

ST. PAUL AND THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS.

IV.

ST. PAUL AND THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS.

IN our last article enough was said to establish the fact that in all the main centres of his missionary operations the Apostle Paul must have been brought into constant touch with the influences of the Mystery-Religions. The process of Hellenisation through which they had passed would impart to each a certain rough similarity of outline. Hence, although his sphere of work might frequently change, the Christian preacher would be confronted by a more or less stable complex of religious ideas. We are aware, indeed, of the emphasis laid by early Christian apologetic on the repellent myths which lay in the background of various mystic cults. And such associations might seem once for all decisive against any openness on the part of the Apostle even to their profounder conceptions. But by this time their whole atmosphere was in process of being spiritualised. The Epistles give clear evidence that Paul did not shrink from deriving metaphors again and again from the Greek athletic festivals which equally came under the lash of ancient Christian writers. In vindicating the worship of the God who had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ against bondage to the elemental spirits (*στοιχεῖα*) he discloses his acquaintance with that astrological mysticism which we saw to be a potent force in contemporary Paganism. And the man who could write Philippians iv. 8 must surely have been sensitive to the higher aspirations of those whom he strove to win for the faith that had satisfied his own yearnings. It seems legitimate to cite his famous words : " I made myself slave of all that I might

gain the more. . . . To all men I have become all things that at all events I might save some" (1 Cor. ix. 19, 22) And there is some significance for Paul's attitude in the position of Philo, also a Jew of the Diaspora, who, while manifesting his dislike of mystic cults,¹ has nevertheless been powerfully affected by some of their ideas.

When we attempt, however, to estimate the data presented in the Epistles, we soon realise how delicate is the problem. There is no doubt that Paul frequently employs terms which have received a more or less technical meaning in connexion with the Mystery-Religions. These occur most prominently in the letters to Corinth and in the Imprisonment-Epistles, all of them addressed to communities which must have had intimate contact with mystery-brotherhoods. Side by side with these terms are found far-reaching conceptions to which, at least, there are thought-provoking analogies in Pagan religion. Restricting our discussion, meanwhile, to terminology, we must emphasise certain cautions which ought to be observed. To begin with, it seems highly precarious to postulate, as Reitzenstein does, an acquaintance on Paul's part with Hellenistic religious literature.² The description itself is nebulous. Probably it means for Reitzenstein documents of the type embodied in the Hermetic *Corpus* and the magical papyri. But this could scarcely be asserted even for Philo, who, no doubt, reflects many ideas belonging to the religion of ancient Egypt. And due weight must be assigned to Cumont's view, that the theology of the Egyptian Mysteries rather followed the general movement of ideas than stimulated it.³ It is sheer hypothesis, therefore, to ascribe to

¹ See Bréhier, *Les Idées philosoph. et relig. de Philon*, pp. 244, 245.

² *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 209, 210. For convenience sake we shall refer to this work as *H.M.R.*

³ *Les Religions Orientales*, p. 135.

Paul any direct impression through literature of the mystery-conceptions. It is altogether different when we think of liturgical formulæ and the technical terms of ritual in common circulation. We may grant at once that many of these would be familiar to the Apostle. No great stretch of imagination, for example, is required to picture the situation at Corinth or Ephesus. Without venturing on details we may admit that the Corinthian brotherhood of Christians would have many links of connexion with the mystic guilds to which some of its members may, in all probability, have belonged. In 1 Corinthians vii. 11 and xii. 14 we see, as Heinrici has instructively pointed out, the Christian community "in danger of stooping to the level of a Pagan cult-association."¹ And the somewhat perplexing exordium of chapter xii. gives us a dim glimpse of the heathen background.

But the interesting question arises: How far does the use of mystic terminology involve the adoption of the ideas which it expresses? Are we to assume that terms can be transferred from one phase of religious thought to another without suffering serious alteration? It must be recognised that many of the Mystery-conceptions, and many of the terms in which they are set forth, spring directly from that strain of mysticism which seems to be everywhere latent in humanity and only requires favouring conditions to reveal itself.² Here Christianity and Pagan religion were bound to manifest affinities. The problem in such cases will be that of determining how far a more or less naïve realism has been subdued to finer intuitions of spiritual truth. Room will have to be left for the presence of symbolism, a factor which must certainly be reckoned with

¹ *Zeitschr. f. wiss. Theol.*, 1876, p. 509.

² Cf. E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 126.

in the thought of Paul.¹ On the other hand, there is real force in Reitzenstein's contention that cult, conception, and language hang closely together.² To what extent, then, must the terminology of the Mystery-Religions carry with it its original significance? And how far are we to suppose a unique religious thinker like Paul to be conscious of this? May we adopt as a rough criterion his demonology? This, indeed, is to a large extent already part of his inheritance from Judaism. But it bears the clear stamp of foreign influences. Now it admittedly shows traces of primitive popular conceptions. Are we to suppose that his mind would be receptive of similarly primitive ideas in more central spheres of thought? These are questions which cannot be hastily answered. And dogmatic statements are utterly irrelevant. But it is of further interest to notice that here and there in the Pauline Epistles we have more than isolated terms and ideas of the type in question. In certain contexts, as, e.g., 1. Corinthians ii. 6 ff., we light upon *groups* of conceptions which have associations with the Mystery-Religions.³ This cannot be accidental. It lets us see the connexions of thought in the Apostle's mind. And these constitute important evidence for the influence of Mystery-Religion. But this significance can easily be exaggerated. Take a familiar example from our own time. Many cultivated religious writers of to-day are fond of using analogies and illustrations from the field of biology. And these often appear in rather elaborate groupings. Yet if they are analysed with care, they will be found to be anything but rigidly scientific. Terms like

¹ Wendland shows how the value of the symbolic in religion was recognised by the higher Greek thought as far back as Socrates (*Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur*, p. 58).

