

GALATIANS 3:28

EXEGETICAL ESSAY ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

Whoever wonders, nowadays, about the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry, does not fail to refer to Paul's declaration to the Galatians: "There is neither male nor female". This formula has, very quickly, taken the form of a slogan.

The reading of the various comments on Galatians 3:28, shows, nevertheless, that more is at stake in this verse than the ordination to the pastoral ministry.

Already Betty Friedan, author of an important work on feminism (1) had answered with clairvoyance, the question about which would be the greatest change brought up by her movement : "You wouldn't believe ... it is a theological one" (2).

It is possible to recognize, even more fundamentally, with Willmore Eva, that the problem is of an hermeneutic nature. (3) Must the Church face the choice between a fundamentalistic reading of the Scripture and a sociologizing or psychologizing reading such as the "Formgeschichte" proposes to us ? (4)

Our aim is not to solve here this vast problem in a few pages. We will just bring up a few exegetical elements. In the meantime, bearing in mind the frame in which this question is put to us, we will have to make, here and there, some observations on the implications of certain exegetical moves found in the course of our research.

I. TERMINOLOGY AND CONTEXT OF GALATIANS 3:28

A. Son of God

Section 3:26-28 of the Epistle to the Galatians deserves a very particular attention. Not only because it seems to hold a central position inside Paul's long argumentation about law and grace, but also because it seems to possess distinctive marks of a baptismal liturgy (5) : at least it refers to baptism, which gives it an unquestionable authority.

Its hinge character is noticeable through the change from the first person plural, which characterized chapter 3 to the second person plural employed in chapter 4. (6)

In short, after having dealt with implications on salvation by grace for Christian Jews of whom Paul feels a member (we), he is going to approach the consequences for Christians of heathen origin (you). (7)

Thus, the situation of the pericope, its hinge nature, its structure and its liturgical colour cause the pauline demonstration of the epistle to be a climax.

The pericope is built in an inclusive manner, typical of the semitic mentality (8). This method consists of inserting between two similar statements (3:26 and 3:28) an argumentation which must be understood from these two statements on. (9)

The section is composed by six lines:

1. (26) πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
2. (27) ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε,
Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε
3. (28a) οὐκ ἔστι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνα
4. (28b) οὐκ ἔστι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος
5. (28c) οὐκ ἔστι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ
6. (28d) πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

1. (26) *For you are all children of God by faith
in Christ Jesus.*
2. (27) *(For as many of you have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ).*
3. (28a) *There is neither Jew nor Greek,*
4. (28b) *there is neither slave nor free,*
5. (28c) *there is neither male nor female:*
6. (28d) *for you are all one
in Christ Jesus*

Although formulated with some differences, the first and last sentence must be brought closer to each other, as they make each other explicit. The union in Christ, mentioned in verse 28 has its source in the divine sonship of the believers. Faith in Jesus Christ is the means by which this unity (or this sonship) is received because Christ, son of God, has allowed us to be adopted sons. (10)

The believers are one person with Christ. They are united to Him. "God sends His Son so that the curse and power of the Law may be broken and the community may live through His substitutionary death. Their sonship lies on this or is shaped by it." (11)

The question is to know now in which broader context one must situate these words of the apostle. Willmore Eva is right when she stresses that Christ has come to redeem the sinner from the curse of the law (verse 13) "and thus opened for all people the free flow of God's promises (particularly that of the Spirit) ... the implications of this are clear to Paul. All who live by this faith in Christ are God's children (verses 26 and 27)." (12)

But to say that "the connection between the curse of the law (verse 13) and the curse of Eve (Gen. 3:16) is unequivocal" (13) lacks to be demonstrated.

First, because in the account of Genesis only the serpent and the earth are the object of a curse (Gen. 3:14 and 17). Neither the woman nor Adam are cursed.

Second, because if any curse had been removed according to Galatians 3:28, not only it would concern the woman but Adam as well. And if by faith Eve is released from her dependance from her husband, what about the man?

Finally, and it seems to me to be a matter of an elementary rule of exegesis to respect the frame in which an author inscribes his remark, Paul

does not go beyond the promise made to Abraham (Gal. 3:6). As for the mentioned curse, it concerns the one which was introduced by the coming of the law four hundred years later (Gal. 3:17). It is convenient, therefore, before inscribing one text in a globalizing theology, to respect the place of that text in its context.

To say that we all are God's children through faith, has, with the apostle Paul, a very clearly eschatological connotation. This element should urge us to be careful before attempting any sociological interpretation.

