvation. God, Christ, man and woman is a historical manifestation, not a ranking, for God and Christ are not two ranks. This would be the later Arian Heresy. Man and women cannot be two ranks because they were made to be “One Flesh.” When this was broken by the fall, that fallen nature was restored by Christ and in Christ to the New Creation.

**Text Study – Chapter 1**

**VERSE 1 –** *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

**VERSE 2 –** *I praise you because you have been mindful of me in everything and are holding to the traditions, just as I passed them on to you.*

In other words, *If you imitate Paul as he imitated Christ, then you will be imitating Christ as he represented God.* Paul begins with “praise,” because, although he cannot approve of the Corinthian practice that he will now discuss, he admits that Corinthian Christians in general have been adhering to traditions that he has already taught them.

**Tradition**

The “traditions” here are unspecified, but they may have some connection with the topic to be discussed in verses 3-16 concerning “veiling” (Cf. 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6). Or it may be “traditions” mentioned here and in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 regarding the principles that guide the relationship of husband and wife which had been adopted by the church.

Paul has used the verb ***paradidomi***, “hand over” (also in 1 Cor 11:23; 13:3; 15:24; Rom 1:24, 26, 28; 4:25; 6:17; 8:32), and “transmitting” or “passing on” a tradition (occurs again in 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; also in 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; Gal 1:9, 12; Phil 4:9).

The NT refers also to Jewish traditions (see Mark 7:3-4; Acts 6:140) and this was very likely the Pharisaic rules. Rabbis used such a term in Aramaic ***qibbel min***, “receive from,” (J. Jeremias, Eucharistic Words of Jesus, page 104). Here, it is what has been handed over by a teacher and received by a community.

**Head but Not Headship**

**VERSE 3 –** *But I want you to realize that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.*

Here we have three-part enunciation that Paul left without giving us a detailed explanation. .

*“Of every man Christ is the head.”* The Greek says ***pantos Andros*** meaning “of every male of the human family.” Paul did not use ***anthropou***, “of every human being.” So he means the male.

“Head” has its meaning in Classical Greek and also in Hebrew, but the Gospel is not a by-product of Greek culture in spite of the fact that we have received its records in the Greek NT, nor is it Hebraic in spite of the fact that it was born in Palestine and grew up as part of Judaism. So how do we define the word “head”?

The Greek work ***kephale,*** “head,” has different meanings in Classical Greek:

1. It means the physical, anatomical “head” of a human being or animal. It is used in this sense of the human head in 1 Corinthians 11:4, 5, 7, 10; 12:21. This meaning agrees with the use of the word in Greek literature.

2. A metaphorically use was also known, and the head stands at times for the whole person, especially in a salutation, such as ***phile kephale***, “Dear Head” (Homer, *Iliad* 8.281); this may be its meaning in 11:4, 5).

3 A second metaphorical is used to mean “source” in a few instances: (Herodotus, Hist. 4.91) ***kephalai***, “sources” of a river, along with ***pegai***, “springs” (Orphic Frag. 21A), or Zeus possibly as “source” or “beginning” of all things. Philo speaks of Esau, Jacob’s brother, as the head or source of the whole clan, (De cong. erud. causa 12: 61)

4 A third metaphorical is used meaning “controlling agent,” “ruler,” or “leader,” as in “head” of a department or “headmaster.” Plato (*Timaeus,* 44d) calls the physical head “the most divine part and governor of everything within us.” This metaphorical sense is found often in the LXX (e.g. Judge 11:11; 2 Sam 22:44: Ps 18:43; Isa 7:8-9; Jer 38:7; Deut 28:13, 44; Isa 9:13-14; 19:15).

5. In Hebrew “Rosh” is used like Classical Greek, to mean the whole person (Prov 10:6; 11:26) and metaphorically meaning the beginning of the year is the first or the head of the months (Exod 12:2, Ps 81:3), also the head of the road that is the beginning of the road (Ezekiel 16:25; 21:19)

**What is Absent?**

1. We have not one text that says head means higher or superior or having authority over others.

2. The Theological meaning must rest with the narrative of Creation in Genesis, where head means source or beginning and no more. This is preferred by a good number of Biblical scholars (such as Bruce, Cervin, Colpe, Delobel, Fee, Kroeger, Mickelsen, and Scroggs). It is clear that the NT Greek never connotes authority or superiority.

