



CLEMENT OF  
ALEXANDRIA



ERIC OSBORN

CAMBRIDGE

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Clement of Alexandria (150–215) lived and taught in the most lively intellectual centre of his day. This book offers a comprehensive account of how he joined the ideas of the New Testament to those of Plato and other classical thinkers. Clement taught that God was active from the beginning to the end of human history and that a Christian life should move on from simple faith to knowledge and love. He argued that a sequence of three elliptical relations governed the universe: Father and Son, God and humanity, humans and their neighbours. Faith as a fixed conviction which is also a growing mustard seed was joined to Plato's unwavering search for the best reason. The open heaven of prophecy became intelligible through Plato's ascending dialectic. This book will be invaluable in making this outstanding thinker of the early church accessible to the students of today.

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*To*  
*My Wife*  
*Lorna Grace*



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## *Preface*

‘The king, who is Christ, watches our laughter from above’. No one enjoyed theology more than Clement, yet his skilful synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem has furrowed many brows. It has often been my experience that thinkers who appear to be simple prove to be complex, while those who appear complex turn out to have clear concepts. Clement belongs to the second category.

From Irenaeus to Tertullian, early Christian theology has a common structure – that of the preaching or kerygma of the earliest churches – and a common source – the scriptures which became the Christian bible. Justin had a similar structure but a limited set of scriptures, drawing on the Sayings of Jesus and Old Testament writings as his source. Fortunately, Irenaeus has left us a statement of the kerygma, the logic of which dominates his own thought and that of Clement.

Clement has been approached in three ways which are found elsewhere in the history of ideas. The retrospective method starts from Nicaea and Chalcedon and asks what he contributed to their later solutions. The doxographical method collects verbal similarities and parallels between Clement and other ancient writers. The analytic or problematic method asks what problems Clement was trying to solve and what new moves he made towards this end, including how he used the doxographical material. The retrospective method has never found much in Clement for the development of doctrine. In contrast, the doxographical method has been unendingly fruitful. For example, parallels between Clement and contemporary Platonism provided a simple picture of Clement as a card-carrying Middle Platonist. This account has fallen apart, chiefly for two reasons. It is plain that Clement does not hold key Middle Platonist teachings (such as that concerning first principles). It is equally plain that his use of Plato differs from the various interpretations of those who preceded him. He goes to Plato himself. Consequently we are left with the analytic approach

which has been influential outside theology. We simply ask what problems forced Clement to write and where he found Christian teaching in need of elucidation.

In my youthful book I argued that the concept of unity made sense of much that he said and displayed him as a coherent thinker. Long years of reflection have now isolated three problems which permeate his entire work. How can the narrative of the kerygma (what God does) be translated into a metaphysic (who God is)? This problem is evident when one sees the *Protrepticus* as a rewriting for Greeks of Irenaeus' *Demonstration*. It governs the use of scripture in Irenaeus and Clement, for the joining of prophecy and Plato is the key to the joining of Jerusalem and Athens. The second problem is how two distinct beings, father and son, constitute one God. This problem is evident from the first verse of the Fourth Gospel, where the word is with and is God. Clement's account of God derives from this Gospel and this problem. The final problem is on the human, not the divine, side. The response to God is faith. It is easier to see where faith begins than to know where it ends. For Clement, an answer had to be found for those who divided faith and knowledge. Clement draws on Paul for epistemology and soteriology, arguing that faith and knowledge are inseparable.

As I see things now, these are the three problems which govern Clement's thinking and which hold his thought together. To understand him requires that we see that these are real problems. How does one move from the kerygma and scripture to propositions about God? How can one God be father and son? How can faith be the way to salvation, opening the way to richer knowledge but never losing its initial simplicity and dominant sufficiency? When these are seen as real problems, Clement's thought will open before us.

In 1942 I sailed as a teenaged soldier to war in New Guinea. In my pack were two books – a bible and Plato's *Republic*. Six years later I discovered Clement of Alexandria, who used Plato's logic to explain the bible. I returned to him for my Cambridge dissertation, 'The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria'. I stayed with him and Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian, although much of my teaching was in New Testament. Only in Ethics did I delve deep into later centuries.

This book returns to Clement for three reasons. First, the second century now looks very different. Middle Platonism has multiplied our knowledge of Clement's intellectual world. His contemporaries have been energetically explored, and his Gnostic opponents are better understood. Philo has been discovered and profitably investigated. The second reason

is that Clement's philosophical dialectic which is mixed with, but distinct from, his citation of philosophical dogmas (I explored the first, Lilla and Wyrwa the second) is directed to one source – the Christian bible. This was the 'true philosophy' from which pagans had torn a portion. Mondésert saw this clearly and called Clement a 'biblical theologian'; Völker repeated it with some vehemence against philosophy; and recently Schneider firmly established this fundamental point. The central question, for me now, becomes how Clement used philosophy, as dialectic and dogma, to explicate prophetic and apostolic scripture as the 'true philosophy' or the Christian gospel. We may call him a 'philosophical exegete' or 'biblical theologian'. (Ernst Käsemann commonly called himself a 'theologian' rather than an 'exegete'.) My third reason is less obvious. I think that Clement's fusion of Christian faith with Plato's search for the 'best reason' instils optimism at the centre of the European tradition. To prove this would take more books than I can write. I cite one instance. In a celebrated interview which explained why he 'gave the DDR away', Mikhail Gorbachev identified the culture which he wished to embrace as optimistic. Europe believed that a way through successive problems could be found, not quickly, but eventually. No culture is monolithic, and Clement's own thought has many strands. Yet Clement draws a final confidence from Paul, John and Plato. The exploration of that confidence is hard to resist. In our final conversation, Jean Daniélou singled out an optimism of grace as the first theme of the Greek fathers.

For the modern reader, Justin, Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian offer different challenges. Justin has good ideas, which are not developed. Irenaeus' great work is a treasury of argument and imagery; its literary form has been likened to a jungle. Tertullian argues vividly but so conceals his rationalism that he was long classed as a fideist. Clement wins the prize for mystery, because his main work is deliberately obscure, designed to separate sophists from philosophers and turn boys into men.

They joined the discourses of the bible and philosophy, of Jerusalem and Athens; they all wrote with strong intent. Christians were being martyred and misunderstanding was rife. Their gospel was a plain formula, but its meaning was unclear. Sects could confuse and discredit. Beyond the diversity of apostolic scripture came the gulf between Athens and Jerusalem: here lay their chief challenge and resource. There was an urgency to elucidate the gospel and they drew on a wide range of argument. Inevitably they were original; originality brings diversity. Their few common characteristics were the inventive mind, an inordinate devotion to the person of Christ, an appreciation of the created world,

and a sense of humour and joy. Irenaeus satirises Gnostic aeons as varieties of pumpkins. Tertullian rejects the notion of a docetic Christ because a mindless human (like Marcion) is possible, but a bodiless human is not. Clement tells jokes but goes deeper. Play and laughter, with endurance, mark the Pauline freedom of the child of God:

O wise sport, laughter aided by endurance, with the king as spectator. . . this is the sport of gods. 'Such a sport, his very own, Jove sports,' says Heraclitus. For what other work is fitting for him, who is wise and perfect than to sport and be glad in the enduring of good things and the disposing of what is good, celebrating with God? . . . And the witness of those who have endured to the end and the thanksgiving which they inspire, this is the mystic sport and the salvation which helps us with solemn gladness. The king, then, who is Christ watches our laughter from above. (paed 1.5.21f; Philo, plant. 169f)

It would be impossible to list all who have helped my understanding of Clement over more than fifty years. The journey began with A. Boyce Gibson, William Telfer, Henry Chadwick and Claude Mondésert. In recent years, Alain Le Boulluec, Judith Kovaks, John Rist and David Runia have been in helpful contact. Ernst Käsemann took me into the New Testament. There are others in Cambridge, Tübingen, Strasbourg and Rome to whom I owe much. Here, my thanks go to colleagues at La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne. Through the generosity of the Australian Research Council I have received distinguished service from research assistants. Michael Champion produced the manuscript and the index of citations from Clement with intelligent skill and good humour, while Clive Bloomfield checked references in Clement. David O'Brien cleaned up footnotes and produced the bibliography. He and Andrew Itter helped greatly while completing their own fine dissertations on Clement. Joan Barclay Lloyd, art historian, has found the cover picture for my last three books. Over many years Mimi Lucas has been a friend and infinite help to my wife and to myself. Ian Breward and Genevieve Osborn helped with the proofs.

The book is dedicated, as was my first book on Clement, to my wife, Lorna.

In the production of the book, Kate Brett, Gillian Dadd, Joanna Breeze and Christopher Jackson, of Cambridge University Press, have displayed the greatest competence and depth of understanding. My thanks go to them all.

## *Abbreviations*

<i>Aug</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>BCNH</i>	<i>Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Etudes</i>
<i>ChH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (7 <sup>th</sup> edn; Berlin, 1951–4)
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>EThL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EtThR</i>	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
EthSt	Erfurter Theologische Studien
FS	<i>Festschrift</i>
GCS	<i>Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i>
<i>Greg</i>	<i>Gregorianum</i>
H.E.	Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HTb</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>HTbR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, <i>The presocratic philosophers</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edn; Cambridge, 1983)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library

LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, <i>The Hellenistic philosophers</i> , 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987)
<i>Mn.</i>	<i>Mnemosyne</i>
NAWG.PH	Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen – Philologisch-historische Klasse
ND	de natura deorum
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> (Migne)
<i>Phron</i>	<i>Phronesis</i>
<i>POC</i>	<i>Proche-orient chrétien</i>
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue des études augustinienes</i>
<i>RevSR</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RFIC	Revista de filologia e d'istruzione classica
<i>RHPhR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>RSPTh</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RThAM</i>	<i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i>
<i>RThPh</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
SC	Sources chrétiennes
<i>Schol</i>	<i>Scholastik</i>
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>The Second Century</i>
<i>SJTh</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SO</i>	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>
<i>SO.S</i>	<i>Symbolae Osloenses, Suppl.</i>
<i>StMiss</i>	<i>Studia missionalia</i>
<i>StPhilo</i>	<i>Studia Philonica</i>
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>StudAns</i>	<i>Studia Anselmiana</i>
<i>StudPatr</i>	<i>Studia patristica</i>
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
SW	Sämtliche Werke
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>ThPh</i>	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
<i>ThStK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>VetChr</i>	<i>Vetera Christianorum</i>
<i>VigChr</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>

ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZKTh	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Other abbreviations follow the *Abkürzungsverzeichnis* of S. Schwertner (Berlin, New York, 1976)

## REFERENCES TO CLEMENT

I.28.176.1	refers to <i>Stromateis</i> book I, chapter 28, section 176, paragraph 1.
paed I.8.62.1	refers to <i>Paedagogus</i> book I, chapter 8, section 62, paragraph 1.
prot I.7.1	refers to <i>Protrepticus</i> chapter I, section 7, paragraph 1.
exc:	<i>Excerpta ex Theodoto</i>
ecl:	<i>Eclogae propheticæ</i>
hypot.	<i>Hypotyposeis</i>
q.d.s.:	<i>Quis dives salvetur?</i>
Fragments follow the numbering of O. Stählin, <i>Clemens Alexandrinus</i> , III (Leipzig, 1909)	

## CHAPTER I

### *Life and works*

#### LIFE AND THOUGHT

Clement was a traveller, always moving on. He invites Greeks to desert to God's side and to enjoy the danger of change (prot 10.93.2). In his quest for knowledge, he left home and travelled to teachers around the eastern Mediterranean, moving from Italy to Egypt.

Of these [teachers], one, an Ionian, lived in Greece, two others who came from Coele-Syria and Egypt respectively were in Magna Graecia. Others were in the east – one was from Assyria, and the other a Hebrew from Palestine. I found the last of them where he was hiding in Egypt. Here I came to rest. He was a real Sicilian bee who drew from the flowers of the apostolic and prophetic meadow and who engendered a purity of knowledge in the soul of his hearers.

(I.I.II)

He remained in Alexandria until in 202 persecution drove him to Palestine, where he died.<sup>1</sup> His early travels had been tied to intellectual exploration. While in Alexandria, his intellectual voyages did not cease. He explored the bible, philosophy and literature, often preserving fragments of philosophers who would otherwise be lost today, and quoting classical writers with affection and sensitivity. He was now driven by evangelical zeal: to explain the gospel, he became all things to all men.

In spiritual matters he called for exploration and movement: he exhorted Greeks to turn to Christ, to follow Christian morals in every detail of behaviour and finally to become wise in the mysteries of Christ. Practical problems drew attention and analysis from his inquiring mind. Despite his criticism of Gnostic<sup>2</sup> theosophy, he followed the flight of Theodotus, exploring new questions and problems. The Christian should

<sup>1</sup> Two letters of Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius H.E. 6.11.6 and 6.14.9), point to his death between 211 and 215.

<sup>2</sup> In this book heretical 'Gnostics' are distinguished from Clement's 'gnostic' by a capital letter.

never abandon his simple faith, but he should always be moving on in his journey towards wisdom and the likeness of God.

