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## THE NON-PAULINE CHARACTER OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16?

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In a recent issue of this journal Wm. O. Walker, Jr. put forward a most ingenious hypothesis as a solution to the notorious difficulties of 1 Cor 11:2-16. He argued (a) that the whole section is an interpolation, (b) that it is composed of three originally separate texts, and (c) that none of these texts is from the pen of Paul. Anyone who has struggled with the problems of this passage is at once inclined to welcome such radical surgery, but closer examination reveals that the arguments used to justify it are highly questionable on both factual and methodological grounds.

I

Walker opens his case by stressing the presence of interpolations elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. I have accepted 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 as post-Pauline insertions,<sup>2</sup> but find other suggestions much less plausible.<sup>3</sup> The number of interpolations is much less than Walker seems to think, and there is no basis for the assumption that the text of the epistles has been heavily retouched by an editor or editors. Hence, one cannot rely on "the general probability of the presence of interpolations in the Pauline writings as they now stand" (p. 99) to give authority to weak arguments. Each case must be judged on its own merits.

Walker offers three arguments to show that vv. 3-16 are an interpolation introduced by v. 2 which he attributes to the redactor. First, vv. 2 and 17 contain significant common terms and are separated by a self-contained unit which when removed leaves a smooth connection between what precedes and what follows. Second, the textual variations in v. 17 betray the efforts of editors or copyists to improve what must have been a rough transition (p. 98).

<sup>1&</sup>quot;1 Corinthians and Paul's Views Regarding Women," JBL 94 (1975) 94-110. The bracketed page numbers in the body of the article refer to this study.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See my L'Existence chrétienne selon saint Paul (LD 80; Paris: Cerf, 1974) 101, 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>No confidence can be placed in the methodology employed to discern interpolations in J. C. O'Neill, *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972); see my review in RB 82 (1975) 143-44. The occasional suggestions that I Corinthians 13 should be considered an interpolation have not been well received because the arguments advanced do not raise the hypothesis to the status of a probability. The analysis of U. Borse ("'Abbild der Lehre' [Röm 6, 17] im Kontexte," BZ 12 [1968] 95-103) shows that many, if not all, of Bultmann's hypotheses regarding interpolations in Romans ("Glossen im Römerbrief," TLZ 72 [1947] 197-202; reprinted, Exegetica [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1967] 278-84) may be rendered unnecessary by a better understanding of what Paul was trying to say.

Third, vv. 2-16 break the context of the letter: "As they now stand, chaps. 8-11 deal in general with matters pertaining to 'eating' and 'drinking' and other more or less related questions. . . . Immediately after 11:2-16 the letter again deals with matters of eating and drinking. The passage under discussion clearly interrupts this discussion with its totally unrelated concern for the roles and relationships of men and women in the church" (p. 99).

The first argument is an accurate statement of principle, but in itself it proves nothing. In the present case its value is nil because it is question only of the verb epainō whose repeated use is entirely natural in this context. The second is an equally valid theoretical observation because textual variants can highlight difficulties caused by redactional insertions (e.g., John 2:3; 19:38). In v. 17, however, the variants are caused by the awkward combination of parangellō and epainō, a difficulty which remains even if the supposed interpolation is removed.

Everything, therefore, hinges on the validity of the third argument from which the other two draw their force. The argument carries conviction only if one is prepared to accept the illusion created by the references to "eating" and "drinking." Close observation, however, reveals the sleight of hand. 11:17-34 can be said to be concerned with eating and drinking, but the issue arises in the context of public worship (vv. 17b, 20, 33-34). The passage under consideration, however, deals with "praying or prophesying" (vv. 4-5), activities which are understood to pertain to the domain of public worship and which Walker does not dispute. Chap. 11, therefore, has an unambiguous principle of unity. Paul passes from questions of dress at public liturgies (vv. 2-16) to the more serious matter of selfishness on the same occasions (vv. 17-34). The transition from chap. 10 is also perfectly comprehensible, for there Paul has been dealing with other social occasions, viz., participation in pagan liturgies (10:14-22) and participation in banquets given by pagans (10:23-11:1). It seems entirely natural that these topics should engender the associated ideal of public occasions within the Christian community. This adequately explains the theme introduced in chap. 11.

Finally, it must be noted that Walker admits that he cannot postulate a satisfactory reason why the interpolation was made at precisely this point in the letter (pp. 99-100). An editor would have had means and opportunity, but in the absence of a plausible motive his intervention must be judged problematic, to say the least.

