SUPPLEMENTS TO VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

Esoteric Teaching in the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria

ANDREW C. ITTER

BRILL

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by

Andrew C. Itter

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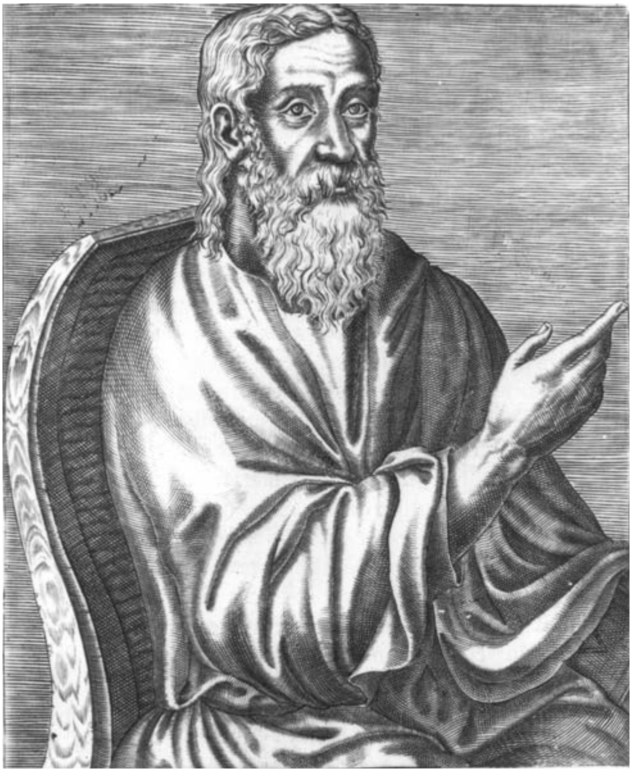

In the case of people who are setting out on a road with which they are unacquainted, it is sufficient merely to point out the direction. After this they must walk and find out the rest for themselves.

(Clement of Alexandria *Str.* 4.2.4.3)

For Diane

CONTENTS

PART TWO

DOCTRINE

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
Arch	*Archivio di Filosophia*
Aug	*Augustinianum*
CH	*Church History*
Com	*Communio*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CQR	*Church Quarterly Review*
DK	Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*
ECQ	*Eastern Church Quarterly*
EH	Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*
GCS	*Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller*
HJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HR	*History of Religions*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JLW	*Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LSJ	Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*
NAWG	*Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*
OQ	*Origeniana Quinta*
PG	Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*
Ph	*Phoenix*
RAC	*Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum*
ReAug	*Revue des etudes augustiniennes*
RevSr	*Revue des sciences religieuses*
Rivista	*Rivista di Ascetica e Mistica*
RPh	*Revue de Philologue*
RS	*Religious Studies*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
SChr	*Sources chrétiennes*
SecCent	*The Second Century*
SJTh	*Scottish Journal of Theology*

SO	*Symbolae Osloenses*
SP	*Studia Patristica*
STh	*Studia Theologica*
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*
SW	*Sacred Web*
ThL	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
Vivre	*Vivre et penser*
ZWth	*Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie*

Greek patristic authors and writings follow the abbreviations of G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961).

ABBREVIATIONS FOR CLEMENT'S WORKS

References follow O. Stählin's *GCS*. *Protr*. 10.90.3 refers to *Protreptikos*, chapter 10, paragraph 90, line 3; *Paid*. 1.10.92.2 refers to *Paidagogos* book 1, chapter 10, paragraph 92, line 2; *Str*. 1.1.21.1 refers to the *Stromateis* book 1, chapter 1, paragraph 21, line 1; *Q.D.S.* 36.1 refers to *Quis Dives Salvetur?* paragraph 36, line 1; *Ecl.* 7.1. refers to *Eclogae Propheticae* paragraph 7, line 1; *Exc.* 3.1 refers to *Excerpta ex Theodoto* paragraph 3, line 1.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated translations of the *Proteptikos*, the *Paidagogos*, the *Stromateis*, *QDS* and the *Eclogae* are mine. I have used Chadwick's translation of the third book of the *Stromateis* in his *Alexandrian Christianity*, and Casey's translation of the *Excerpta*. Modifications where I believed appropriate are note.

INTRODUCTION

Titus Flavius Clemens (*c.* 150–215), better known as Clement of Alexandria, remains a puzzling figure in the history of the Christian Church. Little can be confirmed about the setting in which he operated, and the controversy concerning the nature and purpose of his writings still attracts scholarly debate. Evidence surrounding the so-called 'catechetical school' at Alexandria is hard to come by, making it difficult to reach any firm conclusions about the ecclesiastical context in which Clement wrote his works. However, this is not the case in philosophical and theological historiography. Much scholarly enterprise has been directed towards understanding Clement's place within the history of theological ideas and there are many major studies devoted to tracing the influences present in his works. Clement is a major source of Scriptural evidence, both in the established canon and in the apocrypha; he is one of the chief sources of Pre-Socratic material; and his use of Platonism, either directly or indirectly through the influence of later thinkers, has been the subject of much scrutiny. Influences from Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, Philo, and earlier Christian fathers abound. It is hardly possible to treat Clement's works outside of these many influences and much of the scholarship on Clement has been directed towards this.

Clement was, however, a philosopher, teacher and theologian in his own right.[1] Undeniably indebted to his predecessors, both Hebrew and Greek, he made a significant contribution to the history of Christian thought. Clement himself believed he was merely transmitting what had already been said by the ancients which had become obscured over the course of the centuries by ignorance.[2] It was no small challenge for him to run the gamut of philosophies and theologies available to him

[1] Often regarded as an inferior theologian sitting in the shadows of Origen. See A.C. Outler, "The Platonism of Clement of Alexandria', *JR* 20 (1940), 217–40. In the words of R.P. Casey: "it must be remembered that an author is not explained, or even fairly represented, by showing how much he may have derived from others, for in the last analysis his finished thought is his own, however extensive the foreign material employed in its construction": "Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism", *HTR* 18 (1925), 39–101.

[2] Among the subjects of Clement's instruction are "the most ancient philosophy and primeval prophecy" (*Str.* 7.1.2.2–3). He assures us that there is nothing new in his

in ancient Alexandria, and to harmonise what he thought agreed with the word of Scripture. Like Justin before him, he was determined to seek out what was 'well said' in this eclectic whole and find what was useful for the edification of the Body of Christ and for the acquisition of the knowledge of God.[3] He called this the 'true gnosis', distinguishing it from that of the Gnostics whose claims to exclusive knowledge had only sufficed to discredit the search for knowledge for mainstream Christians.[4] It is my view that much of the scholarly attention given to Clement, particularly where the concern lies in what he appropriated, ultimately falls short of establishing the logical outcomes of his theology and the crucial role the gnostic and gnosis played in the Christian community. The result is that the full extent of Clement's teaching, whether esoteric or otherwise, has not been established.

If we are to fathom the success or failure of Clement's teaching, an investigation into his works must take his appropriation of nearly every philosophy of his day as its starting point, not its end. Clement's use of various philosophies is a manifest and crucial element of his method, but we also need to verify how well his synthesis works, whether or not this eclecticism has an internal consistency which can form the basis for an understanding of Christian doctrine. If we focus on the internal consistency between Clement's method and doctrine we can trace his thinking to its logical outcomes. It is not enough to conclude that since Clement offers little in the way of a systematic exposition of doctrine, particularly in the *Stromateis*, he was not then a doctrinal theologian. The issue of how Christians are to understand doctrine and to come to knowledge of the Word of God was as significant to Clement as anything could be. From our point of view he communicates doctrine in a most peculiar and idiosyncratic way.

Broaching the subject of Clement's methodology, however, requires a discussion concerning the controversy that has surrounded his works

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writings. He is, in Daniélou's words, "above all the man of tradition and traditions": *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. John A. Baker (London, 1973), 453.

[3] E. Molland claims that according to Gregory Thaumaturgus, this was a common methodological practice at the catechetical school in Alexandria. *The Conception of the Gospel in Alexandrian Theology* (Oslo, 1938).

[4] See H. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (The Library of Christian Classics) (Philadelphia, 1954), 17–18. B. McGinn writes: "The most important effect that Gnosticism had on the subsequent history of Christian mysticism was to make esotericism of any sort suspect, especially an esotericism based on secret modes of scriptural interpretation": *The Foundations of Mysticism* vol. 1 (New York, 1991), 99.

for the past century. The controversy primarily concerns the identification of the *Stromateis* with a treatise on teaching that some scholars believe Clement proposed to write, but which was destroyed or lost and is no longer extant to us. The issue has largely revolved around the literary form of the *Stromateis*, and whether or not it can be considered a coherent treatise whose function is to teach. A discussion of what has been said about the literary form of the *Stromateis* will be useful in determining Clement's purpose for using that form and how its method works in regard to the understanding of doctrine.

If it can be determined that the *Stromateis* do function as a coherent teaching, some ground may be gained in establishing whether or not Clement can be considered an esotericist. Clement's writings have suffered at the hands of orthodoxy since the sixteenth century because of their association with the Gnostic excerpts of Theodotus. Scholars have been reluctant to acknowledge the esoteric element in Clement because of its association with heretical Gnosticism and its claim to spiritual and intellectual exclusivity. Clement expended much energy in refuting such notions, but at the same time believed in the need for a Christian elect: an elite group of Christians fully versed in philosophy, but who are exemplars and staunch defenders of the faith, of orthodoxy, and of the church. His version of gnosis, as distinct from that of the Gnostics, defended the role that knowledge plays in the Christian faith: not merely an apologist for gnosis, he advocated its centrality to Christian revelation.

A study of some doctrines that Clement writes about in his works, particularly those which he believed were crucial to attaining gnosis, will be useful in determining whether his writing conveys esoteric material. This can only be done if his methodology is clearly established beforehand. The interdependence of method and doctrine is, I believe, crucial to Clement's teaching. As any reader of Clement's *Stromateis* will testify, the work is haphazard at best and it is very difficult to give a coherent account of its doctrines.[5] This is a universal first impression of his method of writing.

Like the figure of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite some three centuries later, there is something enigmatic about Clement of Alexandria

[5] As C. Bigg insisted, Clement is not "one of those dialecticians who solace the logical mind with the neatness and precision of their statements": *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1913 repr. New York, 1970), 47. This may be exactly what Clement intended.

and the relatively neat little corpus that has come to be gathered under his name. Clement has long been considered the founder of Christian mysticism, but as yet little has been established to justify this title. Reading the *Stromateis* for the first time is a unique experience; it is a text unlike any other from the ancient world. He wrote for a purpose and committed to posterity works that claim to teach the true philosophy of Christ. Somehow the relationship between his mystical teaching and the written word must be determined if we are to understand what mattered most to him.

PART ONE

METHOD

CHAPTER ONE

TEACHING, LEARNING AND WRITING IN SECOND AND THIRD CENTURY ALEXANDRIA

1.1. *Background: The Alexandrian* Paideia

Clement was probably born an Athenian, but he may well have been native to Alexandria.[1] Little is known of his life other than he travelled extensively in search of a great teacher, beginning in Greece and finishing in Egypt where he believed he found in Pantaenus, a Stoic convert to Christianity,[2] the "first in power" among all his teachers.[3] It is believed that Clement replaced Pantaenus as the head of the so-called 'catechetical school' in Alexandria and began teaching sometime in 190, but was forced to relinquish the role and flee Alexandria during the persecutions of Severus in 202. It was probably during this time that he wrote the works that are collected under his name. Little is known of Clement beyond this point. Eusebius tells us of a letter composed by Clement's student Alexander, delivered by Clement to the church in Antioch sometime in 211.[4] However, in a letter to Origen dated somewhere around the year 215, Alexander indicates that both Pantaenus and Clement had passed away, suggesting Clement's death to be some time prior to that date.[5] Clement appears in the earlier western martyrologies, assigned to December 4.

Clement was excised from the martyrology by Clement VIII in the sixteenth century at the advice of Baronius, an ecclesiastical historian, on the grounds of the doubtful orthodoxy of some of his writings. This may have been the case since, according to B.F. Westcott, some of the MSS of Clement found in the 11th century contained excerpts from a Gnostic we have come to know as Theodotos.[6] These writings were

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[1] Epiphanius *Haer.* 32.6.
[2] *HE* 5.10.
[3] *Str.* 1.1.11.2. See Eusebius *HE* 5.11; 6.6, 13, 14.
[4] *HE* 6.11.
[5] *HE* 6.14.
[6] Westcott, article "Clement of Alexandria", in W. Smith & H. Wace (eds.) *The Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. 1 (London, 1877).

in an advanced state of fragmentation, and to this day it is hard to determine whether they are notes taken by Clement himself of certain Gnostic teachings which he intended to refute, or teachings he actually subscribed to.[7] The excising of Clement from the martyrology was later defended by Benedict XIV who was heavily involved in bringing the Church in line with the *Aufklärung*, or the German enlightenment, during the 18th century.

According to Eusebius, the role as head of the school was later filled when Demetrius (*d.* 231–232), the Bishop of Alexandria since *c.* 189, appointed Origen (*c.* 185–*c.* 254) to the position presumably after the cessation of the persecutions. The traditional Eusebian account posits an unbroken succession at the school, but recently this account has been the subject of scholarly criticism.[8] A. van den Hoek believes that G. Bardy was the first scholar to discuss the Alexandrian school in any critical way.[9] In an earlier article she had insisted that Bardy's studies had 'demythologised' Eusebius' account regarding a 'catechetical' school at Alexandria and the notion of a long succession of teachers dating back to Pantaenus and Clement.[10] Bardy believed that these two teachers were simply philosophers who had only taught a private circle of the more advanced Christian students.[11] In Clement's writings there is no reference to Demetrius or to the notion that the Alexandrian *paideia* was in any way allied to an official institution like

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[7] As Tollinton pointed out: "there is so little antagonism and so much sympathetic presentation, in short it is wholly beyond our critical powers to say where the Valentinian ends and the Catholic begins": *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism* vol. 2 (London, 1914), 62.

[8] J. Quasten accepts this traditional account. See his *Patrology* (Westminster, 1986), vol. 2, 5–6.

[9] A. van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and its Philonic Heritage", *HTR* 90/1 (1997), 59–87. She refers to Bardy's "Aux origines de l'école d'Alexandrie", *RSR* 27 (1937), 65–90; "L'église et l'enseignement pendant les trois premiers siecles", *RevSR* 12 (1932), 1–28; "Pour l'histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie", *Vivre* (1942), 80–109. See A. Le Boulluec, "L'école d'Alexandrie: De quelques aventures d'un concept historiographique", in *Mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert* (Paris, 1987); W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and the Greek Paideia* (Cambridge MA, 1961); R. Wilken, "Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue", in P. Henry (ed) *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia, 1984), and D. Wyrwa, "Religiöses Lernen im zweiten Jahrhundert und die Anfänge der alexandrinischen Katachetenschule", in B. Ego, H. Merkel (eds), *Religiösens Lernen in der biblischen, frühjüdischen und frühchristlischen Überlieferung*, Gottingen, 2005. See van den Hoek "Catechetical' School", 59 n. 1 for further reading.

[10] "How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian Background", *HJ* 31 (1990), 179–94.

[11] See also R.M Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianity", *CH* 40 (1971), 133–44.

a church community. Bardy also states that the idea of a church as an institution is not conspicuous in his works.[12] For the most part van den Hoek complies with his view that Clement had little connection with the bishopric of Alexandria.

While Bardy's conclusions were almost unanimously accepted, Wyrwa points out that more recently there have been objections raised to his thesis.[13] Van den Hoek for instance, question Bardy's distinction between official and private instruction, for which no manuscript evidence can be found. As she points out, this distinction existed earlier with Justin in Rome, and later between Origen and Demetrius in Alexandria, but little can be surmised to say the same of Clement's time. She argues that it is possible that Gnostic movements had forced Christians to intitutionalise in the face of heresy; it was at this time that Demetrius became the first datable bishop of Alexandria. However, this issue is unresolvable given the lack of evidence in Clement's writings.

Instead, van den Hoek approaches the issue from the perspective of the origin of Clement's literary sources. Clement draws mostly on Alexandrian sources, suggesting the existence of the famous Alexandrian library possibly rebuilt after its destruction in 48 BCE. Van den Hoek adds that, given the amount of Jewish and Christian sources that Clement drew on, it would be difficult to assume that the library existed separately from any established Christian institution such as that mentioned by Eusebius.[14] Following G. Zuntz, who claimed that the Christian biblical tradition in Alexandria in the second half of the second century was unsurpassed,[15] she concludes that it is difficult to assert that a Christian school could exist independently of the Christian church. Moreover, in a later article van den Hoek suggests that there was a succession between Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen as Eusebius

[12] I find this difficult to accept, considering the passage of *Str.* 6.13.106.1–107.3 where Clement sets out the "grades of the church (ἁι...κατα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν προκοπαί)", bishops, presbyters, and deacons, in imitation of the angelic glory. This organisation prefigures the highly systematic ecclesiastical hierarchy found later in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

[13] Namely, Schoulten, Van den Hoek and Le Boulluec.

[14] *HE* 5.10.

[15] G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles. A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London, 1953), 273.

mentions,[16] and that the Alexandrian school also undertook catechetical training as part of its curriculum.[17]

More significantly, however, van den Hoek points to the importance of Philo in establishing the Christian tradition in Alexandria. The large amount of Philonic citations in both Clement and Origen suggests that Alexandria contained a scriptorium for the copying of texts. The lack of citations in the last three books of Clement's *Stromateis*, which D.T. Runia suggests were written after Clement left Alexandria, would seem to reinforce this view.[18] Furthermore, the first Christian library in Jerusalem was founded by Clement's student, Alexander, suggesting that Alexander used his experience in Alexandria under Clement as a model for Jerusalem. This points to the existence of a library and scriptorium with a continued practice of biblical scholarship as early as the middle of the second century CE and to a school that saw to the education of Christians.

Van den Hoek reiterates and strengthens her stance on these points in her later article, but also reinforces that whilst we must read Eusebius critically, his accounts should not be dismissed altogether. Van den Hoek finds evidence to suggest that there was a succession between Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen as Eusebius suggests, and that the school saw catechetical training as part of its curriculum. Clement and Pantaenus are referred to as πρεσβύτεροι, suggesting an elder who plays some role in church administration. Van den Hoek also points out, however, that Clement never used the term διδασκαλεῖον to refer to his church teaching and is never consistent in his use of terms such as σχολή, διατριβή, or ἅιρεσις, when referring to his school or the community he operated in. Clement, she suggests, was most likely consciously detaching himself from the various heretical groups present in Alexandria at the time.[19] This terminological inconsistency is transmitted through Eusebius, who, even by his time, did not use a consistent term to refer to the school at Alexandria.

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[16] See "Catechetical' School", 80–81 n. 107, 86 and "Origen and the Intellectual Heritage of Alexandria: Continuity or Disjunction" in R.J. Daly (ed.) *OQ* (Leuven, 1992), 47–50.

[17] "Catechetical' School", 66.

[18] See D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen, 1993), 144, and van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the 'Stromateis'* (Leiden, 1988), 197–208.

[19] Ibid., 74. See also Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 2005), 20.

R. van den Broek claims that the succession between Pantaenus, Clement and Origen mentioned by Eusebius is also referred to by Philip of Side in the fifth century and by Photius in the ninth century.[20] However, van den Broek suggests that this is a false assumption on the grounds that Origen never mentions Clement directly, and would have been far too young to attend Clement's classes which, by all reports, were reserved for the most advanced of students. He also doubts the succession between Pantaenus and Clement. Given that the role of teacher was tied to the apostolic succession and continued the tradition of rabbis and Jewish elders who carried out all aspects of religious life in their communities,[21] both Pantaenus' and Clement's roles were more ecclesiastical in nature than academic in any formal Greek sense. While acknowledgeing the existence of a scriptorium, he suggests that it does not necessarily follow that there was also a Christian academy in Alexandria,[22] which can only be dated from the second decade of the third century with Origen at its head.[23] Van den Broek claims that Eusebius had confused the persecutions under the governor Aquila (206–*c.* 211) with those in the year 202 when those who dispensed pre-baptismal instruction fled Alexandria, allowing him to suppose a direct succession between Clement and Origen.

Wyrwa finds no reason to doubt the succession between Pantaenus and Clement, since there is no reason to the doubt the historical reliability of the information contained in the letter of Alexander.[24] Further to this, Wyrwa suggests that given the nature of Clement's writings, ranging from the *Stromateis* conscious effort to teach, to the moral instructions of the *Protreptokos* and the *Paidagogos*, to the instruction manual *To The Newly Baptsised*, as well as the concomitant tensions between oral and written teaching, it is hardly conceivable that this could take place without the background of the practical experiences of a concrete

[20] For the text of Philip of Side see G. Chr. Hansen (ed.) *Theodorus Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1971), 160. For Photius *Bibl. Cod.* 118.

[21] See van den Broek, "Juden und Christen in Alexandrien im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert", in J. van Oort (ed.), *Juden und Christen in der Antike* (Kampen, 1990), 108–11.

[22] There is a difference in emphasis between van den Hoek's and van den Broek's approaches to this question of a catechetical school in Alexandria. In van den Hoek's article emphasis is placed on the 'catechetical' element of the school, whilst in van den Broek's the emphasis is placed on the existence of 'school' itself in Alexandria.

[23] Citing the work of G. Zuntz as well.

[24] See n. 5 above.

school enterprise.[25] This does not, however, shed any further light on the succession between Clement and Origen.

Wyrwa claims that Clement's use of the term πρεσβύτεροι is inconclusive in regard to identifying a relationship with the presbyterium of the Alexandrian church.[26] Nevertheless, Origen's warm reference to Pantaenus, whose example Origen claims to have followed in his autobiographical letter relayed by Eusebius,[27] suggests at least that Pantaenus could not have been far removed from the orthodoxy of the church given Demetrius' close watch over Origen's own associations, heretical or otherwise.[28] This is a clear demarcation between Pantaenus and the heretical groups that followed Basilides, Isidore, Valentinus, Jules Cassian and Carpocrates, among others. Despite this, the noticable absence of Clement's name in Origen's encomium to his predecessors is telling. Wyrwa suggests that this indicates that Clement had already been in conflict with the bishop Demetrius and that the relationship to Clement may not have been advisable in Origen's time. Wyrwa points out that Clement's departure from Alexandria may have been due to the tension between himself and Demetrius, rather than as a result of the persecutions as has been the generally accepted version of events. He suggests further that this traditional view does not explain why Clement did not return after the conflict had subsided, as other clerics did.[29] He points out the inconsistencies of Eusebius' account of the succession between Clement and Origen, particularly in regard to Origen's young age at the time of Clement's departure, and of Eusebius' confusion in calculating the term of office for the Alexandrian governors affecting the dating of the beginning of Origen's time as head of the school. He concludes that there is little evidence to allow us to accept the Eusebian account of a continuation between Clement and Origen, and that there must have been some interuption at this time, the duration of which is unknown.

Finally, Wyrwa analysies the letter of Alexander to Origen relayed by Eusebius, in particular the words that suggest that it was through

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[25] "Religiöses Lernen", 297.
[26] Ibid., 295.
[27] *HE.* 6.19.13.
[28] "Religiöses Lernen", 295.
[29] Ibid., 299 n. 144.

Clement that Alexander came to know Origen.[30] He asks whether the words δι' ὧν σὲ ἐγνώρισα suggest that Alexander and Origen were sitting in Clement's lecture rooms at the same time. However, once again, given the chronological problems associated with the succession, Wyrwa believes that it is more likely that Alexander is referring to the intellectual tradition used by Clement to penetrate the Christian revelation. Alexander sees himself as part of a family of Christian intellectuals through which he came to know Origen. The words do not refer to a literal introduction of Alexander and Origen in the presence of Clement, but rather a community bound together by intellectual endevour through which Clement's ideas brought Alexander and Origen together. The fact that Origen wrote his own *Stromateis* is a clear confession of the continuation of Clement's inheritance.

Also working from Bardy's study, it is interesting to note D. Dawson's hypothetical reconstruction of the socio-cultural climate in which Clement wrote his works.[31] Not happy with the "contradictions and inconsistencies" of the standard Eusebian account, Dawson suggests that the former Stoic Pantaenus was a "free-lance intellectual" who attracted pagan, Christian and Jewish students by his ideas and interpretive methods. Dawson believes that despite his conversion to Christianity, Pantaenus received no official sanction for his teaching from the Alexandrian bishop. All we know is that he had a student called Clement who did not come to be converted but to receive esoteric Christian philosophy and hermeneutics. Clement then took over the running of the school but, as the absence of any conflicting documentary evidence suggests, remained outside the official ecclesiastical circle of Alexandria. With the persecutions of 202, Clement left the city and the school disappeared with him.

Dawson believes that Clement's school was one among many that existed on the margins of the official church community in Alexandria. He attempts to discern the relationship that existed between the various schools and the official institution, stating that it can range from the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* of Valentinian Christians, to groups like the Carpocratians on the outermost fringes of Alexandrian society. Like the Valentinians,

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[30] *HE* 6.14.9. "...and the holy Clement, my master and benefactor, and if there is any other like them, through whom I became acquainted with you (δι' ὧν σὲ ἐγνώρισα)".

[31] *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1992).

Dawson suggests that the school that formed around Clement was made up of members of the episcopally supervised church, and gives no indication that he taught and wrote for any other church than that run by Demetrius. Yet despite mentioning the orders of bishop, priest and deacon, Clement still remains independent of the establishment and makes no mention of Demetrius who at that time was becoming a powerful presence in Alexandria. Clement should be thought of in the same way as Valentinus; an independent teacher with a loose relation to the official Alexandrian church, attracting Christians who sought to learn the higher Christian gnosis.

The distinction between the two is that while Clement wanted to claim for himself the esoteric insights of Christian gnosis, he also wanted to secure this esotericism for the orthodox institution. The result, writes Dawson, is a "domesticated gnosis turned to institutional service". Although Clement was not attached to the official institution of Alexandria, Dawson suggests that he did not oppose the bishop and there was no reason to say that Clement was not in Demetrius' church on Sundays! The most likely account of Clement's relation to the official institution was that his teaching took place on the margins of the Alexandrian church and not at its centre as Eusebius claims, and that Clement's interpretive practices took place in the tension between the emerging official church under Demetrius, and the lure of the more "speculative, meditative, spiritual gnosis".

Dawson's analysis of Clement's allegorical method as a means of cultural revision begins with the hermeneutical application of the Middle Platonic concept of the logos in Justin Martyr's writings. It then moves to Clement's use of the same "voice-based" method of interpreting text, which Dawson then applies directly to Clement's social milieu. Dawson makes a clear distinction between Clement's allegorical method and that of Philo by suggesting that Clement's logos theology, based firmly in Justin's, allows him to demonstrate the harmony that exists between a variety of texts from both the Hebrew and Greek traditions. By gathering together what is 'well said' from each source, Clement appeals to the idea that it is in fact the divine logos speaking through these texts, therefore adumbrating the same truths.[32] Through this "voice-based hermeneutic" the "authorial specificity of [Clement's] precursors is

[32] See Justin *2 Apol.* 13.2–4: "Everything that has been well said by any of these [Plato, Stoics, poets or writers] belongs to us Christians".

irrelevant to the fact that when subjected to his revisionary reading, they express the same underlying voice or meaning". This is opposed to Philo's allegorical method, which relies on the lexical details of the text. Clement "is interested in theme, not linguistic distinctions", and "reads in light of the fully present metatextual divine voice".

However, Dawson sees a problem in Clement's recourse to a divine voice for his allegorical readings in that, given the highly allegorical nature of Alexandrian interpretive methods, it becomes difficult to champion one reading over another. Dawson argues for the Philonic attention to lexical detail to determine authentic textual meaning, a "true spirit of disinterested criticism", over against an idiosyncratic, theme-based hermeneutic. Clement vilifies the sectarians who quote passages from Scripture to prove a point, doing so without putting them into context, and often drawing on ambiguous statements in order to bend them to their own opinions. According to Clement, they fail to look at the meaning of words, making use of mere expression, or, attending to the words alone, they alter their meanings.[33] Yet Dawson rightly points out that this charge could well be directed at Clement himself, who is as selective in his use of Scripture as those he criticises.

Dawson, however, does claim that Clement can be distinguished from the "unfettered, imaginative, mythopoetic Gnosticism of Valentinus" because his domesticated gnosis does not overtly set itself up at odds with the official church institution, nor does his understanding of gnosis "provide the capacity and audacity to judge and overturn Scripture". Clement's gnosis and hermeneutical teaching always remains "constrained by Scripture" and is therefore designed to "augment" rather than supersede it. This respect for canonicity inherited from Philo leads Clement to the domesticity of his gnosis and saves him from the excesses of Gnostic hermeneutics.

1.2. *The Problem of the* Stromateis *and the* Didaskalos

Beyond the difficulty in identifying Clement's ecclesiastical setting, much controversy still surrounds the works of Clement himself. According to Clement the divine Logos manifests itself in three pedagogical phases corresponding with the level of spiritual attainment achieved by the

[33] *Str.* 7.16.96.1–3.

Christian initiate. As J. Wytzes appropriately claims, Clement believed that "God occupies Himself with man as an educator".[34] Clement writes:

> Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benign Word, who first exhorts (προτρέπων), then trains (παιδαγωγῶν), and finally teaches (ἐκδιδάσκων).[35]

Firstly, the Word as *Protreptikos* converts heathens to the Christian faith; secondly, as *Paidagogos* it cures the passions of the soul; and thirdly, with the soul having passed through these initial stages of training in the virtues, the Logos as *Didaskalos* teaches it to ascend to the "methodical" (μεθοδικός) and "intellectual life" (ἐπιστημονικὸς βίος).[36] These three phases ostensibly correspond with the three main extant works of Clement: the *Protreptikos*, the *Paidagogos*, and the *Stromateis*.

During the last century, however, there has been some debate over whether or not the *Stromateis* constitute Clement's proposed treatise on the third phase of the divine pedagogy, the *Teacher*, or *didaskalos*.[37] Until Eugène de Faye's work on Clement appeared in 1898, it was generally accepted that the books of the *Stromateis* constituted Clement's account of this teaching of the Logos,[38] but since then there have been a number of hypotheses put forward suggesting other ways in which we should receive the work.[39] De Faye had insisted that the *Stromateis* did not bear

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[34] "Paideia and Pronoia in the Works of Clemens Alexandrinus", *VC* 9 (1955), 148–58.

[35] *Paid.* 1.1.3.3.

[36] *Paid.* 1.1.1.4.

[37] See *Paid.* 1.1.1.4–2.1; 1.3.8.3; 3.12.97.3.

[38] *Clément d' Alexandrie: Étude sur les rapports du Christianisme et de la philosophie grecque au II^e siècle* (Paris, 1898). Plutarch was said to have written a work entitled *Stromateis* (Eus. *P.E.* 1.7). Origen also wrote a *Stromateis* but this work is only extant in a few fragments (*In Jo.* 13.298). This work was said to have contained ten books according to Jerome (*Ep.* 70.4).

[39] The controversy is expressed with clarity and brevity in the introduction of C. Mondésert & P. Caster, *Les Stromates. Stromate I, SChr* 30 (Paris, 1951); E.F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 1957), 5–7; A. Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément d' Alexandrie*, *Patristica Sorbonesia* 7 (Paris, 1966), 15–41; W. Wagner, "Another Look at the Literary Problem in Clement of Alexandria's Major Writings", *CH* 37 (1968), 251–260, L. Roberts, "The Literary Form of the *Stromateis*", *SecCent* 1 (1984), 211–22 and E.F. Osborn, *Clement* (2005), 7–16. My intention here is not to reiterate the controversy prior to Osborn's work in 1957, but to take a brief look at what has been said on the issue since then. The chief protagonists in the controversy since de Faye have been P. Wendland and his review of de Faye's book in *ThL* 23 (1898), 653ff.; C. Heussi, "Die *Stromateis* des Clemens Alexandrinus und ihr Verhältnis

the title *Didaskalos*, or propound what ought to be expected from such a work. For a work that claimed to be an account of the methodical and intellectual life, the *Stromateis* was unsystematic and, at times, far too disordered. The treatise concerning teaching is therefore not extant or was never written.[40]

It will be useful then to provide a summary of what has been said over the last fifty years on the problem of identifying the *Stromateis* with the *Didaskalos*, and also what has been said concerning the esoteric content of this treatise. By paying particular attention to *how* it teaches we may be able to determine more accurately *what* it teaches and whether it does so effectively. Given its unsystematic treatment of material, as de Faye points out, it is very difficult to determine with much clarity what exactly Clement has to say on certain issues or to see what he is teaching. But if the treatise is doing more than just offering a clear exposition of certain ideas, and if this is a deliberate ploy by Clement, then we need to concentrate on the method Clement chose to communicate his theology before determining its role as a doctrinal teaching.

1.2.1. *Osborn*[41]

According to E.F. Osborn, the style and thought of the *Stromateis* are deliberately unsystematic in order "to hide the meaning from the

zum *Protreptikos* und *Paedagogos*", *ZWth* 45 (1902), 465–512; P. Collomp, "Une source de Clément d'Alexandrie et des homilies pseudo-clémentines", *RPh* 37 (1913), 11–46; R.B. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism*; W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom* (Göttingen, 1915); F. Pratt, "Projets littéraires de Clément d' Alexandrie", *RSR* 15 (1925), 234–257; J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Stuttgart, 1933); G. Lazzati, *Introduzione allo studio di Clemente Alessandrino* (Milano, 1939); M. Pohlenz, *Klemens von Alexandreia und sein hellenisches Christentum* (Göttingen, 1943); F. Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Clemens Alexandrinus nach seinem Pädagogus* (Diss. Université Grégorienne, Vienne, 1946).

[40] De Faye, *Clément d' Alexandrie*, 45ff., 78–111, 126–48. De Faye suggests that a miscellaneous treatise like the *Stromateis* could not sufficiently fulfil the requirements of a treatise on teaching, yet the preface to Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* provides an interesting insight into this problem. Gellius mentions many "witty captions" of works that are miscellaneous in nature, amongst which both *Strômateis* and *Didaskalika* appear (*Praef.* 7). It is not unprecedented then that a miscellaneous treatise and a work on teaching share the same literary form. Clement himself mentions others who may have provided examples of "enigmatical utterences...whole books that present the mind of the writer veiled". He cites Heraclitus' *On Nature*, Pherecydes of Syros' *Theology*, the poetry of Euphorion, Callimachus' *Causes*, Lycophron's *Alexandra* (*Str.* 5.8.50.2–3). See also A. Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates'*, 101–2.

[41] For the sake of order I will treat each viewpoint according to chronology in this chapter, however, each will dealt with thematically in due course.

unworthy and to reveal it to the worthy. The sophistic quibblers, for whom Clement had little time, would not get very far with the *Stromateis*".[42] As Clement claims:

> Such were the impediments in the way of my writing, and even now I fear, as it is said, "to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot"...But there is an outline in the notes, which have the truth sowed sparse and scattered, that it may escape the notice of those who pick up seeds like jackdaws.[43]

According to Osborn, sophists wishing to glance at the work in order to discredit its teaching will not get to the heart of what is being communicated because of the sheer effort and measure of consideration that must be devoted to it.[44] The sparsity of explicit doctrines contained within the *Stromateis* provides an effective stumbling block to such sophists. One may say that this leaves the *Stromateis* open to attack, since if we take the view that they contain the seeds of truth, then they must of necessity be sown within much that is not true or at least misleading. So be it. Clement's ultimate concern is not with those who only utilise philosophy for the purpose of sophistry, but with the progress of those who truly wish to *know* the true philosophy. He tells us directly that his notes are "patched together" (διεστρωμένα), and by this he indicates the name given to his notes which pass from one thing to another, in a sequence of discussions that indicate one thing whilst demonstrating another.[45] He also tells us that he has said this on many occasions so that those who read them carelessly and without skill will pass over the clue provided by their structure. He quotes Heraclitus' famous saying: "For those, who seek for gold, dig much earth and find little gold", to make clear his intention.[46] Yet despite such obvious clues as to the meaning and purpose of the structure of the notes, he is certain that it is only the "golden race" that will dig to find what is allied to them. In this he believes that the Word will seek out those people through his notes and speak to them. It is the gnostics who are of this golden race, and, in the search for *gnosis*, will persevere through this written labyrinth and advance according to their ability to receive its teach-

[42] Osborn, *Clement* (1957), 7.
[43] *Str.* 1.12.55.3.
[44] See *Str.* 1.9.43.1–3; 6.15.132.5; 7.18.110.4.
[45] *Str.* 4.2.4.1–2.
[46] *Str.* 4.2.4.2.

ings. The Word, like gold hidden among much earth, attracts the true seeker to itself.

Osborn believes that, like the "streams of consciousness" of modernist writing, the *Stromateis* functions through the effective association of disparate ideas rather than through an ordered and systematic teaching:

> The aim is to say something which the ordinary forms of connected description could not say. The technique gives a greater insight into the mind of the writer than any ordinary technique can give . . . His *Stromateis* go beyond the usual disciplines of study and thought and depend upon his fertile imagination as well as on his logical faculty. He wishes to say something which the normal disciplines of thought have failed to say. We learn a lot more about the mind of Clement in the *Stromateis* than we could in a more systematic work.[47]

This gets to the heart of Clement's methodology. It is not that Clement's writing is befuddled, or that he could not produce a systematic treatise on the higher reaches of Christian teaching. Rather, it is exactly the attainment of the higher reaches of knowledge that determine the mode of composition, the form and content of which are conducive to teaching the doctrines of the true philosophy.

The purpose of the *Stromateis* then is both to reveal, "so truth when sought and gained through hard work seems a sweet thing", and to conceal:

> Because great is the danger in betraying the truly ineffable word of the real philosophy to those who wish to speak recklessly and unjustly against everything, and who hurl forth quite inappropriately all sorts of names and words, deceiving themselves and bewitching their followers.[48]

The composition of the *Stromateis* not only ensures that the truth is hidden from those who seek to profane the tradition that Clement claims to be privy to, but also that the difficulty of the search through these barriers of concealment brings about a sweeter result for the real initiate.[49] Those who take the time to look will be rewarded with the depth and richness of the true philosophy.

Osborn makes a further claim then, that the *Stromateis* are not so much unsystematic as 'multi-systematic'. Clement, he says, "will give several

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[47] Osborn, *Clement* (1957), 8.

[48] *Str.* 1.2.20.4–21.3. Osborn's translation (*Clement* [1957], 7).

[49] See *Str.* 7.15.91.3 and *Str.* 5.9.56.5. "Besides, all things that shine through a veil show the truth grander and more imposing; as fruits shining through water, and figures through veils, which give added reflections to them".

different solutions to a specific problem and not indicate an exclusive preference for any".[50] In the end, this preference is up to the student who has worked through Clement's teachings and has been attracted, so to speak, to the Word of God sown within it.[51] As the student sets about associating ideas, harmonising seemingly incongruous material, such discipline increases the mind's scope as it begins to incorporate the entirety of philosophic speculation. "As we might expect", Clement says, "the generative power of the seeds of the doctrines comprehended in this treatise is great in small space, as the 'universal herbage of the field,' as Scripture says. Thus the *Stromateis* of notes have their proper title".[52]

Elsewhere Osborn puts forward a number of views on why the *Stromateis* ought to be considered the proposed *Teacher*.[53] Clement's own internal logic, as it comes down to us in the *Stromateis*, is enough evidence to confirm such a view. 1) The first chapter of the first book of the *Stromateis* is concerned primarily with writing as a method of teaching Christian truth. "There is no point whatever", Osborn claims, "in filling the first chapter of the *Stromateis* with intricate argument in favour of written teaching if the *Stromateis* is not going to teach".[54] 2) The work constitutes an effective method of teaching that Clement himself claims to have received from others. "The *Stromateis* are to preserve this tradition of divine teaching, to revive the recollection of it and to prevent it from being lost". 3) The first chapter attempts to justify the act of writing such things at all, and thus takes a different form from any standard or traditional philosophical discourse. 4) Moreover, the *Stromateis* has "fulfilled" all that was predicted of the *Didaskalos*. It has revealed the opinions of the philosophers, the heretical Gnostics, and shown the true philosophy and gnosis. For Osborn, "there is nothing contrary to the plan and method of Christian teaching in the studied disorder of the *Stromateis*... it has something of the impressionist about

[50] Osborn, *Clement* (1957), 7.
[51] Like the grain of mustard seed of Matt. 13.31; Lk. 13.19. In connection with instruction see *Paid.* 1.11.96.1–2.
[52] *Str.* 4.2.6.1–2.
[53] "Teaching and Writing in the First Chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria", *JTS* 10 (1959), 335–343.
[54] Ibid., 342.

it". 5) Lastly, the work is "designed for concealment…If the *Stromateis* are not the *Didaskalos*, they have nothing to hide".[55]

1.2.2. *Méhat*

A. Méhat summarises the views of de Faye, Bousset, Munck, and Lazzati while offering his own hypotheses on the controversy. Whilst these four scholars agree on the fortuitous order of the material in the *Stromateis*, Méhat disagrees entirely with de Faye's thesis that Clement was incapable of producing a well-ordered composition.[56] Méhat, like Osborn, makes the important point that Clement gives solid reasons for why the *Stromateis* appears as it does.[57] "The composition aims at concealment…The *Miscellanies*, then, study neither arrangement nor diction".[58] Méhat anticipates the criticism that these explanations given by Clement could well have been forged afterwards. He argues that Clement has proved himself capable of composing a well-ordered and traditional piece of philosophical literature, that he also announces how the *Stromateis* will function, and that in order to remain obscure, the *Stromateis* do not say all that they could say.[59] Méhat appears to agree with Osborn's conclusion, and with the view expressed by Tollinton before him, "that there is no sufficient reason to suppose that Clement's great Trilogy was composed in any other order than that in which we possess it".[60]

This is not to say that the *Stromateis* does not contain any arrangement. Méhat suggests that Clement often resists the opportunity to digress from a certain order. He supplies us with 33 passages that demonstrate Clement's refusal to treat certain issues merely at the insistence of the thread of the discussion. He notes that Clement will only treat of certain

[55] Osborn however, takes Mondésert's view that in Clement "there is an esoteric attitude in much that he says…but there is no esoteric doctrine". Cf. C. Mondésert, *Clément d' Alexandrie, Introduction à l'étude de sa pensée religieuse à partir de l'écriture* (Diss. Université de Paris, 1944), 61.

[56] According to Méhat one need only peruse the structure of the preliminary works, the *Protreptikos* and the *Paidagogos*, as well as the small treatise *Q.D.S.* He insists, however, that the last two books of the *Paidagogos* pre-empt the unconventional style of the *Stromateis* (*Étude*, 35).

[57] See his "Les ordres d'enseignement chez Clément d'Alexandrie et Sénèque", *SP* 2/2 (1957), 351–57.

[58] *Str.* 7.18.111.1–3.

[59] *Étude*, 36. This is much the same opinion of J. Patrick, *Clement of Alexandria* (Edinburgh and London, 1914), 15–17.

[60] Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*, vol. 1, 191.

things in due time, expressed by the term καιρός; that is, when it is appropriate to effective teaching.[61] The issues Clement does not treat immediately are dealt with later as his work unfolds. Méhat suggests that although Clement's work is haphazard, it does follow some form of sequence where doctrines are treated in necessary succession, the disruption of which would be catastrophic to the order of teaching. This order is expressed by the Stoic term *akolouthia*, and while it can have different meanings, it is clear from Clement that he used it to refer to the order in which divine teaching must take place.[62] Indeed the truth cannot be attained unless teaching remains faithful to this sequence. "Having then from the abundance of nature the means for examining the statements made, we ought to discover the sequence of the truth (τῆς αληθείας τὴν ἀκολουθίαν)".[63] Why not simply the Truth, Méhat asks? Because as the truth forms a whole, it is necessary for its parts to be discovered one after the other. It is a propaedeutic order that requires the learner to build on what has been learned at the appropriate time and at the appropriate level of gnostic attainment. As Méhat points out, such is the criticism of Clement against the Gnostic heretics, who claim "for themselves the knowledge of the greatest things in the universe, without having learned, or inquired, or laboured, or discovered the *akolouthia*".[64]

According to Méhat, one cannot study the *Stromateis* correctly without discovering this sequence, not merely of the doctrines discussed and of the thought that governs their sequence, but also how that sequence is governed by what is greater than the author of the work. The sequence of truth ultimately comes from the Word of God, after all Clement claims it to be a divine teaching. According to Méhat, although the teaching follows the sequence of truth, one must not take this as any kind of systematic plan. The *akolouthia* does not stipulate that the text be ordered, but only that the work is such that the sequence of the truth is held within it.[65]

[61] *Étude*, 38 n 33 for the many examples Méhat gives to demonstrate this.
[62] See for example *Str.* 1.1.15.2; 1.13.57.3–4; 1.28.179.4; 7.10.59.7.
[63] *Str.* 7.15.91.7.
[64] *Str.* 7.16.103.1.
[65] *Étude*, 40 & 504.

1.2.3. *Fortin*

E.L. Fortin believes that Clement was indeed concealing esoteric teachings in his work.[66] Whilst he does not offer any comment on the controversy surrounding the *Stromateis*, his view is illuminating when considering Clement's methodology and esoteric content. Fortin discusses the differing views concerning the esoteric nature of Clement's work. The authenticity and origin of Clement's claim to a secret tradition have been disputed by many scholars, including R.P.C. Hanson, D. van den Eynde, C. Mondésert, and J. Daniélou, who refuse to take what Clement says at face value.[67] It is a pretension on Clement's part and displays the clear influence of Gnosticism. However, Fortin insists that this view is situated at the opposite extreme to scholars of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, who acknowledged the existence of a secret and oral tradition in the early church. It is a tradition that, as Fortin says, became a "kind of catchall and conveniently appealed to... to establish the antiquity and, by implication, the authenticity of certain doctrines or practices not attested or not clearly attested in the early Christian writings".[68]

Fortin contests that perhaps these points of view suffer from the same drawback in that they both attempt to cut the Gordion knot rather than unravel it. Fortin therefore takes a different approach to the problem that he believes does justice to the truth whilst also remaining consonant with what Clement himself says on the matter. Fortin makes the important point:

> Contrary to what both groups of scholars have assumed, Clement does not state or otherwise imply that there existed two distinct and parallel traditions, one handed down by word of mouth from teacher to student and known only to a small elite within the Church, and another contained in writings that are the property of all. What he does say is that the content of the oral teaching or tradition should find its way into the written text, but in such a way that its presence will be missed by the casual or unprepared reader and sniffed, as it were, by the student who

[66] E.L. Fortin, "Clement and the Esoteric Tradition", *SP* 9 (1966), 41–56.

[67] R.P.C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London, 1962), 26–7; D. van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles* (Paris, 1933), 231–2; C. Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1944), 56–7; J. Daniélou, *Théologie de Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris, 1958), 62–3 and "Aux sources de l'esoterisme Judeo-Chretien", *Arch* 2/3 (1960), 39–46.

[68] "Esoteric Tradition", 42. In particular, Fortin cites the work of E. Schelstrate, *De Disciplina Arcani* (Rome, 1685).

> has somehow been made aware of the deeper issues and who needs only a minimum of guidance in order to arrive at the truth by himself.[69]

The cautious opening to the first book of the *Stromateis*, as Osborn has stated, is due precisely to Clement's view that the unwritten teaching will be revealed (and concealed) "through writing". The *Stromateis* "contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell".[70] Fortin claims that we would be in error to believe that Clement withheld any attempt to convey the truths of doctrines in the *Stromateis*, but that this does not mean that those doctrines are fully explicated. Indeed Clement believed that the greater mysteries preclude their being written and made available to the multitude.[71] But where oral instruction is unavailable a teacher may have to resort to written composition.[72] This according to Fortin, is how we are to understand the *Stromateis*. Ultimately written works, as Clement explicitly states, are only reminders of a teaching that has been communicated orally and for which there is no substitute.[73]

Fortin then explains that since Clement desires to communicate the truth as far as the written form allows, he uses many literary devices for its transmission, such as "elliptical or allusive speech, the judicious selection of words and symbols, apparent contradictions, and deliberate omissions".[74] According to Fortin the *Stromateis* belongs to a special category of books that makes it difficult for readers to interpret. The work's nature is two-fold: to produce a "teaching effect on competent and serious students and a persuasive effect on lesser minds who are either unsuited for such a teaching or unwilling to take the pains to acquire it".[75]

To trace the origins of these ideas, Fortin describes the method espoused in the seventh letter of Plato for communicating matters of the highest knowledge, particularly, as the letter states, where students with a high capacity to receive that knowledge are involved. Fortin writes:

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[69] Ibid., 43 citing *Str.* 1.1.15.1.

[70] *Str.* 1.1.18.1.

[71] *Str.* 1.12.55.3–4.

[72] See *Ecl.* 27.1–5.

[73] "Esoteric Tradition", 46 citing *Str.* 1.1.11.1; 1.1.14.1–3.

[74] Brachyology: *Str.* 1.1.15.1; 1.14.60.2; 2.2.5.3; 5.8.46.1; Symbols and enigmas: *Str.* 2.1.1.2; 5.21.2; 5.9.58.1–6; Untruths: *Str.* 7.9.53.2; Exclusions: *Str.* 1.1.14.1–3; 7.14.88.4.

[75] "Esoteric Tradition", 47.

> A presentation of this kind is accomplished precisely by means of "slight indications" of which Plato speaks and which are both necessary and sufficient for students such as these.[76] Any genuine interpretation of a book written in this manner must of necessity be based on a minute scrutiny of the text and all its peculiarities. The full meaning of that text will reveal itself only if one consents to read it with the "third eye", to adapt an expression from Origen,[77] that is to say, only if one pays the closest attention not only to what the characters say, but to everything they do and for that matter to all the other details of the narrative.[78]

Here Fortin argues for a meticulous attention to detail when studying Clement's writings, based on the notion that esoteric ideas can only be communicated through "slight indications", as Plato's letter states. Such guidance, however brief, suffices for those who "find much in the little",[79] and are spurred on to investigate and discover the truth of things.

In these arguments put forward by Fortin, Clement's writing displays all the qualities of a masterful teaching, but they also set in stark relief the difficulties we incur in studying esoteric teaching. Fortin's view concerning the little guidance necessary for those with a gnostic propensity suggests that students are ultimately asked to make the discoveries of knowledge themselves, and that Clement never does it for them. As "is the case of people who are setting out on a road with which they are unacquainted", Clement writes, "it is sufficient merely to point out the direction. After this they must walk and find out the rest for themselves".[80] Such a statement could only mean that the *Stromateis* is concerned not so much with the clear explication of the doctrines themselves, as it is with the method of putting them within reach of the serious seeker.[81] The dispersal of so many doctrines within the work

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[76] Plato. *Ep* 7.341e: διὰ σμικρᾶς ἐνδείξεως. On the term ἔνδειξις see L. Roberts article, "The Literary Form of the *Stromateis*", 217.

[77] Origen, *CCels*. 6.8. *tertius oculus*. Origen is referring to Plato's prophetic abilities.

[78] "Esoteric Tradition", 52.

[79] *Str.* 4.2.4.2.

[80] *Str.* 4.2.4.3. Also *Str.* 7.14.88.4. This is very close to the Jewish Tannaïtic tradition. As G. Sholem writes: "Tannaïtic tradition has it that a pupil who is found worthy to begin a study of mystical lore is given…only…'beginnings of chapters,' whose function is only to point to the subject matter to be dealt with and leaves to the student the task of proving his understanding": *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1965), 31, cited in M. Smith's *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge MA, 1973), 40.

[81] Cf. *Str.* 7.14.88.4 where Clement points out that the example he has given of the gnostic "is not required to unfold the mystery, but only to express what is sufficient for those who are partakers of knowledge to bring it to mind (ἀνάμνησιν)".

with little systematic guidance causes the keen student to speculate all the more, an exercise that is conducive to spiritual growth. For others, perhaps sceptical, it simply means that Clement busily put down what he did not have time to give full consideration to, and the seeds of truth go unattended.

Clement's method also points to a great difficulty in attempting to locate the esoteric content of the *Stromateis*: he wishes to direct the serious student and deter the sophist. The content therefore can only be located through the speculations of the student who has been shown that direction. He tells us that for those who ask for wisdom he will present things that are fitting so that with the greatest possible ease and with the use of their own ideas, they may discover faith in the truth. Indeed, Paul promises this by becoming "all things to all men", that he may gain all men.[82] A scholarly endeavour to trace this methodology is fraught with difficulty since one is dealing not so much with evidence as it is extant to us in a manuscript, but with much that is theoretical and speculative. In the end this may be exactly how Clement sees the seeds of doctrines; in some sense determined by the initiative of the seeker to make them sprout within the soul, not by what can be explicitly stated or demonstrated in a page of writing. Such a view ultimately requires an experiential interaction with doctrines as they are kindled within the seeker, and offers a very different approach to dogmatic theology as it developed from the fourth century onwards. The development of doctrine as externally defined dogmas rather than inwardly realisable truths appears to be what Clement wishes to prevent, having himself witnessed the same decline in both the Greco-Roman and Hebrew cultures. Clement would have found it surprising, I think, that clear theological definition can improve on the doctrines expressed by Scripture, since doctrine itself requires the intellectual exercise that can only be obtained through speculative hermeneutics. In other words, doctrines must necessarily be obscure in order to train the interpreter to appreciate fully their significance.[83]

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[82] *Str.* 5.3.18.6 citing 1 Cor 9.22.

[83] Such a view recalls the *disciplina arcani*, where doctrines are seen as fully developed within a secret and oral tradition in the early centuries of Christianity. As the entry (s.v. "Disciplina Arcani") in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states: "In recent times the traditional theories [of a *disciplina arcani*] have been generally abandoned. Acceptance of theological development makes them largely superfluous".

1.2.4. *Lilla*

Whilst the controversy lies outside of the parameters of S.R.C. Lilla's study, he does offer an opinion on the matter. He agrees with the conclusions of de Faye, but not with those of Méhat claiming that the *Stromateis* deal with *gnosis* in many sections, but never treats in detail those things we would expect to make up the content of higher knowledge such as cosmology or theology. The mention, in passing, of these things does not give us a strong enough indication of the content of the λόγος διδασκαλικός.[84] His brief conclusion is that Clement's reference to a subsequent work, dealing with cosmology and theology, was probably intended to be the proposed *Teacher*.[85] Understandably, in the little time given to the issue, Lilla gives no account of the various views put forward since the 1950s. He does not refer to Osborn's view of the "multi-systematic" method employed by Clement, nor to taking what Clement claims of his writing at face value as both Osborn and Méhat insist, or to the opinion of Fortin as regards the seventh letter of Plato. The mention "*en passant*" of much of the material in the *Stromateis* could well constitute the "slight indications" the genuine seeker requires to attain knowledge through written composition.

1.2.5. *Ferguson*

J. Ferguson suggests that the *Stromateis* is exactly what the title suggests, a patchwork of notes where Clement stored the material he did not want to forget.[86] Ferguson believes that Clement set a task for himself that he could not complete and that the *Stromateis* represent a collection of material that never coheres as a methodical instruction for those seeking *gnosis*. On occasions Clement mentions his intentions for the *Teacher*, for instance, some account of the first cause,[87] some account of the Greek mysteries,[88] and more on the true Gnostic.[89] However,

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[84] S.R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford, 1971), 189 n. 4.

[85] He cites *Str.* 4.1.3.1–2 as proof of this. I will deal with this passage in chapter five.

[86] J. Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York, 1974), 106. The tone of this passage recalls W.R. Inge's unfavourable account of the possible identification of the *Stromateis* with the *Didiskalos* ("Clement of Alexandria", *CQR* 58 (1904), 348–71, 354).

[87] *Str.* 2.8.37.1.

[88] *Str.* 6.2.4.2–3.

[89] *Str.* 6.18.168.4.

according to Ferguson, these things were postponed and therefore not extant to us, or never written. Moreover, according to Ferguson the full title of the *Stromateis*, the *Miscellany of Gnostic Notes in Accordance with the True Philosophy*, further indicates that these are indeed just "notes" (ὑπομνήματα), *aide-mémoire* written solely for the purposes of collecting loose material. Ferguson speculates on Plato's use of the word ὑπόμνημα in connection with his doctrine of *anamnesis*: the view that knowledge is attained through remembrances (ὑπομνήματα) of that which is real, but concludes that this association with Clement's works is only incidental.[90]

1.2.6. *Roberts*

L. Roberts agrees with Fortin that the *Stromateis* is a difficult literary form to categorise, particularly when it requires the personal investment of the reader in order to understand it.[91] He suggests that in order to read the *Stromateis* effectively the reader has to have the ability to retain the many allusions that Clement makes in order for the whole to be comprehended.[92] The amount of material covered in the text requires a special effort on behalf of the reader to hold it within the memory until such time as it affects the transformation required; not just to understand its implications, but somehow to be the embodiment of those implications. Philosophy contains a hermeneutical challenge and the success or failure of an effective reading of Clement's *Stromaties* is determined by the nature of the transformation of the reader.

This point of view agrees with Fortin's belief that students who are capable of discovering the seeds of truth in the work only require a little guidance in order to begin their investigations. As Clement claims, students who ask of the wisdom that he has, are handed things suitable for them, but only enough to allow them to discover the rest for themselves. It is in this sense that the *Stromateis* cannot be categorised as a prescriptive piece of writing; a written work that requires the reader to carry out what is being described. Rather the work is primarily devoted to fostering the reader's own input into the doctrines dispersed throughout it. It is this personal investment and intellectual capacity that winnows true students from false, and this is its esoteric purpose.

[90] Ferguson directs the reader to Plato *Phdr.* 249c to demonstrate this connection.
[91] L. Roberts "The Literary Form of the *Stromateis*", 213. See *Str.* 7.18.111.3.
[92] Ibid., 220.

Hence, with the authority of the seventh letter behind him, Clement believed that as the secret oral tradition undergoes the transition into a cryptic written tradition, the seeds of truth must remain hidden.[93]

1.2.7. *Le Boulluec*

A. Le Boulluec points out that Clement speaks of two forms of written teaching.[94] The first comes in the form of the Hebrew Scriptures, which are clear to all according to a bare reading and provide the rudiments of the faith. Drawing on the *Shepherd of Hermas*,[95] Clement tells us that this is reading Scripture according to the "letter", rather than reading the hidden meaning according to the "syllables".[96] The Scriptures are also then amenable to figurative expression which gnostics advanced in faith are capable of understanding. Clement introduces the second form of written teaching by drawing on Isaiah 8.1 (LXX), which tells of the prophet being ordered to take "a new book and write in it". This, according to Clement, was the Spirit indicating that through the Scriptures there would come afterwards the "sacred knowledge", which, in the beginning, remained unwritten and only spoken to those who would understand. This unwritten meaning of the written Scripture is what was taught to the apostles and, according to Clement, passed down to him and inscribed by the power of God on new hearts.[97] This requires the skills of those who dedicate the fruits of their labours to Hermes, the god of speech and interpretation.[98] It is this unwritten tradition, according to Le Boulluec, that comes down to Clement, who refers to it as the "seeds of knowledge", which, through the need to be kept hidden, dictate the obscure form of the books of the *Stromateis*. The books attempt to express "the truth, which shows by writing the things that are unwritten".[99]

Le Boulluec believes that Clement's method for writing the *Stromateis* is a result of the prime importance he gives to the way Scripture

[93] *Str.* 1.1.18.1.
[94] "Pour qui, pourquoi, comment? Les 'Stromates' de Clément d'Alexandrie", *Patrimoines, Religions du Livre, Les Prologues* (Paris, 1987), 23–36. I am greatly indebted to the late Prof. Eric Osborn who allowed me the use of his summary of this article as taken from the first chapter of his book, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 2005).
[95] *Vis.* II.1.
[96] *Str.* 6.15.131.1–5.
[97] Also mentioned at *Str.* 6.7.61.3.
[98] *Str.* 6.15.132.1.
[99] *Str.* 1.1.10.1.

communicates its truths. While Clement draws on Plato's *Phaedrus* for the distinguishing of oral and written teaching, Le Boulluec contends that the primacy of the written Scriptures allows him to avoid the pitfalls of writing that Plato indicated. Clement overshadows his Platonic allusions to the relation of teacher to student and the dangers of writing[100] with Scriptural metaphors of the spiritual planting of God. Hence Clement can defend the use of writing by recourse to Scripture in a way that Plato could not. The written transmission of this unwritten tradition has its testimony in the figurative style of Scripture.