Clement has been seen variously by interpreters. One extolled him as a Christian liberal, while another explored his rich store of citations. Many have struggled with his literary form. One was drawn to the richness of his call to piety and perfection. Another discerned a logical pattern, which permeated his thought. More recently, one writer has shown the depth of his penetration of Plato and another his understanding of true philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

Clement, more than any other early Christian writer, knew and enjoyed Greek philosophy and literature. Saturated with study of this culture, he belonged to Alexandria, a city which was ruled by it. Clement displayed that heritage as clearly as Tertullian displayed the Roman heritage of Carthage.

Alexandria was a cosmopolitan city including Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, other native Africans and Romans. Its place in trade was dominant. It also had a long literary tradition and a special Platonic tradition which Eudorus represented. Its libraries were central in its learning. Clement quotes more than 300 different literary sources for more than a thousand references to other writers. Jewish-Hellenistic works were available to Clement. Philo was a major influence, and minor influences came from Demetrius, Aristobulus, the Sibylline oracles and others. The story of the Alexandrian origin of the Septuagint emerges in a second-century tradition which is found in Clement and Tertullian, Justin, Irenaeus and elsewhere.

Clement exhorted pagans to turn to Christ with kerygmatic fervour. His language was tied closely to the text of scripture which was ever in need of transposition from vision to metaphysic. Logic helped to elucidate scripture and to defend its truth.

His achievement began from a grasp of divine love as the core of the Christian gospel. God is not God unless he be both father and son, for the divine being is the love which joins father and son. God is love and the revealed mystery of this love is the gospel. Clement's faith in one God is expressed in both philosophical and biblical terms. God is one because he is one and nothing but one (a simple unity like a pinpoint), and

3 R. B. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria: a study in Christian Liberalism*, 2 vols. (London, 1914); S. R. C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: a study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford, 1971); A. Méhat, *Etude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1966); W. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin, 1952); E. F. Osborn, *The philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 1957); D. Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin, 1983); U. Schneider, *Theologie als christliche Philosophie* (Berlin, 1999).

because he is one and universal (a complex unity like a spider's web). From this scheme he explained the duality which he found in the Johannine account of God, who is father and son, God and word.

Clement used the relation between simple and complex unity, between father and son, claiming that in philosophy as in the bible they could not be held apart. The reciprocity, which joined them, is central to his thought. He speaks (paed 1.5.24.3) of the great God who is the perfect child, of the son in father who is father in son. He quotes Is. 9:5,6 where the holy spirit tells him of the great God who is perfect child in newness and perfection. Elsewhere, he speaks of the undefiled God, who has taken the form of man, who is the servant of the father's will, who is both word and God, who is in the father and at the right hand of the father and who has the form of God as he has the form of man (paed 1.2.4.1).

We shall see how Clement follows the Platonic logic of simple and complex unity (*Parmenides* 137c–142).<sup>4</sup> God is the first and oldest first principle and the cause of all things. Nothing can be predicated of him, for he is neither a whole nor a collection of parts. He has no limit, form or name, so all the names we give him are improper. We choose the best names to support our understanding and to indicate the power of God. He cannot be proved because there is nothing prior to him and he is known only by the grace and the word which proceed from him (5.12.81f). Yet the same God, as divine logos, is the creator and sustainer of all things.

#### QUESTIONS: MOBILITY, RECIPROCITY AND SALVATION BY FAITH

Mobility and reciprocity mark the Johannine God. The word is God and with God; he becomes flesh and as son reveals the unique glory of the father. From within the bosom of the father he declares the father. God in love to the world sends his son to die, an act of barbaric immorality unless father and son be in some way identical. Mobility is linked with work, which is constant for father and son. 'My father is still working and I must work' (Jn 5:17). The father sends the son to do the father's work (Jn 5:36f). The final prayer (Jn 17) declares the completion of God's work, which will now go on until all believers share God's life and glory.

Such a movement marks the universality and vitality of God for John and Clement. Clement echoes some words recorded by Plato, which identified the original gods of the Greeks and barbarians with the sun,

<sup>4</sup> See C. Meinwald, 'Goodbye to the Third Man', in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. R. Kraut (Cambridge, 1992), 365–96.

moon, earth, stars and sky. 'Seeing that they were always moving and running, from their running nature they were called gods or runners (*theous, theontas*) and when men became acquainted with other gods they proceeded to apply the same name to them' (Crat. 397d). Clement writes that God is unchangeably one, as he emits the perpetual flow of good things (4.23.151.3). Others had been deceived into deifying the stars and calling them gods because of their motion (prot 2.26.1).

Three problems faced Clement in the exposition of such a God:

1. The kerygma proclaimed a rational plan of divine movement declared in scripture and fulfilled in Christ. Can this plan present coherent answers to questions about God, humanity, right and wrong? How do we move from narrative and oracle to metaphysics?
2. The Gospels proclaimed one God. How can father and son be one God?
3. Paul offered salvation by faith. How can faith be the one way to truth, and what is the salvation which redeems and preserves mankind? How is faith related to knowledge?

Clement's response consists of three major concepts: divine plan/economy, reciprocity and salvation by faith.

Everything is ordered by '*the goodness of the only, one, true, almighty God, from age to age saving by the son*' (7.2.12). *Faith is the one universal salvation of mankind* (paed 1.6.30).

1. 'from age to age'. The divine plan/economy moves to fulfilment in Christ and to the offer of salvation by faith. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Clement adds to this divine plan of salvation the gift of philosophy to the Greeks to prepare them for Christ.
2. 'saving by the son'. The one God is marked by reciprocal love. Always, the word was with God and was God. No one comes to the father but by the son and no one comes to the son unless the father draws him. Reciprocity works on three levels: between father and son, between God and the human person, between human and human.
3. 'salvation by faith'. Salvation has turned the world into a sea of blessings. 'Faith like a grain of mustard seed bites beneficially into the soul so that it grows in it magnificently until the reasons concerning the highest realities rest upon it' (5.1.3.1).

The importance of these three concepts must be stressed if we are to find our way through Clement. Clement cites scripture 5,121 times and

348 different classical authors, including Plato 600 times, Philo 300 times and Homer 240 times. He believes with Philo that all great natures, freed from passion, can hit on the truth. Without attention to his chief problems his work will seem impenetrable. However, before we tackle the problems, we must look at his literary and historical puzzles; on both these questions, scholars have been energetically productive.

#### WRITINGS: THE LITERARY PUZZLE

Movement marks the plan of Clement's writing. He follows the logos who exhorts pagans to desert their falsehood for the truth of God, instructs them in the ethics of Christian practice, then goes on to teach the true knowledge of the mysteries of Christ. Following this plan, Clement's major works form a trilogy: *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus*, *Stromateis*. In addition, the surviving minor works compound the sense of movement. There is a sermon on the salvation of the rich man (*Quis dives salvetur?*) and a fragment on patience to the newly baptised. There is a careful examination of a Gnostic work: *Excerpts from Theodotus*. There are parts of exegetical works: *Hypotyposeis*<sup>5</sup> and *Prophetic Eclogues*. Eusebius cites works which are lost, except for fragments: *On the Passover*, *On Fasting*, *Against Judaisers*, *On Providence*.

Clement's 'trilogy' of major works raises questions which drew close attention during the first half of the twentieth century. The crucial passage in the first chapter of the *Paedagogus* distinguishes between the divine logos who invites men to salvation (*protreptikos*), then guides them to right action and the healing of their passions (*paidagôgos*) and finally teaches, explains and reveals first principles, clarifying symbolic and ultimate statements (*didaskalikos*). No one has questioned the first two elements of Clement's threefold economy. The *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* bear the names which denote their functions. Traditionally, the *Stromateis* were taken to be the *Didascalus*. De Faye<sup>6</sup> in 1898 claimed that

5 The whole of which was seen 200 years ago. See my article, 'Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposeis*: a French eighteenth-century sighting', *JThS* 36 (1985), 67–83. In 1983, a colleague, Colin Duckworth, drew my attention to a private letter of the Comte d'Antraigues which he found in the municipal archives of Dijon. In it the writer described with much detail a copy of Clement's *Hypotyposeis* which he had seen in the library of the monastery of St Macarius, in the Wadi Natrun. After three visits to the monastery I have found no trace of the manuscript. For reasons given elsewhere, the question must remain open. See my article, 'Clement's *Hypotyposeis*. Macarius revisited', *SecCent* 10 (1990), 233–5.

6 E. de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie, étude sur les rapports du christianisme et de la philosophie grecque au IIe siècle* (Paris, 1898), 104.

the *Stromateis* were too unsystematic to be the final work of Clement, who had intended to write a systematic treatment of Christian knowledge but was forced by his complex environment to write a preliminary work which justified the use of Greek philosophy. The stimulus for the *Stromateis* lay in the caution of many Christians towards Greek philosophy which heretics had used (it was thought) to the detriment of the faith. De Faye was dominated by a belief in 'systems' which was characteristic of his day.

The views of De Faye were soon attacked by Heussi, who put forward a modification of the traditional view.<sup>7</sup> In 1925, Prat proposed a different version to reestablish in part the traditional claim for the *Stromateis*.<sup>8</sup> Munck went into greater detail and provided grounds for believing in two trilogies: *Protreptikos*, *Paidagogos*, *Didaskalos*; and *Stromateis* I–III, *Stromateis* IV–VII, and the *Physiologia*. Munck claimed that Clement did not produce the final work of either trilogy.<sup>9</sup> This attractive solution appeared too systematic for Lazzati, who differently divided the works of Clement into those intended for private instruction, and those directed to the general public.<sup>10</sup> The seven books of the *Stromateis* and the three commentary works were esoteric. The *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Quis dives salvetur?* were for the general public. Yet another interpretation was proposed by Quatember, who argued impressively that Clement's trilogy referred to three stages of instruction, not to three written works.<sup>11</sup>

A case for the traditional view can be made from the first chapter of the *Stromateis*.<sup>12</sup> Here Clement insists that the purpose of this work is to teach, and the argument only makes sense if the *Stromateis* are the projected *Didascalus*.<sup>13</sup> Clement argues as follows:

1. Written notes are appropriate for the communication of Christian truth since they teach, instruct and proclaim. The relation between writer and reader is that of teacher to pupil. The explicit use of *didaskalos* and *didaskalia* shows that the argument is concerned to

7 C. Heussi, 'Die Stromateis des Clemens Alexandrinus und ihr Verhältnis zum Protreptikos und Paidagogos', *ZNW* 45 (1902), 465f.

8 F. Prat, 'Projets littéraires de Clément d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 15 (1925), 234.

9 J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Stuttgart, 1933), III.

10 G. Lazzati, *Introduzione allo studio di Clemente Alessandrino* (Milan, 1939), 1–35.

11 F. Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandria nach seinem Pädagogus* (Vienna, 1946), 29–32.

12 E. F. Osborn, 'Teaching and writing in the first chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria', *JThS* 10 (1959), 335–43.

13 *Ibid.*, 342f.

justify teaching through writing. There would be no need of intricate argument in favour of written teaching if the *Stromateis* were not going to teach.

2. The *Stromateis* are records of teaching, notes which Clement took from the words of his teachers. They record his memory of the powerful teachers whom he heard.
3. Clement claims that the teaching which he records and preserves is part of a great tradition, 'the true tradition of the blessed teaching' (I.I.II.3). This teaching comes from God through scripture and tradition. Clement is concerned to revive the memory of it and to preserve it for his readers.
4. There is extended argument on whether this great tradition should be written down and indeed whether one should write at all. It is remarkable that after having written the *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus*, Clement sees the necessity to justify writing before he can begin the *Stromateis*. Clearly, this new work represents a different kind of discourse, and the only other kind of discourse which Clement planned is that of the *logos* who is *Didaskalos*.
5. The *Stromateis* fulfil what Clement had predicted concerning the *Didascalus*. He begins with the announcement that the work will show the opinions of philosophers and heretics and also declare true philosophy and knowledge. The first concern is true *gnosis*, as the title and contents of the work indicate. This concern Clement had allotted to his projected *Didascalus*.
6. The method of the *Stromateis* points to the more appropriate way of teaching philosophy. The writing does not set out a handbook but aims to kindle a spark, to sow a seed or to be the bait to catch a fish.
7. Finally, the very disorder of the *Stromateis* confirms the ultimacy of their teaching. Clement wishes to conceal, from the lazy and unworthy, certain aspects of Christian truth. There is no point in this concealment if he is not handing on the mysteries of Christian knowledge.

The chief objection to the teaching status of the *Stromateis* has been their deliberate incoherence.

For I am silent on the point that the *Stromateis*, being the embodiment of much learning, wish to hide skilfully the seeds of knowledge. As he who loves the chase, after seeking, searching, tracking and hunting with dogs, takes the quarry, so truth when sought and gained through hard work seems a sweet thing. How then did it seem good that this arrangement should be adopted in your notes? 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.

(I.2.20–1)

Indeed, the *Stromateis* stand in marked contrast to the *Didaskalikos* of Alcinous, which is a tidy Platonic handbook and which epitomises the kind of philosophy which Plato and much later Wittgenstein rejected. Wittgenstein said of something which he had written that it could not be philosophy because it suggested that philosophy could be learnt from reading a book. Plato's dialogues imply a similar view.