II

Walker then attempts to solve the problems of internal logic that all commentators have noticed in 11:3-16 by postulating three originally separate self-contained units. Pericope A is a general statement on the relationship of man and woman in the church and consists of vv. 3, 8-9, 11-12. Pericope B deals with the question of head-covering in worship and is composed of vv. 4-7, 10, 13, 16. Pericope C, constituted by vv. 14-15, treats of the proper length of hair for men and women.

Apart from one very generic, and rather subjective, remark concerning the style of writing, one looks in vain for any statement regarding the criteria which permitted Walker to assign individual verses to one pericope rather than to another. This serious methodological fault throws serious doubt on the objectivity of Walker's reconstruction. One is led to suspect that he started with v. 3 and assigned to Pericope A the verses that seemed to fit the theme there announced. Vv. 14-15 also seemed to set themselves apart. The remaining verses were then considered to constitute Pericope B.

A claim that the internal logic of Walker's three texts is a significant improvement on that of Paul would be difficult to substantiate. Pericope A would seem to offer the best chance of success, but within its brief span we encounter two problems. V. 3 enunciates three theses: Christ is the head of man; man is the head of woman; God is the head of Christ. But v. 8 concentrates on only one of these, the man-woman relationship. Why were the other two ignored? Or why were they introduced in the first place if, as Walker claims, the author was exclusively concerned with the headship of man over woman? Moreover, in Paul  $pl\bar{e}n$  (v. 11) is used to break off a discussion and to emphasize what is important. Its appearance in the fourth verse of Pericope A is inexplicable. The discussion has hardly begun, and there have been no digressions.

Neither of these problems arises if we assume the unity of vv. 2-16. It goes without saying that plen is perfectly in place two-thirds of the way through a complex argument. Far from creating a problem, the triple thesis of v. 3 provides the framework within which the basic thrust of the whole section becomes clear, once it is recognized that, as often in Paul, "Christ" designates not the Risen Lord but the community of believers (e.g., 1 Cor 12:12).5 Just as God has authority over the community, so the community has authority over the individual member. The basis of this authority in both cases is causal priority in the order of being. 6 The community owes its existence to God, and the believer owes his/her Christian existence to the community. Both these points command the subsequent discussion concerning the relationship of man to woman. Paul in his specific directives conceives himself as the authoritative representative of the authentic community (cf. v. 16), and he draws his arguments from the order of creation established by God (vv. 7-9, 14-15). The order of creation reveals that man and woman are different, and on the practical level Paul's concern is that their manner of dress should manifest, not obscure, this difference (vv. 4-6, 13). This outline highlights the underlying links which bind Walker's supposed three texts together.

Perhaps the greatest defect in Walker's reconstruction is his failure to face the problem of what the redactor was trying to do by combining the three texts in the way he did. Any division of a passage into its sources must be considered suspect unless a plausible explanation can be offered for the way in which they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>BDF §449(2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See my L'Existence chrétienne selon saint Paul, 79-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See S. Bedale, "The Meaning of kephalē in the Pauline Epistles," JTS 5 (1954) 211-15.

are put together. Otherwise the subjectivity of the interpreter is given free rein. If we assume Walker's three texts, it is certainly possible to suggest how the section acquired its present structure, because there are few limits to the ingenuity of exegetes. The justification, however, becomes very complex, and its very artificiality is highlighted by the fact that there is a much easier and more natural way to combine Pericope A and Pericope B (on the assumption that they were originally independent). Pericope A is concerned with the relationship of man and woman, and it culminates in a mention of God (v. 12). This ending provides a natural transition to Pericope B which deals with man and woman in the worship of God. A redactor would need a strong reason in order to reject such a simple solution. The fact that no such motive can be suggested makes the proposed reconstruction of his sources extremely questionable.

Ш

Walker offers three arguments to show that each of the three source texts is non-Pauline, and regards the cumulative effect of these arguments as a decisive confirmation of the hypothesis that vv. 2-16 are an interpolation. Where these arguments overlap they will be treated together.

Passages A and B are declared inauthentic because the ideas they contain regarding the relationship between man and woman "are not in agreement with what Paul appears to say in his authentic writings" (pp. 104, 106). Walker has in mind "the clear statement of equality in Gal 3:28 and his very positive references to female co-workers" (p. 104). The harmony between the last part of this assertion and 11:11-12 robs it of any force as an argument in favor of Walker's position. It rather points in the opposite direction.