² *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wiss.*, 1912, i. p. 17.

³ Reitzenstein has emphasised this, *H.M.R.*, pp. 53, 210. See also Wendland in *G.G.A.*, Sept. 1910, p. 655.

“ evolution,” “ heredity,” “ struggle for existence,” “ variations,” “ acquired characters,” etc., are in the air. Hence they may be used singly or in series as little else than convenient channels of appeal to the popular interest. Such a possibility must certainly be allowed for in the case of a great preacher like Paul, who would make it his business to find common ground with his audiences, without necessarily accepting the precise interpretations which they might put upon his terms. In any case, an individuality like Paul could not borrow without transforming.¹ “ If we are to speak of Mystery-piety in Paul’s case,” says Reitzenstein, “ we must never forget that the mystery is for him only the symbol (*Bild*) of an actually experienced *μεταβολή*, a conversion.”² It is a question wholly of his precise relation to his environment. That we can only estimate by a careful examination of the facts.

Let us begin with the important term *μυστήριον*. It occurs more than a dozen times in the Pauline Epistles,³ and it certainly suggests some affinity with ethnic religious usage. But that usage is itself flexible. Probably the notion of “ something kept secret ” always belongs to it, including such ideas as the hidden sense of a passage and the mystic meaning of a word. It stands, of course, for any ritual or magical action. From that it develops such senses as the document which contains a revelation, or a divinely-taught prayer which is of necessity believed to

¹ See an admirable paragraph by Reitzenstein in *Zeitsch. f. N.T. Wiss.*, 1912, i. p. 23.

² *Ib.* p. 27. Wendland attractively suggests that Paul stood towards the religion of the Mysteries, as Plato towards Orphism. It constitutes in no sense the centre of his religious life, but it gives him effective forms of expression for his Christian experience (*G.G.A.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 656).

³ We include *Ephesians*, as the only argument which appears to us really valid against Paul’s authorship is that of the *style*, and in this respect there seems to be a far closer affinity between *Ephesians* and *Colossians* than between *Colossians* and any of the other Epistles.

be effectual.¹ In trying to determine the shades of meaning involved in any Pauline terms, it is self-evident that the usage of the LXX. must be investigated. There are, roughly speaking, about a dozen instances of *μυστήριον* in the LXX., and with the exception of two, in which it is combined with *τελετή* in the technical sense (*Wisdom of Solomon*, xiv. 15, 23), it seems invariably to mean "secrets" or "secret plans," once or twice of God, usually of men. In Daniel ii. 17 (LXX.) it stands for the dream which the king had forgotten. In the one passage where it occurs in the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 11 = Mark iv. 11 = Luke viii. 10), in the phrase *τὰ μυστήρια* (Mark, *τὸ μ.*) *τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ* (Matt., *τῶν οὐρανῶν*), it suggests the secret purposes or plans of God concerning His Kingdom which are coming to light in the work and teaching of Jesus, and which appeal only to sensitive hearts. When we turn to the Pauline Epistles, we at once discover that some of the instances directly tally with the usage of the LXX. and Synoptics. To this class belongs Romans ii. 25: "For I do not wish you, brethren, to be ignorant of this *μυστήριον* . . . that callousness has, in part, fallen upon Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel shall be saved." Paul here deals with what has been for him a serious problem, the rejection of the Gospel by the chosen people, and its glad acceptance by the heathen. The one explanation he can find is a *secret purpose* of God, whereby the ingathering of the Gentiles shall finally prove a compelling force to attract Israel also. In 1 Corinthians xv. 51 he describes the transformation of believers at the Parousia as a *μυστήριον*, i.e., as a Divine plan which has been revealed to him, the knowledge of which could not have been reached in any other way. His standpoint here is made plain by 1 Corinthians xiii. 2: "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know

¹ See Reitzenstein's valuable note, *H.M.R.*, pp. 95-97.

all *μυστήρια* and all *γνώσις*." The prophet is for the Apostolic Age, as for the Old Testament (and we may include the Mystery-Religions), the man who is able to declare to his fellows the secret mind of God. So Paul, in 1 Corinthians iv. 1, can speak of himself and his fellow-labourers as "ministers of Christ and stewards of the *μυστήρια* of God." Their function is to reveal the Divine "secrets." The "speaking" with tongues Paul estimates at a lower value than "prophesying," yet that also is a gift of the *πνεῦμα*, and presupposes a certain contact with the Divine. Hence he who speaks "in a tongue" may be described (1 Cor. xiv. 2) as speaking *μυστήρια* by the Spirit.

One secret purpose of God, however, overshadows all others for the Apostle's mind, and in its various bearings seems to fill his thought predominantly as he lies a prisoner at Rome. It is described most explicitly in Ephesians iii. 1 ff.: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, if as a matter of fact ye heard of the stewardship of the grace of God granted to me with a view to you, how that by revelation was made known to me the *μυστήριον* . . . which was not made known in other generations . . . that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." It is magnified also in Colossians i. 25 ff.: "According to the stewardship of God granted to me with a view to you, to fulfil the word of God, the *μυστήριον* hidden from ages and generations: but now it has been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the wealth of the glory of this *μυστήριον* among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you [i.e. Gentiles] the hope of glory." The same overpowering fact is referred to, a few verses lower down, in ii. 2, a passage in which the text is far from certain but which on any reading connects the *μυστήριον*

of God with "Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden." In Colossians iv. 3 and Ephesians vi. 19, Paul describes himself as a prisoner on account of this *μυστήριον*. A wider aspect of the significance of the great truth is unfolded in Ephesians i. 9 ff. : "Having made known to us the *μ.* of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him for the dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ." The notion of a hidden process to be revealed in its true character at the *Parousia*, when all restraints shall be removed, is apparent in 2 Thessalonians ii. 6-8 (*τὸ μ. τῆς ἀνομίας*). Ephesians v. 32 stands by itself. In admonishing husbands and wives as to their mutual relationships, he enforces his precepts by the illustration of Christ and the Church. He cites Genesis ii. 24 on the unity of man and wife and then adds : "This *μ.* is important ; I declare it with reference to Christ and the Church." The instances quoted by Hatch from Justin Martyr,¹ in which *μυστήριον* is interchanged with *παραβολή*, *σύμβολον*, and *τύπος*, justify in our passage the translation "symbol."