The controversy surrounding the *Stromateis* has continued. From a useful summary of the hypotheses put forward by de Faye, Bousset, Munck and Lazzati concerning the *Stromateis*, Méhat shows that they all agree wrongly on the fortuitous ordering of the material in the work. He rejects de Faye's assertion that Clement was incapable of producing a well-ordered piece of philosophical writing;<sup>14</sup> the works of the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus* and *Quis dives salvetur?* clearly demonstrate Clement's capabilities. Moreover, says Méhat, Clement freely announces his intentions for the composition of the *Stromateis*; they aim at concealment and pay no attention to arrangement or diction.<sup>15</sup> Clement fulfils what he proposes in this regard.

Méhat insists that, while the arrangement of the *Stromateis* is haphazard, this does not preclude the possibility of an order of teaching that is conducive to discovering the truth. Méhat cites thirty-three occasions where Clement refuses to digress from a sequence (*akolouthia*) of teaching, an order that is apparent to Clement himself, yet difficult for us to discern. Moreover, Clement is concerned with treating certain issues at the appropriate time (*kairos*) within that sequence, indicating that he has a plan for teaching and discovering the truth. However disorderly the arrangement of the *Stromateis* is, it is clear that Clement himself was teaching with a purpose.

In the same year as Méhat's compendious book appeared, an article by E. L. Fortin offered a different approach to the controversy.<sup>16</sup> Without delving into the various hypotheses put forward by scholars, Fortin sets out two extreme points of view. There are those who claim that Clement's conviction that he is transmitting a secret and oral tradition is an 'affectation' and that such a view supports the Gnostic tendencies of the author.

<sup>14</sup> Méhat, *Etude*, 23–35.

<sup>15</sup> 7.18.III.1–3.

<sup>16</sup> E. L. Fortin, 'Clement and the esoteric tradition', *StudPatr* 9 (1966), 41–56.

On the other hand, there were those scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth century who appealed to a *disciplina arcani* which, where evidence was difficult to achieve, included ideas that could not readily be placed within the development of doctrine. Fortin argues that as accounts of Clement's writings, these views suffer because they 'both attempt to dispose of an admittedly delicate problem by slicing the knot instead of unravelling it'.<sup>17</sup> Fortin therefore claims that, in order to take reasonably what Clement tells us about his writing and not to accuse him of withholding a secret oral teaching, we must find some middle ground. This is supplied by Clement himself when he acknowledges that his task is to write down this teaching, but that it must be put down with the utmost care; he wants to transmit, through writing, essential Christian teachings with some degree of concealment.

To this end, Fortin cites the many occasions where Clement employs literary techniques to disguise what he is attempting to communicate.<sup>18</sup> Such techniques put the *Stromateis* into a 'special category of books' which evade general understanding. Fortin draws on the controversial Seventh Epistle of Plato to illustrate that Clement believed that his method of writing would be sufficient for the genuine seeker. This is 'accomplished precisely by means of "slight indications" of which Plato speaks and which are both necessary and sufficient for students such as these'.<sup>19</sup> Viewed in this way, the *Stromateis* reveal themselves as an esoteric method of teaching.

The next literary comment on Clement was that of S. R. C. Lilla,<sup>20</sup> who devotes a footnote to the puzzle of the *Stromateis*.<sup>21</sup> Lilla inclines to the view of de Faye and disagrees with Méhat: 'The *Stromateis*, though dealing in many sections with gnosis, never examine in detail such arguments as cosmology or theology, which represent the content of the higher gnosis and which would fit in very well with the *logos didaskalikos*, but rather touch them *en passant*.' Such a view, however, plays into the hands of Fortin, for whom Clement's brevity is exactly the means by which the 'higher gnosis' is communicated. Lilla concludes that Clement's reference to a subsequent work, dealing with cosmology and theology, points to the proposed *Didascalus*.<sup>22</sup>

Another negative view of the *Stromateis* was put forward by J. Ferguson, who claimed that they are what the title suggests, a scrapbook of notes in

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. He cites examples of brachyology, symbols and enigmas, deliberate untruths, exclusions.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. Citing Plato *Ep.* 7.341e.

<sup>20</sup> *Clement of Alexandria*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 189 n4.

<sup>22</sup> 4.1.3.1-3.

which Clement stored his material.<sup>23</sup> Clement bit off more than he could chew, and the *Stromateis* constitute a collection of ideas which never cohere as instruction for Christians seeking higher knowledge. Ferguson claims that on occasions Clement mentions his intentions for the *Didascalus*: for instance, he will give some account of first causes,<sup>24</sup> some account of the Greek mysteries<sup>25</sup> and will write more on the true gnostic.<sup>26</sup> However, according to Ferguson these things are postponed and never written. In the *Stromateis*, Clement is only concerned with scraps, he is merely 'composing a piece of exhibition oratory. . . a kind of sketch of words and people, lacking sharpness and vitality'.<sup>27</sup>

Roberts approached the controversy from the perspective of formal criticism.<sup>28</sup> Like Fortin, he acknowledges that the *Stromateis* constitute a literary form that is difficult to categorise. Critics, he suggests, too often assume that literature prior to the eighteenth century was 'primarily mimetic. . . characteristically object-oriented and outward-going'. Such works do not require an inward transformation of the reader in order to be understood. Works like the *Stromateis*, however, 'require a specific effort on the part of the reader'. According to Clement, this literary genre was known to the Greeks, who 'in this kind of composition. . . sow their doctrines secretly and not in a plain, unmistakable manner, seeking to exercise the care and inventiveness of the readers'.<sup>29</sup> These are the 'kindling sparks' that ignite the soul to investigate and acquire knowledge.

Roberts compares Clement's literary categories, namely recollection (*anamnêsis*) and expression (*emphasis*) of the truth, with those found in the *topoi* or *loci* which were first used as aids for the memory by Aristotle. Roberts traces these categories into Latin, showing how a literary form such as the *Stromateis* builds a system of images (*significatio*), which are gathered together by the reader to form a 'network of reciprocal relations'. These are called by Clement *capitula*, under which the images unite to recall the *loci* whence those images originally derived. Roberts believes that for Clement, the meadows of the *Stromateis* constitute the *loci*, while the plants, trees and seeds constitute the images that emphasise and recall the mind to the truth.

23 J. Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York, 1974), 106.

24 2.8.37.1.

25 6.2.42-3.

26 6.18.168.4

27 Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria*, 109.

28 L. Roberts, 'The literary form of the *Stromateis*', *SecCent* 1 (1981), 211-22.

29 *Ibid.*, 213. Cf. 7.18.111.3.

This theory goes some way to determining how, as Méhat suggests, there is a sequence of teaching in Clement which is logical rather than narrative. Consequently the *Stromateis* is a 'work which encompasses an encyclopaedic array of material within a single, logically unified literary form'.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, 'reading must proceed by fitting texts together and by keeping the allusions in mind until by reflexive reference the whole is comprehended'.<sup>31</sup> Roberts believes that with Clement, philosophy and hermeneutics combine to bring the reader to inward transformation as he attempts to coordinate disparate material. The literary form is defined by the experience of the reader and can only be considered 'finished in the act of performance, in the actual reading of the texts plus bringing them together into a systematic union'.<sup>32</sup> The *Stromateis* are greater than the sum of their parts, and their success as literature can be determined only by our experience of it.

Recently Kovacs has discussed the 'divine pedagogy' of Clement, drawing attention to his ability to teach simultaneously at different levels.<sup>33</sup> Clement needed to reach the different spiritual levels of students and yet communicate the higher gnosis for those capable of apprehending it.<sup>34</sup> The *Stromateis* are compared with scripture: '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.'<sup>35</sup> The *Stromateis* are designed to sort out 'advanced students' and to take them through a program of instruction.

The first puzzle in Clement is the method of the *Stromateis*. The more we can understand his reason for adopting this method, the more we shall understand his thought and the intellectual world which he addressed. The key point in understanding the *Stromateis* is the absolute priority of scripture, which is the written expression of truth, 'the truth which indicates in writing the doctrines which cannot be written' (I.I.IO.I). Teaching comes in two forms: first, in the books of the bible; and secondly in the 'new book' of Isaiah 8:1, the explanation of scripture which runs from the saviour to apostles, and to the unwritten tradition which has come to Clement (6.I5.I3I.4-5). This second way of teaching can be expressed in the 'seeds of knowledge' which Clement scatters in his

30 *Ibid.*, 219.

31 *Ibid.*, 220.

32 *Ibid.*, 222.

33 J. L. Kovacs, 'Divine pedagogy and the Gnostic teacher according to Clement of Alexandria', *J ECS* 9 (2001), 3-25.

34 *Ibid.*, 9. Cf. Plato. Rep. 535a-536d.

35 *Ibid.*, 25.

*Stromateis* (1.2.20.4; cf. 1.12.56.3 and its context). Such dissemination is a form of concealment that Clement uses to resolve the contradiction which he sees between the oral teaching of teacher to disciple (or of logos to believer) on the one hand and the written teaching which is open to all on the other. This method of dissemination governs Clement's writing throughout the *Stromateis*. It is reflected in the tension between Clement's clear plan on one side and his many detours. It promises that if the reader culls the varied flowers of the orchard, he will gain the elements of knowledge. Clement used the same metaphor when he spoke of his own teacher who gathered pollen from the flowery field of prophets and apostles. Such dissemination is distinctive to the *Stromateis*, which are a unique venture.

Such conclusions may be confirmed by a careful examination of the beginning of the *Stromateis*. Here Clement contrasts oral and written teaching and sees his own method of writing as a direct consequence of the priority which he gives to the biblical word. For that reason, while he draws on Plato's *Phaedrus*, his dependence on scripture is a means of avoiding the weaknesses of writing which Plato had described. His purpose is to expound scripture to Greeks and Jews (4.1.1.3). He returns at several points to explain his procedure, but his initial account in *Stromateis* I is the most extensive. The purpose of any prologue is to 'invent' or 'shape' the reader, and the prologue begins by speaking of the relation of the teacher to the pupil.<sup>36</sup> Beginning from the Platonic accounts of the pupil as the child of the teacher, Clement uses biblical language to describe a new relation. While Plato distinguishes, in literary composition, the sterile gardens of Adonis and the treasury of recollection, both of which are unsatisfactory when placed beside the creative power of dialectic, Clement joins all in a genre of *spiritual planting and growth which passes between teacher and disciple* and may be oral or written (1.1.1.3–2.1). This dissemination of spiritual seed leads to a harvest of life eternal (1.1.4.2). Clement gains the interest of his readers by using familiar language. He joins an echo of Heraclitus with the two Gospel parables concerning many pearls and a pearl of great price, or many fish and a fish of great size and beauty. Each of these references points to the need for discrimination or dialectic to find one among many. To this first move, Clement adds an explicit claim for philosophy which is subordinate to

36 A. Le Boulluec, 'Pour qui, pourquoi, comment? Les "Stromates" de Clément d'Alexandrie', in *Patrimoines, Religions du Livre, Entrer en Matière. Les Prologues* (Paris, 1998), 23–36. These paragraphs are indebted to the essay of Le Boulluec.

scripture and which is, like nuts, not wholly edible and possessed of a shell which both hides and protects. Philosophy will act as a protecting fence through the use of dialectic (6.10.81.4). Also, in the 'prologue' or first chapter of *Stromateis*, Clement describes dialectic as the way in which philosophy contributes to the demonstration of the faith (1.1.20.2). Dialectic is a matter of comparison and contrast, and for Clement the standard of each move is that of scripture. Platonic dialectic is able to be a rational defence of what faith has believed. Along with the wisdom which the Greeks required, scripture gives knowledge for the Jews. Prophecy, which is the foundation of all second-century theology, proclaims the lord (6.15.127.4). The signs performed by the saviour give grounds for the conversion of Jews; the wisdom promised to the Greeks is a way of elucidating the knowledge which the Jews demand.

The relation of Clement's 'prologue' to the *Phaedrus* has been amply demonstrated by Wyrwa.<sup>37</sup> To his treatment must be added the dominant importance of the references to scripture which Clement makes. Whereas for Plato the pupil is the off-spring of the philosopher, in Clement the pupil is not a son of the teacher, who is an intermediary between God and man and who declares the word of God who is the true teacher (1.1.4.1-3). Both written and unwritten teaching or cultivation are the work of the lord who is teacher and who alone will give the harvest (1.1.7.1). The labourer is but the servant of him who gives the growth, a co-worker with God (1 Cor. 3:7-9; 1.1.7.4). Epistle and Gospel are the source of Clement's theory of teaching. There is only one master of him who speaks as of him who hears; he is the source of understanding of the word (1.1.12.3).

