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How to Kill your Children and Not go to Prison

by

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Note: I was asked to write this article for "Think" magazine, a nationwide publication of Christian evidences and current affairs issues

Studies show 70-90% of young people raised in mainline churches grow up to abandon Christ and the church. Here are some thoughts on how to help the process along:

1. Have a lukewarm faith.

Many Christians attend church, and feel they have a strong commitment to Christ, yet their children grow up choosing another course in life. Why? One reason may be that a parent's faith has failed to impress its child. Our children have an uncanny way of reading us. Daily, they watch and observe us; they know what is most important in our lives. Regular church attendance, even being a leader in our congregation and teaching Sunday school class may not impress a child where business and economic security or, pursuit of worldly comforts and accomplishments are the things that drive us most. However much we may attempt to impress upon them the importance of salvation, nothing we say, do, or teach will mean very much if Christ is not *first* in our hearts and lives. The old saying is "you can't give away what you don't have." If we would save our

children, we must first save ourselves. Moses told the Jews

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deut. 7:5-9)

This passage is important because it shows that there is a connection between putting God first in our lives and his word being engrafted upon the heart. It also shows that if God is first a parent's life, that parent will actively share the word with the child. We must be deeply involved in the word – studying it, meditating upon it, and memorizing it. Families with children in the home should strive for a time of daily gathering around the word, if only to read a Psalm or short passage. This small investment of time will pay huge returns. Not only will the children gain from the instruction, but the example of father and mother opening the Bible and communing with God will leave an indelible mark upon their

tender hearts that God is real and is to be sought in the Word.

2. Attend a mainline church.

You have only *one* chance with your children; you cannot afford to raise them wrong. You MUST succeed in your mission to save their souls. Mainline churches in America are failing. 70-90% of children grow up and leave the church. Therefore, if we would save our children, we must withdraw from mainstream Christendom. It is just that simple. We may need to meet in homes with other like minded believers, or start new congregations. But one thing is for sure: the *status quo* at the local, neighborhood church is a luxury we can no longer afford! There are many things contributing to the failure of the local church; we will address only two: the *ethos* of the church and paid preachers (*yes, paid preachers*).

By and large, the problem with American churches is not doctrinal; we understand doctrine very well (indeed, maybe that is *all* we understand!). Doctrine is not why we are losing our kids. Rather, the problem is with the *ethos* of the church. Most churches owe their separate identity from other churches to questions of doctrine: the role of baptism in salvation, pouring versus immersion, the possibility of apostasy, and similar issues. While these are definitely important and have their place, they do not touch the more important issue of *how shall we then live?* If we have all the right answers to questions of doctrine, but lack the *ethos* to give them meaning and life, we will not profit; we will have only the *form* of godliness, but deny the *power* thereof. (II Tim. 3:5) I am convinced this is the problem of the American church in a nutshell. The next reformation must be ethical; it must address issues of *life and godliness*, rather than mere questions of doctrine.

If there is a message the church needs today, it is that God has called his people to *separation and non-conformity*. This has always been true. From the call of Abraham to depart from his people and country, unto Old Testament Israel, which was set apart from the nations around it by language, culture, diet, dress, and a hundred other items of daily life, God's people have always been called to be *different*. We are strangers and pilgrims in the world; our sojourn here should not be comfortable; we should find ourselves uneasy, even vexed, by the values and

norms of the culture in which we live. But, all too often the church is virtually indistinguishable from the world. The church is too at home in the world, and so the world has found a home in the church.

In most churches, the cultural battle to be different was fought and lost *decades* ago. What was the motivating factor for God's woman to abandon the modesty and femininity of long dresses and adopt form fitting pants, the Bible or the world? Why have so many women left the home to find careers in the work place, the Bible or the world? What informs our opinions about the roles of the sexes and the structure of the family, the Bible or the world? Why do so many couples choose to have only two children, the Bible or the world? What are the educational goals of Christian parents; to raise children who give their lives in sacrifice to Christ, or to get good paying jobs that will provide economic security? The list can be expanded indefinitely. All too often, the church today takes its lead from the culture around it. And since the Bible is not informing our choices in day-to-day life, we have lost the power of a *living testimony* to a dying world, including to our children. If Christianity does not make a difference in our daily lives and choices, it will not make a difference to our children. That brings us to the next issue of why our churches are failing: *paid preachers*.

I am convinced that paid preachers are one of the church's greatest problems. Not that the preachers are bad or ill-informed themselves. Very often they are not. But paid preachers are *not* part of the Biblical pattern and design of Christ for the church. *Period*. The Bible plan for the local congregation is a *plural ministry* of actively teaching elders and deacons. The notion of a full time, hired minister is simply not there. I do not say there is no place for paying those who labor in the word. The Bible is clear that elders who labor in the word should be remunerated. (I Tim. 5:17, 18) Moreover, a new church may have need of a Timothy or Titus to get it on its feet. But, hiring a professional pulpit minister as a permanent part of the church is completely away from the divine model.

