

# The Covering of I Corinthians 11

by Jere E. Frost



There has been my lot for more than forty years to be involved in much study and many discussions on what is commonly called "The Covering Question."

It is my observation that most of the confusion exists because of unwarranted assumptions. But the pertinent facts on this matter can be easily researched and understood, and many of the common assumptions can thereby be clearly refuted and dismissed. Since simplification is said to be the first step to understanding any subject, my approach will be simple, and we will break the subject into definable parts, as follows:

1. The Custom: There was a custom in Corinth of the woman, when in public, being covered.
2. The Covering: The custom's covering was a *katakalypto* that completely covered the head.
3. The Prophesying: This was a spiritual gift.
4. "Nature" Teaching: "Nature" is social propriety, the ways of a society.
5. Women Prophesying: They *did* prophesy, but this did not exempt the prophesess from moral implications associated with the customs.
6. Today: We have neither the custom nor prophesying.

## Corinth Had a Custom of Women Wearing a Covering

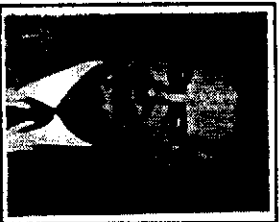
The evidence of a custom in Corinth concerning women being covered is irrefutable. It bothers me when this fact is denied by those who insist that women are to wear a hat in worship services today. Every man has a right to his own opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts. That such a custom indeed prevailed, history and scholarship leave no doubt:

"In Greek, as well as in Eastern cities, it was customary for women, except those of bad character, to cover their heads in public." (THE ONE VOLUME BIBLE COMMENTARY, J.R. Dummelow, on I Corinthians 11).

"No respectable woman in an eastern village or city goes out without it, and, if she does, she is in danger of being misjudged." (HASTINGS' DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE)

"In NT times, however, among both Greeks and Romans, reputable women wore a veil in public. (*Pilgrich Quest. Rom. xiv*) and to appear without it was an act of bravado (or worse); Tarsus, St. Paul's home city, was especially noted for strictness in this regard ... Hence .. Paul's indignant directions I Corinthians 11:2-16 ... have their basis in the social proprieties of the time. The bearing of these directions, however, on the compulsory use of the hat by modern women in public worship would appear to be very remote." (ISBE, Volume 5, page 3047)

"A Corinthian woman's veil would be the *peplum*, worn



over the shoulders in the house, drawn over the face in public. [At Corinth a 'short' woman would be a harlot.]" (THE PRACHER'S HOMILETIC COMMENTARY, I Corinthians 11).

"I Corinthians 11:10. Respectable women went out with their heads covered and wore veils. Only prostitutes displayed their faces and showed off their hair in order to attract men.... Even when Christians have liberty in the practice of their faith they are not to shock propriety." (MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF BIBLE TIMES, Ralph Gower, page 20)

"We must remember the place of the veil in the East. To this day the Eastern women wear the *yashmak* which is a long veil leaving the forehead and the eyes open but reaching down almost to the feet. In Paul's time the Eastern veil

was even more concealing. It came right over the head with only an opening for the eyes and reached right down to the feet. A respectable eastern woman would never have dreamed of appearing without it." (Wm. Barclay, DAVID STUDY BIBLE, commentary of I Corinthians 11:2-16)

The reader can see the plain and simple evidence — Corinth had a custom of women wearing a covering in public.

## The Custom's Covering, a *Katakalypto*, Completely Covered the Head.

The word for the woman's covering in I Corinthians 11 is the Greek word *katakalypto* (*kata*, down, and *kalypto*, cover). It bothers me that some who advocate that a woman must wear a hat, or just something on her head, acknowledge the literal meaning of this word to completely cover and hang down, then shift its meaning to an "adequate" covering, and after some incredible reasoning and mixing of terms conclude that it means "anything" on the head. Unbelievable! It is like a Methodist who goes from baptism literally meaning immersion, rationalizing it to mean an "adequate" amount of water, and concluding that it means "any" water at all. The facts belie the labored efforts of hat-advocates and Methodists to change words' meanings. The character of the covering is noted in the last three quotes above (kindly reread) and in the following:

"Outside the NT the word means 'to veil (oneself)'. In the LXX Moses hides the ark behind a curtain (Exod. 26:34), the Seraphim cover their faces (Isa. 6:2) ..." (THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NT, Kittel and Friedrich).