As E. Schweitzer says, the believers will be shown as sons at the eschaton. (14)

If the believers are sons from now on (*ἐστέ*), it is because they own the premises of the Spirit (15) which allows them to hope. (16)

Surely Paul stresses in Galatians 3:26-28 the current character of the promise through the coming of the Spirit into our hearts (17), but, in spite of everything, he does not forget that hope is at the center of the theological virtues. So much so that in chapter 5 of the epistle to the Galatians he reminds us, in a context that resembles very much that of Gal. 3:28, that faith stands by hope and acts in love. (Gal. 5:5,6)

In 2 Cor. 6:18, 7:1 not only the promise of sonship has an altogether eschatological nature but it also keeps the difference man-woman, by specifying : "I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters".

Thus, our pericope places itself in a frame of an "already" and a "not yet", in the heart of which the presence of the Holy Spirit assures the believers that they can from now on live in the certainty which is

given by hope.

This certainty bears fruits from now on in the community and in the interpersonal relationships. Before measuring its scope, we must, however, penetrate further into the thought of the apostle.

B. Baptized in Christ

The coming of the Holy Spirit into the heart of the believers and the hope which is linked to it, is established by Paul at the baptism.

*v. 27 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ,
have put on Christ."*

We are here in presence of the only explicit reference to baptism in the epistle to the Galatians (18). To tell the truth, in the whole of the pauline corpus these references are scarce (19) which makes them even more important.

For some, the function of this verse "is that of a reminder of the ceremony and its meaning" (20). The apostle reminds the Galatians that at their baptism, through faith in Christ, they have received the Holy Spirit through which they cry: "Abba - Father". (21)

It could be that the words which follow verse 27 form a baptismal proclamation (22). One should then see on the following verses the terms of a proclamation received by the neophytes as an announcement of their new condition: in the community they are entering, no national, social or natural characteristic prevails : all have become brothers through the baptism in Christ, because they all have put on Christ.

No doubt, our pericope refers to baptism. But, to understand from that as Betz thinks, that "there can be no doubt that Paul's statements have social and political implications of even a revolutionary dimension" (23) does not

seem so evident to me.

We are facing here a polemical formulation allowing Paul to take a position against his christian Jews opponents. As it is underlined by H.L. STRACK - P. BILLERBEK, in the Jewish thought and in the rabbis' teaching only a descent of Abraham, the people of Israel, the Messiah, can bear the title of Son of God (24). However, the requirement of circumcision such as it appears in the epistle to the Galatians is not for sure without connection with the quality of a child of God. One can reasonably think that some required the circumcision besides the baptism (25) which aim was to have the believers enter the community of Israel and to have him become an authentic son of God. (26)

The apostle Paul stands with virulence against such a project, forcefully attesting that the Spirit received at the time of baptism is the unquestionable testimony of the sonship of the baptized. It stands out that, in connection with that sonship, the conditions of Jew, Greek, free, slave, male, female, do not have any implications, contrary to what could be an obstacle in the frame of circumcision. If the pericope has a revolutionary character it is on this point : diversity does not detract from unity.

In fact, as the end of verse 28 shows, to go beyond differences allows everyone to be one in Jesus-Christ.

One must take care not to read this εἷς (one) in the Greek sense. It must be taken in the ecclesiological sense of body of Christ. "And the background of σῶμα in the corporate sense is not the Greek idea of organic unity, but the Hebrew idea of human solidarity" (27). Thus the

distinctions are not suppressed, abolished, in the Church (28). This is in fact what is confirmed by the very pauline expression : put on Christ (v.27). It has a very strong anthropological sense, as it is confirmed by its use in 2 Cor. 5:2-4. To put on Christ or immortality implies to keep a personal identity (29)

This seems to be confirmed by the analysis of the pairs mentioned in verse 28.

II. THE ANTITHETIC PAIRS OF GALATIANS 3:28

A. Jew and Greek

In the verse that challenges us there are three pairs of national, social and human categories which are suppressed without equivocation :

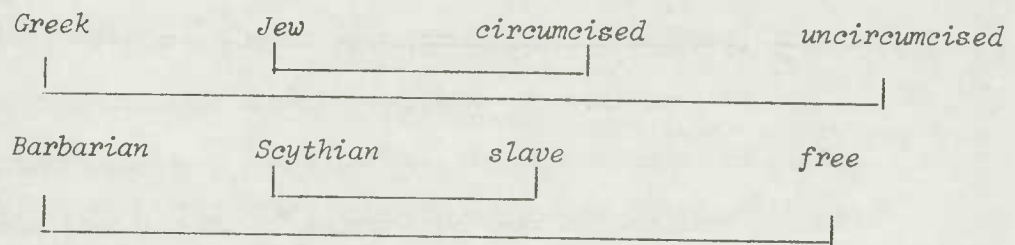
There is neither Jew nor Greek,
There is neither slave nor free,
There is neither male nor female.

Most of the exegets show their perplexity whenever they have to situate these remarks in the whole pauline corpus. This verse is, in fact, against other explicit or implicit words of Paul, in the presence of which one has to take sides.