This biblical element, which distinguishes Clement from Plato, emerges again when he speaks of his recollections. These have a higher significance for Clement because his human teachers recall a trace of the divine teacher from whom alone knowledge may be gained. While the deficiencies of writing are denounced in the prologue as they are in the *Phaedrus*, the criticism is from a different motive. Both writer and reader are confronted with a choice, which decides their salvation (1.1.4.2-3). The indirect style of writing separates the friends who receive the truth (1.2.20.1) from those who do not. It establishes a form of learning, which is a strenuous search for meaning (1.2.21.1). 'The mysteries are transmitted in a mysterious manner' (1.1.13.4). The oral traditions of the apostles are transmitted by word of mouth. Clement speaks of an unwritten expository tradition (5.10.62.1; 6.7.61.3). The written transmission of knowledge

37 Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung*.

shares in this secrecy by concealing or securing the truth. So Clement leads us to the conviction stated at the beginning, that truth is to be found in scripture, which declares in written form the things which cannot be written, and that this mystery is to be found not directly, but indirectly through the seeds which Clement has scattered in the *Stromateis* (1.2.20.4).

A useful study discusses the place of the Christian teacher in the church of Alexandria and in the writing of Clement.<sup>38</sup> Clement is a Christian teacher, the successor of Pantaenus.<sup>39</sup> A letter of Bishop Alexander speaks of Clement as a presbyter and a skilled and trustworthy man (H. E. 6.11.6). The claim that Clement was a priest was virtually destroyed by Koch;<sup>40</sup> however, the use of that title in an official letter counteracts some of his criticism. When Clement left Alexandria in the time of persecution, he chose a way to perfection other than that of martyrdom: the way of teaching and writing.

Within his own writing the ideas of teacher and teaching recur. Clement gives a plan which is governed by stages of teaching. The *Protrepticus* precedes catechetical instruction. It is a handbook for Christians as missionaries, taking the gospel to those who do not believe. In the *Paedagogus*, Clement sets out a Christian *katêchêsis*. His programme is described in *Stromateis* 6.1.3. The work is clearly directed towards catechumens and presents a picture of the whole Christian life (paed 2.1.1). In this work Clement brings together the instruction which he has given to catechumens, pointing them on the Christian way and offering a handbook to guide them. The *Didascalus* was concerned to explain the propositions of faith and to interpret the words of scripture.<sup>41</sup> The *Stromateis* fulfil this role by transmitting the teaching which Clement received, connecting oral and written teaching. The hidden element in them is a guard against their misuse by the mediocre or the bad. In his oral teaching, Clement imparted the seeds of truth and his writing recalls them. Non-Christians also can read because Clement edits his oral teaching to give it wider accessibility. However, the chief recipients of the *Stromateis* are those who are on the way to becoming Christian

38 U. Neymeyr, *Die christlichen Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert: ihre Lehrtätigkeit, ihr Selbstverständnis und ihre Geschichte* (Leiden, 1989).

39 But this has been challenged, for the account of Eusebius is not reliable. *Ibid.*, 42.

40 H. Koch, 'War Clemens von Alexandrien Priester?' *ZNW* 20 (1921), 45. Several passages had suggested that Clement was a priest at Alexandria (6.4.37.3, 6.13.106f; 7.1.3; paed 3.12.101.3) and his role as teacher might be fused with his role as priest.

41 Neymeyr, *Die christlichen Lehrer*, 58.

teachers themselves. Clement sets out the important things for a Christian teacher to know about his office and activity. All true teaching flows from Christ, the one great teacher (1.1.12.3). The Christian teacher stands in the place of Christ pointing to perfection and knowledge.<sup>42</sup> The teacher must examine his motives and ask whether he is concerned with the salvation of those who hear him and the good of those near to him, or whether he looks for rewards of honour (1.1.6.1).<sup>43</sup>

The first task of the Christian teacher is the interpretation of scripture, the explanation of ambiguities and equivocations; he divides and separates what the letter of scripture brings together (1.9.44.3). Just as the hidden meaning of the *Stromateis* is accessible through a spoken interpretation, so the hidden meaning of scripture can be explained by word of mouth. Christian teacher and pupil must become biblical theologians in order to meet the challenge of false teaching. Scripture is the place where the teaching of Christ is to be found; he is the lord who through prophets, gospel and apostles, in different ways, guides from beginning to perfection, along the way of knowledge (7.16.95.3).<sup>44</sup>

From the interpretation of scripture, philosophy and Greek *paideia*, a deeper understanding of the gospel may be achieved. Philosophy is a cooperating cause and a help in the understanding of truth (1.19.99.1). Clement identifies his perfect Christian with the Christian teacher. Christian perfection is not a private possession but a quality necessary for the teacher within the community of faith (7.9.52.2).

A clear picture of Clement's teaching method in the *Stromateis* includes his use of esoteric ideas and methods. Clement aims to take his reader through a varied programme which will mould him 'intellectually and spiritually so that he reaches the perfection of the complete Christian. 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'.<sup>45</sup>

42 *Ibid.*, 65.

43 *Ibid.*, 66.

44 *Ibid.*, 69.

45 A. C. Itter, 'Method and doctrine: esoteric teaching in the writings of Clement of Alexandria' (Dissertation, La Trobe University, 2003), 190. It has become increasingly easy to believe that the *Stromateis* are the *Didascalus*. Clement could not hope to achieve his end by a compendium like that of Alcinous. 'The *Stromateis* is the Διδάσκαλος. Its miscellaneous nature creates a literary labyrinth through which the soul of the initiate has to pass' (191).

## PLATO AND HERACLITUS

Clement's purpose in the *Stromateis* can be illuminated by a consideration of the two philosophers whom he, like Justin, most admired: Plato and Heraclitus. The dialogues of Plato make it clear that Plato would not have seen Alcinous' handbook as compatible with his method in philosophy. This emerges in a recent study of Plato's teaching and practice of concealment.<sup>46</sup> The disorder of the dialogues, it is claimed, points to gaps which compensate for the deficiency of writing. The writing of philosophy preserves past teaching for old age (Phaedr. 276d) and makes philosophy accessible for Plato and his fellow-travellers. Plato's writing, like that of Wittgenstein, puts a lock on the door which catches the eye of those who can open it.<sup>47</sup> Since Schleiermacher there had been a reluctance to recognise an esoteric element of Plato's work. More recently, however, there has been a slender case made for an esoterism which points back to original oral teaching.<sup>48</sup>

Plato does not claim the kind of ambiguity which had been claimed for Homer from the sixth century onwards. Philosophy is not concerned, as Isocrates claimed, with *logoi amphiboloi*.<sup>49</sup> For Plato, knowledge is clear and firm, *saphes kai bebaion* (Phaedr. 275c), and while writing may produce immediate effects, these effects do not last. 'For Plato, the speedy process of instruction through writing which is basically insufficient (276c) can never replace oral dialectic.'<sup>50</sup> Yet writing can be valuable to refresh the memory of the person who possesses knowledge (276d). The philosopher writes *aide-mémoire* for himself in old age and for others of like mind (249c). But writing cannot present the ideas which are the greatest and most precious objects of knowledge (Pol. 285e). Plato's 'basic thought – that there are things which it is better not to reveal in writing, because if they are communicated prematurely, they do not explain anything and are thus "useless" – remains intact and unchanged from the metaphorical image of medical remedies in the *Charmides* through to the twelfth book of the *Laws*, where the significant concept of *aporrêta* is finally coined' (968e).<sup>51</sup> However, the claim that the 'unwritten teachings'

46 T. A. Szlezák, *Reading Plato* (London, 1999).

47 L. Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, ed. G. H. von Wright (Frankfurt, 1977), 23.

48 H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam, 1964); K. Gaiser, *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre* (Stuttgart, 1968); Szlezák, *Reading Plato*.

49 However, this is not true of Clement, who believes philosophy and dialectic to be useful tools in discerning the ambiguities of scripture (1.9.44.3–45.5).

50 Szlezák, *Reading Plato*, 43.

51 *Ibid.*, 65.

of Plato should supersede the Dialogues displays a deep ignorance of Plato's achievement.

The debate concerning the unwritten teaching of Plato will bear little fruit because it is natural to question the possibility of ascertaining what Plato left unwritten. The important point is the one which Clement has taken up: that teaching may be concealed while the reader or hearer becomes ready to understand it. This makes good sense. The conclusion of any theory or argument will not be comprehended until the problems with which it is concerned have been understood by the learner. Here we have a doctrine of recollection in Clement,<sup>52</sup> which is dependent on Plato. In his concern for preserving truth, Plato links the writer to the reader, when a teacher is not present to kindle the sparks of memory.<sup>53</sup> It is enough, says Clement, that his notes point the direction for those setting out on an unknown road, since they must discover and recollect the truth themselves.<sup>54</sup>

If the work of a philosopher is seen as the elucidation of certain problems, then Plato and Clement are acting responsibly in postponing the statement of conclusions until difficulties and problems have been perceived by the reader. 'We need not fear any secret teachings: Plato did not consider his thinking on the principles as secret (*aporrêta*), but as not prematurely communicable (*aporrêta*)' (cf. Phaedr. 275de, Laws 968e).<sup>55</sup> However, the idea that these teachings can in time be written down makes little sense of Plato or Clement. Plato chose the dialogue form to defeat sophists and to teach dialectic; dogmatic secret teaching could not have achieved either of these goals.

The other major figure behind Clement's method is Heraclitus, whose obscurity was proverbial. Clement's use of Heraclitus continues to be underestimated. He quotes Heraclitus as the authority for his concealment and disorder.<sup>56</sup> Those who look for gold, Heraclitus had said, must dig a lot of earth to find a little gold.

52 Roberts, 'Literary form', 211–22.

53 The discussion that takes place at Phaedr. 274b–277a revolves around the suitability of writing as a means to communicate the truth of things. The simile of the gardens of letters likens an effective method of writing to a farmer who grows plants for long-term posterity rather than for ephemeral display. The same concern appears in the controversial seventh letter of Plato (341c–e).

54 4.2.4.4. See also 7.14.88.4.

55 Szlezák, *Reading Plato*, 112.

56 Among the authors Clement mentions as writing works that 'present the mind of the writer veiled', Clement cites Heraclitus' *On Nature* (5.8.50.2).

Let our notes be, as we often said, because of those people who light upon them carelessly and ignorantly, patched together in a motley fashion as the name itself [*stromateis* or patchwork] declares, continually dropping one subject for another, suggesting one thing in the course of discussion and declaring another. 'For seekers after gold', says Heraclitus, 'dig much earth and find a little gold' (DK 22[8]). But those who really are of golden stock, mining for what is akin to them, will find much in a little. For the writing will find one reader who will understand it. The *stromateis* of notes work together for the recollection and the declaration of truth for those who can rationally inquire. But we must also work out and investigate other things too.

(4.2.4)

Apart from the stylistic affinity which Clement claims, many similarities may be noted.<sup>57</sup> Dominant is the theory of the logos, who (for Heraclitus) permeates all things (DK 2[92]) and who (for Clement) moves through the three stages of instruction. In the *Protrepticus*, Clement uses the logos concept as a bridge between the Fourth Gospel and his Greek readers; he quotes Heraclitus on the limitations of human knowledge without divine revelation (DK 78[96]). In the *Paedagogus* the dryness of the soul is taken from Heraclitus (DK 118[74–6]) as support for Clement's account of temperance in drinking (paed 2.2.29.3). In the *Stromateis*, Heraclitus is cited on the need for a basis of faith before knowledge can begin (DK 86[116]) (2.4.17.4) and the necessity for hoping what seems to be beyond hope. The prophetic claim of Isaiah that without faith there can be no understanding is supported by Heraclitus: 'If one does not hope for what is beyond hope, one will never find it, for it is essentially beyond discovery and access' (DK 18[7]) (2.4.17). This deference to faith places him above all the Greek philosophers who denigrate the role it plays.

In the same book of the *Stromateis*, Clement turns to Xenocrates and to Heraclitus for support in his claim that ultimate knowledge is knowledge of first principles or first causes (2.5.24). Such knowledge is beyond demonstration and can be received only by listening to revelation. Demonstration is therefore not autonomous, but depends upon first principles which it cannot prove.<sup>58</sup>

The contribution of Heraclitus to Clement's epistemology is clear. For both claimed the necessity of rational argument which followed a hope which went beyond reason.

<sup>57</sup> Such as his treatment of eschatological fire (5.14.100.4), and the doctrine of opposites (4.6.40.3). See further P. Valentin, 'Héraclite et Clément d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 46 (1958), 27–59.

<sup>58</sup> Valentin, 'Héraclite', 48.

THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA:  
THE HISTORICAL PUZZLE

On this topic there has been much debate which illuminates Clement's setting. The traditional picture of an official school under control of the bishop has long been challenged.<sup>59</sup> Bardy demolished Eusebius' account, with its succession of teachers dating back to Pantaenus and Clement;<sup>60</sup> these two philosophers taught a private circle of advanced Christian students.<sup>61</sup> Recently, two Dutch scholars<sup>62</sup> have taken the matter further. Van den Hoek showed that in Clement's writings the Alexandrian *paideia* is not allied to an official community, and that the church as an institution is not conspicuous. Clement, who became head of the school after Pantaenus in approximately 190, shows little connection with a local bishop. We may even question Bardy's distinction between 'official' and 'private' instruction. Such a distinction existed in earlier days with Justin in Rome, and later between Origen and Demetrius, but there is little evidence for a division in Clement's time.