"To cover up (*kata*, intensive), in the Middle Voice, to cover oneself, is used in I Corinthians 11:6,7 ..." (VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY)

"... to cover up ... to veil or cover one's self: I Co. xi.6." (THAYER, page 331)

"... to cover fully ..." (YOUNG)

"In Greek, as well as in Eastern cities, it was customary

for women, except those of bad character, to cover their heads in public." (COMMENTARY, J.R. Dummelow, on I Corinthians 11)

### Prophesying Was a Spiritual Gift

Advocates of the covering as a binding requirement to-day characteristically distort the meaning of every key fact and word. What they do with the Corinthian custom and *katakalypto*, they do with prophesying — they change its meaning. Some say prophesying merely means teaching, and others say that it is a synecdoche for the worship of the church. But such is fanciful speculation and imagining that arbitrarily assigns the meaning that is *wanted* so as to reach the conclusion desired. That prophesying was a spiritual gift, we call the reader's attention to (1) several passages of Scripture that so identify it, and to (2) lexicons' and scholarly commentators' observations about it.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy ..." (Romans 12:6)

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ... to another prophecy .. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:8-11)

"And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets ... Are all apostles, are all prophets? ..." (I Corinthians 12:28,29)

"And though I have the gift of prophecy ..." (I Corinthians 13:2)

"... whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ..." (I Corinthians 13:8)

"Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue ..." (I Corinthians 14:1,2)

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." (I Corinthians 14:39)

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some ... teachers .." (Ephesians 4:11)

All these Scriptures declare and clarify the role of the prophet as an inspired spokesman. Though he taught, he is distinguished from the mere teacher just as the apostles, who taught, are more than mere teachers. The apostles and prophets were inspired. Peter declared that when the prophets spoke, the Spirit "which was in them" was signifying, or testifying (I Peter 1:11). The Scriptures call prophesying a spiritual gift, and scholars concur.

"Secondarily, prophets ... a person who, under Divine inspiration, predicts future events ..." (ADAM CLARKE on I Corinthians 12:28)

It may be noted that Clarke wobbles on the point in his discussions, much as Methodist theologians do on baptism. But Clarke can tell you the *meaning* of the word *baptize*, and the meaning of the expression, "*for the remission of sins*," but he abandons scholarship and the meaning of words when he proceeds with Methodist doctrine, sprinkling etc. This is exactly what he does on "*prophet*" — but he also gave, as you just read, its actual meaning without his personal theology and beliefs added. Other scholars (such as Vincent), do not back away from their scholarship. They declare prophets inspired and distinguish them from teachers.

"Prophets. Preachers and expounders under the immediate influence of the Spirit, and thus distinguished from teachers. I Corinthians 12:10." On Hebrews 1:1: "By the prophets ... does not mean in the ... writings ... but rather in

the prophets themselves as the vessels of divine inspiration. God speak in them and from them." (VINCENT'S WORD STUDIES)

"...[T]he prophets made new revelations, and spoke all their prophesying under the Spirit's influence." (JAMIESON, FAUSSER AND BROWN on I Corinthians 12:28)

"There were the prophets. The word prophet does not so much mean a *fore-teller* as a *forth-teller*... Their message was held to be not the result of thought and study, but the direct result of the Holy Spirit." (Wm. Barclay, DALY STUDY Bible, Ephesians 4:11)

"prophecy ...prophecy, i.e. discourse emanating from divine inspiration ..." Prophet: "... one who speaks forth by divine inspiration ... II. In the N.T. 1. one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ and spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration ..." (HAYER, page 552)