1.2.8. *Kovacs*

J.L. Kovacs has discussed Clement's teaching, particularly his remarkable ability to teach at many different levels at the same time.[101] As a teacher, Clement was aware of the need to direct his curriculum at the appropriate level of the student. Kovacs maintains that, like the parabolic and symbolic nature of Scripture, Clement's works can be understood at various levels by varying degrees of gnostic sensibility.[102] Ultimately, however, it is capable of communicating the highest truths for those students capable of apprehending them.[103] The pedagogue even has the prerogative of telling "noble lies" for the expedient purpose of training certain souls that are not fully prepared for the whole truth.[104] Though she never states outright whether or not she believes that the *Stromateis* is the *Didaskalos*, she writes:

> As the logos has carefully designed the literal and symbolic levels of Scripture so that the same text can simultaneously teach students on quite different levels, so Clement chooses the versatile genre of the miscellany. This form allows him to move from topic to topic in an endless variety, in its variegated chapters nourishing different sorts of students, while dropping hints about the highest lessons that only the most advanced students will notice and pursue further.[105]

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[100] See *Phdr*. 274b–277a.

[101] J.L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria", *JECS* 9/1 (2001), 3–25.

[102] Cf. Méhat, *Étude*, 530.

[103] "Divine Pedagogy", 9. Cf. Plato. *Rep.* 535a–536d.

[104] Ibid., 18–19. Cf. *Str.* 7.9.53.1–5.

[105] Ibid., 25. She cites a number of instances of Clement's gnostic exegesis in her article "Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria's Interpretation of the Tabernacle", *SP* 31 (1997), 414–37. On the connection to the way Scripture teaches at various levels, see Fortin, 'Esoteric Teaching', 47.

Kovacs's conclusions epitomise the more positive and traditional reading of the *Stromateis*. She acknowledges, though less explicitly than Fortin, that the methodology employed in the *Stromateis* only 'drops hints' about the highest lessons and that it does not readily make itself coherent to exoteric interpretation. The hints are enough to sort out "advanced students" from those who cannot or will not bother with such things. The highest lessons are esoteric by definition, and one must be cautious when considering what Clement 'drops hints' about and follow them through to their logical conclusion. Kovacs's stark comparison between Scripture and the miscellaneous genre of the *Stromateis* is telling and points the way to a significant expansion of the interpretive methods we apply to Clement's works. Much can be determined about the *Stromateis* from this view alone, though Kovacs clearly has Osborn and Méhat's viewpoints in mind. Coupled with Fortin and Roberts' views, I believe that considerable advance can be made in understanding Clement's intentions for the *Stromateis*.

1.3. *Conclusion*

With a positive view of the *Stromateis* predominating since the 1950s, Clement's works need considerable interpretive attention. Like Scripture, which provides Clement with testimony to the power of written teaching (as Le Boulluec suggests), the *Stromateis* can be read according to the letter or according to the syllables; that is, the hidden meanings that require interpretation. There is a consistency about the scholarship I have reviewed in this chapter, which suggests that Clement desired the *Stromateis* to appear exactly in the form that we have it and that due consideration be given to its miscellaneous format to find the arrangement of its teaching. It will mean drawing on the most scanty of evidence, according to Fortin and Kovacs, making the scholar's position highly tenuous. As scholars we must remember that we are not initiates and this position itself precludes certain insights into Clement's works. For instance we are not undergoing the training in virtues that Clement sets out in the *Paidagogos*, nor are we as easily convinced by scanty evidence; such evidence may be transformative to the initiate, but grounds for scepticism for the scholar. This puts the scholar on awkward ground when trying to establish how the *Stromateis* functions. This is made evident by Kovacs' view that the work acts as a sorting ground for advanced students. Should we add scholars to this? Does our scepticism preclude us from identifying the exact purpose of this enigmatic work? Is the *Stromateis* too esoteric for scholars, particularly when one of our major tools of engagement, scepticism, is being placed in doubt as an effective instrument for fathoming Clement's work? Roberts' article would suggest that this is the case. Osborn and Méhat suggest that we take a close look at what the *Stromateis* actually delivers, while Lilla and Ferguson's views, though negative, do offer interesting grounds for investigation.

With the exception of Fortin, however, where scholars have defended the *Stromateis* as a teaching, they have done so without determining the extent to which it can be considered an esoteric work. Does it contain the seeds of knowledge that Clement claims? How far can it be said to be the means of taking the initiate to the highest insight, or *gnosis*, given the miscellaneous form in which it appears? These questions require us to return to the traditional interpretation of the *Stromateis* as the third phase of Clement's divine pedagogy and attempt to trace the direction of its esoteric content.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NUMBER AND SEQUENCE OF THE WORKS

2.1. *Introduction*

The *Protreptikos* and the *Paidagogos* have passed through the ages as an account of first two stages of Clement's divine pedagogy. However, the role that the *Stromateis* plays in that pedagogy has been the subject of much controversy. As we pointed out in the last chapter, allocating the *Stromateis* as the third and final stage of Clement's pedagogy has become highly problematic. Generally the scholarship surrounding this issue has dealt with whether the material contained in the books can constitute a gnostic teaching, and with the way that material is conveyed in the literary form of the *Stromateis*. However, there is another way of addressing the problem that requires us to view the works from a different angle; the number of books contained in the works, particularly the *Stromateis*, and the sequence in which they are arranged.

We can ask why it is, for instance, that there are eight books of the *Stromateis* and not seven or any other number for that matter. We can ask why the books appear in the order that they do, particularly in regards to the awkward relation between the seventh and eighth. If we can find evidence within the works themselves to support the current number and sequence of the works, this will go some way to suggesting that as a whole the *Stromateis* appear today in the format in which Clement first wished them to appear. If there is evidence that confirms the number and sequence of the work as a whole, this will go some way to refuting the idea that the *Stromateis* is simply a scrapbook of notes with no system or order. It will suggest to us that despite the chance arrangement of the material within it, there is an ordered structure to the teaching. Further to this, by coming to a conclusion about the overall structure of the books of the *Stromateis*, we may also be able to infer something about its relation to the other two works, the *Protreptikos* and the *Paidagogos*.

The current number of eight books of the *Stromateis* and the sequence in which they appear today originates from an eleventh century manuscript.[1] Scholars agree that the books were most likely written at some point between Clement taking over as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria (*c*. 190), and the date of his death some time prior to 215. The lack of Philonic citations in the last three books of the *Stromateis* has led some scholars to believe that Clement composed the first five at Alexandria when he had direct access to a scriptorium. This suggests 190 to be the most plausible date for him to have put pen to paper. It is believed then that the final three books were composed after Clement departed from Alexandria during the persecutions of Severus in 202–3.[2] There is only one small piece of evidence from Clement that the *Stromateis* consisted of eight books, or at least more than seven when, late in the seventh book he speaks of a "succeeding *Stromateis*" (προϊέναι Στρωματέα).[3] Explicit reference to the eight books only comes a century later than their supposed composition when Eusebius mentions it.[4] This is helpful but not conclusive.

What makes it difficult for scholars to be convinced of the current number and sequence of the books is that the last book is a fragmented treatise on logic that appears to bear little relation to the previous seven. Westcott suggests that "at a very early date the logical introduction to the *Outlines*[5] was separated from the remainder of the work, and added to the MSS. of the *Miscellanies*, and scribes supplied the place of the eighth according to their pleasure".[6] This offers us one possible answer to a difficult problem, but one that could be discounted if evidence within the works could support the number and sequence of the works as they currently stand, and if it can be demonstrated that Clement wanted the *Stromateis* to culminate in a treatise on logic.

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[1] *Cod. Flor.* (*Laur.* V.3) with the first leaf missing and which also contains the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and *Eclogae Propheticae* (Westcott s.v. "Clement of Alexandria"). See P. Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clement of Alexandria", *VC* 30 (1976), 268–302, esp. 268–69.

[2] See p. 10 n. 18 above.

[3] *Str*. 7.15.89.1. See P. Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*", 290. Méhat translates this in two ways: "the following *Stromateis*" (le stromata suivant) (*Études*, 169) and "the remainder of the *Stromateis*" (le reste du Stromate) (*Études*, 307).

[4] *HE*. 6.13. Jerome also mentions eight books of Clement's *Stromateis* (*Ep*. 70.4) and in the ninth century Photius also states that the *Stromateis* contain eight books (*Bibl. Cod.* 111) though he is most likely working from Eusebius and/or Jerome.

[5] The *Hypotypôseis*, another work by Clement said to have contained eight books but which is only extant in fragments. These fragments are preserved for the most part in Eusebius' *HE*.

[6] Westcott s.v. "Clement of Alexandria".

What we currently have in regard to the number and sequence of the three main extant works is one book of the *Protreptikos*, the three books of the *Paidagogos*, and the eight books of the *Stromateis*. Though Clement gives us enough explicit reference that there were meant to be at least eight books of the *Stromateis*,[7] he never states that it will contain eight. However, given that he is allusive and quite willing to express himself in enigmas, allegories, symbols and the like, to conceal and reveal his teaching, it may be possible to demonstrate that the sequence of his teaching, his theoretical soteriology, is harmonious with the number and sequence of the works.

2.2. *Writing and Teaching*

In the *Eclogae Propheticae*, a work not generally considered part of the three-fold divine pedagogy represented by the *Protreptikos*, the *Paidagogos*, and the *Stromateis*, Clement discusses the relationship between written composition and teaching. He proposes that the ancients (πρεσβύτεροι) did not concern themselves with writing what they handed down (παραδόσεως) in their teachings.[8] Clement suggests that they did not see the function of composition (συντακτικόν) and the department of teaching (διδασκαλικόν) as being related and therefore gave way to those who did. The ancient teachers taught through speech, which is often quick and impulsive, and which the listener must keep up with to maintain understanding. However, that which is written down is met with calculated examination and, as the "written confirmation of teaching (ἔγγραφος διδασκαλίας βεβαίωσις)", is worthy of the upmost care. What is put in trust to writing must be done so in the full knowledge that the tradition passed on will become public and passed on for posterity. Clement concludes by using the analogy of a magnet. The written work will repel those who do not have an affinity with what is being taught, and attract those who do and are capable of comprehending it.

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[7] *Str.* 1.29.182.3 mentions the first; 3.18.110.3 mentions the third; 5.14.97.1 & 6.6.45.5 mentions the second; 5.14.141.4 mentions the fifth; 6.1.1.1 mentions the sixth and seventh; 7.18.111.4 mentions the seventh; *Str.* 7.15.89.1. refers to a succeeding *Stromateis*. The fourth and the eighth are not explicitly mentioned, though the fourth is inferred by the mentioning of a fifth.

[8] *Ecl.* 27.1–5.

The analogy of the magnet here recalls the passage from the seventh book of the *Stromateis*: "As, then, the smallest particle of iron is moved by the spirit of the Heraclean stone [the magnet] when diffused over many iron rings; so also, attracted by the Holy Spirit, the virtuous are added by affinity to the first abode, and the others in succession down to the last".[9] This it self is an allusion to Plato's *Ion*[10] where Socrates describes how the poetic muse channels the poet and puts divine power into those who hear her poetry. This then inspires and permeates all those who come into contact with that power, just as the magnet diffuses its power of attraction through iron rings. It is a form of poetic possession, which Clement appropriates as a way of expressing the power of the Holy Spirit to attract all things to the "first abode".[11] In the passage from the *Eclogae*, Clement transfers this testimony of the power of the poetic and oral tradition of the elders, to the transmission of teaching through the written word. The same power of affinity that operated in poetic inspiration will now act as a method of distinguishing readers of books that communicate the Holy Spirit from those who are not capable of comprehending or receiving that power.

This demonstrates a fundamental change in the way esoteric teaching was transmitted. As Fortin has claimed, Clement did not imply the existence of two parallel traditions, one handed down by word of mouth to an elite group within the church, the other contained in writings that are the property of all. Clement claimed that the oral tradition had found its way into written form, which, though available to all, only attracts those who are fully capable of comprehending it, leaving the unprepared reader heedless of its ultimate content.[12]

Clement, unlike the elders who did not concern themselves with writing, appears to regard himself as one of those who have a "natural turn" for teaching through "written composition". This new emphasis on writing, however, entails for Clement the close connection between the "function of composition" and the "form of teaching". It is difficult to say what Clement means by "composition" (συντακτικόν) exactly. The only other use of this word in Clement's time comes from Theon of Smyrna who used it in reference to musical composition and to

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9 *Str.* 7.2.9.4.
10 533d–e.
11 Most probably a reference to the Lord's mansion of John 14.2 as Stählin points out (*GCS* III.8.24).
12 "Esoteric Tradition", 43.

bringing harmony out of what is inharmonious.[13] This use of the term is highly suggestive of the *akolouthia*, the "sequence of truth" that Méhat has drawn our attention to. As Méhat points out, the arrangement of Clement's writing does not have to be a systematic treatment of ideas for it to be classed as teaching. It is for the students to discover the sequence that allows them to receive certain truths at a time when they are ready to receive them. This sequence may refer to the arrangement of ideas, chapters, or books into a systematic method of teaching, and it may refer to the overall structure and number of the works within which so much material is dispersed with little internal systematic treatment. If this is the case then the order of teaching most likely refers to the written composition of the whole teaching, which provides an overall framework within which the disordered material of the *Stromateis* is placed. Clement suggests that although the notes of his *Stromateis* are haphazard[14] and "not artfully constructed for display",[15] they are nonetheless, a "systematic arrangement of chapters (κεφαλαίων συστηματικὴν ἔκθεσιν)".[16] Such statements force us to analyse the works in the understanding that they are systematic in one sense, but haphazard in another, or rather, that their overall composition brings harmony to much that is inharmonious.

2.3. *The Soteriological Sequence*

There is further evidence to suggest that there is overall arrangement to Clement's works. His soteriological sequence, that is, the order in which the initiate ascends to God and is saved, appears to contain a complex

[13] "The Pythagoreans, whose feelings Plato often adopted, also define music as the perfect union of contrary things, unity within multiplicity, even accord within discord. For music does not only compose (συντακτικήν) rhythm and melody, it puts order into the whole system (παντὸς συστήματος)". Theon of Smyrna, *Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato*, tr. R. & D. Lawlor (San Diego, 1979), 7. Cf. the symphony of the universe as Clement sees it (*Protr.* 1.4.4–6.1).

[14] *Str.* 6.1.2.1.

[15] *Str.* 1.1.11.1.

[16] *Str.* 1.1.14.2. The "chapters" which make up this systematic arrangement are studied by Méhat (*Études*, 179–205). He suggests that the *Stromateis* is a great work of compilation, whose chapters allow him to deal with an enormous array of material unified under its headings. Thus: "Ces souvenirs sont ceux d'une mémoire qui n'a pas constitué ses trésors au hasard, qui n'a pas été sollicitée au hasard, et ce sont des souvenirs rafraîchis par des notes et sans doute des ouvrages dont le compilateur savait d'avance ce qu'ils lui apporteraient."

number symbolism. This is not unique to Clement since Pythagoreans, Platonists, Philo, and earlier fathers regarded number symbolism as a fitting instrument for spiritual contemplation.[17] In the seventh book of the *Stromateis* for example, Clement speaks of a soteriological sequence consisting of a number of transformations:

> [I]n my opinion, the first saving change (μεταβολὴ σωτήριος) is that from heathenism to faith... and the second, that from faith to knowledge. And the latter passes through in love, hence loving and loved, knower and known stand together. And this being the case, one has already attained the condition of "being equal to the angels (ἰσάγγελος)". Accordingly, after the highest eminence in the flesh, always changing for the better, he presses onward to our father's court, through the holy seventh day (διὰ τῆς ἁγίας ἑβδομάδος) to the Lord's own mansion; to be a light, abiding, and continuing eternally, altogether in everyway immutable.[18]

Here, there is a saving change from heathenism to faith and a second from faith to knowledge that "passes through in love" to a point where the initiate becomes equal to the angels. It is at this point that he posits a third stage consisting of a flight through the holy seventh day, which culminates in the Lord's mansion. It is difficult to determine a specific number pattern from this passage alone, especially the transition from knowledge through the holy septenary to the Lord's mansion. It would appear to suggest two initial saving changes and a third consisting of seven stages. However, does the mansion sit at the seventh stage of the septenary, or directly above that in the eighth?

An answer to this is proffered in the sixth book of the *Stromateis* where we are told that chosen souls do not remain in the repose of "seventh day" (ἑβδομάδι), but are assimilated into the ogdoad (ἐις ὀγδοαδικῆς) to devote themselves to the vision (ἐποπτείᾳ) of unceasing contemplation.[19] Here, after the repose of seventh day, alluding most probably to Genesis 2.2,[20] initiates proceed to the eighth grade where they experience the highest vision of the divine, the *epopteia*. This progression from the seventh to the eighth grade provides us with a more concrete account

[17] For example, Irenaeus (*Adv. haer* 3.11.8) who believed that because there were four zones in the world and four winds, it was therefore "fitting" (τό πρέπον) that there could only be four Gospels. On the aesthetic importance of proportion and appropriateness in Greek thought see M. Pohlenz, "τὸ πρέπον: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des griechischen Geistes", *NAWG—Philologisch-historische Klasse* 1 (1933), 53–93 and E.F. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge, 2001), 18–20.

[18] *Str.* 7.10.57.4–5.

[19] *Str.* 6.14.108.1. Cf. *Exc.* 80.1–2 and Plato *Symp.* 209e–212a.

[20] According to Descourtieux, *SChr*, 446, 276–77.

of the movement that takes place beyond the first two saving changes mentioned above. The soul passes through the holy septenary and into the Lord's mansion in the eighth grade.[21] The Lord's mansion is then the culmination of a sequence which can be numbered thus: 1) the conversion from heathenism to faith, 2) a conversion from faith to knowledge, and 3) a conversion consisting of seven stages which culminate in the Lord's mansion in the eighth.

2.3.1. *The Jewish Model*

In the fourth book of the *Stromateis*, Clement uses number symbolism in his account of the high priest's entry into the tabernacle. His exegesis revolves around Ezekiel 44.9 and 25–27, that the true priests of God are those who are pure in heart and who, like the Levites, purify themselves for seven days.[22] In imitation of the high priest, the gnostic experiences a blissful thanksgiving when the soul achieves propitiation in the ogdoad after seven periods of purification.[23] The periods of purifying the soul and the days in which the world was made are analogous here and Clement connects the Jewish propitiation (ἱλασμός) with faith in the Gospel and with the Greek idea of the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις).[24] The seven periods of purification are analogous to the passage through the holy septernary mentioned earlier, which culminates in the Lord's mansion where the soul enjoys the *epopteia*.

As is clear from this, Clement's model for spiritual ascent is chiefly taken from the Levitical ritual concerning propitiation on the Jewish Day of Atonement (*yôm kippur*). The Day of Atonement ends the festival of the ten Days of Penitence at the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Ezekiel tells us that after the high priest spends seven days purifying the altar of God within the tabernacle he will make propitiation on

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[21] The repose of the "spiritual" on the Lord's Day according to *Exc.* 63.1.

[22] *Str.* 4.25.157.3–159.3.

[23] For other examples of the number seven in connection with purification and the trials of the "just man" (δίκαιος) see *Str.* 4.17.109.2–3 and the whole passage from *Str.* 5.14.106.2 to 108.3. *Str.* 6.7.59.4 also refers to being purified in earth seven times as mentioned in Psalms 12.

[24] Clement is here referring to the notion that the restoration of all things takes place after the planets have completely realigned themselves. Cf. Plato *Tim.* 39d; *Ax.* 370b; Nemesius *De nat. hom.* 309,5–311,2. Elsewhere he claims: "And they [the Greeks] called eight (ὀγδοάδα) a cube, counting the fixed sphere along with the seven revolving ones, by which is produced 'the great year', as a kind of period of recompense (ἀνταποδόσεως) of what has been promised" (*Str.* 6.16.140.2). The *apokatastasis* will be discussed in the last chapter.

the eighth day.[25] However, these eight days constitute the last of the ten days of the penitential festival.[26] The first two days of this festival are set aside for the celebration of *rôsh ha-shana*, the festival of New Year.[27] The Jewish ritual provides Clement with a numerical sequence for his soteriological ascent through the seven planetary spheres.

The ten-day schema is also important when considering the number symbolism of Clement's interpretation of the tabernacle. His interpretation is borrowed for the most part from Philo's *De Vita Mosis*,[28] but he does modify it to his own needs. Clement mentions that there were "seven circuits (ἑπτά περίβολοι)" that surrounded the tabernacle's outer covering, forming a "barrier of popular unbelief…keeping back those in the surrounding space".[29] While it is difficult to say whether or not these circuits represent actual physical precincts surrounding the tabernacle or have some figurative meaning, the circuits appear to set up a definite scheme in Clement's soteriology. *Figure 1* is a diagrammatical representation of the tabernacle and its surrounding circuits as found in chapter six of the fifth book of the *Stromateis*:

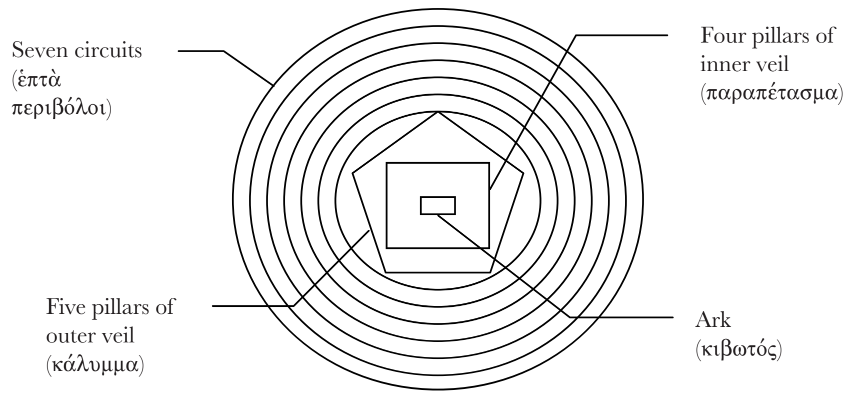

Fig. 1. A diagram of the tabernacle and its surrounding circuits described in chapter six of the fifth book of the *Stromateis*.

[25] Ez 43.25–27. Cf. Mishna *Yoma* 1–2.

[26] Cf. Lev 16.29–30; 23.27; Num 29.7.

[27] Lev 23.24.25 only mentions one day of celebration. The two-day celebration comes about by the delay in communicating the arrival of the new moon to Israelites of the Diaspora. See H. Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals: History and Observance* (New York, 1962), 112–18.

[28] As demonstrated by Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 172–181 and van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria*, 116–47.

[29] *Str.* 5.6.32.2 and 33.3. Van den Hoek believes that these "tantalising" circuits "do not appear in any other source known to us" (*Clement of Alexandria*, 119). Le Boulluec

We can see the seven circuits surrounding the five pillars of the outer covering of the tabernacle (*pentagon*), then the four pillars of the inner sanctuary called the adytum or Holy of Holies (*square*), with the Ark of the Covenant at its centre (*rectangle*). If we count in from the seven circuits to the five pillars, the eighth step takes the initiate through the outer covering of the tabernacle. A further two thresholds have to be passed if one is to proceed into the adytum and open the ark itself. If this is the case then the ark is the tenth step if one counts from the outer circuit inwards.

Clement tells us that the seven circuits were "made mention of among the Hebrews",[30] suggesting that it is an oral tradition that he is appealing to. This may have come from the oral material concerning rituals that ultimately went into the formation of the *Mishna*,[31] since the account of the Day of Atonement from the book of *Kelim* mentions "ten degrees of holiness" that culminate in the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem.[32]

This number symbolism is also born out in Clement's cosmology. In his account of the high priest's entry into the tabernacle, Clement claims that the seven stones on the high priest's robe symbolise the seven planets and, importantly, the different stages of salvation for the soul.[33] As the high priest enters the adyton he discards this robe and puts on one specifically for the Holy of Holies itself. The discarding of the robe figuratively represents the soul's passage beyond the seven planets, which measure the course of time, and its entrance into the eternal

(*SChr* 279, 135), however, claims that the circuits or precincts are made mention of in a number of sources: *II Macc*. 6.4; Josephus *Bell. Jud*. 5.187; Philo *Mos.* ii. 231; *Abr.* 128; *Legat.* 212; Mishna *Kelim* 1.8. However, despite these sources referring to circuits or precincts around the tabernacle, none of them makes specific reference to their being seven in number.

[30] *Str.* 2.7.32.2.

[31] The redaction of the Jewish oral teaching entitled the *Mishna* is slightly later in time than Clement's works (*c*. 229 CE). Though it is a Palestinian text, Clement may have been familiar with its contents in light of the time he spent in Palestine where he reports to have heard a Hebrew speak (*Str.* 1.1.11.2). Indeed this Hebrew was one of the teachers for whom Clement had great respect. Some scholars posit that the Palestinian is most likely someone of Greco-Roman background, possibly Theophilus of Caesarea or Theodotos the Gnostic (E.F. Osborn, "Teaching and Writing", 337 and M. Caster *SChr* 30, 51 n. 4, who both work from G. Bardy, "Aux origines de l'école d'Alexandrie", *RSR* 27 (1937), 65–90 at 71ff.). Others believe it to be Pantaenus himself (J. Paget, "Clement of Alexandria and the Jews", *SJTh* 51 (1998), 86–97).

[32] Mishna *Kelîm* 1.6–9.

[33] *Str.* 5.6.37.1–3.

and noetic world of the Holy of Holies.[34] They also correspond with the initiate's flight through the holy septenary. We are also told that the seven planets are symbolised by the *menorah*, or seven-branched lamp: a central stalk with three on each side symbolising the sun in the midst of the planets. Drawing from Philo, Clement places the lamp between the inner and outer coverings of the tabernacle, since the soul leaves the physical world behind and enters the Holy of Holies representing the eternal noetic world.[35]

Elsewhere Clement gives a brief description of the ten divisions of the cosmos. He says that the first division consists of the four elements, "put in one place for equal interchange", by which he means the earth, and then the seven wandering planets, followed by "the one that does not wander", by which he means the fixed sphere. Above this, he says, is the perfect number, the tenth division where the soul attains knowledge of God the Maker of the creation below Him.[36] In the context of the tabernacle the initiate is within the Holy of Holies itself and has access to the Ark or has actually opened it; either way, the initiate is free to contemplate the divine ideas of God.

The similarities between the ten Days of Penitence and Clement's description of the tabernacle suggest a familiarity with Jewish ritual outside of the Scriptural and Philonic accounts. The two-day festival

[34] *Str.* 5.6.39.3. Van den Hoek claims that the ark is a "symbol" of the noetic world, citing Philo's *Mos.* ii.95 and *QEx* ii.68ff. (*Clement of Alexandria*, 130–31). However, Philo also states that it is the inner sanctuary (*aduton*) in which the Ark is placed that "symbolically represents the realm of mind" (*Mos*. ii.82). I am inclined to say that Clement saw the adytum or Holy of Holies as the noetic world, and that the "things recorded on (ἐπὶ) the sacred Ark signify the world of thought" as well. This would suggest that whatever lies within the inner sanctuary, including the depictions on the Ark, are representative of the noetic realm, but this does not include the actual contents of the Ark which are of a higher order altogether. The passage reads: τά τε ἐπὶ τῆς ἁγίας κιβωτοῦ ἱστορούμενα μηνύει τὰ τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου καὶ ἀποκεκλεισμένου τοῖς πολλοῖς (*Str.* 5.6.35.5). Clement's account of the tabernacle agrees with this interpretation, more so than if we equate the Ark itself with the intellectual world (see *Str.* 5.6.33.2; 5.6.34.7; 5.6.39.3–4; *Exc.* 27.1–3). The Ark constitutes the "plenitude of Christ" (*Str.* 5.10.64.4) that is not only above space and time, but also beyond name and conception (νόησις) (*Str.* 5.11.71.5).

[35] Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra notes the similarities between *Str*. 5.6.39.3–40.3 and *Exc*. 27 and concludes that Clement is influenced as much by Valentinian as by Philo for his imagery of the high priest's entry into the Holy of Holies. However, he believes that Clement was less interested in furthering our understanding of Yom Kippur than in using the ritual as an image for initaion for the different levels of Christian gnosis (*The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: the Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the fifth century*, WUNT 163, Tubingen, 2003), 240–243.

[36] *Str.* 2.11.51.1–2.

of the Jewish New Year corresponds with the first two saving changes of Clement's soteriological sequence, the neophyte who converts from heathenism to faith, and then receives preparatory training in that faith in order to receive knowledge. The seven periods of purification accord with the attainment of knowledge and passage through the holy septenary, whilst the Day of Atonement itself corresponds with attaining the eighth grade. Having entered the Holy of Holies the initiate, like the high priest, can open the Ark of the Covenant.

One more thing needs to be pointed out concerning this sequence. If we take it that there are ten steps in the soteriology then the scheme as a whole would read thus: three saving changes from heathenism to faith, from faith to knowledge, and from knowledge to the Lord's mansion. This would consist of ten stages, the last of which is the eighth sphere or ogdoad. If this was Clement's intention, then there are three numbers in this sequence 3, 10 and 8, which he and the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* before him refer to as having crucial soteriological importance. In the sixth book of the *Stromateis* he quotes Genesis 14.14, which speaks of Abraham numbering the servants born in his house at 318 (τιή). The *Tau* is a type of the lord's sign,[37] and the *Iota* and the *Eta* indicate the Saviour's name,[38] suggesting that Abraham's servants were already saved.[39] Clement provides no reason as to why three hundred is important other than to say that it is three by one hundred. He says, however, that ten is the perfect number and that eight is the first cube or cubic number, which is equal in length, breadth and depth. The three numbers signify Jesus Christ, and, according to Old Testament typology, salvation for the servants of Abraham. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate that Clement should incorporate the numbers 3, 10, and 8 into his soteriological sequence.

2.3.2. *The Mystagogy*

In 1958 Morton Smith claimed to have discovered a letter ascribed to Clement of Alexandria at a monastry in Mar Saba outside of Jerusalem. The letter, he claimed, was written on the blank pages at the back of a 17th century edition of Ignatius' work and was said to have told of a

[37] The *tau* (T) signifying the cross.

[38] Ιη as in Ἰησους. See also *Str.* 6.16.145.7.

[39] *Str.* 6.11.84.1–6. The *Epistle of Barnabas* speaks of Abraham as receiving the "doctrines of the three letters (τριῶν γραμμάτων δόγματα)" (9.7–8).

'secret Gospel of Mark' that had been falsified by the Carpocratians to further their own doctrines. Smith's contention that this material dates back to an original Aramaic version of Mark which served as a source for the canonical Gospel's of Mark and John did not find much favour amongst scholars.[40] This has been fuelled by the absence of the original document, since all that remains are Smith's photographs of the letter, the original having disappeared from Mar Saba. Nevertheless, this letter sheds further light on the sequence we are referring to here. It speaks of a mystagogy of "seven veils" that conceal the inner sanctum of the truth contained in the gospel. Smith supposes that these veils may be a reference to the seven circuits surrounding the tabernacle that Clement mentions in the fifth book of the *Stromateis*. In connection with this he cites the *Babylonian Talmud*, which mentions seven curtains for the seven gates to the temple in Jerusalem[41] and he also connects this to the seven seals of the book held by the Lamb of God in Revelation 5.1.[42] The letter says that Mark composed "a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected",[43] and continues:

> Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching (τὴν ἱεροπηαντικὴν διδασκαλίαν) of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue (μυσταγωγήσειν) lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary (ἄδυτον) of that truth hidden by seven veils (τῆς ἑπτάκις κεκαλυμμένης ἀληθείας).[44]

Smith points out that κεκαλυμμένης, here translated as 'veils', is the term used by Clement to refer to the outer-covering of the tabernacle and also to the concealed nature of the books of the *Stromateis*.[45] However, the seven veils mentioned here surround the inner sanctuary, the adyton, not the tabernacle or temple (ὁ νεώς) as a whole as mentioned

[40] See Stephen Carlson's *The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith's Invention of Secret Mark* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005). See also M. Smith "Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade", *HTR* 75/4 (1982), 449–61 who names Kümmel, Murgia, Musurillo, and Quesnell as doubting the leter's authenticity. According to Smith an overwhelming majority of scholars agree that the letter is by Clement.

[41] *Bavli Ketabôt* 106a.

[42] M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 40–1.

[43] I.22. Cf. Eusebius who attributes to Clement the now famous saying that John had written a "spiritual Gospel (πνευματικὸν ἐυαγγέλιον)".

[44] I. 23–27 (Smith's translation).

[45] *Str.* 1.1.18.1; 1.2.20.1.

in the fifth book.[46] If the veils mentioned in the letter surround the inner and not the outer sanctuary then they equate with the seven stages of purification of which we have been speaking and which take the initiate fully into the Holy of Holies rather than the seven circuits which only take the initiate to the outer covering of the tabernacle. They constitute the last seven stages of the ascent and not the first as represented by the circuits. Strictly speaking the seven circuits do not represent the purificatory process of the gnostic or high priest, but the "barrier of popular unbelief",[47] which stands outside the outer covering of the tabernacle and which cannot, therefore, represent what is being called mystagogic in the letter. The seven veils of the mystagogy refer more probably to the purificatory stage of Clement's soteriology, the holy septenary that leads to the ogdoad.

The confusion concerning the seven circuits and seven veils poses another interesting conundrum. If the letter is spurious, as some scholars believe, the author wrote it without the understanding that Clement distinguishes the inner sanctuary from the tabernacle as a whole, and that the seven circuits only lead to the outside of the whole structure. The letter concerning the secret gospel supports the internal evidence of the *Stromateis* without the supposedly spurious author knowing it. This would suggest authentic Clementine material.

I suggest then that the last seven stages of Clement's soteriology constitute the mystagogy that is referred to in the letter concerning the secret Gospel of Mark. Clement tells us that the Saviour himself initiates us into the mysteries, and freely uses the language of the Greek mysteries to do so.[48] Further evidence to confirm this position can be found in Clement's account of Genesis 22.3–4, Abraham's search for an altar on which to sacrifice his son Isaac. Clement allegorises the three days in which Abraham searched for the alter believing that the first day constitutes the sight of "beautiful things", the second "the soul's best desire", and the third when the "mind sees spiritual things" where the eyes of thought are opened by the Teacher (διδασκάλου) who rose on the third day.[49] Clement proffers the idea that the three days may

[46] *Str.* 5.6.32.2.
[47] *Str.* 5.6.33.3–4.
[48] Cf. *Str.* 4.25.162.3.
[49] *Str.* 5.11.73.1–74.1.

refer to the mystery of the "seal",[50] but he suggests that it is here that the soul sees the *akolouthia* which leads to the place that "contains all things universally" which Plato had called the realm of ideas.[51] This begins the mystagogic stage of his ascent represented by Abraham being initiated (μυσταγωγεῖται) by an angel. This sequence would appear to correspond with the last phase of Clement's soteriological sequence. We can also note the role that angels play in this process and which also appeared in the description of the soteriological ascent to the Lord's mansion where souls become equal to the angels.[52]

The mystagogic sequence appears again in a discussion of the passage from 2 Corinthians 12.2–4 concerning the man who is caught up into the third heaven and who heard unutterable things. Clement suggests that this passage demonstrates the impossibility of expressing God. Yet he also suggests that if the man does begin to speak above the third heaven, which is usually unlawful, it becomes "lawful for those to initiate elect souls in the mysteries there (θέμις τοῖς ἐκεῖ μυσταγωγοῦσιν τὰς ἐχειλεγμένας ψυχάς)".[53] This passage comes after a discussion on the incapacity of the multitude to "reach to summit of intellectual objects".[54] According to Clement, only Moses can ascend the mountain and enter the thick cloud that surrounds God. The passage from Paul is placed within the context of Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai, demonstrating that the heavens of which the apostle spoke represent steps for initiating elect souls into the mysteries, just as Moses was initiated. It is only on reaching the third heaven that it becomes lawful for them to initiate the elect souls in the mysteries; that is, it is only in the third stage of ascent that the mystagogy begins. This agrees with what has already been posited of the soteriological sequence. After two saving changes, the ascent through knowledge that takes the soul to the ark constitutes the mystagogy of the third phase of Clement's divine pedagogy.

In summary, the seven days in which the high priest purifies himself and the temple prior to the Day of Atonement correspond to the mystagogy that prepares the soul for entering the ogdoad. In the letter

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[50] Le Boulluec connects the mystery of the seal with Clement's mention of catechism (*Str.* 2.18.96.2) and with baptism from Matt. 28.19 (*SChr* 279, 252). See also *Exc.* 80.3.

[51] This realm of ideas is either the Holy of Holies (See p. 42 n. 34 above) or a reference to the Ark that is said to be "one instead of one in all places" (*Str.* 5.6.36.3).

[52] *Str.* 7.10.57.4–5. See p. 38 above.

[53] *Str.* 5.12.79.1–2.

[54] *Str.* 5.12.78.1–2.

concerning the secret Gospel of Mark this mystagogy is represented as veils of concealment surrounding the inner sanctuary of the written gospel itself. This mystagogic phase takes place at the third stage of ascent as Clement's interpretations of Genesis 22 and 2 Corinthians 12 demonstrate. The soteriological sequence consists then of three saving changes, the third of which is divided into seven mystagogic veils, κεκαλυμμένης, importantly a term that Clement applies to the books of the *Stromateis* as well. Lastly, the ogdoad, or what Clement sometimes calls the Lord's mansion, is the culmination of the seven-fold mystagogy and is where the soul is free to contemplate the ideas of God. For Clement's gnostic, this is analogous to the high priest viewing the contents of the ark.[55]

2.3.3. *The Greek Christian Model*

Clement places considerable emphasis on the numbers seven and eight, not only in the Jewish and mystagogic contexts already explored, but also in the context of the New Testament and the earlier fathers. In particular is the notion of the Lord's Day, where Christ's resurrection takes place on the first day of a new week signalling the arrival of a new dispensation in the world. The Hebrew Sabbath, which takes place on the seventh day of the week, is transferred to the Sunday, the so-called eighth day, under the new covenant.[56] The numbers seven and eight held mysterious or gnostic significance in the mystagogic phase of Clement's soteriological sequence. Three times in the *Stromateis* he explicitly refers to the mysterious nature of the numbers, and in one instance refers to them as a "gnostic mystery (μυστήριον γνωστικὸν)".[57] The last stages in Clement's soteriological sequence ultimately culminate in this mystery,

[55] *Str.* 5.10.64.4 citing Rom 16.25–27. "Wherefore instruction, which reveals hidden things, is called illumination, as it is the teacher only who uncovers the lid of the ark (κιβωτοῦ)...designating the spiritual gift, and the gnostic tradition, which being present he desires to impart to them present as 'the fullness of Christ (πλήρωμα Χριστοῦ), according to the revelation of the mystery sealed in the ages of eternity, but now manifested by the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all the nations, to bring about the obedience of faith.'"

[56] Matt 28.1; Mk 16.1; Lk 24.1; Jn 20.1. J. Daniélou writes: "It was Christianity that gave the eighth day its importance; Christ rose on the day after the Sabbath, and thenceforward the eighth day is the day of the Resurrection, the Sunday, which distinguishes Christians from Jews". However, as pointed out above, the Jewish Day of Atonement provided Clement with testimony to the significance of the eighth day. See *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, tr. John A. Baker (London, 1964), 397.

[57] *Str.* 4.17.109.2; 6.16.138.5; 6.16.145.3.

particularly when the numbers seven and eight are used in reference to the disjuncture between the Jewish and Christian Sabbath day. Justin Martyr (*c*. 100–165 CE) for instance, broaches this subject, claiming: "It is possible for us to declare how the eighth day possessed a certain mystery (μυστήριον τι εἶχε), which the seventh day did not possess".[58] However, he unfortunately discontinues this discussion and moves on to other things. We are left pondering as to what the mystery is.

The *Epistle of Barnabas* speaks of the significance of the eighth day in its connection with the risen Christ, interpreting it in the context of Isaiah 1.13:

> "Your new moons and your Sabbath I cannot tolerate". You see how he speaks. Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that is what I have made, namely that when giving rest to all things (καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα), I will make a beginning on the eighth day; that is, a beginning of another world. Hence also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead.[59]

The day of Christ's resurrection came to be called the Lord's Day by the early fathers.[60] The significance was that Christ died on the eve of the Jewish Sabbath, the first day of the week, but rose on the Sunday to sanctify it as the first day of a New World. This signalled to early Christians that there was a disjuncture between the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Old Covenant, and the eighth day, the Sabbath of the New Covenant. The veneration of the eighth day saw the re-allocation of the Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of a new week, a new dispensation, and a new creation.

Like Barnabas however, Clement also speaks of the eighth day, labelling it the Lord's Day (κυριακὴν ἡμέραν), but uses Plato to help demonstrate its significance. In the tenth book of the *Republic* Plato speaks of souls of the dead spending seven days on the meadows of asphodel and setting out to be reborn on the eighth.[61] Clement suggests that the meadow refers to the fixed sphere, while the seven days refers to the motion of the seven planets. This concludes when the

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[58] *Dial.* 24.1. Cf. *Dial.* 41.4; 138.1.

[59] *Barn.* 15.8. Cf. *II Enoch* 33.1; *Paid.* 3.12.90.3. On the possible implications of this passage see E. Ferguson, "Was Barnabas a Chiliast?: An Example of Hellenistic Symbolism in *Barnabas* and Clement of Alexandria", in D.L. Balch, E. Ferguson & W.A Meeks (eds.) *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Minneapolis, 1990), and Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, vol. 1, 396.

[60] Jn 20.1 & 26.

[61] *Rep.* 616b.

soul reaches the ogdoad on the eighth.[62] Once again the sequence we have been highlighting can be observed. Here the seven periods represented by the seven planets accord with the mystagogic phase of Clement's soteriology. This passage follows a discussion on what the Greeks plagiarised concerning the resurrection,[63] but here Clement offers us a Platonic testimony to the significance of the number eight in relation to the Lord's Day.[64]

However, like the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement also speaks of this new Sabbath in cosmogonic terms:

> The seventh day…is proclaimed a rest, an abstinence from evils, preparing for the Primal Day (ἀρχέγονον ἡμέραν), our true rest, which, in truth, is the first creation of light, in which all things are viewed and possessed…Having reached this point, we must mention these things by the way, since the discourse has suggested the seventh and the eighth.[65]

Though Clement does not mention the resurrection of Christ here, he acknowledges that "*our*" that is, gnostics',[66] "true rest" is found on the first day of the week rather than the seventh. The eighth day is a cyclic return to the Primal Day, the first day of the sacred week of creation. The implication is that the eighth day, usually associated with the resurrection of Christ, is also associated with the first day of creation, the divine *fiat*, and therefore takes on the cosmogonic significance that the *Epistle of Barnabas* mentions. The true day of rest is actually the first day on which the Lord rose from the dead signalling a return to the creative principle of Genesis 1.1, the first day of God's work. Gnostics, in imitation of the resurrection of Christ, ultimately find rest in the microcosmic renewal of their souls, but also in the macrocosmic renewal of the creation.

Clement's emphasis on the last seventh and eighth stages of initiation can also be seen operating in his method of abstraction. It is heavily reliant on Middle Platonism, but it bears a number symbolism that allows him to marry Platonic abstraction with a symbolism of the cross and

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62 *Str.* 5.14.106.2–4.

63 *Str.* 5.14.105.1–106.1. D. Wyrwa believes the text here to be barely understandable, but believes it to be primarily eschatological and contemplative in nature. *Die christliche Platonaneigung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin; New York, 1983), 315.

64 Although Christ was dead for three days, not seven.

65 *Str.* 6.16.138.1–5.

66 While Rom 6.5 speaks of sharing in the resurrection of Christ in the first person plural, suggesting Christians in general, Clement says it is particularly the gnostic that "keeps the Lord's Day…glorifying the resurrection in himself" (*Str.* 7.12.76.4).

ultimately with fulfilment in Christ. He suggests that the soul can attain "vision by analysis (ἐποπτικὸν ἀναλύσει)", by a process of abstracting the soul from the body. It is unclear how one does this exactly. It appears to be a form of meditation or contemplation on a thought or concept, but in the process consciously abstracting the body from the thought by removing the dimensions of depth, breadth and length. This process centres the mind on the single point or unity (μονὰς), which still holds a position (θέσιν). Clement further suggests that the mind can abstract position itself so that it comes to a "concept of unity (νοεῖται μονάς)". From there it advances into "the greatness of Christ (τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ)", a "conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not... The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name, and conception".[67]

By what can only be described as Clement's negative theology, the soul is capable of abstracting itself from all that does not pertain to God until it comes to the greatness of Christ. The soul undergoes purification by removing the body from its reliance on depth, breadth, and length, that is, space as it extends in the shape of a three dimensional cross.[68] The soul and body become centred at a point, the seventh,[69] having abstracted the directions in which space is emanated from that point. Initiates can then abstract themselves from this point into the conception of unity.[70] This takes place at the eighth stage, the divine "void (ἀχανής)".[71] In doing so the soul has ascended inversely to the way the creation originated in the divine *fiat*; this is the "greatness of Christ". Having contracted the directions of space, which originally emanated as light in the first cosmogonic act, the initiate passes through the seventh stage and gains the absolute in the eighth.

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[67] *Str.* 5.11.71.2–5. On how this passage relates to the abstraction (ἀφαίρεσις) expounded by the Middle Platonists Maximus of Tyre and Albinus, and also Plotinus, see Osborn (*Clement* [1957], 27–31), Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, 341–42) and the appendix of C.W. MacLeod, "ΑΝΑΛΥΣΙΣ: A Study in Ancient Mysticism", *JTS* 21/1 (1970), 43–55.

[68] Cf. *Str.* 6.16.139.4. "Such, again, is the number of the most general motions, according to which all origination (*genesis*) takes place: up, down, to the right, to the left, forward, backward".

[69] Cf. Philo *Leg. All.* i. 4.

[70] In the context of the soul's deification, see Butterworth "The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria", *JTS* 17 (1916), 157–69.

[71] It is difficult to say from the text whether this "void" is situated above the magnitude of Christ, which is unlikely, or whether it constitutes what the soul experiences in the fullness of Christ.

One can see then that Clement placed an emphasis on the final seventh and eighth stages of his soteriological sequence, and that the gnostic mystery surrounding the numbers is tied to Christ's resurrection and the creation of a New World under a new dispensation. Clement drew on both Hebrew and Greek number symbolism to develop his soteriology, marrying the Jewish ritual of the Days of Penitence to Greek cosmology and building a gnostic mystagogy for advanced Christians that culminated in a resurrection that emulates that of Christ. The soteriological sequence of three saving changes, the third of which is divided into seven stages culminating in the ogdoad is consistent throughout Clement's works.

2.4. *The Number and Sequence of Clement's Works*

The sequence we have established in Clement's soteriology shows marked similarities to the general structure of the three main extant works. The crucial passage that connects Clement's soteriological sequence with the number and division of his works is his account of the saving changes, from heathenism to faith, from faith to knowledge, and the flight through the holy septenary to arrive at the Lord's mansion.[72] Two initial changes take place, followed by another consisting of a passage through seven stages culminating in the ogdoad. As Clement states of the divine pedagogy of the Logos, the Word "first exhorts (προτρέπων), then trains (παιδαγωγῶν), and finally teaches (ἐκδιδάσκων)".[73] We have previously said that this was traditionally understood to correspond with the three-fold structure of Clement's works. However, in the context of the soteriological sequence, not only is the three-fold structure of the pedagogy confirmed, but also the division of its third phase into seven stages, culminating in an eighth. Using Clement's account of the tabernacle once again the soteriological sequence of the works can be represented thus:

[72] *Str.* 7.10.57.4–5. See p. 38 above.
[73] *Paid.* 1.1.3.3.

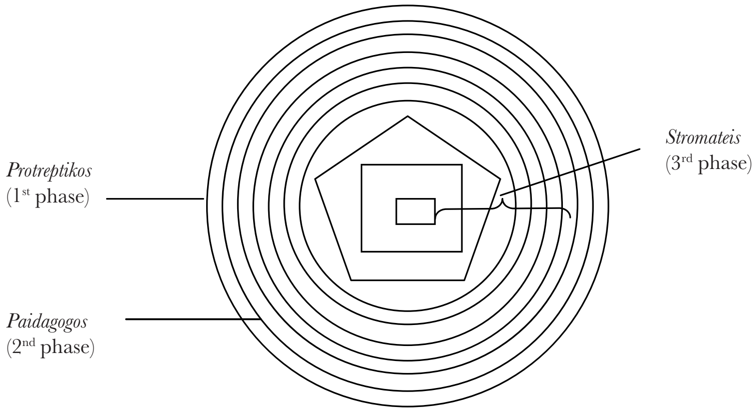

Fig. 2. A diagrammatical representation of the soteriological sequence of the *Protreptikos*, the *Paidagogos*, and the *Stromateis*.

One can see that the *Proptreptikos* corresponds with the outer most circle of the seven circuits that surround the tabernacle, symbolising the conversion of the heathen into the Christian soteriological cosmos. The *Paidagogos* corresponds with the second circuit where souls are trained in the Christian virtues in preparation for negotiating the seven gnostic and mystagogic veils. The seven books of the *Stromateis* then represent that mystagogy with the five remaining circuits and the outer and inner veils of the tabernacle, culminating in access to the Ark of the Covenant. Viewing the contents of the ark itself corresponds to the *epopteia*, the vision of divine things. Once a soul is enrolled into Clement's divine pedagogy it can ascend through the various προκοπαί as they undergo the various saving changes. One can see from this that the overall structure, the number and sequence of the works, provides the *akolouthia* for Clement's divine pedagogy.

There are, however, two problems with this rigid systematising of Clement's soteriology and written works.[74] The first concerns the division of the second phase of divine teaching, the *Paidagogos*, into three books. Counting the three books as separate soteriological stages would throw

[74] One could well say that this is looking for too much system in Clement, an accusation that Lazzati directed at the views of Munck (Lazzati, *Introduzione*, 3). Lazzati was concerned with Munck's assertion that Clement planned to write two trilogies, the first containing the *Protreptikos*, the *Paidagogos*, and the *Logos Didaskalikos*, and the second containing the *Stromateis*, a work on physics, the *Physiologia*, and a work on Theology (Munck, *Untersuchungen*, 111. See also Lilla, *Clement*, 189 n. 4).

the sequence out. However, in the context of what has been claimed of the ascent through the seven spheres, it is difficult to imagine that each of the three books of the *Paidagogos* could represent an ascent of the soul through a planetary sphere. For Clement the content of the *Paidagogos* is considered preliminary training in the faith and the virtues and does not allow the soul to ascend so sharply as it does during the mystagogic stages.[75] This is demonstrated by the correspondence between the "holy septenary" and the seven planets, which represent the mystagogy that terminates in the fixed sphere. Just as the seven books of the *Stromateis* correspond with one phase of the soteriological sequence, the third, so too the three books of the *Paidagogos* are reconciled into one, the second. If the three books of the *Paidagogos* are considered as one soteriological stage, this allows the sequence proposed to remain.

The second difficulty suggested by this system is allocating the eighth book of the *Stromateis* as an account of the final passage into the ogdoad. Can a written work convey such a glory? It is difficult to see how the eighth book of the *Stromateis* can fulfil such a role, particularly as it exists in such a fragmented state. When we read the eighth book of the *Stromateis* we are faced with a detached and fragmented treatise on logic. It is dry in comparison to the previous seven books. The eighth book is a new beginning and ostensibly offers little in the way of a logical sequence from the seventh book. Unlike the previous seven it is a systematic treatment of the principles by which logic can be established and demonstration can begin. As it stands, however, it is difficult to see how this treatise on logic can constitute the culminating experience of Clement's gnostic.

Whether one believes that the eighth book signifies this new beginning or not, one has to agree that the closing words to the seventh book of the *Stromateis* are tantalising if not wholly significant: "And now after this, the seventh *Miscellany* of ours, we shall make the discourse of what follows from another beginning".[76] Clement, following the *Epistle of Barnabas*, places significant emphasis on the mystery surrounding the transition from seven to eight particularly as a return to the first day

[75] See *Str.* 6.1.1.3.

[76] *Str.* 7.18.111.4. καὶ δὴ μετὰ τὸν ἕβδομον τοῦτον ἡμῖν Στρωματέα τῶν ἑξῆς ἀπ' ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ποιησόμεθα τὸν λόγον. See also the closing words to the sixth book, which announces that he will show afterwards how the gnostic stands in relation to the contemplation of nature or physics when he treats of the creation of the world (*Str*. 6.18.168.4).

of a new creation. Given what has been claimed of the soteriological sequence of the numbers seven and eight, and about the eighth day, it is appropriate that a work that is emulating the sequence claim a new beginning in the eighth stage.

2.5. *The Eighth Book of the* Stromateis

After our analysis of the role of number symbolism in Clement's works it is now possible to establish some important patterns concerning the eighth book of the *Stromateis* and its position in Clement's soteriological sequence. I am not concerned with the detail of the logic set out within the treatise, but with the simple fact that the treatise is concerned with logic and that it holds the last position in Clement's divine pedagogy.

2.5.1. *The Number Symbolism of the Eighth Book*

First of all, we have seen that the eighth sphere sits at the tenth stage of the third phase of spiritual ascent. It is the sphere of the divine Logos, and is, in Clement's thinking, also to be associated with the number ten. We have seen that Jesus Christ is symbolised by the numbers ten and eight respectively; *iota* holding the value of ten in the Greek alphabet, and *eta* holding the value of eight, together the first two letters of Jesus' name.[77] Clement also tells us that playing the ten stringed psaltery, or harp, signals the Word Jesus.[78] Ten is also the sacred[79] and perfect number,[80] and represents the Maker who sits above the universe, which Clement divides into nine divisions.[81] The tenth stage of ascent then corresponds with the realm of the Word, the Logos through which the world was made.

The ten-fold division of the universe also has its analogy in the human being.[82] According to Clement there are three major divisions of the human being, sensation, speech, and intellection, which undergo a further categorisation into ten minor divisions, much like the three phases of soteriology already discussed. The tenth is the intellectual

[77] See p. 43 n. 38 above.
[78] *Paid.* 2.4.43.3.
[79] *Str.* 6.16.133.1.
[80] *Str.* 6.11.84.6. Cf. Philo, *Spec*. ii.200.
[81] *Str.* 2.11.51.1. See p. 42 n. 36 above.
[82] *Str.* 2.11.50.3–51.2; 6.16.134.2–135.4.

or spiritual faculty called the mind (νοῦς).[83] This is the rational faculty of the soul that is created in the image and likeness of the divine Logos.[84] As in Plato's tripartite soul Clement places the rational faculty at its summit and as that which is capable of apprehending the divine ideas.[85] "For the mind is the place of ideas and God is mind (νοῦς δὲ ὁ θεός)", writes Clement.[86] It is where the human mind becomes angelic and is rapt in contemplation with Christ. It is the ruling and rational faculty within us that has the power to attain gnosis; to become, like the angels, purely rational.[87] As the tenth and uppermost division in the human being then, the logical faculty corresponds with attaining the tenth division of Clement's soteriological sequence.

In the context of the tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant constitutes the tenth stage of ascent. It is also the receptacle of the Decalogue.[88] Clement elsewhere associates the Ark with the fullness of Christ,[89] and tells us that it was constructed "through divine ideas (θείαις ἐπινοίαις)", leading people from the sensible world to the intellectual.[90] It is the place where the human and divine minds meet.[91] In addition to this the author of the *Excerpta* claims that it is only after the soul enters the Holy of Holies that it can be considered "truly rational and priestly (λογικὴ τῷ ὄντι καὶ ἀρχιερατική)".[92] The Ark bears the significance of the number ten and is where the soul perfects itself in the image and likeness of Christ by becoming truly rational.

One will notice the number ten recurring when Clement speaks about the logical faculty of the soul. It is not out of place then that a treatise on logic should be the culminating work of a three-fold pedagogy, which contains ten stages as a whole, and which sits above and

[83] *Str.* 2.11.51.1.

[84] *Str.* 5.14.94.4–5. Also *Protr.* 10.98.4.

[85] For example *Paid.* 1.13.102.1–4; *Str.* 4.6.40.2.

[86] *Str.* 4.25.155.2–4 citing *Theaet.* 173c. On this identification of God with Mind see H.A. Wolfson, "Clement of Alexandria on the Generation of the Logos", *CH* 20 n. 2 (1951), 72–81, esp. 76.

[87] *Str.* 6.8.68.3.

[88] *Str.* 6.16.133.4. See van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria*, 131–33.

[89] *Str.* 5.10.64.4.

[90] *Str.* 6.11.86.1–3.

[91] *Str.* 6.9.72.1–2. "For the Word of God is intellectual (νοερὸς), since the image of mind (νοῦ) is seen in man alone. Thus also the good man is divine in form (θεοειδής) and godlike (θεοείκελος) in respect to his soul. And, on the other hand, God is like man (ὁ τε αὖ θεὸς ἀνθρωποειδής). For the distinctive form of each one is the mind (ὁ νοῦς) by which we are characterised".

[92] *Exc.* 27.3.

is somewhat detached from a seven-fold mystagogy represented by the other seven books of the *Stromateis*. Occupying the place that it does, the treatise on logic appears to be a literary symbol for entering the rational realm of the ogdoad: logic stripped of the intrigues of the previous seven books, but strengthened by the faith it nutures. This is supported by the internal evidence of a connection between Clement's number symbolism and the soteriological sequence represented by the number and division of the three major extant works.

Another important pattern to be found in the eighth book relates to the Lord's Day and the number symbolism surrounding the belief that the eighth day is also the first day of a new creation. Three times in the eighth book of the *Stromateis* Clement speaks of establishing "the beginning of teaching (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς διδασκαλίας)".[93] As a treatise on the principles of logic it represents the basis on which logical investigation can begin. This phrase is used elsewhere by Clement: "For we have, as the beginning of teaching (τὴν αρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας), the Lord, both by the prophets, the Gospel, and the blessed apostles, 'in divers manners and at sundry times', leading from the beginning (ἀρχῆς) to the end (τέλος) of knowledge".[94] This passage tells us that the teaching of the Lord and the prophets and apostles through Scripture, provide the *archê* and *telos* of gnosis, alluding also to the Christ of Revelation, who is the alpha and omega, the *archê* and *telos*.[95] As the highest wisdom provided to humanity, God and Scripture are the beginning and hence the basis on which to begin one's inquiry into the truth, but also simultaneously the end of that inquiry. Hence one begins one's search with faith in Scripture's trustworthiness, which is then filled out and confirmed by further investigation. One begins at the end so to speak, and uses it as one's trustworthy guide to realise that end fully.

