

## SAVED THROUGH CHILDBEARING: VIRTUES AS CHILDREN IN 1 TIMOTHY 2:11–15

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Let a woman learn in silence in all subjection. I do not permit a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression. Yet *she* will be saved through *childbearing*, if *they* continue in faith, and love, and holiness with temperance. (1 Tim 2:11–15)

1 Timothy 2:11–15 is an allegory in which the virtues faith, love, holiness, and temperance are portrayed as the children of those women in Ephesus who will be saved.<sup>1</sup> A major part of our argument will expose a metaphorical use of the term “childbearing” and related concepts in the environment of 1 Timothy. However, preliminary discussion will center on our use of the term “allegory” as a description of 1 Tim 2:11–15. We will also show why the passage is ostensibly focused on a context-specific rather than a general relationship between women and men. Our goal is nothing less than to justify an entirely new reading of the phrase “saved through childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15.

### I. Allegory as Category

The term “allegory” is here used in the sense of an extended metaphor, that is, in the sense of language, imagery, and structure drawn from an ancient

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations of ancient texts are mine. I have nevertheless consulted the English translations of the Loeb editions of Plato and Philo as well as the English translations found in *Plato: Complete Works* (ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997) and *The Works of Philo* (trans. C. D. Yonge; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997). In the citing of passages, I retain the numbering system found in the Loeb editions. All emphases are mine.

narrative and applied to a contemporary circumstance.<sup>2</sup> Alan Padgett uses the term “cautionary or negative typology” in a similar sense, while Andrew C. Perriman prefers the term “figurative interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> Both scholars refuse the simple, unqualified term “typology” in order to avoid the suggestion of “creation-order” or “prefigurative relationship” as a component of 1 Tim 2:11–15.<sup>4</sup> According to Perriman, prefigurement involves “statements about a state of affairs established at creation that has prevailed to the time of this writing,” while a “figurative interpretation” in this case refers only to “statements about a situation in language borrowed from Genesis.”<sup>5</sup> Both scholars rightly discern that Gen 3:1–21 is not the archetype for divinely predetermined or prefigured relationships in the Ephesian congregation of Timothy, but only a source of meaningful language, imagery, and narration for the Ephesian situation.<sup>6</sup>

It would seem, however, that Padgett and Perriman’s purpose would best be served by the term “allegory.” If one might risk a pithy distinction, in a typology the present derives its meaning from the past, but in an allegory the past derives its meaning from the present.<sup>7</sup> Both Padgett and Perriman seem to find that the metaphorical meanings of 1 Tim 2:11–15 are determined by the present situation of the author and his audience.<sup>8</sup> There would at first seem to be

<sup>2</sup> See David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 3, 5. To distinguish allegory from “metaphor, etymology, and personification” Dawson says, “interpretations and compositions designated as ‘allegorical’ must have a narrative dimension.”

<sup>3</sup> Alan Padgett, “Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8–15 in Social Context,” *Int* 41 (1987): 26; Andrew C. Perriman, “What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *TynBul* 44 (1993): 140.

<sup>4</sup> Padgett specifically rejects the idea of “a creation-order of man over woman, and in general the superiority of man to woman” (“Wealthy Women,” 27, 31).

<sup>5</sup> Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 140.

<sup>6</sup> However, for arguments from creation order, see Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 60; and T. David Gordon, “A Certain Kind of Letter: The Genre of 1 Timothy,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 53–63.

<sup>7</sup> See Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 15–16: “Because it is said to preserve the historical reality of both the initial ‘type’ and its corresponding ‘antitypes,’ typology is said to differ from allegory, which dissolves the historical reality of type and/or antitype into timeless generalities or conceptual abstractions.” Dawson, however, goes on to expound his view, in which “typology is understood to be simply one species of allegory.” See also Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 101 n. 1: “By those who make a distinction between allegory and typology (and this is the majority of modern scholars), allegory involves an arbitrary assigning of externally imposed meaning to the words of Scripture, which meaning is foreign to the ideas conveyed by the words, and often disregards the historical sense of the passage.”

<sup>8</sup> For an unqualified typological interpretation of 1 Tim 2:11–15, see Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 76–77:

no compelling reason for preferring the term “allegory” over “figurative interpretation,” especially since the terms are practically synonymous. Yet the term “allegory” and its cognates have a longer history and furthermore connote a particular method of biblical interpretation contemporaneous with the Pastoral Epistles.<sup>9</sup> At the very least, this shows that there is nothing idiosyncratic about the author’s hermeneutic in 1 Tim 2:11–15, nor about our modern attempts to characterize this hermeneutic. While the qualified typological/figurative approaches used by Padgett and Perriman illuminate our understanding of 1 Tim 2:11–15, the extended metaphorical usages in this passage seem more profitably described as allegory.

## II. Childbearing as Allegorical Metaphor

In this discussion, our focus is on the allegorical use of the *hapax legomenon* “childbearing” (τεκνογονία) in 1 Tim 2:15.<sup>10</sup> It is a clear application of God’s pronouncement upon Eve in Gen 3:16: “I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception and in pain you will *bear children* (MT: תלדו בני; LXX: τέξῃ τέκνα). In 1 Tim 2:15, however, the children to be borne are to be found in the immediate context of the term, namely, the virtues πίστις, ἀγάπη, ἀγιασμός, and σωφοσύνη.<sup>11</sup> First, the women give birth to these virtues, and then they *continue* or *abide* in them in order to be saved. We see this same allegori-

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“Insofar as Eve was more fully deceived than was Adam, she was the prototypical female, Adam the prototypical male.”

<sup>9</sup> The allegorical method of biblical interpretation is usually associated with Alexandria and is most notably represented by Philo (20 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) and in later times by Clement (150–215 C.E.) and Origen (185–254 C.E.), all of Alexandria. See “Allegory,” *ODCC*, 42–43.

<sup>10</sup> A form of τεκνοτροφέω (“to bring up children”) appears in 1 Tim 5:10, while a form of τεκνογονέω (“to bear children”) appears in 1 Tim 5:14.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the four cardinal virtues of Plato, *Resp.* 4.419A–445E, σωφοσύνη, ἀνδρεία, σοφία, and δικαιοσύνη. The first is variously translated as temperance, moderation, self-control, sound-mindedness, and sobriety. The remaining three are usually translated respectively as courage, wisdom, and justice. In *Resp.* 3.389D, σωφοσύνη is central to civic order and administration. “And as for the multitudes are not the chief aims of temperance (σωφοσύνη) to be obedient to rulers, and for rulers themselves to practice self-control in regard to drink and the pleasures of both sex (ἄφροδισια) and food?” The four cardinal virtues reappear in Philo, where they are represented by the four rivers of the paradise of Eden (Gen 2:10–14) (*Leg.* 1.63–72) and as those qualities that are cut off from those who are opposed to learning (*Ebr.* 23); see also *Post.* 128. For Philo, σωφοσύνη is necessary for the health of the soul and mental salvation. See *Virt.* 14–16: “And the health of the soul (ὕγεια δὲ ψυχῆς) consists in well-tempered faculties . . . with reason in control . . . the special name of this healthy state is temperance (σωφοσύνη), which perfects salvation (σωτηρίαν) in our rational being.” Finally, see Augustine, *Civ.* 19.4 for his discussion of temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude.

cal pattern in Philo, *Leg.* 3.1.3.<sup>12</sup> Here he interprets the birth of the Hebrew male infants at the hands of the Hebrew midwives (Exod 1:21) as the effort of the soul (ψυχή) to “build up the substance of virtue” (οικοδομοῦσι τὰ ἀρετῆς πράγματα).<sup>13</sup> Philo then says that the substance of virtue is that “in which they have also decided to abide” (οἷς καὶ ἐνοικεῖν προήρηνται). In each case, that which has given birth (i.e., the soul or the Ephesian women) abides in the very thing that was borne. Our warrant for seeing this sequence of birthing and abiding in 1 Tim 2:15 comes partly from 1 Tim 1:5–6. Here the virtues of love, good conscience, and faith proceed from a pure heart (καθαρὰ καρδιά), in the same way that the Philonic virtues proceed from the soul.<sup>14</sup> When the author criticizes those who have “missed the mark by turning aside” (ἀστοχήσαντες ἐξετράπησαν) from these virtues, he clearly implies that one should continue or abide in these virtues after they are born (cf. 1 Tim 1:19; 2 Tim 2:22). This at least shows that the author of 1 Timothy and Philo share a similar pattern of thinking in regard to virtue ethics. Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, the idea of giving birth to and abiding in the virtues is expressed in terms of “fruit bearing” (καρποφόρος) (Rom 6:21–22; 7:4–5; Gal 5:22–25; Eph 5:8–11; Phil 1:11; Col 1:6, 10; Titus 3:14). This is a use of agricultural rather than gynecological reproductive imagery, but the idea is fundamentally the same.<sup>15</sup>

There is yet no grammatical element in 1 Tim 2:11–15, such as an apposi-

<sup>12</sup> Philo describes his method of interpretation variously as ἀλληγορικός (“allegorical” or “figurative”) (*Opif.* 157), συμβολικῶς (“symbolic”) (*Opif.* 164), and τροπικῶς (“tropical” or “metaphorical”) (*QG* 1.52).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. “to build up the cause of virtue” (F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL, 303) and “to build up the actions of virtue” (Yonge, *Works of Philo*, 50).

<sup>14</sup> This same pattern of birthing and abiding (or producing and abiding) occurs in *Odes Sol.* 11:1–3 (ca. 100–125 C.E.): “My heart was pruned . . . and it produced fruits for the Lord . . . and I ran in the Way in his peace, in the way of truth” (James H. Charlesworth, “Odes of Solomon,” *OTP* 2:744). Notice the agricultural reproductive metaphor.

<sup>15</sup> The idea of children as “fruit of the womb” (MT: פֶּרִי בֶּטֶן; cf. LXX: ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας; καρπὸν κοιλίας) is not unfamiliar in Judaism (Gen 30:2; Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18, 53; 30:9; Isa 13:18; *Jub.* 20:9; 28:16; *L.A.B.* 50:2; 55:4; cf. Hos 9:16; Luke 1:42; 2 *Bar.* 62:5; 73:7; *T. Ab.* 6:5; 8:6; 2 *En.* 71:11). See also *Plant.* 134–38, where Philo uses the terms “fruit of the soul” (ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς καρπός) and “offspring of the soul” (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς γέννημα) interchangeably in reference to Issachar. In this allegory, Leah represents “a rational and virtuous nature,” while her sons, Judah and Issachar respectively represent “the mind which blesses God” and “the reward of gratitude.” Judah is also called “the holy and praiseworthy fruit” (ἅγιος καὶ αἰνετὸς καρπός). In *Sobr.* 65, Isaac is the “fruit” of Abraham. Philo frequently uses “children” (γεννήματα, παιδεῖα, ἔγγονα) and “fruit” (καρπός) interchangeably as a metaphor for virtues, just as he uses “childbearing” (τίκτειν, τικτόμενος) and “fruit bearing” (καρποφόρος, καρποτόκα) interchangeably for the process of producing virtues (*Mut.* 73, 161, 224; *Somm.* 1.37; 2.75–77, 272; *Spec.* 2.29; *Prob.* 70, 160; *Contempl.* 68; *QG* 1.49; 3.10, 54; *Agr.* 9–11, 23, 25; *Opif.* 154–55; *Leg.* 1.45, 49; *Post* 10; *Sacri.* 103–4; *Gig.* 4; *Deus* 4; *Sobr.* 65; *Migr.* 125, 139–40, 205–6; *Congr.* 6; *Deus* 166, 180; *Plant.* 77, 106, 126, 132, 136).

tive phrase or linking verb, that explicitly shows the equivalence between the four virtues mentioned and the result of childbearing. There would probably be objection to our thesis on this basis; however, absence of such an element in 1 Tim 2:11–15 becomes rather inconsequential in light of a similarly structured passage in the writings of Philo. In *Gig.* 5, a series of virtues is referred to as the “male children” of Noah in contrast to the vices of the disobedient multitudes, which are referred to in typical patriarchal fashion as “female children.”

For since the just Noah had male children (ἀρρενογονεῖ), as a follower of right reason, which is perfect and truly male, the thoroughgoing injustices (ἀδικία πάντως) of the multitudes show them to be bearers of female children (θηλυτόκος).