### How "Nature" Teaches

"Nature," in the sense of the purely physical universe, teaches nothing as to appropriate hair. Hair lengths and styles are not the result of women's hair *naturally* growing long and men's hair *naturally* being unable to grow long, for that simply is not the case. Samson had long hair, and a manlier man never lived. Absalom had long hair, and he was apparently the handsomest man in the kingdom, being without blemish from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. *Nature* in the passage is obviously "the way of propriety," society" or "custom," as scholars of the Greek language and customs attest:

Nature: "... a natural feeling of decorum ... in respect to national customs in which one is born and brought up ... It was the national custom among both the Hebrews and Greeks, for men to wear the hair short, and women to wear it long." (A GREEK AND ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT by Edward Robinson, page 771)

"The word *nature* denotes evidently that sense of propriety which all men have, and which is expressed in any prevailing .. custom.... It is doing that which almost universal custom has said appropriately belongs to the female sex." (BARNES NOTES on I Corinthians 11:14)

### The Fact of Prophesying Did Not Change the Implications of Customs

We have established two salient facts that should be kept in mind as to what apparently produced the need for this portion of Scripture. First, there was the custom of women in public wearing a *katakalypto* in Corinth. Second, there were women who prophesied, women who were thus moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. It does not matter whether this was in an assembly or not. Philip had four daughters who not only *could* but who *did* prophesy (Acts 21:8). Custom dictated the same decorum and manner from them as from other women, and called for it on the street corner, in the marketplace, or in the assembly — any and every public place. Arguments about the place are irrelevant to the issue of the covering, for the custom applied in all *public* places. The point is that not even spiritual activity, which would otherwise favorably reflect to the woman's credit and reputation, would justify ignoring the social mores and customs that were so closely identified with morality and character. As Barnes said:

"There can be little doubt that they had consulted him in

their letter (chap. vii. 1) about the proper manner in which a woman ought to demean herself if she was called upon, under the influence of divine inspiration, to utter any thing in public, *This question seems to have been, whether, since she was inspired, it was proper for her to retain the marks of her inferiority of rank, and remain covered; or whether the fact of her inspiration did not release her from that obligation...*" (Albert Barnes, BARNES' NOTES on I Corinthians 11:2)

In Corinth, as already noted, the absence of a covering in public was generally viewed as insubordination or harlotry. Hat-advocates emphasize a *place* (a church assembly). The Scriptures do not. The custom was for all the women to be covered in all public places. Only the insubordinate and harlots did otherwise. Yet only the woman praying or prophesying is addressed. Why is that? Obviously, because the Christian women were not otherwise causing a reproach by being uncovered, the only exception being some who may have thought their inspiration and spiritual activity would release them from the need for the covering. Perhaps they thought a covering was demeaning and inappropriate for one who was prophesying. Whatever the reason, they and they alone were the objects of the admonition to be covered. Inquire as to the *who, when, where* and *what* of the passage. Hat-advocates do not (cannot) answer the *who, when* etc. in Bible terms. Their position requires and depends upon assumptions to the contrary. Consider:

**WHO** is the object of the admonition? *The woman who prayed or prophesied.* It is apparent that there was no problem with other women. No other woman than one praying or prophesying is mentioned.

**WHEN** was she admonished to wear it? *When she prayed or prophesied,* suggesting that at other times there was no problem even with these women.

**WHERE** was the covering needed in the text? Anywhere! All the women wore it in public. The prophethood was not exempted anywhere just because she prayed or prophesied. Covering-advocates sharply contradict themselves at this juncture. All of them that I have ever spoken with deny that a woman ever prayed or prophesied in a worship service. If they are correct, how then can they say this *represents* conduct in a worship service? They themselves deny it ever occurred in one! How can they make a behavior that never occurred in a worship service, in their own view and argument, a synecdoche for a worship service?

**WHAT** was the covering, and what was to be covered? *The covering was a katakalupta — a complete covering.* The head, including the face (it being part of the head) was to be covered ala the custom in Corinth.