When the title "the beginning of teaching" is applied to the eighth book of the *Stromateis* then, we can assume that the same can be said of the logic set out within it. Logic, like God and Scripture, is the foundation on which one builds one's investigation into truth, but it is also the end to which the investigation aims. One uses logic to become logical or rational, like the Logos of God itself. This is exactly what the eighth book sets out to do, building the foundation from which students

[93] *Str.* 8.2.3.1; 8.2.4.1–2.
[94] *Str.* 7.16.95.3.
[95] Rev. 21.6.

can begin their inquiry and promising the end to which that inquiry is directed. Those who ask questions of the Scriptures are given the gift of god-given knowledge "through the true illumination of logical investigation (διὰ τῆς λογικῆς ὄντως ἐκλαμπούσης ζητήσεως)" writes Clement.[96] It is impossible to find the answer to something without having sought it out, and having done so, one receives that after which they aim. Here we see the relation of Scripture to Logic, a prominent feature inherited from Philo. One asks questions according to the Scriptures and, by logical investigation, hopes to receive the God-given gift of illumination. This passage sounds like a preliminary briefing for students setting out on the road to achieving gnosis, highlighting where they are beginning from and what they should expect to achieve.

The phrase ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς διδασκαλίας connects God with Scripture, and Scripture to logic, to form the beginning and end of teaching. But it also carries further significance when Clement couples it with another term: "What better or clearer method (μέθοδος) for the beginning of teaching of this nature?"[97] The term μέθοδος in connection with teaching recalls a passage from the *Paidagogos* describing the role of the Logos as an Instructor in virtue, and how it differs from its role as a Teacher.

> The Instructor (παιδαγωγός) is practical, not methodical (μεθοδικός); his aim is thus to improve the soul, not to teach (διδάξαι), and to act as a guide to a self-controlled life, not to a life of knowledge. Indeed the same Word is didactic (διδασκαλικός), but not in the present instance. For the Word which, in matters of doctrine, reveals and uncovers, is that whose province is to teach.[98]

This is one of the passages that informs us of Clement's plans for a divine teaching. Along with the passages of *Paid* 1.3.3 and 3.97.3, it led some scholars to believe that Clement's treatise on teaching was going to be called the λόγος διδασκαλικός, and that it ought to have been a methodical treatise. However, the word μέθοδος carries with it a slightly different connotation than the English word 'method', signifying the 'inquiry', the 'pursuit', the 'means', or more literally, the 'road that leads after' something: in particular, knowledge.[99] It can refer to

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[96] *Str.* 8.1.2.1–2.

[97] *Str.* 8.2.3.1. See *Str.* 8.4.9.6 and *Str.* 5.3.17.2 where μέθοδος is used to refer to Socrates' teaching method for the questioning of Alcibiades (*1Alcib*. 109e).

[98] *Paid.* 1.1.1.4–2.1.

[99] See LSJ s.v. "μέθοδος".

a systematic inquiry, but this connotation only occurs *per accidens* to its genuine meaning.

As the beginning of methodical teaching, it is not difficult to imagine that the manuscript fragment that was identified by the eleventh century copyists as the eighth book was actually part of the first book of the *Stromateis*, beginning where the *Paidagogos* was to finish. Indeed its fragmented state suggests that it could well have been part of the lost sections of the beginning of the first book of the *Stromateis*.[100] Since it announces itself as "the beginning of teaching" and sets the foundation for attaining true illumination, it appears to fulfil at least the preliminary requirements of what we would expect of the *Didaskalos*.

There is also a marked thematic similarity between the beginning of the fragment of the eighth book and the beginning of the first book of the *Stromateis*. The first book begins with a guarded approach to communicating doctrines that need to be protected against sophistry. This is exactly the theme with which the fragment of the eighth book begins:

> But the most ancient of the philosophers could not endure disputing and doubting. Much less do we, who hold up the really true philosophy, on whom the Scripture commands examination and investigation. For it is the more recent of the Hellenic philosophers who, by empty and unending ambition, are led away by useless nonsense in refuting and argumentation.[101]

Clement sets the sophistry of the more recent Hellenic philosophers against the 'we' who are attached to the "true philosophy (ἀληθοῦς φιλοσοφίας)", then continues on to give an account of the beginning of teaching and the principles of logic. The theme of expounding the true philosophy in contrast to the sophistry of the various Greek schools of thought is the same theme that occurs in a good deal of the first book of the *Stromateis*.[102]

One may well argue that this confirmation of the eighth book as a beginning confirms Westcott's view that the fragment was most likely

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[100] Osborn, "Teaching and Writing", 342 n. 3: "It is possible that the lost first page had explicit references to the Logos who teaches".

[101] *Str.* 8.1.1.1–2.

[102] For example, the discussion concerning the four causes (*Str.* 8.9.25.1–33.9), which Clement has taken predominantly from the Stoics, is also discussed in the first book (*Str.* 1.20.99.1–3).

the original beginning to the lost books of the *Hypotyposes*.[103] However, the thematic similarity with the first book coupled with the appeal to the "true philosophy" confirms that this beginning of teaching is referring to the *Stromateis*, the complete title of which emphasises that the work is concerned with expounding the "True Philosophy".[104] There is little doubt that it belongs in some way to the *Stromateis*, whether as the eighth or as the first book.

Such a conclusion, however, cannot remain unconnected with the obvious number symbolism of the Lord's Day. The connection between the eighth book and the first book of the *Stromateis* may have been deliberately intended by Clement as a literary *archê* and *telos*, the beginning and end of logical investigation.[105] Once the soul enters into the logical realm of the ogdoad, here *literally* represented by the eighth book of the *Stromateis*, the soul is resurrected into the Lord's Day of creation as a fully rational human being. The soul has undergone a microcosmic renewal analogous to Christ's work in the whole creation. It is, as the last words of the seventh book of the *Stromateis* testify, "another beginning". But it is only a new beginning to those select souls who have been capable of assimilating all that has been set out in the *Stromateis*, including the logic set out in the last treatise. These are the souls who have ascended through the saving changes and who pass through to the Lord's mansion in the tenth and final stage of ascent and receive "the gift of god-given knowledge through the true illumination of logical investigation".

2.5.2. *Nautin*

As tantalising as the number symbolism is surrounding the eighth book of the *Stromateis*, we now need to take stock of the scholarship that has been conducted on its nature and purpose. It is fitting to take

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[103] See p. 34 above.

[104] *Str.* 1.29.182.3; 3.18.110.3; 5.14.141.4; 6.1.1.1. *Miscellany of Gnostic Notes in Accordance with the True Philosophy*.

[105] T. Zahn (*Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur*, III. Theil, Supplementum Clementinum [Erlagen, 1884]), who believed the eighth book of the *Stromateis*, the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, and the *Eclogae Propheticae*, represent a condensed addition of the original eighth book of the *Stromateis*. I. Von Arnim (*De octavo Clementis Stromateorum libro* [Rostock Progr., 1894]) and W. Ernst (*De Clementis Alexandrini Stromatum libro octavo qui fertur* [Diss: Götingen, 1910]) argued that the material in the treatise is used throughout the other seven books. See also Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 120 n. 3. This is explored more fully in the next section.

a considered look at Piere Nautin's important article on the matter, published in 1976.[106] Nautin speaks of the *Laurentianus* manuscript of the 11th Century, explaining how the first seven books of the *Stromateis* appeared in continuous text, followed by the title *Stromateis Eight* and a series of disparate fragments. He groups these under three sections:

1. a philosophical section the character of which he subdivides as follows:
   a. a commentary on the biblical text of Matt 7.7/Lk 11.9 "seek and shall find", followed by philosophical considerations on "demonstration" (ἀπόδειξις) (*Str.* 8.1.1.1 to 5.15.1)
   b. a counter-argument to the skeptics called Πρὸς τοὺς Πυρρωνείους (*Str.* 8.5.15.2 to 8.24.9);
   c. a long piece which treats of various kinds of causes (*Str*. 8.9.25.1 to 33.9).
2. the *Excerpta ex Theodotos*, a collection of fragments written by somebody, not a Valentinian, wishing to refute the doctrines of a Valentinian known as Theodotus.
3. the *Eclogae Propheticae*, a commentary that revolves chiefly around the first two verses of the book of *Genesis* and parallel passages from the books of the prophets *Daniel* and *Hosea*. It closes with a few fragments of commentary on Psalm 18.

Drawing on Scherer's work on the papyrus of Toura discovered in 1946, Nautin believes that the fragments attributed to Clement are the work of a copyist who follows the continuous texts that are authentic works by Clement. The grouping of extracts at the end of a continuous manuscript is consonant with the idea of a copyist running out of space to continue a lengthy account. Nautin then seeks to investigate two hypotheses for the existence of this fragmentary material. Firstly, that it is a collection of notes to be used in a later work or works. Nautin counters the work of both Ruben[107] and von Arnim[108] from the 1890s who claimed that the fragmentary material was not notes taken by a copyist, but by Clement himself. These were not fragments of a work that had been lost, but notes that Clement intended for another work

[106] P. Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*", 268–302.
[107] P. Ruben, *Clementis Alexandrini excerpta ex Theodoto* (Diss. Bonn, 1892).
[108] Von Arnim, *De Octavio*.

which he did not complete before death and which were published posthumously by his pupils and/or friends. Von Arnim further states that it would be unlikely that a copyist would not publish the notes of Clement that were primarily heretical passages without including the objections of Clement himself. Nautin adds firstly that Ruben and von Arnim underestimate the refutations found in the fragments and secondly that a copyist concerned with refuting heresy may very well be the writer of those refutations. Without further proof the most likely hypothesis is that a copyist set down the fragments. Nautin offers no evidence to refute von Arnim here. This argument is inconclusive.

Next Nautin looks at the hypothesis of Enrst, later taken up by Collomp and Bousset, whereby the fragments were a collection of notes to a course taught in an academic setting. Ernst's thesis was that the philosophical arguments found under the heading *Stromateis Eight* (*Str.* 8.1.1.1 to 9. 33.9) were all contained in the former books of the *Stromateis*, but that their original form were the fragments of book eight. This led him to believe that the fragments were notes taken by Clement himself as a student of the Alexandrian school and which later became the basis of his work in the first seven books. Ernst cites three passages from book eight claiming that their conformity with classical sources lacked a certain Christian colour, which is found more so in the passages from the fifth book.[109] Hence, they constitute notes taken from formal training in dialectical reasoning and transformed into Christian reasoning later on. While this is not a convincing argument, since, as Nautin points out, much of the first section of book eight is devoted towards an analysis of the very Christian words, "seek and you shall find", Nautin's counter argument is equally unconvincing. He suggests, for example that since the passage of Plato's *Alcibiades* (1.109e εἰ οἰηθείης γε μὴ εἰδέναι) is quoted in full in *Str.* 5.3.17.1.2 and only alluded to in *Str.* 8.1.2.2 then the former must be an earlier work. This argument is not conclusive and might well be used as evidence for Ernst's case as much as Nautin's in that the allusion to *Alcibiades* is more fitting to the brevity of note taking than for a full account, suggesting priority. Not much can be made of this piece of evidence.

Nautin points out that the duality present in the opening lines of book eight, of providing commentary on the evangelical word on the one hand, and a consideration of the advantages of reasoning by

[109] Ernst, *De Clementis*, 10.

questions and answers on the other, serves Clement's purpose and cites Chrysippes as someone who did the same and who was well known to Clement. Nautin also uses the odd wording of *Str*. 8.1.1.3, "an opening being made through the impediment (διοιχθέντος τοῦ ἐμποδὼν)", which seeks to fit the wording of Matt 7.7/Lk 11.9 into the account of opening the obstacles of truth through dialectical reasoning. Yet Nautin believes that the bizarre expression probably resulted from Clement wishing to add force to his commentary on the Gospel and that the less clumsy wording of τὰ ἐμποδὼν διακαθαίρειν ("*supprimer* l'obstacle")[110] used in both *Str*. 5.1.11.4 and 7.15.89.1 is the most likely source rather than that used in book eight. Once again, I fail to see how this disproves Ernst's course notes theory. Odd expression often results when taking or delivering notes in a school setting, especially when delivery of subject matter is done via speech and then copied down as suggested by a school setting.

Nautin then takes a closer look at the passage *Str.* 8.1.2.2 cited by Ernst, suggesting that there is a tautological use of the terms ζητεῖν (to seek) and ἐρευνᾶσθαι (to find) in Clement's use of the familiar Gospel passage. Nautin proposes that the passage would make more sense without the use of these almost synonymous words, which Clement uses to articulate his comparison between dialectical debate and acceptance of the evangelical word. The clearest reason for this for Nautin is that the author is working from a philosophical source on dialectic that has been adapted for use in commentaries on or allude to biblical text. Nautin claims that more faithful adaptations of this source are seen sometimes in book five and sometimes in book eight of the *Stromateis*. He does not provide evidence of any more faithful adaptation of the source in book eight, and indeed were he to do so, would contradict his previous argument that a less clumsy rendering suggests an earlier text. Neither Ernst's nor Nautin's case is convincing here.

The text of *Str.* 1.1.11.1 is then raised as a contentious passage in the meaning a reader may attribute to the word usually translated as 'notes' (ὑπομνήματα). Ernst suggested that this passage refers to notes taken by Clement from his teacher's lessons that form the material of the fragment in book eight. Quite rightly Nautin points out that the author has Plato's *Phaedrus* 276d[sic] and 274e in mind here and that "notes" here refers to Clement's own writing rather than those taken

[110] P. Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*", 276.

down of another's work. Nautin offers no evidence to justify his claim other than to let the text of the *Phaedrus* speak for itself. Socrates' speech appears to support Nautin's conclusion slightly in that the writer of the notes on book one is doing so as an amusing pastime in his old age, rather than any concerted effort to remember notes from lectures he attended.[111] In any case the implication at most suggests that the author's intention in citing the *Phaedrus* here was to set an informal tone to the enterprise rather than a formal note-taking process that might accompany one's attempts to retain important information passed down by a lecturer. This is subtle but inconclusive speculation.

Nautin shifts his attention to the works of Collomp[112] and Bousset[113] who suggest that the source was larger than first believed and consisted of the *Excerpta*, the *Eclogae* and the *Hyptoposes*. Bousset, in particular, takes up the passage of *Ecl.* 56.2 suggesting that the mention of the name Pantaenus is evidence of Clement taking notes in classes taken by Pantaenus, in this instance on an interpretation of Ps 18.6. Drawing on Munck, Nautin claims that Clement only attributes the interpretive principle of how prophetic writing is often indirect about its tenses, often confusing past, present and future events, and that there is nothing in the text that would confirm that these were notes from a formal lesson given by Pantaenus on how to interpret the text of Psalms. Clement, Nautin suggests, is working from memories preserved of discussions with his teacher. Once again, I find this line of argument inconclusive and speculative. The fact that Clement mentions his teacher in the fragments is evidence neither for nor against the idea that they are notes to a formal course.

The passages of *Str.* 1.1.12.1 and 1.1.14.2–3 are then considered by Bousset as evidence of Clemant's note-taking of a course delivered by Pantaenus. Bousset insists that the term ὑποσημέιωσις as used in the first passage is a technical term referring to notes taken under dictation. Nautin contends that the term can also mean notes taken in broader applications than just dictation of lecture notes,[114] and in any case it is clear from the two passages that Clement is not taking formal notes but is writing them down from his memories of past interaction with his

[111] This issue is taken up again in chapter 4.2.
[112] "Une source de Clément d'Alexandrie".
[113] *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb*, 155–271.
[114] He cites Le *Dictionnaire grec-français*: "note prise d'après une lecture ou des souvenirs". LSJ 'ὑποσημέιωσις' s.v. is of little help.

beloved teachers. Bousset's logic stems from Clement's insistence that "certain things" were not noted in his discussions with his teacher and have been lost to time. Since "certain things" were not noted, Bousset takes this as evidence that he must have taken at least some notes because he clearly did not note everything.[115] This is a valid point, which Nautin disregards as false reasoning in that to say that certain things were not noted does not demonstrate that other things were. On the contrary, Nautin believes this to be the best proof that Clement did not take notes and that he had never written his memoirs prior to writing the *Stromateis*. Nautin then cites several authors who disregard the hypothesis put forward by Ernst, Collomp and Bousset,[116] and rather take the view that these were notes taken down in preparation for a later work. Hence Nautin concludes by saying that the fragments are not notes from a course taken by Clement and that they are more so notes taken from the first seven books of the *Stromateis*.

Nautin then turns his attention to passages of Clement that set out his plan for writing in the hope that it will shed light on the nature and purpose of the eighth book. He analyses each one to discover a distinct program. In the first passage (*Str*. 1.1.15.2) Nautin discovers the following program: 1a. a refutation of the heretical sects, b. an account of the epoptic contemplation of the true gnosis according to the tradition set down at the beginning of the world, and 2. a preliminary treatment of material that has to be dealt with before the contemplation of nature. Nautin points out that this contemplation of nature is elsewhere called *physiologia* by Clement (*Str.* 4.1.1.2 and 3.2).[117] Here Clement again mentions two parts to his program: 1. a refutation of the opinions of the Greeks and the heretics and 2. the true gnostic physics or science of nature. But what is it specifically that Clement wishes to treat before the initiate can begin the gnostic contemplation of nature? What, using Clement's georgic imagery, constitutes the brambles that need to be cleared to prepare the ground for planting? Nautin believes this to be the sphere of ethics.

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[115] W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb*, 201.

[116] J. Munck, *Untersuchungen*, 180; R.P. Casey, *Excerpta*, 4; G. Lazzatti, *Introduzione*, 35; Cl. Mondésert, *Clément d' Alexandrie*, 253 & 255; F. Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 7; H. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, 17; J. Quasten, *Initiation aux Pères de l'Eglise*, II (Paris, 1957), 22; A. Méhat, *Ètudes*, 517.

[117] Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*", 283 n. 42.

Moving to the next passage (*Str.* 2.1.1.1 to 2.3), Nautin identifies the following program: 1. to prove that the Greeks plagiarized the Jews in three ways: a. its accounts of miracles, b. the theory of the virtues, c. its symbolic system. Nautin suggests that Clement strayed from this order, initially treating of the virtues in *Stromateis* two to four, its symbolic system in *Stromateis* five and finally the accounts of miracles in some pages of *Stromateis* 6. 2. Clement then envisages an apologetic section intended for the Greeks and for the Jews and which will primarily consist in quoting some passages of Scripture. This section was not announced in the program set out in book one. 3. a criticism of the philosophical sects, which corresponds to the first part of the contemplation of nature announced in the passage from book one.

In the next passage (*Str.* 4.1.1.1 to 3.3), Clement provides a little more detail about his program: 1. once again the plagiarism of the Greeks covering a. the theory of virtues, b. the symbolic system. He does not mention an account on miracles as in the last passage, but assures the reader that this section will conclude the account of ethics (*Str.* 4.1.1.2). 2. the apologetic section once again aimed at the Greeks and the Jews with reference to Scripture. 3. the first part of the *physiologia* with a criticism of the heretical sects consisting of two kinds: a. what the philosophers have said on first principles, b. the heretics using the prophetic scriptures. 4. the second part of the *physiologia*, dealing with the epoptic contemplation of nature, beginning with a account of Genesis. *Str*. 6.1.1.1 confirms that the sixth and seventh books were concerned with ethics, and that he will continue in the style of the *Stromateis* to solve the difficulties raised by the Greeks and the Barbarians in respect to the *parousia* of the Lord. According to Nautin, this corresponds to the apologetic section announced in books two and four.

Towards the end of the seventh book (*Str.* 7.15.89.1) Clement claims that he will refute the ideas of the Greeks and Jews, which Nautin has labeled the apologetic section. He also confirms that this will take place in the "following *Stromateis* (προϊέναι Στρωματέα)".[118] Finally on the last page of the book seven (*Str*. 7.18.110.4), Clement confirms that his account of ethics has concluded.

Nautin suggests the following program set out by Clement in the first seven books and which will be treated in the eighth:

[118] Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*", 290 n. 66.

1. the apologetic section against the Greeks and the Jews in connection with the Incarnation, part of which is expected to start with *Stromateis* eight;
2. the first part of the physics, which must discuss: a. the opinions of the philosophers on first principles, b. the doctrines of the heretics;
3. the second part of physics, the *epopteia*, which will start with a comment of the chapters of the genesis of creation.

1. Nautin's next concern is with whether or not Clement effectively realizes the program set out above, and looks at two hypotheses: do the fragments preserved in the *Laurentianus* manuscript that follow the first seven books of the *Stromateis* correspond with Clement's envisaged program; that is, the fragments labeled *Stromateis Eight,* the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae*? Looking at the first section of the program set out in the first seven books of the *Stromateis*, the apologetic section on the problems (ἀπορίαι) and the further difficulties (προσαπορούμενα) of the Greeks and the Jews, Nautin points out the verb ἀπορεῖν appears precisely at the beginning of the eighth book in relation to the difficulties of the more recent Hellenic philosophers who love controversy. A good deal of the first section of book eight is directed against the sophists and skeptics a little further on under the title Πρὸς τοὺς Πυρρωνείους. In contrast to this Hellenic love of refuting is the barbarian philosophy that invites us to seek in order to find (Matt. 7.7). As Nautin suggests, this introduction is a strong indication that we are at the apologetic section announced earlier. However, we have no mention of the incarnation or any major attempt to refute the Greek and the Jews with recourse to Scripture. The author has, at this stage merely made preliminary remarks about his refutation.

2. Next according to the program set out in the first seven books, we should see the first part of the *physiologia* dealing firstly with a refutation of the philosopher's views on first principles. Nautin sees in *Str.* 8.9.25.1 to 33.9, a draft of the various species of 'causes' according to Greek philosophers, that the concept of 'cause' is closely related to that of 'principle'. Secondly, it will contain a refutation of the doctrines of the heretics. In particular is Clement's intention of a lengthy criticism of the writings of the heretics. This corresponds entirely with the *Excerpta*, according to Nautin, which contains a detailed account of a Valentinian work.

3. Lastly the reader should find an account of the second part of the *physiologia*, or *epopteia*, which would begin with an account of the origin of

the world. This corresponds according to Nautin, to the *Eclogae*, whose first fragment gives account of the first two verses of the book of *Genesis*, before moving on to the third verse at 38.1. Nautin also adds that this section would also be accompanied by a refutation of certain heretics (*Str*. 4.1.3.3), noting that the *Eclogae* explicitly names both Tatian (38.1) and Hermogenes (56.2). Thus, according to Nautin, all the sections laid down with the program are represented in the fragments and they are there in the exact order in which they were announced. An agreement as striking as this could already be enough to convince us that Clement carried out his plan until the end. Nautin also adds the reference to *QDS* 26.8 which mentions a work entitled the *Interpretation of the Principles of Theology* in which Clement will provide an initiatic interpretation of Matt. 19.24 as symbolic of the Saviour. Nautin believes this to be a reference to a work already written rather than a future work because of the use of the present verb ὑπάρχει.[119]

This evidence convinces Nautin that there is no doubt that Clement carried out his program and it is from there that the fragments preserved in *Laurentianus* come. However, Nautin believes that it is impossible that one book of the *Stromateis* could cover the whole of what the program expects, particularly when he devoted seven books to ethics. Clement only announces the apologetic section under the title of the eighth *Stromateis*. He then asks whether the remaining parts of the *physiologia* constitute part of the *Stromateis* or part of a new work.

Nautin then turns his attention to the theory put forward by some earlier scholars that the *Hypotyposes* was the intended continuation of the *Stromateis*.[120] In particular some saw in the last line of the seventh book, the clue that suggested that Clement would continue with another written work.[121] However, as Nautin correctly points out, the passage

[119] Also mentioned *Str*. 4.1.2.2. and 3.2.

[120] Firstly by Daniel Heinsius in a note to his edition to Clement's works in 1616, later by Henri de Valois in his edition of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, 1659. The *Hypotyposes* is mentioned firstly by Eusebius (*EH*. 6.13.2) and later by Photius as consisting of eight books (*Bibl*. 109).

[121] *Str.* 7.18.111.4. καὶ δὴ μετὰ τὸν ἕβδομον τοῦτον ἡμῖν Στρωματέα τῶν ἑξῆς ἀπ' ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ποιησόμεθα τὸν λόγον. As Nautin pointed out ("La fin des Stromates", 295 n. 73), this sentence gave some scholars reason to suggest that the continuation to the *Stromateis* was the *Hypotyposes*. For example, Chr. Bunsen in his *Analecta antenicena*, 1854. Bunsen allocated all the fragments that follow *Stromateis* seven in the *Laurentianus* manuscript to the *Hypotyposes*. A. Mèhat agrees with the hypotheses (*Ètudes*, 255), although suggests that some of the fragments were added material to the *Stromateis* as a provisional crowning.

of *Str.* 7.15.89.1 clearly stipulates that the following work after the seventh book would be another *Stromateis*. According to Nautin, this line does not suggest a new work, but that he will begin with a new set of preliminary criticisms of sophists and the skeptics. At the very least there was to be another *Stromateis* in Clement's program. As we indeed see at the beginning of the eighth book, this clearly corresponds to the apologetic section of the continued program. What needs to be established then is whether, after the apologetic section there would then be a further work on physics called the *Hypotyposes*. The first of three arguments Nautin looks at are:

1. Whether there is agreement between what Photius claimed of the *Hypotyposes* in the ninth century[122] and the sections on physics found in the *Excerpta* and *Eclogae*:
   a. Photius stipulates that the author of the *Hyptoposes* places the Son at the level of creaturely existence (εἰς κτίσμα κατάγει) and the *Exerpta* refers to the Son as the "first created" (πρωτόκτιστος).[123]
   b. Photius makes an obscure reference to the birth of Eve mentioned in the *Hypotyposes*. Nautin believes that Photius understands this description as a night ejaculation of Adam's mentioned in the passage of *Exc.* 21.2, which speaks of the male "seed" of Adam remaining with him while the female "seed" was taken from him to become Eve. Hence, unlike Scripture, Photius sees the author

[122] Nautin refers the following passage of Photius (*Bibl.* 109) Καὶ ἔν τισι μὲν αὐτῶν ὀρθῶς δοκεῖ λέγειν, ἔν τισι δὲ παντελῶς εἰς ἀσεβεῖς καὶ μυθώδεις λόγους ἐκφέρεται. Ὕλην τε γὰρ ἄχρονον καὶ ἰδέας ὡς ἀπό τινων ῥητῶν εἰσαγομένας δοξάζει, καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν εἰς κτίσμα κατάγει. Ἔτι δὲ μετεμψυχώσεις καὶ πολλοὺς πρὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ κόσμους τερατεύεται· καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τὴν Εὔαν, οὐχ ὣς ὁ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς λόγος βούλεται, ἀλλ' αἰσχρῶς τε καὶ ἀθέως ἀποφαίνεται· μίγνυσθαί τε τοὺς ἀγγέλους γυναιξὶ καὶ παιδοποιεῖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνειροπολεῖ, καὶ μὴ σαρκωθῆναι τὸν λόγον ἀλλὰ δόξαι. Λόγους τε τοῦ πατρὸς δύο τερατολογῶν ἀπελέγχεται, ὧν τὸν ἥττονα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπιφανῆναι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνον· φησὶ γάρ· "Λέγεται μὲν καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς λόγος, ὁμωνύμως τῷ πατρικῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὖ νυν οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ σὰρξ γενόμενος· οὐδὲ μὴν ὁ πατρῷος λόγος, ἀλλὰ δύναμίς τις τοῦ Θεοῦ οἷον ἀπόρροια τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ, νοῦς γενόμενος τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίας διαπεφοίτηκε". Καὶ ταῦτα πάντα πειρᾶται ἀπὸ ῥητῶν τινῶν κατασκευάζειν τῆς γραφῆς, καὶ ἄλλα δὲ μυρία φλυαρεῖ καὶ βλασφημεῖ, εἴτε αὐτός, εἴτε τις ἑτερος τὸ αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον ὑποκριθείς. Ἐποιήθησαν δὲ αὐτῷ αἱ βλάσφημοι αὗται τερατολογίαι ἐν τόμοις ὀκτώ. Λέγει δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πολλάκις, καὶ σποράδην καὶ συγκεχυμένως ὥσπερ ἔμπληκτος παράγει τὰ ῥητά. Ὁ δὲ ὅλος σκοπὸς ὡσανεὶ ἑρμηνεῖαι τυγχάνουσι τῆς Γενέσεως, τῆς Ἐξόδου, τῶν Ψαλμῶν, τοῦ θείου Παύλου τῶν ἐπιστολῶν, καὶ τῶν καθολικῶν, καὶ τοῦ Ἐκκλησιαστοῦ. Μαθητὴς δέ, ὡς καὶ αὐτός φησι, γέγονε Πανταίνου· ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν αἱ Ὑποτυπώσεις.

[123] *Exc.* 20.1.

as affirming Eve's birth in a way that is "shameful and unworthy of God".

c. Photius also comments that the *Hypotyposes* will comment on several books of Scripture, among which are *Genesis* and *Psalms*. Nautin points out that it is precisely at the beginning of the *Ecolgae* that we find a commentary on the first verses of *Genesis*, while at the end of the *Eclogae*, we see several verses of *Psalms* 17 and 18 accompanied by a short explication.[124] Nautin also points out that these commentaries on *Genesis* and *Psalms* are interspersed with quotations from other parts of Scripture, but again this aggrees with Photius' description of the *Hypotyposes*, which he claims to speak of the words of scripture in a "dispersed and unmethodical way".
d. Following Eusebius,[125] Photius informs us that in the *Hypotoposes* Clement would acknowledge himself as a disciple of Pantaenus, which he does at *Ecl.* 56.2 (ὁ Πάνταινος δὲ ἡμῶν ἔλεγεν).
e. Nautin adds that the order in which Photius treats of these issues is the same order in which they appear in the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae*.

2. There is also the indications implied by Clement himself:
   a. Nautin refers to the beginning of book four, which modifies his intentions set out in book one; namely that there would be a work primarily on physics after a preliminary work on ethics. In book four, however, Clement announces that he will insert an apologetic section against the Greeks and the Jews between the ethics and the physics. The juxtaposed expression of ἐπὶ τούτοις and ὕστερον (*Str.* 4.1.2.1), which he translates as 'then' and 'later' respectively, indicate to Nautin that Clement saw that his work on ethics was expanding, feeling the need to add an apologetic section, and that he would treat physics later on in another work.
   b. The beginning of book six indicates that all that remains to treat in the *Stromateis* is the apologetic section.[126]
3. Finally, Nautin asserts that it is interesting to observe that Origen, whom Clement exerted considerable influence over, composed both

[124] *Ecl.* 42–44; 51.1 to end.
[125] *EH.* 6.13.2.
[126] Nautin appears to be referring to *Str.* 6.1.1.4 (προϊόντων τῶν ὑπομνημάτων κατὰ τὸν τῶν Στρωματέων χαρακτῆρα, ἐπιλυτέον τά τε ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων τά τε ὑπὸ βαρβάρων προσαπορούμενα ἡμῖν περὶ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου παρουσιάας).

a *Stromateis* and a treatise on first principles (*De Princ.*), suggesting that the *Stromateis* was a distinct literary form from that which would treat of first principles, or what Clement labels the beginning of physics.

These indications all reinforce for Nautin that Clement did not expose his physics in the *Stromateis*, but in another work called the *Hypotyposes*. He therefore breaks up the *Laurentianus* manuscript in the following way:

Works of Clement	Preserved parts in *Laurentianus*
STROMATEIS	
1. Ethics (*Stromateis* 1 to 7)	*Str.* 1 to 7
2. Apologetic against the Greeks and Jews (*Stromateis* 8 to ?)	*Str.* 8.1.1.1 to 8.24.6
HYPOTYPOSES	
1. Physics, first part: critique of the sects:	
a) philosophers: treatise 'on first principles'	*Str.* 8.9.25.1 to 33.9
b) the heretics	*Excerpta ex Theodoto*
2. Physics, second part: '*epopteia*' or allegorical commentary of passages of Scripture	*Eclogae Propheticae*

From this Nautin concludes that the *Stromateis* is not an exact reproduction of Clement's work, but the work of a copyist who had a copy of the *Stromateis* and their continuation, the *Hypotyposes*. However, through lack of energy or time, the copyist transcribed only extracts of the latter under the heading *Stromateis Eight*.

Nautin then directs his attention to concerns that could be raised over the ancient citations of the *Eclogae* that place them under the name *Stromateis Eight*, suggesting that, as Zahn had asserted, the *Eclogae* belonged at the beginning of book eight and assumed that the position of the *Exerpta* went naturally between *Stomateis Eight* and the *Eclogae*. However, Nautin disagrees on two counts:

1. The impossibility of covering all that is raised within the fragments at the end of the *Laurentianus* manuscript; namely, a development

of the theme of logical demonstration, an account of first causes, extracts and refutation of Theodotus and other heretics, extracts and a commentary on Scripture, in particular on the creation of the world. Nautin adds that no other book of the *Stromateis* carries such a range of subjects. This is simply too much to expect of one *Stromateis*.

2. The declaration of Clement himself at the beginning of book eight that it would only cover an apologetic against the Greeks and the Jews. We can see this at the beginning of the eighth book, but, Nautin suggests, not the development on causes, the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogue*, which fit neatly into Clement's proposed account of physics in two parts. Thus Nautin believes that Zahn was incorrect in allotting the *Eclogue* as part of the eighth book.

Nautin then looks at the ancient editions of the *Stromateis* itself to determine how many books it actually contained. Firstly, Eusebius mentions eight books,[127] but it is possible that he did not have the edition written by Clement himself. Acacius of Caesarea, a successor to Eusebius, had a shortened edition which arrives to us through the *Laurentianus*. Acacius was most probably working from the library of Eusebius and so it is also probable that Eusebius himself had only a shortened edition of the *Stromateis*. Closer to Clement's time as Eusebius is, he was not assured of full copies of texts, as the instance of the mutilated copy of Origen's commentary on *Hosea* testifies. It is probable that Eusebius had a similar edition of Clement's works as Acacius and which closely reflects what appears to us in *Laurentianus*. Eusebius' record of eight books is thus indecisive. Nautin asks whether Clement could have condensed his apologetic against the Greeks and the Jews into one *Stromateis*.

Secondly, there is the edition that came down to us in *Laurentianus*. Nautin believes a copyist transcribed fully *Stromateis* one to seven, then extracts of the last *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposes*. He believes that the copyist did not make a summary of this remaining material, but kept some passages which interested him; namely, information on philosophical demonstration and causation, then notes on Clement's view on the doctrines of Theodotus, a rich resource for heresiologists, and then certain interpretations of Scripture and pieces of documentary

[127] Eusebius, *EH*. 6.13.1.

interest such as interpretations from Tatian (*Ecl.* 38.1), quotes from the *Apocalypse of Peter* (*Ecl.* 41.2; 48.1; 49.1) and the *Preaching of Peter* (*Ecl.* 58) which did not appear in the bible, and finally mention of his teacher Pantaenus (*Ecl.* 58). This copyist, Nautin believes, worked in the third century and whose copy of Clement's works entered the library in Caesarea and was used by both Eusebius and later be Acacius, and which was the ancestor to *Laurentianus*.

Thirdly and finally, we know through Photius that an edition did not contain more than *Stromateis* one to seven, followed by *Q.D.S.*,[128] probably delivered from a copy of the previous edition which had removed the eighth book, the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogue*. This could have been the case either because the material was already fragmented or because the copyist realised that the eighth book was mainly made up of passages which were in the edition of the *Hypotyposes*.

Nautin concludes his extensive analysis with four principle points, the first three of which he holds for certain, and the fourth as highly probable:

1. The texts that follow *Stromateis* seven in *Laurentianus* are neither drafts nor notes of readings published by Clement or his acquaintances, nor notes of a course that he would have taken at the school of Pantaenus. They are the fragments that a copyist extracted from the work of Clement.
2. These extracts come from a work that is the continuation of the *Stromateis*, which Clement announced several times.
3. This continuation of *Stromateis* included: 1. the eighth book of the *Stromateis*, and possibly others as well, devoted to an apologetic against the Greeks and the Jews; 2. other volumes containing 'physics' from *Str*. 8.9.25.1 to 33.9, plus the *Excerpta ex Theodotos* and the *Eclogae Propheticae*.
4. Several indications tend to prove that these other volumes containing 'physics' were included in the *Hypotyposes*.

In view of Nautin's conclusions it is difficult to assert that the eighth book of the *Stromateis* could constitute all that is predicated by the number symbolism announced earlier. In regard to Nautin's four conclusions, I would, however, add the following:

[128] Photius, *Bibl.* 111. He does, however, mention eight books.

1. The arguments against the fragments being neither drafts nor notes of readings or notes to a course taken at the school of Pantaenus are not convincing as pointed out above. The arguments on both sides have degrees of probability, but are inconclusive. I am inclined towards the view that the fragments listed under *Stromateis* eight are notes taken by Clement himself, not necessarily from a course taken at the school of Pantaenus, but reminiscences, as he himself suggests, put down in the manner of the previous seven *Stromateis* and later copied.

2. I agree that these extracts come from a work that is the continuation of the *Stromateis*, which Clement announced several times. *Stromateis* one, four, six and seven insist that there is a plan to Clement's teaching which is not fully realised in the extent material. However, the extracts are highly suggestive of what is expected of the program set up by Clement in the previous books.

3. The continuation of *Stromateis* includes the eighth book. Given the implications of the number symbolism contained throughout the first seven books, I would be reluctant to suggest any more that eight books of the *Stromateis*. It may well be as Nautin suggests that Clement found the need to expand the purpose of his ethics to incorporate an apologetic against the Greeks and the Jews. Although while there is an apologetic against the Greeks in *Str*. 8.1.1.1 to 8.24.6, there is no apologetic against the Jews, and, as we suggested above, this is exactly the topic with which the first book of the *Stromateis* begins. Hence, there is nothing here to suggest that the number pattern located in relation to the first and eighth grade is not correct. Furthermore, the number symbolism insists that the eighth grade in Clement's soteriology is concerned with an *archê*, the beginning of teaching and of a new creation. Here lies the ogdoad. Hence the section of the philosophers on first principles, *Str*. 8.9.25.1 to 33.9, is not as out of place as Nautin suggests were it to remain as part of the eighth book of the *Stromateis*, even if it were merely preliminary remarks about it. Indeed that discussion on demonstration flows quite naturally into the discussion of aetiology, and is of a much similar character than the material contained in the *Excerpta*, which Nautin sees as connected to the aetiological material in the eighth book. I believe the fragmentary material is part of the eighth book of the *Stromateis*. However, the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae* are part of a later work that would be the completion of Clement's teaching on physics and the *epopteia* consonant with the *Greater mysteria* that take place after the mystagogic and purificatory stage mentioned in the later chapter.

4. The idea that the extracts tend to suggest that this continuation to the *Stromateis* was the *Hypotyposes* is highly probable for the reasons Nautin articulates, but inconclusive. Whatever work, be it extent or not, it is undoubtedly concerned with physics and ultimately with epoptic vision, and again, Nautin's arguments for the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogue* fitting this decription are convincing. This is entirely consonant with Clement's symbolism surrounding the number eight, although we cannot ascribe the complete physics and epoptic vision to the eighth book itself. This is left for the continuation.

Conclusion

To conclude the discussion on the the number and sequence of Clement's works, the *Stromateis* progress as a mystagogy from the first book through to the eighth in a way that is announced by the number symbolism set out within it. It is possible that the composition of the *Stromateis*, consisting of eight books, is systematised only to the extent of providing the boundaries within which the miscellany of notes can freely operate. Méhat has provided us with useful evidence concerning a sequence of truth, a sequence that may not have a corresponding systematic order on the page. A good analogy is a labyrinth whereby the initiate proceeds though the complex often coming to dead ends and being forced to explore different avenues, yet all the while making some progress towards the goal.[129] From the perspective of the initiate, it may seem that little advancement has been made, yet from the position of the teacher, who oversees the initiate's progress and has traversed the same road before, one can see that the initiate is moving ever closer despite the wrong turns. The analogy of the labyrinth accounts for the haphazard arrangement of the material within the *Stromateis*, which, when viewed as a whole, follows a sequence that ultimately directs the reader to the goal it simultaneously conceals and reveals. The *Stromateis* deliberately obfuscates in order to initiate souls. To this purpose many

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[129] Cf. H.A. Blair: "Clement weaves a pattern in the *Stromateis*, but a pattern in free association, not logic or chronology. It is like Ariadne's clue of thread, for it leads not into but out of the labyrinth of tangled notions in our world today, back in the clear landscape where we can again begin to think. Clement does not make the journey for us to the central mystery, for we are all starting from different places; but he sets us off from possible starting points, tells us what to aim at and where not to turn": *The Kaleidoscope of Truth: Types and Archetypes in Clement of Alexandria* (Worthing, 1986), 14.

are led down blind alleys and lose sight of the *akolouthia* that Clement is adumbrating.

Another more fitting analogy is used by Clement himself; that of husbandry. As Nautin pointed out, the *Stromateis* are situated at the level of ethics. Clement uses the analogy of land being "previously cleared" (προκεκαθαρμένης) of thorns and weeds by the farmer in preparation for planting the vine. This, he claims is a mystery in preparation for another mystery, no doubt a reference to the lesser mysteries in preparation for the greater.[130] The same word is used in connection with the mysteries in book four, although this time, without the georgic imagery.[131] Here he speaks of being initiated into the lesser mysteries with certain subjects being "cleared aside" in preparation for the greater mysteries. In other words, the *Stromateis* act as a clearing of obstacles to make the soul of the initiate ready to receive the greater mysteries. Ethically speaking this implies that the clearing aside of certain subjects is a purificatory process that demonstrates that the gnostic is truly pious.[132] The question remains as to what is cleared aside in the *Stromateis*? This will be the intention of chapters four to six.

Finally, the eighth book of the *Stromateis* fits the pedagogical sequence born out by Clement's number symbolism, albeit in only a preliminary state to that which comes in the *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae*. The realm of Christ is the ogdoad, the place of ideas and therefore rational, but it is also the coming into the light of the first day, in the mind of the initiate and in the divine mind, both of which are symbolised by the number ten. Clement's number symbolism requires that the eighth be considered the first. Given the marked correspondences between the soteriological sequence and the number and sequence of his works, it stands to reason that the eighth book bears some close similarities to the first, since logic, with God and Scripture, constitutes both the *archê* and *telos* of teaching and of gnosis. The treatise represents the restoration of the chaotic structure of the previous seven books to a logical order, and a preparation for the coming treatise on the epoptic vision of physics, showing that in the light of the Lord's Day, logic is as it is, derived from the divine Logos. Though book eight is a short and fragmented treatise, its implications are enormous. The categories

[130] *Str.* 1.1.15.2.
[131] *Str.* 4.1.3.1.
[132] *Str.* 6.1.1.1.

it establishes for the discovery of truth require an enormous intellectual effort to be applied, an effort familiar to those who attempt to become versed in practical application of Stoic and Aristotelian logic. The initiate capable of assimilating this knowledge is reminded that it is God-given, not to be abused as a tool for sophistry, but stringently applied to the recollection and expression of the truth. *Figure 3* sets out the significant correspondences between the content and structure of Clement's works.

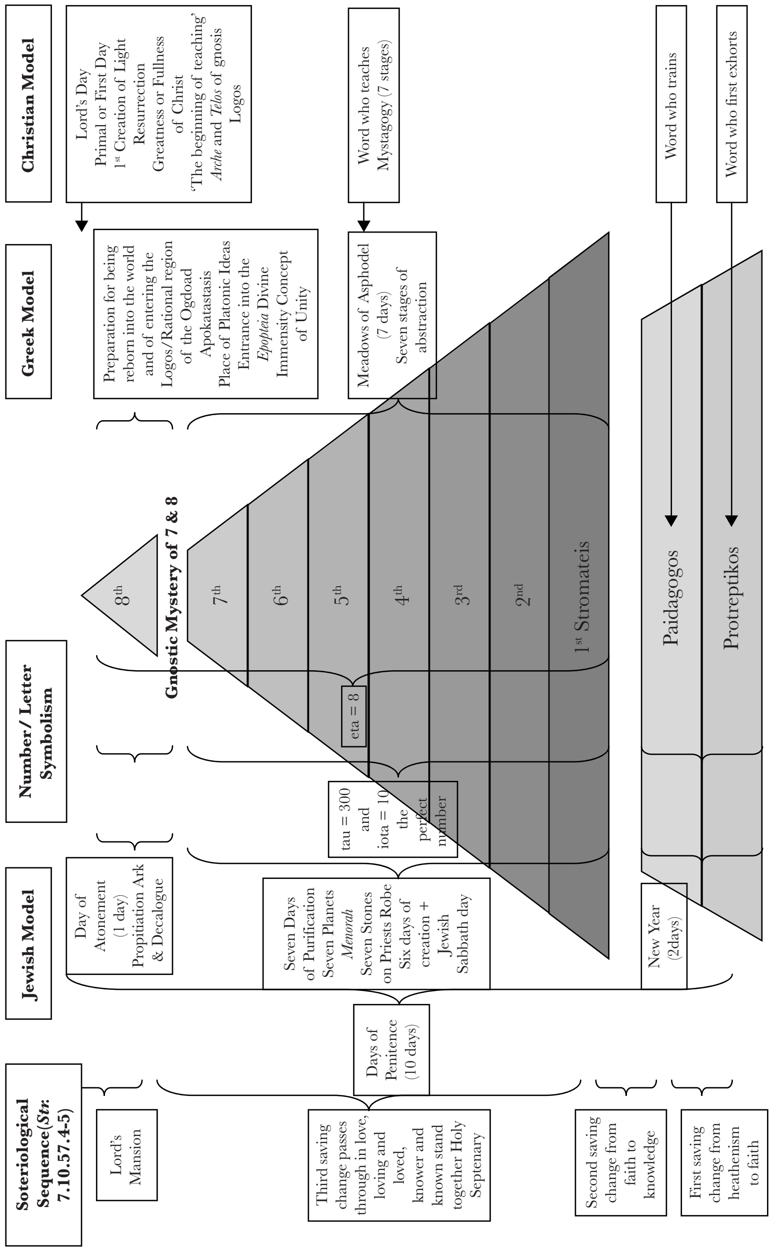

Fig. 3. Diagram of Correspondences between content and structure of Clement's works.

CHAPTER THREE

LOGIC AND ENIGMA

3.1. *Introduction*

The difficulty scholars have faced when attempting to identify the function of the *Stromateis* is compounded by its mixture of Greek philosophical logic and language from a wide variety of sources, with what I have chosen to label 'enigmatic'. One can trace the influences on the *Stromateis* to almost all the schools of Greek philosophical thought. Yet running side by side is the enigmatic material of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, Greek poetry and maxims, myths and Egyptian symbols, and even anecdotes about Hindu wise men, each requiring the more imaginative approach of symbolic or allegoric interpretation. Epistemologically, this material does not readily lend itself to the philosophical categorisation that is such a marked feature of Greek philosophical historiography.

Yet the disparity between philosophy and religion, or more specifically, between logic and the enigmatic is not quite so acute when we consider Clement's treatment of first principles.[1] The first principles in Greek philosophy have always been the subject of logical discussion, and yet, as Clement attempts to show, they are also the subject of faith and have always been disguised in enigmas. From this point of view logic and enigma are concerned with the same territory and therefore both play a crucial role in Clement's method of revealing and concealing the truths concerning God. It will be useful then to analyse these two prominent features of Clement's writing to determine how the synthesis functions as a teaching.

If the method Clement used for the writing of the *Stromateis* operates as a mystagogic teaching as we suggested in the last chapter, we must then determine the tools he used in his initiatory process. Not only is

[1] As E. Molland writes: "The distinction between religion and philosophy is dim to this thinker, who conceives religion as the knowledge of God, and philosophy as a reaching for the true knowledge of divine reality": "Clement of Alexandria on the Origin of Greek philosophy", *SO* 15/16 (1936), 57–85.

the work replete with logical and enigmatic language, it is also replete with the terminology of faith. Clement is not a fideist, but his defence of faith as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge is renowned amongst scholars. His most powerful tool in initiating souls in Christian philosophy lies, then, somewhere between a rigid logic inherited from Greek philosophy and strong faith in Hebrew and Christian revelation.

3.2. *The Tools of Initiation*

As discussed in chapter one, the idea of concealing truths is the method employed by Clement for the writing of the *Stromateis* to sort genuine seekers from false.[2] It follows then, as Kovacs points out, that Clement's method is analogous to Scripture in its attempt to locate the elect of God by clothing its truths in some form of veil.[3] While Scripture conceals its truths "in enigmas, and symbols, and allegories, and metaphors, and such like tropes",[4] Clement uses the miscellaneous literary form of the *Stromateis* as a kind of veil of disparity in order to conceal its truths.[5] This is the domain of the *Didaskalos*, and why the *Stromateis* by necessity appears in the form that it does.[6] The strange mixture of logic, Scriptural, prophetic, and poetic utterances combine to become an enigmatic and synthetic training ground, bringing together two primary elements in both Greek and Hebrew thought.

Ultimately for Clement, even the New Testament acknowledges that its truths are a mystery that few are capable of understanding, and is therefore, esoteric at its core: "But we speak the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery, which none of this world understood, for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory".[7] According to Clement, it is only with the coming of the Word of God and the proclamation of the Gospel, that the prophetic enigmas can be dispelled.[8] Yet he also believed that it is only the gnostic who can fully interpret Scripture and comprehend what others find incomprehensible.[9] Only the gnostic

[2] *Str.* 7.18.111.1–3 and 6.1.2.1–2.
[3] Cf. *Str.* 6.15.126.2–3.
[4] *Str.* 5.4.22.1.
[5] *Str.* 2.1.1.2. See also *Str.* 5.4.24.2–3.
[6] *Paid.* 3.12.97.3–98.1. Cf. *Str.* 2.1.1.2.
[7] 1 Cor 2.6–8 cited at *Str.* 5.4.24.2. Origen also saw the New Testament as esoteric, not just the Gospels, but also the epistles (*De Princ.* 4.2.3).
[8] *Protr.* 1.10.1.
[9] *Str.* 6.8.70.2.

can understand "knotty sayings (στροφὰς λόγων) and the solution of enigmas (λύσεις αἰνιγμάτων)",[10] a "parable and a dark word (σκοτεινὸν λόγον), the sayings and enigmas of the wise".[11] Hence the need for the prophecies contained in Scripture to remain obscure, but which reveal enough truth to ignite the souls of a select few.[12] Clement tells us that it is divine teaching (θεία διδασκαλία) to learn to discern the ambiguities of Scripture and without the gnostic's interpretive skills its truths would remain forever hidden from us. There are, then, a number of skills that gnostics must develop in the process of initiation.

3.2.1. *Logic and Dialectic*

Clement's theology is, at its core, logocentric. He believed that the logical faculty within us is an image of the Word of God,[13] and therefore provides the means by which the soul can return to God. "For, as is the Logos, such also must the believer's life be, so as to be able to follow God, who brings all things to end from the beginning by the right course".[14] Clement speaks of the soul becoming cleansed by "rational water (ὕδωρ λογικόν)"[15] and of being baptised by reason[16] as it learns to discern its way in the true philosophy of Christ. He says that the Christian must also eat bread according to reason and become "circumcised in understanding (περιτέτμηται τὸν λογισμόν)",[17] in his belief that, in the sacramental life, all thought and action is governed by the Logos.[18] Reason or logic for Clement was not a dry academic and ratiocinative tool for the forum; it was the means of living life according to the Word of God. He believed that humans pre-existed with the Word of God before the foundation of the world,[19] and that in

[10] Wis 8.8.
[11] *Str.* 2.2.7.2 citing Prov 1.6. The beginning of Proverbs (1.1–6) demonstrates that the predilection for philosophy to take its way through the veiled language of Scripture is not a Greek incursion into the Hebrew revelation, but an instrument of Scripture for the attainment of wisdom.
[12] *Str.* 6.15.129.4. See also *Str.* 5.4.20.1.
[13] *Protr.* 10.98.4.
[14] *Str.* 7.16.100.3.
[15] *Protr.* 10.99.3.
[16] *Paid.* 1.6.30.1.
[17] *Paid.* 2.8.73.6, albeit this notion is introduced in the negative. Those people who did not know the Lord were "not circumcised in understanding, whose darkness was not enlightened etc...." (Is 1.3).
[18] *Str.* 1.10.46.1.
[19] *Protr.* 1.6.4, working from the prologue to John's Gospel.

order for us to be able to translate ourselves back to our divine origin,[20] a rational soul was breathed into us, making us peculiarly akin to the Logos.[21] It is what sets us apart from the animal kingdom.[22] Clement called this translation a "rational recollection (ἀνάμνησιν λογικήν)"[23] and a "rational gnosis (γνῶσις ἡ λογική)"[24] that allows us to transcend the created order.[25]

However, Clement was also aware that the Logos was a common notion in Greek philosophy and therefore needed to distinguish the logic that was applied to the search for truth, from its use as a sophistic tool where the goal was anything but assimilation to the divine. Sophistry, he believed, is merely human wisdom, only fit for worldly enterprises and caprices where the search for truth no longer played any part.[26] His respect for logic and dialectic made him determined that they be employed in the attainment of divine wisdom and knowledge rather than for worldly gain. For this reason logical discussion played a vital role in the gnostic's life. It was important that the gnostic is capable of countering all that is falsely predicated of the divine and is able to clearly delineate the true philosophy of Christ. The gnostic, according to Clement, employed the art of dialectic to dispel doubt concerning intellectual subjects.[27] Heresy, for example, arises because the truth is difficult to attain and gives rise to many questions. The result is confusion and misinterpretation through the "savouring of self-love and vanity, of those who have not learned or apprehended truly, but only caught up a mere conceit of knowledge".[28] However, those people who have employed their wills and energies to the genuine study of the truth can, with "the skills of the mind and reason (λογισμοῦ), distinguish between

[20] *Paid.* 1.12.100.1; 2.10.100.3.
[21] *Str.* 5.14.94.3. See also *Paid.* 1.3.7.1. God "breathed (ἐνεφύσησεν)" into man something that was "peculiar (ἴδιος)" to Himself.
[22] *Str.* 2.20.111.2.
[23] *Paid.* 3.11.76.2
[24] *Str.* 4.7.54.1 citing 1 Cor 13.12.
[25] *Str.* 2.11.50.3–51.2.
[26] *Str.* 1.8.39.5. See the article by Jean Pépin, "La vraie dialectique selon Clément d' Alexandrie", in *Epektasis: mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. C. Kannengeiser, Paris, 1972. Pépin analyses the two kinds of dialectic that are useful for the Christian gnostic: "d'une part, la dialectique de type aristotélicien ou stoïcien, conçue comme un art formel du raisonnement et de la discussion; d'autre part, la dialectique platonicienne, qui est une ascension spirituelle en direction des réalités les plus hautes, jusqu'au Bien".
[27] *Str.* 6.17.156.2.
[28] *Str.* 7.15.91.2–4.

true and false words".[29] "Such a coping-stone are dialectics", says Clement, "that truth cannot be trampled under foot by sophists".[30]

Clement, therefore, demanded that gnostics have a full knowledge of the sciences, requesting that they bring everything to bear on discovering the truth. Geometry, music, grammar and philosophy should all be utilised to defend the faith against attack. Clement says that we praise the experience of the helmsman, who "has seen the cities of many men",[31] the surgeon and the empiric who have had much experience. Hence the gnostic who acquires the skills of Greek and barbarian philosophy is experienced (πολύπειρος) and therefore worthy of praise because of the powers of discernment this experience brings:

> And our much-knowing (πολύδρις) gnostic can distinguish sophistry from philosophy, the art of embellishment from skilled exercise, concoction from medical skill, and rhetoric from dialectics,[32] and, according to the barbarian philosophy, the other heresies from the truth itself.[33]

Like the helmsman, the physician, and the empiric, it is imperative that the advanced Christian be experienced; that is, be conversant with all forms of learning in order to discern truth from falsity and guard the faith against attack.

For Clement, when this learning is appropriately directed towards "what is pleasing to God"[34] it is to be exonerated and developed. Here, as Pépin points out, is the clear disqualification of dialectical reasoning for the purpose of dialectics alone, but for a spiritual progress towards God.[35] Logic and dialectic need not therefore be mere tools of sophistry and scepticism, but a means of fully realising and manifesting the principle of logic, the Logos, to the world. Clement's gnostic is of vital importance in this regard. The gnostic is a true dialectician and the most god-like of humans. Like the "Eleatic stranger" whom Socrates refers to as "living as a god among men",[36] the gnostic is the only human to exist in a purely rational state of being. Ultimately logic and the use of "dialectical division (διαλεκτικὴ διαιρέσις)" is a means of abstracting

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29 *Str.* 7.16.93.2.
30 *Str.* 6.10.81.4. Also *Str.* 1.20.99.4.
31 An allusion to the opening lines of Homer's *Odyssey* (*Od.* 1.3).
32 Cf. Plato *Gorg.* 465c.
33 *Str.* 1.9.43.4–44.3. See also *Str.* 6.10.80.1–5.
34 *Str.* 1.28.176.3.
35 "La vraie dialectique", 381.
36 *Str.* 4.25.155.2. Plato *Soph.* 216a–b; Cf. also Epicurus *LM*, 135.

oneself from the world and of taking the soul to what is simple and primary: the first principle of all things. This power of "discernment (φρόνησις)" is the way the gnostic comes to knowledge of real existences in the Platonic sense. It is a power that provides knowledge of entities as entities in themselves, presented in their pure and intelligible form.[37] This is what leads to true wisdom, according to Clement; the divine power that grasps what is perfect.[38] The passage of *Str*. 1.28.177.3 to 178.2 is a mixture of Greek abstraction and Scriptural metaphor.[39] The true dialectic can distinguish genera from species and, with the help of the Saviour, pass through the "gloom of ignorance" that confuses the mind and obscures "the eye of the soul". This power of discernment ultimately leads to self-knowledge,[40] but, through the saviour, reveals the father of the universe as far as humanly possible, as testified by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Dialectical ability was crucial in a world that was fraught with sophistry and heresy. It also furnished Clement with a defence against attacks on philosophy from within the faith. He found it necessary to defend the gnostic's abilities from Christians who were determined to renounce philosophy and dialectics in their claim that faith alone is the armoury by which to thwart pretenders to truth.[41] For Clement, the fideist's stance constituted a similar but counter problem to that presented by the Valentinians, who thought of themselves as a predestined elect race who was naturally saved and who denigrated the role that faith plays in the acquisition of knowledge.[42] Clement accuses the fideists with the same charge of believing that they were naturally graced with salvation without any hard work to attain it. Clement suggests, that they gather clusters of grapes from the vine without tending to it all year round.[43] While Gnosticism wished to philosophise or intellectualise

[37] On the division of genus and species in the dialectical method see also *Str*. 1.1.17.3; 6.10.80.4; 8.6.18.4–7. Cf. *Phaedr*. 265d–266b. As Pépin points out, what attracts Clement to the dialectician is the ability to make the double step of "division and gathering (διαιρέσεων και συναγωγῶν)", that is, to bring multiple species into one single kind. One may note the Eucharistic symbolism attached to this double step. "La vraie dialectique", 381.

