

The Athenian Mercury.

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Quest. 1. **T**HE meaning of that Text 1 Cor. 11. 10? *A Woman ought to have power on her Head because of the Angels.*

Ans. This is a Question admitting of so much Dispute, and there are others of so much difficulty depending on it, that it rather needs a Volume than such a Paper as this to discuss it. And indeed one Branch of it only, that of Long-Hair, (as we generally interpret it) in the 14. vers. of this same Chapter, has employ'd some of the most Learned Pens in Europe, who have compos'd just Treatises thereon. However we'll endeavour to give as full a View of it as our short Limits will permit, and in order thereunto must be forc'd to touch on some of those Questions we have already hinted at: What is meant by Prophecie, what by being Cover'd, and what by that *το κομᾶν*, or having longer Hair, as well as the main Difficulties in the Text it self, what is meant by this *ἑξουσία*, or Power, and what by the Angels, neither of which can be very well clear'd till we have first dispatch'd the others, nay indeed we must explain most of the Preceding Context for the same Reason. St. Paul in this Chapter exhorts the *Corinthians* to keep those *μαρτυρίας*, or Traditions, which for fear of the Papiests our Translators have turn'd Ordinances; which he had deliver'd unto them, whence *Estitus* and others of the Romish Communion indeed weakly Argue for their unwritten Traditions, relatings to Points of Doctrine and Articles of Faith after the Canon of Scripture was perfected, and miraculous Gifts ceased, and the Gospel planted in the World, neither of which takes place here; those Traditions or Ordinances being only matters of Discipline or outward Behaviour in the publick Assemblies or Churches of God, that all things might be done decently and in order, and according to the Customs directed by the Apostles, and then in Use by all regular Christians: Amongst others, he treats of the Gesture or Posture in Praying or Propheying, both of Man and Woman, wherein the *Corinthians*, it seems, had forgotten, or regarded not what he had taught them; probably because he had no express Direction from our Saviour for it, and contrary to what he had commanded the Men, pray'd and prophesy'd with their Heads cover'd, the Women with theirs uncovered; and he in the former part of this Chap. endeavours to bring them to the quite contrary. To clear which Custom, as well as these in the Text, we must first, as was propos'd, enquire what is meant by this Propheying so frequently mentioned in the Writings of this Apostle. By Propheying was meant first a miraculous Gift of Praising God either by Psalms, or Hymns, or otherways: Sometimes praising God without Hymns, and in plain Prose, which is prov'd as far as can be done by a Negative Argument from *Acts* 10. 46. When the Holy Ghost fell on the Friends of *Cornelius*, they were heard speaking with other Tongues, and Magnifying or Praising God, but nothing there of Singing mentioned. However by Propheying is sometimes meant singing Gods Praises, as appears pretty plain from 1 Sam. 10. 5. where the Prophets are described coming down the Hill and Propheying with a Psaltery and a Tabret, and a Pipe and a Harp; and thus indeed the very Heathens stile their Priests, *Vates* being applied to them as well as their other Poets; so *Aeneas* in *Virgil* calls *Helenus Vatem*, and just after salutes him by the Title of *Interpres Divum*, and the Devil taught his Prophets as well as Gods, to give out their Oracles in Verse, (such as they were) but besides this, Propheying was taken for revealing any Secret thing, either future or present, the secrets of Mens Hearts, or dark places in Scripture, or future Events: Lastly,