Before we deal with the only remaining passage,² let us briefly collect the implications of Paul's use of *μυστήριον*. It is remarkable that it is generally found, paradoxically, in close connexion with verbs of revelation (*ἀποκαλύπτειν*, *φανερῶν*, *γνωρίζειν*). That wholly accords with Paul's favourite idea of his own function as *κηρύσσειν* (e.g., 1 Cor. i. 23 ; cf. *πρεσβεύειν*, 2 Cor. v. 20). It most commonly refers to that transforming discovery which Paul had reached along the lines of his own Christian experience, that the Gospel of Christ was intended for Gentiles on the

¹ *Essays in Biblical Greek*, pp. 60, 61.

² We have omitted Rom. xvi. 25, as we entirely agree with Dr. Denney's judgment on the passage : "It is very difficult to believe that such mosaic work is the original composition of Paul" (*E.G.T.*, *ad loc.*).

very same terms as for Jews. Often it has a distinctly eschatological outlook, as in Romans ii. 25, 1 Corinthians ii. 7 (*εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν*), 1 Corinthians xv. 51, Ephesians i. 9, Colossians i. 26 (*ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης*), 2 Thessalonians ii. 7.¹ Hence there is no justification for Professor Percy Gardner's assertion that for Paul "the Christian mystery lies in a relation between the disciple and his heavenly Master," or that "the mystery of Paul was a sacred but secret belief in the existence of a spiritual bond holding together a society in union with a spiritual lord with whom the society had communion."² Evidence for such a position is completely lacking. Indeed Professor Gardner passes by the most significant feature in the passage which he takes as his starting-point (1 Cor. ii. 1-10), a passage which we must now consider. Here Paul distinguishes between the usual subject of his preaching, "Jesus Christ and him as crucified" (ver. 2), and "a wisdom," a more difficult element in his teaching, which he declares *ἐν τοῖς τελείοις*, "a divine wisdom *ἐν μυστηρίῳ* (vers. 6, 7), which has been hidden." The following clauses show that this is concerned with the glorious future of the redeemed. We must examine the meaning of *τέλειος* immediately, but this passage certainly has a suggestion of the Mysteries; the Apostle speaks of a more advanced stage of Christian instruction which demands a higher grade of understanding. The same background appears in the continuation of the passage, in which emphasis is laid upon the revelation of the deep things of God through the Spirit to the *πνευματικός*. Here, however, as we have seen, Old Testament conceptions must be allowed for, and

¹ It is putting the matter too strongly to say, as J. Weiss does (on 1 Cor. ii. 7), that *μυστήριον* "is concerned as a rule with eschatological matters," but there is some ground for the statement.

² *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*, pp. 78, 79.

even in the former case we cannot, on the basis of our data, decide how far Paul identifies himself with the Mystery-standpoint. We are warned against straining his language by the phrase which he employs quite casually in Philippians iv. 12: "I have been initiated into the secret of being filled and of being hungry."

We have just noted that Paul refers in 1 Corinthians ii. 6 to a σοφία, a higher stage of instruction, which he imparts to the τέλειοι. How much is involved in the content of the term? It is possible that there is an allusion in both these expressions to arrogant claims made by adherents of the Apollos-party. We know that Alexandrian Judaism laid great stress on a superior knowledge (σοφία) which was the privilege of elect souls, bestowed by God. The personified σοφία is described as μύστις . . . τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιστήμης (Wisdom viii. 4). Philo, in expounding certain Old Testament passages, speaks of "instructing in divine mysteries (τελετὰς . . . θείας) the initiates (μύστας) who are worthy of such sacred mysteries" (*De Cherub.* 42). He himself has been μνηθεὶς τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια (*ib.* 49). It is probable that τέλειος may belong to this circle of mystery-ideas. Plato uses the phrase τὰ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά [*μυστήρια*] to denote the higher initiation (*Sympos.* 210 A), and describes the man who rightly uses the recollections of what his soul once saw in fellowship with God (*συμπορευθεῖσα θεῷ*) as "being ever initiated into perfect mysteries" (*τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος*) and alone becoming "truly perfect" (*τέλεος ὄντως*: *Phaedr.* 249 C). Some scholars, as, e.g., W. Bauer, hold that τέλεος (= τέλειος) here cannot mean "fully initiated," that sense being involved in *τελούμενος*, and τέλεος, which is suggested by a play upon words, having its ordinary significance. But when we find *μυστικῶν τέλων* (=mystic rite) in Aesch. *Fr.* 377, and the plural *τέλη* (e.g., Eur. *Hipp.* 25, *τέλη μυστηρίων*)

constantly employed with this meaning, it is surely hazardous to say that τέλειος cannot be used with this technical connotation. In the Hermetic literature, those who have received the baptism of the Divine νοῦς become τέλειοι.¹ Only the τέλειος, who has shared in the divine γνώσις, can make another τέλειος.² Hence arises the phrase λόγος τέλειος used as a title for one of the Hermetic documents, the revelation which initiates into the knowledge of God.