3. The only appropriate theological meaning here is “the source” of every person’s new being is Christ. This means that the relation of woman, man, and Christ is the relation to their origin or source. Christ is seen as a sort of second Adam, a great theme in 1 Corinthians 15:12-58.

**Head as the Beginning of the New Creation**

1. This must not escape our awareness that Christ is the head of the whole body that is the church (Col 1:18) and He is the beginning of what is newly created the new man, “*but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*” (Eph 4:14-15, and the same is repeated in Col 2:19).
2. If Christ is the head that is the beginning and the source, our languages must concede to the new relation rather than the new relation submits to the old concepts that do exist in every culture and in every language.
3. Elsewhere we read that in the new creation “there is no male or female, slave or free.” “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.  For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” (Gal 3:26-27)
4. A correct reading of Ephesians 5:23-33, should be guided by what is said just now: “*the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church.*”

a. “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.  For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Savior is the one who offered up his life to the church not by authority but by sacrificial love.

b. “Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. The church receives the very life of Christ and is called “his body” and in the “body” there is “one life”.

c. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

d.   “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

e.   “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

f. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

**Basic Un-Answerable Questions:**

1. How do we balance love and submission? Which one has the upper hand? And if authority demands submission, what is the decree of love between two united as one flesh?

2. If Eve was created from the same material of Adam and they were “one flesh” and no one can hate his own body, how can we tailor submission and obedience to “One Flesh” without splitting the One Flesh into Two?

**VERSE 4 –** *Every man who prays or prophesies with covered head brings disgrace upon his head.*

The English language will not tolerate the literal translation, which is “having down from the head.” This is usually understood to mean a veil or cover hanging from the head as in LXX Esther 6:12, “*mourning with head covered*.” From antiquities we learn that Roman statues have been found clearly depicting men, ***capite velato***,“with veiled head,” i.e., with part of their” toga drawn over their heads,” while praying or offering a libation to gods. An example was discovered in excavations where Emperor Augustus’ was covering his head as the head of the Empire (below).



**Augustus**

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| Born 23 September 63 BC – 19 August 14 AD, was the founder of the [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) and its first [Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Emperor), ruling from 27 BC until his death in 14 AD). His statue was found in Julian Basilica in the Corinthian forum; another one of Nero. They portray the emperors as Roman magistrates, combining their religious, civil, and legal roles as head of the empire. B. W. Winter argued that the “socially elite” of Corinth adopted covering their heads and that “Christians who were not among the elite but also chose to follow this Roman custom when they undertook to pray or prophesy” (*After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*, 2001, page, 122-123). |

**Roman Connection**

Is Paul is talking in this passage about what “brings disgrace upon his head,” or condemnation of a Roman official custom or religious practice? Hardly. What is the connection between such a Roman practice and the alleged use of head coverings of Corinthian Christian men? Nothing.

In the context that Paul envisages, the “disgrace” stems from the man’s concealing his status as the “image and glory of God,” as it will be expressed in verse 7. The words, “disgraces his head,” could mean “disgraces himself,” if one sense above of ***kephale*** were to be understood meaning “the whole person,” and it could also means that he disgraces Christ, “the head of every man,” as in (verse 3), from whom he would be concealing himself.

**“Head” has Various Meanings**

**VERSE 5 *–*** *and every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head brings disgrace upon her head, for that is one and the same thing as her shaved head.*

Or we may ask, is Paul referring to an actual practice among Corinthian male Christians? Or he is really discussing, Corinthian Christian women praying or prophesying with heads uncovered? The latter is the better explanation because of verses 5-6, where the main point is “uncovered head brings disgrace upon her head.” “Her head” could mean “the man” of (verse 3), but in light of what follows in verses 5-6, it probably means her own physical head, and not both “heads,” because the noun is singular.

Three things, however, are important in this verse:

1. Paul speaks of “the uncovered head,” of the woman as the counterpart of the man in (verse 4), which shows that the latter phrase cannot mean merely the man’s wearing of long hair as in (verse 14, but rather the covered head of a man.

2. Paul recognizes that Christian women did partake actively in such public prayer and prophecy in a church assembly. This new status of women is not the problem; even if it differs from the custom with which Paul, as a Jew would have been acquainted for women were not allowed to speak or to pray out load in Synagogues in Palestine. It seems rather that Paul has learned that some Christian married women in Corinth were praying or prophesying in church assembly without the customary head covering. Such a woman would bring disgrace to her husband because she behaves as a male.