The word " Ἕλλην " (Greek) is employed 25 times in the NT, 13 of which by Paul and 9 by Luke.

Luke, the disciple of Paul, does not mention the Greeks but in the Acts of the Apostles. With just about two circumstantial exceptions (30) their name is always linked to that of Jews, and the latter are always mentioned first (31). The term designates, in a generic way, the non-Jewish populations met by Paul during his missionary journeys.

Paul also quotes most of the time Jews and Greeks together (32) putting the Jews in first place and even insisting three times on "first the Jew" (33). He does not mention the Greeks first, except once, in Col. 3:11. This reversal of the usual order is situated at the level of a double chiastic structure which could be responsible for this change. In fact, the verse is organized in the following way:



In fact, "the chiasmus also allows to reverse an order, offering to take the desired word to the heights or to the drop of the sentence" (34). In all references we have pointed out, the Jews have, in Paul's opinion, a certain priority. On the other hand, in the Greek world the Scythians receive the lowest credit. Thus, through the performance of the chiastic orders Jews and Scythians occupy the central position. These two positions are situated againts each other, the Jews having the heighest place and the Scythians the lowest. The inversion of the usual order of Jew and Greek is only there to confront the extremes, from the highest, the circumcised Jew, to the lowest, the slave Scythian.

The question remains, therefore, of knowing why the apostle, while stating three times that there is no more distinction between Jews-Greeks (35) keeps, nevertheless, the priority of the Jew over the Greek, and always mentions one before the other (36). Even more, he reminds his superiority because God's Revelation has been entrusted to him (Rom. 3:1,2),

even if, concerning the last judgement, they lose their privilege (Rom. 3:9). He himself is conscious of this paradox as he tries to establish God's impartiality (37).

Several answers of an hermeneutic nature have been suggested. We will examine them at the end of this study.

B. Slave and Free

The question is put even with more acuity about slaves.

The terms ἐλεύθερος (free) and δοῦλος (slave) appear respectively 23 and 124 times in the NT. The order by which these two terms are employed does not have any particular nature. Some uses, however, do not fail to challenge us in connection with the subject that preoccupies us.

Paul states with force his freedom and that of the Christian : "Am I not free?" he says (I cor. 9:1), "We are Sons of the free woman" (Gal. 4:3). The first epistle of Peter is on the same wave length when it exclaims : "live as free men" (I Peter 2:16). But freedom does not have, with Paul, the nature of a claim. It is a right the Gospel confers to him, to which he voluntarily renounces for the service of that same Gospel (38). Being free he made himself a slave to all (I Cor. 9:19) and when he states, in this important chapter to the Corinthians, all the rights this freedom gives him, it is just to say that he renounces to all that, so he will not create any obstacle to the Gospel of Christ (I Cor. 9:12) It is less a question of identification, as it has become understood in terms of missiology, than the abandon of his rights conferred to him by his condition of apostle. Hence, the title of nobility with which he adorns himself : slave of Jesus-Christ. (39)

Moreover, and it is here that the contradiction blows up with more strength, if Paul states that it is "for freedom that Christ has set us free" and that one must not "become slaves of men" (Gal. 5:1; I Cor. 7:23); that there is no more in Christ neither slave nor free man, it does not detract from the fact that the slaves must be subject to their masters (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22; Tit 2:9), and even more when their masters are Christians (I Tim. 6:1,2). If a slave has the opportunity to become free, he must not keep tied up to this social condition in order to live his vocation, but rather stay as a slave and see in his condition of slavery not an obstacle, but a means of serving the name of the Lord (I Cor. 7:21) (40). Paul denounces the paradoxical situation which would consist of becoming a slave of men while getting free from social slavery (I Cor. 7:23).

The contradictory elements are not exempt from the 3rd pair as mentionned in Gal. 3:28 : male and female.

C. Male and Female

The third affirmation in Gal. 3:28 very particularly asks for attention because it is without parallel in the togetherness of the pauline corpus (41).

It differs as well from the 2 previous ones by certain features which did not fail to enliven the theologians' reflection.

H.D. Betz, points out, for example, that in contrast with the preceding statements, this one names the sexes in the neuter (42), which indicates that not only the social differences between man and woman ("roles") are involved but the biological distinctions."(43)

He does not explain, however, what could mean the end of the biological distinctions and in which way a male wouldn't be any longer differentiated from a female in the Church.

The second difference clearly appears in the breaking off of the construction "neither ...nor", in the two previous pairs. All exegetes agree that the form of the third line is a recapture of the text of Gen. 1:27. (44)

Ought we to read there with Cothenet a connection with Gen. 3:16? The expression being rather seldom employed we will not stop to examine it in various contexts.