Here the children of Noah are not literal children, but those virtues which correspond to the nature of reason itself, namely, manliness, justice, perfection, and uprightness.<sup>16</sup> Yet there is no grammatical element that explicitly identifies the children of Noah as these particular virtues. Instead, it is both the immediate and larger literary context of *Gig.* 5 that requires this identification. It is particularly in Philo, *Deus* 117–18, that the children of Noah are most clearly identified as the four virtues mentioned: “For [Moses] says, ‘These are *the generations of Noah* (αἱ γενέσεις Νῶε). Noah was a just man, perfect among his generation. Noah was well-pleasing to God.’” Philo then explains that the children (ἔγγονα) of Noah are “the virtues already mentioned” (αἱ προειρημένα ἀρεταί) here in Gen 6:9, namely, “the being a man, the being just, the being perfect, the being well-pleasing to God” (τὸ ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸ τέλειον εἶναι, τὸ Θεῷ εὐαρεστήσαι).<sup>17</sup> Philo makes explicit in this passage what was implicit in *Gig.* 5. In a similar manner, it is the immediate and larger literary context of 1 Tim 2:11–15 that creates the equivalence between *children* and *virtues* in this passage (e.g., 1 Tim 1:5–6, 19; 2:10; 4:12; 2 Tim 2:22; Titus 2:11–12). In the case of 1 Tim 2:11–15, however, it is also the larger religious-philosophical context of the entire epistle that drives us toward this identification, as we shall see.

<sup>16</sup> See Philo, *Mut.* 189: Arphaxad, the child of Noah (Gen 11:10) is “the offspring of the soul” (ἔγγονον ψυχῆς). He represents that virtue which destroys iniquity.

<sup>17</sup> In *Gig.* 5, Noah “had male children” (ἀρρενογονεῖ) who are associated with reason, which is “truly male” (ἀρρενα ὄντως). In the cognate passage, *Deus* 117–18, Noah is “a just man” (ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος) and “the being a man” (τὸ ἄνθρωπον εἶναι) is one of his virtues. The terms ἄνθρωπος and τὸ ἄνθρωπον εἶναι could very well be rendered “human” and “the being human” or “that he was human.” However, context seems to limit the sense of ἄνθρωπος and ἄνθρωπον to “man,” especially since the terms are so closely associated with ἄρρην and refer specifically to the male Noah and the virtues that are his offspring.

## III. 1 Timothy 2:11–15 as Allegory

Recognition of the allegorical character of 1 Tim 2:11–15 is forced by the author's appropriation of Gen 3:1–21, particularly his use of the names Adam and Eve, and the apparent equivalence that the author creates between the singular pronoun "she," and the plural "they" in v. 15.

Yet *she* will be saved (σωθήσεται) through childbearing, if *they* continue (μείνωσιν) in faith, and love, and holiness with temperance.

"They" refers either to "she," "her children," or "Adam and Eve" in this verse. If "they" refers to "she," then the two pronouns can only be understood as metaphorical references to the women of the Ephesian congregation. Since "Eve" in this literary context is the antecedent of "she," this name can also be understood only as a metaphorical reference to the women of the Ephesian congregation. Similarly, the remark about "the woman" (ἡ γυνή) who was deceived and fell into transgression becomes a metaphorical reference to the same collective. "Adam," then, by contrast, can only be a metaphorical reference to the men of the Ephesian congregation, particularly those functioning as leaders and teachers in the church.

We could then rule out the proposition that the author of 1 Timothy is speaking typologically of "women and men in general." An attentive reading of the epistle shows that the author is ostensibly concerned only with the specific situation of women and men in the church of Ephesus (e.g., 1 Tim 1:3–7, 20; 2:8–10; 3:14–15; 4:16). His use of the Genesis narrative is subordinate to this specific focus and is not an attempt to delineate a universal law of creation based on a prototypical relationship.<sup>18</sup> In all other places where the author draws on the Hebrew Scriptures, it is an ostensibly context-specific application (1 Tim 5:18; 2 Tim 2:19; 3:8, 16).<sup>19</sup>

If "they" refers to "her children," then we have the strange idea of Eve's salvation being dependent on the piety of her progeny. This idea has no support anywhere in biblical tradition.<sup>20</sup> In fact, it is inconsistent with Deut 24:16, Jer 31:29–30, and Ezek 18:1–4. Even stranger, we would have Adam exempt from a requirement for salvation imposed only upon Eve.

If "they" refers to "Adam and Eve," then Eve's salvation becomes depen-

<sup>18</sup> See Padgett, "Wealthy Women at Ephesus," 25: "It is these particular women rather than women in general that Paul was not allowing authority over men, nor teaching positions, in the church services (v. 12)."

<sup>19</sup> The vast majority of NT scholars agree that 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are the work of a single author; see I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 1–2.

<sup>20</sup> See James D. G. Dunn, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," *NIB* 11:802, esp. n. 56; see also Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61.

dent on childbearing and on both her piety and Adam's piety. Meanwhile, Adam's salvation is dependent only on his own piety. These also are ideas that have no precedent in biblical tradition.<sup>21</sup>

The metaphorical or, as I would more specifically argue, allegorical interpretation offers the least difficulties in the context of biblical tradition. Furthermore, understanding "she," "they," "the woman," and "Eve" as equivalent references to the women of the Ephesian church coheres with an understanding of 1 Tim 2:8–3:11 as instruction for local women.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, this is not the only place in the Pauline corpus where allegorical interpretations occur (Rom 11:17–24; 1 Cor 10:1–11; 13:4–7; Gal 4:22–27; Eph 6:12–17).<sup>23</sup>

The author of 1 Tim 2:11–15, therefore, uses the names "Adam" and "Eve" as metaphors respectively for the male teachers and leaders of the Ephesian congregation, on the one hand, and its apparently wealthy female members, on the other (1 Tim 2:9).<sup>24</sup> As "Adam" was "formed first" (πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη) in Gen 2:7–25, so the male teachers and leaders of the Ephesian church were formed first in Christ before the women. The seniority of the male teachers and leaders in Christ becomes the author's reason for affirming their authority over those women of Ephesus who were far less mature in terms of their Christian development (not the authority of every man over every woman).<sup>25</sup> It was because of

<sup>21</sup> See William D. Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 147.

<sup>22</sup> See David M. Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," in *Women, Authority, and the Bible* (ed. Alvera Mickelsen; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), 196: "Eve (v. 13) represents woman (v. 14)/women (vv. 9, 10, 11); thus, the grammatically natural shift in verse 15 from the singular (woman as womankind) to the plural (individually women)." Cf. also Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 59: "That is exactly the point of 5:15—such deception of women by 'Satan' has already been repeated in the church in Ephesus." Both Scholer and Fee imply a metaphorical understanding of Eve in 1 Tim 2:11–15, although they do not use terms like metaphorical, figurative, or allegorical. Both, however, stop short of a metaphorical reading of "childbearing" in 2:15.

<sup>23</sup> Even though Paul uses the terms τύποι (1 Cor 10:6) and τυπικῶς (1 Cor 10:11) to describe the relation of a section of the wilderness narrative (Exod 14:10–32:35) to the Corinthian believers, his application is still an ἀλληγορία (cf. ἀλληγορούμενα in Gal 4:24), since he is interpreting the past in light of his present, just as he does with the story of Sarah and Hagar in Gal 4:22–27. For an allegorical characterization of 1 Cor 10:4 and context, see Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 8. For an opposing typological interpretation of 1 Cor 10:1–13, see Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 287, 290. For Davidson, τύπος and τυπικῶς in 1 Cor 10 seemingly come close to having "specialized, technical meaning as hermeneutical terms." This, however, would probably be reading too much into Paul's use of these terms.

<sup>24</sup> Nor is this the only place in the Pastoral Epistles where metaphorical language is used. See 2 Tim 2:3–6, 20–21; 4:6–8, although in these other places they are not allegorical usages, strictly speaking.

<sup>25</sup> Contra Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, 77; and Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 60–61. Collins feels that the author of 1 Timothy is referring to "women in general," particularly

their immaturity in Christ that these women were being deceived by false teachers, just as Eve was deceived by the serpent. They were therefore called on to submit in silence to the instruction of more seasoned, genuine leaders. These basic points have already been persuasively argued by Padgett and affirmed by Perriman.<sup>26</sup>

#### IV. A Postnatal Relationship in Literary Context

Padgett's and Perriman's metaphorical interpretations appear more feasible and defensible than Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger's treatment of 1 Tim 2:11–15, which is based on rather loose reinterpretations of ἀυθεντεῖν and ἡσυχία (1 Tim 2:12). Rather than understand ἀυθεντεῖν as “to usurp authority over,” the Clark Kroegers argue for translating the term as “to proclaim oneself as author of”; and rather than understand ἡσυχία as “to be in silence,” they translate the word as “to be in conformity” or “to keep something a secret,” so that 2:12 may be rendered:

I do not permit a woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret]. For Adam was created first, then Eve.<sup>27</sup>

The author is therefore countervailing the Gnostic teaching that Eve was the creator of Adam.<sup>28</sup> While interesting, the Clark Kroegers' reinterpretations of ἀυθεντεῖν and ἡσυχία appear rather forced.<sup>29</sup>

The Clark Kroegers, however, are helpful in exposing a possible Gnostic or at least proto-Gnostic presence in the background of 1 Timothy.<sup>30</sup> The term “proto-Gnostic” may be more appropriate, since we first know of a full-blown Gnosticism only from second- to fourth-century texts.<sup>31</sup> Passages such as 1 Tim 1:3–6, 20; 5:11–15; 6:20; 2 Tim 2:14–18; 3:6–9; 4:14 (cf. Titus 3:9) are fre-

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with his statement “she will be saved.” Bassler, too, feels that the author of 1 Timothy is addressing the behavior and weaknesses of women in general.

<sup>26</sup> I am grateful to Professor Alan Padgett for personally providing bibliographic information concerning his own work as well as the work of Fee, Perriman, and Porter, all cited in this present article.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 103, 192.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 121.

<sup>29</sup> For an incisive critique of the Clark Kroegers' argument, see Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 132–38; see also Marshall and Towner, *Pastoral Epistles*, 457–66; and Walter L. Liefeld's response to Catherine Clark Kroeger in *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Mickelsen, 244–48.

<sup>30</sup> Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 60, 66.

<sup>31</sup> *NHL*, 2, 16.

quently cited as possible indicators of an incipient Gnosticism in the Ephesian environment.<sup>32</sup> This recognition of a possible proto-Gnostic presence suggests a direction of interpretation different from that taken by Padgett, Perriman, and others, and even from the Clark Kroegers themselves in regard to being “saved through childbearing.”<sup>33</sup>

Padgett, who renders the phrase “saved through childbirth,” sees the passage as a reference to Gen 3:15. The “child” is primarily the seed of Eve and, in the context of 1 Timothy, perhaps an “oblique reference” to the child of Mary of Nazareth. Padgett indicates, however, that any allusion to Mary and her child is uncertain and at best tangential. In the end, the women of the Ephesian congregation are encouraged to reject the heretical doctrines of the snakelike false teachers, return to the marriage bed and resume childbearing.<sup>34</sup>

Perriman, too, sees in 1 Tim 2:15 an allusion to Gen 3:15. However, childbearing is only a “synecdoche” for a series of “good works,” such as, “childrearing, hospitality to strangers, washing the feet of the saints, helping the afflicted,” alluded to in 2:10 and 5:9–10.<sup>35</sup> Still, in Perriman’s discussion, the literal birthing of children remains the root meaning of childbearing in 1 Tim 2:15.

Stanley E. Porter argues that the author “equates a woman’s earthly function of bearing children with her eschatological or salvific reward.”<sup>36</sup> By so doing the author of the epistle is countering an ascetic tendency and women’s neglect of their domestic roles (1 Tim 4:3). He endorses the resumption of normal relations, including those that result in childbirth.<sup>37</sup> Despite our discomfort, “the author of 1 Timothy apparently believed that for the woman who abides in faith, love, and holiness, her salvation will come by the bearing of children.”<sup>38</sup>

The Clark Kroegers particularly see in 1 Tim 2:15 a repudiation of Gnostic doctrines forbidding childbearing. They observe: “Women are acceptable to God within their childbearing function and need not change their sexual iden-

<sup>32</sup> Clark Kroeger and Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 59–63; *NHL*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> See Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 21; and Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 133. Padgett, nevertheless, suggests that ascetic tendencies referred to in 1 Timothy may be behind the Gnosticism of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and other apocryphal acts and therefore may be “a precursor to Gnosticism arising from heterodox Judaism.” In response to the Clark Kroegers’ description of false teaching in Ephesus, Perriman observes that “it is quite possible that there were Gnostic elements in it and that women played a prominent role in its dissemination.”