3. Is Paul’s assertion restricted to “married women”? The Greek ***gene*** can mean either “woman” (14:34-35) or “wife” (7:16). The former sense is almost certainly meant in (11:3). Here (verse 5) it might have the latter sense (see, B. W. Winter, in a detailed study, [*After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*](http://www.amazon.com/After-Paul-Left-Corinth-Influence/dp/0802848982/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1381687059&sr=1-1&keywords=B.+W.+Winter%2C+after+paul), 2001, page 127), because of the mention of the head covering, which was characteristic of married women outside their homes in Roman culture. The phrase ***pasha de gene***, “every woman,” however, seems to express a wider extension: a woman of indeterminate marriage status. The veil is a symbol of a woman’s dignity, worn in public to mark her off as a private person intent on guarding her purity and so maintaining the honor of her husband or father.

Some commentators (Murphy- O’Connor, R Hayes, and others) say that the Greek ***akatakalypto te kerphle*** does not mean “with uncovered head” and has nothing to do with a veil or cover, but means rather “loosed hair” itself as a “covering” of the head. As a matter of fact ***akatakalyptos*** has the same semantic connotation as the Hebrew and it means in Greek, “let his head be uncovered”.

All of this means that Paul is talking about a veil or some kind of head covering distinct from the woman’s hair itself because Paul mentions hair (11:14–15) and shaved heads in this passage and is only by way of illustration. It serves to strengthen his argument about head covering and is not the central problem.

**VERSE 6 (cont.) –** “*For that is one and the same thing as her shaved head.*” One would not have expected this added reason for the disgrace, that the uncovered head of a woman differed not from a female shaved head, which Paul considers not only offensive, but also shameful. The removal of their hair still symbolizes mourning in Egypt and Palestine when women express their grief for the death of a beloved and a husband.

**VERSE 6 (cont.) –** *For if a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off.*

This is just Paul’s touch of sarcasm. Offensive as this statement may seem even today.

**Customs and Disgrace**

**VERSE 7 –** *But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, then she should cover her head.*

Literally “Let her cover herself.” Paul means that the woman should go the full way, not just being shaved but also even being covered all over. Paul is appealing to social custom, which normally would regard the shaved female head as shameful, and which he will eventually relate to nature itself (verse 14). Greek Classical Writers like Aristophanes (***Ἀριστοφάνης***, c. 446 BC – c. 388 BC was a [Greek](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ancient_Greece) dramatist of the Old and Middle Comedy period. He is also known as the "Father of Comedy" and the "Prince of Ancient Comedy," regarded shaved female head as a disgrace (see, The Festival Women. 837; and also the Jewish Testament Job 23:7; 24:7–10.)

**VERSE 7 (cont.) –** *A man ought not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God.*

“Image and glory of God” is a description developed in the NT from LXX (Gen 1:26), where God in deciding to create human beings says: “*let us make a human being according to our image and likeness*,” and also from the context of Psalm 8, where man is the “god of the cosmos.” Glory, means also splendor, and this glory must be maintained in worship. Covering the head for prayer was known in the days of Jesus and Paul. Here Paul breaks away from the Jewish custom.

**VERSE 7 (cont.) –** *But a woman is the glory of man.*

In Genesis 1:26-27, the narrative of creation of the woman was not lesser than the male because she was made out of him from “*his flesh and from his bones.*” Paul expresses the difference of the sexes, but by writing that the woman as ***doxa andros***, “glory of man” (verse 3), he affirms the female as an equal creature: she too is an image of God. A woman is “the glory of man.” This is also a call for the male to respect and to take pride in his female partner.

**VERSE 8 –** *For man did not come from woman; but woman from man.*

Paul is arguing from the order in the creation account (Gen 2:7), where the man is fashioned first, then the woman, “*she was taken from her man*.” We must read Galatians 3:28, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female*.” Paul argues that such differences as of the first creation play no part in the New Creation (2 Cor 5:17ff). These earthly differences in this life: ethnic, social and sexual, have a place here but not in the Church for these differences do not sustain the unity that Christians have and enjoy “in Christ Jesus.”

**VERSE 9 –** *Nor was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

Paul alludes to Genesis 2:18, 20, where the woman is said to have been created “*(as) a helper fit for him.*” This means to keep that order of appearance to maintain fellowship.

**Authority and Angels**

**VERSE 10 –** *For this reason a woman ought to have authority over her head*.

What does “authority” mean?