What do Clement's literary sources tell us? His vast array of texts has a 'strongly local bias' towards Alexandria and its library. Yet the concentration and variety of Jewish and Christian sources suggest a Christian institution like the 'school of sacred learning' which Eusebius mentions.<sup>63</sup> By the later half of the second century, Alexandria had a *scriptorium* containing a biblical text that was superior to others available in that period.<sup>64</sup> Such evidence suggests the presence of a Christian school which functioned independently of a Christian hierarchy.

Yet Eusebius should not be dismissed. There is some evidence to suggest that there was a succession between Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen,<sup>65</sup> and that the Alexandrian school undertook catechetical training as part of its curriculum. 'Clement evidently sees himself in an ecclesiastical setting,

59 A. van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School of early Christian Alexandria and its Philonic heritage', *HTThR* 90 (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 siècles', *RSR* 12 (1932), 1–28; 'Pour l'histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie', *Vivre et Penser* 2 (1942), 80–109.

60 A. van den Hoek, 'How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian background', *Heyf* 31 (1990), 179–94.

61 See also R. M. Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', *ChH* 40 (1971), 133–44.

62 A. van den Hoek, R. van den Broek.

63 H. E. 5.10.1.

64 G. Zuntz, *The text of the Epistles. A disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London, 1953), 273.

65 This view reflects the intentions of Clement and Origen, who refer directly or indirectly to their predecessors. Van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School', 80–1, 86. See further *Ibid.*, 81 n107, and van den Hoek's article, 'Origen and the intellectual heritage of Alexandria: continuity or disjunction', in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly (Leuven, 1992), 47–50.

appointed in the church by no less than Christ himself.<sup>66</sup> Both Clement and Pantaenus are called *presbuteroi*, indicating not only their age but their church office. On the other hand, Clement never used the term *didaskaleion* to refer to his school and is not consistent in his use of terms such as *scholê*, *diatribê*, or *hairesis*. He was probably dissociating himself from other schools whose opinions he believed false,<sup>67</sup> and even Eusebius did not use a consistent term to refer to the school at Alexandria.

Philo underlines Clement's Alexandrian identity. Since the dissemination of the Philonic corpus came through Alexandrians, particularly Clement and Origen, we must conclude that Alexandria contained a *scriptorium* for copying texts. This is supported by the lack of Philonic citations in the last three books of Clement's *Stromateis*, composed probably after he left Alexandria during the persecutions of 202.<sup>68</sup> When Origen later went to Caesarea he took a collection of books and scrolls, including works by Philo, which was to become the basis of the library of Pamphilus and Eusebius. The Christian library in Jerusalem had been founded earlier by Alexander, Clement's student, who would have used his experience in Alexandria under Clement as a model. All of this confirms that there existed in Alexandria a school, library and *scriptorium* with a strong tradition of biblical scholarship as early as the middle of the second century.

Further light has been shed on the school at Alexandria and the succession between Pantaenus, Clement and Origen.<sup>69</sup> Eusebius speaks of a direct succession between the three, which is supported by Photius in the ninth century and by Philip of Side in the fifth century.<sup>70</sup> In the twenty-fourth book of his *Christian History*, Philip lists thirteen Alexandrian teachers from Athenagoras in the second century to Rhodon at the end of the fourth century. However, van den Broek asserts that the idea of an unbroken succession of Alexandrian teachers is 'completely false, at least until the second decade of the third century'. Against van den Hoek, he notes that Origen never refers to Clement<sup>71</sup> and finds it improbable

66 Van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School', 66.

67 *Ibid.*, 74.

68 See D. T. Runia, *Philo in early Christian literature: a survey* (Assen, 1993), 144 and A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his use of Philo in the 'Stromateis': an early Christian reshaping of a Jewish model* (Leiden, 1988), 197–208.

69 R. van den Broek, 'The Christian "School" of Alexandria in the second and third centuries', in *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (Leiden, 1996), 197–205.

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

71 This is not important. Christians claimed to differ from heretics in discounting allegiance to human teachers. Further, Origen's enthusiasm for martyrdom would estrange him from Clement, who fled persecution.

that Origen attended Clement's classes, which were for advanced students and beyond the capacities of one so young as Origen was at the time.

While van den Broek doubts the succession between Pantaeus and Clement, because Clement saw his role as *didaskalos* linked directly to the apostles, van den Hoek believes that the *didaskaloi* and *presbuteroi* continued the tradition of Rabbis and Jewish elders who directed religious life from first instruction to advanced theology.<sup>72</sup> In other words, the role of Pantaeus and Clement was more ecclesiastical than academic. Again, while van den Broek acknowledges that there was a *scriptorium* in Alexandria by the middle of the second century,<sup>73</sup> he does not believe that there was also a 'school, in the sense of a Christian academy'.<sup>74</sup> He further claims that Eusebius confused the persecutions under the governor Aquila (206–210/11) with those in the year 202, when givers of pre-baptismal instruction fled Alexandria. This allowed him to posit a direct succession between Clement and Origen. It is only with Demetrius' appointment of Origen as head that we can confidently speak of a 'school' in Alexandria. Yet most scholars consider that the school of Alexandria finds historical ground in Pantaeus, the teacher of Clement. It is represented by Eusebius as a sign of the conquest by the church of Greek culture.<sup>75</sup>

What can Clement himself tell us about his school? It is probable that Clement was born in Athens<sup>76</sup> and received his education there in the renewed Ephobia, where the standard of learning was high. Clement writes as a scholar with an extensive literary background. He describes his own purpose in detail: he is concerned to convert Greeks, to prepare candidates for baptism and above all to produce spiritual teachers or competent catechists. These will have been taught the truly gnostic *physiology* in symbolic exegesis, contemplation, perfection, the nature of the angels and the logos, all within a Christian theology based at once on the bible and philosophy. This is the climax of his programme of instruction and his true gnostic is unsurpassed as a teacher who traces his authority and knowledge back to the apostles and finally to Christ.

72 See R. 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), 181–96.

73 Citing the work of G. Zuntz in support.

74 It must be acknowledged that although these two authors are discussing the same topic, there is a difference in emphasis. Van den Hoek looks at the 'catechetical' element of the school, while van den Broek considers the existence of a 'school' itself in Alexandria.

75 A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe–IIIe siècles*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1985).

76 He gives priority to Athens. Through the diffusion of powers in the new creation, the whole earth has become an Athens and a Greece (prot 11.112.1).

Clement gives us insight into the Christian community at Alexandria, which has its orders of deacons, priests and bishops but is not set under one supreme bishop. Teaching is the chief activity of the church; its authority comes from a succession of teachers, not of bishops. Clement never speaks of an episcopal succession in Alexandria, but shows no sign of tension between priests and teachers. He writes (6. 13.106.2) that 'he is a true priest of the church and a true deacon of the will of God, who does and teaches the things of the lord; for it is not because men have obeyed him and he is a priest that he is considered righteous, but it is because he is righteous that he is inscribed in the priesthood'.<sup>77</sup> Authority is shared within the church between teachers and priests; later tension develops when Demetrius becomes the supreme bishop and the conflict causes the departure of Origen from Alexandria. It is unlikely that Clement left Alexandria because of such tension; the reason for his departure was the persecution of 202 (or perhaps that of 206).

Christianity at Alexandria was diverse. Those whom Clement teaches are educated and wealthy, able to appreciate references to Greek literature and philosophy and to respond to the invitation of Clement's *Protrepticus*; women are emancipated within this community and are potential philosophers. On the other hand, not all the Christians at Alexandria belong to this group. Clement refers to the many simple believers; these may be poor and diverse. Further, there are those whom Clement considers as heretics or heterodox: the followers of a false form of *gnôsis*, like the disciples of Valentinus and Basilides. He does not trace a succession of

77 The evidence for this tension does not justify the view of Dawson (*Allegorical readers and cultural revision in ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, 1992)) that Clement was involved in a three-sided contest between hierarchy, Valentinus and himself: Clement was caught between the official church and the attraction of the more 'speculative, meditative, spiritual gnosis'. All this is fictitious, and the 'voice-based' hermeneutic which allegedly springs from his logos theology is a small part of the story. Logos means logic. 'Those who hunt for the sequence of the divine teaching must approach it with the utmost logical skill' (1.28.79). Clement's '*feine Unkirchlichkeit*' (von Campenhausen) makes him an unfortunate subject for Discourse Power theory. Clement's 'pedagogic and imitative Christianity consequently has no serious interest in the intrusions of an alleged authority. . . It is therefore certainly no accident that Clement shows no more than a superficial interest in the "official" and "sacramental" Church in general. But, it must be said once more, this does not in his case as yet imply conscious rejection or hostility. . . the Church herself never felt any special difficulties with him' (H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical authority and spiritual power* (London, 1969), 211. Telfer comments on Clement's identification of the true presbyter with his true gnostic (6.13.106.2). 'Like Polycrates, Clement believed that whoever discharges the office of a bishop will receive corresponding exaltation in heaven. But on earth he rejoiced to see the apostolic faith coming to life again in the person of great Christians, rather than as being dependent for its preservation upon a succession of mediocre ones.' W. Telfer, *The office of a bishop* (London, 1962), 118.

heresy as does Irenaeus, nor does he connect heresy with philosophy. Indeed, he shows an ambivalence towards Valentinus and Basilides, whose opinions he can cite in support of his own arguments (3.7.59.3; 6.6.53.1–4).<sup>78</sup> Clement does not, in his Alexandrian works, engage with Jews and Jewish Christians. He draws on their intellectual heritage in Philo, Aristobulus and others, and mentions the possibility of their conversion (2.1.1.2).<sup>79</sup>

The achievement of the 'school' at Alexandria was later to be seen as a triumph of divine providence in which Christianity and classical culture were brought together. The Hebrew 'philosophy' was identified with the Christian message; the one logos, who was Christ, had spoken by Moses and the prophets. This philosophy is plainly prior to that of the Greeks, which has drawn upon it, and among barbarian wisdom the prophetic bible takes precedence as being more ancient than Greek culture and fundamentally symbolic.<sup>80</sup>

Clement has produced a Christian Hellenism which makes use of the writers of ancient Greece within the context of Greek education and learning. Through mathematics and dialectic, it leads to intellectual realities, to wisdom and to the contemplation of the Good. He covers the doctrines of creation, imitation of Christ, love, eschatology, prayer, penitence and baptism. His way of abstraction towards the supreme being ends in the magnitude of Christ, through whom alone an understanding of the supreme God is reached. His 'physiology' extends beyond the interpretation of natural phenomena to an understanding of the enigmatic language of the scriptures. Clement appears throughout as a teacher.<sup>81</sup> Especially in the *Stromateis* there are learned annotations at every point. While he writes, there is good reason to see his writings as based on words he has already spoken as a teacher.

It is evident that Clement's Jewish, Christian and heretical sources were chiefly of local origin. Christian Alexandrian writings include the Preaching of Peter and the Letter of Barnabas, and several gospels (Hebrews, Thomas, Egyptians). There are also traditions related to Matthew. To these may be added heretical authors like Carpocrates and Cassianus. Other works, which were widely read in Egypt, like the Didache, Hermas,

<sup>78</sup> See Le Boulluc, *La notion d'hérésie*, 324–32.

<sup>79</sup> We cannot conclude that he wrote in isolation from Jews who were also Hellenised; but the evidence is slight.

<sup>80</sup> Clement also takes account of other religions, notably those of the Egyptians, the Scythians, the Chaldeans and the Indians.

<sup>81</sup> On this topic, see van den Hoek, 'How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria?' 179–94.

1 Clement and Irenaeus, were also of importance. Clement's acquaintance with Irenaeus is linked to the very early diffusion of Irenaeus in Egypt. One papyrus fragment is almost contemporary with the writing of 'Against Heresies'.<sup>82</sup> The environment of Clement in Alexandria with its *scriptorium*, library and Christian centre for instruction enabled Clement to achieve his interpretation of the bible and his appropriation of the classical tradition. While the older interpretation of Eusebius' catechetical school cannot be sustained, the evidence of Christian teaching in Alexandria is very strong.

#### ATHENS AND JERUSALEM

Over the last fifty years, we have seen, the discussion of Clement's writings and Alexandrian setting has done much to illuminate his background. Sixty years ago he was described as a meteor whose brief appearance was surrounded by darkness.<sup>83</sup> Today, his enigmatic *Stromateis* are seen as an invitation rather than an exclusion. Alexandria is better known, partly through the expansion in Philonic studies. Within this setting, Clement comes to us as an original thinker. As theologian he cites and expounds scripture interminably, for Plato told him that only the gods and their sons can speak of God. Scripture contained the words which God in Christ had spoken and the words which prophets and evangelists, the sons of God, had received from God their father. As apologist, Clement displayed a wide knowledge of Greek literature – not only philosophers but also poets and dramatists pointed to Christ. He explained the complexity of scripture in a way which was intelligible to his culture, and he claimed scripture, the barbarian philosophy, as the crown of all culture. His compressed accounts of scripture and of Greek literature demand conceptual stamina from modern readers. His masses of metaphors require aesthetic and logical awareness. As an evangelist he spoke to those within and beyond the church. Pagans had to find the treasure which was in Christ. Christians had to explore it, to advance beyond the mediocrity in which they slumbered. Tertullian spoke at this time of 'nostra mediocritas'. Faith must grow into knowledge. Clement showed more sympathy with Gnostic sects than did his contemporaries; at least Gnostics saw the need to move on. His own ideal, the true gnostic or

82 See C. H. Roberts, *Manuscripts, society and belief in early Christian Egypt* (London, 1979), 12, 23, 53. Note also L. Patterson, 'The divine became human: Irenaeus themes in Clement of Alexandria', *StudPatr* 31 (1997), 499.