But other aspects of τέλειος must not be ignored. Of the seven passages in which the word occurs, two definitely contrast τέλειος with νήπιος (1 Cor. xiv. 20; Eph. iv. 13, 14). Here the word must mean "grown-up," "mature," as opposed to "childish." This is the stage of ripe knowledge as contrasted with rudimentary attainment. As we shall find πνευματικοί used as equivalent to τέλειοι in the context of the passage from which we started (1 Cor. iii. 1 ff.) and there set in antithesis to νήπιοι, there seems a good deal to be said for this significance. The term "mature" would, roughly speaking, suit all the Pauline passages. A further possibility, however, is emphasised by J. Weiss in the excellent note on τέλειοι, appended to his commentary on chapter iii. 3. He points out that in the later Stoics and Philo τέλειος is constantly used of the culminating stage of the good life, which the philosopher is called to strive after. Philo (*Leg. Alleg.* iii. 159) places it after the two earlier phases of ὁ ἀρχόμενος and ὁ προκόπτων. And a passage in Epictetus (*Enchir.* 51, 1 f.) aptly illuminates τὸ τέλειον which Paul contrasts with τὸ ἐκ μέρους in 1 Corinthians xiii. 10, and still more the difficult οἱ τέλειοι of Philippians iii. 15. In the latter verse, as in 1 Corinthians ii. 6, τέλειος seems to have an anticipatory sense. For Paul has just spoken of himself as "not having yet reached

¹ See Reitzenstein, *H.M.R.*, p. 165.

² See Reitzenstein, *Neue Jahrb. f. klass. Alt.*, 1904, p. 188.

the goal" (*τετελειώμαι*, Phil. iii. 12), and that implication may certainly be read between the lines in 1 Corinthians ii. 6 ff. Epictetus warns the *τέλειος* of the danger of making no progress (*οὐ προκόψας*) and remaining in life and death an ordinary man. Thus for him the term applies already to the man who has set out on the true path and is still advancing. This accords admirably with Paul's usual standpoint, from which he sees in his converts the end in the beginning, and can think of them as ideally "saints" because they have received the new life, although that life has to develop in the face of many obstacles. It is extremely difficult to decide between these various shades of meaning. And in this case the LXX. sheds little light on Paul's usage. There *τέλειος* usually translates *טָמֵךְ* (and *טָה*), "sound," "healthy" (of sacrificial animals) or, "having integrity" (of men), as well as *סֻלָּם* and *סֻלָּם*, denoting "submission to God" and "peace-offerings." Wellhausen finds the root-idea in *סֻלָּם* to be fellowship between God and His worshippers, and this suggests an early ritual connotation which is perhaps implied in *τέλειος* as used in the LXX. In one passage (1 Chron. xxv. 8), it occurs in the phrase *τελείων καὶ μανθανόντων*, translating *טִיבִי מְלִמִּים* = "teachers." This recalls the contrast in Paul between *τέλειοι* and *νήπιοι*. It seems quite possible to combine the sense of "mature" with that of "complete attainment" for which J. Weiss argues. And in view of the earlier associations of the communities which Paul addresses, we cannot certainly rule out the suggestion that the Mystery-atmosphere is to some extent present,¹ although plainly no conclusion can be drawn from this term as to Paul's personal attitude towards the mystery-conceptions.

It is universally admitted that Paul's use of *πνευματικοί* in 2 Corinthians iii. 1 implies its equivalence to *τέλειοι* in

¹ So even Lightfoot on Col. i. 28.

ii. 6. And whatever differences may arise in the interpretation of details, it is obvious from ii. 10-16 that the basal significance of *πνευματικός* is "one who has received 'the spirit that is from God,'" as Paul puts it (ver. 12). He applies the adjective to spiritual gifts such as prophecy and speaking with "tongues" (1 Cor. xiv. 1 ff.), to the law as a Divine ordinance (Rom. vii. 14), to the future organism (*σῶμα*) of believers divinely-given (1 Cor. xv. 44 f.), and in the vague phrase, *τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας*, to "spiritual powers of evil" (Eph. vi. 12). A more abnormal use appears in 1 Corinthians x. 3 f., where, as epithet of *βρῶμα*, *πῶμα*, and *πέτρα*, it seems to be the antithesis of "literal." Characteristic of Paul's standpoint is 1 Corinthians xiv. 37, from which it is evident that *προφήτης* and *πνευματικός* are alternative descriptions of the same type of person. "Endowed with *πνεῦμα*" expresses the content of the term. We can without much difficulty determine what this involves for the Apostle. Out of some 150 instances of *πνεῦμα* in his Epistles, all, except perhaps about thirty, refer to the direct influence of God. The *πνεῦμα* for Paul is, in these cases, the Divine response to faith, faith in Christ crucified, risen, and alive for evermore. We omit for the present discussion of the relation of the *πνεῦμα* to Baptism. But it may be said that, as a matter of practical religious experience, Paul identifies the *πνεῦμα* with the indwelling Christ. Romans viii. 9, 10 is decisive: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, that is if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Possession of the *πνεῦμα* neutralises the evil tendencies of the *σάρξ*, the "flesh," which the Apostle has discovered as an actual fact of experience, but which he never analyses metaphysically. The

last clause of the passage just quoted illustrates about one half of the remaining uses of *πνεῦμα* in Paul. The gift or accession of the Spirit transforms the inner life so that it becomes assimilated to the life of Christ, the Divine life. Hence the new life of the Christian can be designated *πνεῦμα* as contrasted with *σάρξ*, as, e.g., in Romans viii. 10, or i. 9: "God, whom I serve ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου in the Gospel of his Son." Sometimes he distinguishes between the indwelling *πνεῦμα* and the life which it controls, as in Romans viii. 16: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." At others, the distinction falls into the background: e.g., 1 Corinthians vi. 17: "He that is joined to the Lord is ἐν πνεύμα." Rather more than a dozen passages occur in which *πνεῦμα* is more colourless and seems to stand simply for the inner life of man without special reference to Divine inspiration, e.g., 1 Corinthians ii. 11: "What man knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him?" Here *πνεῦμα* is virtually the equivalent of *ψυχή*, the ordinary life-principle of humanity, the correlative of *σάρξ*, man's material nature discovered in experience to be sinful. So Paul can speak in 2 Corinthians vii. 1 of cleansing themselves "from all defilement of flesh and spirit (*σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος*)," a passage which proves that he has no really dualistic theory of *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα*. He very rarely employs *ψυχή* and only in the sense we have mentioned, but in three interesting passages he contrasts *ψυχικός* with *πνευματικός* to describe man apart from the Divine influence of the *πνεῦμα* (1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 44, 46). His exact meaning is brought out by Jude 19: οὗτοί εἰσιν . . . ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. It is more difficult to define the precise relationships of the term *νοῦς* which Paul occasionally uses in this circle of ideas, but, generally speaking, it seems to have the meaning given it in the popular philosophy of the

