

## CHAPTER XV

### *1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation*

William J. Martin

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#### I

Many and various are the interpretations that have been put upon this passage in Paul's writings, and not all have been complimentary to Paul's logic or his lucidity. That this passage is difficult no one would deny. The source of the difficulty is two-fold: the infrequency of occurrences in the *koine* in general of some of the terms used, and our usual inability to reconstruct with any degree of certainty the contemporary background to the actual situation within and without the church. No one familiar with the literary remains of Paul would lightly assume that he would be guilty of either inconsistencies or illogicalities. It would, therefore, be an unaccountable lapse in the light of his extraordinary linguistic gifts and his avowed principles if there occurred here any evident contradiction to statements elsewhere in this letter or even in any other of his writings.

The passage (11:2-16) occurs within a framework of a discussion on the significance and observance of the Lord's Supper and its place as the central theme in the act of worship.

The first thing to note about this passage is that it is an "approving" passage ("Now I praise you" etc. v. 2), whereas the next section beginning at verse 17 is a "disapproving" section ("I praise you not" etc.). Any wrong or undesirable practices, therefore, referred to in the first section would be *ipso facto* only in a hypothetical sense. True, Paul's commendation would embrace a great deal more than the custody of articles of association with regard to a worship formula, but in the context it is primarily applicable to the matter in hand.

Having expressed his approbation of their steadfastness in what was committed, he now proceeds to announce the theme of the section, namely, The Headship of Christ. ("I will that you recognize that the head of every man is Christ" v. 3). His purpose here is not to teach the principles of public prayer and edifying instruction, or to enunciate the rules for their practice, but to deal with the significancy of the Headship of Christ, and only what is relevant to this theme would be in place here. Whether or not Paul was influenced by the metaphorical extension of the semantic field of the word for head either in Hebrew (*rōš*) or in Aramaic (*rēš*) must remain an open question. Examples of parallel development in the linguistic field are far from rare,<sup>1</sup> and *rōš* and κεφαλή are a case in point.

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Hebrew usage affords interesting linguistic evidence for the way in which such extensions take place and in this particular instance with significant limitations. While the semantic field of the words for "hand", "arm", "eye" and "face" is extended to a degree where these words

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *qaqqadu* and *rēšu* in Akkadian, and *tp* in Egyptian (A. Erman and H. Graspow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* V. p. 265).

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in certain contexts are no more than worn-out metaphors, the word "head" seems to be subject to analogical restraint. For instance, while any one of the former anthropomorphic terms may be used freely to describe the activities of God, "head" is never found in this connexion. A better understanding of linguistics has taught us that "anthropomorphic" terms are not confined to a primitive stage in communication but are found at all levels of culture and are in fact an integral part of all linguistic communication.<sup>2</sup> The literal meaning of *rōš* (head of an animate creature) was apparently early extended to include the description of inanimate objects (Gen. 8:5 "the head of the mountains appeared"; Gen. 11:4 "a tower whose head will be in the heavens"). Then it is extended to rank (Num. 1:4 "a man who is head of the house of his fathers"; 1 Sam. 15:17 "head of the tribes of Israel"); it is used to express totality (Num. 31:26 "Take the sum of the plunder"). It is used to describe the seat of responsibility (2 Sam. 1:16 "thy blood be upon thy head; 1 Ki. 2:44 "God will return your evil on your head"). It is not expressly used as a linguistic term for the "seat" of thought, but its use to describe the activity of the wise man (Eccl. 2:14 "the eyes of the wise man are in his head") is clearly metaphorical and must refer to his rational faculty. There is, too, the reference in Daniel 4:2 (E.V. verse 5) to "visions" of the head. In Hebrew, however, thought is predominantly associated with the heart, in a psychological, not, of course, in an anatomical sense. The passages that could have influenced Paul in the selection of the word are those in which it is applied by transference to rank, and particularly those where it is used specifically of God or the Messiah, such as 1 Chronicles 29:11 ("the One exalted as head above all") or in Psalm 118:22 ("the stone ..... has become the head of the corner"), or even those passages in which a diminutive form of *rōš* (*rīšōn*) is used (Isa. 44:6; 48:12). The fact that Paul had a word in Greek with the right semantic field ready to hand, does not necessarily exclude the possibility of Paul's being influenced by the semantic field of the word in Hebrew, or of his availing himself of what could have been for him virtually a loan-translation.<sup>3</sup>