'tis taken as many think— For publickly Preaching, Instructing, or Teaching others. We must now enquire which of these ways of Propheying is here intended, which will give no inconsiderable Light to the present Argument. The Last we conclude it cannot be, because that Office is plainly restrain'd to the Men, and Woman forbidden to speak in that Sence in the Church, and ordered more than once, to learn in Silence with all Subjection. But this way of Propheying, if any where intended in the Apostles Writings, seems to be included in that Exhortation of his, Cap. 14. vers. 29. *Let the Prophets speak two or three, and let the other Judge,*— and 31. *For ye may all Prophecy one by one.* Though these Texts also relate to those admirable Gifts before mentioned, whereby they reveal'd the most secret Thoughts of those who came into their Assemblies, as St. Peter those of *Ananias* and *Saphira*. But other sort of Prophecies there were in which the Congregation might all join, nay the Women as well as Men, which must be Praying or Singing Psalms, one great part of Prayer being Praises, or celebrating the Praise and Honour of God the proper Work of a Prophet, which are here put together, [a Woman Praying or Propheying] not improbably to give a hint what sort of Prophecy the Apostle meant. To be yet clearer, as far as 'tis possible in these ancient things concerning which we can do little more than guess; lets enquire into that Text in the 14. of this Epistle, 25. where mention is made of — a Psalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation: And here some have thought that the first of these, a Psalm, was not joined in by the rest of the Congregation, because they are reprov'd for having every one a Psalm, &c. But this may be easily solv'd, for each Singing a different Psalm undoubtedly must cause Confusion, which if they took their Courses, as the Apostle directs a little lower, and all Sung one, as the Congregation and Priests in *David's* time; and no doubt the Prophets before in *Samuel's*, would be easily remedy'd. And were only this manner of Propheying used by the Women, it would have been sufficient to complete the Prophecy of God in the Old Testament; that on his Servants and Handmaids hee'd pour out of his Spirit, and they should Prophecy: But we are ready to believe another sort of Prophecy was also granted them in the fulfilling of that Promise, namely that they also revealed Secrets. This we are sure was done by several Holy Women in the New Testament, as *Anna*, the Blessed Virgin, and *Elizabeth*, and the Daughters of *Agabus*. So that a Psalm, or a Revelation the Women have; but a Doctrine or an Interpretation we believe they never had as being the Mans Province, much less can we think they were trusted with the Gift of Tongues. — Let thus much then suffice of Prophecy. We may now advance to the Second thing, The Gesture, Posture, Vesture or Habit, wherein they were to Prophecy, a Man *aperto capite* with his Head uncovered, a Woman *operto*, with her Head covered; the Reasons whereof he adds, *Because the Head of every Man is Christ*, and by Praying or Propheying covered he dishonoureth his Head, as the Woman does by having hers uncovered. The meaning of which Reason, and some of which words we must enquire into before we can get any further. That Christ is now the Head of all Mankind none can deny who believe the Scriptures, and grant him to be the Second Adam; and this is the Head which the Man dishonoureth by covering it, as well as his own Head, for we believe both are here included. That the Mans own Head is here included, and that it was at that time, and in those Countries dishonoured when cover-

ed is very plain from the whole scope of the Words, and the opposition in the case of the Woman, but by the Head two other things were also intended: First, all the Body, or rather all the Man; this is beyond dispute, it being a common way of Expression both in those Eastern and even our European Western Nations, now knowest thou not that I thy Master will be taken from thy Head to day, &c — *per Caput hoc juro* are sufficient proofs hereof. But we think it as evident in the second place, that our Saviour is here chiefly and ultimately intended, else why is he just the very verse before mentioned as the Man's Head, and why is the Apostle so careful to let 'em know, and so solemn in making the Declaration on't, (I would have you know) that the Head of every Man is Christ? In the same manner we believe is that of the Woman to be understood; and indeed if 'tis once granted that the Head which the Man Dishonours by being Covered, is his own Natural Head, and also thereby Christ who is his Moral or Political Head, will not be denied; that the Head which the Woman Dishonours by her being Uncovered, is first her own, and then the Mans, who is her Political, or OEconomical Head.

Having thus taken this rub out of the way, and reconciled the two Opinions, we go on to inquire into the reason why the Man's being Cover'd Dishonours him and his Head, and the Womans Head Uncover'd, her and hers. For the Man there were two Reasons, the first relating to a Civil Right, which more immediately we might refer to his own Natural Head. The second, Sacred relating to Christ, his Political and Spiritual Head, tho both having a clear dependance on each other. the Civil Right is that of all Ingenuous and Free Men among the Ancients, to walk *aperto Capite*, with their Face and Head open and bared to the Air, the contrary whereunto, was thought either a Badge of Slavery, or a mark of a Luxurious Delicate and Effeminate Person, who could not suffer as we say, the least breath of Wind to blow upon him, either to discompose or hurt him. And this the Eastern Nations so far observe, that they make Baring their Feet, and Covering their Heads, a token of Subjection and Obedience. Now in a Man appearing in the Congregation when he spoke in Christ's Name and by his immediate Inspiration, in the habit or posture of a Slave, with his Head Covered, did Dishonour his Head; Dishonour, or Dehoneltare himself, and thereby his Saviour in whose name he spoke, as if he were only King of Slaves, and had not rather broke our Yoke made us Children and Heirs, and vindicated us unto the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God: But by thus appearing Cover'd, a Man did Dishonour Christ his Head, more immediately, as relating to a Sacred Right, in use not only among the Jews, but all the Eastern Nations, but even all the Heathens, which was being always Cover'd, *intra Sacra* while they were at their Devotion. The Romans especially, as the Learned *Lud. Capellus* has observed both the Priests, who were covered either with a Cap or Mitres, or Garlands (that Learned Man should have added, as *Servius* did upon *Virgil*, except when they Sacrifice to *Saturn*, or *Hercules*, which they were to perform with Heads Uncovered) and this the People us'd to do with some part of their Garment. And this it should seem by the Poets manner of Writing its Original, should be a very ancient Custom, for he brings in *Helenus* directing his Hero. *Quin ubi & positus aris jam vota in littore solvet. Purpureo velare comas adapertus amictu. Nequa inter Sanctos ignes in honore Deorum. Hostilis facies occurret & omnia.* Nay, he adds, *Homo socii morem sacrorum bene ipse tereto. Hac casti manent in Religione nepotes!* — *turbet.* But whatever pretences they might have for this Practice, there is no doubt to be made that it proceeded from the Slavish Superstitious Fear the Heathens were under in the Worship of their Idols, who indeed were Devils as the Scripture tells us, and tyrannized over their miserable Votaries. And indeed the Jews themselves were a stiff-neck'd People, and when they did Worship the true God, generally did it more out of Fear than Love; and for this reason we may presume took up the same Custom, for we