Our eldest daughter was recently baptized; we borrowed the baptistery of a congregation that had five elders and nine deacons, yet was looking to hire a full time pulpit minister! Fourteen men in leadership of a congregation of

less than one hundred fifty members, and they could not get the job of preaching and teaching done! Something is seriously wrong with this picture. One of the first qualifications for an elder is that he be “apt to teach.” (I Tim. 3:2) Deacons should also be men capable of teaching and preaching the word. (Acts 6:5; I Tim.3:13) If we have elders and deacons that are Biblically qualified, we should *not need a preacher*.

Paul warned that the time would come when “they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” (II Tim. 4:3) The dynamics of hiring a preacher make him an employee of the church; he becomes a *hireling* who must fiddle the tune of those who pay him. Paul told Timothy to “preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (II Tim. 4:2) This charge is largely if not wholly incompatible with paid preachers. Ministers who preach and reprove out of *season*, soon find they are out of a *job*. The most pressing problems facing the church (including the fact that 70-90% of our young people are being lost) thus go unaddressed. In a word, we have neutered our pulpits and robbed them of their virility! The church could not have declined to the condition it is if this were not true.

3. Use the government schools.

This may come as shock to many parents, but the government school system is not a neutral environment the parent can afford to look at with equanimity: it represents a very *serious* risk to your child’s salvation.

Most parents would not deliberately place their children in a school teaching Muslim, Buddhist, or Jewish doctrine. Yet, most parents seem oblivious to the far greater and more real danger present in today’s government schools. The public school environment is largely, if not wholly, antagonistic to most of what we stand for as a Christian people. Public education is *government* education; and government education is *politicized*; decisions about what is taught have little to do with excellence or equipping children to succeed in life. Seldom does what is taught reflect the values or wishes of Christian parents. The attitude of educators and bureaucrats is that “they know better” what is right for our kids. The schools are change-

agents for our children; textbooks and curricula are carefully crafted to communicate the worldview of atheists, humanists, and socialists in the Department of Education, the federal courts, and teachers’ unions. The notion that there is a Creator who knows and loves us is silently ridiculed; evolutionary models are held out as scientific fact; the earth and universe are always presented as being “billions” of years old. Man is the product of random chance: Life *came* from nothing, *returns* to nothing, and therefore *means* nothing.

When we made the decision to home school our children, we were influenced by a desire not to expose our children to the schools’ atheistic and socialistic curricula. We did not want our children propagandized by politically correct text books and education, touting evolution as a fact, and holding out socialistic theories as the norm for government and society. However, when serving as a minister in a small, central Kansas community, I had the opportunity to serve as a substitute teacher for grades K-12. I quickly learned that the curricula were among the *least* objectionable problems with the public schools.

The school unification movement of the 40’s means that the local, one room school house is a thing of the past. Schools now consist of children bused in from all over the city and community. In larger cities, Christians, Jews, and Muslims all attend the same school. At the very age when they are most in need of reinforcement and absolutes, the most basic tenants of their faith may be challenged by text books, teachers, and fellow students from non-Christian homes. The sheer number of children brought together in the average American school today has fostered a youth sub-culture, replete with its own language, music, entertainment, dress code, and values. Half of the students come from broken homes, homes with children who don’t look alike, have different last names, different fathers and mothers, or homes where the parent never bothered to marry at all. The environment is completely secular and the dress code super charged for sexual stimulation. In one community where we served in the ministry (Tehachapi, CA), a teacher attempted to get uniforms adopted because of the immodest dress of the students and the three “B’s” of “bellies, breasts, and bottoms” that were on daily display. Not coincidentally, that school district also had 51 teen pregnancies in one year! Unfortunately, the teacher failed due to parental objections;

parents felt that uniforms detracted from student freedom and individuality! In American high schools, teen dating is normal, even expected. The probable majority of teenagers will engage in petting and more serious forms of sex. In many schools, arrangements have been made for teenage girls to bring their babies to class, so they can continue their education.

The influence of teachers is huge. In a thousand subtle ways, the teacher influences the child, imparting their values and world-view. The average parent who uses the government schools only sees their child a few short hours each day. The teacher and school will easily have *twice* the time the parent does with its child each day. Without perhaps ever speaking or teaching directly against Christianity, the secular environment and world-view of public schools impacts our children negatively. My father remarried a woman who retired from the public school system in Evanston, Ill. She had a very liberal world view (we jokingly called her “aunt Hilary”). She freely used her position of trust to impart her world-view to her young charges. In fact, she felt it was her duty! She taught primary grades, and gave us most of the children’s books she used as a teacher after she retired. Many, if not most, of the books had a liberal world-view in which the roles of the sexes were reversed or interchangeable, and the culture, traditions, and religions of Eskimos, primitive African tribes, and native American Indians were held out as equally valid, if not superior to Western culture and traditions. She was but one example, which is repeated thousand and thousands of times across America.