83 Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 1.

man of knowledge,<sup>84</sup> was within the reach of all believers. At the same time he attacked Gnostics for their lapses in reason and morals.

Two assessments of Clement's hellenising are worth noting. Clement is recognised as the most Greek of early Christian writers.<sup>85</sup> Yet he insisted that the source of truth was to be found in the scriptures of the Jews and in the Gospels and Epistles. What then can be said about this ambiguous relationship? To hellenise, or to be Greek, is for Clement to concentrate on forms of expression and language, whereas the realities, the *pragmata*, are one's proper source of concern (2.1.3.1–2). The important thing is to put into words, as best one can, what is necessary. At the end of *Stromateis* VII, Clement makes the same point (7.18.III.3). There are indeed two forms of truth, the words and the things. The Greeks are concerned with words and the barbarians are concerned with things. Appropriately, the lord had a physical body of quite ordinary aspect, so that he would draw people by the intelligible content of his message rather than his outward charm. Expression is not as important as signification (6.17.151.2–4). There was a widespread tradition concerning the absence of physical beauty in Christ.<sup>86</sup> Greeks speak in philosophy, and Hebrews in enigma and prophecy. Does God speak Greek? Yes, in the sense that the best of the Greeks lead to truth through indirect language which is analogous to prophecy.<sup>87</sup> Does God speak Greek? No, says Clement, because divine instruction transcends every human dialect. Clement speaks of the true philosophy which comes from the only-begotten who has spoken in different ways from the foundation of the world (Heb. 1:1). This transmission of divine truth through the son (who is the sole wisdom of God) is above all human speech. God knows and hears all, not merely what is spoken, but what is thought, just as for us, comprehension does not come through the physical act of hearing, but by intellection and discernment (7.7.36.5–37.5). God speaks as spirit to spirit (7.7.43.3–5). Finally, the soul of the true Christian becomes so endowed with logos that it reaches the condition of the great high priest and is directly inspired by the logos himself. No longer is such a soul taught by scripture, but lays hold of

84 I have normally translated Clement's true *gnostikos* as 'sage', 'complete Christian', because the literal translation suggests that he was primarily concerned with a competitive Gnosticism. Rather, his chief concern was to join Athens and Jerusalem.

85 On the following, see A. Le Boulluec, 'Clément d'Alexandrie et la conversion du "parler grec"', *Hellenismos, quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque* (Leiden, 1991), 233–50.

86 Justin dial. 85.1; 88.8; 100.2; Is. 53:2–3; Tertullian carn. 9; Clement prot 10.110.1; 3.17.103.3; Origen Cels. 6.75.

87 This indirect language is expressed chiefly though the verb *ainittomai*. See below, chapter 3, page 56 on prophecy and Plato.

ultimate reality; no longer is it joined to the logos but becomes logos itself (exc 27.3–5). The voice of the lord is word without shape, pure light and truth itself. So beyond all language there remains another order of communication conveyed by the metaphor of light in a relationship which is face to face with God; in this relationship, light becomes logos.

A second assessment had claimed that Clement's objective was to establish for Christian faith a scientific, comprehensive view of the world.<sup>88</sup> He had already achieved his solution to some extent in his own person, for he was a convinced Christian and his way of thought was Greek. He stands in sharp contrast to Philo, who remained a law-observing Jew, who appropriated the Hellenic world of thought simply to bring his religion up to date with contemporary ideas.<sup>89</sup> Clement was, by contrast, as deeply convinced of the world-view of Plato and Greek culture as he was of his Christian faith. Inevitably, his scientific treatment does not always appear scientific to the modern reader, especially in his interpretation of the hidden sense of scripture; but he saw Greek philosophy as a preparatory covenant to be set beside the Mosaic law. Clement could make such a claim because he saw in Greek science the activity of the spirit of God. His belief in the pre-existent Christ enabled him to attribute the works of reason to the divine logos without secularising revelation. Together with *logos*, Clement took over the concept of *physis*. For the nature of the world reflected the transcendent God and was therefore able to provide a norm for human behaviour. In this natural order, the logos reigns supreme. Stoic ethics had seen this much, but had no concept of the fulfilment found in the Christian approach; only through the revelation of God could perfection of human conduct be reached. In all Clement's ethical theory, the freedom of the will remained essential; God had given this freedom to men as their privilege. Clement with his Greek background has no place for original sin; for a good God must grant to men the ability to fulfil the divine prescription. Christ stands as the incarnate but ever-present logos, whose activity is a place where grace is found. Over past history Christ has taught and guided mankind until the perfection of God's revelation in his incarnation. 'I am', says Christ in the *Protrepticus*, 'the logos of God, who became man, so that you might learn from a man how a man can become God.' There are many uneven points in Clement's account of the perfect Christian.

88 On the following, see M. Pohlenz, *Klemens von Alexandria und sein hellenisches Christentum*, NAWG.PH (Göttingen, 1943), 175f.

89 See below, chapter 4.

Not all achieve the perfection of his Hellenic Christian, who is distinct from other believers. Yet Clement has a strong sense of Christian community; indeed, his picture of the true gnostic who is found in the church is a much more effective weapon against heresy than negative vituperation. Clement's importance for the development of Christianity is hard to exaggerate. His introduction of the claims of scientific thought and investigation gave to Christianity the heritage of Greece.<sup>90</sup>

Tradition at Alexandria has been identified with a liberal approach to Christian theology; it was praised by the rationalist Renan.<sup>91</sup> Yet by others an opposite verdict was returned: the Alexandrian school was seen as the end of Hellenism at the hands of the Hebrew God. These two estimates of the tradition of Alexandria both contain an element of truth. On the one side it brings a liberalism to Jewish and Christian tradition, on the other hand it submits the Greek mind to the dominance of biblical teaching.

The prime concern of intellectual history is with 'ways of speaking as ways in which people in the past *made sense* of their world' and 'the most complex explorations of the limits of language or conceptual frames at a given time will always have pride of place'.<sup>92</sup> Clement's place in the joining of Athens and Jerusalem will continue to attract interest.<sup>93</sup> The diverse studies of the past fifty years have brought us to a position where we can grasp a clearer picture of Clement's contribution. Clarity comes with a recognition that the *Stromateis* are miscellanies, that Clement repeats himself because everything is joined to everything. 'This idea is the relatedness of all things among themselves, the intelligible bond which sets them in order, and brings them together again, which makes them one beneath their multiplicity, one by their cohesion and their unity'.<sup>94</sup>

90 Pohlenz wrongly sets in contrast to Clement the western tradition which derives from Tertullian.

91 See A. Le Boulluec, 'L'école d'Alexandrie. De quelques aventures d'un concept historiographique', in *Alexandrina. Hellenisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie*, FS C. Mondésert (Paris, 1987), 403–17.

92 A. Brett, 'What is intellectual history now?' in D. Cannadine, *What is history now?* (Basingstoke, 2002), 127.

93 C. Edsman, 'Clement of Alexandria and Greek myths', *StudPatr* 31 (1997), 385–8. 'The classical philologist Christian Gnllka has recently criticized a number of formulations intended to characterize the encounter of classical antiquity and Christianity. He calls the christianization of the old world a "macro-mutation", a quite new creation. In this process elements of the ancient culture are taken up in a selective manner. The church fathers adopted a method *χρησις ὁρθή usus iustus*, "the right use"' (see Chr. Gnllka, *XPHΣΙΣ, Die Methode der Kirchenväter mit der antiken Kultur. I. Der Begriff des 'Rechten Gebrauchs'* (Basel/Stuttgart, 1984), 25f) (385).

94 C. Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie, introduction à l'étude de sa pensée religieuse à partir de l'écriture* (Paris, 1944), 151. For example, his true dialectic will meet us in his account of the bible, his Platonic metaphysic and his logic. It plays a different role in each context.



## PART I

### *Divine Plan/Economy*

#### INTRODUCTION TO PART I

Everything is ordered by 'the goodness of the only, one, true, almighty God, from age to age saving by the son' (7.2.12).

'From age to age' the divine economy moves to fulfilment in Christ and to the offer of salvation by faith which inaugurates a new age. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Clement adds to this divine plan of salvation the gift of philosophy to the Greeks to prepare them for Christ.

Above all, he writes of the splendour of the new age which Christ has brought with greater enthusiasm than any other early Christian writer: Christ has turned sunset to sunrise.

The kerygma or apostolic preaching proclaimed a coherent divine plan or economy declared in scripture and fulfilled in Christ. How can the mobile variety of scripture present coherent answers to questions about God, humanity, right and wrong?



## CHAPTER 2

### *Divine plan/economy and mobility*

‘Indeed the economy of the saviour has produced a certain universal movement and change’

(6.6.47.1)

#### DIVINE PLAN/ECONOMY: FROM SUNSET TO SUNRISE; THE SWEET DANGER OF DECISION

Clement’s *Exhortation to the Greeks* is a lyrical work beginning with a description of the gospel as the new cosmic song which supplants the old songs of the Greeks and which can turn stones into men. The new song overcomes the dullness of those whose hearts are petrified against truth.<sup>1</sup> The exhortation culminates in an offer of salvation. Salvation is the greatest good, which brings man into a relation with God, where, as a friend of God, he shares in a renewed universe of good things. Clement restates Paul’s theme of the righteousness of God which spreads salvation through a new creation.

The beginning of Clement’s thought, as for other second-century theologians, is the primitive Christian kerygma, which speaks of a good and only God, and of his plan of salvation, which comes to perfection in Christ and may be received by all. Clement is so remarkable for his philosophical accounts of God that his devotion to the kerygma is commonly overlooked. Yet, like Irenaeus, he had only one gospel to proclaim: the goodness of God from the beginning to the end, God’s

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Runia, ‘The pre-Christian origins of early Christian spirituality’, in *Prayer and spirituality in the early Church*, ed. P. Allen, W. Mayer, L. Cross, vol. II (Brisbane, 1999), 11–24. ‘Clement’s “new song” is undeniably a foundational document of early Christian spirituality. We should note, too, that it is a protreptic discourse. It aims to convert Hellenes from myth and error to truth and the true Logos. It thus consciously confronts the question of the relation between the old Hellenic spirituality, as Clement sees it, and the new Christian spirituality which he wishes to put in its place’ (9).

saving concern for humankind and the centrality of his act in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> This message emerges at the beginning of the *Protrepticus* (prot 4.59.2). Homer is ordered to be silent in the presence of those who have received the divine likeness of a God who dwells with them and feels for them. These are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people of God. They have learned everything from him who came from above and they have come to know the economy, the plan of salvation, of God the supreme disposer (prot 4.59.3). With this knowledge, they are able to walk in newness of life. The economy joins the old with the new and begins with God's creation of the universe out of nothing by his pure volition,<sup>3</sup> an act which he alone was able to achieve (prot 4.63.3).<sup>4</sup> The kerygma begins from God and continues in his economy.

The unity of the divine plan declares God's unchanging purpose, which is to save the flock of men. It was for this reason that he sent the good shepherd and acted in ways consistent with the fulfilment of his plan (prot 11.116.1). In accommodation to his Greek readers, Clement turns first to the account of the philosophers. Their opinions about God are largely wrong (prot 5); but some philosophers have spoken the truth. When Clement turns from the physical elements which the philosophers have deified, 'I long for God not for the works of God' (prot 6.67.2), he finds truth in Plato, who recognised that it was hard to find God and impossible to declare him when found. Plato has hit on the truth and is an ally in the search for the good. Indeed, there is a divine effluence which enables all people to confess that God is one, that he is unbegotten and indestructible and that he lives on high in the furthest reaches of heaven.

2 Patterson, 'The divine became human', 497–516. 'On this score, it is arguable that Irenaeus is the principal source known to us of Clement's understanding of the place of the Incarnation in the one divine economy of salvation, of various related matters having to do with the perfection of humanity as the goal of that economy, and of the basis of the unity of the Church and the key to the deeper meaning of the scriptures as grounded in the "ecclesiastical rule"' (515). See below, Appendix

3 *Authentikos Logos* 26.7: 'nothing has come into being without his will'. R. van den Broek, 'The *Authentikos Logos*: a new document of Christian Platonism', *VigChr* 33 (1979), 281.

4 Matter is not a first principle but a state of non-being which God changes to existence. D. T. Runia, 'Plato's *Timaeus*, first principle(s), and creation in Philo and early Christian thought', in *Plato's Timaeus as cultural icon*, ed. G. J. Greydams-Schils (Notre Dame, 2003), 133–51. 'Clement's opponents claim that the philosophers are *not* dependent on the scriptures, precisely because they postulate more than a single principle, the implication being that the Bible and Christianity do affirm a single principle only. But Clement points out that the second principle of the philosophers hardly deserves to be called such. In fact Plato himself hints that matter is not really a principle by calling it "nonbeing." Clement, then, most interestingly appeals to the very text from Tim. 48c–d which we cited at the outset, obviously interpreting the single *archê* that it mentions as an option for representing Plato's actual thought. Matter is not really a principle. It is closer to nonbeing than being, but (5.14.89.5–90.1) it is required for the exposition of how God created the cosmos' (139).