<sup>34</sup> Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 27–29.

<sup>35</sup> Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 140–41.

<sup>36</sup> Stanley E. Porter, “What Does It Mean to be ‘Saved by Childbirth’ (1 Timothy 2:15),” *JSNT* 49 (1993): 101.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 102; see also Bassler, who makes a similar point (*1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61).

<sup>38</sup> Porter, “What Does It Mean,” 102.

tity to find salvation.” They find it best to render the statement as, “she shall be saved within the childbearing function” to emphasize that “woman can be saved while she still possesses that distinctive which most decisively sets her apart from man.”<sup>39</sup>

For Simon Coupland, only one interpretation makes sense in the context of 1 Timothy and Pauline and Deutero-Pauline teaching on salvation through faith in Christ, and that is to take the prepositional object of διὰ in 1 Tim 2:15 as a genitive of place rather than agency. In this case, the term διὰ refers to “difficult circumstances through which women must pass.” The author of 1 Timothy is saying that women will be saved *despite* the pain they suffer from bearing children as long as they continue in “faith, love, holiness, and chastity.” Coupland observes that it is therefore not childbearing or the pain of childbearing that saves, but “being in Christ.”<sup>40</sup>

These interpretations all suppose that τεκνογονία is a reference to the literal act of childbearing.<sup>41</sup> One of two consequences results: either a wedge is driven between “childbearing” and salvation for women so that the one does not really have anything to do with the other, or salvation for women is made dependent on childbearing literally understood.<sup>42</sup> Both options pose a problem in the context of 1 Timothy. The author does indeed appear to connect the salvation of women to childbearing, but the idea is at odds with the rest of Pauline thought when it is taken literally.

<sup>39</sup> Clark Kroeger and Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 177, 176.

<sup>40</sup> Simon Coupland, “Salvation through Childbearing? The Riddle of 1 Timothy 2:15,” *Exp-Tim* 112 (2001): 302–3. Coupland succinctly describes the legacy of difficulty that has been bequeathed to modern scholarship by this passage: “New Testament scholars have long been bewildered or bemused by the enigmatic remark in 1 Timothy 2:15. . . . This bewilderment is reflected by the marginal notes in some translations. . . . The theological problem posed by the verse is obvious. How could the author . . . suggest that salvation could come not through faith in Christ alone, but through the ‘work’ of childbearing?” Furthermore, Coupland is correct that previous christological, physiological, and traditional interpretations of the remark are inconsistent with Pauline and Deutero-Pauline thought.

<sup>41</sup> As also supposed by Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 49. For them, the author of 1 Timothy is here advocating preservation of the natural order against “syncretistic and ascetic tendencies and movements.” Literal childbearing here is supposed also by Luke Timothy Johnson (*The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001], 207–8), Thomas R. Schreiner (“An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church*, ed. Köstenberger et al., 150–51), and Collins (*I & II Timothy and Titus*, 76), who says, “The Pastor reaffirms the traditional maternal role of women.”

<sup>42</sup> It is clear that the author’s statement in 1 Tim 2:15 is an answer to the problem of Eve’s transgression (παράβασις) mentioned in 1 Tim 2:14. Despite the echo of Gen 3:16, there is no evidence at all that he or his audience is concerned about the pain women feel when giving birth. The central question is, How will the transgressor “Eve” be saved? The answer is, “through childbearing.” Narrative flow and context leave us little choice but to read the prepositional object of διὰ as a genitive of agency, contrary to Coupland.

A better solution to the problem of salvation for women through childbearing appears when we extend Padgett's and Perriman's metaphorical interpretations to include the reference to "childbearing." There is more here than a symbolic use of Adam and Eve; there is a nonliteral use of the image of childbearing as well. In other words, the whole of 1 Tim 2:11–15 is nonliteral or metaphorical. As we shall argue, the term "childbearing" refers only to birthing the virtues of faith, love, holiness, and temperance.<sup>43</sup> We therefore see a post-natal relationship between the four virtues of 2:15 and those women of Ephesus who will be saved. We shall contend that there was nothing strange about this use of the term *τεκνογονία* in the world of the author and audience of 1 Timothy.

### V. Virtues as Children in Gnosticism and Greek Mythology

The idea of virtues and vices as children is a commonplace in the Gnostic literature of a later period. In *Orig. World* 106–7, for example, the vices are *begotten* by the archon Death:

Then Death, being androgynous, mingled with his (own) nature and begot seven androgynous offspring. These are the names of the male ones: Jealousy, Wrath, Tears, Sighing, Suffering, Lamentation, Bitter Weeping. And these are the names of the female ones: Wrath, Pain, Lust, Sighing, Curse, Bitterness, Quarrelsomeness. They had intercourse with one another, and each one begot seven, so that they amount to forty-nine androgynous demons.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, the virtues are *created* by the archon Zoe:

And in the presence of these, Zoe, who was with Sabaoth, created seven good androgynous forces. These are the names of the male ones: the Unenvious, the Blessed, the Joyful, the True, the Unbegudging, the Beloved, the Trustworthy. Also, as regards the female ones, these are their names: Peace, Glad-

<sup>43</sup> In Prov 8:32–36 we have the converse idea. Instead of humans giving birth to virtues, it is the virtue wisdom (חכמה, σοφία) that has given birth to humans. Also in Philo, *Conf.* 49, wisdom is the mother of the wise. However, in Philo, *Fug.* 50–52, Bethuel is the father of Rebekah, yet his name means "the daughter of God," an appellation for wisdom. Philo asks, "How can wisdom, the daughter of God, be called a father?" Philo explains that even though wisdom is the daughter of God, it is both male and a father in that it sows the seeds of learning, education, knowledge, prudence, and begets (γεννώντα) in the soul "good and praiseworthy practices." See also *Corp. herm.* 13.2, where Hermes Trismegistus explains the doctrine of spiritual rebirth. Tat, his son and pupil, complains, "I do not know from what womb a human being is born again, nor from what seed." Hermes responds, "O son, Wisdom is the womb which gives birth in silence, and the seed is the true Good."

<sup>44</sup> Trans. Hans-Gebhard Bethge and Bentley Layton, "On the Origin of the World (II, 5 and XIII, 2)," in *NHL*, 177.

ness, Rejoicing, Blessedness, Truth, Love, Faith (Pistis). And from these there are many good and innocent spirits.<sup>45</sup>

Given the parallelism between these two acts of generation and the characteristic “birthing” theme in Gnostic texts, there is no reason to think that the creation of these virtues by Zoe occurs by some means other than birthing. In these two cases, however, the vices and virtues are children of archonic beings and are themselves hypostatized into archonic beings.

The idea of birthing *vices* recurs in *Paraph. Shem* 23:30, where it is said of the wind demons that “they gave birth to all kinds of unchastity.”<sup>46</sup> The idea of birthing *virtues* recurs in *Exeg. Soul* 134:30 saying, “Thus when the soul [had adorned] herself again in her beauty [...] enjoyed her beloved, and [he also] loved her . . . so that by him she bears good children and rears them.”<sup>47</sup> In context, “bearing and rearing good children” benefits the soul with “her rejuvenation,” “resurrection from the dead,” “ascent to heaven,” “being born again,” and “salvation” (*Exeg. Soul* 134). The children of the soul in this context can only be virtues.

Even though this language represents a late stage of development in Gnostic thought, it is reasonable to presume that the Gnostic idea of virtues and vices as children had at least an inchoate form in the environment of 1 Timothy. This is especially so if there was an inchoate form of Gnosticism in the environment of 1 Timothy, as 1 Tim 6:20, with its reference to “what is falsely called γνώσεως” would seem to indicate.

However, one need not look only to Gnosticism to find the idea of virtues and vices as children. In Greek mythology, the virtues Diké, Eirene, and Eunomia (Δίκη, Ειρήνη, and Ευνομία, Justice, Peace, and Order) along with Horae (“Ωραι, Hours) were the daughters of the chief god Zeus and the titanide Themis.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the Three Graces—Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia (Ευφροσύνη, Ἀγλαΐα and Θαλία, Merriment, Beauty, and Cheerfulness) were the daughters of Zeus and the titanide Eurynome (Hesiod, *Theog.* 909).<sup>49</sup> One cannot help but be struck by the formal similarity between the terms Euphrosyne and sophrosyne (σωφροσύνη, 1 Tim 2:15).<sup>50</sup> We also find fourteen vices

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Trans. Frederick Wisse, “The Paraphrase of Shem (VII, I),” in *NHL*, 351.

<sup>47</sup> Trans. William C. Robinson, “The Exegesis of the Soul (II, 6),” in *NHL*, 196.

<sup>48</sup> In *Theog.* 218–19 Zeus and Themis were also the progenitors of the Three Fates—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. See also *Theog.* 76–79, where Zeus and Mnemosyne are the progenitors of the Nine Muses—Cleio, Euterpe, Thaleia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania, and Calliope. All anglicized spellings of names in the *Theogony* are from the Loeb translation by H. G. Evelyn-White.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Philo, *Somm.* 2.174 on *euphrosynē*, and *Abr.* 54 on the three graces.

<sup>50</sup> The term εὐφρων, a root of εὐφροσύνη means “sound mind, reasonable,” which is very close to the meaning of σωφροσύνη, “temperance, sound-mindedness.”

and other negative entities that were the children of the goddess Strife (Ἐρις, Eris), namely, Toil, Forgetfulness, Famine, Sorrows, Fightings, Battles, Murders, Manslaughters, Quarrels, Lying Words, Disputes, Lawlessness, Ruin, and Oath (Hesiod, *Theog.* 224–32).<sup>51</sup>

Whether influenced directly by Gnosticism or not, the audience of 1 Timothy, as acculturated Hellenes, would have been familiar with the idea of virtues and vices as children.<sup>52</sup> Most likely the audience of 1 Timothy would have automatically read the meaning of virtues as children into the author's use of *τεκνογονία*. Such a reading would have been a natural, although metaphorical, interpretation of good works (ἔργα ἀγαθὰ) for women in 1 Tim 2:10. Oddly, we probably would have been spared years of modern exegetical difficulty if the author of 1 Timothy had used the term "fruit bearing" instead of "childbearing" in 2:15.<sup>53</sup> If the author had used the agricultural rather than the more appropriate gynecological metaphor, the postnatal or post-generative relationship between the four virtues and the women in 2:15 would probably have been more readily recognized by modern interpreters.<sup>54</sup> However, we should not suppose that the congregation of Timothy would have had the same difficulties grasping the gynecological metaphor that we seem to have had. After all, women are not fruit trees. Women give birth to children, not fruit. It would then make good cultural sense to speak of metaphorical "Eves" giving birth to metaphorical children. As we shall see, the most prevalent metaphorical use of children in the cultural environment of the Pastoral Epistles was as references

<sup>51</sup> The sire of these entities, if there was one, is not named. Strife herself was the daughter of Night (Νύξ).

<sup>52</sup> See Frances Margaret Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20–21. Concerning the Pastoral Epistles, Young says, "The Christian communities for which these epistles were intended are certainly to be located in a Hellenistic urban setting. Far more than in the authentic Paulines the vocabulary and allusions betray the assumptions of such a world." Young further observes, "On the other hand, these letters are pervaded by a religious culture that must stem from Hellenistic Judaism."

<sup>53</sup> In the Gnostic tractate *Apoc. Adam* 6:1, a remnant of the descendants of Noah are referred to as "fruit-bearing trees." Cf. *Odes Sol.* 11:16a–21, where the inhabitants of paradise are referred to as "blooming and fruit-bearing trees" (Charlesworth, "Odes of Solomon," in *OTP* 2:745). See also *Pss. Sol.* 14:2–5, where the Lord's "devout ones" are referred to as "the trees of life" (Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *OTP* 2:663). See G. MacRae, "Apocalypse of Adam," in *OTP* 1:715 n. 6c. In *Ebr.* 8, Philo speaks of "virtue and vice" as "neither blossoming nor bearing fruit at the same time." In Philo, *Congr.* 40 Ephraim represents memory but his name means "fruit-bearing" because "the soul of the man who remembers bears as fruit the very things he has learned and loses none of them" (cf. Philo, *Mut.* 98–100; *Sobr.* 28; *Migr.* 205). Particularly in Philo, *Gig.* 4 and *Plant.* 132, 136 the metaphors "children" and "fruit" are used interchangeably. Again, in *L.A.B.* 42.1–3—the story of Manoah and Eluma, the parents of Samson—the terms "children" and "fruit" are used interchangeably (D. J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," in *OTP* 2:355).