It is no secret that Columbia Teacher’s College and similar institutions are hotbeds of liberalism. Yet, Christian parents routinely deliver their most precious possession to these teachers year after year. Some schools even use the “rainbow” curriculum, which teaches that “same sex” parents are normal and acceptable. In California, the Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against homosexuals in business and public accommodations. This has been interpreted to mean that a parent has no right to remove a child from a classroom merely because the teacher is a homosexual. More recently, Officials at Deerfield High School, in Deerfield, Ill., have ordered their 14-year-old freshman class into a “gay” indoctrination seminar, after

having them sign a confidentiality agreement promising not to tell their parents.

“This is unbelievable,” said Matt Barber, policy director for cultural issues for Concerned Women for America “It’s not enough that students at Deerfield High are being exposed to improper and offensive material relative to unhealthy and high-risk homosexual behavior, but they’ve essentially been told by teachers to lie to their parents about it.”

In Massachusetts after a school repeatedly advocated for the homosexual lifestyle to students in elementary grades, several parents sued, only to have the federal judge order the “gay” agenda taught to the Christians. The conclusion from U.S. District Judge Mark L. Wolf found that it is reasonable, indeed there is an obligation, for public schools to teach young children to accept and endorse homosexuality. Wolf essentially adopted the reasoning in a brief submitted by a number of homosexual-advocacy groups, who said “the rights of religious freedom and parental control over the upbringing of children would undermine teaching and learning”¹

Unfortunately, these examples are played out hundreds of times over and over again across America. Yet, most Christian parents seem oblivious to what is going on, or at least unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary to save their children from the danger and pollution of the public schools. We seem to value our standard of living above our family’s quality of life; we choose the luxury of a two income home, at the cost of our children’s souls. Christian education is not expensive; it is priceless. The parent that loves its child will remove them from the public school ASAP!

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¹
<http://stoptheaclu.com/archives/2007/03/14/district-gags-14-year-olds-after-gay-indoctrination/>

The Consummation of the pre-Messianic Age and the Parousia of Christ

Excerpts from Biblical Apocalypics

by

Milton S. Terry

(A.D. 1898)

It remains to notice a few things peculiar to Matthew's report of this discourse of Jesus. According to his gospel the form of the disciples' question was, "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming (*parousia*) and of the consummation of the age (*sunteleia tou aionos*)?" They seem to have already inferred or assumed that his coming and the consummation of the age would be connected in some way with the desolation of the temple. The closing words of chap. xxiii were of a nature to imply all this [1] If it were not to be, and Jesus knew it, it is inconceivable that he should have confirmed them in such a belief as the language of Matt. xxiv was certainly adapted to do. What significance, then, are we to attach to the words *coming*, and *consummation of the age*?

The words *parousia*, commonly translated *coming*, is so constantly associate, in current dogmatics, with the ultimate goal of human history, that ordinary readers lose sight of its simple meaning in New Testament usage. The word means *presence* as opposed to *absence*. For example, we read in Phil. ii,12, "Sop then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (*en te parousia mou*) only, but now much more in my absence (*en te apousia mou*), work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." But as the personal presence of any one implies a previous coming, so this word is not improperly rendered coming in many passages, and the verb *erchomai*, to *come*, is

often employed to denote the appearance and kingdom of Christ. [2] Bt to assume that this coming or presence of Christ must needs be spectacular in any physical sense, a literal display of his person in the atmosphere of this earth, is to involve the doctrine in great confusion. Why must the coming of the Son of man on the clouds to execute judgment on that generation be understood or explained in any other way than we explain Jehovah's "riding upon a swift cloud," and coming to execute judgment on Egypt, as prophesied in Isa. xix,1? Whatever the real nature of the *parousia*, as contemplated in this prophetic discourse, our Lord unmistakably associates it with [p. 245] the destruction of the temple and city, which he represents as the signal termination of the pre-Messianic age. The coming on clouds, the darkening of the heavens, the collapse of the elements, are, as we have shown above, familiar forms of apocalyptic language, appropriated from the Hebrew prophets. [3]

That other expression in Matthew, "the consummation of the age," is a phrase that has been much abused and widely misunderstood. The common translation, "end of the world," has been a delusion to many readers of the English Bible. It has helped to perpetuate the unscriptural notion that the coming and kingdom of Christ are not facts of the past, present, and future, but of the future only. The fundamental and distinguishing doctrine of all branches of the "Adventists," so-called, is that the coming of the Son of man to set up his kingdom in this world is solely an event of the future. *Christ has as yet no kingdom among men!* Even the parables of our Lord, illustrative of the spiritual character of the kingdom, are forced to harmonize with the concept of a spectacular advent and a political organization. [4] Those who maintain the doctrine, and, indeed, not a few who oppose it, fall into error and inconsistency by failing to apprehend the true meaning of the phrase "the end of the age."