period (=λογικὴ ψυχὴ), the power of judging which belongs to the inner life as such. When this judgment is true to itself, it will decide for the Divine law, as, e.g., Romans vii. 25: "So therefore I for myself (i.e., as apart from Divine influence) with my *νοῦς* serve the law of God." But so long as the *νοῦς* is not invigorated by the Divine *πνεῦμα* it will be hampered by its fleshly associations, so that he has to add: "but with my flesh the law of sin." The *νοῦς* is a purely natural capacity which, however, provides as it were the basis for the operations of the Divine *πνεῦμα*. Hence, in Romans xii. 2, Paul can speak of the "renewing" (*ἀνακατανοωσις*) of the *νοῦς* (cf. Eph. iv. 23). And in his graphic description of ecstatic experiences in 1 Corinthians xiv. 13 ff. he still distinguishes between τὸ πνεῦμά μου and ὁ νοῦς μου, *πνεῦμα* denoting his inner life on its inspired side, while *νοῦς* represents the cool critical judgment which regulates unique spiritual experiences with a view to practical utility.¹ In two important passages (Rom. xi. 34; 1 Cor. ii. 16), the Apostle, quoting from the LXX. of Isaiah xl. 13, retains the expression *νοῦν κυρίου*, *νοῦς* being here the LXX. translation of the Hebrew *ruach*, ordinarily rendered by *πνεῦμα*. Probably the translators must have known of a use of *νοῦς* equivalent to *πνεῦμα*. At any rate it is impossible to make a distinction between the two in 1 Corinthians ii. 16.

Now Reitzenstein, in his famous researches into the Hermetic literature and its parallels in magical papyri and contemporary Pagan mystery-cults, asserts that Paul's various uses of *πνεῦμα* are all to be found in Hellenistic religious documents; that his antithesis between *πνευματικός* and *ψυχικός* was current before Paul's time; that *πνευματικός* was a fixed religious conception in the sphere of the mystic faiths of Paganism; and that *νοῦς* had already become an important

¹ J. Weiss' note on 1 Cor. iv. 14 appears to us to miss the whole point of the passage.

religious] term, the direct equivalent of *πνεῦμα*. "It is in any case noteworthy," he declares, "that all the passages in Paul can be explained from Hellenistic usage (particularly those in which we cannot decide whether he is speaking of the *πνεῦμα* of man or of a Divine *πνεῦμα*, as, e.g., 1 Cor. v. 4, 5). Whether all may be as easily understood from the Hebrew use of *ruach* and *nephesh* or from that of *πνεῦμα* in the LXX., the theologian must determine."¹ We shall attempt briefly to examine and estimate the evidence which he adduces, and then to analyse the relevant phenomena in the Old Testament.

(1) The use of *πνεῦμα* in Hellenistic mystery-documents.

(a) *πνεῦμα* contrasted with *σῶμα* and *σάρξ*: Kenyon, Greek Pap. i. 80: *ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τὸν κτίσαντα . . . πᾶσαν σάρκα καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα*; Pap. Berol. i. 177: *σοῦ τὸ σῶμα περιστελεῖ [ὁ θεός], σοῦ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα . . . ἄξει σὺν ἑαυτῷ*²; (b) Used of God: Wessely, Zauberpap. i. 72 (l. 1115): "Hail, Spirit that enters into me, according to the Divine will, in graciousness": Kenyon, *op. cit.* i. 284: "And straightway enters the Divine Spirit" (*τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα*).³ Cf. the prayer in the Mithras-liturgy (4. 14): "that I may be initiated and that the holy Spirit (*ἱερὸν πνεῦμα*) may blow within me."⁴ The materialistic character of the latter passage is obvious. An interesting example is found in the prayer of the prophet Urbicus (Pap. Lugd. v. col. 10, 12, publ. by Dieterich): "My spirit (*πνεῦμα*) was heard by all the gods and demons"; this is expounded in detail: "My spirit was heard by the spirit of heaven . . . by the spirit of earth, etc." *πνεῦμα* is the link between earth and heaven.⁵ (c) Identification of *πνεῦμα* with *ψυχή*. Here Reitzenstein confines himself to a group of striking instances

¹ *H.M.R.*, p. 140. ² *H.M.R.*, p. 136. ³ *H.M.R.*, pp. 137, 136.

⁴ Ed. 2 (Dieterich-Wünsch).

⁵ *H.M.R.*, p. 138.

from Philo. He holds that in more philosophical circles, while the *πνεῦμα*-description of the higher life is known, the conception of *ψυχή* as the antithesis of *σῶμα* has taken so firm a root that it cannot be displaced. But it is impossible to mistake the significance of such sentences as *De Abrah.* 236: "All those who are able to behold things in a bodiless and naked form, who live rather for the soul (*ψυχή*) than for the body." Here and in numerous other places, *ψυχή* stands for the spiritual life. A very suggestive example occurs in a prayer of the Mithras-liturgy (14. 24 f.): "Abide with me in my soul (*ψυχή*), forsake me not." Obviously no sharp distinction could here be drawn between *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα*.