<sup>54</sup> This may be primarily because of the influence of Matt 7:16–20; 12:33; and Gal 5:22–26 on Western thinking.

to virtues. The author of 1 Timothy therefore uses his audience's familiarity with a commonplace idea to introduce a more Christian form of that same idea.

Incidentally, in Gal 4:19, Paul declares that he is in birth-pangs (ὠδίνω) for his children (i.e., "my children," τέκνα μου) until Christ is formed (μορφωθῆναι Χριστός) in them.<sup>55</sup> This is not the same idea as Ephesian women giving birth to virtues in 1 Tim 2:15. Still, this verse helps to make a point about the distance between the perspective of ancient writers and our modern sensibilities. If the idea of Ephesian women giving birth to virtues is strange to modern hearers, then it is certainly no stranger than the idea of the male Paul giving birth to Galatian believers who are themselves pregnant with Christ.<sup>56</sup>

## VI. Virtues as Children in Philo

Most strikingly, the idea of virtues and vices as children appear in the allegorizing interpretations of Philo.<sup>57</sup> We have already referred to Philo's allegorical interpretation of the story of the Hebrew midwives as soul giving birth to virtue (*Leg.* 3.3), an idea not far from that of a pure heart issuing in virtue in 1 Tim 1:5 (cf. 1 Tim 1:19; 2 Tim 2:22). We have also already referred to Philo's allegorical understanding of the children of Noah as virtues, an understanding similarly implied in 1 Tim 2:15 for the children of the Ephesian women, and similarly made more explicit by context.

Philo interprets other narratives from the Hebrew Scriptures in the same metaphorical way, even to the point of allegorical rewording of patriarchal statements. In *Leg.* 3.180–81, Jacob responds to Rachel's request for children saying, "You have greatly erred, because I am not in the place of God, who alone is able to open *the wombs of souls* (τὰς ψυχῶν μήτρας), and sow virtues (ἀρετάς) in them, and make them to be pregnant (ποιεῖν ἐγκύμονας) and to give birth to good things" (τικτούσας τὰ καλά) (cf. *Leg.* 2.82; *Cher.* 2.45–52).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Phlm 10, where Paul the Apostle speaks of Onesimus as "my child (ἐμοῦ τέκνον), to whom I gave birth (ἐγέννησα) while I was imprisoned."

<sup>56</sup> One might make a remote comparison to a somewhat converse idea in Plato's *Resp.* 6:496A, where the sophisms of incompetent male philosophers are likened to "illegitimate and base children" (γεννᾶν νόθα καὶ φαύλα).

<sup>57</sup> In *Congr.* 43–44, in his midrash on 1 Chr 7:14 and Gen 11:29, Philo explains his allegorical method. "Let no one in his right mind suppose that the wise lawgiver wrote these things as a historical record (ἱστορικὴ γενεαλογία), for these are matters of the soul (πραγμάτων ψυχῆν) which can be explained only through symbolic interpretation (συμβόλων ἀνάπτυξις). When the things named are translated into our own language then we shall know their underlying truth" (cf. *Congr.* 180). Philo refers to allegorical, figurative, metaphorical, or symbolic interpretation numerous times in *Her.* 50; *Deus* 95; *Fug.* 181; *Somm.* 2.207, 260; *Abr.* 99, 131, 147; *Spec.* 1.327; 2.29; *Prob.* 82; *QG* 1.52; 2.36, 37; 3.24, 25, 32; *Opif.* 154–55; *Cher.* 1.21, 25; *Det.* 167; *Post.* 100; *Migr.* 203; *Agr.* 97, 157; and *Plant.* 36.

Elsewhere, Philo interprets Sarah's birthing of Isaac in terms of virtue (ἀρετῇ) giving birth (τέτοκεν) to happiness (εὐδαιμονία), that is, as virtue giving birth to virtue (*Leg.* 2.82). Philo affirms the birth of virtue even while condemning that which is antithetical to virtue. In *Leg.* 3.68, God curses the serpent, which represents pleasure (ἡδονή) because "she does *not possess in the womb* (οὐκ ἔχούση) any seed of virtue, but is always and everywhere full of guilt and pollution."

Sarah returns as "the virtue that rules over my soul" in *Congr.* 6. She "bears children without the aid of a midwife" (ὡς μηδὲ μαιευτικῆς τέχης). Those children (τὰ γεννήματα) are identified as "the practice of prudence, the practice of justice, and the practice of piety" (τὸ φρονεῖν, τὸ δικαιοπραγεῖν, τὸ εὐσεβεῖν). Earlier in this same context her children are identified as "honorable words, irreproachable counsels, and praiseworthy practices" (λόγους δὲ ἀστείους καὶ βουλὰς ἀνεπιλήπτους καὶ ἐπαινετὰς πράξεις) (*Congr.* 4). Philo draws a contrast between Sarah's children and the many vices of his own youth. He describes these vices as the "multitude of *illegitimate children* (νόθων παίδων) which were *born in* (ἀπεκύησαν) me through vain imaginations (κεναὶ δόξαι)." Sarah's children, on the other hand, are "the firstfruits" (τὰς ἀπαρχάς) rendered back to God who "opened her womb" (μήτρην ἀνοιξαντι) (cf. *Congr.* 98; *Mut.* 77–79; *Abr.* 99).

In *Congr.* 13–23, Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarah, represents "education" (παιδεία) or "the middle education of the intermediate and encyclical branches of knowledge" (τὴν τῶν μέσων καὶ ἐγκυκλιῶν ἐπιστημῶν μέσην παιδείαν). Her children then are "abundant learning and intelligence" (πολυμάθειαν καὶ καταφρονητικῶς). As Abraham did not have a child by Sarah until after he had a child by Hagar, so the human soul cannot *produce the offspring* (τεκνοποιήση) of virtue until it has produced the offspring of education.

In *Her.* 50, Leah represents that case "when the soul is *pregnant and begins to give birth* (κυοφορῇ καὶ τίκτειν ἄρχεται) to that which is proper for the soul," while Rachel represents "all that of the senses which is barren and *incapable of bearing children* (ἀτοκεῖ) (cf. *Mut.* 132–33; *Plant.* 134–37).

In *Leg.* 3.88–89, Rebekah is "the soul that waits on God." When God tells her that "two nations are in your womb," the meaning is that the soul contains both "that which is base and irrational" (τὸ φαῦλον καὶ ἄλογον) and "that which is honorable and rational and better" (τὸ ἀστεῖον καὶ λογικὸν καὶ ἄμεινον). The birth of Esau and Jacob therefore represents the soul giving birth respectively to vice and virtue (cf. *Congr.* 129; *Sacr.* 4).

In Philo's allegory of Adam and Eve, Adam represents Mind (νόος) while Eve represents "sense-perception" (αἴσθησις). Each one bears "offspring" (ἐκγονα), "the offspring of the Mind being the things of mind (τὰ νοητά), and the offspring of sense-perception being the things of the senses (τὰ αἰσθητά)" (*Leg.* 3.198; cf. *QG* 1.37; *Cher.* 2.60). Philo interprets God's word to Eve, "In

sorrow you shall bring forth children” (ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα) (Gen 3:16) to mean that sense produces perception with great pain, especially for the foolish (*Leg.* 3.216; cf. *Leg.* 1.75). But when God says in Gen 3:16, “And you shall take refuge in your husband” (Καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἡ ἀποστροφή σου), the meaning is that sense has two husbands, Mind and Pleasure, “the one lawful, and the other an *abortioneer*” (ὁ μὲν νόμιμος, ὁ δὲ φθορεύς) (*Leg.* 3.220).<sup>58</sup> But when sense turns to Mind, “her lawful husband” (τὸν νόμιμον ἄνδρα), then “there are great benefits” (μεγίστη ἐστὶν ὠφέλεια) (*Leg.* 3.221). In the context of Philo’s thought, these “great benefits” are nothing less than the birth of virtue, such as occurred when Sarah (virtue) gave birth to Isaac (happiness) (*Leg.* 3.217).

Philo, when considered together with Greek mythology, further shows that the idea of virtues and vices (ἀρετὰς καὶ κακίας) as children was not peculiar to strictly Gnostic or proto-Gnostic thought. It was a feature of Hellenistic thinking generally speaking.<sup>59</sup> More importantly, Philo shows that the idea of virtues and vices as children particularly of the soul occurred in the context of biblical exegesis of the Genesis narrative (e.g., *Leg.* 3.246–47) and was in currency at the time of 1 Timothy and before.<sup>60</sup> It is also of great relevance that it is not gods, goddesses, or archons that give birth to the virtues in Philo’s midrash but mostly the human heroines of Israel’s history—Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, and the enslaved Hebrew women of Egypt.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, in Philo the virtues themselves are not hypostatized into gods, goddesses, or archons, but remain the inward dispositions and *outward expressions* of the

<sup>58</sup> Cf. “the one lawful, the other a seducer” (Colson and Whitaker, LCL, 451) and “The one a legal one, the other a destroyer” (Yonge, *Works of Philo*, 75).

<sup>59</sup> Hellenistic influence may explain the transition from “her works” (τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς) in Matt 11:19 to “all of her children” (πάντων τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς) in Luke 7:35, “But wisdom is justified by *all of her children*.” Typical Hellenes would understand this as a reference to wisdom (σοφία) as a virtue of the soul *giving birth* to other virtues or virtuous works (cf. Philo, *Congr.* 129; *Fug.* 50–52). The idea is not altogether foreign to Judaism either (Prov 8:19; Wis 8:7; *Let. Aris.* 260; cf. Jas 3:17). Here in Luke, mother wisdom apparently gives birth to temperance (σωφροσύνη) in the soul of John, and to love or friendship (φιλία) in the soul of Jesus. In any case, Luke 7:35 is another place in the NT where we discover the idea of virtues as children. The intertextual transition from “her works” in Matt 11:19 to “all of her children” in Luke 7:35 seems to be paralleled by the *intratextual* transition from “good works” in 1 Tim 2:10 to “childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15. For a different reading, see Simon Gathercole, “The Justification of Wisdom (Matt 11.19b/Luke 7.35),” *NTS* 49 (2003): 476–88. Gathercole argues for Jesus and John as “children” or “envoys” of “Lady Wisdom” and particularly for Luke 7:35 as Jesus’ bitter complaint against those who dissociate him and John from Wisdom’s commissioning.

<sup>60</sup> Philo also interprets “children” as a metaphorical reference to the senses—sight, hearing, smelling, and feeling (*QG* 1.49).

<sup>61</sup> However, in *Ebr.* 165, the daughters of Lot themselves are allegorized as Counsel (βουλή) and Assent (συναίνεσις).

soul.<sup>62</sup> There is both precedent and background for the listing of faith, love, holiness, and temperance as the products of “childbearing” by earthly women in 1 Tim 2:11–15.

## VII. Virtues as Children in Plato

The idea of the human soul *giving birth* to virtues or vices is characteristically Platonic. In *Symp.* 206C, Diotima, the wise woman of Mantinea, declares, “All people are pregnant (κυούσι), Socrates, both in body and soul.”<sup>63</sup> Again, in *Symposium*, virtues born of the soul are specifically referred to as *children* in contrast to human children literally understood. As Diotima says to Socrates concerning the Athenian statesman, Solon, and other benefactors:

And Solon is honored among you because *he gave birth* to the laws, and so are many other men in many other places, among both Hellenes and barbarians, who performed many good works, and *gave birth to a multitude of virtues* (γεννήσαντες παντοίαν ἀρετήν). In their names many shrines have been built because *they had such children* (γέγονε διὰ τοῦς τοιοῦτους παῖδας), but none of them has been so honoured for having *human children* (διὰ τοῦς ἀνθρωπίνοους). (*Symp.* 209D–E)

In this same context, Diotima explains to Socrates that those who are “pregnant in their souls . . . further *conceive and bear . . . wisdom and the other virtues*” and “everyone would prefer to *have such children born to him rather than human children*” (*Symp.* 209A–D).<sup>64</sup>

In Plato, then, we find a natalistic concept of virtue. Virtues are birthed by the soul just as children are birthed by women. Accordingly, the soul is referred to as “she” (αὐτή) in Platonic thought regardless of whether the soul resides in

<sup>62</sup> Augustine will later criticize the Roman practice of hypostatizing virtues and vices into divine or semidivine beings in *Civ.* 4.20–24. Pseudo-Phocylides had much earlier rejected the Greek practice of making a god out of *eros*, which he instead characterized as a dangerous vice (*Ps.-Phoc.* 194).