"We Have No Such Custom"

The Greeks, and Corinth (it being a Greek city), had this custom. The only custom in the entire context is a covering. "We have no such custom" therefore references the covering, not contentiousness, for being contentious is not a custom but is forbidden as a sin. He is therefore giving instructions as to how the believers, those women who prayed and prophesied, were to act in view of the customs where they lived. Paul said "we" have no such custom, and also that the "churches" had no such custom. So his admonition does not rest on some apostolic or church law. This is nothing strange, nor is it unusual or unique in Scripture. For example:

Footwashing was the customary manner of hospitality.

One had to respect the custom to show proper hospitality. Footwashing was required! (John 13:14; I Timothy 5:10). The principle pertaining to graciousness, humility and hospitality still remains to this day, but the custom of footwashing is not part of our culture and the hat-binders do not try to bind *that* custom even though it is mentioned more often than the covering, and is commanded. Why do they pick the one and not the other? Can you imagine the argument if I Timothy 5:10 had said, "*if she have worn a hat in worship*" instead of "*if she have washed the saints feet*"?

*The holy kiss* was commanded five times! (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26; I Peter 5:14) It is illogical to try to bind the covering custom and not bind the holy kiss custom. Principles do not change. Customs do. We need to give a proper, courteous greeting to one another. Women need to appear virtuous. But we shake hands for the former, and women do not need a covering for the latter, in our culture. No brother known to me tries to bind this custom as they do the covering of I Corinthians 11. But the one is as binding as the other!

Paul plainly said the church had "no such custom." Think about that. Repeat it five times. My hat brethren do not read it that way. They read it to say, "we have no other custom" than that, but that is not what it says! "We have no such custom"! It means exactly what it says — this custom did not issue from the apostles or from the church. To emphasize the intrinsic meaning of the subject sentence, let us restate it but change the negatives. Reverse the point 180 degrees and you will notice that then, and only then, it the reads the way hat-advocates believe it:

"*But if any man seem to be contentious, we DO have such a custom, as ALSO DO the churches of God.*" (I Corinthians 11:16, Hatters' Translation)

"Hat" brethren are contentious FOR the covering because they believe the apostles and churches DO have such a custom and requirement. But Paul says the exact opposite! This passage *reproves* whoever is contentious in the matter, and the reason is "for (because)" neither "we" nor "the churches of God" have such a custom. Corinth did! But the apostles did not! But he urged the Corinthians to respect propriety. We should do that equally with the covering, footwashing, holy kissing, and anointing with oil. If it is the custom, "nature" teaches you to conform and not to produce an unnecessary reproach.

#### Conclusion

If whosoever may chance to read this will respect the simple definition and Scriptural use of words, he will see that this was a matter relevant at a specific time and place. As William Barclay, England's celebrated scholar of the Greek language and customs said:

"It must always be remembered that this whole situation arose in Corinth.... It would be quite wrong to make this passage of universal application; it was intensely relevant to the Church of Corinth but it has nothing to do with whether or not women should wear hats in Church at the present day."

We have none of the essentials for making this passage a binding commandment today. It is as passe' as footwashing

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and holy kisses. We have no such customs. *No one* in our culture wears a *katakalupto*. We have no prophets. We have no prophetesses. We have no women praying and prophesying. But principles are ageless, and we should now, as they were urged then, respect the propriety of our social courtesies and customs, and not disregard them to the detriment of the gospel.

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human uoy. When Jesus entered the flesh, His spirit became the guiding principle of that body. Just as my spirit directs and controls my body, so did the divine spirit of Jesus direct and control His. There is only one way that Jesus could be called "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). His spirit was "God" and His body was human. I am afraid many people are blinded by their own concept of what Jesus had to become when He came in the flesh. Rather than accepting the biblical definition of "humanity," they have invented their own definition. We must allow the Bible to define Christ's humanity, not modernists, Jehovah's Witnesses, denominational theologians, false brethren, or our own notions.

What About The "All Things" Of Hebrews 2:17?