1. “Sign/symbol of authority” (NRSV, NAB, JB, ESV, NEB, REB,) “symbol of her authority over her head,” but sometimes it is “symbol of the authority of the woman’s husband, to whom she is subordinate.” Subordinate was never used in the NT, here subordination can’t be applied to an unmarried woman.

2. “Symbol/sign of subjection” in the Greek NT authority is found 29 times in the NT, it has the meaning “have the power to do something” and this is correct for Paul adds “in the Lord,” (verse11) so too is the power from the risen Christ and of the dignity to which the female has been raised.

3. However, the genuine force of authority, ***exousia***, is best brought out by the simple translation, a woman ought to have authority over her head, in the sense that, in covering it, she actively exercises control over it, so as not to expose it to indignity. If she unveils it, everyone has control over it and can gaze at her so as to put her out of countenance.

**VERSE 10 (cont) –** *Because of the angels*.

Who are the Angels? We have various meanings:

1. “Because of the bishops” or “presbyters” in the church, understanding angelous as “angels of the churches,” as in Rev 2:1, 8, 12. (St Ephrem the Syrian, and others such as the old Latin commentary on the Letters of Paul known as the Ambrosiaster) but such a meaning scarcely suits this context.

2. “Human messengers,” because attempts to explain them as heavenly beings yields no satisfactory meaning.

3. “In imitation of the angels,” as in (Isa 6:2), where seraphim, as subordinate beings, cover feet and loins in the presence of the Lord and this meaning that might possible the context.

4. “By way of the angels,” meaning the angels who appeared at the time of Christ’s resurrection (Matt 28:2, 5; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4, 23; John 20:12) who are in worship. But we have to prove that this was commonly known in the days of Paul that angles are present in church’s worship.

5. “Because of (the work of) the good angels,” who are considered assisting at gatherings of public worship, as in Ps 138:1 (LXX: “*before angels shall I sing your praise*” cf. Rev 8:3, where an angel functions as a mediator of the prayers of holy people (Theodoret of Cyrus 5th cent and modern scholars such as R Hays),

6. But another sense may be preferred in this passage, for the woman must have authority over her head and cover it, not only because she is in the presence of men, but because she is praying in the presence of God and His angels. In their presence she must not expose “the glory of man” (11:7). If she were to pray or prophesy with uncovered head, she would be exposing herself, the glory of man, and so would not be glorifying God.

7. It was customary for most women in the ancient Near East, Mesopotamia and the Greco-Roman world to cover their hair when they went outside the home. In biblical times women covered their heads with veils or scarves. The unveiling of a woman's hair was considered a humiliation and punishment (Isa 3:17; cf. Num 5:18 on the loosening of the hair of a woman suspected of adultery (III Macc 4:6; and Susana 32).

**We are Not Independent**

**VERSE 11 –** *In the Lord, however, neither is woman independent of man, nor man of woman.*

Literally “neither is woman without man nor man without woman.” “In the Lord” there can be no separation or independence of woman from man, or man from woman. It also serves to limit Paul’s words to their context, the use of a head covering by a woman in public worship.

**VERSE 12 –** *For just as woman came from man, so man is born of woman; but everything comes from God.*

So in the Lord our faith tells us that we are born and are created by what God has ordained, since all things are from God (Gen 2:3; Neh 9:6; Ps 8:7; 104:24; Isa 40:26; 44:24; cf. Ps 24:1-2; 89:12).

**A Note from Philemon – Respecting Women**

If you notice that you have a lack of respect for women be sure that your faith in God as the One Creator who has created both males and females is only verbal that while you say it in the Creed, you don’t really believe in One Creator who has created both. Those who belittle women are not believers in the One God who has created us. In the New Creation where there is no male or female. We have to be careful how we treat each other, for the values of the old creation still govern the life of the church.

**VERSE 13 –** *Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with uncovered head?*

Is this the kind of situation in which a woman should assert her ministry by behaving like a man and praying uncovering her head? Paul expects the Corinthians to say no.

**Nature and the Established Order**

**VERSE 14 –** *Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears his hair long, it is degrading for him?*

Literally “that a man, if he wears his hair long, it is degrading for him?” Paul appeals to “nature,” by which he means the regular or established order of things. Nature is a teacher of human beings, because nature simply represents the general order of nature and it remind us of what is seemly and becoming. As for “wears his hair long,” the Greek ***komao*** means like a “wig” and it is also a beard. Paul may be appealing to Roman custom, where short-cropped male hair was usual.



