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## Références éditoriales

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say: The Lord Himself spoke: 'I have come to put an end to the works of the female'—and Clement adds: "the female, that is desire (*ἐπιθυμία*), the works are birth and death (*γένεσις καὶ φθορά*)" (63). We can be fairly sure that we have in Salome's question and the Lord's answer another interpretation of *Lk.* 20, 35-36, not so much because of some terminological similarities, but rather because there is an agreement in thought<sup>18</sup>. Both texts have something to say on the relation between marriage (procreation) and death. As we said in our second remark, *Lk.* 20, 34-36 does not seem to exclude an interpretation in the sense of a realized eschatology. But EvEg goes further: it says that by abstaining from marriage (= the engendering of children) man can put an end to Death. Death, as the *ἔσχατος ἐχθρός* (*1 Cor.* 15, 26; cf. *Rev.* 20, 14 and 21, 4), can be overcome by the abolition of marriage. This means that the end of this world can be hastened by an encratic life. The end of this world, which for its very survival is dependent on marriage, can be brought about by the complete rejection of marriage. By begetting children woman gives nourishment to Death (*ἐπιχορηγεῖν τῷ θανάτῳ τροφήν*, 45, 1) and reinforces its power over man. On the other hand, not to marry means to withdraw from the process of *γένεσις* and *φθορά* that keeps this world going, and breaking the power of Death.

The idea of hastening the end of this world by continence is a strange distortion of the pauline perspective in *1 Cor.* 7. Here the awareness that the end is at hand and that the fashion of this world is passing away places all things and institutions of this world, and among these marriage, in the new light of *ὡς μὴ*, of irrelevance. The point of *1 Cor.* 7 is well formulated by Tertullian when he writes: "Crescite et multiplicamini" *evacuavit extremitas temporum*". (Monogam. 7). But in EvEg this perspective is wholly reversed: the irrelevance, even the square rejection of marriage means the eschatological victory over Death and brings the end of this eon about. The idea of hastening the end was not first voiced by the Encratites; it goes back to a Jewish tradition according to which the coming of the Day of the Lord, or of Messianic salvation, is made dependent on the repentance of Israel<sup>19</sup>. The conversion (*μετάνοια*) of the people is the condition of the Coming of the Lord. As Strobel has pointed out, the argumentation of 2 P3, 8ff is entirely based on this Jewish tradition: "*σπεύδοντας*" (scil. *τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας*) has to be translated by 'hastening' in *transitive* sense<sup>20</sup>. Here too we find the idea that the Parousia can be speeded up.

It appears that the setting of Salome's question(s) in EvEg is not hellenistic<sup>21</sup>, but Jewish-Christian. It is, in fact, the traditional question about the time of the Parousia ("How much longer...?" "Until when...?"), the delay of which puzzled both Jews and Christians. The traditional link between continence and eschatology has not been given up. This is an important difference with the gnostic texts which we will discuss later in this paragraph.

It strikes us that in EvEg it is woman who is held responsible for the preservation of the power of Death, or, as Clement rightly explains, of this world of *γένεσις καὶ φθορά*. The contrast between male and female is a theme that returns in many variations in early christian, and especially gnostic, texts. An interesting parallel of this passage of EvEg (Strom. 3, 63) can be found in the Pseudo-Clementines (Hom. 2, 15, 3), where we read

18. QUISPÉL (o.c. p. 83) compares *ἀποθανόνται* (EvEg) with *μέλλουσιν ἀποθανεῖν* (*Lk.* 20, 36D), and *τίκτουσιν* (EvEg) with *τίκτουςιν καὶ γεννῶσιν* (*Lk.* 20, 34, Greek retranslation of the aramaic original). The same author (*L'Evangile selon Thomas et les origines de l'ascèse chrétienne*, in: *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme*, Paris, 1965, p. 50) thinks that this view of the relation between love and death is neither biblical nor Jewish. He seems to overlook that such a link is already suggested in *Lk.* 20, 35, and that the whole passage (20, 34-36) was liable

to the Encratites' radical interpretation. See above p. 215.

19. See on this subject A. STROBEL, *Untersuchungen zum eschatologischen Verzögerungsproblem*, Leyden, 1961. The author shows that the same theme has an anthropological (man's repentance) and a theological (God's longsuffering) version.

20. See p. 87-97. 2P3, 8ff is a Jewish-Christian parallel of R. Eliezer's argumentation.

21. So QUISPÉL, *Makarius*... p. 83, wrongly.

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