<sup>63</sup> In *Congr.* 129, Philo refers to “souls which are pregnant with wisdom” and ready to “bring forth children.” The same idea is found in *QG* 3.10: “For every rational soul bears good fruit or is fruitful” (trans. Ralph Marcus, LCL, 194). In *Det.* 127, “the mind becomes pregnant and labors to give birth to the things of mind.” In *Migr.* 140, Sarah represents “the soul that appears to be pregnant.”

<sup>64</sup> Of course, the context of Plato’s narrative in this case is the celebration of pederastic relationships, in which communion between an older male teacher and a younger male pupil results in “a much greater fellowship than those who have children together” (*Symp.* 209C). Aristotle, Philo, and Paul would have condemned such a relationship (see Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 7.5.3; 7.7.7; Philo, *Spec.* 3.39; and Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9; cf. 1 Tim 1:10). Also see Philo, *Contempl.* 57–61, for his scathing critique of this aspect of Plato’s *Symposium*.

the body of a male or female.<sup>65</sup> As Socrates questions Cebes, “Whatever the soul occupies, *she* always comes to it bringing life?” He questions again, “Then soul will never receive the opposite to that which *she* brings?” (*Phaed.* 105D; cf. 106B, 107C).<sup>66</sup> As we have seen, in Philo we have both a natalistic and generative concept of virtue, that is to say, a use of both the gynecological and agricultural reproductive metaphors.<sup>67</sup> Both concepts and metaphors express the same Platonic idea in Philo.

A contrasting view is provided by Aristotle.<sup>68</sup> In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues for an active or kinetic concept of virtue. Virtue is more what one does; it is not just what one gives birth to within the soul.<sup>69</sup> However, although Aristotle avoids natalistic language, he is not altogether free of generative elements in this discourse about virtue. In *Eth. nic.* 4.3.33–34, Aristotle speaks of “the high-minded man” (μεγαλόψυχος) as “one who would rather possess things that are good and *bear no fruit* (ἄκαρπα), rather than things that are *fruit bearing* (καρπίμων) and cause others to be obligated to him; for in this way he would retain his autonomy.”<sup>70</sup>

There is no question about Plato’s influence on Philo and the Gnostics, particularly in regard to the idea of virtues as children.<sup>71</sup> Plato himself was most

<sup>65</sup> Philo refers to the soul as mother and nurse (μήτηρ καὶ τροφός) (*Somn.* 2.139). Philo also speaks of “the womb of the soul” (τῆς ψυχῆς μήτρας) (*Migr.* 34) without regard to the gender of the body.

<sup>66</sup> The English translation is from *The Complete Texts of Great Dialogues of Plato* (trans. W. H. D. Rouse; New York: Plume Books, 1961), 584. Rouse’s translation preserves the feminine pronoun, unlike those of H. N. Fowler (LCL, 363–64) and *Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. Cooper and Hutchinson, 90–91.

<sup>67</sup> Even in Philo, *Deus* 117–18, where it is Noah who gives birth to virtues, the metaphor is still gynecological, because it is not really Noah but his soul that gives birth. In a large part of Hellenistic thought, the soul is female.

<sup>68</sup> In *Somn.* 167–68, Philo seems to take a mediating stance between the Platonic and Aristotelian schools in the debate over whether virtue comes by nature, practice, or learning. In *Abr.* 52, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob respectively represent all three means of acquiring virtue (cf. Philo, *Ios.* 1).

<sup>69</sup> See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 6.13.1–8, Aristotle acknowledges that virtues may be innate qualities, but we only recognize them as virtues when they take the form of action; and in order for them properly to take the form of action, they must be governed by reason.

<sup>70</sup> See Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell: Peripatetic Press, 1984), 69. Apostle’s translation preserves the agricultural reproductive metaphor, unlike H. Rackham’s in the Loeb edition.

<sup>71</sup> Plato’s influence is pervasive in the Gnostic texts, but more specifically in places such as *Plato Rep* 588A–589B in *NHL*, 318–20; and perhaps in *Exeg. Soul* 127, 134; *Teach. Silv.* 99; *Val. Exp.* 37, 39; *Tri. Trac.* 75–77; *Great Pow.* 43–44. The influence of Homer and Hesiod is also pervasive in the Gnostic texts, but is probably more specifically indicated in the occurrences of names like Asclepius, Hades, Cerberus, Zeus, and Tartarus in *Asclepius* 21–29, 75; *Great Pow.* 37, 41, 42;

likely influenced in this regard by the mythology of Homer and Hesiod, among others;<sup>72</sup> Philo and the Gnostics also show direct influence by Homer and Hesiod, among others.<sup>73</sup> There are, however, no clear, unequivocal indications of direct influence by either Homer, Hesiod, Plato, or Philo anywhere in the Pauline corpus.<sup>74</sup> Yet there is no denying the influence of these writers in the Hellenistic world of the Pauline epistles. Therefore, even if there is only an indirect influence, that influence is reflected in the ideas of natalistic or generative virtue in the undisputed and disputed Pauline epistles.<sup>75</sup>

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Plato *Rep* 49; *Interp. Know.* 13. However, in *Exeg. Soul* 136, 137 we have actual citations of the *Odyssey*.

<sup>72</sup> He was at least influenced by Homer in regard to the use of natalistic language. In Plato, *Theaet.* 152E, Socrates dialogues with Theaetetus the mathematician about the ambivalent, transitory, flux-like character of reality as it is described in the philosophy of Heraclitus. Among others, he associates Homer with Heraclitus, saying, “And when Homer spoke of ‘Oceanus and Tethys, father and mother of the gods (θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα)’ he meant that all things were the *children of flux and motion* (ἔκγονα ῥοῆς τε καὶ κινήσεως)” (cf. Homer, *Il.* 14.201–2, 246). See also *Tim.* 40E–41A and *Crat.* 402B–C for more natalistic language involving Oceanus and Tethys. The influence of Homer and Hesiod on Plato is indicated in *Crat.* 396B–C; 397E–398A; 402 B–C; *Lysis* 215C; *Min.* 318E–319D; *Menex* 238A; *Leg.* 2.658D and numerous other places in his writings.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., Philo, *Aet.* 17, 18 (cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 116). Here Philo reports that some people think that Hesiod was the “father” of Platonic thought. See also *Aet.* 37 (cf. Homer, *Od.* 6.107); 132 (cf. Homer, *Il.* 6.147); *Migr.* 156 (cf. *Il.* 6.484); 195 (cf. *Od.* 4.392); *Contempl.* 40–41 (cf. *Od.* 9.355); *Legat.* 80 (cf. *Od.* 4.363); and *QG* 3.3 (cf. *Od.* 12.183–94); 3.16 (cf. *Od.* 14.258).

<sup>74</sup> However, see the citations of Menander (343–292 B.C.E.) in 1 Cor 15:33 and Epimenides (ca. 600 B.C.E.) or Callimachus in Titus 1:12. There may be another citation of Epimenides in Acts 17:28a, and one of Aratus (ca. 315–240 B.C.E.) or perhaps Cleanthes (ca. 330–231 B.C.E.) in Acts 17:28b. Note the natalistic language of this last citation. “For we are his offspring” (Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν). Cf. Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* 4, ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος εἶσι.

<sup>75</sup> After recounting a series of postresurrection appearances of Christ, Paul says in 1 Cor 15:8, “Last of all, as one born before the time, he appeared to me also.” Paul’s reference to himself as “one born before the time” (τῷ ἐκτρώματι; τὸ ἐκτρώμα) has been particularly troublesome to interpreters. Although there is still not enough evidence to be certain, this reference may be an allusion to Homer, *Il.* 19.118, where Hera causes the birth of Eurytheus “before the full course of months” (ἡλιτομήνων ἔόντα). At the same time, Hera in her craftiness “held back the Eileithyiae” (σχέθε Εἰλειθυίας), the goddesses of childbirth, in order to delay the birth of Heracles against the wishes of unwary Zeus (*Il.* 19.119). Previously, Zeus had promised that the first of his descendants born on that day would become king of Argos (cf. Diodorus Siculus 4.9.4). Paul may be saying that, in the same way the prematurely born Eurytheus was made king in place of someone thought more deserving, he was made an apostle in place of others thought more deserving, with Christ replacing Hera in this potential allegory of Paul as Eurytheus. For a survey of other interpretations, see William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 32; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 318, 322–23; Harm W. Hollander and Gijbert Van Der Hout, “The Apostle Paul Calling Himself an Abortion: 1 Cor. 15:8 within the context of 1 Cor. 15: 8–10,” *NovT* 38 (1996): 224–36; and Matthew W. Mitchell, “Reexamining the ‘Aborted Apostle’: An Exploration of Paul’s Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15:8,” *JSN* 25 (2003): 469–85.

A more general mark of Hellenistic influence in the undisputed and disputed Pauline epistles is the appearance of virtue and vice lists in this corpus.<sup>76</sup> 1 Timothy 2:15 is primarily a short list of virtues similar to the short lists that we find in Plato, *Resp.* 4.427E; *Lach.* 198B; *Prot.* 349B; Philo, *Prob.* 70; *Post.* 128; *Ebr.* 23; *Deus* 79; and *Wis* 8:7. Longer lists of virtues appear in Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.2.7–9; 3.6.1–5.3.17; *Eth. eud.* 2.3.4; *Virt. vit.* 2.1–7; 4.1–5.7; 8.1–4; and *Wis* 7:22–23; *Jas* 3:17–18; and 2 Pet 1:5–7.<sup>77</sup> Short lists of vices appear in Plato, *Resp.* 10.609B; Philo, *Conf.* 21; *Somn.* 2.266; *Post.* 52; and 3 *Bar.* 8:5 (Slavonic and Greek); and *T. Jud.* 16:1.<sup>78</sup> Longer vice lists appear in Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.2.13; *Eth. eud.* 2.3.4; *Virt. vit.* 6.1–7.14; 3.1–8; and *Matt* 15:19; 3 *Bar.* 13:4 (Greek); *Wis* 14:25–26; *T. Levi* 17:11; *Jas* 3:15–16; 1 Pet 4:3; and 2 Pet 2:12–20.<sup>79</sup> In Philo, *Sacr.* 32, there is an unusually long list, giving as many as 152 vices. Despite the variety, there is a discernible pattern of discourse in Hellenistic virtue ethics, and the listing of virtues and vices seems to be the most notable aspect of that pattern.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, it is plain that the author of the Pastoral Epistles is familiar with at least this aspect of Hellenistic virtue ethics.<sup>81</sup> If this is the case, we can hardly ignore the implications of his acquaintance with virtue and vice lists for our understanding of *τεκνογονία* in 1 Tim 2:15.

### VIII. The Legacy of Ionia and Artemis

Ephesus is the purported locale of Timothy and his congregation (1 Cor 16:8–11; 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12). Even if this locale is a pseudepigraphal

<sup>76</sup> *Virtue lists*: Rom 5:3–5; 1 Cor 13:4–7; 2 Cor 6:6–7; Gal 5:22–23; Phil 4:8–9; Col 3:12–17; 1 Tim 2:15; 3:2–7, 8–10, 11–12; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22; Titus 1:7–9; 2:2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–10, 11–12; 3:1–2. *Vice lists*: Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19–21; Col 3:8–9; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 2 Tim 3:2–5; Titus 3:3.

<sup>77</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 2.3.4 is actually a mixed list of both virtues and vices.

<sup>78</sup> In *Conf.* 21, Philo describes the mind that is *pregnant* with evil. He refers to what may be called the four cardinal vices: folly, cowardice, intemperance, and injustice.

<sup>79</sup> *On the Origin of the World* 106–7 and *Theog.* 224–32 mentioned above are also forms of virtue and vice lists.