Jesus quotes in an explicit way Gen. 1:27 in His famous instructions against repudiation. In Mat. 19:4 as in Mark 10:6 Jesus founds His whole demonstration about the indissoluble nature of marriage on the creating act of God who "has made them male and female." Let us notice that the reference to Gen. 2:24 is linked to that of Gen. 1:27 by a " ἔνεκεν τούτου " (that's why). This would mean that if the words of Paul should be applied to those of Jesus, the indissoluble character of marriage would no longer have a basis (45) which isn't, surely, in the apostle's mind.

If therefore a reference to Gen. 1:27 implies Gen. 3:16 we would find Paul in direct opposition to Jesus; or then if one would choose Jesus rather than Paul, Gen 3:16 would be based on a fact of creation and would not be a consequence of sin. Any which way we may approach the problem, to link Gen. 3:16 to Gal 3:28 leads to a deadend.

In Rom. 1:26,27, we do not find a quotation connection with Gal 3:28, but a vocabulary connection. Here, with the terms of male and female, Paul condemns sexual relations against nature (παρὰ φύσιν). It

is, therefore, on male and female nature that the type of legitimate sexual relations is established. I do not dare to imagine what the suppression of this state of nature by Gal. 3:28 would implicate in the Church. If, as Betz says, all biological distinction is excluded, homosexuality receives its credentials through Paul's writings. We cannot avoid here the simple rules of logic. If with Galatians 3:28 one must face in the Church the radical end of sexual identity in connection with social behaviour, we will not lack voices to say that heterosexuality is a form of social behaviour imposed by middle-class society.

The other references do not have an obvious meaning. It is the case of Luke 2:23, Rev. 12:5 and 13 : all these three precise that Jesus was a male (46). If we would follow E. Schüssler-Fiorenza's argumentations (47), we could see mainly in Revelation, a late position aiming at establishing the andocentric character of the Church. We are touching here a problem of hermeneutics, that's to say, which one - the inspired author or the modern reader - has best understood the core of the revelation. We will come back to this.

No matter what, inasmuch as we cannot establish on the references of Revelation the principle of a priestly phallocracy, it would be useless to claim the contrary from Galatians 3:28. It would still be necessary to have 2 contexts answer to a priestly perspective, which does not seem to be the case as we will see.

The apostle Paul ends his demonstration by putting into parallel two statements : "you are all sons of God" (v.26) and "you are all one in Christ Jesus" (v.28). God is unique (3:20), Christ is the only offspring (3:16) and the Church is one.

As we have seen, the statement referring to the believers is not of a metaphysical nature. It is not a question, for the apostle, of establishing the nature of the Church, but of affirming, on a soteriological level, everyone's participation in the promised heritage.

Therefore, his conclusion, ultimate outcome of his demonstration : "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (v.29). Christ being the heir of the promises, to put on Christ means to enter the divine family and to become coheir with Christ of all the promises made to Abraham.

An analysis of the literary structure of the whole pericope will confirm that the climax of the argumentation bears down on the full right to the heritage "in Christ".

III. THE STRUCTURE OF GALATIANS 3:16 to 4:11

In a rather recent dissertation R.B. Hays established patterns of narrative logic in Galatians 3:16 - 4:11 (48) He cleverly demonstrates that Gal. 3:23 - 29 is constructed on a pattern closely parallel to that of 4:3-7. This parallelism consists neither in surface syntax nor in verbal repetition but in the narrative pattern which the passage manifests (49). We do not follow him entirely on the beginning of his parallelism, but we agree with him about the end. Hays starts the parallelism with 4:3, but we think we can make him start with verse 1, the word heir functioning as a link to connect the two parallel argumentations.

23. Now, before faith
came we were confirmed
under the law, kept
under restraint

until faith should
be revealed
24. So that the law was
our custodian
until Christ came

that we might be
justified by faith
25. But now that faith
has come

we are no longer under
a custodian;
26. for in Christ we
are all sons of God
through faith.
27. for as many of you
as were baptized into
Christ have put on Christ.
28. There is neither Jew
nor Greek, there is neither
slave nor free, there is
neither male nor female,
for you are all one in Christ
Jesus.
29. And if you are Christ's
then you are Abraham's
offspring, heirs according
to promise.
1. I mean that the heir as
long as he is a child is
no better than a slave,

though he is the owner of
all the estate
2. But he is under guardians
and trustees
until the date set by the father
3. So with us; when we were
children, we were slaves
to the elemental spirits of the
universe.
4. But when the time had fully
come, God sent forth his Son,
born of a woman, born
under the law
5. To redeem those who were
under the law

So that we might receive
adoption as sons
6. And because you are sons,
God has sent the Spirit of
his Son into our hearts,
crying, "Abba! Father!"
7. So through God you are
no longer a slave, but a son,
and if a son then an heir.