The relationship to Gal 3:28 demands delicate evaluation. Those who see it as an evident contradiction must recognize that it gives rise to precisely the same problem that we encounter with regard to the relationship of Gal 3:28 to 1 Cor 7:20, as Walker explicitly concedes (p. 110), and the same explanation is valid for both cases. Paul denied the practical application of his principle of equality in situations where he saw its application was in danger of becoming a major distraction from the central concerns of Christian life, or where it was likely to prove an obstacle to the credibility of the church. These reasons carried greater weight with him than they possibly do with us because of his eschatological expectation, and because of his extremely pragmatic concern for the success of his mission.

It is also possible that the contradiction may be more apparent than real. Paul certainly speaks of the subordination of woman to man, and contemporary problems of church discipline arise because it is assumed that this point is central to the apostle's concern. In fact it is only a *means* relative to his goal which is to insist that there is a difference between men and women which should be expressed in their respective modes of dress (cf. vv. 7-9). It is the latter point that Paul is concerned to *teach*, and behind which he throws the full weight of his authority. Paul uses the Genesis narrative to serve his

purpose. It appears to do so, but the logic is questionable. How little importance he himself attached to it seems evident from the fact that the difference between men and women on which he insists has nothing to do with their roles in the church. It is limited exclusively to matters of dress. From the point of view of their roles men and women are put on the same level (vv. 4-5). In other words, they are equal, as Gal 3:28 says.

Passages B and C are, moreover, considered inauthentic because "in his undoubtedly authentic writings Paul nowhere indicates any concern for such 'incidental' matters as whether men and women should pray or prophesy with their heads covered or uncovered or whether their hair should be long or short or confined or loose" (p. 106). This argument has logical force only on the assumption that Paul could not have been concerned with such issues, and on any scientific terms such knowledge is inaccessible to the exegete. The argument is completely illegitimate.

Passage A appears inauthentic because "it is so similar in tone and vocabulary to Col 3:18-19 and Eph 5:22-23, both of which, of course, are widely regarded as pseudo-Pauline" (p. 104), and because of its non-Pauline use of the word "head" (p. 105). This point is a classical example of "evidence which fits" as opposed to "evidence which proves." The latter permits of only one interpretation whereas the former can be turned to suit the presuppositions of the exegete. The evidence brought to light by Walker fits equally well with the hypothesis that the deutero-Pauline letters owe their Pauline character to the fact that they borrowed and built on ideas and terminology found in the authentic letters. From this point of view what Paul says in so-called Pericope A would have legitimized the inclusion of the Haustafeln in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5, and would have inspired the development of the notion of "head" found in these epistles. Failure to recognize that there are two possibilities whose relative merits have to be weighed is a serious defect in Walker's methodology. For those who accept the authenticity of Colossians, and I am one, his argument, of course, proves the reverse of his intention.

The definition of man as "the glory of God" (v. 7) is given by Walker as a reason for declaring Pericope B inauthentic, because for Paul "'glory' is essentially an eschatological concept, applied not to man's present life but to the new creation which is still to be consummated in the future" (p. 107). He claims that the basis for this assertion is given in Rom 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In the present context, however, Paul is concerned with those who are "in Christ" (v. 11) and whose sins have been forgiven. There is a presumption, therefore, that "glory" has been restored, and this finds a measure of confirmation in the equivalence established between "glory" and "righteousness" in the Apocalypse of Moses (20:1-2). Thus, Paul can say, "To this he called you through our gospel so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes 2:14). 2 Cor 3:18 forbids an

<sup>7</sup>Cf. H. Palmer, *The Logic of Gospel Criticism* (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1968) 152.

interpretation of this verse which would bring it into line with Rom 5:2 and 8:18 where it is a question of a "glory" reserved for the future. As one who is now righteous before God, the believer has already reacquired the capacity to give Him honor, which is the basic ingredient in the concept of "glory" in this context.<sup>8</sup> From the believers' point of view there is no difference between "the glory of Christ" (2 Thes 2:14; 2 Cor 3:18) and "the glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7), because through conformity to the image of God's Son (Rom 8:29) they have been recreated (2 Cor 5:17) in the state that Adam lost. In Christ humanity once again exists as God intended from the beginning, for Christ is the model of authentic humanity (2 Cor 4:4-6).<sup>9</sup> The theme of "glory," therefore, is intimately related to the imitation of Christ which is evoked by Paul in the immediate context (1 Cor 11:1). Far from being a "lapse" from Paul's habitual pattern, as Walker tries to suggest (p. 107 n. 47), v. 7 is fully at home in the authentic letters.