A Roman wig of a male

Marble bust 119 AD

**VERSES 15 –** *But if a woman wears her hair long, is it her glory? For her hair has been given [to her] for a covering.*

We don’t know for sure what was the problem. Paul looked at woman’s long hair is a gift of God and for her glory. Here it is a matter of decency and socially appreciated outlook.

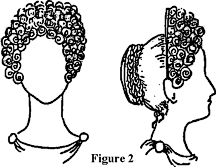


Figure 2 – Pre-Christian

Thomas Hope, *Costumes of the Greeks and Romans*

Perhaps Paul wants women to cover this “wrap-around mantle” whenever she prays to God in public to make Christian women look different.

**VERSE 16 –** *If anyone is inclined to be argumentative (about this), we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.*

Here it seems that there were a church inner discipline that was known to all communities.

**Historical Witness of the Fathers of the Church**

**Head Coverings**

John Chrysostom, 5th Century:

“The Corinthian women used to pray and to prophesy (for in those days women also prophesied) with their heads bare. Meanwhile the men, who had spent a long time in philosophy, wore their hair long and covered their heads when praying, which was a Greek custom. Paul had already admonished them about these things. It seems that some had listened to him but that others disobeyed. Here he praises the obedient before going on to correct the others.”

*-- Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 26.2.

**Submission**

Tertullian, 3rd Century:

“To what kind of a crown, I ask, did Christ Jesus submit for the salvation of both sexes? What crown has he who is the head of man and the glory of the woman and the husband of the church? It was made from thorns and thistles.”

-- *The Chaplet* 14.

**What is the Meaning of Head?**

Ambrosiaster, 4th Century:

“God is the head of Christ because he begat him; Christ is the head of the man because he created him, and the man is the head of the woman because she was taken from his side. Thus one expression has different meanings, according to the difference of person and substantive relationship.”

-- *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles*, 1 Cor 11:3, Ancient Christian Texts, p 171.

John Chrysostom:

“The word head is used in two different senses here, since otherwise absurdity would result. The distance between Christ and man is far greater than between man and woman, on the one hand or between Christ and God on the other, and is of a different kind. Christ and God are equal in substance but different in relationship, and the same applies to man and woman. But between God and Christ the Son on the one hand and man [and woman] on the other, there is a vast difference of substance as well as of relationship.”

-- *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 26.3.

**Wearing a Veil**

John Chrysostom:

A woman does not acquire a man’s dignity by having her head uncovered but rather loses her own. Her shame and reproach thus derive from her desire to be like a man as well as from her actions.

-- *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 25.4.

**Man, the Image and Glory of God**

Augustine, 5th century:

“This image made to the image of God is not equal to and coeternal with him whose image he is, and it would not be, even if it had not sinned at all. The meaning of the words of God when he said: “*Let us make man to our image and likeness*” must be understood. They were not spoken in the singular but in the plural. For man was not made in the image of the Father alone, or of the Son alone, or of the Holy Spirit alone, but in the image of the Trinity.

-- Literal Interpretation of Genesis 61.

**A Letter from Philemon**

Brother George,

Joy and peace are the gifts of the Risen Lord. He was made man, and we are not told anything about how he used to wash or to eat or to dress, for he came to reveal to us our new humanity not customs or habits. I am amazed that we have never heard in the four evangelists (*i.e., Gospels*) anything about any of the social habits of our beloved Jesus. He did not come to impose on us how to live but he came to give us life according to love, not according to any Law.

The incarnation of the Son of God did not bring habits but union with the Godhead. This has freed me from all customs that do not help me to reach the goal of the incarnation *[which is]* to be in the Son by the Holy Spirit resting in the Father.

Brother, don’t let anyone deceive you by imposing a custom or a dress or a kind of food as a means to bring you close to Christ, for this is utterly false because a substitute for the Savior is a total denial of the Savior’s redeeming love.

Last week a brother came from Alexandria and asked me if I read the Bible daily. I told him that one verse may be just enough for me for a week or even for a month. He did not understand that it is enough to go into the depth of one verse rather than to read a whole gospel.

He is one of those who made the Bible a substitute for Christ. As long they orbit round some ideas, their heart is empty. These who are looking to live like Jesus and seek to imitate him in his outward life, miss his communion with the Father.

Don’t get into this debate about how women should dress or what head cover they should have for our Lord did not come to establish customs but to give us eternal life.

Pray for me

Philemon a sinner

1 Jan 1965

***Pope’s Notes***

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