For, first of all, they do not determine clearly what age (*aion*) is contemplated in such a text as Matt. xxiv,3. They quite generally assume that the period of the Gospel dispensation is meant. But nothing is more familiar in the Jewish terminology of our Lord's time than the current phrases *this age* and *the age to come*. The period which preceded the coming of the Messiah [p. 246] was spoken of as *this age*; that which

followed his coming was *the age to come*.^[5] It is not important to consider what various and often contradictory notions the rabbins associated with the age to come. Their notions were as various as those concerning the character of the Messiah himself. But by *this age* they meant and could mean nothing else than the current period in which they were living, the then present age. The question of the disciples, as recorded, could therefore only refer to the pre-Messianic age, and its consummation was, as we have seen, associated in their thought with the overthrow of the temple. But even were it admitted that their notion of the "consummation of the age" was erroneous, the teaching of Jesus was emphatic beyond all rational question that that generation should not pass away before all those things of which they inquired should be fulfilled.

The age to come, the Messianic time, would accordingly be the period that would follow immediately after the termination of the pre-Messianic age. That time had not yet come when Jesus spoke. According to the whole trend of New Testament teaching that age and the Messianic kingdom were *near* or *at hand*. Christ's ministry fell in the last days of an *aion*. The gospel of his kingdom must be firmly established in the world before the end of that age. The gospel of his kingdom must be firmly established in the world before the end of that age. So we read, in Heb. ix, 26: "Now, once, at the end of the ages (*epi sunteleia ton aionon*) hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Also in Heb. i, 1, it is written: "God...hath at the last of these days spoken unto us in his Son." Similarly Peter (1 Pet. i, 20) speaks of Christ as "foreknown before the foundation of the world, but manifested at the end of the times for your sake." Paul, too, speaks of himself as living near the consummation of an age: "These things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x, 11) The ministry both of Jesus and his disciples must, therefore, be recognized as occurring in the latter days of an *aion*, or near the end of the pre-Messianic age. The New Testament writers, as well as Jesus, are clear on this point. They never represent themselves as already entered upon the first days, or the beginning of the age, but rather in the last days.

If, now, we ask with the disciples, WHEN shall these things be? or at what point are we to recognize the end of the pre-Messianic age? we are to find the answer in the eschatological discourse of [p. 248] Jesus, and at some point before that generation passed away. "The ends of the ages" may have a definite point of contact and transition from one age to another. The coming age may, like the morning twilight, cast its beams into the foregoing night, and so the preceding age may partake in its last days of many things which belong to the age to come. ^[6] But such facts do not affect the question of the signal crisis which may conspicuously mark the end of one age and the opening of another. Was there such a crisis between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, that we can point to it and say, "That was preeminently and conspicuously an event which marked an epoch in the history of both Judaism and Christianity?"

Some writers find such a crisis or end in the crucifixion of Jesus, and the moment when he said, "It is finished." (*tetelestai*). Others say it was at the resurrection; some few designate the ascension; but many have taught that the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the coming of Christ in his kingdom, the end of the old and the beginning of the new age. To all of these theories there are two insuperable objections: (1) They are irreconcilable with the statement of Jesus that the Gospel must first be preached "in all the habitable earth" (*oikonmene*), and (2), long after the day of Pentecost, the apostles speak of their work as taking place in the last days, or near the end of the age.

Is it not strange that any careful student of our Lord's teaching should fail to understand his answer to this very question? The disciples asked, definitely, WHEN shall it be? And Jesus proceeded to foretell a variety of things which they would live to see - all preliminary to the end. He foretold the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, and an intelligible sign by which they might know the imminence of the final catastrophe of Judaism. And having told them of all these things, and of his own coming in the clouds and its glorious significance, he added: "When ye see these things coming to pass, know that it is nigh, at the door. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished." The ruin of the temple

was, accordingly, the crisis which marked the end of the pre-Messianic age. [p. 249]

Matthew's gospel appends to the eschatological discourse three parables of admonition, which occupy the whole of the twenty-fifth chapter. The parable of the ten virgins and the picture of the judgment are peculiar to this gospel, but the parable of the talents appears to be in substance identical with that of the pounds (*mnas, minas*) in Luke xix, 11-27. The three parables as they stand in Matthew, whether originally uttered in this connection or not, are every way appropriate to the context. They are admonitions to watch and be ready for the coming of the Lord, and are not essentially different from the counsels already noticed in the fourth section of the preceding discourse (for example, Matt. xxiv, 32-51). The lesson of the parable of the virgins is, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." The great lesson of the parable of the talents is that the Lord's servants have also something more to do than merely to watch. They must be diligently employed in the service and interests of their owner during his temporary absence from them, whether the time be long or short. There is, then, no difficulty as to the import of these parables, and no question as to their relevancy to the subject of which Jesus spoke on the Mount of Olives.

Greater difficulty is supposed to attach to the sublime picture of Judgment recorded in Matt. xxv.31-46, and most expositors have thought that the picture must needs refer to a general and formal judgment of all nations of men at the conclusion of human history. But the language of Matthew is explicit in referring it to the time "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him," and when "he shall sit on the throne of his glory." There would be obvious inconsistency in making this coming of the Son of man different from that of matt. xxiv, 30, and xvi, 27,28. How, then, it is asked, can this sublime ideal be brought within the time-limits of the prophecy of matt. xxiv?

