

# Epistle 199

by George Fox

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*The speaker encourages listeners to keep in the power of God over outward things, including head coverings in prayer, and to avoid stumbling into worldly concerns.*

**Scripture:** Joel 2:28

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Spiritual Discipline"

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## Description

George Fox addresses the controversy surrounding the custom of wearing hats during prayer and thanksgiving, emphasizing that true worship is not about outward appearances but about the power and motions of God within. He points out the disputes among early Christians regarding prayer attire and highlights the importance of maintaining comeliness and honor in worship. Fox challenges the notion that covering one's head during prayer symbolizes Christ being covered, asserting that true worship transcends outward symbols and rituals, focusing on the spirit and prophecy.

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## Transcript

Friends,--The matter concerning not putting off the hat in prayer, and when they give thanks to God, which hath been said by some to be heathenish and Romish, and set up in the time of darkness and ignorance, and in the curse, and in the fall, and cursed. Then they, and ye, who have put off your hats, when ye have prayed, and given thanks to God, must be wrong, according to their judgment, (which is false.) For who have known the power of God, and the motions of it, which power was before hats and coverings were, are out of this judgment. For there was a sect of people amongst the Corinthians, that were jangling about meats, drinks, days [Col 2:16], marriages; and whether they should pray covered, and whether the woman should pray and prophesy uncovered? There was such a strife, before the Papists got up. And therefore the apostle set up a comeliness amongst the churches, and says, it was a dishonour for a woman to pray or prophesy with her head uncovered. And also, a dishonour for a man to pray or prophesy with his head covered [1 Cor 11:4f]. . . .

They say, Christ is the head of the woman [1 Cor 11:3], (spoken of in the Corinthians,) and her head must be covered when she prays and prophesies; and is it not meant of an outward hat. Then Christ, which is the head, must be covered in the woman when she prays and prophesies; and when a man prays and prophesies his head must be uncovered. This also shows a contradiction. For prophecy is in the spirit [Joel 2:28], and praying is in the spirit [Eph 6:18], and by prophecy they see Christ. And if Christ be covered, then they must consider it by what the woman covers him, and whether or nay she can prophesy

when he is covered? And so it is that mind which runs into outward things that stumbles; and ever was and ever will be so. . . .

. . . For they that have attained to that state which Adam was in before the fall, it is without hats or coverings. And they that are come to Christ (and abide in him) are in a state beyond Adam before he fell, far before outward coverings were; for Christ was with the Father before the world began, before Adam was made. And when the apostle spake to the Corinthians how that he would have them to know that God was the head of Christ, and Christ was the head of the man, and the man was the head of the woman [1 Cor 11:3]; and the woman was made for the man and not the man for the woman [1 Cor 11:9]; and he is the image and glory of God, and she is the glory of the man [1 Cor 11:7]: this the apostle spake to the Corinthians, who were not come to the state of Adam and Eve before they fell; amongst whom there was a sect about the man being covered, and the woman uncovered. . . . .

The church of the Romans fell away by running into outward things from the power and life; also the Corinthians, Galatians, and others of them; and also the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev 1:4], by running into outward things; and what the outward things were they ran into ye may read. And how the apostle reprov'd them, and what all are gone into since they lost the power of God, and the unity in the spirit. And therefore, all dear friends, keep in the power of God over all outward things, which was before they were; and in that power is the standing unity.

G. F.

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