[38] *Str*. 1.28.177.3–178.2 citing Matt 11.27/Lk 10.22.

[39] See Osborn *Clement* (1957), 153–57 and Méhat, *Étude*, 435. This is the best example of christianised Platonic dialectic in the eyes of Pépin, "La vraie dialectique", 381.

[40] γνωστέον ἑαμτούς alluding to famous Greek maxim from the oracle at Delphi.

[41] See *Str*. 6.10.80.5; 6.11.89.1; 6.11.93.1.

[42] Cf. *Str*. 2.3.10.2; 5.1.3.3.

[43] *Str*. 1.9.42.2–43.1.

without the work of faith, fideists wish to remain faithful without the work of intellectual rigour.

As the intellectual defender of the faith the gnostic was also the most capable person to interpret the Scriptures, the enigmatic nature of which precludes them from being understood by all.[44] Continuing his diatribe against fideists, Clement shows the role that philosophy, dialectic and logic play in understanding the full meaning of Scripture:

> How useful is it to distinguish utterances which are ambiguous (ἀμφιβόλους), and which are used synonymously (ὁμωνὺμως) in the Testaments. For at the time of his temptation, the Lord cleverly matched the devil by ambiguity.[45] And I do not yet see how, as some people assume, that at the same time the discoverer of philosophy and dialectics[46] is mislead by being outwitted by ambiguity. And if the prophets and apostles did not know the skills by which the exercises of philosophy are to be seen, yet the mind of the prophetic and teaching spirit, uttered secretly (ἐπικεκρυμμένως) because all do not have an understanding ear, requires skilful teaching for clear exposition. For the prophets and students of the Spirit knew their steadfast minds. For they knew them in trust in a way that others could not easily do, as the Spirit has said. In this manner it is not possible for those who have not learned to receive it. "Write", it is said, "the commandments doubly, in purpose and knowledge, that you may answer the words of truth to them who sent you".[47] What, then, is the knowledge of answering? or what that of asking? It is dialectics.[48]

[44] Like the Egyptians who "did not entrust the mysteries they possessed to all and sundry, and did not divulge the knowledge of divine things to the profane" (*Str.* 5.5.31.5). See also *Str.* 5.6.32.1; 5.7.41.2.

[45] Matt 4.1–11.

[46] That is, the devil, according to the fideists.

[47] Stählin (*GCS* II. 30.8–10) and M. Caster (*SChr* 30, 80 n. 2) both cite Prov. 22.20–21 as Clement's reference here, but this is not very helpful. It may be an obscure reference to Matt. 22.40. Clement is suggesting I believe, that the two tablets of the Law represent two ways of knowing the Law; that is, as the prophets and the disciples saw them and as the untaught masses saw them. Only the prophets and disciples are capable of unifying and realising their double nature, in 'knowledge' of their metaphysical truth, and in 'purpose' as a practical way of living their life. Clement may also be referring to the two sets of tablets that Moses brought down from Sinai, destroying the first because of the idolatry of the Israelites. The two sets of tablets show the written and oral nature of revealed truth contained in Scripture, the latter of which requires the Tannaitic method of interpretation. The Tannaim were more or less contemporary with Clement and were also concerned with the redaction of oral teachings. See A. Untermann's *Dictionary of Jewish Lore and Legend* (London, 1983) s.v. "oral torah".

[48] *Str.* 1.9.44.3–45.5. Cf. *Str.* 6.15.132.3–4 where Moses himself is seen doubly; that is, from two persepectives (See p. 166 n. 103 below).

Clement believed that Scripture communicates its truths esoterically ("because all do not have an understanding ear") and ambiguously, meaning that few are capable of discerning expressions that appear to contradict each other, but which actually refer to the same thing (ὁμωνύμως). He cannot see that if philosophy and dialectics are the creation of the devil, as some presume, how it is that the devil was fooled by the replies that Christ gives him in the desert according to the Gospel of Matthew.[49] Clearly, philosophy and dialectic are tools used by the Lord to dispel evil. The prophets and the apostles knew of the philosophy of Christ, and therefore could philosophise and discern the ambiguities of Scripture. As Clement says elsewhere, Scripture 'desires' gnostics to "become skilful money-changers".[50]

This is confirmed for Clement by the tablets of the Law which were written doubly, another example of the ambiguous way in which God communicates himself. Scripture is not a "single myconos (μία μύκονος)",[51] Clement tells us, "but those who hunt after the sequence (ἀκολουθίαν) of the divine teaching, must approach it in a more dialectical way (διαλεκτικώτερον)".[52]

Logic and dialectic then are the tools for sorting true words from false, and to maintain the faith against attacks from Greek philosophers, heretical Gnosticism, and simple believers of the faith alike. Yet the question still remains as to how the logic and dialectic used by the gnostic differs from that of the sophist.[53] A sophist can distinguish true from false words as well as any gnostic and without recourse to a divine

[49] See Pépin, "La vraie dialectique", 377.

[50] *Str*. 1.28.177.2. See also *Str*. 6.10.81.1–2. The saying is not scriptural (*Agrapha*, 141), but alludes to the parable of the talents (Matt. 25.27).

[51] *Str*. 1.28.179.4. A phrase that has come to mean something like "it's all one" or "all alike" (See LSJ s.v. "Μύκονος". In his notes to this passage, Caster claims that this saying seems to characterise the impossibility of seizing the complexity of Scripture as a whole (*SChr* 30 174 n. 5). I would suggest that Clement is highlighting the fact that the ambiguities in Scripture do not allow us to take it as a consistent whole on a merely literal level. Only the dialectician who is capable of discerning its ambiguities can harmonise them to find the truth contained therein.

[52] Cf. Méhat *Étude sur les Stromates*, 40.

[53] *Str*. 6.10.81.4. Pépin states: "l'apport de la philosophie grecque n'est pas de fortifier la vérité chrétienne, mais de paralyser l'attaque portée contre celle-ci par la sophistique et de déjouer ses pièges, en sorte qu'on l'a convenablement nommée clôture et mur (φραγμὸς οἰκείως εἴρηται καὶ θριγκός) de la vigne". Pépin sees the influence of the stoic vocabulary of Philo (φραγμὸν: *De agric*. 2.8–3.15) and Plato's vocabulary (θριγκὸς: *Rep*. 7.534e) at work here in Clement's attempt to illustrate the usefulness of dialectics as a tool to protect or feance off the faith from the attacks of sophistry. "La vraie dialectique", 379.

reality. Both are eclectic, drawing on various philosophies to argue their case, and both claim to be expounding the truth.[54] Unravelling the ambiguities of Scripture is much the same as arguing a tricky case in the forum. What are the criteria for discerning the genuine seeker of truth from the false? In short, the answer for Clement is the faith and trustworthiness of the gnostic and of Scripture.

3.2.2. *Faith and Trustworthiness*

It is impossible to overestimate the role that faith plays in Clement's gnosis; it is the foundation on which gnostics build their investigation into the truth.[55] This reliance on faith, however, by no means leaves the gnostic open to intellectual attack where the truth is concerned. The distinction between the gnostic and the sophist, and divine and human reasoning, also comes down to trustworthiness. Ultimately there must be a canon or criterion for truth to which one can appeal in order to find the basis of certainty.

Logic, when abused and not appropriately directed towards discovering the truth of things, can simply become a tool for pedantry.[56] Words can be manipulated to prove the opinions of men without recourse to the truth; such is the case with Stoic pantheism, says Clement.[57] This is the "dialectic in fashion in the schools", he claims, "the exercise of a philosopher in matters of opinion, for the sake of the faculty of disputation. But the truth is not in these at all".[58] Working from 1 Timothy 6.3–5, he calls this "art of logic (τὴν λογικὴν τέχνην)" a "disease", suggesting that logic was essentially destructive to the soul

[54] Cf. for example *Str.* 1.7.37.6 with the passage *Str.* 1.12.57.1–58.2.

[55] Cf. *Str.* 2.2.8.4. The relation of *pistis* to *gnosis* is thoroughly treated in Lilla (*Clement of Alexandria*, 118–142). He states that the tension between Greek philosophers and heretics on the one hand, and simple believers on the other, led Clement to develop his own doctrine of *pistis*. H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought* (Oxford, 1966), 51–4, describes the *Stromateis* as the "first Christian essay in aid of the grammar of assent". He also points out the pressure being asserted against an epistemological doctrine of faith from three corners, pagan critics, the gnostic heretics, and simple believers. For a more extensive bibliography on the topic see Lilla (*Clement of Alexandria*, 119 n. 4).

[56] *Str.* 1.10.51.2 τὴν λογικὴν τερθρείαν.

[57] *Str.* 1.10.51.1. As Pépin states, "Toutefois, si l'on considère qu'aux yeux du même Clément, le dialecticien par excellence est Chrysippe et non pas Aristote". ("La vraie dialectique", 376). While not diminishing the impact of Aristotelian logic on Clement, Pépin claims that it is Stoic vocabulary and definitions that Clement is building on.

[58] *Str.* 1.9.39.5.

when used in this way.[59] Not only do the logomachies of the forum distract us from what is essential to right living, but they also poison us against right living.[60] This is the "tradition of men (παράδοσιν τῶν αντηρώπων)" spoken of in Colossians 2.8[61] and the "vain thoughts" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3.19–20, to which Clement adds: "Let no man therefore glory on account of pre-eminence in human thought (ἀντηρωπίνῃ διανοίᾳ)".[62]

As much as Clement appropriates the philosophies of the Greeks—the Pre-Socratic, the Platonic, the Aristotelian, the Stoic and, to some extent, the Epicurean—he sees them as human wisdoms rather than divine. He claims that "whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science pervaded by piety—this eclectic whole I call philosophy. But such conclusions of human reasoning (ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν), as men have cut away and falsified, I would never call divine".[63] Greek philosophy as a whole, though at times expressing the truth, is a human rather than a divine reason at work.[64] This was the philosophy of the day according to Clement, ephemeral and harmful, and was a clear demonstration of the need for expounding the true philosophy of Christ grounded in faith.

So where is it that the Greeks, if we are to take them as a whole for an instant, go wrong according to Clement? He proposes that the purpose of translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was to provide them with an understanding, lacking in their systems, of the role that faith plays in living life according to reason.[65] He also claims:

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[59] *Str.* 1.9.40.1–2.

[60] *Str.* 1.9.40.1; 1.10.49.3.

[61] *Str.* 1.10.51.1.

[62] *Str.* 1.10.50.1. Working from the 1 Corinthians passage, it is to be noted that this is peculiarly human reasoning that Clement identifies with διαλογισμός. In every instance where Clement speaks of διαλογισμός, he is referring to human thinking (*Protr.* 81.2; *Str.* 1.3.23.3; 1.11.50.1; 2.11.50.3; 3.10.69.4; 4.6.33.5; 4.17.107.7) unless he specifically qualifies it as 'holy' (ἁγίομς τοὺς διαλογισμσὺς, *Str.* 4.6.39.4).

[63] *Str.* 1.7.37.6. See also *Str.* 6.7.55.4.

[64] This appears to contradict Clement's assertion that Greek philosophy was given as a covenant by God (*Str.* 6.5.42.3). However, at the beginning of the eighth book of the *Stromateis* he clearly sees some form of degradation in Greek thinking from the time of Plato and Aristotle, though these also come under attack. For the most part here he directs his concerns to the more recent of the Hellenic philosophers (*Str.* 8.1.1.1–2). The same degradation was anticiptaed by Aristotle *Top.* 1.1.100b 23–101 a 4; *Sophist. Elench.* 2.165b.7–8; 11.171b 6–22. See Pépin, "La vraie dialectique", 376.

[65] *Str.* 1.7.38.1–5.

> "Now my just one shall live by faith", the prophet said. And another prophet also says, "Except you believe, neither shall you understand". For how could the soul advance in transcendent contemplation, while disbelief concerning what was to be learned struggled within? But faith (πίστις), which the Greeks discard, deeming it empty and barbarous, is a voluntary preconception (προληψις ἑκούσιος), the assent of piety (θεοσεβείας συγκατάθεσις)—"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"[66]... Others have defined faith to be a thoughtful assent (ἐννοητικὴν συγκατάθεσιν) to an unseen thing, as certainly the demonstration of an unknown thing is an evident assent. If then it is a choice, being desirous of something, the desire is in this instance intellectual. And since choice is the beginning of action, faith is discovered to be the beginning of action, being the foundation of rational choice insomuch as something is demonstrated to oneself beforehand through faith. To follow voluntarily what is collected, is the principle of understanding (συνέσεως ἀρχή). Undistracted choice, then, gives considerable weight in the direction of knowledge. The exercise of faith at once becomes knowledge, resting on a sure foundation.[67]

Here Clement is deliberately drawing on Stoic and Epicurean philosophical categories for the criterion of truth to demonstrate the unspoken role that faith plays in them. Epicurean "preconception (πρόληψις)"[68] and Stoic "assent (συγκατάθεσις)"[69] are different ways of speaking about faith. Elsewhere Clement makes it known that among other Greek views, the Aristotelian first cause is the subject of faith,[70] and less explicitly we can conclude that he believed Plato's pre-existent knowledge to be the

[66] Heb 11.1.

[67] *Str.* 2.2.8.2–9.3.

[68] *Str.* 2.4.16.3. ναὶ μὴν καὶ ὁ 'Επίκουρος...πρόληψιν εἶναι διανοίας τὴν πίστιν ὑπολαμβάνει. See also *Str.* 2.6.28.1. Cf. the other doxographical accounts of πρόληψις as the criterion of truth in Epicurean philosophy (Diog. Laert. 10.31, 33; Cicero *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.43). None of these sources mentions faith in connection to preconception, but the lack of acknowledgment is exactly Clement's point. On the apparent disparity between the Epicurean belief in the primacy of the senses as the criteria for truth, as opposed to the intellect for Clement see Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 129–31.

[69] *Str.* 2.12.55.1. συγκατάθεσι...δ' οὐδεν ἀλλο ἢ πίστις. See also *Str.* 2.6.27.2–28.1; 5.13.86.1. Lilla again traces the influence of Antiochus in this identification of συγκατάθεσις and πίστιςας. He cites Varro's account of the Stoic identification of *adsensi* and *fides*. Lilla (*Clement of Alexandria*, 127–30) and Witt (*Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* [Cambridge, 1937], 29 n. 1). See also Cicero's *Ac. Post.* 1.40–1.

[70] Cf. *Top.* 100b. ἀλλ' ἑκάστην τῶν αρχῶν ἀυτὴν καθ' ἑαυτὴν εἶναι πιστήν. Aristotle did not use *pistis* in any technical sense according to E.A. Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria's Refutation of Gnosticism* (New York and Toronto, 1977), 22.

subject of faith also.[71] An assent is the voluntary movement or choice towards something intellectual and preconceived: it is in other words, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Faith then is the beginning of action and therefore of all rational choice, and is the foundation and principle of all understanding.[72]

Faith, according to Clement, admits no doubts, and dissipates them when accompanied by logic and dialectic.[73] This is what Clement refers to by the phrase "intelligent faith (ἐπιστημονικὴ πίστις)", "the highest demonstration" that one has recourse to.[74] It is a faith made certain by knowledge, but it is a knowledge that has a firm foundation in faith. "It is impossible for a man without learning to comprehend the things that are declared in the faith. But to adopt what is well said, and not to adopt the reverse, is caused not simply by faith, but by faith combined with knowledge".[75] For Clement the Greeks were not without faith, but had failed to acknowledge its role within their philosophical systems. Faith then is the criterion for determining true from false knowledge, divine from human reason, and therefore a gnostic from a sophist.

This criterion for sorting genuine seekers of the truth also bears on Clement's understanding of teaching. He tells us that teaching is worthy

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[71] Plato does not mention faith in relation to apprehending the first principles, but refers to a hypothesised principle for the beginning of investigation, which takes the soul step by step to the "un-hypothetical first principle of everything (μέχρι τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν ἰών)". In the four categories of Plato's epistemology, belief or faith (πίστις) is relegated to the third rank below understanding (νόησις) and thought (διάνοια), but situated above imaging (ἐικασία). It constitutes the highest level of understanding of the natural order, but is below the lowest level of the intelligible world, and is incapable of grasping first principles (*Rep*. 509d–511d). πίστις represents something very different for Plato than Clement in this respect. Lilla points out that it was Aristotle who developed more fully the theory of an indemonstrable first principle that Clement was to use (*Clement of Alexandria*, 121).

[72] On the various arguments for faith presented by Clement see E.F. Osborn, "Arguments for Faith in Clement of Alexandria", *VC* 48 (1994), 1–24.

[73] *Str*. 6.17.156.2.

[74] *Str*. 2.11.49.3. This intelligent faith constitutes the pinnacle of gnostic achievement, but it is built on the foundation of the common faith (ἡ κοινὴ πίστις). As Clement calls it, this "twofold faith (διττή πιστίς)" constitutes the means and the end of pious action: what is initially "hoped for (ελπιζόμενος)" and what is "accomplished (τελεώμενος)" (*Str*. 2.12.54.3); what is conducive to "growth" and to "perfection (τελείσις)" (*Str.* 5.1.2.3–5). Similarly, faith is a "gnostic superstructure on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ" (*Str.* 5.4.26.1–4). See also *Str.* 2.11.48.1; 8.3.5.2–3; 8.3.7.7. Lilla (*Clement of Alexandria*, 134) acknowledges the influence of Albinus here who also spoke of a twofold *pistis* (*Did*. 153.27ff.).

[75] *Str.* 1.6.35.2.

of trust (ἀξιόπιστος) when faith contributes to the process of learning.[76] This trustworthiness is crucial because it provides a sure indication to the initiate that the teacher is possessed of the truth. The gnostic should "maintain a life calculated to inspire trust (ἀξιόπιστον) towards those without".[77] They are the "living images (ἔμψυχα ἀγάλματα)" of God, according to Clement, having received the Word of the "trustworthy teacher (ἀξιόπιστος διδάσκαλος)", who is Christ.[78] Teachers in this respect are not merely academics for Clement, but those whose claim to knowledge is wholly dependent on faith and who inspire trust in those around them.

In this respect, the learned experience and moral uprightness of gnostics also makes them exemplars of the faith. Clement suggests that the faith of gnostics differs from ordinary faith in that it is perfect, so that, like Paul, they are capable of remaining content throughout the extremes of life.[79] As such, they are the defenders and maintainers of the canon of truth and the church. Such a person is an invaluable example to the Christian community. If the defence of the faith is left to simple believers without recourse to the exemplary and perfect faith of the gnostic, the result can only induce a growing ignorance surrounding the core of the faith itself. Making a pun on Luke 23.34, Clement says: "and do not those who are called orthodox (ὀρθοδοξασταί) apply themselves to good works, knowing not what they do?"[80] Clement believed that those who stand by the dictate of faith alone ultimately needed defending, not only from attacks from outside the Christian faith, but also from themselves. The common faith must have recourse to gnostic experience and faith to maintain the rule of truth and of the church itself.[81]

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[76] *Str.* 2.6.25.4. It is worth noting that πιστός in the word ἀξιόπιστος covers the same semantic range as πίστις. It literally means "worthy of πίστις".

[77] *Str.* 7.8.51.2. On this see J. Wytzes, "The Twofold Way (I): Platonic Influences in the Work of Clement of Alexandria", *VC* 11 (1957), 226–45, p. 231.

[78] *Str.* 7.9.52.2.

[79] *Str.* 4.16.100.6–101.1 citing 1 Tim 4.12 & Phil 4.11–13.

[80] *Str.* 1.9.45.6. οὐκ ἐιδότες ἅ ποιοῦσιν is an echo of Lk 23.34 οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν as is pointed out in Stählin's notes (*GCS* II.30.18). It was in the Alexandrian church of the second century that the problem of orthodoxy arose between simple believers and educated Christians. See H. Chadwick, *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1967), 168.

[81] Cf *Str.* 4.1.3.1 "The gnostic tradition according to the rule of the truth (κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας κανόνα γνωστικῆς παραδόσεως)"; *Str.* 5.1.1.4 "The knowledge of the Son and Father, which is according to the gnostic rule (γνῶσις δὲ υἱοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡ κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τὸν γνωστικόν)"; *Str.* 6.15.131.1; *Str.* 6.17.150.3; *Str.* 7.3.14.1; *Str.*

Hence, while Scripture supplies the beginning and end of teaching, it is the gnostic who has faith in Scripture who is the most worthy of trust. We have, Clement claims, the Lord as "the beginning of teaching (τὴν αρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας)" which has been passed down through the prophets, the gospel and through the apostles. This beginning of teaching is both the beginning and end of knowledge, and to suppose that there is another beginning besides this, according to Clement, then it could no longer be considered the first principle.[82] Only the gnostic who, "of himself believes (ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ πιστός) the Scripture" is "worthy of trust (ἀξιόπιστος)". It is these people whom we consult for the criteria by which to judge all manner of things "in divers manners and at sundry times",[83] and rightly so. We cannot give our agreement on a bare statement of the opinions of men. It must be subjected to scrutiny. Yet the first principle needs no criticism, other wise it would not be the first principle. It is self-evidently true.[84] Hence when we grasp by faith the indemonstrable first principle that is the source of demonstration itself, then we are trained in knowledge of the truth. Those who have merely 'tasted' the Scriptures are believers, but those who have advanced in the correct exposition of the truth as expressed in Scripture are gnostics. Gnostics, "out of faith believe by demonstration (ἐκ πίστεως πειθόμεθα ἀποδεικτικῶς)".

This testimony confirms Clement's belief that Scripture communicates the first principle of things, which the gnostic apprehends and uses as the basis for all logical discussion. Everything that is put up for discussion and demonstration must be done so with faith in, and in reference to the Scriptures. This can never be forgotten nor made subservient to the "testimony of men", and from this only comes the ability to demonstrate unequivocally the truth of things. We see here the ground for Clement's logic, not as a system of analysing the truth according to human reasoning, but revealed to man through Scripture, the prophets, the apostles, and the gnostic, who is the arbiter of truth.[85]

7.7.41.3 "The only really holy and pious man is he who is truly gnostic according to the rule of the Church".

[82] This relates to Clement's treatment of the first principle of logic in *Str.* 8.3.7.1 and *Str.* 8.3.8.1.

[83] Heb 1.1.

[84] *Str.* 7.16.95.3–96.2.

[85] *Str.* 6.17.150.1–4.

In all of this, faith plays a crucial role and, as Clement says, "nothing is wanting to faith as it is perfect and complete in itself".[86]

This is the ultimate testimony of faith for Clement, claiming that he had derived his teaching ultimately from Scripture and the voice of the Lord, the prophets. Scripture is the ἀρχή τῆς διδασκαλίας, the first principle of teaching and the canon by which the knowledge of God must be judged. One can also clearly see here the merging of the two traditions of Israel and Greece. For the Hebrews it was clearly Scripture, for the Greek it was philosophical investigation into first principles. For the peculiar race of the Christians, it was both, and though Clement emphasises the primacy of the Hebrew Scriptures here, these traditions are not counter to each other; they prepare for the same truth to be found in Christ and in the Gospels.[87]

One may well criticise this belief in the primacy of Scripture in that it can provide the faithful with a means of escaping valid criticisms of its doctrines: Christians can always fall back on faith and Scripture when they are in fact incapable of refuting the arguments of others. Yet Clement clearly discourages this position in his criticism of those Christians who lay claim to faith alone as criterion for truth, and who discourage the use of logic and dialectic. To rely on faith for Clement was by no means a relinquishing of one's duty to defend it where it came under attack from sophists and Christians alike. It was the purpose of a genuine spiritual teacher, not only to teach, but to be a living image and testimony of faith and truth; that is, to teach the righteous life of reason by example and in accordance with the Scriptures.

3.3. *The First Principle*

Ferguson states that Clement promised an exposition of the first cause.[88] He cites a passage in which Clement discusses the views of causation according to the Gnostics Basilides and Valentinus. Clement also

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[86] *Paid.* 1.6.29.2.

[87] As Lilla points out, Clement combines "religious *pistis* (i.e. the acceptance of Scripture) with the epistemological *pistis* (i.e. the acceptance of the principle of demonstration and of its result)... Accordingly, the accepted truth of Scripture becomes the ἀρχή of demonstration; the study and interpretation of Scripture becomes scientific demonstration; and the inner meaning which is disclosed at the end of this study becomes the conclusion of demonstration which, as we have seen, is also trustworthy" (*Clement of Alexandria*, 137–38). See also *Str.* 7.16.93.1; 7.16.96.1–5.

[88] *Clement*, 106. He cites *Str.* 2.8.37.1 as evidence of this.

mentions an exposition of first causes, as the Greeks saw them, in the sixth book of the *Stromateis*, which is postponed,[89] and again in *Quis Dives Salvetur?*, where a discussion on first principles and theology is promised and seemingly never delivered.[90] There is nothing in these passages to suppose that they are referring to different works as Ferguson implies, nor is there reason to suppose that the exposition will be a complete work in itself. However, there are many passages within the *Stromateis* that deal with first principles, and given what has been established about Clement's methodology, its treatment is most likely deliberately disparate and cursory.

3.3.1. *Establishing a Convention*

Clement, like many of the Greek philosophers, was concerned with how one attains knowledge of first principles. As we shall see he is closest to Aristotle in his understanding, but primarily develops his own Christian thesis on how we are to relate first principles to the divine persons, and how to gain knowledge of them. He does, however, tackle Greek philosophy in purely philosophical terms in the eighth book of the *Stromateis*. Like the Greeks he believed that for argumentation to begin there must be a convention, a principle which all agree on for it to be possible to demonstrate anything at all, and for dialectic to be entered into. Either all things require demonstration or some are "believed of themselves (ἐξ ἀυτῶν πιστά)". If all things require demonstration then nothing can be proven since demonstration would continue *ad infinitum*. Alternatively, that which is believed of themselves "will become the beginnings of demonstration (τῶν ἀποδείξεων ἀρχαί)".[91] According to Clement then, anyone who wishes to demonstrate the truth of something must begin from a self-evident premise that requires no demonstration. If this cannot be achieved then it would be impossible to begin, and given the importance that Clement placed on dialectical argumentation in discerning the truth of things, his project of training souls would be doomed before it began:

> [I]f demonstration is to occur at all, it is absolutely necessary that there is something prior to it that is trustworthy in itself (τι πιστὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ), which is said to be first and indemonstrable (πρῶτον καὶ ἀναπόδεικτον).

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[89] *Str.* 6.2.4.2.
[90] *Q.D.S.* 26.
[91] *Str.* 8.3.7.1. See also *Str.* 8.3.8.1.

> As a result, all demonstration leads to indemonstrable faith (τὴν ἀναπόδεικτον πίστιν)...If then an argument is found to be of this nature, as from points already believed to be capable of producing belief in what is not yet believed, we shall make it known that this is the very essence of demonstration (οὐσίαν ἀποδείξεως).[92]

Clement takes this indemonstrable faith as the point from which all demonstration starts, claiming that this ultimate indemonstrability was a common notion among the philosophers.[93] Since demonstration begins with indemonstrability, then a philosophical or dialectical argument that leads up to that which is self-evident and agreed by all to be indemonstrable means that one has "truly demonstrated", and brought about what Clement calls "intellectual faith" in the hearer.[94] On many occasions then, Clement explicitly states that first principles are indemonstrable and therefore the subject of faith.[95]

Clement contrasts this form of demonstration with syllogistic reasoning. If one begins from a premise that is not agreed by all and is merely "probable and not primary", and yet draws the right conclusion, one has only syllogised, not produced "scientific demonstration" (ἐπιστημονικήν).[96] True demonstration must ultimately result in indemonstrable faith and therefore something more than the ability to prove a point on the grounds of opinion alone. This distinction between apodictic and syllogistic reasoning allows Clement to distinguish human wisdom based on opinion (δοξαστικὴ), and divine wisdom based on knowledge (γνῶσις).[97] For Clement it stands to reason that knowledge is firmly grounded in faith.

We may doubt Clement's assertion that the indemonstrability of first principles was "common" to Greek philosophers, but nonetheless he does provide us with an example of the beginning of demonstration

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[92] *Str.* 8.3.7.2–5.

[93] This was the case at least for Aristotle. See *Mag. Mor.* 1197a 23. αἱ δ' ἀρχαὶ ἀναπόδεικτοι.

[94] *Str.* 8.3.5.3.

[95] *Str.* 2.4.14.1; 2.5.24.3; 7.16.95.6; 8.6.7.2.

[96] *Str.* 8.3.7.8.

[97] *Str.* 2.11.49.3. This whole argument follows Aristotle's *Topics* closely but not exactly. R.E. Witt points out that Clement's distinction between apodictic and syllogistic reasoning is not completely Aristotelian (*Middle Platonism*, 33). Both he and Lilla (*Clement of Alexandria*, 134–5) acknowledge the influence of Middle Platonism, citing (Pseudo) Plutarch who also connected *pistis* with scientific knowledge (*De Plac. Philos.* 877 C1) and Albinus, who distinguished πίστις ἐπιστημονική from πίστις δοξαστική (*Did.* 153.27ff.).

and teaching in a passage in the last chapter concerning ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς διδασκαλίας:

> Would there be thus a better and more obvious way leading to the beginning of teaching (ἀρχὴν τῆς… διδασκαλίας) of this kind than to treat the proposed name rationally, with enough of clarity so that all those who have the same language can follow? Is the name demonstration, by chance, of the same kind as *blituri*, a sound, simply, which does not mean anything? How is it that neither the philosopher, neither the speaker, nor the judge quotes the word demonstration like a word without significance, and that none of the contending parties are unaware of its meaning, that it does not exist? In any case the philosophers present demonstration as endowed with existence, each one in his own manner, differently.[98]

Clement is showing that the ground of demonstration must begin with a meaning that all agree on and which exists. It therefore cannot begin from sounds that signify or mean nothing.[99]

> Therefore if one would treat of each question rightly, one cannot carry back the discourse to another more generally admitted fundamental principle than what is admitted to be signified by the term by all of the same nation and tongue.[100]

Given that Clement calls this the "beginning of teaching", a term reserved elsewhere for Scripture,[101] it is important for this demonstration to begin without any body being unclear about the terms of reference. The passage sets up this convention so that all parties of the argument can comprehend the self-evident first principle of demonstration, and hence begin their teaching.

Clement was adamant that scepticism concerning a self-evident truth is self-invalidating and therefore allows itself enough slack in the rope to hang by. To demonstrate this, Clement draws on the Pyrrhonist use of the suspension of judgement: the view that there is no truth. "Like the dream that says that all dreams are false", scepticism invalidates itself before it begins, since to suppose the idea that "nothing is true (μηδὲν εἶναι ἀληθὲς)" is true, clearly betrays that there is a truth to be known.[102] Any statement by the sceptic, however negatively put, appeals to a belief in the underlying truthfulness of itself, betraying

[98] *Str.* 8.2.3.1–3.
[99] Witt, *Middle Platonism*, 32.
[100] *Str.* 8.2.3.2–4.
[101] *Str.* 7.16.95.3.
[102] *Str.* 8.5.15.2–16.1.

the truth it is trying to invalidate.[103] Logically, sceptics are compelled to accept their own self-invalidation, or concede a belief in a certain truth, which is self-evident.

The argument recalls Clement's unusual interpretation of 2 Corinthians 11.14, which describes how "the devil is transformed into an angel of light".[104] According to Clement, those who proclaim that this passage demonstrates that philosophy is a tool of the devil for false prophecy fail to realise that the transformation of the devil into an angel, even if it is for the purposes of deceiving, shows that he cannot but betray the truth; that is betray himself as an angel of light.[105] Any predetermined position of doubt concerning truth is doomed to fail despite itself, and it was on this fundamental principle that Clement could feel assured that his convention would yield positive results.

Clement's treatment of scepticism; scepticism of the possibility of providing proof, as in the case of the Pyrrhonists, or towards the use of philosophy in the Christian faith, demonstrates the extreme to which he was willing to go to in order to allow for dialectic to eventuate. It is an extreme that is secured by Clement's claim to the truth provided by Scripture and by God. As he claims, the gnostic "ought to give great attention to the truth"[106] since all argument depends on keeping one's mind on the "essence of demonstration (οὐσία ἀποδείξεως)",[107] which is ultimately an indemonstrable faith that is beyond signification. He would not have been so willing to establish this convention had he not had such a firm conviction that the indemonstrable first principle constitutes a certainty that is impossible to refute, and necessarily the

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[103] This recalls the logic puzzle about the two doors concealing reward behind one, and punishment behind the other. A person guards each door: one by someone who cannot tell a lie, the other, by someone who cannot tell the truth. The question you ask of either person is: would the other person tell me that you have the reward behind your door? In either case the answer 'yes' means that the reward is behind the other person's door, whilst the answer 'no' means that it is behind the door of the person of whom you asked the question. Falsity betrays the truth despite itself.

[104] *Str.* 6.8.66.1–5.

[105] It is certainly an odd interpretation of this passage, which has come down to us as a testimony against false prophecy. However, the concept directs us to the idea of Satan casting out Satan (Matt 12.26). It also maybe an early reference to the identification of Satan or the devil with Lucifer (ἑωσφόρος), the "light bringer" or "bringer of the morning" (Is 14.12 and Lk 10.18), the brightest of the angels in heaven to fall to the earth. Clement also speaks of the Greek equivalent, Prometheus *pyrophoros*, as bringing the light of knowledge to earth providing us with a "trace of wisdom . . . from God" by which to kindle the light of recollection in us (*Str.* 1.17.87.1).

[106] *Str.* 8.3.8.2.

[107] *Str.* 8.3.7.7.

ground of truth. If all can at least agree on this then there is a clear possibility of producing belief in those who are willing to hear, and therefore to teach them the true philosophy of Christ.

3.3.2. *The Logical and Enigmatic First Principle*

Moving from logic to theology, the indemonstrable first principle provides Clement with a model for his doctrine of God. Following the Stoics, he saw the first principle of logic to be the first principle of ethics and physics also.[108] Dialectic, the ability to use logic, takes us to the creator and moral foundation of the physical universe. Hence, he applies the categories of logic to understand the enigmatic relationship between two persons of the Trinity, the Father and Son:[109]

> God is indemonstrable (ἀναπόδεικτος) and unknowable (οὐκ ἐπιστημονικός). But the Son is wisdom, and knowledge, and truth... He is also susceptible of demonstration (ἀπόδειξιν) and of description (διέχοδον).[110]

This passage allows us to define Clement's position in that we can now see that through Christ it is possible to demonstrate and describe God the Father, who is indemonstrable and unknowable to us. Elsewhere Clement writes: "For since the first principle of everything is difficult to find out (δύσευρετος), the absolutely first and oldest principle, which is the cause of all other things being and having been, is difficult to prove (δύσδεικτος)".[111] The Father remains demonstrably indemonstrable, if one can allow that, but essentially undefined, whereas the Son is demonstrable and susceptible to description.

This relationship between Father and Son offers a logical conception of how we are to understand the passage of Matt 11.27/Lk 10.22: "And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him". If we apply Clement's faith and logic to the relation between the Father and the Son, the idea is that no one can understand the

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[108] *Str.* 4.25.162.5. D.J.M. Bradley states that "Physics, Logic, and Ethics are distinguishable enterprises but there are no radical disjunctions between the principles and conclusions governing each inquiry". (Cf. *S.V.F.* 1.85; 2.37, 38, 41, 43.) See his article, "The Transformation of Stoic Ethic in Clement of Alexandria", *Aug* 14 (1974), 41–66, esp. 43.

[109] *Str.* 1.28.177.1.

[110] *Str.* 4.25.156.1.

[111] *Str.* 5.12.84.1.

Son without having faith in the indemonstrable Father, and the Father can only be revealed through the demonstration of the Son who is wisdom, knowledge and truth.[112] This relationship between faith in the indemonstrable Father, and the logic of demonstration represented by the Son is what Clement calls a "counterbalanced" or "reciprocal knowledge (ἀντιταλαντεύουσα γνῶσις)",[113] a two-fold method of coming to knowledge of the first principle.[114] "'For I am the door'",[115] Clement quotes John, "for the gates of the Word being rational (λογικαι), are opened by the key of faith".[116]

However, such a stance is also, quite simply, a contradiction. The difference for Clement here is that whereas a sceptic may say that the contradiction *ipso facto* renders the argument false, Clement would say that it is *ipso facto* necessarily true, since the contradiction renders the argument indemonstrable, the subject of faith and therefore the logical first principle. The gnostic is in awe and wonder before this mystery that demonstrates the confines of human reasoning, but which directs the reason to transcend itself in search of the inscrutable and ineffable. It is here that human logic fails and must give way to the enigmatic method of communicating truths about first principles. The passage from Matthew/Luke tells us that one cannot know the Son without the Father, yet it claims that the Son can "reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι)" the Father. This speaks of an experience of the divine that lies beyond human ratiocination. Clement supposes that the mind in man is an image of the divine Word and that it is capable of assimilating itself to the Word.[117] The human mind must therefore be capable of transcending the confines of its own rational categories in order to grasp the demonstrable Son and have the indemonstrable Father revealed to it.

The conundrum is also announced in the two aspects of the one first principle, which is simultaneously indemonstrable and yet the ground of demonstration. Clement claims that "God, who is unbeginning (ἄναρχος), is the perfect beginning (αρχή) of the universe, and the

[112] *Str.* 7.16.95.5–6.
[113] *Paid.* 1.9.88.3. See also *Protr.* 1.10.2; *Str.* 1.28.178.2; *Str.* 2.4.16.2; *Exc.* 7.1–2; *Ecl.* 8.1.
[114] As is evidenced in Jn 14.9–11 also.
[115] Jn 10.9.
[116] *Protr.* 1.10.2–3.
[117] See *Protr.* 10.98.4 for example.

producer of the beginning (αρχῆς ποιητικός)".[118] As the producer of the beginning he is the unbeginning Father, but as the first principle of the universe, he is the Son and beginning of all things. However, this is not a clear dichotomy for Clement, since the Son is also understood to be "the timeless and unbeginning first principle":[119] Father and Son are one but can only be understood in contradictory terms as the one "unbeginning beginning".[120] Once again this illustrates the reciprocity between the principle that can be demonstrated, the Son, and the Father, the unbeginning and indemonstrable principle, or, in the context of John 1, the Word that was with God and who was God.

This paradoxical or contradictory approach may have been why Clement follows Plato in saying that first principles are hidden in enigmas.[121] In the second letter attributed to Plato, which Clement quotes, the author announces that first principles must be discussed in enigmas rather than written plainly, so that those unworthy of the knowledge remain ignorant of them.[122] Clement provides a simple example of an enigmatic description of the first principle from Egypt where they figuratively referred to the sun by depicting a scarab beetle. The beetle makes a ball out of dung and pushes it along before its face while emitting its seed into it. As Clement says, it "gives birth (γεννᾶν)" by doing so, without a female of the species.[123] As an enigma of the first principle it represents the divine sun, the *fiat*, or else the *logos spermatikos* sitting above the earth, inseminating it with the principle of reason and bringing its offspring into being.[124] The enigmatic feature of

[118] *Str.* 4.25.162.5. Cf. the fragment of the *Comm. 1st Ep. of Jn* 1.1: "For when he says, 'That which was from the beginning', he touches on the generation without beginning (*sine principio*) of the Son, who is co-existent (*simul exstantis*) with the Father. There was, then, a Word importing an unbeginning eternity; as also the Word itself, that is, the Son of God, who being, by equality of substance, one with the Father, is eternal and uncreate (*infectum*)". Cf also Aristides *Apol.* 1.4; Tatian *Or.* 4; *Corp. Herm.* 4.8. As Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, 330) claims, Clement gives priority to the one first principle that is without beginning, in contrast to the Middle Platonists, who spoke of first principles (ἀρχαί) (see *Protr.* 5.65.4).

[119] *Str.* 7.1.2.2 τὴν ἄχρονον ἄναρχον ἀρχήν τε καὶ ἀπαρχὴν τῶν ὄντων, τὸν υἱόν.

[120] *Str.* 5.14.141.1. On this point see H.A. Wolfson, "Clement of Alexandria on the Generation of the Logos", 73.

[121] *Str.* 5.4.21.4.

[122] *Ep.* 2.312d; 314b–c cited by Clement *Str.* 5.10.65.1–2.

[123] *Str.* 5.4.20.3–4.

[124] Represented in Egyptian mythology as the god Khepri who rolled the sun along its course in the sky each day, and also as Atum-Re, the sun god and creator of the world.

this symbol lies in the fact that the beetle represents an androgynous principle that begets the world of itself. It relies on a complementary principle both male and female, to create. Logically speaking, it uses the contradiction that it is both male and female simultaneously to communicate its truth.

Yet according to Clement only those taught in theology can philosophise and see beyond the symbolic veil to comprehend meaning. This is why the dialectical power of discernment is crucial in interpreting the enigmatic passages of Scripture. As I have pointed out, it must be a dialectical ability that is governed by faith in a first principle that transcends the oppositions governing human logic. In order to understand the ambiguous nature of Scripture the gnostic needs to be fully versed in the way certain contradictions act as a useful tool in comprehending enigmatic language. Clement uses the Greek maxims to demonstrate this, such as "spare time (χρόνου φείδου)"[125] or "know yourself (γνῶθι σεαυτόν)".[126] The Pythian Apollo is called Loxias for this reason.[127] Both barbarians and Greeks have veiled the first principle of things in enigmas, symbols, allegories and metaphors.[128] He includes a quote from Isaiah to demonstrate that these Greek examples suffice as a way to understand the way Scripture communicates its truths: "'I will give you treasures, hidden, dark.' Now wisdom, difficult to hunt, is the treasures of God and never ending riches. But those taught in theology by the prophets, the poets, philosophise much by way of hidden sense".[129]

The ambiguous nature of divine maxims comes about because they essentially reveal opposition (ἐναντιότης) in their meanings.[130] To "know yourself", for instance, can mean that you are mortal and born as a human being, and that you must humbly know your place within God's creation. But on the other hand, it can be taken to mean that

[125] *Str.* 5.4.22.1.
[126] *Str.* 5.4.23.1.
[127] LSJ s.v. "Λοξίας": 'ambiguous' or 'oblique'.
[128] *Str.* 5.4.21.4–22.1. See also *Str.* 2.2.7.2.
[129] *Str.* 5.4.23.2–24.1. This is somewhat against Le Boulluec's assertion that Plato did not have recourse to a written tradition, the purpose of which was to teach, in the way that Clement did with Scripture. Scripture provided Clement with a justification for writing hidden truths, but clearly much of the unwritten Greek tradition had found its way into written form that Plato could have used as a defense for writing ("Pour qui, pouquoi, comment?"). See p. 30 above.
[130] *Str.* 5.4.22.1.

your true identity is to have been created in the image of God, and you therefore partake in the essence (οὐσία) of the divine in some way.[131] To know yourself then is to know simultaneously that you are to be humbled before the divine, but that you are also in some sense divine yourself. The maxim reveals an essential truth of our humanity, but one that it would fail to communicate if the integrity of the ambiguity were compromised.

The idea of opposites or contraries was common to the Greek philosophers, who refer to various oppositions of which the world is constructed.[132] Clement also refers to different sets of oppositions at different times, oppositions of which the world is constructed; hot and cold, dry and wet, but also actions with ethical connotations, such as givers and receivers.[133] He tells us that nothing stands in opposition to God,[134] or the canon of truth,[135] and that the opposites of good and evil cannot co-exist in the gnostic.[136] He speaks of virtue contained as the mean between extremes as in Aristotelian ethics.[137] He also uses oppositions, as we have seen, to refer to the way in which maxims can contain ambiguous meanings.

Oppositions that result in higher meaning are shown in an anecdote related by Clement telling us of the replies given by ten Indian Gymnosophists when questioned by Alexander the Great. These are cited by Clement to show that the Greeks plagiarised many views, not only from the Hebrews and the Egyptians, but also from the Hindus:[138]

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[131] *Str.* 5.4.23.1. See R. Mortley's interesting comments on Clement's interpretation of this maxim as a contemplation of the divine mind by the human mind; a meeting of the divine and the divine in man. "The Mirror and I Cor. 13.12 in the Epistemology of Clement of Alexandria", *VC* 30/2 (1976), 109–20.

[132] Anaximander (see Arist. *Phys.* 187a20; Simpl, *in Phys.* 24, 21; Ps-Plutarch, *Strom.* 2); Heraclitus DK. 10, 51, 53, 67, 80; Parmenides DK. 8, 9; Anaxagoras (see Arist. *Phys.* 187a23); Alcmaeon the Pythagorean (see Arist. *Met.* 986a22); Plato *Phaed.* 105a–c; Arist. *Meta.* 986a–b, 1018a, 1057b; *Cat.* 6a "they say that those things are contraries (ἐναντίων) which, within the same class, are separated by the greatest possible distance".

[133] *Str.* 3.6.55.1. Also *Str.* 4.6.40.3.

[134] *Str.* 1.17.85.6.

[135] *Str.* 3.11.71.1.

[136] *Str.* 7.11.65.6. Clement appears to be alluding to Plato's discussion of opposites in the *Phaedo* (105a) where two opposites cannot occupy the same place but have to give way to one another.

[137] *Paid.* 3.10.51.3. Cf. Arist. *E.N.* 1108b. On this see Clark (*Clement's Use of Aristotle*, 29) and Lilla, (*Clement of Alexandria*, 64), who believes this idea to be mediated through Philo and the Middle Platonists. Cf. Plutarch *Prof.* 84a and Albinus *Did.* 184.13ff.

[138] For the sake of brevity I have removed some of the replies.

> The philosophy of the Indians, too, has been proclaimed. Alexander of Macedon, having taken ten of the Indian Gymnosophists that seemed the best and most concise, proposed to them problems, threatening to put to death him that did not answer successfully, ordering one, the eldest, to decide. The first was scrutinised, being asked to suppose whether he thought that the living outnumber the dead; "the living" he declared; "for the dead were not". The second, on being asked whether the sea or the land nurtured larger beasts; "the land" he declared; "for the sea was part of it"...And the fifth being asked, whether he thought that day or night came first, said: "One night day. For obscure questions must have obscure answers"...And the seventh being asked, "How any one of men could become God?" said: "If he do what it is impossible for man to do". And the eighth being asked; "Which is the stronger, life or death?": "Life", he declared, "which withstands such ills". And the ninth being questioned, "Up to what point it is good for a man to live?" said: "Till he does not think that to die is better than to live". And on Alexander, commanding the tenth to speak, since he was judge, said, "One spoke as bad as the other!" And on Alexander saying, "Shall you not, then, be first to die, having given such a judgment?" he said, "and how, O king, will you prove true, after saying that you would kill first the one who gave the worst answer?"[139]

It is a wonderful anecdote that demonstrates how well logic and enigma work together. Each of the these problems begin with an opposing proposition, life and death, sea and land, night and day, man and God, which is resolved by championing one side of the proposition and claiming that its contrary state no longer opposes it. Living and dying are not opposites according to this way of thinking, since there is no such thing as death and life can bear such ills. The sea and the land are not opposites because the sea is part of the land. Night and day are not opposed because they both take place in one day. Man can become God by doing what it is impossible for man to do; meaning that man must in some sense be God to begin with.

These are all rather enigmatic replies and require a frame of reference outside syllogistic reasoning. By human reasoning, we would simply call them illogical. Syllogistically, they have not demonstrated anything until the tenth wise man, ordered by Alexander to decide the outcome, outwits the king by claiming that none of the men answered well. The problem demonstrates that Alexander's reasoning has disproved itself. There is a stalemate, but the result is that Alexander has no grounds for killing the men and presumably they are left to live. The anecdote

[139] *Str.* 6.4.38.2–12.

also demonstrates that some statements appeal to a part of us, perhaps some part of our essential humanity that cannot determine whether they are true or false, however illogical they appear. They confound us but somehow lead us to a truth that exists outside of the thought processes that only deal in logical oppositions.

Like many other ideas of Clement, there is no formal account of oppositions in his writings, but generally we can say that the world remains in a state of tension through contraries; the divine, however, remains impassible and is subject to no such opposition. Heraclitus' concept of the identity of opposites clearly lies at the heart of this: "the road up and the road down are one and the same."[140] According to W.K.C. Guthrie Heraclitus, sometimes referred to as 'The Riddler' proposed: "not only are the extremes in a single genus to be indentified with each other, but the whole apparently disparate collection of phenomena displays to the discerning mind an essential unity. This is the true Logos".[141] All the powers of the Spirit are collectively one thing, Clement claims, concluding in the one point that is the Son. Yet while God the Father remains indemonstrable and unknowable, God the Son is susceptible of demonstration and description.[142] However, the Son is not merely one thing, nor a collection of parts, "but one thing as all things (ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἕν)", the circle of powers rolled into unity, the alpha and omega.[143] Here we see Clement applying his identity of opposites to Christ as the Alpha and Omega, sitting above the oppositions in creation and reconciling them as the Logos principle. Demonstration does not subdue opposing forces, but reconciles them as a unity that is transcendent of the dualities of which creation itself is made. "Thus the Lord himself", writes Clement, "is called 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,' 'by whom all things were made, and without whom not even one thing was made'".[144] Here the Christ of Revelation is seen contradictorily as both one and many, not as a collection of parts that form a whole, bit as one in all things wholly.[145]

[140] *Frag*. 60.

[141] *History of Greek Philosphy Volume 1: the Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambidge, 1962), 444.

[142] *Str.* 4.25.156.1–2.

[143] *Str.* 4.25.157.1. On the role of the Logos as the One/Many see Osborn (*Clement*, 41–44 [1957]) and Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, 370).

[144] *Str.* 6.16.141.7 citing Jn 1.3.

[145] See also Clement's agreement with Neopythagorean immanence (*Protr*. 6.72.4–5), which Witt believes to have a Posidonian influence ("The Hellenism of Clement of

3.3.3. *Into the Light of God*

Clement elsewhere mentions the contraries inherent in creation by referring to the opposites of light and dark that proceed from the divine Word. For instance when quoting several Greek poets' and tragedians' views on God's transcendent oneness and his providential immanence, he refers to the divine as a "creative mind (δημιουργός νόυς)" whose creative activity is to "grow of itself (ἀυτοφυῆ)" and in whose universe exist the "opposites (ἐναντιότητες)" of light and darkness.[146] In the context of God's creative activity, quite clearly Clement is referring to the beginning of the world with the creation of the first night and day.[147] The creation is then a logical conception born in the mind of God, a unity that separates into contraries. The world must of necessity be dual in nature, since if all was to stay as a unity within the Word of God, it could not have come to be. However, the dual nature of creation must be reconcilable in Christ who is the logical principle from which it sprung.

In the prayer that ends the preliminary work of the *Paidagogos*, the gnostic eucharist is described as a coming into the light of the perfect day. Clement speaks of being carried along by the Holy Spirit through night and day until "the perfect day (τὴν τελείαν ἡμέραν)", "giving thanks (ἐυχάριστον)" to the Father and the Son.[148] The perfect day is unmistakably the first day of the *fiat lux*, which is an epithet of the Logos.[149] This is the light of the "the true to-day", as Clement says elsewhere, "the never-ending day of God, [that] extends over eternity. Let us then ever obey the voice of the divine Word. For the today is everlasting, an image of eternity. And day is the symbol of light; and the light of men is the Word, by whom we behold God".[150]

The motif of a reconciliation of opposites can also be seen operating in Clement's interpretation of a fragment of Heraclitus and a Scriptural passage. Clement speaks of the light that illumines the mind that

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Alexandria", *CQ* 25 (1931), 195–204). Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, 365) states that this passage shows the influence of Philo's transformation of the Platonic world-soul (*Tim.* 34b; 36e), to the Logos of God. Philo speaks of the Logos, brought forth from the Father, stretching from the middle to the extremities of the universe (*De Plant.* 2.8–9). One can also see the influence of the Stoic idea of Logos working here.

[146] *Str.* 5.14.114.3.

[147] Gn 1.4.

[148] *Paid.* 3.12.101.1–2.

[149] *Str.* 6.16.145.6.

[150] Protr. 9.84.6. See also *Protr.* 9.84.8.

cannot be ignored, unlike the light of the senses. "Heraclitus remarks: 'How can anyone fail to notice that which never sets?' "[151] We should not allow the mind to be veiled. "And the darkness", Scripture says, "did not overcome it".[152] The light of the mind can dispel darkness by "self-controlled reasoning (σώφρονι λογισμῷ)", a lamp which cannot be extinguished.[153] The lamp does not just represent one's personal conviction and relation to God, an inner glow that should not be hidden under a bushel. Here it represents the human reason as the perfect image of the divine reason, transcending the light and darkness of the senses, to the light of God that can never be extinguished.

The rational faculty in humans has the capacity to "cleave the heaven by knowledge",[154] to pierce the dualities of which the world is constituted and pass into the perfect and eternal light of the divine reason. Only the Logos is "able to make night during the period of the day".[155] This symbolic understanding of the divine and logical faculty within humans is reiterated when we consider that the lamp is also used as a symbol of Christ. "The golden lamp", writes Clement, "conveys another enigma as a symbol of Christ, not in respect of form alone, but in his casting light, 'at sundry times in diverse manners' ".[156] It is the light that casts no shadow, not admitting its opposite because it stands transcendent of opposition.

Since the separation of opposites is the first step into the creation according to the first verses of Genesis and John's gospel, when the soul returns to God this opposition is the final retraction of duality before being restored into the unity of light, or the Word of God. In effect, opposition represents the final gateway for the gnostic soul as it ascends back to the rational state of the Logos, a sun-door if you will, to be passed through before the Father can be revealed. " 'For I am the door',[157] Clement quotes, "for the gates of the Word being rational (λογικαί), are opened by the key of faith. 'No one knows God but the

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[151] DK *frag.* 16.
[152] Jn 1.5.
[153] *Paid.* 2.10.99.6 alluding to Matt 5.15/Mk 4.21/Lk 11.33. Cf. also Wis. 7.10.
[154] *Str.* 7.13.82.5.
[155] *Str.* 5.14.101.1.
[156] *Str.* 5.6.35.1 citing Heb 1.1. This quote from Hebrews is used by Clement to show the diversity of Scripture and of the creation that is then brought together by the gnostic. It also recalls Clement's interpretation of Prov. 4.18 (See *Str.* 1.5.29.1–3).
[157] Jn 10.9.

Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him'".[158] The metaphor of Christ as a door refers to the ascent of the soul as it passes through the oppositions in the world to have the Father revealed to it. The gates are rational, yet opened by the key of faith. Once again we see the "reciprocal knowledge" of the demonstrable Son and the indemonstrable Father, logical demonstration and faith together, offered as an interpretation of Matt 11.27/Lk 10.22. The Scriptural enigmas of Christ represent the union of all oppositions passed through in the soul's ascent to the vision of the Father, the *epopteia*.

The highest experience of the gnostic is to be able to transcend duality and see clearly the first principle of all things. This is perhaps best expressed by Clement's account of the beatitude concerning peacemakers, who petition for the cessation of the violence caused in the mind by all that wars against the life of reason.

> "Blessed, then, are the peacemakers", who have tamed and controlled the law which wars against the will of the mind, the boastful promises of anger, and the incitements of desire, and the other passions that fight against the reason; who, having lived in the knowledge of good works and true reason, will be restored in adoption (εἰς υἱοθεσίαν ἀποκατασταθήσονται), which is the most adored. It follows that the perfect peace-making is that which keeps all things in agreement with what is peaceful, unmoved, calls providence holy and good, and has its place in the knowledge of divine and human things, by which it considers the opposites that are in the world to be the beautiful harmony of creation (δι' ἧς τὰς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐναντιότητας ἁρμονίαν κτίσεως καλλίστην λογίζεται).[159]

Elsewhere Clement tells us that the gnostic conducts the investigation into the truth in a state of peace, advancing by the science of demonstration until he/she attains to comprehensive knowledge.[160] However, it is a peace that comes from a faith in God who is situated beyond the opposing forces that are present in the world, a state of equilibrium or impassibility that gnostics must strive to embody in themselves. Knowledge comes when the gnostic has achieved this and can view things from a position beyond duality and can see the harmony present within the creation. This is beatitude for Clement and why faith in and knowledge of first principles is of the utmost importance.

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[158] *Protr.* 1.10.2–3.
[159] *Str.* 4.6.40.2–3.
[160] *Str.* 8.1.2.5.

3.4. *Conclusion*

In what Clement calls the "Mosaic Philosophy", a term that exemplifies his mixture of logical philosophy and Scriptural enigma,[161] he considers its highest grade to be the "form of theology (τὸ θεολογικὸν εἶδος)", the ability to discourse on the divine. However, in the first book of the *Stromateis* he equates theology with the power of "vision (ἐποπτεία)", by which he means the experience of seeing the divine attained in the "great mysteries (μέγαλα μυστήρια)". But he continues then to say that these things also equate with what Aristotle calls "metaphysics (μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ)" and with what Plato means by "dialectic".[162] In understanding the Mosaic Philosophy, the true philosophy of Christ, Clement believed it necessary to meld the enigmatic, the occult, and the visionary, which characterises the Scriptural and initiatory method of communicating divine truths, with the logic of the Greek philosophical schools.

Clement saw logic and dialectic as crucial tools for discerning truth from falsity, but they needed to be distinguished from their use as tools of sophistry and scepticism. Therefore, Clement emphasises the role that faith and trustworthiness play in attaining the truth in order to distinguish the gnostic from the sophist. In order to engage in dialectical argumentation and begin the discussion into first principles, Clement establishes a convention on which all agree so that demonstration could take place. His convention therefore requires the admission that there is a fundamental principle that is indemonstrable and self-evident, and which is by definition the subject of an intelligent faith. Philosophical language can only express this first principle in contradictory terms and must accompany the enigmatic utterances most perfectly expressed by Scripture.

The crucial point about Clement's logic here is that it must take on a visionary aspect in its attempt to broach the hermetic seal of enigmatic utterances, particularly concerning first principles. These truths need a higher form of interpretive ability than can be provided by human logic, and are within the scope of divine logic alone: that is, the reciprocal knowledge of faith and logical demonstration. Logic, which had become an academic tool for disputing and doubting in the forum of the later

[161] A term borrowed from Philo *Mut.* 223.4. The close connection between scientific demonstration and the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture in Clement is found in Philo. For example *De Vita cont.* 78. See Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 140–2.

[162] *Str.* 1.28.176.2–3.

Hellenic schools, was an abuse of the reasoning faculty, which had been instilled in man as the image of the Word of God. For Clement the rational and the visionary ought not to be separated.

For Clement then, there must be common ground between the investigation into first principles via logic and dialectics, and the allegorical method of interpreting the enigmas that reveal these principles, as for example, in the application of philosophical categories to the divine persons. The rational faculty ought to concern itself with the places it seemingly cannot go,[163] and it is therefore important on the one hand not to treat logic as a dry philosophical tool, or enigma on the other as devoid of logic and scientific method. If the aim of the *Stromateis* is to initiate souls into the true philosophy of Christ and to have knowledge of the first principle of the universe as Clement proclaims, then it must contain the two elements we have been discussing.

Hence, the *Stromateis* contain much in a small space, communicating much of what has been said by the various schools of Greek philosophy, by the Scriptures, by the poets, and by myths. Clement puts them all together for the purposes of providing the disparate material through which the initiate has to sort the true from the false. Yet throughout this conglomeration there is ultimately a synthesis of different forms of language about the same principles, which, in other contexts, more often than not result in disagreement and disputation.[164] Clement strove to quell as much contention on this front as possible by demonstrating that all language fails to communicate the first principle of the universe. Yet the gnostic must be conversant with all the different forms of discourse in order to determine their validity and to direct the initiate in the best way possible. Ultimately, this principle, the God of the universe, is best described in Scripture; but in order to fathom its meaning, the gnostic must be fully trained in divine logic, theology, metaphysics, dialectics, and vision.