<sup>80</sup> The occurrence of domestic codes, or *Haustafeln*, in the Pauline corpus (Eph 5:22–6:4; Col 3:18–4:1; 1 Tim 3:4–5, 12; 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10) is a related phenomenon and also a mark of Hellenistic influence. See Lewis R. Donelson, *Colossians, Ephesians, First and Second Timothy, and Titus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 48–49, 131–33.

<sup>81</sup> The author of the Epistle of James may also be influenced by Hellenistic virtue ethics (1:2–4; 2:18–26; 3:13–17). He specifically reiterates the theme of vice giving birth to vice, that is to say, lust giving birth to sin and sin giving birth to death (1:15). Observe furthermore, how the term “firstfruit” becomes a synonym for children in 1:18. There is a similar equivalence between children and firstfruit in Philo, *Congr.* 6.

feature of the text (which is by no means an unassailable characterization), it is still significant that the author evokes an Ephesian provenance for the audience of the epistle.<sup>82</sup> Knowledgeable Hellenes among the readers of 1 Timothy would inevitably imagine a hearing of its author against the backdrop of Ephesian culture and all that is associated with it.<sup>83</sup> Ephesus is therefore a referent that evokes observations relevant to the present argument.

Ephesus was in that coastal province of west central Asia Minor and nearby islands known in earlier times as Ionia.<sup>84</sup> This region was the matrix for a widely influential and particular kind of philosophical thought. In time, this particular kind of philosophy was identified by the name of the region itself. It is not critical for our case that the audience of 1 Timothy have an actual provenance in the region of Ionia (although Ionia was the most likely provenance). It is significant enough that this audience is associated with that region in the mind of an ancient author and his readers.

The influence of Ionian philosophers and their legacy in the wider Greek world is an already well-rehearsed theme in classical studies.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, the prominence of Plato and Philo as heirs of Ionian thought is another commonplace.<sup>86</sup> Even though Ionian thought is a rationalization or “demythologizing” of Homer, Hesiod, and other epic lyricists, it retains some of the natalistic features of epic.<sup>87</sup> Ionian thought perpetuates the tradition of natalistic lan-

<sup>82</sup> While acknowledging the impossibility of demonstrating the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, Johnson nevertheless argues that the grounds for judging them inauthentic are so seriously flawed as to render these judgments invalid. After exploring the literary category of *mandata principis* (commandments of a ruler) as a possible genre for 1 Timothy and Titus, Johnson finds reason seriously to consider the provenance of 1 Timothy “not as a fictional setting, but perhaps as the real-life occasion for the letter.” See Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 91, 140–42.

<sup>83</sup> See C. E. Arnold, “Ephesus,” in *DPL*, 249–52.

<sup>84</sup> See Plato, *Thg.* 129D. Against Socrates’ warning, Sannio and Thrasyllus go on an expedition to “Ephesus and the rest of Ionia.” Incidentally, there are some scholarly doubts about the Platonic authorship of *Theages*.

<sup>85</sup> See Malcolm Schofield, “The Ionians,” in *From the Beginnings to Plato* (Routledge History of Philosophy 1; ed. C. C. W. Taylor; London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 47–83; Jonathan M. Hall, “Ionians,” in *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*, vol. 1 (ed. Graham Speake; London/Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 820–21; *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists* (trans. Robin Waterfield; Oxford World’s Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xi–xxxiii; and A. A. Long, “The Scope of Early Greek Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (ed. A. A. Long; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–21.

<sup>86</sup> See F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970), 300–308.

<sup>87</sup> As founders of natural philosophy, the seventh- to fifth-century Ionian philosophers Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Democritus, Xenophanes, and others sought to replace mythological cosmologies with materialistic explanations for the universe. On the Ionian philosophers, see Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1.3.19–1.5.28; 8.1.1–8.3.30; and Augustine, *Civ.* 8.2; 18.37.

guage.<sup>88</sup> The Ionian philosophers particularly drew upon the myth of the titans Oceanus and Tethys as “begetters” of all things, as a convenient source of metaphors and imagery (Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1.3.29–36; Plato, *Theaet.* 152D–E; *Tim.* 40E–41A; *Crat.* 402B–C). Accordingly, Xenophanes says, “but the great ocean is begetter of clouds and winds and rivers.”<sup>89</sup> Malcolm Schofield comments on this statement of Xenophanes: “The striking description of the ocean (*pontos*) as ‘begetter’ already recalls, yet simultaneously rationalizes, Hesiod’s account of how it ‘begat’ Nereus, the old man of the sea and other mythical figures (*Theogony* 233–9).”<sup>90</sup> As rationalizers of myth, the Ionian philosophers were in large measure the founders of allegorical interpretation.<sup>91</sup>

Regardless of the actual place and destination of their literary compositions, it is this germinal Ionian heritage that binds Plato and Philo to Homer and Hesiod, and then binds them all to 1 Timothy at least in regard to the natalistic concept of virtue.<sup>92</sup> There is then no need to show that the author and

<sup>88</sup> See Plato, *Resp.* 6:18E, where the Ideas are described as “the offspring of the Good” (ἐκγονός τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ). Also Plato, *Symp.* 203B–C, where Eros (“Ἔρως, Love) is lauded as the son of Poros (Πόρος, Resource) and Penia (Πενία, Poverty). See also Philostratus, *Heroikos* 7.8, where truth (ἀλήθεια) is “the mother of virtue” (μητέρα ἀρετῆς).

<sup>89</sup> Schofield, “Ionians,” 76. He identifies the source of this statement as “The Geneva Scholium on *Iliad* XXI.” One might compare Job 38:29, where God asks Job, “From whose *womb* (MT: בֶּטֶן; LXX: γαστήρ) does the ice come forth, and who has *given birth* (MT: ἴβ; LXX: τέτοκεν) to the hoarfrost of the heavens?” The implication is that it was God who conceived in the womb and gave birth to these phenomena. This is a rare and startling case of natalistic imagery applied to the God of Israel.

<sup>90</sup> Schofield, “Ionians,” 76. See also the reference to “men to whom the clouds gave birth” in *Apoc. Ab.* 14.6 (R. Rubinkiewicz and H. G. Lunt, “Apocalypse of Abraham,” in *OTP*, 1:696, esp. n. f.).

<sup>91</sup> See Peters, *Harvest of Hellenism*, 451: “Plato, who cared only for the morality of the traditional myths as a criterion for their political use, reveals in passing that in his day there were those who saw an ‘undersense’ (*hyponoia*) in the myths. There is reason to suspect that this ‘other reading’ (*allegoria*) was being practiced by Anaxagoras and some of his disciples, and that the hidden meaning was a physical one. . . . For both the physicists and the moralists the preferred text was Homer, a choice dictated no doubt by the poet’s place at the cultural center of the society and the consequent attention given to his works by literary exegetes at Alexandria and Pergamum.”

<sup>92</sup> From a strictly linguistic point of view, the *Koine* dialect of the LXX, the NT, Josephus, and Philo descends mostly from the Attic, which was the dialect of Aeschylus (525–456), Sophocles (496–406), Euripides (ca. 480–406), and, of course, Plato (427–347) among other Athenian poets and philosophers. Attic in turn descends from Ionic, the dialect of Homer and Hesiod. For a discussion, see Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920, 1956, 1976), 3–4A. According to Smyth, “The *Koinè* took its rise in the Alexandrian period, so called from the preëminence of Alexandria in Egypt as a centre of learning until the Roman conquest of the East; and lasted to the end of the ancient world (sixth century A.D.).” The author and audience of 1 Timothy therefore share a linguistic heritage with Philo of Alexandria. However, with the sharing of a linguistic heritage there must also be the inevitable sharing of other cultural legacies, such as a stock of familiar metaphors.

audience of 1 Timothy had direct knowledge of Plato or Philo as a way of accounting for the epistle's natalistic concept of virtue. The concept is simply *koinos topos*, or a philosophical commonplace.<sup>93</sup>

Ephesus is also significant as the ancient center of the worship of Artemis (see Acts 19:24–41). Here is another promising avenue of investigation uncovered by the Clark Kroegers.<sup>94</sup> Although we cannot accept their central argument for the reinterpretation of 1 Tim 2:12, their characterization of 1 Tim 2:11–15 as a probable response to some features of the Artemis fertility cult is helpful. For the purposes of this study, the relevant feature of the Artemis cult would be language that associates the goddess with birthing or midwifery.<sup>95</sup> When Apuleius (ca. 120–60 C.E.) identifies the Egyptian goddess Isis with Artemis (Diana) he says, “At another time you are Phoebus’ sister; by applying to birth soothing remedies you relieve the pain of childbirth, and have brought teeming numbers to birth; now you are worshipped in the famed shrines of Ephesus” (*Metam.* 11.2).<sup>96</sup> At a much earlier time, Callimachus (310–235 B.C.E.) spoke for Artemis and said, “I will dwell on the mountains, and I will go to the cities of men only when women sorely distressed by the pangs of childbirth call upon me for help” (*Hymn. Dian.* 20–22). Plato, Callimachus, the author of Luke-Acts, Apuleius, other literati, and the audiences for whom they wrote show that knowledge of Artemis lore and Ephesian culture was widespread and transgenerational even beyond Ionia itself. One would expect that in cultures dominated by worship of a deity associated with childbirth, or at least in cultures knowledgeable about such worship, that the image of childbirth would be used in a variety of metaphorical senses.

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, for example, Socrates rehearses the legend of Artemis as the founder of the midwifery guild among mothers past the age of childbearing (*Theaet.* 149B–151E). Although Artemis was the patron goddess of childbirth, she herself was childless.<sup>97</sup> She honors the image of herself in

<sup>93</sup> For a discussion of *koinos topos* (“common-place”) in a different context, see Hermogenes, *The Preliminary Exercises* 6, in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (trans. George A. Kennedy; SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 79–81.

<sup>94</sup> Clark Kroeger and Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 47–58, 105–13. See also L. M. McDonald, “Ephesus,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 318–21.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Philo, *Migr.* 214, where the midwives of Exod 1:21 are “those souls which search for the invisible qualities” (αἱ ζητητικαὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν ψυχαί) (cf. *Leg.* 3.3).

<sup>96</sup> Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (trans. P. G. Welch; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 219. Phoebus is another name for the sun-god Apollo. See the translation of W. Adlington and S. Gaselee (LCL, 541), where Artemis is addressed as the one “who hast saved so many people by lightening and lessening with thy medicines the pangs of travail” (*quae partu fetarum medelis lenientibus recreato populos tantos*).

<sup>97</sup> Outside of Ephesus, Artemis was usually thought of as goddess of archery and hunting

postreproductive mothers by assigning them the task of midwifing (μαίευτικός). Artemis does not choose women who have never been mothers because they lack experience. Socrates salutes midwives not only for their experience with pregnancy and motherhood but also for their skills in pharmacology, incantation, and matchmaking. The works of midwives are therefore highly important.

Socrates then describes himself to Theaetetus as a midwife (μαῖα) for the souls of men (he specifically means *men*, ἄνδρας). His vocation is to help *men* “give birth to the manifold good things found within them.” They cannot give birth by themselves. “But it is God and I,” Socrates says, “who delivers their children for them” (*Theaet.* 150D). Socrates criticizes those men who have failed to acknowledge his midwifing role after they had given birth. He also criticizes those who have left him for bad company and have “so greatly abused the children I helped them to birth that they lost them.” According to Socrates, “they have caused miscarriage” (ἐξήμβλωσαν; root: ἀμβλίσκω) (*Theaet.* 150E). Those men who associate with Socrates are like women in childbirth, suffering the pains of labor. Their situation is indeed worse than that of parturient women because they suffer day and night. Socrates suspects that Theaetetus is parturient, like a woman in labor (*Theaet.* 151A–C). The speech of Socrates in *Theaetetus* bears great interest and relevance, because it is here that he deploys the Artemis legend as a frame of reference for a metaphorical use of childbearing, and for explicating his own role in the birthing of children, with the children to be borne being specifically understood as virtues.<sup>98</sup>

It would be difficult to see how the author and audience of 1 Timothy could be oblivious to this frame of reference and similar metaphorical uses of childbearing in Ephesian culture, whether or not that audience actually resided in Ephesus. As acculturated savants of this Artemis mythology and language

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(Homer, *Il.* 16.184; Callimachus, *Hymn. Apoll.* 60). In this case, the role of goddess of childbirth was instead assigned to Eileithyia (Εἰλειθία), daughter of Hera (Hesiod, *Theog.* 922; Homer, *Il.* 16.187; 19.103). Sometimes Homer uses a plural form of the reference, such as, “Eileithyiae, daughters of Hera” (Εἰλειθιαί, Ἥρης θυγατέρες) (*Il.* 11.270–71; 19.119). That Plato preserves the tradition of Artemis as goddess of childbirth along with that of Eileithyia in the same role (*Symp.* 206D) attests to the degree of Ionian-Ephesian influence in his thought.