The difficulties which are here suggested arise either from the assumptions of a literalizing exegesis or from a failure to keep in mind that the coming and kingdom of Christ are in their nature a *process*, which has definite historical beginning, but stretches on indefinitely into future ages of ages. Consequently, while most of the things enumerated in the foregoing discourse

had fulfillment in the fall of Judaism and the beginning of Christianity, other things, from their very nature, are such as must needs be of repeated or continual occurrence. Such especially is the execution of judgment, a function of every reigning king. The scriptural doctrine of Messiah's reign is not that God, the father Almighty, vacates his throne at the accession of Christ. Neither the concept of Psalm ii, [p. 250] 7-9, nor Psalm cx, nor Dan. vii, 13,14, implies that the eternal God is any less the ruler and sovereign of the world after he sets his anointed Son at his right hand, and "gives him dominion and glory and a kingdom." From thence onward he judges the world by Jesus Christ, and the sublime picture of Matt. xxv, 31-46, is a parable of this great fact. Hence the force and propriety of the words: When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." But how long he shall continue to sit thus on his glorious throne of judgment - how long "he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet" - is not a matter of specific revelation. The ideal of judgment presented in Matt. xxv, 31-46, is therefore no single event, like the destruction of Jerusalem. It is not to be explained literally as a formal assize not to open until the end of human history on earth. It is, rather, a most impressive parabolic picture of the age-long administration of Jesus Christ, from the hour of the signal overthrow of Jerusalem until "he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father" (1 Cor. xv, 24). the anointed King of glory is judge of the living as well as of the dead, and it is a grave error to represent "the day of the Lord" or "the day of judgment" as something deferred to the end of time. We have shown over and over again in the preceding portions of this volume that "the great and terrible day of the Lord " is a prophetic phrase of remarkable fullness of meaning. The Old Testament doctrine is that "the kingdom is Jehovah's, and he is ruler among the nations" (Psalm xxii, 28). "Say ye among the nations, Jehovah reigneth; he shall judge the peoples with equity. he cometh, he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his truth" (Psalm xcvi, 10-13. The day of judgment for any wicked nation, city, or individual is the time when the penal visitation comes; and the judgment of God's saints is manifest in every signal event which magnifies goodness and condemns iniquity.[7] [p. 251]

But this divine administration of the world, which in the Hebrew Scriptures is the work of Jehovah, is portrayed in Dan. vii, 13,14, and represented in the New Testament as committed unto Christ. The Father has given him "authority to execute judgment because he is Son of man" (John v, 27). And the Son of man came, in accord with the apocalyptic picture of Dan. vii, 13, and Matt. xxiv, 30, and executed judgment upon Jerusalem, guilty of "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Able the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah" (Matt. xxiii, 35,36). That was the first conspicuous exhibition of his judicial power, and it marked the crisis and end of the pre-Messianic age. Christ is, therefore, now King and Judge; but all things are not yet subjected unto him, and he must reign until he shall have put all things in subjection under his feet. And this no other than the decree, Jehovah has said to me, My Son art thou; I have this day begotten thee. Ask from me, and I will give nations for thine inheritance, And for thy possession the ends of the earth

We conclude, then, that the additions peculiar to Matthew's version of our Lord's discourse on the Mount of Olives contain nothing inappropriate to the occasion, and nothing inconsistent with the definite time-limit of the prophecy and the analogy of New Testament eschatology. [p. 252]

Notes

(Editor's note: the following notes appeared at the foot of the page where they are cited and should be referenced accordingly.)

[1] "the disciples assume as a matter of course," says Meyer, "that immediately after the destruction in question the Lord will appear, in accordance with what is said in xxiii, 39, for the purpose of setting up his kingdom, and that with this the current (the pre-Messianic) era of the world's history will come to an end." - *Critical and Exegetical Handbook on Matthew, in loco.*

[2] Comp. Matt xvi, 27,28; xxiv, 30; xxv, 31; John xiv, 3; Rev. 1, 7; xxii, 7.

[3] Acts i, 11, is often cited to show that Christ's coming must needs be spectacular, "in like

manner as ye beheld him going into the heaven." But (1) in the only other three places where *on tropou*, what manner, occurs, it points to a general concept rather than the particular form of its actuality. Thus, in Acts vii, 28, it is not some particular manner in which Moses killed the Egyptian that is notable, but rather the certain fact of it. In 2 Tim. iii, 8, it is likewise the fact of strenuous position in Matt. xxiii, 37, and Luke xiii, 34, it is the general thought of protection rather than the visible manner of a mother bird that is intended. Again (2), if Jesus did not come in that generation, and immediately after the great tribulation that attended the fall of Jerusalem, his words in Matt. xvi, 27,28, xxiv, 29, and parallel passages are in the highest degree misleading. (3) To make the one statement of the angel in Acts i, 11, override all the saying of Jesus on the same subject and control their meaning is a very one-sided method of biblical interpretation. but all the angel's words necessarily mean is that as Jesus has ascended into heaven so he will come from heaven. And this main thought agrees with the language of Jesus and the prophets.

[4] See, for example, the excursus of Dr. E.R. Craven on the Basileia in the American edition of Lange's Commentary on the Revelation of John, pp. 93-100.