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[163] Cf. Seneca *Ep*. 95.65. "But reason (*ratio*) is not satisfied by obvious facts; its higher and nobler function is to deal with hidden things (*occultis*)".

[164] See *Str.* 1.12.57.4.

PART TWO

DOCTRINE

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DOCTRINE OF *ANAMNESIS*

4.1. *Introduction*

The number and sequence of Clement's works puts the *Stromateis* at the ethical level in his teaching, in preparation for receiving the higher epoptic vision as Nautin suggests. It is now time then to analyse some of the major doctrines that Clement adumbrates in the *Stromateis* to determine what he clears aside to prepare the ground for receiving the higher gnosis.[1] However, before this it is fitting to take a look at an element in Clement's writing that is, in a sense, both method and doctrine.

It comes as little surprise that Clement should espouse a method and doctrine of recollection (ἀναμνησις).[2] Where he does utilise the language of anamnesis, it is not, directly at least, in reference to passages from the New Testament around which the doctrine grew from the fourth century onwards.[3] The doctrine, as Christians have come to understand it, has been drawn directly from the testimony of the New Testament and indeed the Platonic theory has found little or no purchase within it. Clement, however, develops a theory of "rational anamnesis (ἀνάμνησιν λογικήν)"[4] that synthesised Platonic thought and New Testament revelation. However, this synthesis relies on the

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[1] *Str.* 1.1.15.2–3.

[2] Contrary to Ferguson's view (see p. 28 above) I believe that this was intentional connection that Clement desired his readers to make.

[3] Lk. 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.24–25. For the development of anamnesis within the liturgy see D. Gregg, *Anamnesis in the Eucharist*, Grove Liturgical Study, 5 (Bramcote, 1976); A.G. Martimort, *The Church at Prayer* vol. 2 (Shannon, 1973); B. Botte, "Problèmes de l'Anamnèse", *JEH* 5 (1954), 16–24; N.A. Dahl, "Anamnesis. Mémoire et commémoration dans le Christianisme primitive", *STh* 1 (1948), 69–95; O. Casel, "Das Mysteriengedächtnis der Meßliturgie im Lichte der Tradition", *JLW* 6 (1926), 113–204. Clement is mentioned only once in these authoritative works in reference to the development of a doctrine of anamnesis. Though Clement's works are replete with recollection terminology, the close connection to Platonism and to esotericism does not make it readily amenable to Christian liturgical phraseology. Casel acknowledges Clement's inspirational role in bringing the Christian mystery of the anamnesis to the gentiles ("Das Mysteriengedächtnis", 144).

[4] *Paid.* 3.11.76.2.

mediation of the reader's intellectual capacity to harmonise seemingly incongruous material as it is set out in the *Stromateis*. It is only through an understanding of the literary form of the work that the synthesis becomes effective for a Christian gnosis.

The theory of anamnesis was crucial to the Platonic system in demonstrating, not only the immortality of the soul, but its logical counterpart, its pre-existence.[5] In the strictly Platonic sense however, this latter view was not accepted by Clement who claims that God is the sole cause of our creation before which we had no existence (οὐ προόντας).[6] Recollection for Clement was therefore not a matter of remembering the soul's previous existence in any kind of separate state from God. However, he says towards the beginning of the *Protreptikos* that we existed before the foundation of the world, because we were "begotten beforehand (πρότερον γεγεννημένοι) by God".[7] This is so because we date from the beginning, as rational images of the Word of God. The idea of recollecting our pre-existence with God was attractive to him, and indeed the books of the *Stromateis* are replete with allusions to the theory. "The *Stromateis* of notes", writes Clement, "contribute then to the recollection (ἀνάμνησιν) and expression of truth in the case of him who is able to investigate with reason".[8]

4.2. *Plato's* Phaedrus *and Clement's* Stromateis

The *Stromateis* come to be closely associated with the Platonic theory of recollection through its extended title: The *Miscellany of Gnostic Notes in Accordance with True Philosophy*.[9] The Greek word for 'notes' (ὑπομνήματα) carries with it the sense of memoranda jotted down for the purposes of remembering. But as Ferguson points out, "the word is used in connection with Plato's theory of knowledge and his view that knowledge is a recollection of things apprehended before birth. Clement, a devout Platonist, would not be sorry that his title should bear such overtones".[10] The title and the work itself, however, do not merely carry overtones of this Platonic connection; they are deliberate

[5] Cf. *Phaed*. 72e–73a.
[6] *Ecl.* 17.1–2. See also *Ecl.* 18.1. Cf. *Str.* 8.8.6–9.1.
[7] *Protr.* 1.6.4.
[8] *Str.* 4.2.4.3.
[9] *Str.* 1.29.182.3; 3.18.110.3; 5.14.141.4; 6.1.1.1.
[10] He has *Phdr.* 249c in mind (*Clement of Alexandria*, 108).

and significant to Clement. One need only consider the most notable instance of comparison, that between the books of the *Stromateis* and Plato's description of writing in the *Phaedrus*.[11]

4.2.1. *The Gardens of Letters*

Clement clearly echoes Socrates' discussion with Phaedrus into the suitability of writing as a means of communicating the truth of things.[12] Socrates is quite adamant that writing is a tool that is destructive of two integral aspects of the human mind: memory and wisdom.[13] He concludes that writing is a tool for forgetting and that it only has the appearance of wisdom insomuch as people who read will believe that they have attained the truth without being properly taught. Written compositions can never defend themselves from the accusations of their readers and cannot enter into dialogue over matters that require clarification. The truths they indicate can be the subject of much misinterpretation and misuse, and can never ask the help of their creators, who are likened to fathers, for defending their thesis.[14]

However, Socrates then uses a simile to describe a form of "writing" or "etching (γραφή)" that is the most conducive to teaching.[15] It is a form of writing where the truth communicated is capable of defending itself against the questioning reader. He claims that a farmer who is serious about his occupation will not force plants to come to fruition

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[11] G.W. Butterworth outlines Clement's intimate knowledge of the *Phaedrus* and his reliance on it for the writing of the *Protreptikos*, but no mention is made of the relevance to the method used in composing the *Stromateis*. See "Clement of Alexandria's *Protreptikos* and the *Phaedrus* of Plato", *CQ* 10 (1916), 198–205. Wyrwa deals with the relationship between the *Phaedrus* and the first book of the *Stromateis* in *christliche Platonaneigung*, 30–46.

[12] Plato *Phdr*. 274b–277a.

[13] Socrates recalls a story from Egypt describing the invention of writing by Theuth and its presentation as a gift to King Thamus (*Phdr*. 274c–275d).

[14] *Phdr*. 275a. Theuth as inventor of writing is called its father, an analogy that Socrates continues when he states that words, like children, require defence on their behalf.

[15] Numenius believed that Plato's teaching and writing was deliberately obscure, causing contradictory viewpoints about what he taught. Plato, he writes, taught "neither in the usual manner, nor did he make his teaching very clear; but he treated each point just as he thought wise, leaving it in twilight, half way between clearness and unclearness (ἐπικρυψάμενος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ δῆλα εἶναι καὶ μὴ δῆλα, ἀσφαλῶς μὲν ἐγράψατο). He did indeed thus attain security in his writing, but he himself thus became the cause of the subsequent discord and difference of opinions about his teaching": *In frag.* 24. (tr. K. Guthrie). Hence, one may well say that deliberate obsfication leads to the misinterpretation and misuse that Clement is trying to prevent!

as is done in the Gardens of Adonis,[16] but rather will sow his seeds at their appropriate time and be content when they sprout fruit many months later. Similarly, in order to defend the truth in written form, the wise man will sow seeds of truth in the minds of its listeners at the appropriate time and with due care to their long-term survival:

> But finer still is the serious treatment of these subjects which you find when a man employs the art of dialectic, and fastening upon a suitable soul, plants and sows in it truths accompanied by knowledge. Such truths can defend themselves as well as the man who planted them; they are not sterile, but contain a seed from which fresh truths spring up in other minds; in this way they secure immortality for it, and confer upon the man who possesses it the highest happiness which it is possible for a human being to enjoy.[17]

These "gardens of letters (τῶν γραμμάτων κῆποι)" as Socrates calls them, are written in the soul of the listener by the discourse of wise man who stores up reminders for "when he reaches forgetful old age".[18]

Phaedrus points out that the written word is but the image (εἴδωλον) of the "living and breathing discourse (λόγον ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον)"[19] of the wise man. Truth is sown within the listener in a way that allows it time to come to maturity within the soul. If listeners are not sufficiently prepared and exposed to truths beyond their comprehension, the truth would, like quick growing plants, easily perish in their souls. The truth contained in this form of 'writing' defends itself because of the appropriate nurturing of the neophyte who wishes to follow in the footsteps of this wise man: words that are written with intelligence on the soul of the learner, as Socrates contends.[20]

Socrates does not actually explain how this is done. One imagines a haphazard collection of useful memories of the wise old man, which somehow conceal their meaning to the untrained or inattentive listener, but provide enough incentive to urge on those who are capable of understanding them. They instruct through a kind of gentle serendipity, teaching readers or students in the happiest of ways, not under the presumption of a formal teaching but as a discourse that meanders

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[16] During the festival of Adonis quick growing seeds were sown to sprout and die within a short period in midsummer for the sake of a brief but wonderful window box display.

[17] *Phdr*. 276e–277a.

[18] *Phdr.* 276d.

[19] *Phdr.* 276a.

[20] *Phdr*. 276a.

past objects of knowledge that the wise man recalls. "You have not discovered a cure for memory, but of remembering" says Socrates,[21] suggesting that writing only acts as a reminder, like the sight of beauty within the world reminds us of the Idea of Beauty. One cannot write the truth because centrally it ruins the memory and only approximates wisdom. In other words, the highest truths are inexpressible and a written work that acknowledges this at the outset has already adumbrated a truth that a deliberate and systematic account cannot.[22] As Socrates sarcastically points out, the men of old, who were not as sophisticated as the young men of Phaedrus' time, were quite willing to accept the oracular truth delivered by an oak tree or a stone.[23] The listener, it would appear, ought to trust in the supernatural provenance of the message rather than the vehicle through which it is communicated. In this case, what suffices are the reminiscences of an old wise man who is well aware of the dangers of writing, and who is concerned not just with sowing what is necessary for the posterity of the tradition, but also with ensuring that the truth is accompanied by the appropriate instruction.

King Thamus' apprehension concerning Theuth's invention is that once writing becomes the chief method of passing on ideas, the truth of what is communicated yields priority to the authority of the speaker, or in this case the writer.[24] In short we can see a straying from genuine philosophy to mere sophistry, where the concern for reputation outweighs the concern for truth.[25] The discussion with Phaedrus therefore revolves around the effective transmission of speeches made by men of intellect into written form, a theme present from the outset of the dialogue.

The similarities here to what Clement proposes for his *Stromateis* are clear. Clement claims that "words are the progeny of the soul (ψυχῆς δὲ ἔγγονοι οἱ λόγοι)", and those who instruct us in them their fathers.[26]

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[21] *Phdr*. 275a. οὔκουν μνήμης ἀλλὰ ὑπομνήσεως φάρμακον ηὗρες.

[22] *Phdr*. 275a. This is exactly the concern raised by the second and seventh epistles of Plato and which Clement also dwells on (*Ep*. 2.312d; 314b–c cited by Clement *Str.* 5.10.65.1–2 and 7.341c–d cited *Str.* 5.11.77.1).

[23] *Phdr*. 275b–c.

[24] *Phdr.* 275c.

[25] Cf. *Str.* 1.1.6.2; 1.1.9.2. Clement argues against the vain use of words and uses philosophy in his notes in an attempt to protect philosophy itself from catachresis. See for example *Str.* 1.2.19.1; 1.2.21.2.

[26] *Str.* 1.1.1.2.

Written words, like helpless offspring, require the help of their progenitor, or one who has followed in the footsteps of the wise man, in defending their claims.[27] The "word that is sown", writes Clement, "is hidden in the soul of the learner, as in the earth, and this is a spiritual planting (πνευματικὴ φυτεία)",[28] in order to germinate and grow, and to preserve the blessed tradition received from the apostles.[29]

Being concerned that the word of truth needs defending, his notes are designed to conceal the "seeds of truth" or "knowledge".[30] Writing them down is dangerous, yet unlike Socrates who has spoken discourse in mind, Clement is here referring to written script iself. Knowledge is not the purview of all, yet written compositions are for the many. "'Swine, for instance, delight in dirt more than in clean water'.[31] 'Therefore', says the Lord, 'I speak to them in parables: because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not, and do not understand'".[32] The Lord himself, writes Clement, "did not disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that [the divine mysteries] belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech not to writing" re-emphasising that his notes are ultimately only an image of the truth.[33] As Fortin suggests, Clement's imperative is therefore to protect these seeds through a form of concealed writing, which is available to all, but which only a few can comprehend. This method gives rise to the process of recollection: "For it is not required to unfold the mystery, but only to indicate what is sufficient for those who are partakers in knowledge to recollect (ἀνάμνησιν)".[34]

Moreover, in agreement with Phaedrus' comment, these written words are for Clement merely the image (εἴδωλον) of the "vigorous and animated discourses (ἐναργεῖς καὶ ἔμψυχοι λόγοι)" of blessed men

[27] *Str.* 1.1.14.4.
[28] Clement draws on Prov. 2.
[29] *Str.* 1.1.11.3. See also *Paid.* 2.1.14.2. In a brief account of Matt. 22.21 Clement writes: "Let the mention (ὑπόμνησις) we make for our present purpose suffice, as it is not unsuitable to the flowers of the Word (τοῦ λόγου ἄνθεσιν); and we have often done this, drawing to the urgent point of the question the most beneficial fountain, in order to water those who have been planted in the Word".
[30] *Str.* 1.1.18.1; 1.2.20.4.
[31] Heraclitus DK *frag.* 13.
[32] *Str.* 1.1.2.2–3 citing. Matt. 13.13.
[33] *Str.* 1.1.13.2.
[34] *Str.* 7.14.88.4.

he witnessed in his search for a teacher.[35] Clement's use of the *Phaedrus* is explicit when he makes the ironic allusion: "my notes are stored up against old age, as a cure against forgetfulness".[36] It is a play on Socrates' belief that writing is not a cure for memory, but only for reminding. A cure for memory would mean that the wings the soul lost in its fall to earth would be fully replaced. Quite clearly, writing is incapable of achieving this and so Clement comforts himself with his notes as pale reminders of those discourses. Moreover, he also professes that his notes will not interpret secret things sufficiently, but only to recall them to memory. He writes to aid his memory in "a systematic arrangement of chapters" and, in doing so, employs the form of the *Stromateis*. Things that have remained unnoticed and faded away; Clement writes, these things "I rekindle in my notes (ταῦτα δὲ ἀναζωπυρῶν ὑπομνήμασι)".[37] Clement clearly sees himself as a wise old man whose task it is to recollect and rekindle the "secret things (τὰ ἀπόρρητα)" in the mind of his readers.[38] However, he is acutely aware that he is not in the same league as those from whom he received the teachings.[39] He claims he will not interpret them sufficiently since many things have been forgotten and, as we have already pointed out, in order to allow readers to make the discoveries themselves.

Despite this technique the *Stromateis* does attempt to follow some arrangement, as Méhat points out. The *Stromateis* are a "systematic (συστηματικὴν) arrangement of chapters", according to Clement. Méhat suggests that Clement often relinquishes a lengthy refutation of various heresies in order to keep his notes on track, as if the train of his thought, or more importantly the train of his readers' thoughts, might be misdirected by such diversion.[40] In other words, he is chiefly concerned with the task at hand, which is to initiate souls into the true philosophy. Clement does not wish to "break the discourse (διακόπτῃ τὸν λόγον)" for the unprofitable purpose of entering into endless

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[35] *Str.* 1.1.11.1–2. Clement claims that his writings are an image to recall the archetype, that is, the discourses of wise and blessed men (*Str.* 1.1.14.1).

[36] *Str.* 1.1.11.1. ἀλλά μοι ὑπομνήματα εἰς γῆρας θησαυρίζεται, λήθης φάρμακον. See D. Wyrwa, *christliche Platonaneigung*, 32.

[37] *Str.* 1.1.14.2–3.

[38] This perhaps challenges the view that Clement was only about forty years old when he started to write the *Stromateis* when he became head of the school in Alexandria in *c.* 190.

[39] Cf. *Str.* 1.1.14.1.

[40] Cf. *Str.* 1.10.46.4–47.2; 1.21.101.2. Méhat believes that Clement treats things "en son temps (καιρός)" in order to maintain "the sequence (ἀκολουθία) of the truth". See pp. 21–22 above.

debates concerning doctrine.[41] Confirmation of the truths contained in the text, as Roberts suggests, will only arrive on the willing suspension of disbelief from the reader, during which time the seeds of doctrines planted in the soul are given time to germinate and grow. Primarily, the soul has to become receptive to the doctrines presented, as soil must in preparation to receive seeds.[42] The Word "confers the very highest of advantages—the beginning of faith, readiness for adopting the right mode of life, the impulse towards the truth, a movement of inquiry, a trace of knowledge; in a word, it gives the means to salvation. And those who have been rightly reared in the words of truth, and received provision for eternal life, wing their way to heaven".[43] Clement expects his method to operate in such a fashion as to allow the doctrines to teach themselves, and indeed hopes that heretics with whom he has entered into some debate will learn from his notes.[44]

Such an expectation could not arise were it not presumed by Clement that his notes are ordered towards some purpose other than merely scrapbook memoirs. Yet it is necessary that the notes, despite being "a systematic arrangement of chapters", paradoxically take on something of a haphazard nature. Clement claims as much of his *Stromateis*. They are like a meadow of blooming flowers or a park where trees are planted in no particular order:

> Hence other authors have composed learned anthologies, gathering bouquets, Meadows, and Helicons, and Honeycombs, and Robes.[45] Then, with the things that come to memory (μνήμην) by chance (ἔτυχεν), and are abridged neither in order nor expression but purposely scattered, the pattern of the *Stromateis* is indiscrimately dappled like a meadow, as is the custom. And as such my notes will have kindling sparks (ζώπυρα), and he who is adapted for knowledge, if he fall in with them, research made with effort will turn out to his benefit and improvement.[46]

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[41] Cf. *Str.* 3.5.40.1; 5.14.140.2; 8.1.1.1–2.

[42] Or similarly, as softened wax made ready to receive the stamp (*Str.* 7.12.71.1–3; cf. Plato *Theaet.* 191d–e).

[43] *Str.* 1.1.4.3–4. The use of the wing metaphor recalls Plato's own language of anamnesis, for example *Phdr.* 246c.

[44] *Str.* 7.16.102.2.

[45] This list of plants is mentioned in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* who also claims that his work will adopt a "haphazard order (*ordo fortuitus*)" (*Praef.* 7).

[46] *Str.* 6.1.2.1–3. Casey believes this passage to be an "admission of defeat" in Clement's attempt to construct a "closely written volume of exposition and debate", rather than an acknowledgment of a deliberate methodology ("Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism", 46).

Hence the *Stromateis* operate as an anthology, a bouquet of discourses through which the reader searches, picking up seeds of doctrines, or like bees seeking for pollen among the flowers.[47] Their chance nature suggests something like the role of the priests who wrote down the words of the Sibylline Oracle, the medium through which the divine speaks and which governs the arrangement of the teaching.[48] The notes are arranged in order to attract those who seek the true philosophy with the appropriate receptivity. As I concluded in chapter two, the composition of the number and sequence of the *Stromateis* follows the *akolouthia* within which the material remains miscellaneous.

It is not difficult to imagine that the *Stromateis* represent an attempt by Clement to carry out the methodology espoused in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Clement wishes to pass on the tradition of the apostles in writing, yet has done so through this carefully chosen genre to protect the seeds of knowledge from those who consult them carelessly.[49]

4.2.2. *A Childish Pastime*

The peculiar issue at hand lies in the indirect use of writing to teach truths. As Clement says of his writing: "It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently".[50] The method of explicating truths as they are understood by a wise man cannot merely be executed through a straightforward written account of what these truths are. Socrates points out in the *Phaedrus*, that it ought to be 'written' as a leisurely pastime or childish amusement (παιδιά) for the old man: playful accounts of when he meandered through the fields of ideas. While this is a method for the "serious treatment" of these subjects, it nonetheless implies a certain jovial ease in which the student feels little awareness of contrived instruction. In this sense the method lures its listeners, acting as a persuasive tool in its almost frivolous disregard for the implications inherent in the subject matter.

Clement's pedagogical concerns are apparent throughout his works, and they are coupled with a deep sense of the innocent inquiry that children exhibit in their learning processes. Clement's *Paidagogos* discusses

[47] Hence the young initiate can be likened to a bee seeking pollen. See W. Tefler, "Bees in Clement of Alexandria", *JTS* 28 (1927), 167–78. See also the hymn to the Paidagogos at the end of the treatise by that name.

[48] Cf. Virgil *Aen*. 3.441–52.

[49] *Str.* 4.2.4.1.

[50] *Str.* 1.1.15.1.

the issue of who actually constitutes a child in the eyes of God, and suggests that seekers of the true philosophy of Christ are the children of whom Scripture speaks on many occasions.[51] To be as a 'child' does not imply naivety in regard to philosophic principles. Clement insists that childlikeness before God is neither a state of unlearning (ἀμαθής), nor a state of being without reason (ἀλόγιστος),[52] but that in the conversion to Christ one must exhibit the receptivity and simplicity conducive to learning the true philosophy. Only then can one receive the Kingdom of Heaven according to the words of Matthew 18.3.[53] As a child before God the initiate should maintain a status like that of an infant to a parent and of a student to a teacher. "Perfection is with the Lord, who is always teaching, and childishness (παιδικὸν) and infancy with those who are always learning".[54]

Clement's exegesis of Genesis 26.8 provides an insight into how his Christian *paideia* should operate. The Father of the universe is affectionate towards those who have turned to him. He adopts them and treats them kindly and gently, giving them the name of child:

> I also connect Isaac with child. Isaac is interpreted as 'laughter' (γέλως). He was seen playing (παίζοντα) with his wife and supporter Rebecca by the meddling king. It appears to me that the king, whose name was Abimelech, is a supramundane wisdom viewing closely the mystery of play (τῆς παιδιᾶς τὸ μυστήριον). They interpret Rebecca to mean 'perseverance' (ὑπομονήν). O wise play (τῆς φρονίμου παιδιᾶς), laughter also supported by perseverance, and the king as overseer! The spirit of those who are children in Christ rejoices, who live as citizens in perseverance. And this is the divine play (ἡ θεία παιδιά). "To play such a game which is of god himself", says Heraclitus.[55] For what other work is fitting for a wise and perfect man (σοφός καὶ τέλειος), than to play and be glad in the perseverance of what is good—and, in the governance of what is good, be in solemn assembly with God? That which is disclosed by the prophet may be taken up differently—that is, of our laughing for salvation, as Isaac. Released from death, he also laughed, playing and rejoicing with his wife, who is the supporter in our salvation, the Church. The steadfast name of perseverance is set and the testimony of those who have persevered to the end, and the thanks giving (εὐχαριστία) on this, is the mystic play (ἡ μυστικὴ παιδιά), and the salvation accompanied with revered delight

[51] In particular see *Paid.* 1.5.12.1.
[52] *Paid.* 1.5.16.2.
[53] *Paid.* 1.5.12.4; 1.5.16.2–4.
[54] *Paid.* 1.5.17.3.
[55] Cf. DK *frags.* 79 & 52.

> that supports us. The King, then, who is Christ, sees our laughter from above, and "looking through the window", as the Scripture says, sees the thanks giving (ἐυχαριστίαν), and the blessing, and the rejoicing, and the gladness, and furthermore the perseverance which works together with them and their embrace.[56]

Clement believes that the children of God should be taught in laughter and perseverance, rejoicing for salvation in the church. The "mystic", "wise" and "divine" play is the means by which the children come to knowledge of God.[57] It is odd that he should use such profound epithets for the light-hearted and frolicsome play between two lovers. Yet for Clement, it is exactly this playful interaction that signifies God's gentle approach to instructing those who turn to him, and the right attitude with which the "wise and perfect man" rejoices and perseveres with what is good.[58] Abimelech,[59] here a type of Christ, watches over this divine play and rejoices in it. In Clement's *paideia* the initiate becomes a child again, like Adam who, "when in Paradise, played free (ἔπαιζε λελυμένος), because he was a child with God".[60] Christ and Abimelech provide the typology of the wise old man who occupies himself in helping Christians recover their prelapsarian childlikeness before God.

The exegesis provides a wonderful insight into how Clement believed his teaching ought to take place. It meant that his teaching should not consist of a rigid curriculum that would harden the receptive ground of inquiring minds, but would reflect the playful way in which the children of God begin their philosophical endeavours. Furthermore, this curriculum must undergo the transition into written form. For Clement, this was the *Stromateis*, the literary playing field for such initiates, foreshadowed in his exegesis of Isaac, Rebecca and Abimelech in the preliminary work of the *Paidagogos*. As Roberts points out, we have to imagine a work that requires something of the readers themselves rather than a descriptive piece of writing that does not effect any internal transformation in the mind of the reader. The miscellaneous method of Clement's notes reflects this idea. It is a literary form that appears

[56] *Paid.* 1.5.21.2–23.1.
[57] See also *Paid.* 1.5.14.5.
[58] Note also the term "eucharist" applied to the witnessing of this "play" by Christ.
[59] Literally "my father is king".
[60] *Protr.* 11.111.1.

to the reader as a collection of notes put down in no particular order or preference, but which have the capacity to teach.

In some way, an ordered teaching shifts the emphasis away from the learner and onto the teacher, as if the teacher can tell the student what they need to know in order to become virtuous, knowledgeable, or god-like. For Clement, the learner could only come to such things through their own internal learning processes, and to develop this, Clement's notes were designed to shift the focus from the teacher to the learner. The truth must be given time to germinate and grow in the mind of the learner, but this cannot occur when the curriculum is overly conscious of its need to teach, something which manifests itself in the need to transmit ideas as clearly and as precisely as possible. Under this way of thinking, the end justifies the means, the joy of learning is removed from the process, and perseverance curtailed. The *Stromateis* was written to make sure this did not happen and that students who were inspired enough by it would continue reading; those who were not, could leave it alone.

4.3. *The Divine Spark*

Clement also adopts a different metaphor to that of the garden of letters to express how the initiate gathers the seeds of truth for an effective anamnesis. He speaks of a process of rekindling the spark of knowledge within the soul to set it alight; a metaphor he also applies to the way Scripture teaches its truths.[61] In one instance he uses the metaphor to demonstrate the congruity between Platonic and Hebrew thought, referring to the truth-loving Plato "fanning the spark (τὸ ἔναυσμα ζωπυρῶν)" of the Hebrew philosophy.[62] He also applies it to the Word of God "when in the soul itself the spark of true goodness, kindled (ἀναζωπυρούμενον) in the soul by the Divine Word, is able to burst forth into flame (ἐκλάμπειν)".[63] The love of God manifests itself

[61] Scripture, *Str.* 1.1.10.4; Torah, *Str.* 1.6.35.1; 1.26.169.1.

[62] *Paid.* 2.1.18.1.

[63] *Protr.* 11.117.2. Cf. *Exc.* 3.1 "Therefore when the Saviour came, he awakened the soul and kindled the spark (ἐλθὼν οὖν ὁ Σωτὴρ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐξύπνισεν, ἐξῆψεν δὲ τὸν σπινθῆρα)". Tardieu points out that the spark (σπινθῆρα) here is the spark mentioned in *Exc.* 1.3 which is "kindled by the Logos" and is not a reference to Is 42.1 as Stählin and Sagnard insist. Rather the spark is to be connected with both the 'pneumatic seed' and the part of the "reasonable and heavenly soul" mentioned in *Exc.* 53.5. Hence it is to be understood in its Gnostic context derived from Plato, such as is seen in Maxi-

as a spark of goodness in the soul causing it to be set alight. This recalls the Logos of which John spoke, the "light of men" that sets the soul alight, simultaneously giving us life and the reason for our existence, as well as the means by which to return to our beginning in God.[64]

However, setting alight the soul is also a metaphor that Clement uses for the notes of his *Stromateis*: "My notes (ὑπομνήματα) shall serve as kindling sparks (ζώπυρα) in the case of him who is fit for knowledge".[65] "In such studies", he says elsewhere, "the soul is purged from sensible things, and is set alight (ἀναζωπυρεῖται), so as to be able to see the truth distinctly".[66] As a description of how knowledge is attained through study, it also shows the influence of Plato's seventh letter, in which Plato claims that knowledge cannot be communicated to all. According to Plato, knowledge can only be attained through the long discussion between a teacher and a pupil in joint pursuit of a subject, when, "suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straight away nourishes itself".[67] Like the metaphor of the seeds of truth which are given time to learn how to defend themselves in the mind of the reader, the kindling sparks refer to the same process of the soul nurturing the truth within itself. However, the metaphor allows Clement to use the symbolism of light, connecting the Logos in the human mind with the Logos of God as the principle of light to the world. This is heavenly love, the light of men, but it is also a call to study and to use the mind to learn how to become like God.

Clement, like Plato, sees the divine spark as something not visible to all. It requires unusual receptivity to recognise and re-ignite the light of reason in those who seek for knowledge. Two uses of the metaphor

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mus of Tyre, *Philos*, 31.4 where he claims: τι ζώπυρον αφανὲς πρὸς σωτηρίαν βίου, ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι νοῦν. Tardieu hypothesizes that Plato's account of the soul's birth "like shooting stars" (*Rep*. 10.621b) is a possible source of the tradition of the metaphor of the spark for the resonable part of the soul. According to Ireneaus the Gnostics Saturninus and Basilides promulgated a false doctrine regarding the "spark of life" that, after death, returns to what is of the same nature as itself, while the body decays (*Adv. Haer*. 1.24). ("ΨΥΚΑΙΟΣ ΣΠΙΝΘΗΡ: Histoire d'une métaphore dans la tradition platonicienne jusqu'à Eckhardt", *ReAug* 21 (1975) 225–255). The metaphor of the spark was also used in the *Chaldean Oracles*. According to Lydus: "Having mingled the spark of the soul (ψυχαῖον σπινθῆρα) with two like-minded faculties, with Intellect and divine Will (the Father) added to them as a third chaste eros, the Binder of all things and their sublime guide" (*Mens*. 1.11).

[64] Jn 1.4 & 9.

[65] *Str.* 6.1.2.2. See also *Str.* 1.1.14.2–3; 7.18.110.4.

[66] *Str.* 1.6.33.3.

[67] *Ep*. 7.341c.

demand our attention. The first is an interpretation of Matthew 6.15 and Psalms 18.11–12. "He that has ears to hear, let him hear", Clement takes as a declaration that not all have understanding. In conjunction with David stating that "Dark water is in the clouds of the skies. At the brightness before him the clouds passed hail and coals of fire", Clement claims that holy words are secretive because while the coals that fall from the sky are clear and shining signs of the divine for the gnostic, they appear dark like extinguished coals from the fire to the multitude. These coals, "unless lit up and rekindled (ἀναζωπορςσαι), will not give forth fire or light".[68]

In another instance, Clement speaks of reviving the light of God by the few who are capable of doing so. "For the art transforms the light of the sun into fire by passing it through a clear vessel full of water; so also philosophy, a hidden spark (ἐμπύρευμα) from the divine Scripture, is visible to a few".[69] This beautiful image demonstrates how philosophy is magnified and set alight in the elect soul.[70] As with the previous metaphor, this igniting of the soul through philosophy is the prerogative of the gnostic, and remains impossible to the many. It is, in other words, esoteric. In fact it is exactly the ignorance of the multitude that brings about the darkness or obscuration of the spark of truth found in the soul. "There was an innate original union (ἔμφυτος ἀρχαία κοινωνία) between men and heaven", writes Clement, "obscured through ignorance (ἀγνοίᾳ), but which now at length has leapt forth instantaneously from the darkness, and shines resplendent".[71] With the coming of the light of the world in Christ, this ignorance is dispersed, but while this is the light of Christ, it is also that of wise and virginal souls. Scripture signifies the darkness of ignorance by night. Wise souls (φρόνιμοι ψυχαί), who understand that they live in a world of ignorance "kindle the light (τὸ φῶς ἀνάπτουσι)...and illumine the darkness (φωτίζουσι τὸ σκότος), and dispel the ignorance (τὴν ἄγνοιαν ἐξελαύνουσι)", as they await the appearance of Christ the teacher.[72] Wise souls share in the

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[68] *Str.* 6.15.115.6–116.3.
[69] *Str.* 6.17.149.2. Cf. *Protr.* 7.74.7.
[70] Cf. Plato *Ep.* 7.341e. Plato did not believe that the things discussed in his dialogues were of any use to the multitude, who will only "be filled with an ill-founded and quite unbecoming disdain, and with an exaggerated and foolish elation, as if they learned something grand". See also *Phdr.* 275a–b.
[71] *Protr.* 2.25.3.
[72] *Str.* 5.3.17.3.

light of God and the original union between humanity and heaven is therefore regained in the knowledge attained by the wise souls.

It is with this idea that Clement could look on the myth of Prometheus in a positive light. "There is then in philosophy, though stolen as the fire by Prometheus, a slender spark (ζωπυρούμενον), capable of being rekindled into light (φῶς), a trace of wisdom and an impulse from God".[73] This captures the essence of Clement's esoteric teaching. Though the light of God is brought down from heaven, it cools and solidifies, so to speak, to become like dark coals. They remain "dark to the multitude", but "wise souls" can reignite them once again and rediscover that trace of wisdom. Few are capable of doing this; few are capable of allowing the light of the Logos of God to fully reignite the soul to become illuminated in Christ.

Finally, it is only through the rekindling of the gnostic soul that the Logos of God and therefore the principle of truth can be made evident to the world.

> Whenever one has received a spark (ἔναυσμα) of the subject, kindling it within in his soul by yearning and learning, he sets everything in motion to know it. For that which one does not apprehend, neither does he yearn for it, nor does he welcome the help he gets from it. Afterwards, therefore, upon the fulfilment of virtuous action, the gnostic imitates the Lord, as far as accessible to men, having received a certain quality akin to the Lord, into assimilation to God. But those who are not intelligent with knowledge cannot judge the truth by rule (κανονίζειν). It is not therefore possible to partake in the gnostic contemplations (γνωστικῶν θεωρημάτων), unless we empty ourselves of our preconceptions.[74]

Without gnostic contemplations, quite simply there would be no witness in the world of the canon of divine truth. The realisation of the light of God within the soul of the gnostic is for Clement the presence in the world of the Logos of God. Having recalled once again that which is akin to God within the soul, it becomes ignited as a light to the world, illuminating the darkness of ignorance.

[73] *Str.* 1.17.87.1. Cf. Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 107–10.
[74] *Str.* 6.17.150.1–4.

4.4. Anamnesis *and Baptism*

Clement's notes contain what he took to be the highest reaches of Christian knowledge as far as the written word allowed.[75] Recollecting the seeds of truth dispersed throughout the *Stromateis* becomes the means by which to attain knowledge, but this is by no means a mere academic exercise; it is also purificatory and initiatory. To receive knowledge is to receive purification and illumination and therefore to be baptised. "Knowledge is therefore quick in purifying", writes Clement, "and fit for that acceptable transformation to the better".[76] Elsewhere he writes that Christians need to purify themselves of corrupt and evil doctrines by the use of "right reason (τοῦ λογοῦ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ)" and from here to recollect the principle chapters of doctrine. Finally, after such purifications take place the soul is prepared for initiation into the mysteries.[77] As Roberts points out, these are the *capitula* under which Clement gathers his collection of *significatio* or images which, when recollected, form a network of reciprocal relations that cohere as a doctrine.[78] The crucial point is that in recollecting these doctrines the soul is also purified by the intellectual struggle it takes to reconstruct them.

The connection between baptism and anamnesis arises in the first book of the *Paidagogos*. Clement discusses the idea of the Gnostic heretics who believed themselves to be saved by predestination, an elect race of spitriual people who were superior to those they called psychic people who are capable of being saved but are not so by predestination. Clement argues that this is false and only one who is baptised according to the Word and continues through life in repentance can properly be called spiritual:

> Nor is it out of place to make use of the sayings of those who call the memory (μνήμην) of excellent things the refining of the spirit (διυλισμὸν τοῦ πνεύματος), understanding by refining, the separation (χωρισμόν) of what is inferior that results from the recollection (ὑπομνήσεως) of what is superior. There follows out of necessity, the repentance for what is worse in he who has come to the recollection of what is better. At any rate, in repentance they confess that the spirit soars upward. In the same way it is not out of place that we also, repenting of our sins, have gotten rid of

[75] *Str.* 6.1.1.4.
[76] *Str.* 7.10.56.7.
[77] *Str.* 7.4.27.6.
[78] Roberts, "The Literary Form of the *Stromateis*", 216.

> our faults, refined by baptism (διυλιζόμενοι βαπτίσματι), soar upwards to the eternal light, as children towards the Father.[79]

Baptism acts as the separating element through a recollection of what is better, but which of necessity causes the repentance for what is worse. There is no such thing as a predestined spiritual person who has not undergone these stages of repentance through recollection. This is called a "refining of the spirit" by Clement. Furthermore, it is entirely appropriate to refer to baptism in the terminology of recollection. The soul becomes cleansed by recollection and so "retraces its steps" and "speeds back to eternal light" in God.

We can determine more closely what Clement means by a "refining of the spirit" and the "separation" of what is worse from a notable interpretation of Matthew 3.11–12 in the *Eclogae Propheticae*. The description of the separation of the wheat from the chaff with the winnowing fan is an image of baptism by Spirit and fire. The wind caused by the fan is the Spirit.[80] The chaff represents the material forces that need to be destroyed for the soul to ascend with the Spirit. These material forces are destroyed by fire that can detect them. This ability to discern allows us to refer to the fire as wise. The separation of the wheat from the chaff is a Scriptural metaphor for baptism, but, as we have seen, for Clement this refining process is also a way of understanding the purificatory and initiatory process of recollection.

The 'wise fire' that discerns the material from the spiritual becomes a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the work of baptism, simultaneously destroying what is base and conserving what is good in the soul.[81] The 'wise fire' of the soul and the divine spark are unquestionably derived from the same source. The soul chooses to light its own fire, be it one of the retribution of the internal persecution,[82] or of the illumination of anamnesis. Under the mode of the Holy Spirit, the fire is called wise; under the mode of the Logos, it is called a spark. Either way, the soul undergoes purification and illumination through recollection.

Elsewhere, Clement states that there are various stages of baptism that the soul undergoes, and hence it takes the form of a series of initiations

[79] *Paid.* 1.6.31.2–32.2.
[80] *Ecl.* 25.1–4.
[81] See W.C. van Unnik, "The 'Wise Fire' in a Gnostic Eschatological Vision", in P. Granfield & J.A. Jungman (eds.) *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (Munster, 1970), 277–88.
[82] *Q.D.S.* 25.3–4.

that have to be negotiated by the soul. In contrast to Christ, whose one baptism achieved salvation for all, the initiated soul undergoes many purifications in its ascent.[83] Hence the humanity of Christ was perfected by one act of baptism,[84] whereas the initiate's baptism manifests itself in different stages, variously called washing, grace, illumination and perfection. Washing, by which we cleanse our sins; grace, by which our transgressions are forgiven; illumination, by which we come to the vision (ἐποπτεία) of the light of salvation; and perfection, which is a state of wanting for nothing.[85] Clement acknowledges, however, that the baptised initiate has not yet received "the perfect gift", and that this will only happen at the resurrection.[86] Like the perfection of faith, baptism is perfect in itself. This does not mean that the initiate does not have to continue to work towards receiving the perfect gift. Rather, it means that the gnostic has begun the journey into greater degrees of purity and sanctification.

In the case of the gnostic, baptism is an ascent through the various mansions of God. The gnostic's peculiar role in God's plan for salvation is not merely to be saved, but to be accorded with the highest honours.[87] There is more than one repentance (μετανοίας) for the gnostic who wishes to ascend to the highest honour. The gnostic here, begins as a believer, but through great discipline ascends to the mansion that is better than the previous one, yet is still tortured by the need to attain to heights that others have ascended to. For the gnostic at least there is at least a second repentance after post baptismal sin, but given the various degrees of purification there could well be more.

The result of these many 'baptisms' for the gnostic is the perfect vision of the light of God:

> As, then, those who have shaken off sleep at once become awake within; or rather, just as those who attempt to bring down a cataract from the eyes, does not furnish them with the light from without which they do not have, but bringing down the obstacle from the sight, leave the pupil free,[88] so also we who are baptised, having cleaned the sins that obscure the light of the Divine Spirit, have the eye of the spirit free and unob-

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[83] See *Str.* 2.12.86.6 where Clement compares the one baptism of Christ with the many "washings" of Moses.
[84] See *Ecl.* 7.2–3 & *Exc.* 36.1–2.
[85] *Paid.* 1.6.26.2–3.
[86] *Paid.* 1.6.28.3.
[87] *Str.* 6.14.109.2–4.
[88] Cf. Matt. 7.3–5.

> structed and bright, by which alone we behold (ἐποπτεύομεν) the Divine, the Holy Spirit flowing down to us from heaven. This is the eternal combining of the eye with the power to see the eternal light, since like loves like, and the holy loves that from what is holy, which has legitimately been called light. 'Once you were darkness, now you are light (φῶς) in the Lord'. Hence I am of the opinion that man (φῶτα) was called by the ancients light.[89]

Initiates do not receive a light that they did not already possess, but rather they have cleansed the pupils of their eyes so that they can now recognise the light of the soul once more. They discover that they possessed the light all along and remember themselves as beings of light. Having become illuminated through baptism, the "eye of the spirit (ὄμμα τοῦ πνεύματος)" is free to contemplate the divine—an "eternal adjustment of the vision", restored in the light of the Holy Spirit.

Clement's anamnesis comes about by the belief that the attainment of knowledge brings with it various degrees of purity at various stages in the ascent to God. However, returning to his interpretation of Matthew 3.11–12, one of the most important Scriptural passages concerning baptism, we see that he also uses it to describe the method he chose for writing the *Stromateis*:

> The *Stromateis* of notes then, indeed combine towards recollection (ἀνάμνησιν) and towards expression of truth in the kind who is able to study according to reason...Hence, "seek and you shall find", holding on to the truly kingly road and not deviating. Naturally then, the generative power of the seeds of doctrines comprehended in this treatise is much in the little, as the "universal herbage of the field",[90] as Scripture says. Thus the *Stromateis* of notes have their legitimate title...We must then often, as winnowing sieves, shake and toss up this great mixture of seeds, in order to separate the wheat.[91]

The chance method of the *Stromateis* works by shaking and tossing the "great mixture of seeds" (πολυμιγίαν τῶν σπερμάτων) in order to separate out the seeds of doctrines, the same way that the winnowing sieve, as the words of Matthew 7.7 insist, separates the wheat from the chaff. In describing the *Stromateis* in this way, Clement is making his own method of writing analogous to the process through which one is refined by the spirit and baptised. Clement believed that the Word of

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[89] *Paid.* 1.6.28.1–3. See also *Ecl.* 32.3–33.2; *Exc.* 1.3.
[90] Job 5.25.
[91] *Str.* 4.2.4.3–7.4.

God had been sown by his pen throughout the books of the *Stromateis*,[92] hence, gathering it together again through recollection effected a gnostic baptism. The *Stromateis* is aptly titled for this reason.

It is important to point out that this gnostic baptism reinforces Kovacs's view that Clement's methodology was a process of sorting out, not just the seeds of truth, but also "advanced students".[93] As she suggests, the methodology implies a process of initiation, one that advances students who select the seeds of truth in the text, but which also sees the students themselves being selected and initiated into the higher teaching. To return to Clement's garden metaphor, these souls, chosen from within the church, are the "pick of the bunch (ἀπηνθισμένοι)", an analogy that applies to the Word sown within the meadows of the *Stromateis* as much as to the gnostic who gathers it.[94] The method sorts true doctrines and true seekers simultaneously.

4.5. Anamnesis *and Thanksgiving*

As we have seen Clement likens the doctrines contained in his work to seeds, in particular wheat, but he also likens them to kindling sparks. The seeds of doctrines germinate or ignite in the soul as it remembers its pre-existent life in the Word of God. When put together, both these metaphors allow Clement to make a further proposition in regard to the gnostic who studies the doctrines of God. Along with the purification and illumination of baptism, Clement often refers to the gnostic in eucharistic terminology, suggesting a further significance to his doctrine of recollection and to the initiatory method of the literary form of the *Stromateis*.

4.5.1. *The Bread of Heaven*

Clement makes the etymological connection between the "wheat (πυρός)" that is separated from the chaff in the baptismal process of anamnesis and the genitive form of the word for "fire (πυρός)".[95] As

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[92] Cf. Acts 2.41 cited by Clement *Str.* 1.18.89.4.

[93] "Divine Pedagogy", 25.

[94] *Str.* 6.13.107.2. In reference to the miscellaneous method see *Str.* 4.2.6.2. Cf. *Str.* 6.11.89.2.

[95] J. Ferguson detects an Epicurean influence in Clement's wordplay, claiming that Epicurean "theories of language were almost bound to hold that resemblances between words must be expressions of resemblances between things". Ferguson is here referring

we have seen he uses the passage of Matthew 3.11–12 to describe his own method of writing, which sieves genuine seekers of the truth from those who are not. It is necessary to quote the passage from Matthew at length in order to demonstrate what he does with the word for wheat, σῖτος, in the Gospel:

> John says, therefore: "I indeed baptise you with water, but there comes after me he that baptises with the Spirit and fire"…. "For His fan is in His hand, to purge his floor: and he will gather the wheat (σῖτον) into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire". Therefore "through fire" (διὰ πυρός) is attached then to "through Spirit", since he separates the wheat (σῖτος) from the chaff, that is, from the material husk, through Spirit; and the chaff is separated, being fanned through the wind: so also the Spirit possesses a power of separating material forces. Since, then, some things are produced from what is unproduced and indestructible (ἀγεννήτου καὶ ἀφθάρτου), that is the seeds of life (τὰ σπερματικὰ ζωῆς) we bring together. The wheat (ὁ πυρός) is also stored and the material part, so far as it is joined with the superior part, remains; whenever separated from it, it is destroyed; for it had its existence in another thing. On the one hand then, this separating element is the Spirit, and on the other the consuming element is the fire, and material fire is to be understood. But since that which is saved is like wheat (σίτῳ), and that which grows around the soul is like chaff, and the one is incorporeal, and that which is separated is material; to the incorporeal he opposes spirit… and to the material he opposes fire.[96]

In the midst of this passage Clement feels it necessary to use πυρός for wheat rather than Matthew's term. Where he does this, we must assume that he had a purpose in doing so, particularly when he alternates the terminology within a single passage. In this case the alternation of the two terms is striking. One may well ask why Clement decides to change the term for wheat from σῖτος to πυρός directly after speaking about the "unproduced and indestructible seeds of life", and then once again back to σῖτος. The seeds refer to those souls that have been baptised by the spirit and who have come through fire (διὰ πυρός). The alternation suggests that Clement saw some significance in the connection between the nominative form for wheat, πυρός, and the genitive for fire, πυρὸς: somehow the wheat is generated from, or born of fire. The implication is that the soul that is purified and separated out through baptism, the

to Lucretius *De Rer. Nat.* 1.912–14. "The Achievement of Clement of Alexandria", *RS* 12 (1976), 59–80. Hence, *Paid.* 1.6.28.3 for example.

[96] *Ecl.* 25.1–4. Cf. *Ecl.* 8.1–2 & *Exc.* 81.1–3.

wheat, is purified and produced from the unproduced and indestructible, which is the fire of the Holy Spirit.

This connection allows Clement to make a further reference to the sacramental nature of the gnostic life. He speaks of the bread of heaven mentioned in John 6.51, but emphasises the relationship between the bread and the wheat from which it is made. This is "the mystery of the bread (τὸ μυστικὸν τοῦ ἄρτου)" since it is the flesh that has risen "through fire (διὰ πυρός) as the wheat (ὁ πυρός) springs up from decay and germination...In truth, it has risen through fire for the joy of the Church, as bread baked (ἄρτον πεπτομένον)".[97] The terminology surrounding the bread indicates that Clement viewed the etymological connection between wheat and bread baked through fire, as significant. Here flesh, that is, the resurrected body, rises again through the fire just as bread does when baked. The seeds of wheat once again refer to souls that have sought the seeds of the Word of God and allowed them to germinate or ignite within. The process is one of increased sanctification, where souls become the bread of heaven in imitation of Christ.

As Daniélou points out, Clement is drawing on the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* here.[98] The witnesses to Polycarp's death miraculously tell us that as the martyr entered the furnace that had been prepared for his death, they did not see his body burn but saw it turn to bread being baked (ἄρτοσ ὀπτώμενος). Here the martyrdom becomes a form of sacrament in which the body, having been purified, becomes imperishable bread in the fire. The element of fire has little effect because there is nothing there to destroy. Rather the sacrifice becomes sanctified through the "wise fire" of God that destroys what is material and base, and conserves and nurtures what is good.[99]

Furthermore, this process of wheat being born of, or purified by fire, holds for Clement's methodology also. "There is only a sketch in the notes", writes Clement, "which have the truth sowed sparse and broadcast, that it may escape the notice of those who pick up seeds

[97] *Paid.* 1.6.46.2–3. Daniélou points out that this passage is indicative of the material that would have been dealt with in Clement's lost or never written treatise *On the Resurrection* (Περὶ ἀναστάσεως). "Just as fire bakes bread, so it transfigures the body of Christ" (*Gospel Message*, 27–8).

[98] *Mart. Polycarp* 15.2.

[99] Cf. *Ecl.* 25.1–4 which speaks of the "consuming fire" of God (Deut. 4.24/Heb 12.29) and its power to discern what is to be destroyed and what is to be saved. Van Unnik also observes this connection in Clement ("The 'Wise Fire'", 280).

like jackdaws; but when they find a good husbandman, each one of them will germinate and produce wheat (τὸν πυρόν)".[100] Clement chose the term πυρός because it is a metaphor that simultaneously refers to the seeds of wheat sown throughout the meadows of the *Stromateis* and to the kindling sparks of knowledge that set the soul alight to sanctify the body as the bread of heaven. The metaphor signifies the seeds of doctrines that are recollected by the initiate to ensure that the truth is nurtured and given time to strengthen to the point where it is capable of defending itself against attack. This is how his methodology operates as a way of sanctifying the initiate through knowledge.

4.5.2. *The Eclectic Eucharist*

The gnostic, above all, studies to be as much like God as possible, and, among other things, this study is a form of thanksgiving to God. "The soul studies to be God (ἡ ψυχὴ μελετᾷ εἶναι θεός)…always giving thanks (εὐχαριστοῦσα) to God for all things, by righteous hearing and divine reading, by true investigation (διὰ ζητήσεως ἀληθοῦς)".[101] For Clement, there is a close connection between the study of the divine and giving thanks to it. In baptism the soul learns to separate the wheat from the chaff with the help of the Spirit, but for Clement this is also "the truly thankful selection (τὴν ἀληθῶς εὐχάριστον ἐκλογήν)" of all that is good in life. In other words, the selection of the good things of God's creation is a form of thanksgiving. He says elsewhere that the gnostic not only give thanks for the creation, but is also praised for doing so since "through intelligence, harvesting supplies to be the food of contemplation (δι' ἐπιστήμης τὰ ἐφόδια τῆς θεωρίας καρπούμενος), having embraced nobly the magnitude of knowledge (τῆς γνώσεως μέγεθος) [the gnostic] advances on to the holy recompense of conversion".[102] Here Clement demonstrates the close connection between the eclectic life of the gnostic and the Eucharist. The "harvesting of supplies to be the food of contemplation" and "the magnitude of

[100] *Str.* 1.12.56.3.

[101] *Str.* 6.14.113.1. For our purposes here, the emphasis has predominantly been on the eclectic study of the gnostic as a eucharist itself, but one will note that much of what would be considered as the active rather than the contemplative Christian life, such as oblation, prayer, lauding, etc., is involved also as the whole of this passage demonstrates. The gnostic is in no way exempt from performing the common actions of worship, and indeed can only attain to gnostic status having undergone and perfected them.

[102] *Str.* 7.13.83.3–5.

knowledge" come about by gathering the good things of the world for gnostic contemplation. While Clement is not speaking of a liturgical Eucharist here,[103] the image is one of communion where the gnostic gathers the food, embraces all that is good and ascends towards God in holy recompense. This is not the life that boasts knowledge of a wide selection of philosophies, such as the "eclectic whole" known as Greek philosophy,[104] as if by exposing oneself to as much philosophy as possible one can transcend the world by human wisdom alone. Rather it is the ability or capacity of mind to gather together the wide variety of truths dispersed throughout the world and to unite them where truth abounds, under the Word of God.

Elsewhere Clement provides us with a fuller account of this eclecticism when he demonstrates the universal nature of the truth of the Word of God. Just as the bread of Christ is torn apart in replication of the Word dispersed throughout the world, so too is the truth disseminated throughout the various sects and philosophies of the Greeks and Hebrews:

> Since, therefore, truth is one (for falsehood has ten thousand digressions); just as the Bacchantes tore apart the limbs of Pentheus, so the heresys of barbarian and Hellenic philosophy have done with truth... But all, in my opinion, are illuminated by the dawn of light. Let all, therefore, both Greeks and barbarians, who have sought after the truth... display whatever they have of the word of truth. Eternity, for instance, momentarily brings together the future and the present and yet also the past of time. But truth, which is much more powerful than eternity, can gather its own seeds (τὰ οἰκεῖα σπέρματα), even if they have fallen on foreign land. For we shall find that very many of the dogmas that are held by such heresys (which have not become completely deaf, and are not cut away from the order of nature just as the women cut off the man in the story), though appearing dissimilar to one another, correspond in their origin and with the truth as a whole. For they join together in one, either as a part, or a species, or a genus. For instance, though the highest note is opposite (ἐναντία) from the lowest note, yet both are a single harmony... Also, in the whole universe, all the parts, though at odds from each other, maintain their relation towards the whole. So then, the barbarian and

[103] Clement does give a formal account of the liturgical eucharist at *Paid.* 2.2.19.4–20.2. Cf. Jn 6.53. See H.G. Marsh, who emphasises that in Clement's eucharist man is body and soul, both of which are "mystically blended" with the spirit and sanctified. "The Use of ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria", *JTS* 37 (1936), 64–80, 76.

[104] Cf. *Str.* 1.7.37.6.

> Hellenic philosophy has torn off a piece of eternal truth, not from the mythology of Dionysus, but from the theology of the ever-living Word of he who is. And he who brings together (συνθεὶς) again the separate fragments, and makes them one (ἑνοποιήσας), will without danger, be assured, behold the perfect Word, the truth... He who is conversant with all kinds of wisdom, will be legitimately a gnostic.[105]

With the "dawn of light" in Christ all the "digressions" of falsity are eradicated, but whatever each sect has retained of the truth will be drawn together into the one truth of the Word. This is the task of the gnostic who synthesises the various elements of truth found in both Hebrew and Greek philosophy and harmonises them under the Word of God.

Like the body of Pentheus then, the truth has been torn apart and dispersed throughout the world, but with the coming of Christ and the manifestation of the "ever-living Word", the gnostic is now able to disperse ignorance and to gather again the scattered seeds into unity. Clement freely uses the language of the mystery religions to express this notion,[106] saying elsewhere that "the writing of these notes of mine... will be an image to recall the archetype to him who is struck with the thyrsus".[107] He can do this because such truths as are found in the mysteries of Dionysus are derived ultimately from the Word of God. The elect (ἐκλεκτοί) are eclectic (ἐκλεκτικοί), because they have wisely selected and studied the seeds of truth, the source of which appeared to the world in the person of Christ.

Since truth is found in the one true first principle, all paths that lead to the truth must also lead to the universal Word of God.[108] Hence, light that shines in all directions becomes the perfect symbol to represent the many paths to the truth. Since the way of truth is one, yet into

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105 *Str.* 1.13.57.1–58.2.

106 *Str*. 4.25.162.3. As he claimed he would do: "I will show you the Word, and the mysteries of the Word, expounding them after your own fashion" (*Protr.* 12.119.1). See Chr. Riedwieg's work, which analyses significant parallels between Clement's mystery terminology and that of the mystery religions, in particular this passage from the *Protr* (12.118.5–119.3) and the orgiastic rites of Dionysius as found in Euripides' *Bacchae*. However, he detects a clear continuity in Clement of the Platonic and Philonic philosophical tradition "wobei die eine durch die Allegorese und die andere durch den gestuften Lernprozeß mit der Epoptie als *telos*, gekennzeichnet ist". (*Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, Berlin-New York 1987), 158. See also Casel, "Das Mysteriengedächtnis", 144.

107 *Str.* 1.1.14.1. Note that the thyrsus was the sacred wand used to initiate new members into the mysteries.

108 See for example *Str.* 5.14.141.1–2.

it, like a perennial river, streams flow from all sides. God numbered many ways to salvation for the righteous man since, as scripture says, "The paths of the righteous shine like the light".[109] It is in the light of truth available to all peoples,[110] that the gnostic can draw together what has been 'well said' by the various philosophies of the world, and by which Clement can carry out what Dawson calls his "voiced based hermeneutic".[111] Clement's *Stromateis* make use of all that was available to him at the time, be it Greek or Hebrew, Egyptian or Hindu. All these sources are in the purview of Clement's gnostic, so long as they can be verified by the Word of God, the principle of truth from which they were all derived.

Finally it is important to note that, as with baptism, Clement's view of the Eucharist is intellectual where the gnostic is concerned. However, this is not in any way to imply that practice is not involved as well; the gnostic is an experienced exemplar "in learning and in life".[112] Intense practice and attention to the right mode of living accompany the search for knowledge, such that the whole life becomes a sacrament in offering to God. Their whole life, writes Clement, will honour God, even if they are alone. They will give thanks for the knowledge of the way to live life properly.[113] The whole of the gnostic life is a thanksgiving to God and as such its presence improves the lives of those whom the gnostic associates with. The gnostic's uninterrupted converse with God ensures that there is a living presence of the divine to partake of and give thanks for. But it is the gnostic's knowledge of how to live that is important, a gnosis derived from the host of all that is good in the world to be the food of contemplation.

4.6. *Conclusion*

Christian anamnesis as Clement sees it is a modification of Plato's theory, differing most notably on the pre-existence of souls. However, Clement freely uses the language of Plato and sees in the theory much to harmonise with how the gnostic comes into communion with God. This occurs through the initiate's desire to turn to God and be trained

[109] *Str.* 1.5.29.1–3 citing Prov. 4.18.
[110] Cf. *Str.* 5.14.133.7–9.
[111] See p. 14 above.
[112] *Str.* 7.7.44.8.
[113] *Str.* 7.7.35.3–5. Cf. *Str.* 7.12.80.1.

in laughter and perseverance in the playful quest for divine knowledge, thereby sowing the seed or igniting the divine spark in the soul through a desire to study and learn. Clement speaks of these in the baptismal and eucharistic language of Scripture to demonstrate that the gathering and contemplating of the many philosophies of the Greeks and Hebrews leads to a sanctified life, which recreates the liturgical act of communion.

