PHILO'S 'HEAVENLY MAN' 1)

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In a number of passages in the works of Philo of Alexandria Gen. i 26 f. is interpreted of a 'heavenly man' as opposed to the empirical man created in Gen. ii 7 of body and soul. This fact is of particular interest to New Testament studies for two reasons: in the first place it has a particular relevance as a possible background to Paul's statements in I Cor. xv 44 ff.; secondly it takes on a more general significance in the study of the background of the New Testament because it has been suggested that here we have pre-Christian evidence of the existence of a gnostic anthropos-figure and hence of a gnostic redeemer-myth.

As regards the first point, it may well be that exegetes have taken a wrong tack in their initial exegesis of Paul. It has rightly been argued that I Cor. xv 46 is polemical, but is his quarrel with a doctrine of two men? W. Schmithals, for instance, rightly points out that what are contrasted in this verse are two neuters 2); but, even if that point is fully convincing, that does not mean that he is justified in his gnostic interpretation of the two natures in the scheme of thought which Paul here opposes. Although he claims

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1) My warmest thanks go to Prof. C. F. D. Moule and Dr. J. B. Schaller for their help and encouragement in the preparation of this article; the latter's advice and criticism was particularly helpful to one not so versed in Philonic studies. However the views expressed here and the responsibility for them remain mine.

2) Die Gnosis in Korinth: eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen (F.R.L.A.N.T. N.F. xlviii, Göttingen, 1965), p. 133 (he is inclined, however, to treat the verse as a gloss by an anti-gnostic follower of Paul: pp. 160 f. n. 2); cf. A. Vögtle, "Der Menschensohn" und die paulinische Christologie' Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus 1961 I (Analecta Biblica xvii, Rome, 1963), p. 210, R. Scroggs, The Last Adam: a Study in Pauline Anthropology (Oxford, 1966), p. 87. — Some scholars supply σῶμα here: e.g. J. Jeremias, Art. ἀγαθον, T.W.N.T. I (Stuttgart, 1933), p. 143, C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London, 1968), p. 374. But is this necessary?—It would also be possible to take the σῶμα as introducing a quotation; but since it is not followed by a masculine singular the reference would have to be back to v. 44, which is less likely.

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that the priority of the spiritual nature is of the essence of gnostic soteriology \(^1\), the Gnostics nowhere seem to have achieved such a succinct or lucid statement of their beliefs: the spiritual nature is described as upper, heavenly, true and other such things, but not as temporally first. It may be more profitable to note instead that \(\pi\rho\omega\tau\nu\) in I Cor. xv 46 is better taken as an adverb, parallel to \(\varepsilon\pi\varepsilon\tau\alpha\), and translated 'at first': 'but the spiritual (nature does) not (come) at first but (rather) the psychic and (only) then (subsequently) the spiritual' \(^2\). Taken in this way the verse becomes a polemic against an unrealistic spiritualization of this present life, a blending of heaven and earth that does away with the earthiness of the latter; the Corinthians erred in holding to a one-stage soteriology, rather than in reversing the order of a two-stage one. So far from having already realized the fullness of salvation in their Spirit-filled earthly life (I Cor. iv 8) the Corinthians must realize that they are still but mortal and must await their full redemption at Christ's coming.

However, this rejection of the relevance of a comparison with Philo through an exegesis of I Corinthians needs to be expanded by an investigation of Philo's thought with two possible points of contact in view:

(A) it needs to be shown that Philo himself, as we have his views recorded for us, would be an inept comparison at this point: he, at any rate, would not wish to stress the priority of the spiritual man or nature. Unless Paul completely misunderstands his opponent or opponents their views are not even like Philo's.

(B) But a further, more serious form of argument then arises which grants that Philo himself is not the target of Paul's attack

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\(^1\) Op. cit., p. 159. This is questioned by L. SCHOTTROFF, Der Glaubende und die feindliche Welt: Beobachtungen zum gnostischen Dualismus und seiner Bedeutung für Paulus und das Johannesevangelium (W.M.A.N.T. xxxvii, Neukirchen, 1970), p. 142; nevertheless she holds (ibid.) that Paul is here countering a gnostic view for 'Es geht ihm... darum, daß das Heil zu dem total negativ Bestimmten kommt.' But if that is what Paul is contending in I Cor. xv 46 he has chosen a strange way of saying so.

\(^2\) We may perhaps see a parallel to this idea in 4 Ezra iv 29 and vii 14: the harvest of the evil must be reaped to make way for the good harvest and men must pass through afflictions to gain glory.—It should be noted that \(\pi\rho\omega\tau\nu\) is widely translated as an adverb (cf., e.g., the comms. of Barrett, Conzelmann, Lietzmann-Kümmler ad loc.); however if one is to read into this an anti-gnostic polemic one then needs to understand a verb in the past tense with it (so Barrett, ibid.: '... that came first').