(2) *πνευματικός* and *ψυχικός* in the Mystery-literature. The form in which Reitzenstein has presented his material on this point makes it difficult to distinguish between the actual data and his bold inferences from them. In our last paragraph we noted the conception of the Divine Spirit (*πνεῦμα*) as entering the human personality. This being so, we might expect to find the corresponding adjective to describe the condition of the spirit-possessed person. As a matter of fact, only one instance is adduced, from Wessely, *Zauberpap.* i. 89 (l. 1778), where Eros is addressed as "lord of all *spiritual* perception (*πνευματικῆς αἰσθήσεως*) of all hidden (i.e., Divine) things." The contrasted term *ψυχικός* seems only to occur once in the extant fragments, but the passage is very suggestive. In the opening prayer of the Mithras-liturgy, the aspirant after the vision of God makes supplication: "For to-day I, a mortal born of mortal womb, exalted by Almighty power and incorruptible right hand, with immortal eyes shall behold by immortal spirit the immortal Aeon and Lord of the crowns of fire, I who have been sanctified by sacred rites, while, for a little, my human natural powers (*ἀνθρωπινῆς μου ψυχικῆς δυνάμεως*)

stay behind . . . Stand still, mortal nature of man.”¹ Obviously *ψυχικῆς* here describes human nature as apart from *πνεῦμα*. The other examples to which Reitzenstein refers come from Gnostic documents of post-Christian date. He asserts without argument that the well-known Gnostic categories, *σαρκικοί*, *ψυχικοί*, and *πνευματικοί* cannot have had their origin in Paul’s usage (e.g., 1 Cor. iii. 1), but must be due to the Hellenistic Mystery-Religions, which recognised three classes, unbelievers, proselytes (*religiosi*), and *τέλειοι* (or, *πνευματικοί*). He seems to base his position largely on the fact that in the Gnostic classification the use of *ψυχικός* for an intermediate group reveals the persistence of the more philosophical idea of *ψυχή* as practically synonymous with *πνεῦμα*, so that no sharp division had to be made. But in Paul also there are various instances, as we have seen, in which no clear distinction is drawn between *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα*. And at this point it may be worth while to remind ourselves of a possibility which may not be summarily ruled out. The Hellenistic documents from which quotations have been made cannot be dated with any confidence. In a former article we noted the remarkable influence of certain Jewish conceptions on Egyptian magical papyri. When we remember how fluctuating were the boundary-lines between various phases of Gnosticism and Pagan religious communities, it is by no means impossible to believe that semi-Christian Gnostic influence filtered into these Hellenistic Mystery-brotherhoods, leaving its mark both upon ideas and terminology.

Without, however, pressing this point, let us glance at Reitzenstein’s parallels between what he calls the “double-being” of Paul and corresponding phenomena in the Mystery-Religions. Here we must guard against clear-cut definitions and rigidly logical inferences. For we move in an extra-

¹ *Eine Mithrasliturgie*², 4. 18 ff.

ordinarily elusive sphere. "If it be asked," says Dr. Inge, "which is our personality, the shifting *moi* (as Fénelon calls it) or the ideal self, the end or the developing states? we must answer that it is both and neither, and that the root of mystical religion is in the conviction that it is at once both and neither."¹ Hence we dare not isolate such an affirmation as Paul's daring words in Galatians ii. 20: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Indeed, the very sentence which follows reveals that Paul's is anything rather than a disintegrated life: "that which I now live *in the flesh* I live by faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." That is to say, the relation of the human individual Paul to Jesus the historic Person is never lost in an impalpable, indescribable experience. Reitzenstein lays great stress on what he regards as a sort of two-fold personality in the initiates of the Hellenistic Mystery-Religions. Thus, e.g., in the Mithras-liturgy the suppliant exclaims: "It is not possible for me, a mortal born, to rise up on high with the golden radiance of the immortal light," and he bids his human nature be still, while with his divine he attains the vision of God.² In the vision of the alchemist Zosimus, which reflects the popular Mystery-theology, such sentences occur as this: "The men who desire to reach virtue enter in here and become spirits (*πνεύματα*), escaping from the body."³ Reitzenstein believes that various expressions in the poets of this period indicate a quickening of the religious sense in the direction which we are discussing, as, e.g., Lucan, *Phars.* v. 167, 168, of the inspiration of the Pythia: the god, who takes possession of her, *mentemque priorem expulit*

¹ *Christian Mysticism*, p. 33.

² *Eine Mithrasliturgie*², 4. 27-29.

³ See Berthelot, *Les alchimistes grecs*, p. 109, 12, cited by Reitzenstein, *H.M.R.*, p. 141.

atque hominem toto sibi cedere jussit pectore. Here he takes *mens* as equal to *ψυχή*. That is driven out and replaced by the presence of the god himself, so that a new being arises for the time.¹ To such instances as we have quoted Reitzenstein adduces parallels from Paul, more especially the antithesis between *πνευματικός* and *ψυχικός*. On the basis of 1 Corinthians ii. 6-iii. 4, he asserts that for Paul the *ψυχικός* is "man pure and simple," the *πνευματικός* "no longer man at all." But the parallels are not relevant. So far as we can judge, the "pneumatic" condition in the Mystery-literature seems always to be associated with states of ecstacy. There is no evidence that Paul regards the *πνευματικός* as in any sense having ceased to be true man. For possession of the *πνεῦμα* is in Paul's eyes the normal, abiding condition of the Christian. We, of course, recognise his descriptions of special "pneumatic" experiences such as glossolalia and prophecy, and to them we shall return. But they are always subordinated to the permanent "fruit" of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness," etc. (Gal. v. 22 f.). Nothing, therefore, could be more irrelevant than to take the phrases *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* (1 Cor. iii. 3) and *ἄνθρωποι* (iii. 4) as Reitzenstein does, in a baldly literal sense.² The *πνευματικοί* are still liable to temptations and spiritual perils (Gal. vi. 1 f.). But as those who possess the pledge of the Spirit (2 Cor. v. 5) they are destined for the eternal life of God.