Even if the reader disagrees with the details of the parallelism we have made, he ought, all the same, to agree that we face here two parallel argumentations. In the first one (Gal. 3:23-29) Paul tries to show that with the coming of Christ, the believer has access to the divine Sonship and nothing prevents him (v. 28) to become heir according to promise. In the second section (Gal. 4:1-7), Paul underlines that with Christ's coming the believer attains adulthood and can, therefore, profit from the title of adopted son and the heritage which is linked to it.

Be it, therefore, in a narrow or in a wide context, Galatians 3:28 does not present any other aim but that of establishing the dignity of son and heir, in Christ, of all believers, no matter which citizenship, social condition or sexual characteristics.

In order to resume the distinction established by R. Gayer towards slaves (50), the climax of Paul's demonstration bears down on "Sein" (being) and not on "Dasein" (existence). In the same manner as Christ could take the condition of slave (Phil. 2:7) being God, so the believer can take upon himself all conditions, none of them being of any importance as he knows he is the son of God, the heir.

This is, it seems to me, what a healthy exegesis can establish from the analysis of the particular context in which we find this verse.

Surely, the dogmatist-theologian can, from the implications of Paul's remarks, try to extrapolate in the ethical, cultural, ecclesiological field. But he must, in one side refrain from leaning on Galatians 3:28, because it is only fraudulently that one can reorientate a remark if one cannot prove that it corresponds to the author's intention. On the other hand, we will have to account for the whole of the pauline corpus about which we will have to make further remarks.

IV. THE PARALLEL TEXTS

A. Col. 3:11

We have already shown the chiastic form under which Col. 3:11 is presented. We will not take here our analysis further, simply stressing its connections with Gal. 3:28. Not only Paul annuls the distinction between races and social or religious conditions (circumcised and uncircumcised) but he ends his sentence on the same note: ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός (Christ is all in all).

Gal. 3:28 : πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἓστε ἐν Χριστῷ
(for you are all one in Christ Jesus).

The formulations are different but they have the same aim: to establish that Christ's presence erases all differences.

But in which context should it be faced here? In all evidence we are situating ourselves in a parenetic section. After having established the doctrine, Paul exposes its practical implications from 3:5 οὖν (therefore) And, besides, verse 11 starts with a ὅπου (here). It is linked to the new man who is renewed after the image of his Creator (v.10). In our pericope, it is still a questions of putting on, not Christ any longer (theological viewpoint) but feelings of mutual love (vv. 12,14) (ethical viewpoint) implying particular relationships in the community (v. 12-17) and in the family (v. 18-4:1).

We may, therefore, state as a fact, without venturing too much to be wrong, that the first aim of Col. 3:11 is that of making each one face his moral responsibilities no matter his origin, origin to which we could add: male and female.

B. I Cor. 12:13

I Cor. 12:13 is often quoted in parallel to Gal. 3:28, but more often, unfortunately, without comments. One can understand it insofar as I Cor. 12:13 says exactly the opposite of Gal. 3:28.

Let us already notice that it does not exist in those verses any denial of the kind of the one we have found in Gal. 3:28. He does indeed allude to an only Spirit to whom all belong, thus establishing their unity. But if all make up one body, it is in so far as Jews and Greeks, as slaves and as free men. To whoever would want to claim the contrary Paul opposes his long demonstration about the body where the foot, the eyes, the hand, etc. fully participate of the body as foot, eye, hand, etc. each one playing a role in the body, whatever its condition might be, or to go further, its charismas. We cannot but quote here, in spite of its length, the judicious reflection of M. Bouttier: "I Cor. 12:13 celebrates in a positive way the presence in the heart of the community of baptized people belonging to extreme conditions ... The apostle invites the Corinthians to recognize the unity of the Spirit, author of the most varied gifts, in the unity of the body where he puts together men whom the law, be it Jewish or secular, placed in opposition to one another. What would the σῶμα become if he did not include the Jews? One more thiasé among all those who swarm in Corinth ... What would be the body without the Greeks? Just another sect in the heart of Judaism to be added to those enumerated by Josephus. What would it be without slaves? A manifestation of class culture. What would it be without those personages known in the city? A draft of the Spartakist movement ... Greeks, Jews, slaves, free men constitute a kind of semiotic square, with its opposites and contradictories.

It will be found each time, and each one of the occupied positions plays an irreplaceable role in the theological definition of the Church " (51). Why not to add to this reflection of M. Bouttier, the place of male and female? Those who use I Cor. 12 in order to sustain Gal. 3 would not be welcome to deny us that right.