Those who take either the "two-spirit" view or the "ordi-

# Response To "The Covering of I Corinthians 11"

by Patrick T. Donahue

**H**IS article is written in response to Jere E. Frost's article entitled "The Covering of I Corinthians 11" which appeared in the September 1997 issue of GOSPEL TRUTHS. The conclusion demonstrated by my response is that the veil enjoined by I Corinthians 11:2-26 was required, not by custom, but by divine revelation, therefore it is still binding today.

## Cover When?

Let me begin by agreeing with Mr. Frost that the "when" or "where" of the covering was "anywhere." The covering was not just required in the church's assembly; it was required anywhere that the woman draved or prophesied. It cannot be that the covering requirement was limited to the assembly, because the woman was required to be covered when she prophesied, and she was not to prophesy in the assembly (I Corinthians 14:34-35). The text actually tells us in verse 5 exactly when the covering is required, and it does not say in the assembly; instead it says when the woman "prayeth or prophesieth."

## Cover How Much?

I agree with Mr. Frost's point that the covering was "... to cover fully..." (Young), that is, to "completely" cover the head. But that does not mean that the covering has to cover the face also. The New Testament makes a distinction in the head and the face (just as we do today) in passages like Matthew 6:17

("... when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face").

## How "Nature" Teaches

Mr. Frost has a section entitled "How 'Nature' Teaches," obviously drawing from the word "nature" found in verse 14. He thinks one definition for the meaning of this word somehow helps his case for the covering only being a custom of the day and place, but his single faceted definition is shown to prove absolutely nothing by the following other definitions for "nature" (Strong's #5449):

+ THAYER - nature, i.e. natural sense, native conviction or knowledge, as opposed to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training or prescribed by law ... the native sense of propriety ... I Co. xi. 14 ... guided by their natural sense of what is right and proper, Ro. ii. 14

+ ARNDT and GINGRICH - may mean instinctively.

+ VINE - the regular law and order of nature.

Regardless of which definition you choose, just because "nature" teaches something, that doesn't mean it is not binding. The same Greek word is also found in Romans 1:26 to refer to the fact that homosexuality is against "nature." Wouldn't Mr. Frost's reasoning mean that Romans 1:24-27 is not binding? As a matter of fact, one of the points I made in

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the above mentioned teachings and practices of brethren today. Those things *should not* be classified as matters of "the faith" to brethren who believe them. Who among us draws lines of fellowship and withdraws from brethren who practice them? Our practice of not doing so is a clear indication that we view such matters as individual, conscientious scruples not to be forced on others. We have no choice but to withdraw from brethren who are in violation in matters of "the faith." If I am not in agreement with the teaching of brethren on the above subjects and they really do believe they are matters of "the faith," (those things described above that would fit into Jude 3) they would be obligated before God to practice what they preach and withdraw from all who disagree.

#### Conclusion:

First of all, it seems to me that referring to the issues under consideration in Romans 14 as matters of "the faith" is a violation of the text itself. They were not to withdraw from one another over these matters (which a violation of matters of "the faith" would demand) – contrariwise, they were to "receive one another." Thus they were *not* matters of "the faith."

Secondly, as mentioned in the first two paragraphs of this article, referring to such as "matters of 'the faith'" is also the source of much confusion and division among brethren. Since an examination of the passages clearly indicate that God wanted those at Rome to consider the matters (meats and days) matters which they could practice and still have fellowship with each other; should we not refer to the things as conscientious scruples, brethren's personal opinions regarding Scripture or some other designation other than "the faith" in order to promote peace among brethren? "Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (Romans 14:19). Otherwise, are we not in violation of the very passages (Romans 14) we are attempting to explain? We should all love the brotherhood enough to make such adjustments, and not use language that will inflame others and bring about confusion and division among us? **☞**

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I will be in a gospel meeting with the church in Crystal River, FL, January 26 thru February 1. Charlie Graham is the local preacher. We look forward to seeing many friends during that time.

a recent public debate against a homosexual was that "even nature itself" teaches against homosexuality ("because the body parts don't fit"). I did not mean by the argument that revelation did not teach it. I meant that both revelation and nature teach it. Just because nature teaches something, that does not mean that revelation does not teach it. Nature teaches that God exists (Psalms 19:1, Romans 1:20), but revelation also teaches it, and it is not optional whether or not we believe it. The truth is that Paul has already established the artificial covering based upon a number of unchanging reasons (listed later in the article); in verses 14-15, he establishes the covering for women by pointing out something the Corinthians already agreed with: the fact that women are the ones that have the "natural" covering (long hair) ought to tell us that women are the ones that should have the artificial covering. This is precisely "how" nature teaches us that the artificial covering is required for women. The bottom line is that verse 14 says nothing to make the veil non-binding today.