The poets saw this and so did (Pseudo-)Plato. 'All things are around the king of all things and that is the cause of everything good' (Plato, *Ep.* 2.312e). God is the just measure of all things; both Moses and Plato speak of his presence in and through the whole universe (*Laws* 715e, 716a). Plato took his wisdom from many sources, but in his account of God he turned, as the Sibyl declares, to the Hebrews. Other philosophers follow Plato in their account of one universal God. The Pythagoreans find God within the total structure of the universe (prot 6.72.4). The poets take up the theme of one God and declare his transcendence above images of bronze or gold. The unity and the transcendence of God are in stark contrast to the gods of popular religion, who display every human weakness.

Clement now leads his Greek audience from philosophers and poets to prophets, there to find the direct road to salvation. The Sibyl speaks of the one God who rules over all and calls men from darkness to light. Scripture destroys falsehood and points to the one God. Yet its words by themselves are not enough; they must be put into practice.<sup>5</sup>

Clement states the primitive Christian kerygma of salvation. When we look at what God's goodness has done, we find the following story:

the first man played in paradise with childlike freedom,<sup>6</sup> since he was a child of God. But when he fell a victim to pleasure, and was led astray by lusts, the child, coming to manhood through disobedience and refusing to listen to the father, was ashamed to meet God. See how pleasure prevailed! The man who had been free by reason of innocence was discovered to be bound by sins. The lord purposed once again to loose him from his bonds. Clothing himself with bonds of flesh (which is a divine mystery) he subdued the serpent and enslaved the tyrant, death. Most wonderful of all, the very man who had erred through pleasure and was bound by corruption was shown to be free again through his outstretched hands.<sup>7</sup> O amazing mystery! The lord has sunk down, but man rose up, and he who was driven from paradise gains a greater prize, heaven, on becoming obedient.

(prot II.III.I-3)

5 Jeremiah and Isaiah reflect the same belief in God which Moses declared with his noble utterance, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord is thy God, the Lord is One and thou shalt worship thy God and him only shalt thou serve' (*Deut.* 6:4, 6:13; prot 8.80.4). Those who have perverted their concept of God must turn to the prophetic words and to the mysteries of divine wisdom. The lord calls on men to abandon vanity and falsehood, and his holy apostle takes up the theme of the psalms when he declares that men have changed the glory of God into the likeness of corruptible man and worshipped the creature rather than creator. 'The sun shall fail and the heavens shall be darkened, but the almighty', says the prophet, 'shall shine forever'. The powers of the heavens shall be shaken and the heavens shall be folded up, spread out and drawn together like a curtain (prot 8.81.4). Here Clement has typically rolled together many passages from scripture (prot 8.81.2).

6 C. Harrison, 'The childhood of man in early Christian writers (Theophilus, Irenaeus, Clement)', *Aug* 32 (1992), 61-76. This study points to the development of this idea in Clement, where the childhood of Adam must be recovered as a central part of Christianity.

7 Outstretched on the cross.

The picture of Adam as a child in paradise is common to Clement and Irenaeus, but the notion of playing is peculiar to Clement.<sup>8</sup> In this passage, Clement declares the coherence of the divine economy, as did Irenaeus and Tertullian.

The identity of the kerygma in Clement, Irenaeus and Tertullian is evident. Divine goodness leads to a divine plan of salvation, which is consummated in Christ and shared by all who believe. Clement's achievement is to take the same kerygma and expound it in a way which is not limited, as is the *Demonstration* of Irenaeus, to fulfilment of scripture. It is the same saving plan which is presented and elaborated, in the *Protrepticus*, in a way accessible to Greek readers.

At the centre of this economy is recapitulation in Christ, which includes correction and perfection of sinful humanity, inauguration and consummation of a new humanity in Christ.<sup>9</sup> No other writer sets out the wonder of the new age as does Clement. Truth comes down from heaven, light spreads over the earth and the champion of the universe conquers darkness and sin. He goes out, as the word from Zion, into all the world (prot 1.2.2f). His is the new song which brings life and which gives harmony to the universe reaching from centre to circumference (prot 1.5.2). As the instrument of God (prot 1.6.1) he opens eyes and unstops ears, he leads the lame and wandering to righteousness, and exhibits God to the foolish. He destroys corruption and death, and he brings divine love and grace to mankind. All this is new, but it is not new in the way in which we speak of a new house, for it was before the morning star and the word was in the beginning. By the act of God's champion, we are able to abandon the customs of our fathers as infantile and unworthy of mature men (prot 10.109.3; 10.110.3). To cross over to the side of God is a change from ignorance to knowledge, from folly to wisdom, from debauchery to self-control, from injustice to righteousness and from godlessness to God (prot 10.93.1).<sup>10</sup>

8 See paed 1.5.21f.

9 M. Ritter, 'Christentum und Eigentum bei Clemens von Alexandrien', *ZKG* 86 (1975), 25. Newness in Clement is brought out clearly in opposition to other views. The gospel is not a 'nova lex', nor an individualistic redemption doctrine, but the message of God's new creation. This encourages the believer and empowers him to advance further in love than righteousness or the status quo requires. The church as a new creature discovers God as giver, liberator, bringer of joy and real community. See also W. Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana. Die Idee des Fortschritts in der alten Kirche bis Eusebius* (Göttingen, 1994).

10 Cf. H. Kutter, *Clemens Alexandrinus und das Neue Testament* (Giessen, 1897). 'Klemens kennt keine grundlegenden Wirkungen des Herrn für die Gegenwart. Gottes Heil ist eine in der Vergangenheit abgeschlossene Grösse' (152). This is plainly wrong.

Man is the image of God and can be restored to God's likeness (prot 10.98.3). To seek God is to seek life, to find God is to possess life (prot 10.106.5). So we must seek God and rejoice in the life that he gives (prot 10.107.1). The effect of the gospel on the world is stated with Johannine clarity. The divine power has illuminated the earth and scattered everywhere the seed of salvation. The speed with which God has acted proves that only he could be the author of salvation. He has brought peace to all, acting as the divine logos, who is transparently and truly God, equal to the ruler of all, being his son and the word who was in God. When he was first proclaimed, he was not believed, and when he put on the mask of humanity to act out the drama of salvation, he was not recognised. He was the true actor who joined his action to that of creation and spread his work among men more quickly than the rays of the sun can spread. Christ has given us light, and God himself gives witness to his origin and person. He the logos, herald of peace, mediator and saviour, is spread over the earth which has now become an ocean of good things (prot 10.110.3). Clement is more exuberant than Irenaeus concerning the present splendours which Christ has manifested. (Irenaeus includes more future eschatology.) All things are now filled with his holy powers, and the whole world has by the logos become an Athens and a Greece (prot 11.112.1). The totality of Christ cannot be divided. There is no longer barbarian, Jew, Greek, male, or female; a new humanity has been formed by the holy spirit (prot 11.112.3).

It is up to men to receive truth by removing (prot 11.114.1) the ignorance that has hindered their sight, to welcome God as the light which has invaded their darkness and overcome the shadow of death. This light is life eternal, and whatever partakes of this light will live (prot 11.114.2). The whole universe has woken to unsleeping light, and sunset has turned into sunrise (prot 11.114.4). This is the new creation, as the sun of righteousness shines on all men and dispenses truth. He makes men divine by heavenly teaching, putting God's laws into their minds and hearts (prot 11.114.4). By these laws, all shall know God, from the small to the great. We must receive the laws of life, obey God, learn about him and return thanks to him for the goodness that he has showered upon us. In return for a little faith, he gives us the whole earth, with water to drink or sail on, air to breathe, fire as our servant and the world as our home (prot 11.115.1f). Clement finally calls on the whole rational (*logikos*) human race, which the word (*logos*) has created (prot 12.120.3), to come to him and find their place under God. It is his will to grant them the gift of immortality through him who gives himself (prot 12.120.3f) that they

may know God. Here they find all things summed up: the symphony and harmony of the father, his son and Christ, the word of God, the arm of the lord, his universal power and the will of the father. Their imperfect likeness to God needs to be corrected according to the archetype who calls them, as he anoints them with faith. He calls on all who labour and are heavy laden to come to his rest, to take his yoke upon them and to learn of him. His yoke is easy and his burden is light (prot 12.120.5). Inauguration offers the choice of participation, of sharing in God. So they must run to receive this yoke and to be joined to the son who rides into Jerusalem in triumph. He offers the greatest gift, and reason demands that men choose without hesitation the better of the alternatives before them. In choosing this gift they belong to God and hold all things in common with him. Salvation means nothing less than this reciprocity with God, and the choice between judgement and grace is offered to all (prot 120–123).

Clement returns to the theme of a divine economy frequently throughout his writing.<sup>11</sup> He himself, in the plan of his three works, follows his own plan or economy, beginning with exhortation, continuing with training, to end in teaching. This is the good economy of the word who loves mankind (paed 1.1.3.3). Again in Book VI of the *Stromateis*, Clement describes three progressive kinds of worship. The Greeks worship physical elements in their idolatry, the Jews worship angels and archangels (6.5.41.2), but Christians worship in a new and spiritual way. Through the new covenant, this way is open. The same God is known by the Greeks in a Gentile way, by Jews in a Jewish way, and by Christians in a new and spiritual way (6.5.41.5–6). Mankind is not divided by three different natures; rather, the lord has come in three different ways: the gospel was proclaimed at the appropriate time, just as the law and prophets had been earlier proclaimed and philosophy propounded to prepare human ears to receive the gospel (6.6.44.1). Righteousness according to the law needed faith, and righteousness according to philosophy needed both faith and the rejection of idolatry. When Christ came, he descended into hell because this was appropriate to the saving plan. Indeed, the apostles also descended, and there was a universal

<sup>11</sup> J. L. Kovacs, 'Concealment and Gnostic exegesis: Clement of Alexandria's interpretation of the tabernacle', *StudPatr* 31 (1997), 414–37. Clement argues *against* those who claim 'that the whole *oikonomia* prophesied of the lord is a parable' (6.15.127.1). Clement transformed the Valentinian idea of two ways of salvation into two stages of the one salvation. This became a central theme of his theology (428). See also K. Parel, 'The theological anthropology of Clement of Alexandria' (Dissertation, Cambridge, 1995), 33–47 for a concise account of Clement's doctrine of the *oikonomia*.

movement and translation through the economy of the saviour (6.6.47.1). Those outside the law, when they heard the voice of the lord, whether directly or through the apostles, were converted rapidly and came to faith. For the three-fold divine economy operates in hell as it operates on earth. God is no respecter of persons (6.6.46.4), and his beneficence knows no limit (6.8.64.1).

Movement and universal presence go together. While the son of God never moves from his watchtower, he is always present as universal mind (7.2.5.5). The son is saviour and lord of all (7.2.6.6), and the first mover is the cause of all good things (7.2.8.5). The power of the son spreads through the universe, and he draws men to himself as a magnet (7.2.9.4). He becomes the one saviour individually to each and in common to all (7.3.16.5). All that he does is part of a universal plan which is rational and recognisable.

### *Divine movement and design*

Clement uses the language of movement to describe God, salvation and humanity. The word *theos*, he wrongly claims, is derived from the root of *thein* or movement. The *Protrepticus* is an exhortation to movement and change, beginning from the saving movement of God which is reflected in human need for constant change towards what is better until perfection is gained. The saving movement of God and the free response of man are then joined in the act of salvation which is never still.

God's one work is to save mankind (prot 9.87.3). His supreme act of emptying himself to become man shows strength and mercy. The results, we have seen, are startling. When God suddenly reveals man's original communion with heaven, he changes darkness into light (prot 2.25.3). His movement is universal. The vitality of God is shown by this movement: there could be no greater contrast than that between the lifeless image of Zeus and the sole creator of the universe, taken together with man who is his living, rational image (prot 10.98.2). God's universality reflects the speed with which his goodness acts as light or seed; the earth has been illuminated by the goodness, which scattered the seed of salvation over the universe. When the word was first preached by the prophets, some believed; but when he became incarnate, his light spread, swifter than the rising sun, as he presented by teaching and signs the God from whom he came and who he was (prot 10.110.3) (Symp. 210d).

God is autonomous in his design. His will is his work, which we observe in the created world. His plan is human salvation, which we see

in the church. His perfection is imparted to men who are born again by a bare faith which depends on God alone (paed 1.6.27.2). God's action, through his son, is like that of a general who directs his troops or a pilot who steers his ship. The divine pilot guides his children as they are driven by the wind of the spirit, to bring them safely into their heavenly harbour (paed 1.7.54.2f).