<sup>98</sup> This same excavating for birthing metaphors occurs in Plato, *Symp.* 206D, where we have the appearance of Eileithyia, patron goddess of childbirth. Diotima explains to Socrates that Eileithyia represents Beauty. The myth of the goddess is used as a frame of reference for speaking about the pregnant soul and her desire to give birth to beautiful things. Elsewhere, Pausanias (ca. 174 C.E.) speaks about the cult of Eileithyia, who had a sanctuary in Corinth, among other places (Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.35.11). The influence of such cults and their legends on language, particularly in the metaphorical use of the image of childbearing, may be at least remotely reflected in early Christian use of natalistic language (Luke 7:35; Acts 17:28; John 3:3–7; 1 Cor 15:8; Gal 4:19, 26–27; 1 Thess 5:3; 1 Tim 2:15; Phlm 10; Jas 1:15, 18; 1 Pet 1:3; Rev 12:1–6). However, there are also precedents in the Hebrew Scriptures (Deut 32:18; Num 11:12; Job 38:29; Hos 5:4–7).

and other birth-goddess lore, the author and audience of 1 Timothy would surely bring a metaphorical understanding to the use of “childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15.

### IX. Soteriology and Virtues-Bearing

More support for a new reading of 1 Tim 2:15 can be derived from a theological or, more specifically, a soteriological description of 1 Timothy and the other Pastorals. We are not suggesting that there is a formal theology or soteriology contained within the Pastoral Epistles. What we actually have is a series of loosely connected affirmations. Yet these affirmations possess sufficient coherence and consistency to enable us to lay out a basic pattern of thought.<sup>99</sup> We are especially interested in the author’s use of *σωθῆναι* (1 Tim 2:4) and cognate terms. Salvation is ultimately an eschatological and apocalyptic event.<sup>100</sup> It is the central event in a scenario precipitated by the coming of Christ at the end of the age (1 Tim 6:14–15; 2 Tim 4:1; Titus 2:13). Eschatological salvation is corporate in scope (2 Tim 4:8; Titus 3:7), but personally apprehended (2 Tim 2:10–13; 4:8, 18). For the collective of believers it means “eternal life” (1 Tim 6:19; Titus 1:2; 3:7), “eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10), “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8), and life in God’s “heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim 4:18). Eschatological salvation is preceded by the judgment of the living and the dead, and is awarded to those who are found “rich in good works” (1 Tim 6:18), who have lived according to “sound doctrine” (1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:1).<sup>101</sup>

There is, however, a second sense of salvation in the Pastoral Epistles. It is a realized sense.<sup>102</sup> The believer takes possession of future salvation in the present (1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 2:11; 3:5).<sup>103</sup> Salvation is realized when people “lay hold on to sound doctrine” (2 Tim 1:13), “come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25), and “cleanse themselves” of vice (2 Tim 2:21). Saving knowledge, which elicits faith, is communicated through the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 1:10)—a ministry of preaching and teaching that includes

<sup>99</sup> See Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 2–3.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–59.

<sup>101</sup> See Donelson, *Colossians, Ephesians, First and Second Timothy, and Titus*, 146–50; also Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 58.

<sup>102</sup> See Philip H. Towner, “The Portrait of Paul and the Theology of 2 Timothy: The Closing Chapter of the Pauline Story,” *HBT* 21 (1999): 169.

<sup>103</sup> From a broad perspective, any distinction between realized and eschatological salvation is quite artificial. In the believer’s experience, the possession of one is the possession of the other, as the author of the Pastoral Epistles indicates (1 Tim 6:12; Titus 2:11; 3:7). Nevertheless, the distinction becomes necessary in order to show more clearly how salvation is related to virtues-bearing.

exposition of the “the holy writings” (2 Tim 3:15–16). In this case, saving knowledge seems equivalent to “faith in Jesus Christ” (2 Tim 3:15). One receives salvation in the here and now when one accepts this knowledge.<sup>104</sup>

Realized salvation is nevertheless not according to works, here understood as virtuous works, but according to grace (2 Tim 1:9; Titus 2:11; 3:5).<sup>105</sup> Grace is both God’s merciful disposition toward us (1 Tim 1:2, 13–14) and God’s powerful presence with us (2 Tim 2:2; 4:17, 22; Titus 3:15).<sup>106</sup> As mercy, God’s grace was expressed through the self-sacrifice of Jesus, whose death effected liberation or ransom from sin (1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14). As presence, God’s grace is experienced as the Holy Spirit, which gives life (1 Tim 6:13; 2 Tim 1:7, 14).<sup>107</sup> Grace was first mediated to us through Jesus Christ prior to creation and then during his earthly sojourn (2 Tim 1:9–10; 2:5). Grace continues to be mediated to us through his spiritual presence as resurrected Lord (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 2:11). In either case, when God’s grace through Jesus Christ is acknowledged and accepted, it elicits the response of faith.

Various senses of faith occur in the Pastoral Epistles. At times faith means assent to sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:4; 3:9; 2 Tim 1:13; 2 Tim 2:2). At times faith appears as the content of sound doctrine (1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 3:15; 4:7; Titus 1:4, 13; Titus 2:2). At other times, faith is a virtue of the soul among other virtues (1 Tim 2:15; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22).<sup>108</sup> However, as a response to grace, faith is an act of bonding with God or Christ through self-surrender in a committed relationship (2 Tim 1:12; 2:19; 3:17). This faith as bonding is manifested outwardly in the life of the believer through acts that mirror the character of God or Christ (1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 1:13; Titus 2:11–14).<sup>109</sup> Although these acts would be called virtues elsewhere, in the Pastoral Epistles they are called acts of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness, or simply good works (1 Tim 5:25; 6:11, 18; 2 Tim 2:21; 3:17).<sup>110</sup>

In the Pauline corpus as a whole, virtues are understood variously as inwardly possessed gifts of God or the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13; Gal 5:22–25; 1 Tim 1:2, 14, 19; 2 Tim 1:2, 5–7), willfully cultivated aspects of the human spirit (Rom 12:9–21; 1 Cor 13:4–7, 13; 2 Tim 2:22), or outward expressions of a righteous character (Rom 12:13; 1 Cor 16:14; Gal 6:10; 2 Thess 1:4; 1 Tim 3:2–

<sup>104</sup> See Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 58–59.

<sup>105</sup> See Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 348.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 347–48, 355.

<sup>107</sup> See Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 68–70.

<sup>108</sup> See Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 153; Marshall and Towner, *Pastoral Epistles*, 120.

<sup>109</sup> See Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 179, 183.

<sup>110</sup> See Donelson, *Colossians, Ephesians, First and Second Timothy, and Titus*, 131–33.

4, 8–13; 5:25; Eph 4:25–32).<sup>111</sup> In all three cases, virtues are consequent to realized salvation (Rom 13:11–14; Eph 4:21–24; 1 Cor 2:14; 15:58; Titus 2:11–14; 3:8) but antecedent to eschatological salvation (Gal 6:8; 2 Thess 1:5; 2:13–17; 1 Tim 4:8–10; 6:11–12, 18–19; Titus 3:3–7).<sup>112</sup> 1 Timothy 2:15 seems to share more in this third sense of virtues as outward expressions of a righteous character. This is not to suggest, however, that 1 Tim 2:15 is entirely free of ambiguity in its evocation of virtue ethics. In context, the four virtues of 1 Tim 2:15 are both inward dispositions (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:5–6) and outward expressions (1 Tim 2:2; 3:2–4; 5:9–10, 25; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:10; 4:5; Titus 1:7–9; 2:3–8) as well as signs of realized salvation (1 Tim 1:5) and means of eschatological salvation (1 Tim 1:16; 4:15–16; 2 Tim 4:7–8). However, in 1 Tim 2:15 the emphasis appears to be on the outward expression of virtues as the means of eschatological salvation (cf. Rom 2:6–7; 2 Cor 5:10). The performance of these works somehow builds up merit or “stores up treasure” that will guarantee one’s salvation in the eschatological future (1 Tim 6:18–19).<sup>113</sup>

Both God and Christ are Savior (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3, 4; 2:10; 3:4, 6).<sup>114</sup> It almost seems that God is primarily Savior in an eschatological context and Christ is primarily Savior in a realized context, but we cannot be altogether certain that this is what the author is thinking. At one point it is not clear whether God is again being called Savior, Christ is being called God, or a distinction is being maintained between God and Christ (Titus 2:13; cf. Rom 9:5; 2 Pet 1:1).<sup>115</sup> It is at least clear that the roles of God and Christ as Savior converge insofar as God has acted in and through Christ to bring salvation to all (1 Tim 2:3–6; 2 Tim 1:8–10; Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–8).<sup>116</sup>

We come to a critical point with the observation that “God our Savior wants all people (πάντας ἀνθρώπους) to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:3–4). This inclusive aspect of the author’s message is a recurring theme. The author wishes that prayer and intercession be made for

<sup>111</sup> See Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 182–83; also Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 37–39.

<sup>112</sup> See Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 28–31, 57–59.

<sup>113</sup> See Marshall and Towner, *Pastoral Epistles*, 673.

<sup>114</sup> This may or may not be a self-conscious rejection of the idea of the Roman emperor as savior. J. N. D. Kelly feels that it is not. He maintains that the author is simply speaking in accordance with Jewish theology and tradition when he applies the title Savior to God as well as to Christ (*A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: Timothy I & II, Titus* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987], 40).

<sup>115</sup> See Raymond F. Collins, “The Theology of the Epistle to Titus,” *ETL* 76 (2000): 71–72; also Bonnie Thurston, “The Theology of Titus,” *HBT* 21 (1999): 179.

<sup>116</sup> See Greg A. Couser, “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles: Toward Theological Method and Meaning,” *NovT* 42 (2000): 283.

“all people” (πάντων ἀνθρώπων) (1 Tim 2:1). Christ gave himself as a ransom for “all” (πάντων) (1 Tim 2:6). God is the savior of “all people” (πάντων ἀνθρώπων), especially those who believe (1 Tim 4:10). The author exhorts “everyone (πᾶς) who names the name of the Lord to depart from unrighteousness” (2 Tim 2:19). The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to “all people” (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις) (Titus 2:11).

It is probable that the terms for “all” used by the author are gender-inclusive as well as ethnically inclusive—perhaps even primarily gender-inclusive. Although there is mention of Gentiles in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 2:7; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:11; 4:17), there is not an explicit Jew–Gentile dichotomy (cf. Rom 1:16; 2:10; 3:30). Instead we find an explicit male–female dichotomy. Furthermore, when the author wishes to be gender-specific he uses restrictive terms (ἄνδρα, ἄνδρας, γυνή, γυναῖκας, 1 Tim 2:8–12; 3:2, 11–12).<sup>117</sup> His use of inclusive terms in a soteriological context therefore appears to be more than casual.

We come to an equally critical point with the observation that the means of salvation are the same for *all*, without regard to gender. These closely related references to saving knowledge (1 Tim 2:4), the ransoming death of Christ (1 Tim 2:6), saving faith (1 Tim 4:10), and the grace of God (Titus 2:11) are inseparable from the inclusive statements already mentioned. If both genders are included in these “all” phrases, then the author of the Pastoral Epistles believes that the means of salvation for women and men are the same (cf. Gal 3:28). We must ask, then, how to reconcile this observation with the seemingly gender-specific idea of salvation through childbearing.<sup>118</sup> At this point, the solution seems readily available in the literary-cultural background of the idea.

Why then should we suppose that the author and audience of 1 Timothy have an understanding of childbearing that is similar to metaphorical uses in Hellenistic virtue ethics? Why should we abandon a literal “plain sense” reading of 1 Tim 2:15? The answer is threefold. First, the form of the statement, with “childbearing” in the apodosis and four virtues listed in the protasis, is similar to other literary expressions in that culture where children become metaphors for virtues (e.g., Plato, *Symp.* 209D–E; Philo, *Gig.* 5; *Deus* 117–18). Second, such a supposition places a theologically and historically coherent reading of 1 Timothy over against an incoherent one. Third, this dual coherence in itself exists at four levels: within the epistle of 1 Timothy, within the cor-

<sup>117</sup> See Marshall and Towner, *Pastoral Epistles*, 425–28. As they show in their survey of interpretive options for 1 Tim 2:4, not much attention has been given to the possibility of gender inclusiveness in the epistle’s use of “all.”