#### Footwashing And The Holy Kiss

Mr. Frost puts the covering requirement in the same category as footwashing and the holy kiss. But he presents no evidence that they are in the category, he just asserts it. To the contrary, it can be shown from the Scriptures themselves that both footwashing (Genesis 18:4, Genesis 19:2, Genesis 24:32, Judges 19:21, I Samuel 25:41, II Samuel 11:8, Luke 7:36-44) and greeting with a kiss (Genesis 27:26-27, Genesis 33:4, Genesis 45:15, Exodus 4:27, Exodus 18:7, II Samuel 14:33, 20:9, Luke 7:45, 15:20) had been a practice for centuries before the New Testament was written, and the New Testament just regulates these already existing practices. But no man can show from the Scriptures that covering the head during prayer or prophecy was a common practice before I Corinthians 11. As a matter of fact, passages like II Samuel 15:30-31 show just the opposite. There the record shows that David prayed with a head covering on. In view of all these facts, the veil requirement is not like footwashing and the holy kiss.

#### The Spiritual Gifts Argument

Mr. Frost labors to prove that "prophesieth" in I Corinthians 11:5 is a miraculous gift, and therefore the covering does not apply today, since miraculous gifts have ceased. But anybody who knows what the word "or" means understands that this position is completely without merit. Verse 5 requires a woman to be covered when she "prayeth OR prophesieth" (in addition, verse 13 mentions that a woman should be covered when she prays, and it doesn't mention prophecy at all). Granted, prophecy has ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-10) but prayer certainly has not. Notice the following parallel sentence: Every person driving or riding in (the front seat of) a car with belt unbuckled breaketh the law. What does the sentence mean? If you do either, you break the law. The same is true with the covering; if a woman either prays uncovered or prophesies uncovered, she breaks God's law.

I am confident that Mr. Frost's wife prays today. Therefore according to God's word, she breaks God's law if she does so unvelled.

Some say that prayer in I Corinthians 11:5 is miraculous prayer since it is mentioned in close proximity to the miraculous gift of prophecy. But this type of false reasoning would make the gifts of "giving, ruling, exhorting, and ministry"

miraculous, since they are mentioned in close proximity to prophecy in Romans 12:6-8. Again, this type of false reasoning would make eating bread miraculous, since it is mentioned in the same verse with prophecy in Amos 7:12. You say ridiculous? Then you've got the point. This type of reasoning would mean that Acts 20:7 is not binding today, since the preaching there was undoubtedly inspired. As a matter of fact, practically the whole New Testament would be rendered useless since every book is riddled with the mention of spiritual gifts. What proves too much, proves nothing.

#### The Scholars Say Custom?

Mr. Frost's primary argument for his custom view was as usual, not the Scriptures, but scholars stating that the covering was just a custom. He quotes a few scholars stating such, but predictably leaves off all of the multitudes of scholars that report just the opposite. Notice what the following scholars have to say:

+ **CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES** - In 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 particularly to Christians.

+ **EXPOSITORS'S GREEK TESTAMENT** - Paul's instructions do not agree precisely with current practice. Jewish men covered their heads; amongst the Greeks both sexes worshipped with uncovered heads.

+ **W. E. Vine** - Among the Jews the heads of the men were covered in the synagogue. Among the Greeks both men and women were uncovered.

+ **MORRIS in TYNDALE SERIES** - Jewish men always prayed with heads covered (as they still do). Greek women, as well as menfolk, prayed with head uncovered.