[5] See Schurer, *History of Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, English translation, vol. ii, p. 177; Schoettgen, *Horae Hebraicae*, i., 1153-1158.

[6] And so we should note that many things which Jesus spoke by way of counsel and admonition are as applicable to one period as another. The exhortation to watch, which having a special historical motive and force with the disciples, has its abiding lesson as one of the things ever incumbent upon the servants of the heavenly King. So many particular exhortation and counsels of Old Testament prophets have permanent value. It is in this way that the scriptures of both Testaments are profitable for instruction in righteousness.

[7] We need not assume to say how far and in what manner Christ executes his judgments or gathers his elect by the ministry of angels. He who "makes the clouds his chariot, who walks upon the wings of the wind, making his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire" (Psalm

civ, 3,4; comp. Heb 1, 7), is present in all the great crises of this world's history, and he makes his angels ministering spirits to serve such as are to inherit salvation (Heb. 1,14). Our Lord represented Lazarus as carried away (apevexthenai) by the angels into Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi, 22). But there is no warrant in Scripture for the notion that when the angels are sent forth on missions of mercy or of judgment their operations must needs be visible to mortal eyes. When the impious Herod Agrippa allowed himself to be honored as a god, "immediately an angel of God smote him, and, becoming eaten of worms, he breathed out his spirit" (Acts xii, 22,23). Human eyes saw nothing but the curse of a foul disease, or a terrible plague; but Scripture sees back of it the potent ministry of a destroying angel (comp. Exod. xii, 23; 2 Sam. xxiv, 16). So the visible effects of divine judgment were terribly manifest in the unparalleled miseries of Jerusalem. The righteous blood of unnumbered martyrs was visited upon that generation (Matt. xxiii, 35,36); and where the Jewish historian saw and made record of appalling tribulation and woe the word of prophecy discerned a "revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of his power [personal or natural] in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel" (2 Thess. 1, 7,8). In like manner the King of glory is continually judging and reigning among the nations, and he will not cease from his age-long work until " he shall have abolished all rule and authority and power" (1 Cor. . xv, 24).



Christian Woman's Headship Veiling

A brief explanation of I Cor. 10:31-11:16

Any reasonable interpretation of I Cor. 11:1-16 must have it that God would have Christian women don a covering in token of male headship and the modesty, purity, and submissiveness enjoined upon the fairer sex. The following article provides a verse-by-verse analysis of the text.

I Cor. 10:31-33 – Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of man, that they may be saved.

This passage belongs to chpts. 8-10, not chpt. 11. In chapters 8-10 Paul is talking about liberties and concludes by saying we should so conduct ourselves as to win men for Christ. Some commentators attempt to attach these verses to I Cor. 11:1-16 to make them say that Paul is merely speaking to cultural traditions among Greeks, and that his instruction regarding veiling should be followed merely to accommodate Greek sensitivities. This is wrong. The translators correctly began a new chapter at I Cor. 11:1 to reflect the change of subject from eating meats offered to idols to matters pertaining to Christian witness and worship. Nothing in these verses authorizes the church to set aside scriptural instruction merely to accommodate the culture in which they live.

I Cor. 11:1-2 – Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

The church is keeping what ordinances it knows and Paul praises them for this. These would have been delivered during his personal presence at Corinth and would likely have consisted of the decrees of the "Jerusalem council." (Acts 15; 16:4) The decrees promulgated by the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:28)

through Christ's apostles at the Jerusalem council were not exhaustive, but merely illustrative of the sort of moral and ethical conduct required of alien sinners (Gentiles) to remain members in good standing of the church. Hence, they were subject to further explanation, elaboration, and supplementation as need required. St. Paul is now going to instruct the Corinthians of doctrinal and ethical instruction they had not previously received.

3 – But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

In saying "*I would have you know*" Paul is imparting *new* instruction. This obviates completely the argument that he is merely addressing circumstances arising from Greek cultural traditions. The Corinthians were Greek and would know their own customs; they surely did not need a Jew like Paul to explain these to them. That Paul is totally unconcerned with cultural traditions in the present passage - Greek, Roman, or Jewish - is apparent from his argumentation and his appeal to *creation principles* and *spiritual realities*. Not once will he resort to culture or custom in support of what he is about to say.

4, 5 – Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

Roman custom was for men to cover their heads in prayer. Pagan priests among the Romans always covered the head in their offerings and prayers. Similarly, Josephus describes Vespasian at his triumph, saying: "And when everybody entirely held their peace, he stood up, and covering the greatest part of his head with his cloak, he put up the accustomed solemn prayers." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Bk. VII, Chpt. v, Sec. 4; Whiston ed. - See picture below.) Some commentators suggest that for the man to cover his head was also a Jewish custom, but this cannot be proved by scripture. What Jews do today or did in the middle ages is not proof of what obtained during New Testament times. Even if they did have this custom, it is clearly disallowed by Paul. Paul

indicates that for the man to cover his head dishonors Christ, presumably because it denigrates male headship, confuses the roles of the sexes, and demeans the man. In other words, as Christ's appointed head of the woman, it shames Christ for the man to assume the token of feminine subjection.