<sup>118</sup> See the survey of attempts to address this question in Marshall and Towner, *Pastoral Epistles*, 467–70. They observe, “Its meaning is a puzzle, and a number of interpretations have been offered.”

pus of the Pastoral Epistles, within the Pauline corpus as a whole, and within the Hellenistic environment of the NT. The availability of both extrabiblical and intertextual literary evidence for a coherent reading of a notoriously difficult biblical text cannot be merely fortuitous, especially when the two kinds of evidence are culturally contemporaneous. Unless we want to assign all such correspondences in historical studies to happenstance, our metaphorical understanding of childbearing in 1 Tim 2:15 is more probable than the glaring contradiction posed by a literal, “plain sense” reading. It is true that metaphorical and literal interpretations are not always mutually exclusive. Even though Philo, for example, interprets the child of Sarah as virtue, he does believe that there was actually a flesh-and-blood Isaac. However, there can be no literal understanding of childbearing as a means of salvation in 1 Tim 2:15, precisely because childbearing is here linked to salvation as its means. A theological and historical investigation precludes such literalism.

It should also be acknowledged that the understanding of salvation in 1 Timothy and the other Pastorals is not altogether congruent with how salvation is understood in Plato or Philo. In Hellenistic virtue ethics, salvation is mostly the attainment of sound-mindedness, self-control, and self-sufficiency (Plato, *Resp.* 3.389D; Philo, *Virt.* 14–16). This is not the salvation that furthermore means forgiveness of sins, escape from divine wrath, fellowship with God, and life eternal, such as we find in the Pastorals. Our point is not that the author of 1 Timothy shares a common understanding of salvation with Plato and Philo, but that they draw upon a common metaphorical use of “childbearing.”

#### X. 1 Timothy 2:15 in the History of Biblical Interpretation

In the history of biblical interpretation, a literal understanding of childbearing in 1 Tim 2:15 is assumed by Clement of Alexandria (150–215 C.E.), Gregory of Nyssa (330–395 C.E.), Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428 C.E.), Ambrosiaster (ca. 370 C.E.), and Pelagius (ca. 415 C.E.).<sup>119</sup> However, in *Strom.* 3.12.90, Clement altogether ignores the subject of 1 Tim 2:15. It is the man who is the husband of one wife who finds salvation by bringing children into the world. For Gregory, the text refers to the salvation of the mother who bears

<sup>119</sup> See *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (ed. Peter Gorday; ACCS 9; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 167, for citations of Theodore, Ambrosiaster, Pelagius, and Gregory on 1 Tim 2:15. Origen of Alexandria (185–254 C.E.) is also cited, but Origen is actually commenting on the Song of Songs when he speaks allegorically of a “chaste begetting of children” as a result of marital union between Christ and the church or between Christ and the “blessed soul” as an individual member of the church. It is not clear whether the “children” themselves are anything other than members of the church.

spiritually regenerated children. Theodore only stipulates further that all women, not just Eve, will be saved through childbearing. Ambrosiaster adds the qualification that the salvation that comes through childbearing applies only to women whose children are “reborn in Christ.” Pelagius explains that when Paul speaks of the salvation that comes through childbearing, he is referring only to the baptism and spiritual rebirth to which children are brought by their believing mother. Although Pelagius spiritualizes the meaning of childbearing, he still assumes that these are literal children borne by their mother. A literal reading of “childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15 can therefore claim ancient roots. Nevertheless, an arresting departure from this historic literal reading occurs in the deliberations of Augustine of Hippo (354–450 C.E.).

In *Trin.* 12.7.11, Augustine maintains that Paul’s teaching—that the woman is “brought to salvation by childbearing” (*saluam fieri per filiorum generationem*)—is to be understood “figuratively and mystically” (*figurate ac mystice*). Augustine, however, is here chiefly addressing the conundrum of why a woman is required in 1 Cor 11:5–7 to wear a veil over her head if she is also made in the image of God, as we are told in Gen 1:27. Augustine explains that it is both the man and the woman together who are the image of God. Yet, when standing alone, the man remains the image of God, while the woman, when standing alone, does not. This is because the man in the Genesis text represents the human mind directed toward spiritual things, while the woman represents the human mind directed toward temporal things. When the human mind is both directed toward the spiritual and distracted by the temporal it is still the image of God. However, it is only the spiritually directed side of the mind that is the image of God when standing alone, while the temporally directed side when standing alone is not. It is obvious that Augustine is straining at this point. In any case, the veil on the woman’s head represents the restraining influence of the spiritually focused side of the mind upon the temporally focused side of the mind.

To prove that Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor 11:5–7 and other places should be interpreted in this figurative and mystical way, Augustine cites 1 Tim 5:5, where the widow who is bereft of children and nephews has nevertheless placed her trust in God and prays constantly. For Augustine (and this is quite a leap) the widow of 1 Tim 5:5 illustrates the deceived woman and transgressor who is brought to salvation by childbearing, but only if “they” continue in “faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.”<sup>120</sup> Augustine understands “they” as a reference to the widow’s children; however, he finds it untenable that a widow could be deprived of salvation if she had no children, or if the children she had did

<sup>120</sup> Augustine: *On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises* (ed. Philip Schaff; NPNF 3; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 159.

not continue in good works. Therefore, like the veil on the woman's head, "children" must be understood figuratively and mystically. According to Augustine, "good works are, as it were, the children of our lives" (*opera bona tanquam filii sunt vitae nostrae*). Although Augustine sees "good works as children" in the apodosis of 1 Tim 2:15, he disappointingly does not explicitly identify these good works as the four virtues listed in the protasis. Furthermore, it is not historical evidence but wild logic and a dogmatic allegorizing hermeneutic that form the basis for his conclusions. Nevertheless, in the history of biblical interpretation, it is Augustine who comes closest to the understanding of 1 Tim 2:15 advocated in this article. Later, in *Civ.* 10.3, Augustine will say that it is by God's embrace that "the intellectual soul is impregnated and made to give birth to true virtues." Augustine in no way directly relates this observation to 1 Tim 2:15, but it certainly reflects the Platonic-Philonian perspective that characterizes both the time of Augustine and the time of 1 Timothy several centuries earlier.

The period between Augustine and the Reformation is a wide gap, but one finds nothing new or notable in this gap regarding the exegesis of our text. Martin Luther (1483–1546) will still offer little to celebrate in his appropriations of 1 Tim 2:15. He understood that salvation through literal childbirth applies only to the married woman who lives by the Word of God and faith.<sup>121</sup> In another place, however, the verse means that God will not reject infants "because of pimples, filth, and troubles provided they persevere in faith and love." God "has patience in many infirmities."<sup>122</sup>

John Calvin (1509–1564) also understood "childbearing" in 1 Tim 2:15 in the literal sense. He maintained, however, that women are saved through childbearing as an act of obedience. But more than childbearing is being referred to here. The apostle is speaking also of the pains and distresses associated with childbirth and the rearing of children. Nevertheless, obedience in these matters is acceptable to God only if it proceeds from faith, love, sanctification, and sobriety.<sup>123</sup> Again, there is nothing new or notable in the exegesis of our text in the period between Calvin and twentieth-century biblical scholarship. In retrospect, our brief encounter with Augustine was the only glimmer of confirmation offered for our investigation by this trek through time. Perhaps he would have offered us more had he engaged the text of 1 Tim 2:15 more directly.

<sup>121</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 26–30*, in *Luther's Works* 5 (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen; St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 5.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>123</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Epistle to Timothy* (trans. William Pringle; Calvin's Commentaries 21; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 71–72.

## XI. The Convergence of Evidence

It might finally be asked, To which stream of influence do we assign the greatest weight in our argument for an allegorical and natalistic interpretation of 1 Tim 2:15? Is it Greek mythology, Ionian philosophy, Platonic or Philonic thought, Hellenistic virtue ethics, Gnostic background, Ephesian culture and Artemis lore, or an apparently synonymous agricultural metaphor and generative concept in the undisputed and disputed Pauline epistles? Answering this question would seem to be an unnecessary exercise. If it were not the case that all of these influences weigh heavily upon our argument, it would surely be a few of them. But given the demonstrable historical and literary interrelationship of these streams of influence, how could we isolate a few from all the rest? How could we isolate only one from the rest? It seems that we should simply acknowledge the weighty relevance of all of these streams of influence in this argument.

Therefore, in regard to the hermeneutics of 1 Tim 2:15 in particular, our investigation leaves us with two possibilities. Either the author and audience of 1 Timothy understood the four virtues of 1 Tim 2:15 as *children*, that is to say, as the products of “childbearing,” or we have a soteriological idea in 1 Tim 2:15 (i.e., the idea that women are saved through literal childbirth) that is both unprecedented and uncorroborated in the whole of the Pauline corpus and its literary-cultural environment. In light of the religio-philosophical evidence herein discussed, we must ask, Which is most likely, the former or the latter case?

## XII. Virtues as Children in Pauline Context

“Childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15 is therefore a metaphor for “virtues-bearing.” It is the final metaphor in a thoroughly allegorical parenthesis. One advantage of this new reading of 1 Tim 2:11–15 over traditional ones is that it more clearly shows how “saved through childbearing” coheres with the typical Pauline notion of “saved by faith” (Rom 1:16; 10:9–10; 2 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:8).<sup>124</sup> Our reading also more clearly shows how “saved through childbearing” coheres with the typical Pauline notions of “love as the fulfillment of the law” (Rom 13:10), “fruit unto holiness” (Rom 6:22; cf. Heb 12:14), “love, goodness, faith, and self-control as fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22–23), and “working out your soul salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).<sup>125</sup> Therefore, we have reason to

<sup>124</sup> Cf. “saved by hope” (Rom 8:24) and “saved by grace” (2 Tim 1:9; Eph 2:5). Cf. also “justified by faith” (Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16) and “justified by grace” (Titus 3:7).

<sup>125</sup> In some contexts, 1 Tim 2:11–15 is often discussed in conjunction with 1 Cor 14:34–35. A

retire patently non-Pauline notions such as the salvation of women based on their ability to bear children in the literal sense. For the author of 1 Timothy, the means of salvation for women remains the same as the means of salvation for men<sup>126</sup>—and vice versa. *All women and men must give birth to and continue in faith, love, holiness, and temperance in order to be saved.* The author of 1 Timothy implies as much in 4:12. “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct (ἀναστροφῆ), in love, in faith, and in purity (ἀγνεία)” (cf. Titus 2:11–12). Despite questions about the authorship of 1 Timothy, there is no question that the author belongs to the “Pauline school.”<sup>127</sup> In no other way does the author of 1 Timothy present an idea that is incompatible with the thought of the undisputed Paulines (cf. 1 Tim 1:8–11 and Rom 7:7–12). It is therefore highly unlikely that the author of this epistle would depart so greatly from typical Pauline thought that he would suggest that literal childbirth is somehow important for the salvation of women.

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convincing treatment of this Corinthian passage was presented by David W. Odell-Scott in a paper entitled, “The Paulinist Reversal of Paul’s Critique of Gender Subordination: Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 11” presented at the SBL annual meeting in Boston, November 22, 1999. In this paper Odell-Scott demonstrated that 1 Cor 14:34–35 and 1 Cor 11:3–9, 13–15 are not the words of Paul but the words of Corinthian opponents whom Paul quotes and then debunks in 1 Cor 11:11, 16; 14:36. See also his “Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b–36,” *BTB* 13 (1983): 90–93; and “In Defense of an Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:34–36: A Reply to Murphy-O’Connor’s Critique,” *BTB* 17 (1987): 100–103. In this last article Odell-Scott responds to Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” *CBQ* 48 (1986): 81–94.

<sup>126</sup> See Clark Kroeger and Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 171, 177; and Coupland, “Salvation through Childbearing,” 303. This is ultimately the point that the Clark Kroegers and Coupland want to make, but their literal understanding of the reference to “childbearing” forces them to make this point in spite of rather than because of the reference.

<sup>127</sup> See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 82–84.

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