The idea of being taught by nature (v. 14) is adduced by Walker as a reason for declaring Pericope C inauthentic. "Rom 1:26-27; 2:14 are not really parallels at all, for they do not represent a 'hypostasizing' of 'nature' as a 'quasi-divine' reality or power such as is found in Stoicism and in 1 Cor 11:14" (p. 107). Walker feels no need to justify this interpretation, because he views Pericope C as an independent unit. In this perspective the Stoic ring becomes the key to the interpretation. Taken in context, however, a quite different impression is given, because Paul has been arguing from the order of creation (vv. 8-9) and v. 14 easily lends itself to interpretation within this framework. Stoic language is not always used to express Stoic ideas. Hence, we must look more closely at the reasons that Walker gives for separating vv. 14-15 from the rest of the section. Of the four reasons he gives only two have a right to serious consideration, the differences in vocabulary and subject-matter.

The argument from vocabulary has no cogency because the basis is far too slight. There is no good reason why an author should not shift from aischros (v. 6) and kataischynein (vv. 4, 5) to atimia (v. 14). Paul uses the latter term five times elsewhere, and in one case it appears as the antithesis to doxa (2 Cor 6:8), just as it does here. Doxa is predicated of different realities in vv. 7 and 14, but the same meaning ("giving honor") is applicable in both cases.

The argument from subject-matter is thus formulated by Walker: "Pericope B is concerned with the question of head-covering in worship, while Pericope C deals with the proper length of hair for men and women and actually implies rather strongly that women do not need any artificial head-covering, since they have their long hair as a natural covering" (p. 103). Walker himself, however, cites a study by J. B. Hurley who argues that 11:2-16 is concerned with proper hair-style and length rather than with head-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>See A. Feuillet, "L'homme 'gloire de Dieu' et la femme 'gloire de l'homme' (1 Cor., xi, 7b)," RB 81 (1974) 161-82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>See most recently M. Thrall, "Christ Crucified or Second Adam? A Christological Debate between Paul and the Corinthians," Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule (eds. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley; London/New York: Cambridge University, 1973) 145.

covering.<sup>10</sup> I had independently come to the same conclusion, and Walker's objection (pp. 103-4 n. 37), as he himself recognizes, is very weak, particularly since women's hair-styles at this period probably incorporated some form of head-covering however small.<sup>11</sup>

Walker's final objection to the authenticity of Pericope C is the improbability that a Jew such as Paul would have adopted such an attitude towards long hair on men (p. 108). It is difficult to establish with any accuracy just what the Palestinian custom was at this period, but in any case such evidence is less significant than the harmony between vv. 14 and 4. The latter verse criticizes a man for "having (something) hanging down from the head" (kata kephalēs echōn). 12 This is a rather unusual circumlocution for "veil" (why should a circumlocution be employed?) and it would seem more natural to understand the phrase as referring to long hair, as John Chrysostom apparently did: hoi de andres kai ekomōn. 13

None of Walker's arguments, therefore, stands up to close analysis, and in consequence the hypothesis that 1 Cor 11:2-16 is a post-Pauline interpolation must be rejected. Despite my negative judgment I must stress that I consider it well worth while for Walker to have put forward this hypothesis for the first time. It is only when all the possibilities have been thoroughly explored that we can come to a correct interpretation of Paul's understanding of the place of women in the church.

This problem preoccupies many at present, and it seems worthwhile to underline the fact that, even if Walker were correct in claiming that "the genuine Pauline corpus contains none of the passages which advocate male supremacy and female subordination in any form. On the contrary, the only direct Pauline statement on the subject is Gal 3:28 which insists on absolute equality in Christ" (p. 109), the problem would remain intact. This conclusion would certainly rehabilitate *Paul*, but the objection to improving the position of women is based on the fact that the *New Testament* seems to be against it. The so-called post-Pauline passages belong to a document that was received by the church as authoritative. The basic issue, therefore, concerns the authority of the New Testament, and I believe that the true solution is to be sought in what is *formally taught* by the inspired writers. The statements regarding the subordination of women form part of the presuppositions of the sacred writer and do not belong to this category.

<sup>10</sup>"Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36," WTJ 35 (1973) 193-204. Though marred by a number of rather bizarre interpretations, basically the same view was put forward by A. Isaksson, Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19.13-12 [sic] and 1. Cor. 11.3-16 (ASNU 24; Lund: Gleerup, 1965) 165-86.

11 Str-B, 3. 428.

<sup>12</sup>See A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (London: Hodder & Staughton, preface dated 1914) 606-7; J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Vol. 3 Syntax by N. Turner (Edinburgh: Clark, 1963) 268; F.-M. Abel, Grammaire du grec biblique suivie d'un choix de papyrus (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927) 221.

<sup>13</sup> In Ep. 1 ad Cor, Hom. 26, 1 (PG 61:213); cf. W. J. Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce (eds. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin; Exeter: Paternoster, 1970) 233.