Paul proceeds to explain the respective rôles of the man and the woman ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ that is, in a church worship-meeting convened for the specific purpose of commemorating the Lord's Supper. These rôles reflect the relationship that exists with Christ as Head of every man, using the word generically and with the limitations imposed on it by the character of the addressee, namely a Christian church. Man is to appear

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with uncovered head for he is the glorious image of God (v. 7), whom he represents and in a sense personates in the worship of the true Head. The woman, on the other hand, acts the part of the church. Now, if a distinction is to be made between the man and the woman in the worship-meeting, this requires an explanation. If the woman here is to behave differently or to be treated differently from the man, it would be the only instance where the requirements incumbent upon them were not identical. As they received forgiveness in the same way, were baptized in the same way, they should surely worship in the same way. Any distinction would have seemed a clear contradiction of the great truth that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28).

For her role as representing the church, the woman is required to conform with certain conditions. As the man's uncovered head betokens the supremacy of the true Head, whom he

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<sup>2</sup> H. Güntert and A. Scherer, *Grundfragen der Sprachwissenschaft* (1956), pp. 63 ff.

<sup>3</sup> E. Richter, *Fremdwortkunde* (1919), pp. 84 ff.

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represents, so it is necessary for the woman as the symbol of the church to acknowledge by her 'covered' head the Headship of Christ. Several indications show beyond reasonable doubt that Paul is using the term "covered" to refer to long hair.<sup>4</sup> First, he uses it in contradistinction to the state of the man who is debarred from "having the (hair) hanging down"<sup>5</sup> (v. 4). To make the wearing of a head-covering the opposite of short hair would be a false antithesis. It would have been pharisaical casuistry, and sheer quibbling to say that wearing a head-covering compensated for being shorn. To annul the state of being shorn you must be the opposite. To be transparently honest Paul would have had to say there is only one way, one simple, plain, unambiguous, right way to efface the shame of being shorn and that is to have long hair; and that is surely what Paul is saying. Second, nowhere in the passage is any word ever used for a material veil or head-dress. Third, as the forms of the verb κατακαλύπτω (to cover) found here (vv. 6 and 7) are not construed with an indirect object, it is best to take them as passive. Fourth, in v. 15 Paul states unequivocally that a woman's long hair takes the place of an item of dress.<sup>6</sup> Besides, one would expect Paul to use some more explicit term for "unveiled", such as γυμνοκέφαλος "bare-headed" (γυμνόπους "bare-footed").

There was evidently something undesirable and even disreputable associated with shorn hair. What it was we can no longer say with certainty.<sup>7</sup> Shorn hair among the Jews was a sign of mourning. (Job. 1:20; Jer. 7:29;

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Mic. 1:16). The use of the definite article in ἡ ἐξυρημένη "the shorn woman" (v. 5) would seem to point to the existence of a specific class to whom this designation could be applied. Paul in any case would have disapproved of the practice because of its association with heathen superstition. The practice of cutting off the hair among the Greeks as a religious rite is well attested. The Vestal virgins and all Greek girls did it on reaching puberty. The earliest form of the custom appears to have been the vow or dedication of hair to a river, to be fulfilled at puberty or at some crisis, or after deliverance from danger.<sup>8</sup> Some of the Hellenized Jewesses may well have copied their Greek neighbours.

The next verse (6) (in the A.V. "For if a woman is not covered, let her be shorn: but if it is shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered"), although evidently only of a parenthetical nature, presents some difficulty, and a right understanding of it is indispensable to the meaning of the whole passage.

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<sup>4</sup> On the possibility of a woman's dressed hair meeting Jewish requirements, see Strack-Billerbeck III, pp. 428 f. The uncertainty in dating Rabbinical material, however, deprives any deductions made from it of much of their cogency.

<sup>5</sup> Chrysostom took this to refer to long hair

<sup>6</sup> "Coiffure" has developed in the reverse direction, from "coif" a close-fitting cap.