are as sure that they used it long since, as *Maimonides* in his *Misna* informs us, as that they do it now, or that they have no warrant in Scripture for so doing. Now if the *Corinthians* it's probable had taken up this Custom either from the Jews or Heathens, but we believe from the latter by what remains to be said of the Woman. Now by this following the Jews, Heathen, disgracing Gods Service, appearing before him in the habit of Fear and Grief, or Mourners; the *Corinthians* did represent our Saviour as a hard Master, and so dishonour their Head before the World, making him like to the Gods of the Heathen, whereas he commands them to go boldly to the Throne of Grace, and yet reverently too, and has made Faith, or a firm Confidence in him when our works are suitable; the Condition not only of any Blessing we are to obtain from him, but even of Eternal Life. This for the Mans being uncovered, now for the Womans having her Head cover'd least she dishonour her Head. When we first read that Text, and what succeeds it, of a Womans long Hair, that 'twas decorous for a Woman *κομᾶν*, and *Salmasius's* Learned Notes upon't, wherein he understands not *κομᾶν* of long promish Hair, but rather of cur'd Hair, which thereby is shorten'd, being tyed up and plaited, and roll'd in the form of a Crown on the Womans Head, which is indeed a Glory to them, as 'tis call'd in the Text, not the contrary when we read this we immediately reflected on the Custom of the Priestesses and Prophetesses among the Heathens, who when either Sacrificing or delivering Oracles, used to have their Heads uncovered and their Hair disheavell'd loose about their Shoulders, to which there seemed to us some Allusion in this Custom of the *Corinthian* Women, and this Judgment we are since confirm'd in by finding 'tis the same with the Pious and Learned Mr. *Jo. Medes* in his *Diatrib.* on the Place. *They did it,* says he, *out of a wicked Imitation of the Gentile Heathen Priestesses, who when they worshipt their Idols or gave forth their Oracles, as Pythea, or the Sibyls, or perform'd Sacrifices, as the Menades or Bacchanals were wont to do it in an unusual Habit, with their Faces bared, and their Hair loose and disheavell'd.* Thus far he, and innumerable Instances might be brought out of the Heathen Poets and Historians to confirm it, *Ovid* is full of such Discriptions. Thus *Ovid* describes *Medea* Sacrificing to *Hecate*. *Nudos humeris infusa capillos;* agen, *Et tantum Cælo tegitur,* which we believe may refer to her Head as well as the open Air. This Custom it seems the *Corinthian* Women followed, unveiling their Faces, and disheavelling their Hair when they Prophesied, that they might appear in a Sacred Rage as well as the Sibyls and Priestesses of *Apollo*; this the Apostle tells them is dishonouring their Heads, For two Reasons, because the Veil is a token of Subjection and Modesty, and because the disordered dress was Immodeit; now by throwing off their Veils without their Husbands leave, they shew'd they regarded not their Duty and Subjection to them, by uncovering, undressing their Heads and disheavelling their Hair, they seemed like mad People; and so dishonoured or exposed both their natural Heads, themselves, and their Political Heads, their Husbands. After all this we think what remains easie, that by the Womans having Power on her Head, or Government, which is the same, *ἐξουσία* and *ἐξουσιάζειν* most properly signifying a Moral political Authority or Power, we lay by her having Government on her Head, is no more than her being under Government, namely her Husbands, on whom the power is placed by God; He shall Rule over thee: the Symbol of which Subjection was the Veil in those Eastern Nations. As for the last Difficulty, *Because of the Angels.* We believe are either meant those Angels or ministering Spirits, which look into the Church, and are witnesses of our Behaviour there, or else the Angels of the Churches, the Bishops or chief Men who preside in the Church, whom they ought to Respect or Reverence; both Opinions we Esteem probable, but rather incline to the former.

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