For a woman to go uncovered is tantamount to her being shaven. This proves unequivocally that the hair is *not* the covering in contemplation; Paul is not asking women merely to wear long hair, he wants them to wear a *veil*. The veil complements and answers to long hair. Hence, to go without the veil or covering is all the same as if she were shaven. God has given the woman long hair as an ornament of her feminine figure and nature; it is her glory. (I Cor. 11:15) To have short or shaven hair is masculine and is confusion. God wants the sexes to maintain their several roles; men are to be masculine, women are to be feminine; dress and adornment help preserve these God-given distinctions. The notion of "unisex" clothing would have been unthinkable and abhorrent to the Jews; for man to wear what pertained to woman or woman to wear what pertained to man was prohibited. (Deut. 22:5) The veil reinforces the ornament and token of a woman's femininity. The veil is also an incident of modesty and submissiveness. Paul indicates that God would have women adorn themselves in "modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." (I Tim. 2:9) Broided hair speaks to glamor, worldliness, and vanity of the perishable outer-man. In mankind's fallen condition, a woman's hair, given in token of her purity and submissiveness, was turned against nature and a woman's uncovered head made a token of feminine brazenness, sensuality, and frowardness. The veil exercises a restraining influence upon feminine wantonness, standing as a call to the modesty, purity, and simplicity of a heart surrendered to the will of God. God's women will adorn herself accordingly.

Nothing supports the notion that Paul's instruction is limited to worship of the church during times of general assembly. Women are prohibited to lead prayer or teach over the man in the church. (I Cor. 14:34-37; I Tim. 2:1,9-15) Since women were prohibited to lead in prayer or to prophesy in church, we are constrained to understand Paul to be speaking to circumstances

outside the assembly, to her conduct in *general*. Although he addresses only the question of praying and prophesying, the better view is that the covering was a token of a woman's modesty, purity, and submissiveness and was to be worn while in public, if not at all times – not just during prayer. It is noteworthy that Tacitus, the Roman historian, reports that Poppaea Sabina, Nero's wife, adopted the custom of wearing a veil in public. (Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, xlv; XVI, xvi.) This is typically interpreted as evidence that Poppaea was a Jewish proselyte and testifies to Jewish practice of wearing a covering in public, not merely in the synagogue. This, in turn, suggests the broader application urged here and that Paul is not speaking merely to worship in the assembly.

6 – For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

Paul has already indicated that it is a shame for a woman to be uncovered. This is not a reflection of cultural traditions, but of spiritual ethics and realities rising out of male headship. If she is going to go uncovered (without a veil), Paul says the woman may as well *also* be shorn of her hair, for the one answers to the other. The word “also” proves the hair is not the covering. Thus it is not a question of one or the other, but of *both*. God would have women don long hair *and* a covering. As long hair is an ornament of her feminine nature (vv. 13, 14) and to be shaven is against nature and shameful, so laying aside her covering (veil) is shameful also. The veil is a *voluntary expression* that she consents to God's creation principles and male headship; to cast aside the covering is all the same as to renounce the headship of her husband or father and therefore is reproachful to them.

7 – For a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Man is closer in origination and priority to the woman; he is the image and glory of *God*, she is the glory of *man*. This does not mean she is less in value or essence, it merely means that she is different in role and function. The symbol of the covering has a specific message it conveys and it is confusion for the man to wear the symbol set aside for the woman.

8-10 - For the man is not of the woman; but the woman is of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power over her head because of the angels.

Paul does not appeal to culture once in his argument. He appeals to creation principles and the order of creation. Woman was made for man; the covering is an expression of this fact. In the garden the couple were naked and unashamed, and her long hair was a sufficient token and ornament of woman's feminine and passive nature. After the fall, God clothed the man and the woman. The veil was apparently ordained at some unrecorded point of sacred history as an affirmation of what in nature the woman's long hair symbolized; *viz.*, that she is under the coverture (power and authority) of man. Hence, God's woman has been covered from the earliest recorded times. (Gen. 24:65) Reference to the angels seems to speak to the fact that a wife's or daughter's prayers and vows were subject to the approval of her husband or father. If a wife or daughter made a vow binding herself in some way, it was subject to disallowance by her husband or father in the day he learned of it. (Num. 30) Hence, the veil reflects the fact that she is not “*sui juris*” (of her own legal right or person), but under the legal power and protection of man. The veil would therefore seem to serve as a sign to the angels that her vows may be set aside by her husband or father, and, hence, must be carried to God with this qualification. Older widows who did not return to their father's house were *sui juris* (Naomi, for example) and this reasoning would not have applied to them, though we may well expect that she donned the covering in token of feminine submissiveness all the same.

11-12 - Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

In God and Christ, man is now born of woman, hence there is a condition of interdependence. However, this does not nullify the headship principle of the man it merely shows that woman also has her place in God's economy.