One can see from this concept that Clement's anamnesis operates not only as a vertical ascent to the divine through recollection, but also as a gathering in on the horizontal plane of all that is disparate in the world. The movement is both upward and inward towards the centring of one's being in Christ. This movement recalls the account of Clement's mystagogy and method of abstraction referred to in the second chapter.[114] By analysis the soul abstracts itself from its extension in space by drawing it together into the still point represented by the number seven. The mind then becomes capable of embracing the universal Logos, abstracting itself from the seventh point into voidness, "the greatness of Christ". Clement's *Stromateis* emulate the work of the cross in this respect, drawing the truths dispersed through the text back into the centre from which they originally sprung, and uplifting them into a unity reflecting Christ. The seven books of the miscellanies come together like the directions of space. Clement's notes allow the initiate to recollect the fundamental symbolic movements of the soul in communion with God, inversely replicating the Word's descent and dispersal throughout the world for our sakes.

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[114] See p. 50 above.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHYSIOLOGY, COSMOGONY AND THEOLOGY

5.1. *Introduction*

Before giving some account of what Clement says about physiology, cosmogony, and theology it is fitting to return to the objections of Lilla raised in the first chapter. Lilla states that Clement announces his intentions for teaching gnosis at the beginning of the first book of the *Stromateis*:

> The published views of the noteworthy sects will be expounded; against these will be set everything that ought to have been adduced beforehand from the knowledge that comes with the visionary stage of contemplation. (πανὺθ' ὅσα... ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως), which, as we proceed according to "the renowned and venerable canon of tradition" from the creation of the world, will advance to our view setting before us what, according to the contemplation of nature, necessarily has to be treated of beforehand, and clearing off what stands in the way of the sequence (ἀκολουθίᾳ), so that we may have our ears ready for the reception of the tradition of true knowledge; the soil being previously cleared of the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman for the planting of the vine. For there is a contest and the prelude to the contest; and there are some mysteries before other mysteries.[1]

For Clement, it is important for the contemplation of gnosis according to the canon of tradition established at the creation of the world to proceed to the contemplation of nature. But certain things need to be treated beforehand in order to clear what stands in the way of the *akolouthia*, and to advance through the minor mysteries to the greater. This is confirmed later by Clement at the beginning of the fourth book when he explains that on completion of what he proposes in his remembrances, he will address "the true science of nature (φυσιολογίαν)", having received initiation into the minor mysteries before entering the greater. Before the science of nature and vision (ἐποπτεία) can take place the gnostic tradition requires discussion on both cosmogony

[1] *Str.* 1.1.15.2–3. I am indebted to Roger Sworder and John Penwill for the translation of Clement's obscure Greek here.

(κοσμογονίας) and theology (θεολογικὸν).[2] Lilla concludes that these things are not set out in the *Stromateis*. He believes this passage outlines Clement's "plans for his future literary activity": a work dealing with physiology, cosmogony and theology, the λογός διδασκαλικός. The *Stromateis* therefore only represents material that was preparatory for the writing of the work on teaching.[3]

It appears to me that the passage from the fourth book is a recapitulation of the program being set out in the first book and that the bulk of Clement's material concerning physiology and the origin of the world is to appear in the books that follow. I agree with Lilla's statement that Clement's discussion of physiology, cosmogony, and theology is "en passant", but I believe that this confirms what has already been established concerning Clement's method of only giving slight indications to the student who is a genuine seeker of the truth. I will therefore address the material in the fifth and sixth books and attempt to establish what Clement is clearing aside and weeding out in preparation for the epoptic section which would, according to Nautin, have been made up of material form the *Excerpta, Eclogae* and the lost *Hypotyposes*. Contrary to Lilla, can the material on the subjects set out in this program be considered teaching, despite being only preparatory?

The fifth and sixth books of the *Stromateis* contain the most concentrated material on Clement's physiology and cosmogony, but it also contains much material on first principles.[4] These subjects are treated together making it difficult to separate and determine what Clement had to say about each. Nonetheless, as I have already argued in regard to his method, this is exactly what Clement desired of his work. It is the role of the gnostic initiate to separate out the seeds of doctrines from the great mixture of seeds thrown up in the *Stromateis*. Clement does not give a direct account, but puts forward a number of viewpoints, giving preference to none of them. As Osborn suggests, this is how his "multisystematic" methodology operates,[5] since the reader is forced to examine each viewpoint critically and, without preferential treatment for any one opinion, asked to harmonise what has been well said from

[2] *Str.* 4.1.3.1–2.
[3] Lilla, *Clement*, 189.
[4] Despite Lilla's objections, he provides a useful account on Clement's view of the origin of the world. He makes the important point that for Clement the study of the origin of the world is an important factor in attaining *gnosis* (*Clement of Alexandria*, 189–99).
[5] Osborn, *Clement* (1957), 7.

the various schools of thought with Scripture and the Word of God.[6] It is from this that we can begin to understand what Clement himself thought despite it being almost entirely through what other people have said.

5.2. *Physiology*

The discussion concerning physiology appears for the most part in the fourteenth chapter of the fifth book of the *Stromateis* where Clement sets about demonstrating that the Greeks plagiarised much of their doctrines from the Hebrews.[7] He begins by introducing the Stoic belief that God, like the soul, is in essence both body and spirit,[8] with the implication that they believed both to be material. However, he suspends his judgement on this view, saying that at present we should not take this as "gnostic truth (ἡ γνωστικὴ ἀλήθεια)". For the moment he contents himself with a rejection of Stoic pantheism, saying that they mistook the Wisdom of God, which "pervades and passes through all",[9] for the Logos; that is, God's immanent Wisdom for his transcendent Word. But this begins a lengthy and patchy account of what the Greeks said concerning nature (φύσις), the origin of the world, and first principles, from which we must glean his own view of creation.

5.2.1. Creatio Ex Nihilo, *the Eternity of Matter, and the First Principle*

By 200 CE the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* had been widely accepted amongst Christians.[10] Clement, however, was never so categorical when it came to such issues, particularly where his firm conviction in the truth

6 Cf. *Str.* 1.7.37.6.
7 See *Str.* 5.14.89.1. Against both Bousset (*Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb*, 205–218) and Munck (*Untersuchungen*, 127–151) who believed *Str*. 5.14.89 through to *Str*. 6.2.4 to be a foreign literary body within the *Stromateis*, Wyrwa argues that "hat Clemens diese Ausführungen als einen zusammenhängenden Komplex verstanden wissen woollen". *christliche Platonaneigung*, 298–99.
8 *Str.* 5.14.89.2. φασὶ γὰρ σῶμα εἶναι τὸν θεὸν ὁι Στωϊκοὶ καὶ πνεῦμα κατ' οὐσίαν.
9 Wis 7.24.
10 For the most comprehensive account of the development of this doctrine up until this time see G. May's book, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation from Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, tr. A.S. Worrall, (Edinburgh, 1994).

of Greek philosophy was concerned.[11] Since Greek philosophy was considered by Clement to be a covenant in preparation for receiving the Gospel,[12] he was in some sense assured of the validity of Greek views concerning the origin of the world. However, he was faced with the task of harmonising issues, such as the eternity of matter, or matter as a first principle, with the Christian view of creation from nothing.[13] For Christians, matter was created from nothing by the free act of God and therefore could in no way be considered co-eternal or uncreated with him.[14] Such a view would force us to believe that God and matter constitute two first principles rather than one, which was unacceptable to monotheistic creationism. However, we must remember that Clement was working at a time where no such doctrine of creation had been formalised, and indeed was free to contemplate such issues in a much more liberal frame of reference than his successors. Despite this he was highly conscious of protecting the idea from false assumptions.

To begin with, he sets about determining what the Greek philosophers meant when they claimed that matter constituted one of the first principles. The Stoics, Plato and Pythagoras, as well as Aristotle, he claims, supposed the existence of matter (ὕλην) among the first principles (ἀρχαῖς). Yet Clement states that they also said that matter is "without quality (ἄποιον) and without form (ἀσχημάτιστον)", and that Plato even

[11] The eternity of matter was one of the ideas on which Photius attacked Clement in the ninth century (*Bibl. Cod.* 109). On this see J. Patrick, *Clement of Alexandria*, 77.

[12] *Str.* 6.5.42.1; 6.6.44.1. See J.T. Muckle, "Clement of Alexandria on Philosophy as a Divine Testament for the Greeks", *Ph* 5 (1951), 79–86.

[13] I say Christian view for it is by no means conclusive that it was also the Hebrew view to posit creation from nothing. It must be pointed out, however, that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is not peculiar to Christianity at this period (See A. Altmann's chapter "A Note on the Rabbinic Doctrine of Creation", in *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, London, 1969). However, despite claiming the peculiarity of Christianity in its fulfilment of the two previous covenants of God, Clement wishes to demonstrate that its validity lies not in its novelty, but in its antiquity, its reiteration of the most ancient tradition (*Str.* 1.1.12.1; 7.17.107.5). We are mainly concerned here with the Greek view because Clement is more concerned with bringing Greek philosophy into the fold, so to speak. The *locus classicus* of the Hebrew view of a pre-existent and formless matter, besides Gn 1.2, is Wis 11.17. See G. May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo*, 21–26, and D. Winston, "The Book of Wisdom's Theory of Cosmogony", *HR* 11 (1971), 191–92. For a contrary view of this see J. Goldstein "The Origins of the Doctrine of Creation *Ex Nihilo*", *JJS* 35 (1984), 127–35.

[14] As Theophilus of Antioch states (*Ad Auto.* 2.4). Also see H.A. Wolfson's article "Plato's Pre-existent Matter in Patristic Philosophy", in *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honour of Harry Caplan*, (Ithaca, 1966), 414.

claimed it to be non-existence (μὴ ὂν),[15] concluding that Genesis 1.2 supplied them with the ground of material essence (ὑλικῆς οὐσίας):[16] "Now the earth was invisible (ἀόρατος) and formless (ἀκατασκεύαστος)". Furthermore, Clement supposes that Plato's expression of doubt as to whether or not there is one true first principle or many, was really an indication that he believed there to be only one.[17] The implication for Clement is that there is one first principle that is the "ground of material essence", and that it is none other than the non-existence, the invisible and formless earth, of Genesis. What precedes the creation is a non-existence that is logically prior to the existent, and this itself is the one true first principle rather than two λόγοι or ἀρχαὶ, or an identification of material essence with God as the Greeks had supposed. Since material essence is non-existent, how, by Clement's reasoning, could one assert a plurality of non-existences? Clement's interpretation of the ideas concerning material essence among the Greeks therefore allows him to harmonise their views with the Christian view concerning creation from nothing.

Clement proceeds to argue that Plato and the Stoics also posit that the world is created, and moreover that it is created out of non-existence:

> No, the philosophers, having so heard from Moses, taught that the world was created. And so Plato expressly said, "How was it that the world had no beginning of its existence, or derived its beginning from some beginning? For being visible, it is tangible; and being tangible, it has a body". Again, when he says, "It is a difficult task to find the Maker and Father of this universe", he not only signified that the universe was created,[18] but points out that it was born from God like a son, and that he is called its father, as coming into being from him alone and from non-existence (ὡς ἂν ἐκ μόνου γενομένου καὶ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος ὑποστάντος). The Stoics also hold the tenet that the world was created.[19]

[15] Cf. Plato *Tim.* 51a. Primal matter, or what Plato calls the receptacle of becoming which receives the imprint of the eternal and intelligible ideas, is described as ἀνόρατον εἶδός τι καὶ ἄμορφον. Goldstein ("Creation *Ex Nihilo*", 127) cites Aristotle as a 'Platonist' who espouses this view. Cf. *Phys.* 192a 6–7 and 191a 10.

[16] *Str.* 5.14.89.5–90.1. See W.E.G. Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil* (London, 1971), 4.

[17] *Tim.* 48c.

[18] *Tim.* 28b–c. Cf. Theophilus *Adv. Auto.* 2.4.

[19] *Str.* 5.14.92.1–4. The Stoic view is dealt with later by Clement.

Clement's defence of Plato's view appears to lead him into a form of proto-Arianism by identifying the Son with creation.[20] However, when Plato speaks of a Maker and Father it is enough to demonstrate that he saw the world as created.[21] The creation has bodily tangibility and has therefore 'come to be' as such, proving that Plato did not view the world as uncreated. According to Clement's view, Plato posited that the world was in fact created and, by what was claimed earlier, from non-existence.

However, in this passage Clement also states that according to Plato the universe is created from the father alone, but then also adds that it comes from non-existence. This is a strange assumption and could be taken in two ways: either that Clement saw God the father as bringing the creation into being from non-existence, which, as the doctrine developed in later centuries, posits God as the supreme being who creates the world out of nothing. Alternatively, however, he may be suggesting an identification of the father with non-existence as that from which the Son and creation are born. This is highly probable since in the earlier passage he acknowledges that the one first principle is non-existent, despite the Greeks' referring to it as material essence. This is a highly contentious issue, but one that becomes crucial, not just to Clement's theology, but for the theology of the whole Christian mystical tradition.

Earlier on in the fifth book, for instance, Clement informs us that "we may somehow advance to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not (οὐχ ὅ ἐστίν, ὅ δὲ μή ἔστι γνωρίσαντες)"[22] and that if we refer to God as a "being" (τὸ ὂν) we do so in order to grasp what is actually ungraspable, supplying a name for that which is nameless. God is οὐκ or μὴ ὄν because he is the cause of being and therefore logically prior to it.[23] We cannot therefore know

[20] See Wyrwa, *christliche Platonaneigung*, 307.

[21] See also *Str*. 5.14.102.3 where Clement also cites Plato's *Ep*. 6.323d which speaks of God as father. Wyrwa points out that only Plutarch (*De animae procr*. 3.4; Mor. 1013b; 1014a) and Attikos (via Proclus *In. Tim. comm*. 1 p. 276,31ff.) ever mention the literalness with which Plato can be taken here. However, Platonists in general evade the notion of a father of the universe. *christliche Platonaneigung*, 308.

[22] *Str.* 5.12.71.3.

[23] *Str.* 5.12.82.1. οὐ κυρίως καλοῦντες ἤτοι . . . ἢ ἀυτὸ τὸ ὄν. Lilla points out that the identification of μὴ ὄν or ἀνουσίαστος (one could also include ὑπερούσια) with the highest divinity features in much mystical thinking. This "does not imply the denial of [God's] existence, but simply the fact that he cannot be considered as a 'real being' since he is beyond (or above) οὐσία" (*Clement of Alexandria*, 196 n. 6). Lilla has this only

God by what he is, only by what he is not, since God is *no thing*. It is odd for instance that Clement should categorically state that the universe comes to be from the father "alone (μόνος)", and qualify this with καὶ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος in the same sentence. Moreover, by extension from what has previously been said, this must also be the same "material essence", or the "invisible and formless" earth of Genesis 1.2, which Clement has already identified as μὴ ὄν. Since God in essence transcends being, this suggests that material essence has no ontological status since it is in no way distinct from that from which it came, the divine non-existence. This is as much as to say that matter itself can not be considered an eternal principle distinct from God, since, according to Clement, there is only one first principle.

However, this is dangerous ground for Clement who, if misunderstood, could well incur the charge of Stoic pantheism, identifying God with matter, or rather of positing nothing outside of material essence. This may explain his guarded approach to the doctrine and why he appears to suspend his judgement concerning the 'gnostic truth' of the Stoic view of God as both body and spirit. However, Clement's willingness to suspend judgement from the outset also implies that he sees some gnostic truth in the idea. Picking through the thorns and brambles is a difficult process, but here Clment has weeded out the belief that matter can constitute a first principle.

It would appear then that Clement posits the origin of all things from a divine nothingness. But he does state that all things visible and tangible have 'come to be' and therefore have some ontological status. He draws on Plato for his theory of causation, believing that Plato even plagiarised his Theory of Ideas from Moses, which also spoke of a division between the archetypal world of thought and the world of sense. The former world is the Monad and the world of the senses is represented by the number six.

> For six is called by the Pythagoreans marriage, as being the genital number; and he places in the Monad the invisible heaven and the holy earth, and intellectual light. For 'in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ)', it is said,

partially correct. The highest divinity, which is οὐκ or μὴ ὄν is precisely the real in the sense that it is the cause of all being. It is *hyperousia* and therefore beyond what human beings mistake as real. Plato alluded to this idea much earlier when he spoke about the form of the Good (*Rep*. 509b). Cf. Plotinus *Enn.* 5.4.1; *Corp. Herm.* 2.5; Basilides as cited in Hippolytus *Ref. Om. Haer*. 7.21; Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Div. Nom. PG*. 3. 588B.

> "God made the heaven and the earth; and the earth was invisible". And it is added, "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light". And in the sensible cosmogony (τῇ κοσμογονίᾳ τῇ αἰσθητῃ) he creates a solid heaven (στερεὸν οὐρανὸν) and what is solid is capable of being perceived by sense, and a visible earth, and a visible light. Hence does not Plato appear to have left the ideas of living creatures in the intellectual world, and to make intellectual objects into sensible species according to their kind (γένη)?[24]

Clement is postulating a causal descent from the Monad or intelligible realm, to a sensible one, suggesting that created things come into existence and attain an ontological status. Creation comes through the Monad, and on coming to be becomes a tangible and visible image of its intangible and invisible archetype. This view offers us as a Platonic description of the creation of the firmament (στερέωμα) of Genesis 1.6, the "material cosmogony" of the "solid heaven".[25] When the book of Genesis says that all things were made by God according to their kind,[26] Clement sees this as the source from which Plato appropriated his own Theory of Ideas.

The Monad is the first principle (ἀρχή) in which is contained all of Genesis 1.1–3: the heaven and earth, and the "intellectual light" of the *fiat*. However, in chapter three we saw that Clement believed God to be an unbeginning principle (ἄναρχος), which produces the beginning (ἀρχή) of all things.[27] God is the first principle of all things, and also prior to the first principle as the Father and Son: both *archê* and *anarchos* together.[28] Hence for Clement, "in the beginning" describes how the principle that is unbeginning, of itself, becomes the beginning of creation, represented here as the intelligible and archetypal world of the Monad and from which proceeds the world of the senses signified by the "genital" or "creative number" six. Elsewhere he lets us know that "God is one, and beyond the one and above the Monad itself".[29] Hence, despite the monad being the *archê*, it is not the ultimate principle, but

[24] *Str.* 5.14.93.4–94.3.
[25] See Lilla, *Clement*, 191.
[26] Gn 1.11, 12, 21, 24, 25.
[27] *Str.* 4.25.162.5 ὁ θεὸς δὲ ἄναρχος, ἀρχὴ τῶν ὅλων παντελής, ἀρχῆς ποιητικος. See pp. 99–100 above.
[28] *Str.* 7.1.2.3.
[29] *Paid.* 1.8.71.2 citing Ex 3.14.

the principle that is produced from the unbeginning principle.[30] The monad refers to that point when being is produced from what is beyond being, the pre-ontological divinity of God the Father and the Son.

The discussion concerning the coming into being of the material world leads Clement on to a seemingly unrelated train of thought, which on closer inspection is of great significance. He speaks of how matter, or the material that can be seen by the senses, cannot constitute the true nature of humankind. The earthly body, he tells us, is simply a tabernacle into which God breathes the soul through the passages of the senses.[31] He claims that this is the ruling faculty or the mind (νοῦς) and is that in us which is made in the image and likeness of God. It is the faculty of mind that provides the means by which we assimilate ourselves to God if we follow the laws of Moses.[32] Furthermore, Clement adds, Plato had also spoken of this principle when he believed that the end of philosophy was to live in likeness to God (ὁμοίωσιν θεῷ).[33]

However, what is surprising about this sidetrack into the nature of human physiology is that according to Clement, this likeness to God of which both the Hebrews and the Greeks spoke is also what the Stoics meant when they said that we ought to "live in agreement with nature (ἀκολούθως τῇ φύσει ζῆν)".[34] Since the Stoics did not distinguish God from nature, Clement takes nature here to mean the nature of God, not nature as a principle in and of itself. Hence, to live in accordance with nature is to live in accordance with or in likeness to God. A little further on in his discussion concerning likeness to God and living the good life, he quotes from the *Timaeus*: "You must necessarily assimilate the faculty of understanding to that which understands, according to its original nature (ἀρχαίαν φύσιν)".[35] Our faculty of understanding, the mind, is, in its original nature, like God, or at least the mind of God, which is Christ. Thus we assimilate to that which we were in our original nature, which is the image and likeness of the divine. Ultimately this is our genuine physiology: not that we are by nature material but that

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[30] The monad is not exactly the Logos, but the "essential unity (τῆς μοναδικῆς οὐσία)" (*Protr.* 9.88.2) to which the human mind can ascend to reflect the unity of God (Cf. *Paid.*1.8.71.2; *Str.* 4.25.157.2; 4.25.157.2).

[31] *Str.* 5.14.94.3–4.

[32] *Str.* 5.14.94.6 citing Deut 13.4.

[33] *Theaet.* 176b.

[34] *Str.* 5.14.95.1. Cf. Diogenes Laertius 7.87; Stobaeus 2.77, 16–27; 2.75, 11–26.

[35] *Str.* 5.14.96.2 citing *Tim.* 90d. See also *Tim.* 29b.

we are by nature god-like. Clement's refutation of Stoic materialism leads to an understanding of the physiology of humanity, understood as god-like and spiritual in its original nature with God, and not material as the Stoics believed.[36]

For Clement physiology is not as some Pre-Socratics or the Stoics suppose it to be, that nature is a principle in and of itself. It is ultimately contingent on God, and in order to understand its original nature fully, we must know it as something born of God, who is prior to the existent. This distinction is part of Clement's understanding of the lesser mysteries before moving on to the greater. To understand the true gnostic physiology, we must ultimately know the one first principle of all things, the nature of God, and to know this is to know that matter is essentially non-existent and that God creates the world from nothing.

5.2.2. *The Self-Generating God*

Much of the discussion in the fourteenth chapter of the fifth book of the *Stromateis* is devoted to seeing how the Greeks unwittingly spoke of the Father and Son,[37] and how the first principle is one.[38] But the emphasis is also concerned with how this one first principle as Father and Son came to create of itself to form the universe. Clement's discussion therefore returns to the identification of nature with God, as (mis)understood by the Stoics who "define nature (φύσιν) to be designing fire (πῦρ τεχνικὸν),[39] systematically advancing to generation (γένεσιν)".[40] Having said this Clement suggests further that God and his Word are allegorically termed fire and light. Clement sets before us something of a puzzle, indicating that there is a similarity between the Stoic notion of nature as a designing and self-generating fire, and God and his Word as they are allegorically understood as fire and light. The work of God

[36] On this distinction see Bradley, "The Transformation of Stoic Ethic", 49–50. As W.E.G. Floyd writes: "Clement supports what [the Stoics] say, but does not mean what they mean" (*Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 13).

[37] Spoken of by Plato (*Str.* 5.14.102.3), by Homer (*Str*. 5.14.116.1) and by Xenocrates (*Str.* 5.14.116.3–4).

[38] Spoken of by Xenophon (*Str.* 5.14.108.5), by Colophon (*Str.* 5.14.109.1) and by Timaeus of Locri (*Str.* 5.14.115.4–5).

[39] Cf. *SVF*. 2.1027. "The Stoics made god out to be intelligent (νοερὸν), a designing fire (πῦρ τεχνικὸν) which methodically proceeds towards creation of the world (γενέσει κόσμου)". See Bradley, "The Transformation of Stoic Ethic", 44. See also Plato *Prot.* 321e and Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 7 παντέχνου πυρὸς σέλας.

[40] *Str.* 5.14.100.4.

the Father, in connection with the Word that advances systematically to generation, is highly indicative of the creation of the world in Genesis 1.3. This is easy to see in regard to the Son understood as light, since it corresponds with the *fiat lux*. However, understanding the Father as fire is a little more problematical since there is nothing immediately to indicate fire in the creation of the world in the opening verses of Genesis. The most notable instance from the Hebrew Scriptures of God as fire is the "consuming fire (πῦρ καταναλίσκον)" of Deuteronomy.[41] Elsewhere, Clement speaks of the consuming fire as the ultimate expression of God's power, which has the ability to destroy, but also to create and to nurture. Fire in this case is the symbol of God's providential action in the cosmos, having the power to destroy and to restore.

We know, however, that Clement is concerned with Genesis here because he then cites a passage from Homer concerning the conjugal union of Tethys and Oceanus, which he believes was plagiarised from Genesis 1.9.[42] He then quotes a fragment from Pindar: "And God from gloomy night can raise unstained light, and can in darkest gloom obscure the day's brightness pure. He alone (ὁ μόνος) who is able to make night during the period of day is God".[43] Here is a clear reference to Genesis 1.3–4, and the belief that God alone is capable of separating the eternal day of the divine *fiat* into the opposites of day and night.[44] The point that Clement is making here is that God is one and that "he alone" generates the opposites of night and day. When the Greeks spoke in such a way they were allegorically referring to the same self-generating act of God and his Word in the book of Genesis.

Clement moves then to a discussion concerning Pre-Socratic physiology and what it had to say concerning God and fire. Empedocles, referring to "the renewal of all things" speaks of "a transformation into the essence of fire (πυρὸς οὐσίαν)". Heraclitus, Clement continues, believed there to be an eternal world (κόσμον ἀίδιον) and one that is perishable that appeared in nearly every respect to be like the eternal one. According to Clement, the difference is that the eternal world "consists of the universal essence (ἁπάσης οὐσίας)":

[41] Deut. 4.24/Heb. 12.29 which Clement speaks of at *Ecl.* 26.1–4. Cf. the "devouring flame (βοσκηθεῖσα φλόξ)" that Clement quotes from an unknown tragedian (*Str.* 5.14.121.4–122.1). The fragment is attributed to Sophocles (*frag* 1027).

[42] *Str.* 5.14.100.5 citing *Il.* 14. 206.

[43] *Str.* 5.14.101.1.

[44] Hence his reference to Plato's "nocturnal day" (*Rep.* 521c) (*Str.* 5.14.105.2–106.2).

> "The same world of all things, neither any of the gods, nor any one of men, made (οὔτε... ἐποίησεν). But it was, and is, and will be ever-living fire (πῦρ ἀείζωον), kindled according to measure, and quenched according to measure".[45] And that he taught it to be generated (γενητὸν) and perishable (φθαρτὸν), is shown by what follows: "There are transmutations of fire—first, the sea; and of the sea half is land, half fiery vapour".[46] For he says that these are powers (δυνάμεις). For by the Word of God which governs all things, fire by the air is turned into moisture, which is, as it were, the seed (σπέρμα) of cosmic change; and this he calls sea.[47] And out of it again is produced earth, and sky, and all that they contain. How, again, they are restored (ἀναλαμβάνεται) and ignited (ἐκπυροῦται), he shows clearly in these words: "The sea is diffused and measured according to the same principle which subsisted before it became earth"[48]... The most renowned of the Stoics teach similar doctrines with him, in treating of the conflagration (ἐκπυρώσεως) and the government of the world and both the world and man properly so called and of the continuance of our souls.[49]

There are then two kinds of fire. Fiery or universal essence constitutes an eternal world from one point of view, but from another it can be seen as undergoing elemental transmutations by which the world is constantly coming into being and passing away. Hence fire is eternal and unmade on the one hand, and created and perishable on the other. By the Logos of God the eternal world of fiery or universal essence undergoes a transmutation into a generated and perishable world in which the elements commingle.[50] Fire, by coming into contact with air, is turned into moisture to become sea. From this the earth and sky and all things in them are produced. Here we see Clement's God who is both *anarchos*, beyond being, and *archê*, the principle of being that causes all things to come to be.

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[45] DK *frag.* 30.

[46] DK *frag.* 31.

[47] Cf. *SVF* 1.103–104; Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 370. In his *Eclogues* (6.31–34), Virgil has a similar schema but all the elements commingle together in their seed form: "The seeds of earth and breath and sea and liquid fire (*liquidi ignis*) were forced together... From these first things all else, all, and the cosmos' tender globe grew of itself (*et ipse tener mundi concreuerit orbis*)".

[48] DK *frag*. 31.

[49] *Str.* 5.14.103.6–105.1.

[50] I am in disagreement with Wolfson's assertion that the 'eternal world' that Heraclitus is speaking of in this passage "refers to an eternal succession of perishable worlds". I believe that this is exactly what he is contrasting it with. "Patristic Arguments Against the Eternity of the World", *HTR* 59 (1966), 351–67.

The "designing fire" of Stoic physiology and the eternal world of fiery or universal essence posited by certain Pre-Socratic *physiologoi*, represent for Clement the essential and self-generating principle of God and his Word, Father and Son together. The Word is the "germ of cosmic change", the *logos spermatikos* that brings into being a perishable world from the eternal and unmade world. The latter points to the allegorical representation of God as fire who is transcendent of being, and who is also the producer of being. Given what Clement has postulated with regard to Stoic physiology, what the presocratics called *phusis* is not merely a description of the material world, but an account of the unbeginning principle that generates of itself to bring created order into being. The "physical" or "natural renewal of all things" spoken of by the presocratics[51] is a restoration of all things to their original nature, which is, as we have seen, *in divinis*. Ultimately the true study of *phusis* is the study of the first principle of all things, which is, in its original nature, God and his Word together and which pre-existed "before the foundation of the world".[52] Once again, Clement has removed a thorn from the soil to prepare it for spiritual planting.

Clement returns to the notion of self-generation, this time citing the lost play of Euripides, *Pirithous*, which speaks of ether instead of fire as an allegory for divine creativity:

> "You, self-sprung (αὐτοφυῆ), who on ether's wheel has spun universal nature, around whom light and dusky spangled night, the countless host of stars, too, ceaseless dance". For there he says that the creative mind (δμιουργὸν νοῦν) is self-sprung (αὐτοφυῆ). What follows applies to the ordering of the universe, in which are the opposites (ἐναντιότητες) of light and darkness.[53]

The "creative mind" of God, which, as we have seen, is the Logos, sprung from God the Father to create the opposites of night and dark, spinning nature on ether's wheel. Once again this Greek reference is used to draw attention to Genesis, in this case the creation of light and dark. Clement willingly quotes this and many other passages from the Greeks because they can be interpreted to agree with his view of the essential unity of Father and Son in the self-generating act of creation.

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[51] *Str.* 5.14.103.6.
[52] *Protr.* 1.6.4.
[53] *Str.* 5.14.114.1–3. Cf. Asclepius *Corp. Herm.* 6b 10–15.

The Scriptural accounts of the one true self-generating God are congruent with those given by various people who pre-conceive of God according to their own cultural expressions.[54] To make certain that the reader is not in any doubt that the Greeks had ultimately spoken of one first principle, demonstrating that it is absurd to posit matter as another principle in relation to God, Clement cites the Greek philosopher Timaeus of Locri, who, in his work on nature, claimed that "there is one unoriginated first principle of all things (μία ἀρχὰ πάντων ἐστὶν ἀγένητος). For if it was originated, it would no longer be the first principle; but the first principle would be that from which it originated".[55] By virtue of the fact that the material world is originated, it cannot therefore constitute a first principle, since if it was, then the principle could not be considered simple and primary. This argument represents another example of the indemonstrable and self-evident first principle we discussed in chapter three, where one is forced to agree on a principle which is trustworthy in itself and which requires no further demonstration.[56] It is significant also that this reference comes from a work concerning nature since it reinforces what Clement has said already about true physiology. Ultimately, nature is only properly understood through the study of the one uncreated first principle, since for Clement all things derive their being from one divine original nature.

Clement also speaks of another way in which the Greeks spoke of God who is self-generating, this time through the Orphic idea of a feminine aspect of God:

> By the expression μητροπάτωρ[57] [Orpheus] not only intimates creation out of nothing (ἐκ μὴ ὄντων γένεσιν), but gives occasion to those who presently introduce and imagine a consort (σύζυγον) of the Deity.[58] And

[54] Hence towards the end of the fourteenth chapter he returns to Plato's statement concerning the difficulty in finding the Father and Maker of the universe, and speaks of God's universal declaration to all races (*Str.* 5.14.133.9–134.1).

[55] *Str.* 5.14.115.4–5. See also *Str.* 5.14.133.1. The source of Timaeus of Locri is unknown (Stählin *GCS*, II. 404) but cf. Plato *Phdr*. 245d ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀγένητον.

[56] *Str.* 8.3.7.1. Also *Str.* 8.3.8.1.

[57] LSJ (s.v. "μητροπάτωρ") translates this as "mother's father" or "grandfather", hence Wilson's translation has "sire of our Mother". However, I agree with Le Boulluec's suggestion that the word means "mother and father at once or at the same time". He leaves it untranslated because the Scriptural passage concerning one God that Clement claims Orpheus to be paraphrasing suggests that it is to be understood as one entity (*SChr* 278, 227).

[58] Clement is here challenging the Gnostic idea that there is a separate deity called the Mother (i.e. Achamoth; see Irenaeus *Adv. haer*. 1.5.1) whom the πνευματικοί unite

> he paraphrases those prophetic Scriptures… "Behold, behold that I am He, and there is no god beside me…"[59]

Clement believes Orpheus' use of the term μητροπάτωρ is a paraphrase of a Scriptural passage concerning God's absolute unity. Despite the term having inspired the Gnostics to posit a feminine deity distinct from God the Father, for Clement the term points more directly to the unity of God as a self-generating principle. For Clement there is no God but God, but this should not exclude the possibility of using sexual symbolism.[60] Mother and Father together symbolise the fact that God begets of himself, a Son. But also, more cryptically, it intimates the creation of the world from nothing. Given Clement's interpretation of *Timaeus* 28c that the universe was created like a son from the father alone and from non-existence, μητροπάτωρ signifies that same cosmogonic act which sees the creation born from God's own nothingness.

The notion of eternal matter therefore is a fallacy in that in its original nature it is not distinct from the divine, since there is, ἐν ἀρχῇ, nothing distinct from God's ipseity. God and matter are utterly distinct.[61] God is the one true principle from which all things come to be by his own self-generating act. It is only on their coming into being that things appear ontologically distinct from God, in which case they seem to be something other than their original nature. This is why Clement sees physiology as being crucial to the study of gnosis, since it ultimately trains the mind to ascend beyond the realm of existences to the study of the first principle which is beyond being. The crucial distinction Clement is directing us to, is that God is not a body as the Stoics believed, but that all things, including matter, are essentially spiritual.

There is little doubt that the evidence concerning physiology is slight, as Lilla suggests, but to study physiology, taken to be the study of the physical world, is to misunderstand nature in principle. Clement's physiology, however scanty, constitutes a cogent doctrine, not in and of itself, but rather as a means of preparing the mind of the initiate for an understanding of God in and of himself, and of nature as contingent on the oneness of God.

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with in the ogdoad; "the eternal marriage of the Syzyge (συζυγίας)". (*Exc.* 63.1–61.2. See also *Str.* 5.14.102.2).

[59] *Str.* 5.14.126.1–4.

[60] Cf. *QDS*. 37.1–2 and *Paid.* 1.6.46.1.

[61] *Str.* 2.16.74.1.

5.3. *Cosmogony*

Though we have already covered some ground on Clement's cosmogony, he does have more to say on the issue in the sixth book of the *Stromateis*. One of the sidetracks that Clement makes in his account of physiology and the self-generation of God in the fourteenth chapter of the fifth book of the *Stromateis*, is an account of the resurrection according to Plato's Myth of Er.[62] It is a strange interruption into the discussion, but not when we consider that it appears again a little later in Clement's discourse as an account of Christ's resurrection on the Lord's Day.[63] It comes at a time when Clement is referring to the unity of God the Father and the Son, and how this unity comes to create through the light of the divine *fiat*. We have already seen how Clement associates Christ's resurrection on the eighth day with coming into the ogdoad and also with a return to the first day of creation. The discussion concerning resurrection at this point is, therefore, not as out of place as it may appear at first, since the resurrection of the Lord's Day, as the *Epistle of Barnabas* testifies, is a complete return to the cosmogony of Genesis 1.

5.3.1. *The Lord's Day*

The passage from the fifth book concerning the Lord's Day,[64] describes how the soul ascends to the eighth sphere. Plato's account tells us that the souls of the dead leave the meadow on the eighth day, and after four day's journey they can peer down over the heavens and earth on a column of light like a rainbow. The souls then come to the light itself and can see the spindle of Necessity that holds together eight whorls representing the different planetary and astral spheres, the first of which is fixed.[65]

In the context of Clement's account of the tabernacle discussed in chapter two, we have made mention of the seven planets, here repre-

[62] *Str.* 4.14.103.2–5.
[63] *Str.* 5.14.106.2–107.1.
[64] *Str*. 5.14.106.2–4. See p. 49 above.
[65] *Rep.* 616e–617d. Note that with the inversion of the universe from above down, the first whorl represents the fixed stars, whereas from below it is numbered the eighth. This division of the fixed stars and the seven 'wanderers' corresponds with the motions of the same and the different in the *Timaeus*. From above, the eighth whorl takes its colour from the seventh, which shines brightest, signifying the moon and sun respectively (*Tim*. 36c–d; cf. Philo. *De Dec*. 102–105).

sented by the seven days on the meadow, or similarly the mystagogic periods in which the soul is purified. Clement also mentions the eighth day in which the soul's journey leads to heaven or the ogdoad.[66] From the meadow the soul is required to take a four-day journey to be reborn into the world. Here Clement equates the four days in which the soul travels with the four elements, which represent the four coloured materials making up the inner and outer veils in Clement's account of the tabernacle.[67] Departing from the eighth sphere suggests the coming out of the Holy of Holies and back into the world of the senses.[68] Having been resurrected and released from the world, the soul comes to a place where it can look down on the fixed stars and seven planets, the realm of time measured by the course of the planets. Just so, the gnostic soul now emerges from the ogdoad, as the high priest would from the tabernacle, to peer out over the world of the senses and see the entire cosmos in one vision, before it returns to the world.[69]

Coming from the eighth sphere downward, however, the Lord's Day corresponds with the first day of creation and therefore the number one, but in this respect it also corresponds with the number seven. The soul steps out of the intellectual realm of the ogdoad and back into the world of the senses, the realm of time and space represented by the seven planets, and as such replicates the first cosmogonic act of God. The number seven represents the seventh and still point at the centre of the three dimensional cross, the point from which the light of the divine *fiat* emanates bringing the creation into being.[70] From the perspective of above down, or rather from principle to manifestation, it can be equated with the number one.

What is interesting about the number seven is that it also represents the Sabbath, the day of rest. As Clement tells us in this passage, coming into the Lord's Day is a "practical art" that speeds the soul to the "end of rest (τέλος ἀναπαύσεως)". Attaining rest is here in the same context in which the *Epistle of Barnabas* placed it, in the sense that the Lord's Day represents a restoration of the Sabbath from the old order to the new—"our true rest", as Clement says.[71] However, there is a

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[66] Cf. *Exc.* 41.2–42.2. In Gnostic terms Christ bears the seed of the elect into the pleroma, which is the repose of the ogdoad and also the Lord's Day.
[67] *Str.* 5.6.32.3. Cf. Philo. *Mos.* ii. 84, 88, 101.
[68] *Str.* 5.6.33.3–4.
[69] *Str.* 6.8.69.3–70.1. See also *Str.* 6.7.61.1–3; 6.8.68.2; 7.6.43.1; 7.15.92.2.
[70] See *Str.* 6.16.139.4.
[71] *Barn.* 15.8 & *Str.* 6.16.138.1–5. See p. 49 above.

fundamental contradiction concerning the return of the Lord's Day in that it is simultaneously the first day of creation, the day on which God began his work, and also the day on which God rests.

Clement discusses this dilemma in his account of the fourth commandment concerning the keeping of the Sabbath.[72] Ostensibly this passage begins as a straightforward account of the Sabbath, a divinely sanctioned day of rest given to humanity because of the six days of work and because of the troubles of life. Though God is immune to such troubles he nonetheless gives us rest on the seventh day in preparation for the Primal Day, the first day of the new creation. The light of truth both creates and illuminates us by bringing about wisdom and knowledge of real existences. It brings us impassibility and rest in emulation of God's rest on the Sabbath.

However, the passage becomes decidedly convoluted when Clement suggests that the discussion revolves around the numbers seven and eight. This is because the Primal Day mentioned is also the eighth day on which Christ rose from the dead. But then Clement suggests that the eighth is strictly the seventh and the true Sabbath, and the seventh is strictly the sixth, representing the six days of creation. Clement then discusses the number six, regarding it in this instance as the perfect number of creation, because, as the Pythagoreans believed, it is the product of the masculine and feminine numbers, the "genital number (γόνιμος ἀριθμός)" of marriage which issues from the monad in the material cosmogony.[73] It is also symbolic of the directions of space or the "general motions" as he puts it here, in the shape of the three dimensional cross.

From here Clement returns to the number seven stipulating its motherless and childless nature.[74] He claims that the still point of the

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[72] *Str.* 6.16.137.4–140.2.

[73] *Str.* 5.14.93.4. See pp. 147–48 above. As Wilson points out, "μεσευθύς, μέσος and εὐθύς, between the even ones, applied by the Pythagoreans to 6, a half-way between 2 and 10" (*ANF.* 513 n. 1. See also *Str.* 5.14.93.4–5). Cf. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom*, 102 and Theon of Smyrna, *Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato*, tr. R & D. Lawlor (San Diego, 1979), *prop*. 45.

[74] It appears that Clement's reasoning on the number seven is flawed here, or there has been some tampering with the text. *Str.* 6.140.1–2 reads: οὔτε γὰρ ἔκ τινος ἀριθμοῦ ἐπί τινα λαμβάνουσι γίνεται ὁ ἑπτὰ οὔτε ἐπί τινα ληφθεὶς ἀποτελεῖ τῶν ἐντὸς τῆς δεκάδος ἕτερον. The "motherless and childless" nature of the number seven comes about because it is the only number that is (a) not the *product* of any two numbers between two and ten, and (b) the only prime number that cannot produce the number ten or lower. However, the verb forms λαμβάνω and ληπθείς imply subtraction and

centre of the six directions of space (i.e. up, down, right, left, forward and backward as in the shape of a three dimensional cross) represents the "nature of rest" and is the day of rest on which souls are resurrected into the next age according to the words of Luke 20.34–35 where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage any more". This is why Clement then speaks of the number eight, the cube or ogdoad, as representing the repose and recompense from the course of time which is measured by the seven revolving planets. This is how the "great year" of Greek cosmology is produced

However, what of the eight becoming seven and the seven becoming six? It appears that what Clement means by all of this is that after Christ's resurrection the new creation will constitute a return to or transfigure the original *taxis* of the sacred week of the Hebrews. That is to say that the eighth day will be restored as the seventh, the original Sabbath, and the seventh, which was the day of rest, will again become the six days of creation.[75] It is not too difficult to see how eight becomes seven with Christ's resurrection back into the world, but, as a temporal schema, it is difficult to imagine how the seventh day can become the six days of creation. This is why Clement then uses the spatial symbol of the three-dimensional cross, since the seventh and still point, the light of the first day, emanates along the six directions of space. Hence, once the soul participates in the resurrection and illumination of the Lord's Day with Christ, it restores the Sabbath to its rightful position as the seventh.

Immediately following this long passage Clement discusses the transfiguration of Christ in terms of the number symbolism we have just seen.[76] Christ and the three apostles ascend the mountain and are joined by Moses and Elijah, hence four become six.[77] Christ beams with the light of the transfiguration, emanating power through the voice of God, thus six become seven. This provides rest to the disciples chosen to see it. It is difficult to see where the eight comes from but it appears that the voice of God bridges the gap between the divine and the created

addition rather than multiplication, leaving the reasoning false. Cf. Philo *Leg All.* i.15; *De Dec.* 102; *De Opif.* 99–100; Theon, *Mathematics, prop.* 46.

[75] E. Ferguson believes this to be the case, although rightly points out that Clement is not suggesting that Christians keep the Sabbath the way the Jews did, but that the Sabbath is an "abstinence of evil" and an "eschatological rest" ("Was Barnabas a Chiliast?", 166).

[76] *Str.* 6.16.140.3–4.

[77] Matt 17.3.

realms, representing eight and six respectively. Christ is the God-man, the Son of God and of Mary: "God in a body of flesh".

The Gospel account tells us that after Christ is transfigured and tells the apostles to "rise and have no fear", the two prophets, Moses and Elijah disappear, and the rest descend the mountain. Clement takes this to mean that they descend back into the created realm after having been taken up to the ogdoad. Hence, he returns to his account of the number six, the number of creation, but, ever more cryptically, speaks of it in its connection with a certain unwritten letter in the Greek alphabet.[78] This is an undeniable reference to the digamma, a letter introduced sometime prior to the eighth century BCE with the Ionic numeration of the Greek alphabet.[79] This "character which is not written", though spoken of, is commonly understood to be the Phoenician letter Vau and given the numerical value of six in place of *Zeta*. Clement's main concern here is the mystical significance of the letter that brings about the same redressing of the balance from number eight to seven and number seven to six as we saw earlier.[80] Here, with the unwritten introduction of the digamma, *Zeta* and *Eta* are displaced from six and seven, to seven and eight respectively. However, when the digamma is not counted, and the alphabet is restored, *Zeta* is returned to six and *Eta*, is restored as the seventh indicating once again a restoration to an original order where the eighth is the seventh and the place of rest and seven is the sixth, the number of creation.[81]

The connection with Christ's transfiguration in the eighth, and the mysterious quality of the number six completes Clement's earlier cryptic mention of the eight becoming seven, and seven becoming six. His elliptical account of the digamma demonstrates the ineffability of this

[78] *Str.* 6.16.140.4–141.6.

[79] *ANF* 513 n. 4. Also P. Descourtieux, *Les Stromates. Stromate VI, SChr* 446 (Paris, 1999), 336 n. 4.

[80] The historical view depicts the introduction of three Phoenician letters into the Greek alphabet as a deliberate choice governed by historical circumstance. See T. Heath, *A History of Greek Mathematics* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1960), 32. Clement, however, takes it that the digamma has an unwritten mystical significance, probably in reference to the way the secret and oral tradition of the elders made its way into the public and written tradition.

[81] It comes as no surprise that the digamma is depicted as a gamma (Γ) with two horizontal lines instead of one, much like the English letter F. Dionysius of Halicarnassus described it as a "double gamma" (*Antiq. Rom.* 1.20.3). In Clement's context, it represents six, the number of marriage, the gamma having the numerical value of three and then doubled. As he pointed out previously: three, the masculine number, times two, the feminine number.

sacred union of heaven and earth in the person of Christ, the God-man.[82] As with the Lord's Day, Christ's transfiguration symbolises the redressing of the balance of things by restoring the new creation back to the Hebrew *taxis* of the number seven. This way of understanding the eighth day also offers an explanation of why the *Epistle of Barnabas* speaks of the eighth day as a way of restoring the Sabbath to its rightful position since God no longer accepts the Sabbaths of the Hebrews. Christ's resurrection and transfiguration, which glorify the eighth day, simultaneously represent a rejection and a renewal of the original order of Genesis, restoring the rightful place of the Sabbath through a return to the cosmogonic principle, and bringing rest to those who are chosen to seek it.

Another passage demonstrates how we are to understand the notion of God's eternal working and resting.[83] As in the previous passages, Clement tells us a great deal in a small space. The Lord is called alpha and omega, the beginning and end, but God's resting is not to be understood that "God ceased from doing (πέπαυται ποιῶν ὁ θεός)".[84] For if God were to stop creating he would also stop being good, which would be sacrilege, according to Clement. It must be understood that while the seventh day is a rest, this is not to be understood as a cessation of God's creative activity. Here we can see the paradox of Clement's divine logic at work in that only God is capable of being eternally at work and eternally at rest. He preserves the order of things, but for creation to take place it must necessarily enter into some form of sequence in time. However, once we talk about an *akolouthia* of events we are necessarily talking about time and space into which these things become manifested. God's creative act takes place beyond these categories from a place of repose, signified by Christ as alpha and omega, the *archê* from which all things originate and the *telos* to which all things return. It is only "as some conceive"—that is through the limitation of human thinking—that God at some point does not create, or that at some point came to create. Creation is the eternal activity of the oneness of God, "created at once in thought (ἅμα νοήματι κτισθέντων)". In other words we have a logical creation that does not require sequence, yet once it enters time, sequence is a natural consequence. This does not require

[82] As Ferguson points out ("Was Barnabas a Chiliast?", 166).
[83] *Str.* 6.16.141.7–142.4.
[84] Clement is following Philo in this account (*Leg. Alleg.* 1.5) παύεται γὰρ οὐδέποτε ποιῶν ὁ θεός.

that the world or matter be eternal as well. The voice of God set in motion the sequence of created beings announced in the seven days of creation, suggesting that the creation operates with time, as opposed to God's creative capacity, which is eternal. Following Philo, Clement is working from the Platonic notion that time is a moving image of eternity, and as such it must symbolise eternity in some substantial way. Hence, the whole creation "revolves in sevens".[85]

Clement's use of the word *akolouthia* in this passage is also significant. As we have seen, it is used to refer to the arrangement or the sequence of teaching that Clement has set out in his *Stromateis*. But in the passage concerning the cosmogonic work of the Sabbath day the word is used in reference to the sequence of the universe through the days of creation. In order for all things to cease from their ancient disorder, they were given a divine sequence set out in Genesis. What we have here is an *akolouthia* that provides the Scriptural testimony for Clement's own sequence of teaching set out in the books of the *Stromateis*: "the venerable canon of tradition from the creation of the world".[86] God's sequence is set out in the ordering of the universe; Clement's *Stromateis* follow this sequence, containing seven books with a new beginning in the eighth, symbolising the restoration of the true Sabbath after resurrection in the ogdoad.

Clement finishes his account of the Sabbath day with the mystery surrounding the numbers seven and eight, drawing on Psalm 89.9–10 (LXX), demonstrating that God's creative activity is eternal and so not subject to time.[87] Quoting Genesis 2.4, Clement adds that the expression "'when they were created' intimates an indefinite and dateless production (ἀόριστον ἐκφορὰν καὶ ἄχρονον)". He then adds that the expression "'in the day that God made', that is, in and by which God made 'all things', and 'without which not even one thing was made', points out the activity exerted by the Son". The day, is however, God's day. Creation is an eternal activity, the perpetual production of the Son as the light of the *fiat lux*, the first and eternal day of creation. This is the eternal 'today' of God. Furthermore, this has something to do with

[85] See *Str.* 6.16.143.1–145.2. This is why Clement cites many instances of the importance of the number seven in Greek thought at *Str.* 5.14.107.2–108.2. Cf. Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 13.13.34. Many of these examples are of spurious origin according to E. Schürer, *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, tr. P. Christie (New York, 1972), 295. See also A. Le Boulluec, *SChr* 279, 328–29.

[86] *Str.* 1.1.15.2.

[87] *Str.* 6.16.145.3–7.

the mystic account of the numbers seven and eight, which Clement alludes to through the passage from Psalms. The mystery surrounding the numbers seven and eight here supports what we have already claimed: that is, when the days of our years are restored to strength, as is the eight legged spider mentioned in Psalm 89.

As difficult as this material on cosmogony is, it does help explain Clement's cryptic interpretation of the sixth commandment concerning murder. He does not speak of the crime in terms of humans killing humans as we would usually interpret the commandment, but of people destroying the true doctrine of God concerning eternity and the origin of the world:

> Then follows the command about murder. Now murder is a sure destruction. He, then, who wishes to pervert the true doctrine of God and eternity, in order to admit falsehood, saying either that the universe is not under providence (ἀπρονόητον), or that the world is uncreated (ἀγένητον), or affirming anything against the true teaching, is pernicious.[88]

Clement's unusual interpretation of the commandment against murder emphasises that he is preoccupied with communicating the truth of the origin of the world and God's eternal creative activity. He is telling us that it is wrong to believe that the world is uncreated, but that we must not assume that it is not eternally under the providence of God. Eternity and creation are not mutually exclusive categories for God, since "the constitution of the universe, [is] made and held together unceasingly (ἀδιαλείπτως) by God", as he says elsewhere.[89]

I believe that Lilla's concern that the material in the fifth and six books offers us only a few scattered passages by which to reconstruct Clement's cosmogony is not wholly justified. Given Clement's methodology and the announcement in the fourth book that he will treat physiology and cosmogony before passing onto theology, the scattered material does all that it needs to in order to be considered a coherent teaching of doctrine, even if only preparatory. The emphasis is, however, not that the doctrine be clearly set out so that all who read it will understand it, but that it be conducive to the study of gnosis, as Lilla himself argues, and preparing initiates for the greater mysteries. Since Clement sees gnosis as achievable only by those who are capable of

[88] *Str.* 6.16.147.2. J. Patrick takes this as proof against Photius' assertion that Clement taught the eternity of matter (*Clement of Alexandria*, 78).
[89] *Str.* 5.14.99.3.

winnowing the seeds of doctrines in the *Stromateis*, it is fitting that his accounts of physiology and cosmogony remain in the purview of the elect only. It is cryptic for this very reason.

5.4. *Theology*

There remains then the issue of whether or not Clement treats theology in his *Stromateis*. To a certain extent this is the most difficult to demonstrate of the three subjects. To begin with it appears to be the highest discipline that can be achieved in the study of gnosis. As the crucial passage from the fourth book of the *Stromateis* establishes, the study of nature (φυσιολογία) and the origin of the world (κοσμογονία) have to be understood before the initiate can ascend to theology.[90] Prior to the sequence he sets out here he does claim that he will make some 'inroad' into theology, which suggests that the *Stromateis* will broach the subject.[91]

In *Q.D.S.* Clement makes a reference to his understanding of theology, but claims that it will also concern first principles and contain something on the mystery of the Saviour.[92] The discussion concerning physiology and cosmogony has largely been concerned with establishing that there is only one first principle, and with the mystery surrounding the resurrection of Christ as the restorer or Saviour of humanity. Yet unlike the study of physiology and cosmogony, we have yet to see an exposition on theology itself. The reason for this is that theology for Clement was not a subject to study, but rather the method by which one comes to know the subjects of physiology and cosmogony, and to know the nature of the one first principle.

In the first book of the *Stromateis* for instance, Clement gives some structure to his teaching by equating "theology" with the power of "vision (ἐποπτεία)" in the "great mysteries (μέγαλα μυστήρια)", with what Aristotle calls "metaphysics (μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ)" and with what Plato calls "dialectic (διαλεκτική)".[93] Firstly, equating theology with the vision attained in the great mysteries alludes more to a religious experience than a subject that can be given account of, and secondly,

[90] *Str.* 4.1.3.1–2.
[91] *Str.* 4.1.2.2.
[92] *Q.D.S.* 26.8.
[93] *Str.* 1.28.176.2–3.

equating it with the disciplines of metaphysics and dialectics shows that theology is an instrument of discovering truth rather than a subject in and of itself. As I suggested in the third chapter, the gnostic is taught by Scripture and by the Word to use the tools of Greek philosophy, but that theology, or divine logic, must necessarily take on the visionary aspect to penetrate the higher meaning of Scripture.

I pointed out that gnostics ought to concern themselves with the enigmatic method of expounding doctrines, such as that found in Scripture. It is this method that Clement refers to mostly under the term 'theology', particularly concerning first principles. The Egyptians wrote their "theological myths (θεολογουμένοις μύθοις)" in anaglyphs, using the figurative style to conceal their meaning from the unlearned masses.[94] Clement refers to the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes as a "true theologian", because he prudently concealed his views concerning God.[95] "All then, in a word, who have spoken of divine things (θεολογήσαντες), both Barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things, and delivered the truth in enigmas, and symbols, and allegories, and metaphors, and such like tropes".[96] Theology uses these tools of initiation in order to pierce the veil of enigmatic utterances. "The mode of symbolic interpretation is very useful, helping one to right theology".[97] "Those taught in theology . . . philosophise much by way of hidden sense. I mean Orpheus,[98] Linus, Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod, and those in this fashion are wise. The persuasive style of poetry is for them a veil for the many".[99] Those people equipped with theology know how to discern their way through veiled truths.[100]

Clement tells us that there is a "theology of the ever-living Word (τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ θεολογία)", from which both the barbarians and the Greeks have merely torn a fragment.[101] It is only the true theologian who can grasp this by knowing the importance of real philosophy and true theology. The Christian community requires these people to be

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[94] *Str.* 5.4.21.1.
[95] *Protr.* 6.72.1.
[96] *Str.* 5.4.21.4.
[97] *Str.* 5.8.46.1 χρησιμώτατον ἄρα τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἑρμηνείας εἶδος είς πολλὰ, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὀρθὴν θεολογίαν συνεργοῦν.
[98] Referred to as a theologian on a number of occasions (*Protr.* 7.74.3; *Str.* 5.8.49.4; 5.12.78.4).
[99] *Str.* 5.4.24.1. Cf. Plato *Prot.* 316d.
[100] *Str.* 5.9.56.4–57.2.
[101] *Str.* 1.13.57.6.

its interpreters and its guides so that it is less liable to being deceived by false doctrines. Moses is Clement's exemplar for this because of his ability as an interpreter of the sacred laws,[102] but also because he provides testimony of the highest ascent to God. Elsewhere, Clement speaks of Moses' ascension to heaven that is witnessed by two people from two different perspectives. One sees Moses with the angels, whilst the other sees him merely standing on the mountain.[103] Clement uses this account to express the double way in which knowledge is received. Some are "elevated by the spirit" and see what is signified by scripture, while others, represented by the second witness see merely the body of the scriptures. "Knowledge is not the priviledge of all", Clement concludes. Just as the theologian is capable of discerning or interpreting the veiled nature of revealed truths, Moses was capable of "ascending the mountain for holy contemplation",[104] entering into the thick darkness that surrounds God.

There is then no writing of Clement's that directly concerns theology as a subject. We can only refer to it by way of the tools it uses to fathom the depths of Scripture and the nature of God. It is a method available to the few souls capable of reaching the summit of intellectual objects.[105] Yet we have attempted to show that Clement did provide a coherent teaching on physiology and cosmogony, and this does reveal something of the nature of the methods employed in true theology for Clement.

5.4.1. *Negative Theology: Essence, Power and the Bosom of the Father*

On the one hand we have God's eternal and pre-ontological self-creative activity that never ceases to be providential. On the other hand we have a world that comes into and out of being, originating from and passing away in the *nihil* of God. This is both the *archê* and *telos* of all that exists, the original nature in which nothing is in any way other than God himself. God is eternally all in all. In this sense, all that has

[102] *Str.* 1.22.150.4.

[103] *Str*. 6.15.132.3–4. Cf. *Str.* 1.9.44.3–45.5. The pseudepigraphal *Assumption of Moses* makes for an interesting comparison here. Moses' last testament to Joshua has him declare that God did not make the full purpose of creation known to all men in order that they may judged according to their own attempts to know that purpose. Only Moses, the "mediator of the Covenant" (1.15) had this knowledge from the beginning of the world (*As. Mos.* 1.11–18).

[104] Cf. *Str*. 6.15.132.1–4.