<sup>7</sup> There does not seem to be enough evidence in the works of secular writers to suggest that "shorn hair" was the mark of a prostitute. At a former period Corinth was a by-word for immorality and great hordes of prostitutes were associated with the temple of Aphrodite (H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo*, Loeb, IV, pp. 190 f.). It is unlikely that the resuscitation of the city by the Romans led to any marked improvement in its moral habits.

<sup>8</sup> W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (1902), p. 240; I owe this reference to Mr R. W. Hutchinson.

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The first point that strikes one in attempting to understand it is the use of οὐ "not", which is almost invariably used with the "real" indicative, that is, something actually existing or happening, and not contrary to fact.<sup>9</sup> Thus this state of things was actually occurring.

Second, an explanation for the use of two forms of the imperative, aorist and present, must be sought. This change in "aspect"<sup>10</sup> by a writer of Paul's syntactical precision is unlikely to be merely whimsical. What then was the distinction in function of these two verbal forms?

## II

A vast literature<sup>11</sup> has grown up around the problem of the character of

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the aorist in general and the Greek aorist in particular. While the Greeks themselves recognized that the tense-forms combined time-relation and "aspect" in their meaning, they referred to the future and aorist simply as indeterminate forms of the verb outside the tenses proper.<sup>12</sup> It is, doubtless, easier for those whose speech habits by accident of birth are acquired from a language in which "aspect" is operative and who, as it were, have assimilated "aspect", to grasp the nature of its genius. Some writers on the subject ascribe to "aspect" an exaggerated complexity or a too ingenious subtlety, presupposing a quality of mental juggling beyond the capabilities of most men.

In the New Testament usage the distinction between the present imperative<sup>13</sup> and that of the aorist is broadly speaking that of universal and particular. While the present imperative is

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<sup>9</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek in the Light of Historical Research* (New York and London, 1914), p. 1011; Blass-Debrunner, 428.

<sup>10</sup> It is probably best to take "aspect" as subjective, and *Aktionsart* ("mode of action") as objective: see W. Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie* I, part 2 (1906), pp. 190 f.

<sup>11</sup> On "aspect" in general: G. Guillaume, *Temps et Verbe: Théorie des Aspects, des Modes et des Temps* (1929); a systematic piece of work with helpful diagrammatic representations. E. Koschmieder, *Zeitbezug und Sprache*; stimulating, but his postulate of "Zeitrichtungsbezug" (relation of direction in time) strikes one as a little *verkünstelt*; for a criticism of the work, see the review by A. Debrunner in *IF* 48 (1930), pp. 89ff.; also E. Hermann, "Aspekt und Aktionsart", *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil. Hist. Kl.* (1933), Heft 4, pp. 470 ff.; for Koschmieder's reply to these criticisms, see *IF* 53 (1935), pp. 280 ff. W. Streitberg, "Die Benennung der Aktionsarten", *IF* 22 (1907/8), Anzeiger, pp. 72 ff.; F. Hartmann, "Aorist und Imperfektum", *Kuhn's Zeitschrift* 48 (1918), pp. ff., and *idem* 49 (1920), pp. 1 ff.; G. O. Curme, *Grammar of the German Language* (1922), § 164; E. Hermann, "Objektive und Subjektive Aktionsart", *IF* 45 (1927), pp. 207 ff.

On "aspect" in Greek: G. Curtius, *Erläuterungen zu meiner griechischen Schuigrammatik* (1863), pp. 171 ff.; E. D. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*<sup>3</sup> (1898); W. W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (1897); H. Meltzer, "Zur Lehre von den Aktionen besonders im Griechischen", *IF* 17 (1905), pp. 186 ff.; B. Romano, "Il significato fondamentale dell'aoristo greco", *Rivista di filologia* 50 (1922), pp. 197 and 335 ;J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* I (Edinburgh, 1908), 11(1929) Slid III (1963), pp. 74 f.; A. T. Robertson, *op cit.*, pp. 855 f.; J. E. Harrison, *Aspects, Aorist and the Classical Tripos* (Cambridge, 1919); C. W. Peppler, "Durative and Aoristic", *AJP* 54 (1933), pp. 47 ff.; E. Schwyzer and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik* (1950) II, pp. 246 ff.; Blass-Debrunner, *op. cit.*, § 335-37; C. Grassi, "Imperativo presente e aoristo nelle preghiere agli dei", *Studi Italia ni di Filologia Classica* 35 (1963), pp. 186 ff.; W. F. Bakker, *The Greek Imperative* (1966).