(3) We have seen that in one or two instances Paul adopts from the LXX. a use of *νοῦς* as virtually equivalent to *πνεῦμα*. Probably this implies, as Reitzenstein urges, that the usage was not unfamiliar to the Apostle and his readers. It would be unsafe to dogmatise, but it is certainly suggestive to find that in the Hermetic mystical literature *νοῦς* appears often to be a synonym for *πνεῦμα*. Thus in

¹ *H.M.R.*, p. 150.

² *H.M.R.*, p. 168.

the famous *Λόγος τέλειος*, extracted by Reitzenstein from the Papyrus Mimaut,¹ thanks are given to the Highest because he has graciously bestowed "spirit, revelation, and knowledge" (*νοῦν, λόγον, γνῶσιν*). In document XII. (XIII.) of the Hermetic *Corpus*, *ὁ νοῦς* is described as the "soul" (*ψυχῆ*) of God, which rules over everything.² This conception appears continually in *Poimandres*. The conception, no doubt, has markedly philosophical affinities,³ but it has filtered down into popular religion. Very significant is a passage in the *Κρατήρ ἢ Μονάς*: "All who were baptized in the *νοῦς*, these partake of *γνῶσις* and become *τέλειοι ἄνθρωποι*, having received the *νοῦς* (§ 4). It is evidently a Divine gift. We may compare *Mithras-liturgy*, 4. 13: "in order that I may be regenerated by *νόημα*," which we are almost bound to translate by "spirit." It lies outside our present purpose to deal with the intimate connexion between *νοῦς* and *λόγος*, the thought being regarded in Hermetic philosophical mythology as the father of the Word. But the hypothesis maintained by Reitzenstein that Egyptian religion, as embodied in the Hermetic Mystery-literature, had really become the religion of *νοῦς*, not in the sense of "understanding," but of a revealing deity, receives a good deal of corroboration from the documents which have come down to us.

Before going further, let us try to ascertain the positions which may be regarded as established. Reitzenstein has certainly shown that in documents of the Hellenistic Mystery-Religions *πνεῦμα* and *νοῦς* are used to denote the Divine life or spirit in itself, or that life or spirit as imparted to those who fulfil certain religious conditions, and, especially, some prescribed initiation. They become, in short, religious terms. It is also evident that a distinction can now be

¹ See *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, 1904, p. 393 ff.

² Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 102, note 1.

³ See, e.g., Zielinski, *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, 1906, pp. 25, 35, 56.

drawn between *πνεῦμα* and *ψυχή*, the principle of Divine life being contrasted with that of merely human. But instances are exceedingly uncommon, and Reitzenstein himself admits that *ψυχή* has been so firmly entrenched as the antithesis of *σῶμα* that it could with difficulty be used in a disparaging sense. It need scarcely be observed that the usages in question reveal a marked departure from the ordinary Greek use of *πνεῦμα* or *νοῦς*. Reitzenstein would attribute their appearance mainly to Oriental influence, a realm in which a man like Paul would easily find himself at home. But the instance, e.g., which he cites from Lucan has surely distinct affinities with earlier Hellenic thought : cf., e.g., Aesch. *Prom.* 902 ff. : ἔξω δὲ δρόμου φέρομαι λύσσης πνεύματι μάργῳ, where the "raging spirit of frenzy" is the visitation of a god. When we remember how prevalent was the conception of the *ἔνθεος*, the person filled with the God, and recall the derivation of *πνεῦμα* from *πνέω*, to "blow" or "breathe," it seems precarious to restrict the emergence of such ideas to a period dominated by its contact with Oriental religions. One question, perhaps, should here be touched upon. Reitzenstein, Heitmüller and others lay stress on the notion that Paul, like his Stoic contemporaries and the devotees of the Mystery-Religions, conceived the *πνεῦμα* to be substance as well as power. In the Mithras-liturgy, e.g., one of the instructions given runs : "Take up your stand and draw the *πνεῦμα* from the divine . . . and say, Come to me, O Lord" (10. 23 ff.). That is typical of the *πνεῦμα*-conception in Hellenistic religious literature. Traces of a similar "animism" may be found in Hebrew thought. But there, as Volz shows, with the ethical deepening of religion, the conception of power in *ruach* as the Spirit of God comes to overshadow that of a substance imparted.¹ It is from this standpoint,

¹ See *Der Geist Gottes im A.T.*, pp. 76, 77.

as we shall discover, that Paul's thought must, in the main, be estimated. We would frankly admit that the processes of ancient psychology are so far removed from our habits of thought that it is unsafe to deny the survival of realistic notions side by side with such profoundly ethical conceptions as those most prominent in Paul's use of *πνεῦμα*. We must recognise that he lived in an atmosphere in which everything causal was regarded as substantial, in which "force" and "body" constituted no antithesis.¹ But it is difficult to find unmistakable traces of such a view even in Paul's speculations on the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*. If his conception of *πνεῦμα* was highly animistic, he has succeeded even there in concealing it. To interpret 1 Corinthians vii. 14, where Paul speaks of an unbelieving husband being sanctified by his believing wife, as referring to a physical process by which the *πνεῦμα* is transmitted (so Heitmüller),² is grossly to caricature the Apostle's entire standpoint in the passage.