[105] *Str.* 5.12.78.1.

come to be by the creative act of God, but as such is removed from its original nature with God. This dichotomy between what *is* and what *is not* forms the basis of Clement's negative theology, the fundamental principle of which is that all that exists needs to be cleared aside before coming to the ultimate vision of God, knowing not what he is, but only what he is not.[106]

This notion is brought up in the second book of the *Stromateis* in a discussion concerning physiology and cosmogony, when Clement announces his aims for the attainment of Wisdom based on that which is outlined in the Book of Wisdom.[107] This passage prefigures the discussion concerning physiology and cosmogony that takes place in the fifth book. We remember that the discussion begins with Clement's refutation of Stoic pantheism, which, he believes, mistakes the immanent Wisdom of God for the transcendent Word of God.[108] The Wisdom of God, who is the artificer of all things, leads the soul to an understanding of the things that exist and the constitution of the world. It leads to a contemplation of nature and all the things that come to be in the world. Ultimately, however, such learning leads to an understanding of God who is above all that has come to be, and this is the professed aim of Clement's philosophy.

Moses is the archetypal theologian who is capable of penetrating the darkness surrounding God by removing all that stands between God and himself:

> If, then, abstracting all that belongs to bodies and things called incorporeal, we cast ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and thence advance into void (ἀχανὲς) by holiness, we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not. And form and motion, or standing, or a throne, or place, or right hand or left, are not at all to be conceived as belonging to the Father of the universe,

[106] *Str.* 5.12.71.3. Camelot claims that Clement lays the foundation for the negative theology that continues through Gregory of Nyssa and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (*SChr* 38, 36 n. 5). A. Levasti agrees, labelling Clement the "founder of Christian mysticism" ('Clemente Alessandrino, iniziatore della Mistica cristiana', *Rivista* 12 (1967), 127–47), and J. Wytzes refers to him as the "father of Orthodox mysticism" ("Paideia and Pronoia", 149). Bigg, however, insists that though Clement is "the father of all the Mystics he is no Mystic himself" (*The Christian Platonists*, 98). Camelot also discusses this proposition in *Foi et gnose: Introduction à l'étude de la connaissance mystique chez Clement d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1945), 134–43, believing the question as to whether Clement was himself a mystic is unanswerable.

[107] *Str.* 2.2.5.2–6.4 citing Wis 7.17–20.

[108] *Str.* 5.14.89.1–2.

> although it is so written. But what each of these means will be shown in its proper place. The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space and time, and name, and conception. Wherefore also Moses says, "Show yourself to me",[109] intimating most clearly that God is not capable of being taught by man, or expressed in speech, but to be known only by His own power (δυνάμει). For inquiry was obscure and dim; but the grace of knowledge is from Him by the Son.[110]

Moses' desire to see the glory of God comes about because he understands that God cannot be known, but, through a series of negations, can determine at least what he is not. This passage is a continuation of Clement's account of abstraction leading to the greatness of Christ,[111] giving us some indication of what Clement means by calling Moses a theologian. His apophatic theology allows him to come to know of God in the highest possible sense, but even then, this is not God in and of himself. Theology is ultimately the capacity to ascend to God in this way.

As in the passage before this one, Clement announces a crucial distinction that became of great importance to the Christian mystical tradition—the distinction of God in essence and in power.[112] For Clement, a creature of God is never capable of comprehending or participating in God as he is in essence (οὐσία), but only as he is expressed by his power (δύναμις). God in essence is remote, but by virtue of his power, is very near to us. This idea is consistent with a theory of emanation in that essence and power may be distinct in the way that the source of light is distinct from its rays.[113] As light the rays are not other than

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[109] Ex 33.18.

[110] *Str.* 5.11.71.3–5. See also *Str.* 5.11.78.1–2.

[111] See p. 50 above.

[112] This distinction between essence and power is also made by Philo *QE.*2.68. Cf. a fragment of Cassiodorus *Comm. 1st Ep. Jn* 1.5. On this crucial distinction in relation to creation see G. Florovsky's article, "The Idea of Creation in Christian Philosophy", *ECQ* 8 (1949), 53–77, esp. 67–68. On the topic of the distinction between essence and power or energies of God in general, see the works of V. Lossky, *The Vision of God*, tr. A. Moorhouse (New York, 1983) and *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge & London, 1957).

[113] Cf. Tertullian *Apol.* 21. Unawareness of this metaphor as a distinction between transcendence and immanence leads to misinterpretation of Clement's doctrine of God and Logos, to use Wolfson's words, as a "twofold stage theory". It is a theory begun by Photius in the ninth century that Clement believed the Logos to have been generated as a "distinct personal being" (See H.A. Wolfson, "Clement of Alexandria on the Generation of the Logos" and R.P. Casey, "Clement and the Two Divine Logoi", *JTS* 25 [1923], 43–56). This view suffers from an overly compartmentalised way of thinking that does not allow for the apparent contradiction of the Logos as eternal

their source, but are contingent upon it. But it is also consistent with creation *ex nihilo* since the source is the transcendent no-thingness of God, not as though there is a clear dissection from the immanent, but by God's sheer inaccessibility. The essence of God is symbolised by the "inaccessible" or "unapproachable light (τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀπρόσιτον)" of 1 Timothy 6.16,[114] and underlies a fundamental paradox in Christian mystical theology. First of all, God in essence utterly transcends us.[115] This is the cold face of transcendence for Clement. Quite simply we bear no relation and are not of the same essence as God.

Secondly, however, there is the God who is very near to us also, the "advent of divine power (ἐπιφασίς ἐστι θείας δυνάμεως)",[116] as Clement says elsewhere. This is the God "which holds all things to its breast (ἐγκεκόλπισται)". The verb ἐγκολπίζω is significant here and recalls a significant passage concerning the "bosom of the Father" of John's Gospel:

> Behold the mysteries of love and then you will look into (ἐποπτεύσεις) the bosom (κόλπον) of the Father, whom God the only-begotten alone showed the way. And God himself is love; and out of love to us became visible to us. In his ineffability (ἄρρητον) he is Father; in his sympathy (συμπαθές) for us he became Mother. The Father by loving became feminine (ἐθηλύνθη): and the great sign of this is he whom he begot of himself (ἐγέννησεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ); and the fruit brought forth by love is love.[117]

The word κόλπος has interesting connotations not readily translated directly into English. It is often translated as 'bosom', but can also carry the connotation of a bay, or a gulf or hollow. It can also refer to the womb, the vagina or the lap, or even the folds of a woman's garment.[118] Ultimately, however, it appears to signify the sympathetic quality of a woman's embrace, such as when a child is held within the folds of its mother's arms, and kept close to its place of origin and to what sustains its life. In this passage the Father becomes feminine in order

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and one with God and yet begotten and issuing from God. As J. Ferguson claims: "his doctrine is subtle and careful; he was expressing a qualifying distinction not a substantial division" ("The Achievement of Clement of Alexandria", 72).

[114] *Str.* 6.3.32.3–4. On this passage in relation to Clement's apophatic theology see J.W. Trigg, "Receiving the Alpha: Negative Theology in Clement of Alexandria and its Possible Implications", *SP* 31 (1997), 540–45.

[115] *Str.* 2.16.74.1–2.

[116] *Str.* 6.3.32.4.

[117] *Q.D.S.* 37.1–2. This passage is treated in C. Nardi, "'Il seme eletto e la maternita di Dio nel Quis dives salvetur di Clemente Alessandrino", *Prometheus* 11 (1985), 271–86.

[118] LSJ s.v. 'κόλπος'.

to become known to us as motherly and sympathetic. It is the mystery of love since the soul is "shown the way to (εξηγήσατο)" that which is ultimately ineffable and invisible. In God's sympathy for humankind he embraces us to his bosom and draws us into the unfathomable depths of his love.[119] Furthermore, the *epopteia* is, as we said earlier, the form of theology. It is the vision of God's absolute inaccessibility which becomes the object of an "insatiable contemplation (ἀκόρεστος θεωρία)" for the gnostic, as the soul ever ascends in the light of God's power.[120]

Clement speaks of the "bosom of the father" in another passage, this time emphasising the apophatic theology that arises once the soul understands the one true first principle of all things:

> And John the apostle says: "No man has seen God at any time. The only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known",[121] calling invisibility and ineffability the bosom of God. Hence some have called it Depth (βυθόν), as containing and embosoming all things, inaccessible and boundless. This discourse respecting God is most difficult to handle. For since the first principle (ἀρχή) of everything is difficult to find, the absolutely first and oldest principle (ἡ πρώτη καὶ πρεσβυτάτη ἀρχή), which is the cause of all other things being and having been, is difficult to prove. For how can that be expressed which is neither genus, nor difference, nor species, nor individual, nor number; no more, is neither an event, nor that to which an event happens? No one can rightly express him wholly. For on account of his greatness he is ranked as the all, and is the Father of the universe. Nor are any parts to be predicated of him. For the one is indivisible; wherefore also it is infinite, not considered with reference to inscrutability, but with reference to its being without dimensions, and not having a limit. And therefore it is without form (ἀσχημάτιστον) and name (ἀνωνόμαστον). And if we name it, we do not do so properly, terming it either the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Being itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν), or Father, or God, or Creator or Lord. We speak not as supplying his name; but for want, we use good names, in order that the mind may have these as points of support, so as not to err in other respects. For each one by itself does not express God; but all together are indicative of the power of the omnipotent (τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δυνάμεως). For predicates are expressed either from what belongs to things themselves, or from their mutual relation. But none of these is admissible in reference to God. Nor any more is he apprehended by the science of demonstration (ἀποδεικτικῇ). For it

[119] See *Paid.* 1.6.46.1 where Clement states that "Christ himself is nourishment. Hence seeking (ζητῆσαι) is called sucking (μαστεῦσαι); for to those babes who seek the Word, the Father's breasts (θηλαι) supply the milk for the love of man".

[120] *Str.* 6.9.75.1–2.

[121] Jn 1.18.

> depends on primary and better known principles. But there is nothing pre-existent to the Unbegotten (ἀγεννήτου οὐδὲν προϋπάρχει).[122]

This is perhaps the most notable expression of Clement's negative theology, emphasising a series of negations that take the soul to the invisible and ineffable bosom of God. The begotten God or Son as it is often translated in the New Testament, lies in the bosom of the Father.[123] According to Clement, some people call this Depth,[124] which, in connection with God's invisible, ineffable, inaccessible, and nameless nature, suggests the link between God and the invisible and formless earth, the abyss (ἄβυσσος) of Genesis 1.2. This is reinforced again by the distinction between the *archê* of all things and the first and eldest principle that, as we have seen, is what Clement calls *anarchos*. Here the "bosom of the Father", the Depth, equates with the unbeginning principle, which is even more difficult to prove than *archê* itself, but which condescends to create the world. It represents the masculinity and femininity of God, the Orphic μητροπάτωρ, which is paradoxically invisible and ineffable and yet contains and embraces all things to its bosom.

God in essence is transcendent, and any predication of God is ultimately inadmissible and must only be understood as indicative of the power of God. God can only be comprehended in the silence of prayer.[125] God is not in essence the One, or Good, or Mind, or Being, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord, but beyond all of them. Ultimately, as humans, we can share in God's power, but it requires us to transcend any predication of God or any ontological barrier that would indicate what God is, since for Clement, we can only know him by what he is not. This is theology for Clement, necessarily an apophatic discipline if it is to take the soul to the vision of the Father through

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[122] *Str.* 5.12.81.3–82.4.

[123] See also *Exc.* 8.1: "Logos is God in God, who is also said to be 'in the bosom of the Father', continuous, undivided, one God".

[124] Le Boulluec (*SChr* 279, p. 263) notes Segaar's correction in the MS from βυθός and βαθύς and points out the close connection between the latter and κόλπος by directing the reader to the poetic term βαθύκολπος, an adjective referring to the deep folds of a dress. He also believes that the Depth here recalls the void (τὸ ἀχανές) into which the soul ascends in the greatness of Christ (See *Str.* 5.11.71.3).

[125] On this theme see Osborn, *Clement* (1957), 28 and R. Mortley, who concludes his article by saying that "knowledge becomes a problem not of saying, but of being": "The Theme of Silence in Clement of Alexandria", *JTS* 24 (1973), 197–202.

the Son. It is not a subject, but a discipline for coming to know the true nature of God.

5.5. *Conclusion*

Physiology and cosmogony have played a large role in coming to this understanding of theology. The examples of God's essence and power show that there is both continuity and discontinuity between God and his creation. Clement clearly establishes that God, in essence, is utterly removed from the creation and is therefore discontinuous with it. But it was important to Clement that Christians, in particular, gnostics retain the notion that they are also, in some sense, continuous with God.[126] Working from an understanding of the first principle, we learn that to comprehend our true physiology as god-like rather than material allows us to see that our existence is contingent on God. We also learn that to understand how the world came to be we need to know that there is only one true self-generating first principle that is both Father and Son. This unbeginning beginning is the Primal Word, which brought the world into being ἐν ἀρχῇ, the Logos of God in Genesis 1 and John's Gospel, which, in the person of Jesus Christ, brought about a cosmogonic restoration on the day of his resurrection. To learn how to be a gnostic with Christ in the light of his eternal cosmogonic act, the initiate has to become a theologian like Moses. The initiate has to learn to discern and pierce the veil that separates human from God and know that all that is, is not God. The initiate must abstract all that does not pertain to God and ascend to what he is not in the light of God's power and be embraced to his bosom.

When God made the human race, according to Clement, he "breathed into [us] what was peculiar to himself",[127] we, who, "before the foundation of the world . . . pre-existed in the eye of God".[128] "Let us not then, who are sons of the true light", he writes, "close the door

[126] I am indebted to T. Scott who writes: "Between the Divine and the Human, between the Absolute and the Relative, between Principle and Manifestation, there is discontinuity and continuity. Discontinuity, for there can be no common measure between God and man. Continuity, for nothing can be other than God". "Notes on the Mystery of the *Coincidentia Oppositorum*", *SW* 9 (Dec 2002), 11–35. See also Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 68.

[127] *Paid.* 1.3.7.1.

[128] *Protr.* 1.6.4.

against the light; but turning in on ourselves, illumining the eyes of the hidden man, and gazing (ἐποπτεύσαντες) on the truth itself, and receiving its streams, let us clearly and wisely reveal such dreams as are true".[129] If God is utterly discontinuous the door of heaven would be shut against us, thereby removing beyond our reach the light by which we illuminate our souls and receive the power of God through gnosis. The light of God's power, however, is bestowed by grace, yet for Clement it is a light that we also possessed all along but failed to recognise within us. The purpose of Clement's negative theology ultimately is to remember that we are sons and daughters of the true light of God, a theology that deserves the recognition of founding the Christian mystical tradition.

Hence, while we cannot say with any certainty that the stromatic accounts of physiology, cosmogony and theology are all that Clement was to posit about this doctrines, it is clear that at the ethical level or at least at the level of the lesser mysteries, which seek to clear the ground of the soul for receieving the greater, Clement has purposefully taught the initiate what can and cannot be regarded as orthodox. The accounts are fractious, but didactically meaningful. We will look at one final doctrine that uses the same method as those already dealt with, as it too needs careful consideration by the ascending gnostic; that is, the doctrine of the soul's restoration to God.

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[129] *Paid.* 2.9.80.4.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DOCTRINE OF *APOKATASTASIS*

6.1. *Introduction*

Apokatastasis is generally translated in English as 'restoration', 'restitution', or 're-establishment'.[1] In the Hellenic, or Hellenistic scheme of things it is used to refer to the return of things to a former state. Plato refers to the restoration of the sun and moon to their original positions after an eclipse;[2] Aristotle used it as the "making good of what our nature lacks",[3] which Aretaeus used later in terms of a return to health.[4] Polybius used it to refer to a return to civil peace,[5] whereas the Stoics used it to refer to the cyclic nature of existence and the periodic return of the cosmos to its original condition in the universal conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις).[6] Asclepiodotus used it to refer to the reversal of movement in military formations,[7] while Plutarch used it to refer to the return of the stars to their original positions after their yearly course.[8] Proclus later used it extensively to refer to the restoration of the soul to its former state.[9] Its meanings in the Greco-Roman world were many and varied and generally well summed up by the Latin phrase, *restititio in pristinum statum*.

In the Septuagint, the noun usually translated from the Hebrew *shûwb*, 'to turn back', is never used. However its cognate verb is used

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[1] LSJ s.v. "ἀποκατάστασις". For a list of uses of the term 'Apokatastasis', both Non-Christian and Christian see Chr. Lenz, "Apokatastasis", in *RAC* vol, 1 (1950), 510–516 and also the difficulty in applying it a fixed meaning see A. Méhat: "Tantôt l'idée forge ou transforme le mot, tantôt le mot réagit à la pression de l'idée et lui communique ce qu'il tient de son passé et de sa structure". ("'Apocatastase' Origène, Clément d'Alexandrie, *Act.* 3.21", *VC* 10 (1956), 196–214), 196.

[2] *Ax.* 370b. Cf. *Tim.* 39d (Although the *Axiochus* is generally agreed not to be a work of Plato).

[3] *MM.* 1205a.

[4] *S.A.* 1.10.

[5] *Hist.* 4.23.1.

[6] For example Nemesius, *De. nat. hom.* 309,5–311,2.

[7] *Tact.* 10.6.

[8] *De Facie* 937f. See also *Corp. Herm.* Asclepius 13.9.

[9] E.g. *Inst.* 199.

extensively. In Genesis, for example, it is used to express the restoring of the cupbearer in the temple after three days;[10] in Exodus, the return of the waters after Moses separates the sea to allow the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians;[11] and as the restoration of the people of Israel to the Promised Land in Jeremiah and Samuel.[12] Philo had also used the term to speak of the wanderings of the Israelites as an allegory of "the perfect restoration of the soul (τῆν τελείαν ἀποκατάστασιν ψυχῆς)" after a period of tribulation.[13]

In the New Testament the noun only appears once, in Acts 3.21, where Luke speaks of Christ being received in heaven "until the times of the restoration of all things, (ἀποκαταστασεῶς παντῶν) which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began". The passage speaks of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures prophesying the restoration of Israel, but, in its new context, is seen as Christ awaiting in heaven as fulfilment for all that has been proclaimed in the past. Its verb cognate, ἀποκαθιστήμι, is also used in this connection, with the coming again of Elijah "to restore all things (ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα)".[14] The prophet Elijah was understood by some early Christians as a precursor to John the Baptist, who, in baptising Jesus, instigated the Advent of Christ in the world, securing the world's salvation, or in this instance, its restoration.[15] These *testimonia* provide the starting point for a Christian understanding of the restoration, with Christ as the principle in which all things are made new, and as a fulfilment of the role of God as restorer of the kingdom of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures.[16]

Accounts of the doctrine in the Church fathers are also many and varied,[17] from the Clementine Homilies, which spoke of it in terms of restoring one's self to the image and likeness of God,[18] to Justin Martyr who spoke of Christ restoring the free sons of Noah and his servants, conferring the same honour on all who keep God's com-

[10] Gn 40.13.
[11] Ex 14.26.
[12] Jer 15.19; 2 Sam 9.7. Also see *Str.* 1.21.124.1–3; 1.21.140.7.
[13] *Heres* 293.3.
[14] Matt. 17:11 & Mk. 9.12 following Mal 3.23.
[15] See for example Justin Martyr *Dial.* 49.5 & Origen *Comm. in Matt.* 13.2.
[16] See Acts 1.6.
[17] The most recent studies of the patristic doctrine of *apokatastasis* are those of J. Sachs, "Current Eschatology: Universal Salvation and the Problem of Hell", *TS* 52 (1991), 227–54 and "Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology", *TS* 54 (1993), 617–40.
[18] *Clem. hom.* 10.6.

mandments.[19] Irenaeus used the term to refer to when Sophia "was restored to her consort (ἀποκατασταθῆναι τῇ συζυγίᾳ)" in the Gnostic systems.[20] However, he also used it in various orthodox contexts, such as when all things are restored in the sound of a unified *amen* at the end of time,[21] or when the sun is restored to its original position after twelve months,[22] or the restoration of the Law of Moses to the people of Israel after their captivity.[23] He also used it to refer to the flesh being restored to life in God,[24] an allusion to the resurrection, which was later to become important for Gregory of Nyssa, who interprets the doctrine in exactly that light. The *Shepherd of Hermas* speaks of a restoration to one's house after a time of affliction, positing an end to the sufferings of the soul after repentence.[25] Tatian made the crucial distinction for a Christian *apokatastasis* by insisting that the restoration would be brought about by God alone, and not by sidereal revolutions as the Stoics believed.[26]

Méhat, however, insists that the prefix *apo* is not necessarily related to the idea of return, such as in ἀποπλέω, which holds the idea of separation, a way out or exit and of release (as in ἀπολύω, ἀπολυτρόω, ἀποβαίνω) but also of completion (as in ἀποτελέω and ἀπεργάζομαι).[27] Méhat believes that our meaning of the word has been hampered by preconceptions derived from Origen, who uses it simultaneously in one passage to refer to a return to one's locality, as a return to health, as in a legal sense and as reinstating a soldier who has been driven from his ranks.[28] Méhat tests these four meanings against other sources. Theophilus, for example, used the term to refer to the Hebrews' return to the land of Caanan; that is in the sense of returning to one's locality.[29] However, Méhat points out, there is some difficulty in translating

[19] *Dial.* 134.4.
[20] *Adv. haer*. 1.2.4; 1.2.5; 1.8.4.
[21] *Adv. haer*. 1.14.1.
[22] *Adv. haer*. 1.17.1.
[23] *Adv. haer*. 3.21.2.
[24] *Adv. haer*. 5.12.1.
[25] *Sim.* 7. Note that the *Shepherd* states that if the head of the house is afflicted, so too is the whole house. Hence, there is a dispersal of sin via the head of the house. See also Theophilus, who uses the word in a similar manner (*Ad Auto*. 2.17).
[26] Tatian *Orat.* 6. Clement also believed that attributing growth and changes in the world to the stars robbed God of his tireless strength, and that it was God alone who brings all things to what is in accordance with their nature (*Str.* 6.16.147.4–148.3).
[27] Méhat, "Apocatastase", 200.
[28] *Jer. Hom*. 14.18.
[29] *Ad. Aut.* 3.9.

ἀποκατέστησεν in this passage. Bardy had translated this return as "it establishes them again" implying that Theophilus saw this as a return to the holy land of the patriarchs. However, Méhat insists that there is no indication in Theophilus that this was his intention. Rather, we should see the meaning firstly as a release after the trials of Egypt, and the return as a secondary nuance.[30]

In the passages of Matt 12.13/Mk 3.5/Lk 6.10, the verb is used in the sense of curing a man's withered hand, which Méhat insists, is not a return to health but a curing of someone who was never in good health. The meaning is more in the sense of a deliverence from disease rather than a return to health. The same sense can be found in Philo, where he speaks of "the perfect apokatastasis of the soul".[31] Here Philo refers to four stages of life: the formlessness of the first and childish stage, the corruption of the second stage, and the curing of the soul by philosophy in the third stage, and finally the releasing of the soul in the fourth stage. This is not a return to the pristine condition of the first stage of life, but a delivery from disease incurred from the previous stages.

On the legal sense, Méhat cites the example of the *Shepherd of Hermas* mentioned above, insisting that the restoration to one's house after a period of exile[32] refers to the political and economic re-establishment of the house in a broader sense than merely the legal. However, there is no indication from *Hermas* that the house had been in state of prosperity beforehand, but rather things took a happier course after one period of affliction. Furthermore, it was the latin translators who chose to translate ἀποκαθιστάναι as *restituere*, giving the sense of a return to an original state. From this also comes the latin formula *restituere rem*, which is used to mark miliary successes, political superiority and economic prosperity suceeding a period of the reverse, as in *Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem*. Méhat implies, since he does not argue the point, that the idea of return or rectification is a latin incursion on a meaning that was not necessarily there in the Greek. Hence, the term does not neceesarily imply any return to a golden age, but rather the idea of overcoming great difficulties, or of ceasing the dangers from which one has been

[30] Méhat, "Apocatastase", 200.
[31] *Her*. 293–298.
[32] Note that Origen uses the example of exile to speak of a legal *apokatastasis*, whereas Hermas is using it to refer to a moral *apokatastasis* after a period of sinful behaviour.

previously facing. Despite this, the notion of a return is the most frequent meaning applied to the word when translated.

Since the time of Origen, the doctrine of *apokatastasis* became highly controversial and has generally been thought of as the restoration of all rational creatures back to God. For Origen, since "God will be all in all (ὁ θεὸς πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν)",[33] the improvement and correction of all rational creatures will take place over great periods of time until they are restored into a state of unity. This will continue until the last enemy of all, death, will be restored, the implication being that even the devil will be restored to God.[34] For this reason the word has come to be understood in terms of a doctrine of "universal salvation". The first notable criticism of the doctrine comes from St. Augustine, who criticised such "tender-hearted Christians", like Origen who believed that all things would be saved.[35] From the time of Origen's account sometime in the first part of the third century, the doctrine itself has been treated with the utmost suspicion, which ultimately led to its condemnation by the Church at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553.

The council that addressed the doctrine officially was originally convoked in order to treat the Three Chapters controversy, in which three members of the Eastern Church were charged with Nestorianism. In one anathema listing certain other heretics to be dealt with, Origen's name appeared; possibly an interpolation. Consequently, many of his doctrines were condemned. Fifteen anathemata were brought down against Origen, or more accurately, what has come to be known as Origenism, represented most notably by Didymus the Blind and Evagrius of Pontus. Most scholars agree that the condemnation arose mainly because of the extremist nature of later exponents of Origen's theology rather than as an indictment of Origen himself, who was generally well loved in the early Church.

Nonetheless, the teachings of Origen, who had been dead some three hundred years, were accused of being heretical, although no formal canon was issued, and to this day there remains some doubt as

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33 1 Cor 15.28.

34 *De Princ.* 3.6.5. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa *Or. Cat.* 26.58–74.

35 *De civitate dei* 21.17. This is a troublesome description of Origen who was known for his steely will, hence the other name he was known by, Adamantius. The view of Augustine can also be seen in *De gestis Pelagii* 10. On Augustine's 'hard-lined' approach to this doctrine see Sachs, "Current Eschatology", 230–31 and Hans Urs von Balthasar *Dare We Hope 'That All Men be Saved'?* (San Francisco, 1986), 47–72.

to how formal the charges were. One of the reasons for this was that ten years prior, the fifth synod of Constantinople was convoked for the purposes of addressing the 'problem' of Origenism. Certain Palestinian opponents to Origenist monks managed to convince Emperor Justinian to write to Mennas, the Patriarch of Constantinople, to convoke a Council in 543. The result was that an edict was drawn up pointing out Justinian's views of certain Origenist errors, which was then signed by Pope Vigilius and the Eastern Patriarchs. In any case, most of Origen's distinctive teachings, including the pre-existence of souls, the spherical shape of the resurrection body, and the *apokatastasis*, were labelled heretical.[36]

Interestingly no condemnation was made of Gregory of Nyssa who openly taught the doctrine of *apokatastasis*.[37] Most notably for Gregory, the *apokatastasis* was to be understood in terms of the definition of the resurrection. The resurrection, he tells us on many occasions, is the restoration of man to his original state.[38] However, like Origen he taught that even the devil would be restored, that purification by fire was ameliorative rather than punitive, and that there would be an end to the suffering after death "after long periods of time (μακραῖς περιόδοις)".[39] In his *De Vita Moses* Gregory tells us that even those who have suffered condemnation in Gehenna will partake in the final restoration which is expected to take place later in the kingdom of heaven.[40] He also speaks of the restoration of all things to the Good in his treatise *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*.[41]

At the turn of last century both Harnack and Tixeront had outlined Origen's and Gregory of Nyssa's debt to Clement in regards to their doctrines of restoration.[42] However, both emphasised their debt

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[36] Pre-existence, anathema 13; the spherical shape of the resurrection body, anathema 10; apokatastasis, anathema 1. See A. Hahn, *Biblothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche* (Breslau, 1897), 227–9.

[37] See Sachs, "Current Eschatology", 230.

[38] ὅτι ἀνάστασις ἐστιν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (See *Anim. et res*. *PG* 46.148; 46.156; *Virg*. *PG* 12.4; *Pulch*, *PG* 9.472; *In Eccl*, *PG* 5.296; *Hom. Opif.*, *PG* 188; 224).

[39] *Or. catech*, *PG* 26.72.

[40] *v. Moses PG* 2.82.

[41] *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum PG* 5.155.11.

[42] A. Harnack, *Lehrbuch derDogmengeschichte*, 3 vols (Freiburg, 1886–9), vol. 1 645–46; J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne* (Paris, 1905), tome 1 277, 304–05. See also G. Müller, "Origenes und die Apokatastasis", *TZ* 14 (1958), 174–90. More recently see J. Sachs, "Current Eschatology" and "Apokatastasis in Patristic Theology" as well as Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*

to Clement's idea of God's fire as one of chastisement or correction rather than of punishment, which, as a retaliation for evil, is unbefitting God.[43] This is a pronounced aspect of Clement's doctrine of universal salvation and hinges on the tension between an individual soul's freedom to refuse the chastisements of God, over and against God's universal capacity to save all things.[44] It is a tension between the soul's autonomy and universal salvation, and the point to which the free will of someone can be compelled by God to choose repentance, despite his endowing us with the freedom to refuse him.

Méhat points out that a majority of Clement's references to *apokatastasis* are to an eschatological context.[45] Unlike Origen, Clement uses the term independent of Scriptural references, never using the verb ἀποκαθίστημι and ignoring Acts 3.21. This makes it likely that his use of the term comes from another source making it difficult to trace the nuances Clement employs. In one instance, Méhat claims that Clement uses ἀνάπαυσις here as almost synonymous with *apokatastasis*, though adding that this does not help in defining *apokatastasis* since the meaning of *anapausis* is also unclear.[46] The only certainty is that it evokes

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(Cambridge, 1991), 44–45 and "The Ripening of Salvation: Hope for Resurrection in the Early Church", *Com* 17 (1990), 27–49.

[43] *Str.* 7.16.102.4–5. Méhat insists, however, that we should not attempt to find any stoic reference to the conflagration in Clement's doctrine: "Nulle part, à ma connaissance, ni Clément d'Alexandrie, ni Origène n'emploient le mot *d'apocatastase* quand ils se réfèrent à la doctrine stoïcienne de la conflagration universelle et du nouveau départ de l'univers; ils ne connaissent que le mot bien stoïcien de διακόσμησις. *Apocatastase* appartient plutôt à la théorie astronomique de la Grande Année, laquelle n'a que des rapports accidentels avec la doctrine de la conflagration". ("Apocatastase", 198). However, I beleive this is a conclusion that results from taking the word in isolation of Clement's full eschatology and the role of the "wise fire" plays in it. See the section on the Death to Death below.

[44] Bishop Kaye believed that Clement never resolves this tension (*Some Account of the Writings of Clement of Alexandria* [London, 1835], 255). W.E.G. Floyd disagrees: "Clement seems to sail smoothly between the Scylla of human freedom and the Charybdis of divine predestination". (*Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 28). For an in depth discussion on this issue see Sachs, "Current Eschatology", and von Balthasar's *Dare We Hope*, which has a section on the *apokatastasis*. It must be pointed out though that whilst von Balthasar condones a form of Christian universalism, he sees the *apokatastasis* as a "shibboleth…a term rightly applied to the pantheist systems" of later extremist disciples of Origen like Evagrius and Bar Sudali. See "Christian Universalism", in *Word and Redemption* (New York, 1965), 136.

[45] In two passages it is used to refer to moral improvement (*Str*. 2.12.55.5; 2.19.98.2) although this later reference clearly has further implications than Méhat claims. In another two places it is used to refer to the Hebrews' restoration or release of the Hebrews from Babylonian captivity (*Str*. 1.21.124.3; 140.7).

[46] *Str*. 2.22.134.4.

eschatology, substituting the meaning of "eternal life" in the Pauline words of Rom 6.22 for the "restoration of hope". He takes this as evidence, excluding the passage of *Str.* 2.12.55.5 where the emphasis is on penitence, that Clement did not use *apokatastasis* in the sense of a return to a former state, but as an act of an eschatological rehabilitation of the people of God.[47]

Méhat takes the passages of *Str.* 4.22.145.1, *Str.* 2.22.134.4, 136.3 and 6 as evidence that the term ought not to be translated as a return, restitution or reestablishment as, for example Mondésert does.[48] He uses the example of the word *apodosis*, which can be used in the sense of a remuneration of something held in deposit. However, while one can remunerate goods, one cannot restore hope in the sense of a remuneration of something. Rather, Méhat suggests, we should translate *apokatastasis* much more in the vein of a release instead of a restoration, a final payment or a realization of prophecies, audaciously suggesting that Origen should have taken lessons in Greek! While Méhat makes a valid point about Origen's possible misconception of Clement's use of the term, making a biblical word a title in the history of heresies as he suggests, his article only takes a cursory look at the many Hellenic influences present in Clement that suggests that the term is a reaslisation, yes, but also a restoration. While these words have different meanings, they amount to the same end, with the exception that the latter entails a fallen or damaged state in need of reparation. As we shall see this is a prominent feature of Clement's soteriology and eschatology, and therefore of his doctrine of *apokatastasis*. All humans pre-existed with God before the foundation of the world,[49] therefore Clement's entire theology revolves around what humans must do to repair the damage resulting from their fallen state. Restoration is an entirely appropriate way to translate the word for this reason alone.

Beyond these issues, little attention by scholars then or now, has been given to Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis*, especially to the peculiar aspects of it that did not appear to have been transmitted to Origen or Gregory. These are the ideas of the restoration of the elect and the restoration of hope, which are the two most prominent aspects around which Clement developed his version of the doctrine. Further to this,

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47 "Apocatastase", 204.
48 *SChr* 38, pp. 136–137.
49 *Protr.* 1.6.4.

however, is the idea of how the doctrine is related to the method that Clement uses to convey it. We have seen with Clement's doctrine of anamnesis, for instance, that it is intimately related to how Clement conveys his material. Coming to the recollection of our pre-existence in the eye of God depends on gathering and harmonising the disparate material of the *Stromateis* into a unity reflecting the Word of God, and ascending towards universal wisdom in that unity. We have seen that Physiology, Cosmogony, and Theology are interdependent doctrines and disciplines that guide the seeker to the one true first principle, and that the multisystematic way in which Clement's communicates this directs us to this truth without explicitly stating it. We must be aware then that his doctrine of *apokatastasis* may well bear out this same relation between method and doctrine. The material on the doctrine is disparate and needs to be gathered together. We need to determine whether Clement's doctrine of restoration is also one that is dependent on this method of gathering together.

6.2. *The Unity of Faith and Universal Salvation*

Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis* begins with the simple imperative of the unity of faith espoused in Ephesians 4.13. It is difficult to overestimate the role that faith plays in Clement's theology in general, but it is particularly prevalent in Clement's universalism. Clement calls faith a grace[50] with an "unfailing energy (ἀδιάπτωτος ἐνέργεια)" that guides all things "to what is universal and simple (εἰς τὸ καθόλου ἀναβιβάζουσα τὸ ἁπλοῦν)".[51] The "unguent of faith", he says, anoints Christians because God desired them to conform to his archetype and throw off corruption[52] as he "trains them in one salvation of faith in God (εἰς δὲ τὴν μονότροπον τῆς εἰς τὸν θεὸν πίστεως σωτηρίαν παιδαγωγῶν)".[53] "Faith will restore (ἡ πίστις ἀποκαταστήσει)",[54] and those who have faith can partake in the "equality of salvation (τῆς σωτηρίας τὴν ἰσότητα)". Faith enrols all people into God's plan for salvation. "Faith is the one universal salvation of humanity (μία καθολικὴ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος

50 *Str.* 1.7.38.4–5.
51 *Str.* 2.4.14.3.
52 *Protr.* 12.120.5.
53 *Paid.* 1.1.1.2.
54 *Str.* 2.20.104.1.

σωτηρία ἡ πίστις)".[55] Clement's universal view of faith also appears to extend beyond the Church's domain. For instance he claims that "the beneficence of God is eternal, and that... equal natural righteousness reached all, according to the worth of each several race".[56] Earlier in the fifth book of the *Stromateis*, he had announced that all people live with faith in a superior being, having the same preconception (πρόληψιν), "since the most universal (καθολικώτατα) of his operations equally pervade all".[57] Again emphasis is placed on faith and faith as a pre-conception of God.[58] According to Clement, God's beneficence manifested itself as an equal natural righteousness to all races by virtue of their pre-conception of God.[59] Christ is Saviour, not merely of some and not of others, he tells us elsewhere.[60]

There does appear then to be a tension in Clement's writings about the nature of the Church's universal operations and the universality of faith. All people have some pre-conception or faith in a superior being and therefore are capable of partaking in the one universal salvation. However, this emphasis on faith has its basis in Clement's belief that Christians are a new, peculiar, and universal race born out of, but distinct from, the Hebrews and the Greeks. Under the new covenant prepared for by the Law of Moses and the philosophy of the Greeks, Christians come together for the edification of the body of Christ in the unity of faith.[61] Though Clement refers to the *apokatastasis* of the Hebrew people and of the temple,[62] he believes that the one true salvation and *apokatastasis* can only take place under the new covenant. Ultimately faith was lacking to the Hebrews,[63] and, as we have already pointed out in chapter three, present but unacknowledged or underestimated in Greek philosophy.

He buttresses this argument for faith elsewhere by claiming that those who wish to live the true life must know the importance of the coming of the Saviour, and learn of the greatness and the newness of

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[55] *Paid.* 1.6.30.2.
[56] *Str.* 5.14.141.1.
[57] *Str.* 5.14.133.8–9. Cf Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.10.2.
[58] See p. 89 above.
[59] Cf. Justin Martyr *1 Apol.* 46 where all those who live the reasonable life, or by the Word are Christians, both prior and posterior to the Advent. The Word was the first-born of God and therefore has been present in the world for all time.
[60] *Str.* 7.2.6.6.
[61] *Str.* 4.21.132.1 citing Eph 4.13. See also *Ecl.* 56.3 & 60.2.
[62] *Str.* 1.21.124.3–4; *Str.* 1.21.140.7.
[63] *Str.* 6.6.47.1.

his grace.[64] He claims that if the Law of Moses had been sufficient to confer eternal life, then there would have been no need for the Saviour to come into the world and suffer for us. The Advent of the Lord, therefore, brought about a "universal calling to be a peculiar race[65] of righteousness, through the teaching which flows from faith, brought together (συνάγοντος) by one Lord, the only God of both Greeks and barbarians, or rather the whole race of men".[66] Elsewhere he makes this more explicit, claiming that "there is one unchangeable gift of salvation given by one God, through one Lord, benefiting in many ways".[67] Though there is only one "covenant of salvation" since the foundation of the world, according to Clement, it was with the Advent of Christ that the partition separating the cultural divisions of the Greeks and the Hebrews was removed.[68] Faith in the one true God ultimately transcends all racial boundaries and distinctions to bring about a genuine catholicity.

It is this catholicity that defines the role of the "ancient and universal Church (τὴν ἀρχαίαν καὶ καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν)" according to Clement, "collecting as it does into the unity of the one faith, which results from the peculiar testaments, or rather the one testament in different times, by the will of the one God".[69] The preaching (κήρυγμα) of this New Testament had come at a fit time (καιρός), when the Hebrews and Greeks were finally ready to receive it.[70] Christ even preaches to the souls in Hades where there took place a "universal movement (καθολικὴ κίνησις) and translation through the economy of the Saviour".[71] Hence the preaching of the Gospel is a calling to unite in faith and receive the promise of salvation. Faith catholicises because it is not racially or culturally defined. "By the little grain [of mustard], as it is figuratively called, [God] bestows salvation on all humanity abundantly".[72] "If you have faith as a grain of mustard, you shall remove mountains", therefore "the dead man is raised up in consequence of the power of

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[64] *Q.D.S.* 8.1 citing Jn 1.17.
[65] Cf. Titus 2.14.
[66] *Str.* 6.17.159.9. See article by D. Kimber Buell, "Race and Universalism in Early Christianity", *JECS* 10/4 (2002), 429–68.
[67] *Str.* 6.13.106.3–107.1.
[68] Cf. Eph. 2.14.
[69] *Str.* 7.17.107.5.
[70] *Str.* 6.6.44.1.
[71] *Str.* 6.6.47.1. Clement is following the Shepherd of Hermas *Sim.* 9.16.6.
[72] *Paid.* 1.11.96.2.

believing that he would be raised".[73] Such is Clement's belief in the power of faith to save.

This does not alleviate the tensions we feel in modern times between the church and those who do not declare faith according to the church, but it does provide a Christian testimony to an inclusive doctrine of faith based on the universal phenomena of the pre-conception of the divine. Like Justin Martyr before him, Clement believed the Word was, is, and shall be, and was therefore to be understood as an a-historical reality as well as a historical phenomenon: the Word that transcends the divisions that are brought about when it is historically localised.[74] This allowed Justin and Clement to see Christ in a much more universal sense and see the work of the church and of the unity of faith in that light.

Despite Clement's belief in a universal faith and its capacity to enrol everyone in God's economy of salvation, this does not excuse the faithful from attempting to acquire virtue. The whole economy of salvation is set out in the seventh book of the *Stromaties*,[75] from the first principle, to the "blessed band of angels, and down to ourselves". This provides the basis for an ecclesiastical hierarchy constructed in imitation of an angelic hierarchy, which is itself an imitation of the order of the first, second, and third things.[76] This mention of first, second, and third things is an allusion to the second letter of Plato in which he enigmatically discusses the nature of the first principle and which elsewhere Clement takes to be a description of the Holy Trinity.[77] The economy of salvation laid out here is then placed in the context of Ephesians 4.13

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[73] *Str.* 2.11.49.1.

[74] See *1st Apol.* 26. This a-historicicity of the Logos leads Clement dangerously close to Docetism. Photius accused Clement, among other things, of Docetism (*Bibl. Cod.* 109 καὶ μὴ σαρκωθῆναι τὸν λόγον ἀλλὰ δόξαι). Photius was refering to the material in the *Hypotyposes*, but this does find a connection in *Str.* 6.9.71.1–2 where Clement believes it ludicrous to suppose that Christ's resurrection body demanded the normal bodily requirements such as food or drink. He appeared in a "phantasmal shape (δοκήσει)", according to Clement, and only partook of these things so that the apostles would not hold a different opinion of him. Clement believes that Christ was "kept together by a holy energy (δυνάμει συνεχόμενον ἁγίᾳ)". See J. McLelland, "The Alexandrian Quest of the Non-Historical Christ", *CH* 37 (1968), 355–64. Bigg writes that the Alexandrians "think always less of the historical fact than of the idea, less of the outward sign than of the inner truth" (*The Christian Platonists*, 52).

[75] *Str.* 7.2.9.2–10.1.

[76] Cf. *Str.* 6.13.107.2 where "the grades here in the Church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory".

[77] *Str.* 5.14.103.1 citing Plato. *Ep.* 2.312e.

where the unity of faith and the acquisition of virtue train souls to the "perfect man" for the edification of the Body of Christ. With the whole church constructed in imitation of the Holy Trinity, the Father directs the salvation of all through the agency of the gnostic.[78]

However, whilst faith is the principle that unifies this hierarchical structure, the acquisition of "virtue should be the object of voluntary choice (αἱρεῖσθαι τὸν βουλόμενον)", "the law from the first", as Clement says, that allows the soul to "consort with the objects of its choice", be it virtue or vice.[79] Souls do have the freedom to choose vice to the point where they are no longer attracted to the first abode and "fall down to the ground": they can choose not to participate in the unity of faith. This issue of choice bears largely on one of the major difficulties theologians have had with the doctrine of *apokatastasis* as it is understood as the salvation of all souls. Can a soul freely choose damnation and death, despite the Father "directing the salvation of all"? For Clement the answer is yes: "'The Lord hears the righteous, but the wicked he does not save, because they do not desire to know God'. For the Almighty (παντοκράτορα) will not accomplish what is absurd".[80] Hence we have a fundamental contradiction in Clement's theology of universalism. On the one hand, God bestows on us the freedom to reject him, and yet on the other he somehow directs the salvation of all. Can the human soul be compelled to repent in order to be saved? In order to discover Clement's view on this point we need to take a closer look at what he believed would happen to souls after death.

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[78] Clements contrast with Irenaeus must be pointed out here. Clement's economy of salavation is vertical in its application, but also more immediate, whereas Irenaeus' is horizontal and future. Osborn is worth quoting in full here: "For Irenaus there is a still a narrative eschatology, a story of how man becomes God by a series of final events. Clement has very little final mythology. He is concerned to describe how the new humanity can be found now. Irenaeus declares in striking words that the glory of God is man fully alive. Only Clement gives us an extended account of that new humanity. Irenaeus tells us that God became man that man might become God; Clement alone gives us detailed decription of the man who is a god walking the earth". (*Clement* [2005], 269).

[79] For *pistis* as a voluntary choosing (προάιρεσις) see also *Str.* 2.2.9.2, which, as Clark points out, is distinctly peripatetic (Cf. *E.N.* vi.2.1139b) (*Clement's Use of Aristotle*, 23). See also W.E.G. Floyd (*Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 29–30, 33), who also connects it with τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, which came into use with the Stoics, particularly, Chryssipus.

[80] *Str.* 4.26.170.1. Clement maybe referring to I Kings 8: 32 here.

6.3. *The Death to Death*

Clement's account of Christ anointing the feet of Judas Iscariot is interesting in this respect. The discussion begins with why Clement feels that ointments are unnecessary and promote pleasure and indulgence in those who use them. However, he then acknowledges the use of ointment in Christ's ministry. Christ's feet were anointed by the woman in Matthew 26, which Clement takes as a symbol of his teaching and suffering as he travels to the ends of the earth, consecrating it with the oil on his feet. Clement proffers the idea that the anointed feet of Christ also symbolise the apostles whose mission it was to preach the Gospel of Christ after receiving "the fragrant unction of the Holy Spirit".[81] "'Let us adore where his feet stood',[82] that is, where the apostles, his feet, arrived, since, preached by them, he came to the ends of the earth".[83] Mystically understood, Clement tells us, the oil is Christ himself whose mercy extends to all.[84] But the ointment with which he anointed the feet of the apostles was adulterated oil because it was also used to anoint the feet of the traitor Judas.[85] The anointing of the feet of the apostles for their ministry, despite being adulterated by Judas, was to ensure that the sweet fragrance of Christ reached all the nations of the world and to make Christ known in every place.[86] The feet of Judas were anointed despite his betrayal, and also diffused the sweet fragrance of Christ. Despite the oil being adulterated, the fragrance nonetheless manifests the knowledge of Christ everywhere. Clement finishes this discussion with a quotation from 2 Corinthians 2.14–16, claiming that Christians are the sweet fragrance of the Lord to those who are saved, but importantly, also to those who are lost. The fragrance or myrrh of Christ accompanies the soul in the funeral rites to ensure safe passage into the afterlife.

What is crucial about this is that Christ's fragrance anoints all that come into contact with the proclamation of the Gospel through the apostles' ministry, even those who choose death. As Clement adds, even the dead are anointed.[87] For those who heed and are saved there

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[81] *Paid.* 2.8.61.3.
[82] Ps 132.7.
[83] *Paid.* 2.8.62.1.
[84] Clement plays on words 'oil' (ἔλαιον) and 'mercy' (ἔλεος).
[85] Jn 13.
[86] *Paid.* 2.8.63.1–3.
[87] *Paid.* 2.8.62.3.

is the sweet fragrance bringing life to life, but in those who are lost, the sweet fragrance brings death to death. Clement's interpretation of the anointing of Judas' feet by Christ is therefore used as a way of understanding what is exactly meant by the death to death: the fragrance brings about the destruction of death. The anointing of the world through the preaching of the Gospel assures the end of death itself. Simply put, life results in either case; in the life to life and also in the death to death.

Elsewhere, Clement refers to Christ's saving effect on the dead in terms of another Scriptural metaphor; that of the new song: "Behold the might of the new song!...Those, moreover, that were as dead, not being partakers of the true life, have come to life again, simply by becoming listeners to this song".[88] Though we do not have a full account of Clement's view of the resurrection, this death to death suggests, as the author of the *Excerpta* claims, that "death may be released by death and corruption by resurrection".[89] Those who reject the preaching, as Judas did, will somehow yet be restored to life. As with the analogy of the magnet diffusing over the steel rings cited above, it is possible for some not to remain attracted to the first administrator of all things and who choose to fall to the ground. Yet by the reckoning of the sweet fragrance of Christ, they may yet be allowed to live, despite their choosing to reject God.

The tension is resolved for Clement by the idea of punishments and limitations in the afterlife. Clement likens death to sleep in order to demonstrate how the soul remains active without receiving stimulation from the body.[90] For Clement, the only difference between sleep and death is that on death the soul more fully departs from the body than in sleep.[91] Dreams are a sure indication of the soul's ability to act, more, less or completely independently of the body. The more a disembodied soul remains attached to things earthly and bodily, the more it is afflicted when at death it is freed from the body, the agency through which it experienced addiction. For Clement, souls "although darkened by passions, when released from their bodies, are able to

[88] *Protr.* 1.4.4.
[89] *Exc.* 80.1. This would appear to be material that would have gone into the missing treatise on the resurrection (see *Paid.* 1.6.47.1; 2.10.104.3) (*Gospel Message*, 27–8). Clement also does not have a clear view of the Last Judgement.
[90] *Paid.* 2.9.79.3.
[91] *Str.* 4.22.141.1.

perceive more clearly, because of their being no longer obstructed by the flesh".[92] Indeed the soul "turns in on itself, and has a truer hold of intelligence (φρονήσεως)".[93] However, the over gratification of the body in the experience of the passions leads to its own desensitisation, and when the soul is released from its somewhat deadened or callused state, it is suddenly hypersensitive to the passions it succumbed to in its bodily life. The soul receives its meet punishment in 'feeling' those passions as pains more powerfully than when embodied. Clement elsewhere makes reference to certain πρεσβύτεροι who preferred to receive corrections to their soul in the here and now, fearing that after death they would receive the punishments all at once, making the intensity of the pain too much to withstand.[94]

It is with this in mind that Clement interprets Matthew 5:28: "He that looks so as to lust, has already committed adultery".[95] Lust arises within the mind that has not steeled itself against bodily pleasures and therefore leaves an impression or image that the soul retains in sleep or after death.[96] Following Plato's *Theaetetus*, he tells us that "each deceit, by pressing constantly on the soul, impresses its image (τυποῦται) on it; and the soul unwittingly carries about the image of the passion, which takes its rise from the bait and our consent".[97] In *Q.D.S.*, Clement tells us that this leads to a form of self-punishment within the soul; an "internal persecution (χαλεπώτατος ἔνδοθεν)" caused by the passions ingniting within the soul.[98] Clement elsewhere claims that these sinners are "seared" or "cauterised in conscience" because of wrong choices and believing in contrary doctrines.[99] The images impressed on their souls kindle the fire of their own punishment. God is free of blame in this respect.[100] Therefore, the soul enters its own persecution: "Earthly

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[92] *Str.* 6.6.46.3.
[93] *Str.* 4.22.140.1.
[94] *Ecl.* 11.1–2.
[95] See for example *Str.* 2.11.50.2; 3.94.3; 4.18.114.2.
[96] Cf. Plato *Gorg.* 524c–d.
[97] *Str.* 2.20.111.4. Cf. Plato *Theaet.* 191 c–e.
[98] *Q.D.S.* 25.3–6. Origen developed this idea. See *De Princ.* 2.10.4–5.
[99] *Str.* 3.12.85.1.
[100] *Str.* 5.14.136.4 citing Plato *Rep.* 10.617e: "Plato in what follows gives an exhibition of free-will (Gk: αὐτεξούσιον): 'Virtue owns not a master; and in proportion as each one honours or dishonours it, in that proportion he will be a partaker of it. The blame lies in the exercise of free choice'. But God is blameless. For he is never the author of evil". On this see W.E.G. Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 32.

wickedness nourished for fuel to the flames", as Clement writes elsewhere.[101]

In chapter four we discussed fire as a symbol of knowledge igniting in the soul, as it recollects its former state in the light of God. However, here it represents the persecution of the sinner. Clement speaks of the two-fold nature of fire elsewhere, pointing out both its destructive and its nurturing power.[102] When scripture speaks of God as a "consuming fire (πῦρ καταναλίσκον)",[103] is does so to refer both to his power to create, to make, to nourish and to save the body and soul. But it also refers to God's power to consume and destroy. Elsewhere, Clement refers to this "consuming fire", as the "wise" or "intelligent fire (πῦρ φρόνιμον)" that distinguishes the material elements in the soul and burns them away.[104] As such this "wise fire" is ignited entirely by the choice of the individual concerned, whether it is towards an object of virtue or vice. Human free will as expressed through the wise fire is an expression of God's Almighty power to destroy and save simultaneously.

Ultimately for Clement, human freedom is uncircumscribed because it has the power to choose the objects contrary to God to a point where the soul can bring about its own destruction in fire. These souls choose their own death and ignite the fire of their own internal persecution. However, it is exactly in this destruction that the soul's restoration to God is accomplished. This appears contradictory since the soul freely chooses its own destruction, but for Clement, the discerning fire is also the consuming fire of God. As Clement tells us, the destruction destined for damned souls exhibits the "most manifest kindness of God", his "all-potent will (θέλημα παντοκρατορικόν)",[105] because it is exactly in its dissolution that it is restored to God without compulsion. It has freely chosen to return to God, albeit in the belief that it was choosing what it thought was contrary to God. However, since nothing is ultimately contrary to God,[106] his kindness and all-potent will resides in the gift of free will to humans, while also manifesting the ability to restore them to himself despite their choice of death and without circumscribing their freedom. This is a very difficult point to communicate, since it

[101] *Protr.* 11.111.1.
[102] *Ecl.* 26. 1–4.
[103] Deut. 4.24/Heb. 12.29.
[104] *Ecl.* 25.4. The "wise fire" was discussed in chapter four as an initiatic symbol of the Holy Spirit in the work of baptism. See p. 129 above.
[105] *Str.* 5.1.6.3.
[106] *Str.* 1.17.85.6.

would appear to condone the idea that giving in to every form of sin is actually a path to salvation. However, this view relies on an underestimation of God's love for humanity, and also of the acuteness of the self-inflicted pain of internal persecution. Sin is its own pain and ultimately removes from the soul what it most desires, which is, an existence separate from God. Ultimately, its individuality is removed by its own attempt to seek individual existence, restored to God's unity in fiery or universal essence. This is a large issue in and of itself, but it suffices to highlight God's power to bring death to death and why the wise fire of God was such a potent symbol for Clement.[107]

In the last chapter we discussed this universal fire as a symbol of God's power to bring the world into being from non-existence and return it to non-existence.[108] Souls that choose death and resist God are restored to the divine pre-existent state via their own freedom to choose what is contrary to God. Since the internal persecution sets alight the conflagration within, the soul has chosen self-destruction. However, this conflagration is nothing other than fiery or universal essence, which Clement sees as symbolic of God's power. God is free of blame. He does not achieve what is absurd, and yet directs the salvation of all by allowing all souls to exercise their own free will whilst restoring them to himself. He does not force humans to conform to himself and does not circumscribe their free will in any respect. This was an important disctinction for the gnostic to make.

In the context of a universal *apokatastasis* the idea of bringing about death to death is discussed in the third book of the *Stromateis*. In a discussion concerning the Gnostic view of the evil nature of the world, Clement analyses their interpretation of the words of Salome in the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*.[109] She asks the Lord: "How long shall death hold sway", to which the Lord answers, "As long as women bear

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[107] Cf. Origen *De Princ.* 1.6.3; 3.6.6.

[108] Cf. the account of the *apokatastasis* in Tatian's *Orat.* (6.1–2) and Origen's *De Princ.* (2.3.3) which speaks of the resurrection in terms of coming to be and returning to non-existence before being restored.

[109] There are very few references to this strange Gospel, but most come from Clement. James claims that it was likely to have originated in Egypt and circulated around the middle of the second century. Clement appears not to see it as canonical (*Str.* 3.13.93.1), but this does not stop him defending its ideas from heretical interpretation (See also *Str.* 3.6.45.3; 3.9.63.1–64.3; *Exc.* 67). See M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993), 16–19.

children".[110] Clement takes up the discussion later in the book[111] saying that Salome's words refer to the consummation or end of the world:

> It is probably therefore with reference to the consummation (συντελείας) that Salome says: "until when shall men die?"...By natural necessity in the divine plan death follows birth, and the coming together of soul and body is followed by their dissolution (διάλυσις). If birth exists for the sake of learning and knowledge, dissolution leads to restoration (ἀποκαταστάσεως δὲ ἡ διάλυσις). As woman is regarded as the cause of death because she brings to birth, so also for the same reason she may be called the originator of life.[112]

As sure as death follows birth or the coming together of soul and body leads to their dissolution, restoration will assuredly follow dissolution. As much as the female is the cause of death, she is also the bringer or restorer of life. Though death follows life, the divine plan for the world at its consummation is that life will triumph over death and be restored. The destruction or consummation of the world will therefore lead to the *apokatastasis*.

For Clement then, life and death are opposites only for a dualistic world subject to human reasoning. From the perspective of divine logic, that is theology proper, death is an absence of life, but not its complete opposite. The opposite of life is not death but evil: "'Behold, I have set before your eyes good and evil, life and death that you may choose life'. For it calls good 'life', and the choice of it excellent, and the choice of the opposite 'evil'".[113] The death to death constitutes a logical conundrum analogous to the self-invalidation of scepticism[114] and to the nature of Satan himself,[115] in that just as scepticism and Satan hold within themselves the seeds of their own destruction, so too does death lead to its own death.[116] The Hindu sage makes this clear in his reply to Alexander's question as to which was the stronger, life or death: he simply says: "Life, which withstands such ills".[117] This conundrum is fundamental to Clement's doctrine of the soul, but it

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110 *Str.* 3.6.45.3.
111 *Str.* 3.9.63.1–3.
112 *Str.* 3.9.64.1–3.
113 *Str.* 5.14.96.5–6 citing Deut. 30:15–20.
114 *Str.* 8.5.15.2–16.1.
115 Cf. Matt 12.26. See p. 96 above.
116 See von Balthasar's discussion of this conundrum in his chapter entitled "The Self-Consumption of Hell", in *Dare We Hope*, 134–42.
117 *Str.* 6.4.38.2–12. See p. 103 above.

also bears an analogy to his doctrine of *apokatastasis* in that death holds no sway where Christ is present.

6.4. *The Life to Life: the Gnostic* Parousia

The gnostic does not undergo fiery torture like the sinner, but freely crosses the threshold into the afterlife without fear of internal persecution. This, according to Clement, is achieved through knowledge. Using the analogy from Plato's *Theaetetus* once again, he tells us that the soul becomes like the wax that is softened to receive the stamp applied to it.[118] Knowledge impresses itself on the soul in the same way that our passions do. However, whereas the impressions caused by earthly passions sear the conscience and cause the soul's internal persecution in fire, knowledge leads the soul to the good life. The soul must become receptive to knowledge and receive it as wax does a stamp; such knowledge prepares the soul for its separation from the body, allowing it to be free of the constraints and addictions of the body.