<sup>12</sup> R. H. Robins, *Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory in Europe* (1951), pp. 36 f.

<sup>13</sup> On the nature of the imperative in general, see *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 32 (1957), pp. 315 ff.

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used to denote an action of unlimited extension or habitual occurrence, of which the bounds, if such exist, have no relevant practical significance, the aorist describes a specific action, limited in duration.<sup>14</sup> The action may be egressive (effective), or terminative. Where the stress may be on the ingressive character of the action, it is still defined with a perfectly specific delimitation. The term "punctiliar", often used of the aorist, could be misleading, since the chief function of the aorist is not to denote the initial or the final point of the action. A segment of time is involved and it is the nature of this segment as a whole and its particularistic character that evokes the use of the aorist. The kind of action with which it deals could often best be described as "cessative".

One must bear in mind the fact that the action of a verb by its very nature may comprise a "tense-aspect", say, durative, and thus have, as it were, a "built-in" tense-aspect. Again, some present imperatives are forms of weak semantic content or have become stereotype. Verbs of motion, in particular, seem highly susceptible to this kind of deflation,<sup>15</sup> but it is not necessarily or invariably so. Again, the negative seems to act on occasion as an aspectual catalyst.<sup>16</sup> This can be clearly seen in Hebrew, for example,

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by the modification made in the aspect of the action of the verb by the presence of *b<sup>e</sup>terem* "not yet" in any construction.

The New Testament abounds in examples illustrating the universal character of the present imperative and the particularizing function of the aorist imperative. Take for instance, the passage in Acts 12:8: "And the angel said to him 'Dress yourself and put on your sandals'. And he did so. And he said to him, 'Wrap your mantle around you and follow me.'" There are here three aorist imperatives followed by one present. The aorists all refer to specific actions of limited duration (ζῶσαι "wrap yourself", ἀκολούθει "tie on", περιβαλοῦ "dress") and could be described as egressive, but for the action of unspecified duration the present is used (ἀκολούθει "follow"). Compare with this the use of this same verb in an aorist imperative in Luke 22:10 (ἀκολουθήσατε "follow") to express an egressive action on a particular occasion with the end-point explicitly given (εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν "into the house"). Again, in Luke 3:11, where a specific article (one coat) is in question we find the aorist (μεταδώτω "let him share"), but for a recurring action in a possible everyday situation, the present imperative (ποιεῖτω "let him do") is used. Again, in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35), the limited extent of the innkeeper's liability is brought out by the aorist with the end-point expressed - "my return": ἐπιμελήθητι "take care of him" (verse 35), while the universal obligation for such actions is expressed by present imperatives: πορεύου "go", ποίει "do" (verse 37). Again, in Luke 11:5 the aorist brings out the temporariness of the request and the specified quantity (3 loaves), its limitation: χρησόν "lend to tide me over", whereas in verse 9 actions for universal performance are expressed by present imperatives: αἰτεῖτε "ask", ζητεῖτε "seek", κρούετε "knock", In Luke 1:8 the aorist imperative implies a particular occasion: ἐτοίμασον "make ready now", but the present brings out the fact of the permanent relationship between master and servant, inherent in the word δοῦλος the duty is habitual: διακόνει "serve" (as always). The soliloquy of the rich man (Luke 12:19) shows with what

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<sup>14</sup> For the view of Apollonius Dyscolus, see J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax I* (1926), p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> Matt. 9:6 (cf. Lk. 5:24); Mk. 1:44; Jn. 4:16; 7:3; 9:7.

<sup>16</sup> Wackernagel, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 214 f.