Therefore, here we find ourselves very clearly within an ecclesiological context where each one finds his statut with his socio-cultural identity. And even if Paul does not implicate men and women in this verse, he does deal widely with the question in chapters 11 and 14, where, according to H. Conzelmann, "Paul protests against the emancipation of the woman through which the latter makes of her condition that of the image of the man, the subject of her own confession of faith. Paul claims, against this position, that the woman has been called as a woman, that she must stay in the world as she is and she must not imitate men" (52).

Thus, we believe with Conzelmann, that Gal. 3:28, situated in the frame of its context and of Paul's other declarations, can very well signify that none should envy other people's position, neither the Jew that of the Greek, nor the slave that of the free man, and the woman that of the man. "But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour." (Gal. 6:4). The Corinthians seem to have been very wrong on this point. But as I Cor. 12 shows, each one has his place in the body, without all being eye, hand or foot.

As it is shown in the codes of subordination in Col. and Eph. each one has his own responsibility in his own sphere. "Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2) does not mean to share equally all burdens but, for love, to put oneself at the service of each other (Gal. 5:13). These ethical consequences

of Paul's theological account to the Galatians seem very enlightening on the contents of this statement.

Surely, not everyone shares this opinion, and some may prefer to present an hermeneutic problem. We would like to summarize it briefly.

V. QUESTIONS OF HERMENEUTICS

For anyone who reads Galatians 3:28 as a macharisma or as a liturgical proclamation uttered at the time of baptism, having the aim of establishing the new condition of the neophyte in the Christian community, there is no doubt that Paul's other declarations on slaves and women constitute a problem (53). How to solve what looks like a contradiction?

Most of the solutions faced have already been suggested in connection with slavery. Because since the middle of the 19th century, Christianity had to answer the questions asked by Marxist Communism on the subject. True, our purpose here refers only to the feminine condition. But the arguments for the former being resumed for the latter, we will be brought to consider them together.

A. Arguments of an historical nature

Paul introduced a principle of equality which should preside all relationships between men. Whatever may be the concessions he has had to make afterwards, the principle ought necessarily to entail its normal consequences: the disappearance of slavery (54), the accession of women to freedom. It is Christianity, one states, that has succeeded in modifying the relationships between men (55).

He is the one who "first changed so completely the relationships between master and slave that he did apply an explosive load to the whole institution" (56). The same as applies to the feminine condition which after centuries of oppression collects today the benefits of a fruit that has taken very long to ripen.

Such an idealistic viewpoint does not, however, absolutely portray the historical facts. It would have been difficult to write the same about slaves by the end of the XVI century while the triangular trade streamed into America hundreds of thousands of slaves, or about women in the middle of the XIX industrial century. Even if there were some Christian attempts, one has to recognize that the abolition of slavery or the emancipation of women are linked to philosophical, economical and political causes rather than to the action of Christian communities (57). If brotherly love, extolled in the Church, were such a powerful yeast against the enslavements of this world, we have the right to ask why, at the origin of the Church, at a moment when faith was so lively, did this yeast not create spectacular results (58). The end of legal slavery did not prevent the economical enslavement and feminine emancipation did not hinder the existence of the woman-object in this gadget age.

Christianity may have played a role not from its theology but rather from its ethics. Theology just played an a posteriori role.

In a recent study, E. Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that the regressive evolution connected to the condition of women established (according to her) by Gal. 3:28, has been carried on in the Church itself. Showing the patriarchalization of the family codes from the epistle to the Colossians till the pastorals, she sustains that the formation of the canon was conditioned by the conflicts taking place in the second and third centuries concerning the role of the woman in the Church. (59) The canon would, therefore, reflect the success of a long process which recognizes as authoritative the texts with androcentric character.

For her, everything is in function of the old patriarchal structure to

which Paul himself must have made concessions.

One will notice that such a position can lead in a search of the true inspiration in the non canonic texts. As A.D. Betz points out, one should look into the gnosticism, the apocryphal Gospels, the texts of Nag Hammadi and in 2 Clement which contain comparable declarations. (60)

B. Historical-critic method

E. Schüssler Fiorenza's suggestion is one of transition to another approach accepted by a number of contemporary authors, who explain the contradiction of texts by the difference of sources. I Cor. 14: 34-35, I Tim. 2: 11-15 are, with Titus 2:9-10 post pauline and come from a violently anti-feminist milieu. For F. LENHARDT, for example, the epistle to Timothy is not Paul's. The spirit which animates it is neither Biblical nor evangelical (61). G. Kehnscherper rejects as not authentic any unfavorable declaration to the idea of liberty (62).

C. Masson joins H.J. Holtzmann and J. Weiss who saw in the epistle to the Colossians a revision and a development of the former epistle of Paul to the Ephesians by the epistle to the Ephesians (63).