+ **VINCENT'S WORD STUDIES** - The Romans (the men), like the Jews, prayed with the head veiled.

+ **PULPIT COMMENTARY** - Having his head covered ... The Jewish worshipper in praying always covers his head with his Tallith.

+ **MORFAT SERIES - Men and Women worshipped bare-headed in Greek rites.**

+ **ROBERTSON in WORD PICTURES** - The Greeks (both men and women) remained bareheaded in public prayer.

What can we learn from the fact that scholars are disagreed on this matter (and just about every issue)? What we should have known all along, that we are just going to have to accept God's revelation on the matter! The Scriptures only (and not commentaries) are inspired, and therefore reliable for doctrine (II Timothy 3:16-17).

This brings us to what should be the main point for all brethren. What does God's word reveal as to the reason a woman should be covered when she prays? The text actually gives us seven (as I count) reasons, and not one of them has to do with custom. These reasons follow:

#### 1. Headship

I Corinthians 11:3-5a teaches that a woman ought to be covered when she prays or prophesies because of the order of headship. I ask the reader, is man still the head of woman? (note: many of our more liberal brethren say no, so they allow women preachers, elders, etc.). If man is still the head of woman, then the Bible still says that if a woman prays to God uncovered, she dishonors her head (man). You can't have one (headship) without the other (the covering!)

From the phrase "prayeth or prophesieth," another significant flaw in Mr. Frost's custom argument becomes apparent. Mr. Frost uses his own scholars to say that the custom was for the women to wear the veil "in public" (similar to women in Arab countries today). But the text says nothing of the phrase "in public." Verses 4, 5, and 13 mention that the application was to be made during times of prayer or prophecy. This is not the same as "in public," because a woman prays in private also (like at the dinner table at home). So if we compare the text to even Mr. Frost's own scholars, we see the practice enjoined by Paul was different than the prevailing custom of the day. To complicate matters further, we have Mr. Frost trying to tell us that it was the custom of the Corinthian people for their women (a bunch of heathens) to veil their heads when they prayed or prophesied. Since when do the heathen pray or prophesy? Moreover, does Mr. Frost really expect us to believe that Paul is telling the Christian ladies that they ought to be veiled when they prayed because the heathen ladies were veiled when they prayed? Conclusion: the phrase "prayeth or prophesieth" shows that the practice was peculiar to Christians (since they were the only ones that actually prayed or prophesied), and therefore proves that Paul is not just regulating a local custom.

#### 2. Shame Like Shorn Or Shaven

I Corinthians 11:5b-6 teaches that a woman ought to wear the covering because to be uncovered is shameful like being shorn or shaven. Is it still a shame for a woman to be shaven? Then the Bible still teaches that it is likewise a shame for a woman to be uncovered when she prays or prophesies. Actually the verse uses "if" in the sense of "since." Since it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. It is not left up to us. A woman should be covered even today.

#### 3. Image And Glory

I Corinthians 11:7 teaches that a man should not wear the covering because he is the "image and glory" of God, while the woman is the glory of the man. I would ask, has anything changed about this reason for the covering? Does God still recognize this fact of creation when assigning man and woman their roles? Then the covering still applies today.

#### 4. Because Of The Angels

I Corinthians 11:10 teaches that a woman ought to be covered "because of the angels." Again I ask, has anything changed about this reason for the covering? Nobody even knows for sure exactly what this reason fully entails, so how could anybody know that the reason doesn't apply anymore? The covering still applies today, because of the angels.

#### 5. Artificial Covering Needed By Same Gender As Natural Covering

I Corinthians 11:13-15 teaches that a woman ought to wear the artificial covering because she is the one given the natural covering of long hair. Paul's argument is essentially this: "Look, God has given women (not men) the long hair as a natural/permanent covering; that ought to tell you that when it comes to the artificial/temporary covering, God wants the woman covered, not the man." Ask yourself, are women still supposed to have longer hair than men today? Then the veil is still required today.

#### 6. No Such Custom

Mr. Frost says at one point, "Paul plainly said the church