13 – Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

In Romans, Paul speaks about Gentiles who although they "have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law." (Rom. 2:14, 15) Paul makes a similar appeal here: Paul wants the Corinthians to look at the nature *of the two sexes* and decide if it is appropriate that the woman behave with the same boldness and independence as the man. When the couple had sinned, God addressed the man, not the woman. She is under his authority and her spiritual well being was Adam's responsibility; he was answerable for what had transpired with his knowledge or by his neglect. Woman's status before God placing her under her husband or father requires that she affect a more humble demeanor when approaching the Almighty in recognition of, and submission to, His created order.

14 – Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him.

By its very nature, long hair is uniquely feminine. It is an ornament of the woman's feminine nature; it is her glory. (v. 15) Combing, brushing, and caring for long hair is appropriate to the woman, but it is altogether unbecoming for a man to give such attention to his appearance and would be *effeminate*. Thus, for men to don long hair is a shame and is *against nature*. By the same token, for a woman to wear masculine clothing and assume the mannerisms of the male is a confusion of nature and shameful in the sight of God.

15 – But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

"The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head." (Prov. 20:29; *cf.* 16:31) A woman's glory is her feminine figure and her long hair. They are an ornament given her of God to grace her appearance. In the garden, the hair was a sufficient covering and token of her passive nature, but after sin entered in there was a need for a constant reminder of male headship. One of the consequences of sin was that God's established order was subverted and willfulness in the woman would express itself by seeking to

usurp man's authority. This is the meaning of the phrase "Thy desire shall be for thy husband but he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3:16) The identical phrase occurs regarding sin's desire to dominate Cain. (Gen. 4:7) Hence, the meaning is that woman would desire to dominate her husband or father, but that he was to retain his place of headship over her. The veil is an object lesson of male headship. The woman who dons a covering expresses her *willing assent* to male headship in the home, church, and state. A woman's hair also has poetic meaning as a token of modesty, purity, and submissiveness (hence, the bridal veil), and is reflective of the larger ethical instruction concerning the demeanor of the Christian woman, her devotion to godliness, and avoidance of worldly fashion and values. A woman who covers will instinctively reject immodest clothing and traditional male clothing such as pants and short hair styles as inconsistent with her Christian witness.

16 – But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Paul is not dismissing what he just labored for 15 verses to establish. What he taught is timeless and based upon unchanging principles of creation and male headship. Saying "if any man *seem* to be contentious" is but another way of saying "if any man *is* contentious." Since to be contentious and resist the Spirit can *never* be appropriate, the mature Christian will want to discover God's will in this area and conform. There is always a blessing attached to obedience and we lose a blessing when we reject the instruction of scripture. Even in matters that are not essential to salvation, the Christian should seek the blessing obedience brings. This is particularly true at a time when feminism is subverting the family and attempting to subvert the church by women presuming to teach over the man. (I Tim. 2:9-15) In I Cor. 14:37, 38 Paul, after enjoining silence upon the woman in church, states: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The commandments Paul sets out in I Cor. 14:34-38 directly relate to those set out in I Cor. 11:1-16. Both passages speak to the roles and conduct becoming the sexes. In I Cor. 11:1-16, Paul speaks to appropriate attire in women praying or

prophesying *out side* of the assembly, in I Cor. 14:34-36 he enjoins their speaking *in and to* the assembly. Doubtless, the same "contentious" men who resisted Paul's teaching in chapter eleven are addressed again in chapter fourteen when he states "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." Willing ignorance is no more appropriate to the Christian than contentiousness. Paul is not condoning either trait or quality, and merely indicates that he will not waste further effort attempting to instill instruction to those who have an un-teachable spirit. Their disobedience will be upon their own heads.

What is the meaning of Paul's statement "we have no such custom?" One possibility is that Paul here indicates that what he is setting out is praiseworthy and therefore *commended*, albeit not *commanded*. In other words, his teaching would be like other points making up the larger ethical instruction of the church which, while bringing God's blessing, are not essential to salvation. For example, fasting is commendable, but not required. If so, Paul may arguably stop short of enjoining this tradition in the churches as a test of fellowship.

Against this interpretation, however, it may be urged that it would be extremely unusual, indeed, *unprecedented* for the apostle to take fifteen verses explaining and establishing the spiritual principles which underlie a custom or practice only to dismiss obedience at the end. Hence, the better view is that the apostle is not stating that the catholic (universal) church has no such custom, for clearly it *did* have such a custom, which Paul here both explains and enjoins. Rather, he is stating we have no such custom *as the contentious party is advocating in its stead*. In effect, then, Paul would be saying "we have no *other* custom" than the one he has stated and set out. This was the understanding of the translators of the New International Version who, perhaps not incorrectly, paraphrased the passage precisely this way.

Conclusion

If I Cor. 11:1-16 is to have any meaning at all, we must acknowledge that God would have his woman cover. That, after all, is the very thing Paul is attempting to establish or correct. Any construction or interpretation which negates this purpose renders the passage meaningless and

nullifies the word of God. If it is not commanded, it is clearly commended and our homes and families will receive a blessing if we obey. Of this much we may be *certain*.



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