There is here a question of hermeneutical choice about which the Adventist Church already seems to have taken position. We will not, therefore, resume the question. Such a reading is unacceptable for it. (64)

c. Sociology and Psychology

With many contemporary authors, A. Suhl sustains that the situation of modern man not answering any longer to that of Paul, it is from this new condition offered by our world that we must undertake the ethical reflection. (65)

R.L. Dudley, like a good sociologist, wonders about finding out if the texts are not products of culture, but he is prudent enough, which does not happen to many, to leave to the theologians the task of deciding (66). Others prefer to play with an eventual reversal of the apostle who did not dare to go to the bottom of his own thought and who was frightened by the unhappy consequences of his former statement. (67)

Certainly, the input of sociology and of history of morals must not be neglected. But, in a way, it will always be convenient to distinguish between the theological texts and the ethical texts. It would be rather disquieting if, for example, on a pretext of patriarchal society one would come to denounce marriage without distinguish what it contains of fundamental and relative. Even the progressive revelation has its limits, because the observation of the Sabbath for the Adventists could seem a backward movement compared to the event of Easter which happened on a Sunday.

We do not have any other claims here than to present the problem, our approach being purely exegetical. The question of women's ordination does not seem to be envisageable on the basis of Gal. 3:28. It lies on other considerations which do not enter the frame of this work. We believe, however, that an attentive exam of the texts can enlighten on a different way the debate which we are confronting.

NOTES

- (1) The Feminine Mystic, W.W. Norton, New York, 1963
- (2) Ibid, quoted by J. HOURCADE, La femme dans l'Eglise. Etude anthropologique et théologique des ministères féminins, (Croire et Savoir) Téqui, Paris, 1986, p. 9
- (3) "Should our church ordain women? Yes.", Ministry, 58/3 (March 1985) p. 14
- (4) Thus also : R.L. DUDLEY, "Ordination of women: a question of status or function" ?, Ministry 58/10 (October 1985), pp 20, 21.
- (5) cf. M. BOUTTIER, "Complexio Oppositorum sur les formules de I Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Col 3:10,11", NTS 23 (1976), pp 1-19.
- (6) The connections between the "we" and the "you" seem to be too organized to be without meaning
3:6-25 = we 3:26-29 = you
4:1-5 = we 4:6 ff = you
- (7) With H.D. BETZ, A Commentary on Paul's Letters to the Churches in Galatia, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 185.
- (8) cf. X. LEON-DUFOUR, "Les Evangiles Synoptiques", A. ROBERT, A. FEUILLET Introduction à la Bible, II, Desclée, Tournai, 1959, p. 167.
- (9) This method is common in the Gospel of Matthew. See: Mat 6:19,21; 7:16,20; 16: 6,12; 18:1,4; etc.
- (10) Gal. 4:4,5
- (11) E. SCHWEITZER, "υιός ", TDNT, 8 (1975), p. 391.
- (12) Art. Cit. p. 18
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) "In the NT the inheritance is very often future and eschatological" Idem, p. 391, note 417. cf. Rom 8:19-25; Luc 20:36; 6:35.
- (15) Rom. 8:23
- (16) Rom 8:24-25
- (17) Gal 4:6
- (18) There are others implicitly recognizable by their connection with the theology of baptism present in Rom 6 like death and resurrection with Christ. Gal 2:19; 5:24; 6:14.
- (19) Rom 6:3,4; I Cor. 1:13-17; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12.

- (20) H.D. BETZ, *Op. Cit.* p. 186
- (21) Gal 4:6
- (22) In the same way, H.D. BETZ sees there a beatitude. M. BOUTTIER, *art. cit.*, p. 6, is not convinced of that. In fact, if it is a question of a pre-pauline macharisma it is suprising that one cannot find another trace of it but with Paul, and that there are no other social-ly liberating currents based on baptism.
- (23) *Op. cit.*, p. 190
- (24) *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Misdrasch*, VOL. III, München, 1979, pp. 15-21.
- (25) Cf. Gal. 6:12,15
- (26) "The whole scriptural argumentation of the context tends to safeguard the unity of and in the Church between judeo and pagano-Christians... there was a risk of it being broken... by the judaizing claim to the ritualistic uniformity which required all Christians to be circumcised." P. BONNARD, *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Galates* (CNT9), Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel, Paris, 1953, p. 78.
- (27) W.D. STACEY; *The Pauline view of man in relation to its Judaic and Hellenistic Background*, Macmillan, London, 1956, p.193. "In the Body of Christ, divisions and death, in the spiritual sense, were still possible. In the Stoic conception of body, they were not." *Ibid.*
- (28) So, P. BONNARD, *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.
- (29) cf. W.D. STACEY, *Op. Cit.* pp 189-193.
- (30) Acts 16:3; 21:28
- (31) Acts 14:1; 16:1; 17:4; 18:4; 19:10,17; 20:21.
- (32) Rom. 3:9; 10:12; I Cor. 1:22,24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal. 3:28
- (33) Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10.
- (34) H. MORIER, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique*, PUF, Paris, 1981, p.194.
- (35) Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11.
- (36) That's why we cannot keep BETZ' hypothesis when he declares: "Naming the Jews first seems to indicate that Jews on their own initiative gave up their prerogatives", *Op. Cit.*, p. 191.
- (37) Rom. 2:11; 3:29; 9:14.