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effect the various forms can be used: ἀναπαύου "take your ease" (present — time's unlimited!), φάγε, πίε "eat, drink" (aorists, off and on; special times of feasting?), εὐφραίνου "be glad" (present, on and on, without end or break). The contrast can be clearly seen in a passage like Matthew 8:21. The speaker uses an aorist imperative where a specific task is involved, the burial of his father: ἐπίτρεψόν "suffer me"; but for a demand without limitations Christ uses the present: ἀκολούθει "follow me", while the next imperative reverts to an aorist, as it refers to a particular instance: ἄφες "leave" (this burial to those who put such things first). Similarly, in Matthew 16:24 the aorists: ἀπαρνησάσθω "let him deny himself", ἀπάτω "let him take up", are egressive and ingressive respectively, but the present ἀκολουθεῖτω "let him follow", is a command that implies total acquiescence. Even in

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John 7:24 the variation in the forms is unlikely to be accidental: the present is universal: μὴ κρίνετε κατ'ὄψιν "never judge according to the appearance"; the aorist is particular κρίνατε judge" (in this case). In John 5:8 following two aorist imperatives ἔγειρε "stand up", ἄρον "take up", there follows a present imperative, περιπάτει "walk". An aorist with its limitative associations would have implied a limit in distance or in time, and would have been totally incongruous here. The present is instinct with assurance and promise that the cure was permanent.

No one with a sense for "aspect" could fail to note the deep significance on occasion of Christ's use of one or other of these forms. In the parable of "The Great Supper" (Luke 14:16-24), the present imperative of the first invitation stands in significant contrast to the aorists that come later. The present: ἔρχεσθε "come" (verse 17) points to the unlimited extent of the invitation and the unbounded generosity of the host, but those that follow are couched in aoristic form and with expressed limitations ἐξέλθε "go out" (places specified), εἰσάγαγε "bring in" (particular people) (v.21). In verse 23 even greater restrictions are imposed. Again, in his discourse on the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25 none could have missed the reason for the forms of the imperatives used. In contrast with the aorist (v. 34) κληρονομήσατε "inherit" with its consummative force giving it a note of glorious attainment, there is the fateful present imperative used to the lost (v. 41) πορεύεσθε "go (for ever)", the irrevocable sentence of endless separation and limitless despair.

That Paul does not deviate in his usage from this pattern can be seen from many examples scattered throughout his letters. In 1 Corinthians 15:58 the present imperative γίνεσθε "be ye" is used for an action of universal character, re-inforced by πάντοτε in the immediate context, while in chap. 16:1 the aorist imperative ποιήσατε "do" is used of a particular situation terminating in Paul's arrival. Similarly in 2 Corinthians 6:17 aorists are used for cessative actions: ἐξέλθετε "come out, ἀφορίσθητε "be ye separated" (note the passive), but for the settled pattern of conduct a present imperative is used: ἄπτεσθε "touch not (at all)". Paul's effective use of these two forms is well illustrated in Colossians 3 where present imperatives are used in (v. 1) ζητεῖτε "seek" — a constant attitude, (v. 2) φρονεῖτε "set your mind upon" (habitual), (v. 3) βραβευέτω "let (peace) be a (permanent) arbitrator", (v. 16) ἐνοικεῖτω "let (the word of Christ) make its home (in you)". But aorist imperatives are also used: (v. 5) νεκρώσατε "put to death" (egressive), (v. 8) ἀπόθεσθε "put away" (a defined list), (v. 12) ἐνδύσασθε "put on" (particular things). A similar state of affairs obtains in Ephesians 6:1 ff., where Paul uses present imperatives when he enjoins actions of a universal and unrestricted

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character (verses 1, 2, 4, 5 and 9) but aorists where the actions are patently limited (verses 11, 13, 14 and 17). For those who have ears to hear, there is a striking display of Paul's masterly skill and delicate

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touch in Phm. 17. How easy and light the particular burden is that he is seeking to impose on Philemon, he brings out by using, as his Master did before him (Matt. 11:29), the aorist: προσλαβοῦ "receive" (a specific and known charge).<sup>17</sup> In contrast with this is the unlimited liability that he imposes on himself, latent in the present imperative: ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγα "debit it to me" (here's an open cheque, and the sky's the limit!). The incomparable tact and the utter graciousness of it all reveal the instincts and the fine feelings of the perfect Christian gentleman.