In view of the conclusions reached, we must now return to Reitzenstein's original inquiry as to whether Paul's use of the terms *πνεῦμα*, *ψυχή*, *νοῦς*, *πνευματικός*, and *ψυχικός* is more easily explained from Hellenistic religious usage or from the Old Testament. Our examination of Reitzenstein's material discloses an interesting affinity between conceptions of the indwelling divine spirit belonging to the Mystery-Religions, and Paul's central idea of the gift of the *πνεῦμα*. But one omission is noteworthy. Nothing adduced is strictly relevant to the profoundly ethical contrast which Paul draws between *σάρξ*, "flesh" (not *σῶμα*) and *πνεῦμα*, "spirit." Further, on Reitzenstein's own showing, the antithesis between *πνεῦμα* and *ψυχή*, so funda-

¹ Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 106: *quod facit corpus est*. It is remarkable to find the blending of these ideas in recent scientific speculation on matter and energy.

² *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus*, p. 19.

mental for Paul, is exceedingly rare, inasmuch as $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ is always apt to retain its significance as the higher part of man, in opposition to $\sigma\hat{\omega}\mu\alpha$.

What light is thrown on the situation by the Old Testament? Practically every leading conception in this sphere of Paul's religious thought may be said to have its roots definitely laid in that soil. In a number of Old Testament passages, *bāsār*, "flesh," like many of the physical organs of man (e.g., liver, kidneys), has a psychological connotation (e.g. Job iv. 15, Ps. lxxxiv. 3, Ezek. xxxvi. 26); and "in an important group of cases, 'flesh' is used of man, or man's essential nature, in contrast with God, or with 'spirit' to emphasise man's frailty, dependence, or incapacity" (Isa. xxxi. 3, xl. 6, Ps. lvi. 4, Jer. xvii. 5, etc.).¹ Here is the palpable foundation for Paul's conception of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, a factor which he had discovered in his own experience as making for evil, although he affords no evidence for the hypothesis of an inherently evil matter. This $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, with its evil affections, can be overcome by $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$. We have already seen that for Paul $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ means, in an overwhelming number of instances, the Divine gift to faith in Christ, the indwelling Spirit of God, or the indwelling Christ. Again his thought links on directly to the Old Testament. There, the conception of the *ruach* of God, developing with that of God Himself, came to be regarded as the source of prophetic inspiration (Ezek. ii. 2), the instrument of Divine revelation generally (Zech. vii. 12), and, most notably, the endowment for special functions (Isa. lxi. 1 f.), and for character (Ps. li. 11). The Old Testament had conceived man's relation to God "along two principal lines, namely, that of the Spirit of God as acting more or less

¹ See the admirable discussion in Prof. Wheeler Robinson's *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 22-25, a work to which we are deeply indebted in this section of the article.

intermittently and externally upon man, and that of spiritual fellowship with God, which sought realisation in many ways." ¹ These lines converge in Paul, and are fused together through his personal experience of the risen Christ. The relation of *πνεῦμα* to *ψυχή* and of *πνευματικός* to *ψυχικός* in Paul finds its direct explanation in Old Testament usage. We noted that occasionally the Apostle makes no apparent distinction between the Divine *πνεῦμα* as imparted, and the resultant human life which he designates *πνεῦμα*, e.g., Romans viii. 10. So also, e.g., in Ezekiel xi. 19, xxxvi. 26, no line of cleavage can be drawn between the Divine and the (renewed) human *ruach*.²

Of special interest is the connexion of Paul's terminology with the relationships of *ruach* (*πνεῦμα* in LXX.) and *nephesh* (*ψυχή* in LXX.), in the Old Testament. A group of passages in Paul has been referred to, in which *πνεῦμα* seems to denote the inner life of man, apart from any emphasis on its Divine elements. This usage has often complicated the exegesis of the Epistles, but it is only another proof of Paul's fidelity to Old Testament terminology. After the Exile, *ruach* encroaches on the sphere of *nephesh*, with which it has always been akin, and comes to denote "the normal breath-soul as the principle of life in man" ³; see especially Isaiah xxvi. 9: "with my *nephesh* I desired thee in the night, yea, with my *ruach* within me, I sought longingly for thee"; and compare the exact parallel in Psalm lxxvii. 3, 4. Finally, the use of *nephesh* (*ψυχή*) in the Old Testament to signify the life-principle both in itself and as the basis of individuality, and further, in connexion with a wide range of states of consciousness (particularly, emotional),⁴ supplies a luminous background (*a*) for Paul's religious use of *πνεῦμα*,

¹ Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 125. ² See Volz, *op. cit.*, p. 76, note 1.

³ See Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 110.

⁴ Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 17.

(b) for the sharp antithesis between *πνευματικός* and *ψυχικός*, which rests essentially on normal Old Testament usage.

A word must be said as to the Old Testament affinities of *νοῦς*. Following O. T. practice, Paul frequently uses *καρδία* (= *lēb*), "heart," as a more or less general description of the inner life of man, occasionally emphasising its emotional, intellectual, or volitional character, all these being aspects of *lēb* which receive separate prominence in the O. T. (e.g., Judg. xviii. 20, 1 Kings iii. 9, 1 Sam. ii. 35).¹ But the range of *καρδία* as denoting intellectual activities is curtailed by Paul's employment of *νοῦς*. And the existence beside it, in a scarcely distinguishable sense, of the term *συνείδησις*, which belongs to Greek (popular) philosophy, suggests that this is the point in his psychological terminology at which Paul was chiefly affected by contemporary usage. But, as we have seen, his employment of *νοῦς* as the equivalent of *πνεῦμα*, the phenomenon singled out by Reitzenstein in this connexion for comparison with the Mystery-terminology, depends on quotations from the LXX., and cannot, therefore, be made the basis of any far-reaching hypothesis.

In our next article we shall deal with terms which in Paul and the Mystery-Religions are descriptive of crucial pneumatic activities.

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STUDIES IN CONVERSION.

VIII. CHALMERS.

THE Evangelical Revival was blessing England with the influences of a spiritual springtime by the middle of the eighteenth century. But, at that time and for long afterwards, Scotland still lay in the cold and wintry grasp of Moderatism; and it was not till the commencement of the

¹ See Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 22.