Once again dreams offer us a clue to the state of the soul after death, for the gnostic will have "sinlessness in dreams",[119] "good conscience",[120] and have "such dreams as are true".[121] Ultimately it is the cleansed soul that is raised to God, having lightened its load of earthly cares through training and discipline. Working from Matt 10.39 Clement states that the search for knowledge is to die to sin and the earthly life.[122] One who gives up earthly life will have it all the greater, and conversely, one who lives the earthly life will have it taken away from them. The gnostic life, like the Platonic philosopher's, is a preparation for death.[123]

Following Plato's *Phaedo*, Clement insists that the philosophic life consists in training oneself to separate the soul from the body. Like Socrates, Clement believes that we must not regard death as an evil,[124] but rather make the separation of the soul from the body the practice of "true philosophy".[125] Elsewhere, Clement speaks of Matthew's plea

[118] Cf. Plato *Theaet.* 191c–e.
[119] *Str.* 4.22.142.4. See also *Str.* 4.22.139.1–5; 7.12.78.5.
[120] *Str.* 2.6.29.4. See also *Str.* 7.12.78.3; 7.12.79.4–5.
[121] *Paid.* 2.9.82.2.
[122] *Str.* 4.6.27.1–3. See also *Str.* 4.8.56.4–57.1.
[123] *Str.* 4.3.12.5–6 following Plato *Phaed.* 67d, 80e, 81a.
[124] *Str.* 4.3.11.2.
[125] *Str.* 5.11.67.1–2.

to "watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming", in the context of Socrates' view of the philosophic life, interpreting it to mean, "study how to live, and endeavour to separate the soul from the body".[126] It is a "rational death (λογικὸς θάνατος) urging the soul away".[127] It is in the study or practice of death that one learns truly how to live, since only one who has let go of the world is free to live in it unconstrained by its intrigues and caprices.[128]

But Clement adds a further element to this idea of the practice of death that needs to be emphasised to understand how he understood the life to life, and which furthers our understanding of his doctrine of *apokatastasis*. Clement's gnostic is someone who has made the separation of body and soul a life-long study, but not for the purpose of making a smooth transition into the afterlife alone.[129] The gnostic has attained this state of liberation while still in the flesh.[130] Paradoxically, the world has been crucified to such a soul, conversing as if in heaven, yet remaining in the flesh.

There is then, a crucial distinction to be made between the death of the soul of the sinner and the death to sin that gnostics seek during their lives. Neither refers to physical death, but to different kinds of psychic death: the first refers to the decisive choice of sinners to destroy their souls, and the second, to the decisive choice of the gnostic to destroy passion of the soul and earthly attachment.[131] The life to life is then a death to sin while still living in the flesh; living as though "already without flesh (ἀσάρκος) and already grown holy without this earth", as he says elsewhere.[132] The gnostic is the subject of an underlying paradox, but one that is of the utmost importance to Clement. While the life of knowledge is the practice of death, this does not mean that

[126] *Str.* 5.14.106.1.
[127] *Str.* 7.12.71.3.
[128] This offers us a philosophical interpretation of Matt 16.25–26: "For whoever wants to save his life (ψυχὴν) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"
[129] *Str.* 4.3.12.5–6 citing Gal 6.14/Phil 3.20. Cf. Plato *Rep.* 618c–619a.
[130] The importance of the flesh in the gnostic's deification should not be underestimated. See Butterworth, "The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria", 159–60.
[131] Cf. Plato *Phaedo* 81b ff.
[132] *Str.* 7.14.86.7. For an in depth discussion into the question of gnostic perfection being found in life or after death see the two articles by J. Wytzes, "The Twofold way (I)", and "The Twofold way (II), Platonic Influences in the Work of Clement of Alexandria", *VC* 14 (1960), 129–53.

the gnostic denies life in the world, nor does it mean that the world is an evil place, as certain heretics would have it. Quite the contrary, it is crucial that the gnostic attempts to depart from this world in order to exist in it without being fettered by earthly passions.[133] The gnostic is someone who utilises the things of the world where necessary, but who has kept the soul free from the passions that drag it to earth. Gnostics do not seek death to rid themselves of the world *per se*, but in order to train the soul to exist in harmony with it. To put it another way, they lose their life in order to live well, that is, to bring life to life.

It is in this context that Clement sees the gnostic as the embodiment of the presence (παρουσία) of Christ in the world. Clement describes this presence as Wisdom that showed itself by the prophets and which Christ himself imparted to the apostles during his Advent. This Wisdom constitutes the essence of the "gnostic tradition" communicated through the apostles and which Clement believed was to be continued through the gnostic.[134] Elsewhere he speaks of Paul's desire to present himself to the Romans in "the fullness of the blessing of Christ",[135] as exemplary of the "gnostic tradition (γνωστικὴν παράδοσιν)" and the presence he believed was transmitted by Christ during his Advent.[136] Those few who were present when Christ imparted the gnostic tradition and had the mystery disclosed to them were in the fullness of Christ, manifesting his presence in order to bring faith to all the nations. "But knowledge, conveyed from communication through the grace of God as a deposit, is entrusted to those who show themselves worthy of it; and from it the worth of love beams forth from light to light".[137] The gnostic "rejoices in good things present (Gk: παροῦσιν ἀγαθοῖς), and is glad on account of those things promised, as if they were already present (ἤδη παροῦσιν)".[138] Christ "deposited" his grace in the world during his Advent, but after his departing, his presence was to be maintained in the world through the gnostic tradition.

Ultimately the presence of the gnostic is the testimony to divine truth. The life to life provides proof that death holds no sway for those who live in Christ. Continuing the discussion from the third book of

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[133] *Str.* 6.9.75.3.
[134] *Str.* 6.7.61.1. Cf. *Str.* 6.9.71.1.
[135] Rom 15.29.
[136] *Str.* 5.10.64.4–6. See Le Boulluec, *SChr* 279, 230.
[137] *Str.* 7.10.55.6.
[138] *Str.* 7.7.47.4.

the *Stromateis* mentioned in the last section, Clement discusses the role of women in the world, who, according to the false doctrine of Jules Cassian and those who later became known as Encratites, bring with them death and therefore evil. He discounts their view by recourse to Paul's letter to the Philippians and to his belief that the true gnostic life in the flesh is the divine presence:

> In fact the woman who first began transgression was named "Life"[139] because she became responsible for the succession of those who were born and fell into sin, the mother of righteous and unrighteous alike, since each one of us makes himself either righteous or disobedient. On this account I for my part do not think the apostle was expressing disgust at life in the flesh when he said: "But with all boldness both now and ever Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If, however, it is to be life in the flesh, that also means for me fruitful work. I do not know which I prefer. I am constrained on both sides: I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sakes".[140] Here he showed clearly, I think, that the perfect reason for departing from the body is love of God, and that if one is to be present in the flesh (ἐν σαρκὶ παρουσίας) one should give thanks remaining here for the sake of those who need salvation.[141]

The course of life and death is not meant to be denigrated, but exonerated, and, as Paul's testimony exemplifies, is accepted with gratitude by Clement's gnostic. The passage from the Philippians expresses Paul's confusion as to which direction he should head, toward death in order to live in Christ, or towards life in order to be a living example to others in their search for salvation.[142] He knows that to be with Christ would be better, and that death is simply another way of magnifying Christ, but his preference is to stay with those who need him. For this reason the gnostic remains present in the flesh, giving thanks to God. Having gone through this preparation, the gnostic lives in complete detachment from the world, "though still detained on earth", as Clement says elsewhere.[143]

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[139] An allusion to Eve in Gn 3.20, whose name in Hebrew means "life giving".
[140] Phil 1.20–24.
[141] *Str.* 3.9.65.1–66.1 (tr. Chadwick slightly modified). Cf. *Str.* 7.7.35.1. Clement mentions the Encratites elsewhere (*Str.* 7.17.108.2). The view that marriage was licensed fornication and the body is to be denegrated as sinful was also mentioned by Irenaeus *Adv. Haer*. 1.28 and Hipplytus *Haer*. 8.20.
[142] Cf. Plato *Phaedo* 61a ff and Cicero *Dream of Scipio* 15.
[143] *Str.* 7.12.80.2. See also *Str*. 7.12.74.8–9.

As we claimed in the fourth chapter, gnostics exemplify the sacramental life, becoming the bread of heaven them selves and whose presence the Christian community partakes of and give thanks for. The gnostic gives life to life by becoming deified in the flesh. "He who listens to the Lord, and follows the prophecy given by him, will be formed perfectly in the likeness of the teacher, a god going about in flesh (ἐν σαρκὶ περιπολῶν θεός)".[144] This is the perfect imitation of Christ, who, after his transfiguration, was "God in the flesh (θεὸς ἐν σαρκίῳ)".[145] The deification of the human and the incarnation of Christ differ only in the point from which they began, since Christ descended from above, and the gnostic ascended from below. "The good man is godlike (θεοειδὴς) in form and semblance in respect to the soul. And on the other hand, God is like man (ἀνθρωποειδής)".[146] The gnostic, like Christ, has bridged the gap between the divine and the human.

One more element of the significance of the presence of the gnostic needs to be highlighted. The gnostic lives in the flesh but at the same time is free of the flesh, and this is considered a thanksgiving by Clement. However, in the following passage we can more readily see how it is that the gnostic life becomes sanctified in the light of Christ's presence:

> [The gnostic] asks to live the selected life in the flesh (τὸν ὡρισμένον ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ βίον), a gnostic, without flesh (ἄσαρκος), and to reach for the best things, and flee from the worse . . . He follows, on his departure . . . hasting by reason of a good conscience (ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν) to give thanks (εὐχαριστῆσαι); and having got there with Christ shows himself worthy, through his purity, to possess by a process of blending, the power of God communicated by Christ. For he does not wish to be warm by participation in heat, or luminous by participation in flame, but to be wholly light (ὅλος φῶς).[147]

The gnostic becomes "blended" with, and possesses, the power of God through Christ. Clement uses the analogy of fire to demonstrate that the gnostic does not merely wish to be warmed by coming near to fire, but wishes to be wholly light. Once again, in contrast to the fire of internal persecution, the igniting of the soul by divine love secures its

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[144] *Str.* 7.16.101.4. Cf. Epicurus *LM* 135.
[145] *Str.* 6.16.140.3. Cf. *Str.* 4.26.171.4.
[146] *Str.* 6.9.72.1–3. Hence, as Butterworth claimed, man contains within himself a spark of the divine nature ("The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria", 157).
[147] *Str.* 7.12.79.2–5.

passage through fire by becoming fire. The gnostic, Clement tells us, is one who has become utterly purified and tested by fire,[148] but who is not tormented the way sinners are in their own internal persecution. In this sense the igniting of the soul by gnostic study, which we identified as the divine spark in chapter four, is in contradistinction to the internal persecution of the soul that has given in to the passions. The fire of God is simultaneously a destructive power and a salve depending on the condition of the soul that enters it. Hence Clement's analogy: "Honey is sweet to those who are well, and bitter to those who are in fever, according to the state of susceptibility of those who are affected".[149] The soul that sins becomes fuel for the flames and restored in the fire of God, but the gnostic soul can pass through fire without suffering torment, becoming the fire of God. As we pointed out in chapter four, Clement's anamnesis ultimately brings the soul to recognise itself as a being of light.[150] The connection between man and light is no mere play on words for Clement, but a full recognition of the significance of the presence of Christ embodied in the gnostic's life in the flesh and of being ignited by the love of God.

To conclude this section on the fate of the soul after death, it is apparent that Clement's distinction between the death to death and the life to life bears greatly on the tension between individual sin and God's universal capacity to save. Clement saw that there was no contradiction where God's saving power was concerned: this is unequivocal. The difficulty he faced was that of understanding how this imperative was to be harmonised with the free will of the individual, which was itself the gift of God. The soul can freely choose destruction and death in fire if it so wishes, but in doing so it is restored by the very same fire that destroyed it, not as an individual, but in universal and fiery essence, the consuming fire of God. Inverse to this is the life to life where the gnostic spends his/her life in the attainment of knowledge, is ignited with the divine spark of God, and becomes the living presence of God in the world. The very same fire that is persecution and death to the sinner, is succour and life for the gnostic.

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[148] *Str.* 6.12.97.2.
[149] *Str.* 8.9.32.3.
[150] *Paid.* 1.6.28.1–3. Cf. *Ecl.* 32.3–33.2. See p. 131 above.

The crucial distinction here is that the sinner is restored universally, that is, in the universal conflagration or consummation of the world. The gnostic, however, is in some sense restored as an individual whilst still embodied, but one who also manifests the glory of God's universal presence in the world. In this way the gnostic represents Christ's universal capacity to save as well. This idea needs clarification and is exactly the point on which Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis* hinges. The gnostic is an individual, but is also, in some sense, universalised by becoming Christ-like. This idea prevails in Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis*: a universalism that is inextricably tied to gnostic individuals, or, as Clement calls them, the elect.

6.5. *The Gnostic's Role in Creation and Restoration*

We began this chapter with Clement's belief in the universal salvation and its connection to the unity of faith, but we have yet to see what Clement says explicitly concerning the way the faithful are restored. We have seen the way those who choose death are restored universally and the way gnostics bring life to life, but in order to understand how the simple faithful are restored we need to see how gnostics relate to the community of which they are a part. What role do gnostics play in the unity of faith and the edification of the Body of Christ? The difficulty is that Clement does not speak of Acts 3.21 and says very little about the restoration of all things. Clement uses the term *apokatastasis* and its cognates generally to refer to the gnostic elect rather than to an eschatological restoration of the universe, or to a restoration of the faithful as a whole. Where he does mention or imply a restoration of the whole it is through the medium of the restoration of the gnostic. Hence, microcosmic and macrocosmic restoration is closely related. The whole is restored through the part. Gnostics who come to knowledge of universals become universal themselves, and in doing so help Christ to restore the whole. His concern with educating the Christian in knowledge stemmed from a belief that gnostic perfection played a unique role the unity of faith and in building up the Body of Christ, and also in the restoration of the whole world. Hence, while some uses of the *apokatastasis* appear to refer simply to the gnostic elect, by extension, they have universal implications.

6.5.1. *The Elect of the Elect*

Gnostics trained in the Wisdom of God constitute the summit of Christian intellectual life.[151] In this respect they were the elect around which the church revolved. First of all, the church was created when, from the Greeks and the Hebrews, there arose the peculiar race of Christians who were the "elect race (τὸ γένος τὸ ἐκλεκτόν)" for Clement.[152] But from this elect race it is the gnostic elect who are regarded of highest value to it.[153] They constitute those who are "more elect than the elect (τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι)"; that is, the elect people drawn from the elect race of Christians.[154] As the elect of the elect the gnostic's time in the world is a sojourn,[155] before being restored once again to peace and immortality.[156]

For Clement, the elect were "'predestined before the foundation of the world' to be enrolled in the highest adoption".[157] This may look like the predestined elect of the Valentinians and Basilideans, but Clement was adamant that his gnostic exercise faith, reason, and free choice in order to attain this status.[158] It is clear that we are not to understand the predestined elect in the sense of being naturally saved, since, according to Clement, even Abraham had to choose to believe the voice of the Lord which spoke to him in Mamre promising him and his descendants the land of Canaan.[159] Clement posits that Abraham was predestined as an elect person, yet had to exercise his choice to believe the voice, doing so immediately on hearing it. This is how we are to understand the predestination of "the faithful and the elect".[160]

The issue of free choice is crucial here since while it is the case that the elect are distinguished from the elect race of Christians, they are not fully distinct from them. This is to say that the exercise of choice in the search for the knowledge maintains continuity between gnostics

[151] Cf. *Str.* 7.7.47.3. "The knowledge of God then, is the highest thing (μέγιστον ἄρα ἡ γνῶσις τοῦ θεοῦ)".
[152] *Protr.* 4.59.3. See also *Str.* 5.14.98.4.
[153] *Str.* 7.5.29.4.
[154] *Str.* 6.13.107.2. See also *Q.D.S.* 36.1; *Str.* 1.19.92.4; *Str.* 5.3.17.5 citing Matt 20.16.
[155] *Str.* 4.26.165.4; *Str.* 7.12.77.3.
[156] *Str.* 2.2.4.4–5.1. αὕτη παιδεία σοφιας…ἀποκαθιστὰς δὲ εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν.
[157] *Str.* 6.9.76.3 citing Eph 1.4–5/I Pet 1.20.
[158] *Str.* 6.9.76.3–77.1.
[159] *Str.* 5.1.4.1 citing Gn 17.8; 18.1.
[160] Cf. *Str.* 7.2.6.6.

and simple believers. While it may be said that the gnostic can achieve knowledge of God above and beyond the capacity of the simple believer, the element of choice precludes us from making their abilities distinct in the way the predestined elect of the Valentinians and Basilideans believed. Unlike the sharp division between spiritual and psychic men in the Gnostic systems, Clement always distinguishes his gnostics, but never divides them as a race apart. His gnostics play the most active role in the salvation of the whole Christian community.

It is generally in the context of this elect group then that Clement speaks of restoring or of restoration. Clement believed that the gnostic elect constitute what Matthew referred to as "peacemakers". They are the exemplars of peace in the world who will be "restored in adoption (εἰς υἱοθεσίαν ἀποκατασταθήσονται)", having come to the knowledge that the opposites of creation and all that wars against the disposition of the mind are actually under the Providence of God and in beautiful harmony.[161] He says that the elect are "made eternal by knowledge", "restored into perfection (εἰς τελειότητα ἀποκαθιστάμενοι)" and rise to the "nature of angels" to be "restored on the summit (ἐν τῇ ἄκρᾳ ἀποκαταστάσει)".[162] The summit here refers to the eighth grade or ogdoad where light conveys the gnostic through the mystic grades of progression until it "restores (ἀποκαταστήσῃ the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest (ἀναπαύσεως)".[163] These phrases all refer

[161] *Str.* 4.6.40.2.

[162] *Ecl.* 57.1–5. See Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 460. Méhat, once again in his attempt to dismiss the connotation of a return in the use of the word *apokatastasis* sees this as evidence that it is a scale rather than a return ("Apocatastase", 205). The "first-created" angels are nowhere mentioned to have been deposed, and so this cannot be a reference to a return, but again, a final state or completion. However, once again this demonstrates that he is analysisng the meaning of the words in isolation of their broader context. In this case while the passage does refer to the first-created "au sommet de *l'apocatastase*", the passage is referring to those men who, through knowledge, become angels and archangels, "so as to rise to the nature of the first-created (εἰς τὴν πρωτόκτιστον τῶν ἀγγέλων φύσιν)". Hence, the passage implies that the summit here is a reference to the "first abode" (*Ecl.* 56.7) or ogdoad which, as pointed out earlier, is the place of re-creation and therefore a restoration to a pristine and prelapsarian state.

[163] *Str.* 7.10.56.7–57.2. Cf. *Exc.* 63 where the resurrection of the Lord's Day takes place in the ogdoad. See also Gregory *Hom. Opif. PG* 189.21–25. R. Staats, claims: "Das gilt um so mehr, als zum Beispiel ein Klemens von Alexandrien den Gnostiker Theodot zitieren kann... und doch andererseits selbst völlig unbefangen mit dem Symbol spielt und die Ogdoas einmal gar den wahren Sabbat nennt". ("Ogdoas als ein Symbol für die Auferstehung", *VC* 26 (1972), 29–52), 36.

to Clement's gnostics who, on receiving perfection by knowledge, are considered "gods going about in a body of flesh".[164]

The *apokatastasis* is also characterised by the acquisition of knowledge by the elect. In the second chapter we discussed the three saving changes that take place in the soul, the first from heathenism to faith, the second, from faith to knowledge, and the third, the passage through the holy septenary to arrive at the Lord's mansion.[165] In the passage just prior to this account, the arrival at the Lord's mansion is also referred to as a process of the elect soul's restoration:

> Knowledge is therefore quick in purifying, and fit for that acceptable transformation to the better. Hence also with ease it removes [the soul] to what is akin to the soul, divine and holy, and by its own light conveys man through the mystic stages of advancement (τὰς προκοπὰς τὰς μυστικὰς) till it restores (ἀποκαταστήσῃ) the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest, teaching it to gaze on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension. For in this consists the perfection of the gnostic soul, in its being with the Lord, where it is in immediate subjection to Him, after rising above all purification and service.[166]

"The mystic stages of advancement" refer to the holy septenary Clement goes on to mention in the passage immediately following and which we have already identified as the mystagogic phase of his divine pedagogy. At the uppermost of these mystic stages sits the Lord's mansion where the soul is restored to rest.[167] As the uppermost point, this mystic stage of rest corresponds with the eighth grade or ogdoad, the summit we mentioned in the last paragraph.[168] This is the entrance into the Holy of Holies spoken of in chapter two where the gnostic soul, in imitation of the high priest who brings about propitiation on the eighth day according to the testimony of Ezekiel 44.27. It is here that the gnostic soul "restores" the gnostic "to the highest rest (εἰς τὴν ἀκροτάτην ἀνάπαυσιν ἀποκαθιστάς)".[169]

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[164] *Str.* 7.16.101.4.
[165] *Str.* 7.10.57.4–5. See p. 38 above.
[166] *Str.* 7.10.56.7–57.2.
[167] Cf. Origen *De Princ.* 1.6.3. For the "grades of the church (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν προκοπαί)" see *Str.* 6.13.106.1–107.3. On Clement's use of the ancient philosophical term προκοπή see Kovacs "Divine Pedagogy", 10.
[168] See Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 451.
[169] *Str.* 4.25.157.3–159.3 See p. 39 above.

6.5.2. *The Deification of the Gnostic*

For Clement the gnostic or elect soul dwells with the Lord, continues as his familiar friend, shares the same hearth, bears the cross with the saviour, and even becomes the Holy of Holies itself.[170] Like the high priest the soul reaches its place of rest in the eighth grade, but in so doing it becomes sanctified as the inner sanctuary, once again emphasising that the gnostic becomes a living example, or in this case, an adyton to the divine presence in the world. The soul is in the immediate vicinity of God's presence which was said to have been contained in the Ark of the Covenant.[171] It is in this state that the gnostic is now able endlessly to contemplate God. Elsewhere, Clement refers to this as a "restoration to everlasting contemplation" (τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῇ αἰδίῳ ἀποκατάστασις).[172] Furthermore, in this state gnostics are "called by the appellation of gods", receiving deification as adopted sons of God.[173]

It is important to note that although gnostics can become deified and are called gods, this is not to be understood as becoming God in essence.[174] The gnostic becomes god-like, but not God, can contemplate God, but not fully comprehend the possibilities of God's essence. As we established earlier, God is remote in essence, but by virtue of his power is very close to us. The power of God represented by Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, simultaneously represents God's closeness and sympathy towards us, and also his ineffability and invisibility. The gnostic is deified in the power of God, endlessly ascending toward God as rays of light recede into its "inaccessible" source. The power of God bridges the abyss separating creature and creator. What Clement refers to as the "restoration to everlasting contemplation" is necessarily paradoxical because it implies a restoration to some end, but it is also a place of insatiability in regards to knowing God. This insatiability is an "endless end (τὲλος ἀτελεύτητον)" as he calls it elsewhere;[175] an end where the soul learns of its ultimate relation to God as

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[170] *Str.* 2.20.104.3. Elsewhere Clement calls this the "shrine of the soul (τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ ἄδυτον)". (*Paid.* 3.2.5.3).

[171] Hence the Hebrew belief that the Ark contained the Shekhinah, the "indwelling", "presence' or immanence" of God.

[172] *Str.* 7.10.56.6.

[173] See also *Str.* 4.26.171.4.

[174] Note that, as Butterworth points out, "the title 'god' is…never applied by [Clement] to angels or men in the same sense as Christ". ("The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria", 161).

[175] *Str.* 7.10.56.3; *Str.* 2.22.134.1–3.

divine and immortal on the one hand, and created and mortal on the other; capable of intimacy with him, yet separated by an unbridgeable abyss. Hence, "complete restoration (ἡ παντελὴν ἀποκατάστασις)" follows insatiable contemplation, which is also a "boundless joy".[176] This is the state of someone who is grasping towards "the light inaccessible", and who therefore endlessly ascends on the rays of God's light, or, to put it another way, knows God's immanent power, but who continually strives for transcendence with God in essence.[177] The gnostic deification can only be understood in the context of God's power and essence.

Another important point needs to be emphasised at this juncture. In attaining the eighth grade the gnostic is restored and deified in the greatness of Christ. In replication of Christ's resurrection, this deification is also a return to the first day of creation: it represents a return to the first principle, the *archê* of Genesis. This is not the unbeginning principle (ἄναρχος), or God in essence, but the manifestation of God's power. In this sense, the deification of the gnostic soul also means that it becomes a co-worker in creation with Christ.[178] Clement expresses this, not in terms of *archê*, but in terms of the gnostic becoming a unity or monad. To see this connection we first of all need to reiterate what Clement says about the monad in the cosmogonic principle of Genesis 1, which we spoke of in the last chapter.[179] The monad constitutes the point where the light of the divine *fiat* brings about the material cosmogony after the pattern of the invisible heaven and incorporeal earth. To express this by means of what we have already established of the self-generating first principle, it is the point where the *anarchos* becomes *archê*, in order to give visibility and form to that which was invisible and formless.

However, Clement speaks of the monad elsewhere in terms of the unifying principle to which the gnostic soul aspires. When the soul becomes impassible and is not swayed back and forth by the desires,

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[176] *Str.* 6.9.75.1–2. Elsewhere referred to as "insatiable vision (Gk: ἀκόρεσιον... θέαν)". (*Str.* 7.3.13.1).

[177] As Daniélou states, this gnosis "resembles not a transient vision but rather a stable condition which partakes in advance of the nature of eternal life". (*Gospel Message*, 450).

[178] On the surface this appears dangerously close to the criticism that Clement himself makes against the Valentinian *pneumatikoi*. On this distinction see E. Proctor, *Christian Controversy in Alexandria: Clement's Polemic Against the Basilideans and Valentinians* (New York, 1995), 69.

[179] *Str.* 514.93.4–94.3. See p. 148 above.

it will become an "unmixed oneness (ἀχράντως μοναδικός)",[180] but in so doing it has attained to a unity with Christ:

> Therefore also to believe in [Christ], and by him, is to become one (μοναδικόν), being indissolubly united in him; and to disbelieve is to be separated, disjoined, divided.[181]

Again, one can see the imagery of communion working here. To believe in Christ is to become united to him in oneness, and to disbelieve is to become divided from him and scattered. Just as Christ is the one, so the person who believes will become one.

Elsewhere, Clement claims that "God is one (ἕν), and beyond the one and above the monad itself".[182] Christ is both ἄναρχος and transcendent, but also ἐν ἀρχῇ, the monad as the immanent principle of creation. This idea reiterates Clement's distinction of God in essence and in power. The gnostic is capable of possessing, "by a process of blending (ἀνάκρασιν), the power of God communicated by Christ",[183] but, like any other of God's creatures, is incapable of unifying in essence with God, who bears no natural relation to us. The monad represents that point of unity in the power of God to which the gnostic can aim.[184]

Nonetheless, by becoming one with Christ in the power of God the gnostic is unified in the principle of creation itself and therefore participates in Christ's work in bringing things into harmony.

> Let us hurry to salvation, to regeneration; let us who are many hurry that we may be brought together into one love (εἰς μίαν ἀγάπην συναχθῆναι), according to the essential unity of the monad (κατα τὴν τῆς μοναδικῆς οὐσίας ἕνωσιν); and by being made good let us analogously pursue unity, seeking after the good monad. The union of many in one, issuing in the production of divine harmony out of a medley of sounds (πολυφωνίας) and scattering becomes one symphony (μία συμφωνία) following one choir-leader and teacher, the Word.[185]

[180] *Str.* 4.23.152.1.
[181] *Str.* 4.25.157.1–3.
[182] *Paid.* 1.8.71.2.
[183] *Str.* 7.12.79.2–5.
[184] This view of the Monad was probably Clement's defence against the Carpocratians, whose false view of the Monad, as far as we can tell, led to the belief that if the soul could become united with Christ, then it was therefore consubstantial with God (*Str.* 3.2.5.3).
[185] *Protr.* 9.88.2–3.

This symphony is a major theme at the beginning of the *Protreptikos* where Clement discusses the new song brought into the world by the coming of Christ. The symphony of the new song is a metaphor for the composition of the world into a melodious order,[186] in which the gnostic participates in unison with Christ, in the work of creation itself. When the soul hurries to salvation and regeneration, to come together in the "one love" of the monad, it partakes of the creative work of God. Clement claims that gnostics become the "causes (αἴτιοι) of their own salvation"[187] and goes as far as to say that "the gnostic even makes and creates himself (ναὶ μὴν εἁυτὸν κτίζει καὶ δημιουργεῖ)".[188]

By glorifying the resurrection of Christ in them selves,[189] gnostics participate in the first cosmogonic act of Christ as the Word of God. This is most explicitly related by Clement in his discussions concerning the unity of the monad, which simultaneously represents the point of light by which the divine creates the world of itself, and the oneness to which the soul aspires. It represents the point at which the unity of God becomes the manifold things of creation, and also the point at which the human soul, subject to the disparities of the manifold creation, is restored and becomes one with Christ. Finally, Clement uses the analogy of the symphony to show how in the monad, the soul joins in the choir to sing the song of creation with Christ at its head. The symbols of light and sound merge in the gnostic as they do in Christ's cosmogonic work. Ultimately, however, what Clement is conveying is that gnostics, above all others and in accordance with their ability to ascend to the highest of God's many mansions, are "fellow-workers (συνεργοὶ) in the ineffable administration and service" of God.[190] The presence of the gnostic in the world is also testimony to the creative work of God for the salvation of the whole world.

6.5.3. *The Restoration of the Elect*

To return to the issue of the elect of the elect in relation to the "unity of faith", Clement was assured of the gnostic's role in the edification of the body of Christ and in the restoration. Drawing on Ephesians 4.11–13, coming to knowledge of the Son of God, to become the perfect

[186] *Protr.* 1.5.1.
[187] *Str.* 6.15.122.3.
[188] *Str.* 7.3.13.3.
[189] *Str.* 7.12.76.4.
[190] *Str.* 4.6.37.1.

man,[191] Clement tells us that we are to strive to be as perfect as we can while remaining behind in the flesh (καὶ τελειοῦσθαι ὡς ὅτι μάλιστα ἔτι ἐν σαρκὶ καταμένοντας), to study the will of God until we reach the restoration (ἀποκατάστασιν) of perfect nobleness in the fullness of Christ. This is the completion of our training.[192] The unity of faith is dependent on the role of the gnostic as an exemplar of perfection, and in this way the unity of faith is restored to the fullness of Christ. Clement's gnostic is not a mere participant in faith, but is actually its core, or the goal to which it should aim.[193]

In this way the gnostic is crucial to the restoration of the whole community of the faithful. Clement makes it clear that the gnostic, though only one person, is of equal value with the people.[194] Since God has reconciled the gnostic to himself, the gnostic is honoured equally with the people, being restored (ἀποκατασταθεὶς) to his original condition with God, and from this "the whole is called from the part (καλεῖται δὲ καὶ ἐκ μέρους τὸ πᾶν)". Here the reconciliation of the one leads to the summoning of the whole people. The implication of this, however, is that when gnostics are reconciled to God they have achieved something of universal value. In effect, the reconciliation to God means that the gnostics have gained something of God's universal restorative power that summons all things to him. Like the magnetic attraction of the Hereclean stone that Clement uses as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the seventh book of the *Stromateis*,[195] gnostics become an attractive force of God by becoming universally valuable. We have already examined how the gnostic is the one who attains to the eighth grade, the realm of universals "which Plato called the region of ideas, having learned from Moses that it was a place which contained all things universally".[196]

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191 The perfect man is genderless, yet still referred to as "man". See *Str.* 6.12.100.3: "For souls, themselves by themselves, are equal. Souls are neither male (ἄρρενες) nor female (θήλειαι), when they no longer marry or are given in marriage. And is not woman translated into man (καὶ μή τι οὕτως μετατίθεται εἰς τὸν ἄνδρα ἡ γυνή), when she has become equally unfeminine (ἀθήλυντος), and manly (ἀνδρικὴ), and perfect?" Clement appears to follow the Gnostic view here Cf. *Exc.* 21.1–22.2; 79–80.1.

192 *Str.* 4.21.132.1–2.

193 See also *Str.* 4.16.100.2.

194 *Str.* 2.19.98.2. Van den Hoek claims that Clement is paraphrasing Philo's commentary on Deut. 30.11–14; 26.17 here, but that he diverts Philo's ethical discourse of singularity and multitude to an eschatological one; a restoration of mankind developed in conjunction with Eph 4.11ff. She cites *Str.* 2.22.134.2 & *Str.* 4.21.132.1 as evidence of this (*Clement of Alexandria*, 103–4). See also Méhat, "Apocatastase", 204.

195 *Str.* 7.2.9.4.

196 *Str.* 5.11.73.1–74.1.

As Clement writes, man, "composed of body and soul, is a universe in miniature (τὸν σμικρὸν κόσμον)",[197] but it is the gnostic who has come to fulfil this potential.[198] Reconciliation to God means the gnostic becomes an active restorative presence to all human beings.

Though not mentioning the *apokatastasis* directly, the notion that the gnostic is the elect of the elect and the agent through whom the whole is restored is powerfully represented in the homiletic treatise, *Quis Dives Salvetur?*[199] All the faithful are "godlike (θεοπρεπεῖς)", but there are, however, "some more elect than the elect (τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι)", who, having drawn them selves like ships to a beach out of the flux of the world, hold within themselves the "ineffable mysteries (τὰ ἀνεκλάλητα μυστήρια)" and "whom the Word calls 'the light of the world', and 'the salt of the earth'".[200] Clement refers to these more elect souls as the seed (Gk: σπέρμα). The plural ἐκλεκτότεροι, becomes the singular of both light and seed, suggesting that they are united in one with Christ. Clement tells us that all things are "held together (συνέχεται)" so long as the seed remains. However, when that seed is "gathered (συναχθέντος)" "all these things shall be very quickly dissolved (αὐτοῦ πάντα τάχιστα λυθήσεται)". This seed exists on the earth as a sojourner just as Christ did during his Advent, but during its time here maintains the creative work of the Word of God, without which all things would dissolve. That is to say that when the gnostic seed is gathered the world will cease to be. As the light of the world, the elect represent the light of the divine *fiat* that, as we mentioned in regard to the monad, is the principle of creation. This is further emphasised when the light metaphor changes to that of a seed that is in the image and likeness and the "true son and heir" of God with Christ. This once again emphasises the role of the gnostic in the unity of faith, but also reinforces the idea that the gnostic is one who has undergone a universal transformation, being counted equally with the whole people and on which the world itself depends to continue.

[197] *Protr.* 1.5.3.

[198] Philosophically speaking, this micro/macrocosmic transformation takes place when knowing a thing is to become that thing, where epistemology and ontology are one and the same thing. To know the universal is to be the universal. We will return to this issue in the last section of this chapter.

[199] *Q.D.S.* 36.1–3. Cf. Matt 24.31/Mk 13.27. See also Justin *1Apol.* 28.2–3.

[200] Matt 5.13–14.

This idea is further confirmed by the discussion concerning the words of Salome in the third book of the *Stromateis*. The entire world is dependent upon the restoration of the gnostic elect:

> Those who are opposed to God's creation, disparaging it under the fair name of continence, also quote the words of Salome, which we mentioned earlier. They are found, I believe, in the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*. They say that the Saviour himself said "I came to destroy the works of the female", meaning by "female", desire, and "works", birth and death. What then would they say? Has this destruction in fact been accomplished? They could not say so, for the world continues exactly as before. Yet the Lord did not lie. For in truth he did destroy the works of desire, love of money, contentiousness, vanity, mad lust for women, pederasty, gluttony, licentiousness, and similar vices. Their birth is the soul's death, since then we are "dead in sins".[201] And this is the incontinence referred to as "female". Birth and death chiefly involved in the creation must necessarily continue until the achievement of complete separation and the restoration of the elect (ἀποκαταστάσεως ἐκλογῆς), on whose account even the beings mingled with the world are restored to the proper condition.[202]

This is perhaps the most crucial passage concerning Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis*. The passage claims that when Christ said that he had come to destroy the works of the female, he did not lie. However, since the world continues as it did before this would suggest otherwise. The list of sins he mentions still take place, yet since the coming of Christ, the perpetrators are, in some sense, dead. This is evidenced by the passage from Ephesians that claims that to give birth to sins is to be dead in them, not bodily, but morally and psychically.[203] In other words, the life of sin is a form of death, but despite this the world seemingly

[201] Eph 2.5.

[202] *Str.* 3.9.63.1–4 (tr. Chadwick slightly modified) Note the Méhat suggests that it is difficult to distinguish whether this reference to the restoration of the elect is difficult to distinguish as either Valentinian or Clementine, and therefore does not treat its full implications ("Apocatastase", 204). However, the reference to the restoration of the elect clearly comes in Clement's correction of the heretical view and is therefore his view, and is eschatologically significant. See also *Str*. 2.8.37.6.

[203] As Casey said: "death is more a moral than a physical concept" for Clement ("Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism", 55). The death of the soul is mentioned immediately following the passage just quoted at *Str.* 3.9.64.1. Though not as explicit as Tatian (*Orat.* 13), Clement leaves open the possibility of the soul's death. As R.McL. Wilson says, "If [the soul] continues alone, it tends downward towards matter, and dies together with the flesh". ("The Early History of the Exegesis of Gen. 1.26", *SP* 1 (1957), 420–37). Plato's discussion in the *Phaedo* (81c–e) on the immortality of the soul leans in this direction, but is fully denied in *Rep.* 608d ff.

continues as it did before. Despite the fact that these sins continue to take place, something significant occurred with the Advent of Christ in the world. It caused a kind of cosmic inversion whereby the life of sin appears merely as the semblance of life, and is really a form of death. Life is death and death is life, a concept that clarifies the death to death and the life to life of 2 Corinthians 2.16. It also helps us appreciate the theory behind the Christian attempt to eschew life in this world for life in another, but in doing so helps them gain a greater life in this world. The Christian is asked to leave the world in order to return to it and live properly. Life appears to continue and will do so until such time as the restoration of the elect, that is, when the seed is gathered and the world undergoes dissolution.

The implication is that the world continues so long as the elect maintain the presence of Christ to the world and continue to communicate the gnostic tradition. The gnostic is therefore crucial to the salvation of the unity of faith and to the world. The gnostic life is esoteric, yet for Clement the fact that truth was so difficult to attain meant that the search for it should be accorded the highest respect, and that a person who seeks for knowledge was therefore indispensable to the Christian community. Christ as teacher or educator is "the guide of all humanity",[204] but this is accomplished through those who allow themselves to be fully taught in the ways of God. Hence the esoteric life acts as the medium through which universal adherence to the Word of God could be accomplished.[205] In what can usefully be summed up in the paradoxical phrase, 'esoteric universalism', Clement wanted to ensure that the Christian community maintained its gnostic tradition by continuing to initiate its elect souls into the mysteries of God.[206] If such a tradition were to be broken, the result for Clement, would quite literally be catastrophic for the world.

[204] *Paid.* 1.7.55.2.

[205] Plato believed that when the soul regains the wings it lost when it came into contact with matter, it "soars high and administers the entire world" (*Phdr.* 246 c). Plotinus later used this passage to talk about regaining the human archetype and the creative power that goes along with rediscovering one's universal being: "'it soars high and administers the entire world': becoming the all it is the maker of all". (*Enn.* 5.8.7).

[206] See my article: "The Restoration of the Elect: Clement of Alexandria's Doctrine of *Apokatastasis*", *SP* 41 (2006), 169–174. The same conclusion was reached by Wyrwa in regards to the gnostic's role in the Christian community. "Religiöses Lernen", 271.

6.5.4. *The Restoration of Hope*

One last point needs to be made concerning Clement's doctrine of *apokatastasis*. We have seen Clement refer to the restoration in connection with rest and immortality, with adoption, with everlasting contemplation, and most importantly with the elect, but he also mentions it in relation to hope. He writes: "Now hope is synonymous with the recompense and the restoration of hope (ἐλπὶς δὲ ὁμωνύμως καὶ ἡ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀπόδοσις τε καὶ ἀποκατάστασις)".[207] Elsewhere he writes: "For the restoration of hope is called by the same name, hope (ἡ γὰρ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀποκατάστασις ὁμωνύμως ἐλπὶς εἴρηται)".[208] For Clement, to live in hope is to be already restored because one has secured the promise that awaits one in the after life as a present reality, that is, in the here and now. "Such a one has obtained rest (ἀναπεπαῦσθαι), having received the hope for which he hoped", and this Clement also calls the "restoration of the promise (τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἀποκατάστασιν)".[209] It is a rest that resides in hope and promise of rest, and, furthermore, can take place while we are still present in our bodies.[210] Once again, this is the prerogative of the gnostic alone.

Clement therefore places hope in the context of the restoration, emphasising its two-fold nature. Drawing on Romans 6.22 and 5.4, Clement describes how Paul spoke of a two-fold hope as that which is expected and that which is received. This is the "the restoration of the hope (τὴν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀποκατάστασιν)".[211] It is in this two-fold hope, in which living the life of hope is also to be restored in hope, that Clement sees our fullest assimilation to Christ. This state of living the future as though already present, is the perfect state of rest, and can be achieved by living according to the commandments of God.

It is difficult to see how this perfection of hope differs from the perfection of faith in this regard, but certain passages do offer us a distinction. Clement follows the order of importance suggested in 1 Corinthians 13.13, beginning with faith, proceeding to hope, and culminating in the greatest, love or charity. He claims that faith is the body of Christ, a motif we have already discussed in regards to Ephesians 4, and hope is the soul of that body. The Lord is flesh and blood and,

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[207] *Str.* 4.22.145.1.
[208] *Str.* 2.22.136.4.
[209] *Str.* 2.22.163.6.
[210] *Str.* 6.6.49.3.
[211] *Str.* 2.22.134.3–4.

according to Clement, when he asked us to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood,[212] he was symbolically referring to his body of faith and his soul of hope. "For in reality, the blood of faith is hope, in which faith is held together (συνέχεται) as by soul. And when hope expires, it is as if blood flowed forth, and the vitality of faith is destroyed".[213] Hope is the living principle of the faith, without which faith would be lifeless. Faith is the foundation, but is held together by the hope or expectation that the object of faith will be delivered. Individually speaking hope is what binds the mind to that which it contemplates; as a community, hope therefore constitutes the element that binds the unity of faith to that at which it aims. Hope, like faith, therefore, is twofold. It can, like simple faith, merely lead to opinion,[214] but it is also an intellectual apprehension of the thing sought for. Clement draws on the presocratic Parmenides, whom he believes refered to hope by suggesting that he who hopes and believes, sees intellectual objects.[215] The mind hopes to receive something that *is*, but the hope is not detached from the thing that *is*. In other words, the hope that something is, has a substantial relation to that which is. It appears that Clement is following Parmenides' line of argument that says that "thinking (νοεῖν) and being (εἶναι) are the same thing".[216] Clement's reference suggests that the hope has a kind of hypostatic relation to that which is hoped for, in the same sense that to think that something is must also mean that the thing exists. However, to distinguish this from believing that we can hope or think something into material being, Clement argues that this relation takes place in the mind, the realm of the real, and not in the realm of the senses. Furthermore, it is exactly the mind that is the "distinctive form" by which both God and humans are characterised, and therefore is the realm of real existences.[217]

Parmenides' belief that thinking and being are the same is slightly altered by Clement in order to justify hope as an intellectual apprehension

[212] Jn 6.54.
[213] *Paid.* 1.6.38.2.
[214] *Str.* 8.3.5.2–3. See also *Str.* 2.22.143.4 which speaks of a "twofold hope (διττὴ ἐλπίς)".
[215] *Str.* 5.2.15.5–16.1. Parmenides DK 28 B4.
[216] DK 28 B3 quoted at *Str.* 6.2.23.3. See also Plotinus *Enn.* 5.1.8. On this enigmatic fragment of Parmenides see Kirk, Raven and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1983), 246 n. 2.
[217] *Str.* 6.9.72.2.

that a future reward can be gained in the present life.[218] He would be just as happy saying "hoping and being are the same thing". "He who by love", he writes, "is already in the midst of that in which he is destined to be and has the anticipated hope by knowledge (τὴν ἐλπίδα προειληφὼς διὰ τῆς γνώσεως), does not desire anything, having as far as possible, the very thing desired".[219] Hence, hope is synonymous with the restoration of hope. Yet, like the perfection of faith, which has its basis and an incumbent need to build an intelligent faith on that basis, hope is simultaneously both complete and lacking, and the attainment of our knowledge of God is dependent upon this disjuncture. "For neither have we attained all, nor do we lack all".[220] Hence there is an imperative to regain what we have lost or forgotten.

Whatever the subtle differences between faith and hope, and considering that a majority of Clement's references to the *apokatastasis* refer to the elect, the restoration of hope is most likely another reference to the faithful's reliance on the gnostic's universal restorative presence in the world. Gnostics have the capacity to be restored in hope in the present and who communicate that hope to others as a living presence. They are an elite precisely because they choose to strive for knowledge in a way that few do, in order to know how to live life according to God and to exemplify Christ's presence in the world, benefiting all Christians by doing so. This is what Clement describes as "gnostic love (γνωστικὴ ἀγάπη)",[221] the love that is the culmination of the "sacred triad" of 1 Corinthians 13.13, and which leads on to "rational gnosis".[222] It is the knowledge of God that is a good in itself, which brings about assimilation with the divine.

6.6. *Conclusion*

Lastly, a crucial analogy arises between Clement's doctrine of restoration and the method he uses to achieve an understanding of it. The *apokatastasis* is achieved by all things being in some way attracted to

[218] Cf. Heb 11.1 which would seem to be the reverse of what Clement is claiming in regards to the slightly different role of faith and hope.
[219] *Str.* 6.9.73.4.
[220] *Ecl.* 12.1. Cf. Plato *Epin.* 973c quoted by Clement *Str.* 5.1.7.6. "There is a good hope that after death I shall attain all".
[221] *Str.* 6.9.75.2.
[222] *Str.* 4.7.54.1.

the gnostic; that is, that the gnostic acts as the Christ-like agent in the world drawing all things to itself and restoring them in Christ. Like the doctrine of anamnesis, the process is one of gathering in and of lifting up. The inward and upward movements have their analogy, therefore, in the process by which the gnostic gathers the seeds of doctrines contained in the *Stromateis*. The agricultural imagery of the harvest that we have seen Clement use to refer to gathering the seeds of truth dispersed throughout his *Stromateis* equally applies to the affinity with which people are attracted to the piety of the gnostic and draw benefits from the fruits they yield.[223] These are not just the figurative seeds that represent the doctrines of the Word dispersed throughout a written work and left to be gathered in, but people, "the fruits of men" who, by virtue of the gnostics' piety, have come to believe.[224] The fields of the *Stromateis* represent, not only the field of ideas through which the gnostic searches for the truth, but the whole world throughout which the Word of God has been dispersed. The gnostic is the farmer or husbandman, or rather a worker of the earth and a synergist with God securing the salvation of all humankind.

Gnostics are the "husbandmen of faith (τῆς πίστεως γεωργοῖς)"[225] Clement tells us, who gather the seeds of the faith as a farmer does his crop. In the context of the elect person's role in the unity of faith, the analogy suggests that as the "husbandmen of faith", the elect gather the faithful about them, embodying and emanating God's saving grace. However, he is also speaking of the seeds of truth dispersed throughout the *Stromateis*. The doctrine of restoration is analogous to the method by which the gnostic gathers the seeds of truth in the *Stromateis* itself. Just as the genuine seeker gathers the seeds of truth, so too does the gnostic act as the attractive power of the Holy Spirit to bind the faithful together. This is the underlying purpose of Clement's writing anything at all. With the absence of apostles in the world to transmit the gnostic tradition orally, God's presence had to be maintained in such a way as to attract those with a gnostic propensity so that his saving work could continue.[226] But at the same time, this gnostic study is for the benefit of

[223] *Str.* 7.1.3.5–6. See also *Str.* 6.15.118.2; *Str.* 2.18.95.2–96.2 as well as *Str.* 7.12.74.1–2 which speaks of "the divine husbandman (θεῖος γεωργός)".
[224] See also *Paid.* 2.10.83.1–2.
[225] *Str.* 1.1.18.2.
[226] *Str.* 7.12.77.4.

all those who come into contact with such people, who are dependent on the gnostic for salvation and restoration.

In this respect Clement is espousing an esotericism distinct from Gnosticism. The elect are not naturally saved, nor exempt from responsibilities to the religious community despite being predestined, and they are not the only ones to reap the benefits of God's saving grace. The gnostic is more or less distinguished from simple believers, but never distinct from them. This is an important point that Clement strove to communicate: the gnostic chooses to search for the knowledge of God and as such is distinguished from others only insomuch as they have the capacity to receive higher teachings. Clement's gnostics are not an elect race apart from other Christians, predestined to be saved while others fail, but rather predestined because they have chosen to submit fully to the grace of salvation: a grace that is communicated through the gnostic to all.[227] Knowledge is in no sense a self-serving exercise, but wholly philanthropic in this respect.[228] As Bigg aptly put it, Clement is "above all things a Missionary".[229] His esoteric universalism teaches a universal salvation that requires the continuing initiation of its elect persons, and their ability to communicate the "grace of knowledge"[230] to all.

[227] This crucial distinction between Clement's gnosticism and heretical Gnosticism is pointed out by McGinn (*The Foundations of Mysticism*, 103), who directs the reader to the Camelot's treatment of this tension in Clement's writings (*Foi et gnose*, 43–48, 87–88, 92–95, 141–42).

[228] Kovacs follows Méhat's view that the gnostic should not be viewed as a mere "solitary dreamer", (*Études*, 60–61) but one whose pedagogical task is to care for the souls of his neighbours ("Divine Pedagogy", 17). However, Clement in my view, believes the gnostic's duty of care extends far beyond this as well. This view contrasts with that of Casey's who, in the 20s, had insisted that Clement held that "salvation was open to all but achieved by few", and concludes that Clement's universalism was "pessimistic". ("Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism", 53 n. 40). This is to underestimate Clement's faith in the human ability to become a universal agent in God's economy of salvation (Cf. *Str.* 7.7.41.6–7; 7.9.52.1–2; 7.13.81.4–7).

[229] *The Christian Platonists*, 47.

[230] *Str.* 5.11.71.5.

CONCLUSION

Broaching the subject of Clement's didactic efficacy through an examination of his method and doctrine has allowed us to see the important implications of his work. If one examines method alone, one is left without a sense of what is to be achieved by it, and if one examines doctrine alone, one is left without an effective means of realising it. In Clement's writing the two work together in a teaching which does not leave the initiate with a pre-formulated understanding of what is meant by certain doctrines, but with a sense of what is required to realise them fully within the soul. This is not simply intellectual work, but a life coupled with the moral imperative of the salvation of others: "a life calculated to inspire trust towards those without".[1] The efficacy of doctrine is entirely dependent on this internal realisation of the initiate, which is made present to us by the gnostic tradition handed down by Christ during his Advent. This realisation of the initiate is the fullest expression of living in the image of Christ for Clement: the soul that has gathered together the Word of God to become the embodiment of those doctrines.

This has profound implications for the way we are to understand doctrine. For Clement, the idea of a fully defined, a fully formulated or written doctrine would have been entirely against the grain of his pedagogy. He deferred to Socrates' view that writing was detrimental to both wisdom and memory and that if we are to continue to recall the life of Christ as a presence in our lives, gnosis, the knowing of things both human and divine, is our greatest hope. In the absence of an oral teaching, Clement saw his role as transmitting the unwritten primordial tradition of the ancients into writing. He set about putting this tradition down in a way that simultaneously concealed the truth from those who were not capable of receiving it, and revealed it to those whom the Word had sought out to receive it. As a result, the literary form of the *Stromateis* is utterly implicated in the development

[1] *Str.* 7.8.51.2. Thus Wyrwa: "Damit ist gegeben, dass religiöses Lernen niemals bloß eine intellektuelle Aneignung eines bestimmten Wissensgehaltes bedeuten kann, sondern ein Hineinwachsen in die befreiende und erneuernde Lebenswirklichkeit ist, von der sich die christliche Gemeinde durch die Gegenwart ihres Herrn bestimmt sein lässt". "Religiöses Lernen", 271.

of the initiate seeking the truth.[2] It is the training ground in which initiates hone their skills as theologians, philosophers, metaphysicians and ultimately gnostic teachers. It is a training ground with a definite *akolouthia*: an arrangement of teaching evidenced in the number and sequence of the overall structure of the works, but whose mystagogic component required the haphazard or unsystematic element of the *Stromateis* which operates as a method for the initiation of elect souls.

Few people are capable of achieving the gnostic perfection that Clement sets out in the *Stromateis*. This means that it be considered esoteric by necessity. Moreover, it is entirely beyond the scope of an objective analysis of the work to conclude otherwise since the esoteric core, that is, the doctrines of the Word of God, are only fully realised in the internal processes of those undergoing Clement's training as initiation. An objective analysis precludes the possibility of undergoing this initiation since it tries to remain detached from a position of any bias or sceptical of the truth of its content. Given that Clement only set out to indicate the direction in which the initiate must head, the detached position will not allow for the belief that these works adumbrate a higher knowledge. Clement is certain that the exercise of logic and dialectic in understanding his work is not to be understood as equipping the reader or initiate with the means to analyse the material in an objective manner. Rather, the truth itself requires commitment to it, and is why the *Stromateis* require the faith of the reader in the truth contained therein. Clement sees logic and dialectic as tools for the purpose of seeking the truth and penetrating those ideas that continue to remain enigmatic to us. They are not tools of argument for argument's sake nor is it possible to come to the truth if one is sceptical of truth itself. Truth necessarily requires faith in or preconception of what that truth is. For Clement, how could it be otherwise? He does not separate the life of reason from the life of faith; in fact they are utterly interdependent in the life of the gnostic. The academic who does not fully enter into the initiation is, in this case, a sophist, and therefore not in a position to determine the efficacy of the work's esoteric content.

Conversely, one might argue that, given that Clement's works only point the way to the gnostic experience of doctrine, the esoteric content

[2] As Chadwick points out (*Alexandrian Christianity*, 18): "It has been suggested that only this obscurity of his style prevented Clement from suffering condemnation like Origen in later centuries". This is a point well taken and perhaps sheds some light on why Clement has always remained in the shadow of Origen!

therefore cannot be contained in them. It must lie outside the works in the personal experience of the gnostic. This is correct, since Clement assures us that the truth cannot be conveyed through writing, and that written instruction is merely an image of the truth. Yet it is exactly this imperative that sustains Clement's works as esoteric. The admission at the outset of the *Stromateis* that the written word cannot convey the truth in itself is the intimation of what is actually required to realise the truth as a reality in the Christian soul. The form of the *Stromateis* gives us the strongest indication of the inadequacy of words and their organisation into systematic descriptors or formulae to convey doctrine. Rather, the chance arrangement is designed for the purposes of shattering this idea. The initiation of elect souls requires a much more sophisticated approach to teaching to ensure that these souls come to the fullest appreciation of doctrine.

According to Clement, the initiation of the elect through the search for knowledge baptises and sanctifies the gnostic soul until it becomes an exemplar to the unity of faith; a living and breathing thanksgiving whose presence is partaken of by the Christian community. But while any literate person can assuredly read the *Stromateis*, few are capable of comprehending its implications and assimilating its content as a sacramental experience. Some may see the *Stromateis* of notes as a collection of scrap material, others see them as containing something of profound significance. Where some may see haphazard notes scrawled down with little purpose or order, others see the *akolouthia*, the shape of Clement's teaching and its significance in coming to know the true philosophy of Christ. One may get lost in the miscellany of notes, unable to harmonise so much that does not appear to fit any systematic pattern, others see much to gather and learn, and have the ability to create a web of meaning that is fully harmonious with the Word of God. Doing this is entirely the prerogative of the reader whom the Word of God seeks out to receive itself. The reader, under these circumstances, can choose to become an initiate and enrol in the teaching that Clement felt required to put down for posterity. This cannot be achieved if one takes a purely objective approach to his works. One must believe one will find what one is looking for, as Clement's views on faith and knowledge clearly testify.

Anamnesis for Clement is the process by which the soul rediscovers its divine origin within the Word of God. The initiate who does the work of gathering and reconstructing the doctrines which have been scattered throughout the fields of the *Stromateis* will be rewarded with the true gnosis as understood by Clement. Anamnesis is both a method and a doctrine in this respect. However, we feel the implications for Clement's method and doctrine most fully in his understanding of restoration, where the work of the initiate in gathering the seeds of truth also becomes the work of gathering souls together in the unity of faith. Such a soul has not only come to *know* of the doctrine of restoration, but has also come to *be* the agent through which it is achieved. Nowhere is the interrelatedness between method and doctrine more complete than here.

To achieve this universal presence, however, the initiate must reconstruct the doctrines of physiology and cosmogony through right theology set out in Clement's miscellany. The initiate can only ever catch a hint of what Clement himself believes to be orthodox in regards to these doctrines, but it is exactly this lack of confirmation which causes the initiate to expend so much intellectual energy striving to find pattern and meaning in what appears disparate and incongruous. Therein lies the value of Clement's method of training souls to understand the implications of knowing the oneness of God in regard to these sciences.

The oneness of God is the origin of all metaphysical certainty and is the ground of all discussion concerning physiology and cosmogony. It is also, therefore, the ground of all theological discussion. For the gnostic at least, discussion must take place in the knowledge that God's unity lies beyond all that can be spoken or thought, and beyond all that is. God's depths can never be plumbed. But this leaves the gnostic with no tangible *isness* around which to formulate theological arguments; rather it directs human thought to what lies beyond its ken to a place that can contradictorily be described as both voidness and fullness simultaneously. The result is an apophatic theology that was to become essential to the Christian mystical tradition. Theology is the study of God as he is, in himself, and for theology to be effective for Clement, it must therefore remove all linguistic, conceptual, and ontological barriers so that assimilation with God's power can take place. Once again, the literary form of the *Stromateis*, which directs the soul beyond words, thoughts, and being itself, is a training in a theology that is directed towards inner transformation rather than outward formulation.

Clement's promise of the rewards which will come to the initiate through the search for knowledge is a large one, and his works are a noble and demanding exercise in spiritual teaching. Yet his profundity is easily overlooked if one reads his works as a befuddled and primitive stage in the development of doctrine. Clement is a doctrinal theologian, but also a metaphysician, a mystagogue, a skilled spiritual teacher, concerned not only with doctrines themselves, but also with the method of rekindling them to life in the Christian; of making sure that doctrines did not become textual solidifications, but internal transformative processes.[3] Without the method employed by Clement, the doctrines, the "ancestral and apostolic seeds (προγονικὰ καὶ ἀποστολικὰ σπέρματα)" which he claims to have received through the "blessed tradition of the apostles"[4] could not be brought to fruition. As method, the 'Teaching' is the way one comes to knowledge: as doctrine, the 'Teaching' is what one comes to know.[5] The *Stromateis* is the *Didaskalos*. Its miscellaneous nature creates a literary labyrinth through which the soul of the initiate has to pass. In this light much more can be discovered about Clement as a philosopher, teacher and theologian in his own right.

[3] As J. Ferguson claims: "Clement has an unusually profound awareness" of religious language, insisting that "we can speak only out of our own experience, and recognise that the truth is far greater than we can speak or think…There is a difference between speaking God and speaking about God". ("The Achievement of Clement of Alexandria", 68).

[4] *Str.* 1.1.12.1.

[5] As Wyrwa aptly puts it: "Damit ist zugleich gegeben, dass nach christlichem Verständnis religiöses Lernen niemals zu einem vorgegebenen, fixen Abschluss kommt, sondern immer auf dem Weg des Einübens bleibt, dass sozusagen das Ziel des Lernens nichts anderes ist als der Weg, der mit dem Lernen beschritten wird". "Religiöses Lernen",271.

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SUBJECT INDEX