Of particular interest for the matter in hand are the forms found in 1 Corinthians 7:9 f. The aorist imperative (v. 9) γαμησάτωσαν "let them marry", refers clearly to a cessative action, the present imperative (v. ii) μενέτω "let her remain" (unmarried), envisages no end-point, the aorist in the same verse καταλλαγῆτω "let her effect a reconciliation" "again denotes a cessative action in that it would bring to an end the separation from her husband."<sup>18</sup>

### III

What then is being said in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 6, that would induce Paul to employ an aorist imperative and a present imperative in adjacent clauses? The kind of situation that was likely to arise was one that has been common to all true revivals of religion that impenetrate a total cross-section of the community, often drawing in a disproportionate number of converts from among the social outcasts and outsiders. It would be unthinkable that among Paul's many converts there were not women of the "shorn woman" class. What then was to be done about their inability to conform with the requirement of having long hair? Were they to be excluded until such time as nature would remedy their lack? Certainly not. It would have been monstrous to exclude any believer from the immediate enjoyment of the privileges of church fellowship. Did not the father receive the prodigal just as he was, minus the external trappings of sonship? The problem of such converts could be the situation dealt with here, in what is, in all probability, a parenthesis. Thus, (v. 6) εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω "For if a woman is not covered'

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<sup>17</sup> This modest and moderating quality of the aorist may be the factor that accounts for the popularity and prevalence of the form in prayers. On that prevalence, see E. Kieckers, "Zum Gebrauch des Imperativus Aoristi und Praesentis", *IF* 24 (1909), pp. 10 ff. (The conjecture on pp. 16 f. betrays great ingenuity, but is almost certainly wide of the mark).

<sup>18</sup> The number of passages that present difficulty or show an apparent deviation from this usage is remarkably small: 1 Cor. 7:21, χρῆσαι "make use of it" (in this particular instance, in contrast to the preceding general injunctions in the present imperative), 2 Cor. 13:12, ἀσπᾶσασθε "greet" (a specific group — the bearers of the letters?). Other occurrences of the form could possibly be explained in the same way. 1 Pet. 2:17, τιμήσατε, should probably be taken with the preceding clause, thus: "But all such as are servants of God, honour."

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(has not long hair)<sup>19</sup> then let her remain cropped (for the time being; κειράσθω,<sup>20</sup> aorist imperative with cessative force, referring to a particular situation), but since it is a shame for a woman to be cropped or shorn let her become 'covered' — (i.e. let her hair grow again; κατακαλυπτέσθω (present imperative for a non-terminative, inchoative action).

The positive reason for Paul's direction with regard to the woman's hair seems amply clear. The woman in worship had a vital part to play and to fit her for this it was essential that she should retain the visually distinctive mark of womanhood — the glory of her hair, for she plays the part of the Bride, the church. This involved a gesture of subordination. Is the part of the man then superior to that of the woman? It would be as meaningless to ask if the bread is superior to the wine. The man is no more superior to her than God is to the Son. Subordination does not for one moment imply inferiority, as Paul is quick to point out (verses 11 and 12). The gesture required of her and which apparently differentiated her from the man is one with which:

- (a) she should comply — otherwise she would dishonour her Head (verse 5);
- (b) she could comply — far from making any impossible demands on her, by conforming she avoids bringing shame on her womanhood (verse 6);
- (c) she would comply — because it would be non-natural not to (verse 13 ff.).

This last is one of the most gracious tributes in all literature to womanhood, for putting it at its lowest, nature, God's own creative laws, teaches her that she should (v. 14). Of all the lovely things in this world of beauty, the loveliest of all is a woman. In a world of beautiful things which proclaim God's love of beauty, she is the crown. The best works of the greatest artists and sculptors confirm it. God would never expect a woman to mutilate the glory of his greatest masterpiece.

How much more appropriate the symbolism of the hair given to her (v. 15, and Paul must mean in the purpose of God) than any material object that could have been chosen by human agency.<sup>21</sup> It would have been strange, surely, if Paul had introduced into the service of worship an object, such as a veil, for which there was no authority from Christ. The New Testament church had escaped with one bound from the fetters of ritualism, that pictographic stage where the models and methods of the

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<sup>19</sup> The difficulty of defining similar variable terms, e.g. "middle-aged", is discussed by W. P. Alston, *Philosophy of Language* (1964), pp. 84 ff. Alston seems a little too ready to admit defeat. For practical purposes the requirement here would be unambiguous contrast with that of the man.