- (38) cf. G. BORNKAMM, Paul, apôtre de Jesus-Christ, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1971, p. 259.
- (39) Rom. 1:1; Phil 1:1; Tit 1:1. In the same way Peter: "Live as free men... but live as slaves of God". I Pet 2:16.
- (40) We may wonder if the theme of the Kénose of Phil 2 is not the background of this exhortation. See also: G. BORNKAMM, pp. 286, 287
- (41) It is found again, however, in the gnostic texts and in the Apocryphal Gospels, some texts of Nag Hammadi and 2 Clem. 12. Cf. BETZ, p. 196, notes 118-121.
- (42) F. BLASS-A. DEBRUNNER, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, University of Chicago Press, 1961, §34,2. W. BAUER, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, University of Chicago Press, 1957, ἀρσεν, ὁ ἄνθρωπος.
- (43) p. 195.
- (44) Cf. E. COTHENET, L'Épître aux Galates, (Cahiers Evangile 34), Cerf, Paris, 1980, p. 46.
- (45) E. SCHUSSLER-FIORENZA is herself sensitive to the eventuality when she writes : "The reference here probably alludes to Gen. 1:27, where humanity created in the image of God is qualified as 'male and female' in order to introduce the theme of procreation and fertility (1:28). Jewish exegesis understood 'male and female' therefore, primarily in terms of marriage and family." Op. Cit., p. 211.
- (46) It could simply be a reference to Ps 2:9 or to Is 7:14
- (47) In Memory of Her. A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origin, Crossroad, New York, 1983.
- (48) The faith of Jesus-Christ, an investigation of the narrative structure of Galatians 3:1-4:11, (SBL Dissertation series 56), Scholars Press, Chico (California), 1983.
- (49) pp. 229 ff
- (50) Die Stellung des Sklaven in den paulinischen Gemeinden und bei Paulus, P. Lang, Frankfurt/M., 1976, pp 144-149.
- (51) pp. 4,5
- (52) Theologie du Nouveau Testament, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1967, p. 275. Let us notice here that the I epistle of Peter, considered very close to Paul's, finds its support in the notion of common heritage not to suppress the differences between men and women, but in order to justify a code of subordination comparable to Ephesians and Colossians. (cf. I Peter 3:7).

- (53) We are not wondering here about the question of children as they are not mentioned in Gal. 3:28. Let us, however, call the reader's attention to the fact that if one is lead into doubting the validity of Paul's words in the codes of subordination of Colossians and Ephesians on account of Gal. 3:28, it would be convenient to see to which extent, nevertheless, the children are not put in equality with their parents.
- (54) P. BENOIT, "Philemon", DBS III, Paris, 1961, col 1208.
- (55) cf. J.D.N. KELLY, A Commentary on the pastoral epistles (Black's NTC) Edinburgh, 1963, p. 131.
- (56) C.F.D. MOULE, The Epistles of Paul the apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, (CGTC), Cambridge, 1957, p. 131
- (57) Let us remember that we will have to wait for 1789 in order to see the first official text against slavery. Sure, Methodists and Southern Baptists of the USA were implicated, but rather in political than in Christian terms: "We recommend the taking of legal measures capable of supressing this awful custom, slavery being as a violent privation of the rights of nature, incompatible with a republican government." E. HIRSCH, Geschichte der Neuen Evangelischen Theologie in Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegung des europäischen Denken, III, 3rd edition Gütersloh, 1964, p. 364.
- (58) J.B. LIGHTFOOT must admit it : "The Church, however, even in the ardor of its first love, had not forbidden its members to keep slaves in their homes". Saint Paul Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, 12th ed., London, 1897, p. 324.
- (59) pp. 53-56; 270-315.
- (60) p. 196
- (61) "La place de la femme dans l'Eglise d'après le NT", Etudes Théologiques et religieuses, 1948, pp. 40-44.
- (62) Die Stellung des Bibel und der Alten Christlichen Kirche zur Sklaverei, Halle, 1957.
- (63) L'épître de Saint Paul aux Colossians (CNT 10) Neuchâtel, Paris, 1950, p. 86.
- (64) cf. G.F. HASEL, Biblical Interpretation today, Lincoln, (Neb), 1985, pp. 100-113.
- (65) "Der Philemonbrief als Beispiel paulinischer Paränese" Kairos NS 15 (1973). pp. 275, 277.
- (66) p. 20
- (67) So Willmore EVA, p. 19.