<sup>20</sup> Because of the nature of the action of the verb described by κείρω, it can be either active or passive, but not reflexive.

<sup>21</sup> While the logical conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that it is not necessary for women to wear a hat or other head-covering, Christian women, nevertheless, in their dress and behaviour will always comply with accepted conventions consistent with decorum.



William J. Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.231-241.

kindergarten were legitimately used, a prior but not a more primitive stage. The believer was now occupied in worship, not with visual objects as such, but with conceptual entities and spiritual realities. Sacredness or holiness was no longer attributed to material things.<sup>22</sup>

These reasons given above, one would have thought, were of such importance, that it would not be necessary to seek any other. Nevertheless, another has been adduced and often assigned an importance far and away greater than any of these, namely, that the purpose of remaining "covered" was to enable the woman to participate audibly in the service.<sup>23</sup> This involves the assumption that the converse "it is seemly to pray unto God covered" can be read into the passage, although, in fact, it is nowhere stated. One so well versed in the ways of logical thinking, as Paul evidently was, could not have been unaware of the fact that since a converse is not necessarily true, it must, therefore, if valid, not be left unexpressed<sup>24</sup> Calvin on 1 Corinthians 7:1 remarked that the statement "it is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman" did not imply "it is a bad thing to do so". All this might seem to savour of sophistry, were it not for the fact that minutes later (some 15 minutes, reading at a speed of 120 words a minute) Paul makes a statement that shows that the converse was not in his mind; it is the unambiguous statement: "let the women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted to them to speak" (1 Cor. 14:34).

Paul may also have seen in the woman's silence yet another symbolic act in her role of representing the church. The church had made no positive contribution to her salvation; it was solely the work of her Head. Here then would be a significant gesture, silently proclaiming her negative part in the work of redemption.

Paul refers also to the order and purpose of the creation of man<sup>25</sup> (vv. 8 and 9), possibly seeing in it a reflection of the relationship between Christ and his church. The woman was created for the man as was the church for Christ. The man had priority in creation,<sup>26</sup> the woman the initiative in transgression. A wound was the price the man had to pay for his helpmeet; a deeper and a deadly wound was the price paid for the church.

Thus like a great master musician who superimposes on the basic theme

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another melody, God has superimposed on the central theme of worship a glorious counterpoint of heavenly chords, the near echo of things eternal.

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<sup>22</sup> Even as late as the third century, to consecrate an earthly house was considered a pagan practice; see F. W. Deichmann, *Früchristliche Kirchen im Rom* (Basel, 1948), pp. 9 ff.

<sup>23</sup> Praying was evidently not necessarily an audible exercise or one for general participation (cf. Acts 3:1; 16:13; 1 Cor. 14:15). The noun seems also to be used on occasion as an elliptical term for worship (Matt. 21:13).

<sup>24</sup> For example, if in this passage it does not say that a woman should wear a head-covering, it would not follow that she should not wear one. But it would not be thought necessary in the ordinary course of events to state that this converse does not hold good.

<sup>25</sup> The so-called "second account" of creation can be taken as complementary to that in Gen. 1. On descriptive technique in general, see "Dischronologized Narrative in the Old Testament", *VT* (Rome Congress volume, 1969), pp. 179 ff.

<sup>26</sup> For interesting comments by a medical authority, see D. M. Blair, *The Beginning of Wisdom* (London, 1946), pp. 30 f. and 90.

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Under all that Paul writes lies the substance of destiny. It cannot be detected merely by the mechanics of insensate scholarship. How at times one covets the skill and the insight which *die Stillen im Lande*<sup>27</sup> have possessed in such rich measure.<sup>28</sup> Between their skill and ours is often the difference between that of the mannequin-maker with his measuring tapes and calipers, and that of the surgeon moving with unerring skill among the living tissues.

To one who possesses an ideal combination of skills these fallen ψιχία picked up by a mere Hebraist from under the master's table, are a small γενέθλιος δόσις offered as a token of affectionate esteem.

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<sup>27</sup> Psa. 35:20 (Luther).

<sup>28</sup> E.g., F. W. Robertson, *Expository Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians* (London, 1872).