There is complexity within the providence of God; but his justice balances his different activities. There is a balance between father and son, since no one knows the father but the son, and no one knows the son but the father. Divine justice constrains and converts by word and reason on the one side and flesh and law on the other (paed 1.9.88.2,3). The same balance is shown when divine providence performs its chief work, which is not simply to do good, but to turn existing evils into good (1.17.86.2,3). As the one ultimate cause, God works in many ways, uniting different agents and forces towards one end, just as many men join in hauling a ship (*ek pollôn aitiôn hen*) (1.20.97.1). The extent of divine activity over a long time explains the detailed and tedious history into which Clement can digress (1.21.101.1–29.182.3). For him, such history is not tedious because it proves the continuity of God's movement.

For all his universal presence, God is difficult to grasp, as he recedes from those who pursue him (2.2.5.3). Yet his mystery is balanced by exuberant goodness, for God is one in the perpetual flow of good things to his creatures (4.23.151.3). He draws men to himself just as those who pull on an anchor are drawn to the anchor (4.23.152.2).

God's power spreads everywhere, like the fire on Mount Sinai (6.3.32.3). His saving power is active (*energêtikê*) and it works (*ergazetai*) everywhere and always (6.6.47.4; 6.3.33.1; 6.16.148.1; 6.18.167.5). The saving movement is embraced in one covenant from the beginning of the world. While different generations and different times have understood this covenant in different ways, the one God has moved to save in many ways, and his gift of salvation is irreversible (6.13.106.3).

Clement's positive evaluation of Greek philosophy is bound up with his understanding of time as a teleological continuity, of history as divinely ordered salvation-history, and his criticism of culture from the position of Christianity which is both new and universal.<sup>12</sup> The unity and continuity of history derive from the irreversible past and the future

12 G. Apostolopoulou, *Die Dialektik bei Klemens von Alexandria: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der philosophischen Methoden* (München, 1996), 19.

perspective of the plan of salvation.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of history is educational – so to train humanity that humans will gain knowledge, piety and virtue, as they move from law and philosophy to the truth of revelation.<sup>14</sup>

*The ascent of humanity through reciprocity with God*

Clement's *Exhortation to the Greeks* begins as a universal song which recalls to heaven humans who are now on earth (prot 1.3.2). The path of return requires perseverance: Plato has grasped some initial truths, but he needs to push on, beyond those hints about God which he has given (prot 6.68.1–70.2). Going further, the prophets call men to turn away from senseless idols (prot 8.78,9). Respect for custom can hinder progress to good (prot 10.89). Change is as dramatic as it is necessary. Clement's metaphors constantly multiply. Our ears must be open to the words of salvation. The medicine of immortality must be taken. We must stop slithering in the dust like earth-bound snakes and must lift our eyes to the heavens above (prot 10.106.2). We must abandon the darkness of ignorance and receive the light of eternal life (prot 11.114.1). We must steer clear of custom which brings shipwreck and death (prot 12.118.1).

Clement concludes his *Exhortation* with a call to decision. Reason does not hesitate to choose between wisdom and folly. We must grip truth with our teeth and rationally follow God (prot 12.122.2). Such decision has its dangers, but such danger is sweet.

Clement sets out the plan of responding movement towards God, from the exhortation of the *protreptikos* to the instruction of the *paidagōgos* to the teaching of the *didaskalos*. In these three modes, the logos is eager to lead men to perfection by his plan (*oikonomia*) (paed 1.1.3.3).<sup>15</sup> His pupils are children, because they know God as father; they are simple, small, pure and lovers of the unicorn, with the simplicity of that animal which has one horn. Even those who progress in the word remain children, always learning, always perfect (paed 1.5.17.1). Ephesians sets the goal of all Christians as growth into the perfect manhood of Christ (paed 1.5.18.3).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. A. Koffas, *Die Sophia-Lehre bei Klemens von Alexandrien* (Frankfurt, 1982). 'Im Mittelpunkt der klementinischen Ausführungen stehen "σοφία" (Weisheit) und "Παιδαγωγία" (Erziehung und Bildung). "οὐ γὰρ φύσει, μαθήσει δὲ οἱ καλοὶ κάγαθοι γίνονται (Str 1 34.1)' (206).

<sup>14</sup> Apostolopoulou, *Die Dialektik*, 27.

<sup>15</sup> M. Mees, 'Jetzt und Dann in der Eschatologie Klemens von Alexandrien', *Aug* 18 (1978), 127–37. The dominance of present eschatology in Clement requires that the believer should strive towards perfection which participates in God here and now. Through love, knowledge and hope, the perfect Christian anticipates the end. The chief form of anticipation for Clement is the constant prayer, which informs the whole Christian life and sanctifies every act.

Even childhood does not imply imperfection, for perfection is received at baptism by those who are declared by Christ to be 'gods' and who are by faith born again to new life (paed 1.6.25.1–26.2). The perfection of faith remains proleptic or anticipatory, because something is kept in reserve until the last day (2 Pet. 3:7). As a pledge of the future, faith anticipates what is to be completed at the resurrection, when 'it will be for us according to our faith' (Jn 3:36; Mt 9:29) (paed 1.6.29.1–3).

Because of this future dimension, Clement is, in his early writings,<sup>16</sup> astonished at the arrogance of those who already call themselves 'perfect' and 'gnostic'. For Paul (Phil. 3:15), as he strives upwards, denies that he has arrived at his goal. He declares rather a desire for perfection and acknowledges his rebirth into faith and wholeness of being (paed 1.6.52.2, 3). Instruction from God points towards contemplation and perseverance in holy actions (paed 1.7.54.1). Man's upward path is guided by the example of the life of the lord; he follows the footsteps of God, who shows in human form the soundness, simplicity and sufficiency of a pilgrim who discards all baggage on the way to life eternal. Alone, uncluttered by servants, the follower of Christ chooses a simple life, taking a day at a time (paed 1.12.98.3, 4). He travels light who follows God, stripping off what is transient and holding on to what endures: faith in God, allegiance to him who suffered, good works to men. This is his permanent and precious possession (paed 2.3.36.2). Such pilgrimage is a solemn matter, and buffoonery must be avoided (paed 2.5.47). In the chaos of a disordered world, where sensuality has disrupted nature (paed 3.3.21.1–3), he takes the cross of his lord as his 'limit' against disorder. The cross defends him and fences him from his past sins (paed 3.12.85.3).

Clement, we saw, begins the *Stromateis* with a defence of writing as the movement of knowledge, because wisdom is to be shared for the benefit of men (*koinônikon, philanthrôpon*) (1.1.1.2f). Soul is joined to soul and spirit is joined to spirit as the seed of the word germinates and grows (1.1.2.1). The saviour gives in abundance to his servants what they must increase if they are to enter the joy of the lord (1.1.3.1). Both speaker and writer, as they communicate truth, make faith active by love (1.1.4.1). Knowledge is always on the move; wisdom is useless unless it makes its hearers wise (1.1.12.3).

Yet plain writing has its limitations, for it speaks with one voice, unable to answer the questions which it provokes. So it needs the help of the

<sup>16</sup> In contrast to *Stromateis* VII. In the present work, Clement's 'gnostic' (*gnostikos*) does not have a capital letter, as do heretical 'Gnostics'. He is also translated as 'sage' or 'complete Christian'.

reader or his disciple, to whom it gives hints, indicates secretly and demonstrates silently (1.1.14.4). The process of learning is marked by reciprocity, movement and change. It prepares, first by clearing the ground, by setting out preparatory mysteries and by using philosophy and other basic instruction. Paul's use of preliminary instruction is commended as he becomes a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks (1 Cor. 9:20,21). All wisdom is made perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28); any additional sources of learning are like a relish which is added to the food of athletes, not as an indulgence, but as a savoury stimulant towards excellence. Learning uses every device in its pursuit of the one pearl of wisdom, which shines out among other pearls for those who work hard under the guidance of a good helper. Greek erudition is an irrigation of land to prepare it for spiritual seed (1.1.15.2–17.4). All these helps are needed because humans become noble and good not by nature but by learning. The good man needs to learn in the same way as the doctor and the pilot need to be trained before they can practise their craft (1.6.34.2). No resource may be neglected in the process of learning. Philosophy is necessary for him who wishes to gain the knowledge of God (1.9.43.2–44.3). The important resource of Greek philosophy does not grasp the greatness of truth, yet it prepares the learner to receive that truth (1.16.80.6), as do all the ways of wisdom (2.2.4.1). Learning always involves movement, because it turns a preconception into comprehension (2.4.17.1). It involves interaction, because faith comes by hearing, as Paul says, and hearing comes by the word of God. Isaiah asks who has believed his report, looking for a response in the process of learning. For Clement, faith which hears the preaching of the apostles is led up to the word of the lord, the son of God. The reciprocity of teaching, where teacher and faithful hearer are joined, is like a ball-game where one throws and another catches (2.6.25.1–4).<sup>17</sup>

Clement's disordered notes call for strenuous study, not passive acceptance. We must dig much earth to find a little gold. In the end, Clement claims, 'the writing will find one who understands', but other work and research are needed. The writing can point the way to readers: 'after this they must walk and find out the rest for themselves' (4.2.5.1). The Pythian priestess said 'You will find if you seek,' and Hesiod spoke of hidden excellence and the long steep path to virtue (WD 289–92). Similarly, Jesus spoke of the narrow way (Mt 7:14), of the kingdom which belongs

<sup>17</sup> Gadamer has used the same simile: see his *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen, 1965), title page and 107. The same ideas of play and mutuality are present in both writers. See below, page 166f.

to the violent (Mt 11:12) and of the need to seek in order to find (Mt 7:7) (4.2.4.If).

The opposite of learning and faith is sin, which is also an activity (*energeia*) and not a created substance (*ousia*). It is not God's work, but something freely chosen and pursued by men (4.13.93.3). The notion of 'taking a position' explains the process of learning and knowledge. To know, we must place ourselves in relation to what truly is. So *epistêmê* fixes the soul on an object, and *pistis* sets the soul in relation to true existence. Both are ways of giving position (*stasis*) to the soul (4.22.143.3).<sup>18</sup>

The movement of the soul should be upwards. It is not sent down from heaven to an inferior state, for God works all things towards what is better; as it chooses the best life, it exchanges earth for heaven (4.26.167.4). Clement prays that the spirit of Christ will wing him aloft to his Jerusalem, the heavenly city (4.26.172.2). The ascent of the soul is rational. He who gave life and being also gives reason, to the end that human life be both rational and good (5.1.6.3). Reason recognises ignorance, starts to search, finds a teacher, and goes on to faith and love. As Plato told Alcibiades, searching leads to finding and finding leads to knowledge. This searching holds the light of knowledge in darkness, just as the wise virgins of the parable kept their lamps burning in expectation (5.1.17.1–3). Responsibilities lie with teacher as with learner. The teacher must become all things to all men, and present the truth in ways which seekers will understand (5.3.18.5–7). On the other hand, the learner must master his passions if he is to enter the higher world of intellect and gain knowledge of the ineffable God who is above every name (5.6.34.7). Despite these hurdles, the perfection of Christ is now open to all. The glory of his mystery is made known to the nations. Those things which were hidden are now revealed to the saints, through faith and hope in Christ, who is the one foundation (5.10.61.1, 2). Clement, profoundly influenced by the letter to the Hebrews, repeats the call to perfection, which abandons elementary things and climbs higher (Heb. 5:14–6:1) (5.10.62.4). Pythagoras similarly demanded of his pupils that they spend five years in silence, which would enable them to turn away from sensible objects and advance to the vision of the divine through pure intellect (5.11.67.3). For the Greeks, the way to knowledge of mysteries moves from purification to the lesser mysteries and then to the great mysteries. The

<sup>18</sup> See A. van den Hoek, 'Etymologizing in a Christian context: the techniques of Clement and Origen', *StPhilo* (2004), 152.

great mysteries, for Clement, move from cleansing (*katharsis*) to the magnitude of Christ (5.11.70.7).<sup>19</sup>

In Clement's *Stromateis* he declares his concern to resolve the difficulties of Greeks and barbarians concerning the coming of his lord, to kindle sparks in the memory<sup>20</sup> of his readers and to lead them on to perfect knowledge. When the Greeks learn from Clement's writings, they will see that it is wrong to persecute the friends of God. For the knowledge into which the believer is brought is a spiritual garden, a restoration to paradise in the light and true knowledge which comes from the saviour himself (6.1.2.2-4).

For all its continuity with culture, this true knowledge moves into something new. Remarkably, Clement claims that, in general, the Greeks have known in a different way the same God as the Christians, whereas the Jews have not known the same God (6.5.39.4).<sup>21</sup> The one God, says Clement, is known in a new and spiritual way (6.5.41.1-7). The newness of the way is wider in extent and higher in spirituality. The man of knowledge prays continually in his mind as he is joined to God by love. He asks for forgiveness, for grace not to sin, for power to do good and to understand the whole creation and economy (6.12.102.1). Step by step, he has reached this life of continuous prayer, which begins from faith. The faith of Abraham, which counted for righteousness, showed that he had taken a step towards a reality which was greater and more perfect (6.12.103.1).

Movement and interaction do not cease when the summit of knowledge is reached. The man of knowledge is formed to bear the exact impression of the mind of his teacher (6.15.115.1). The philosopher finds truth by assimilation; he is grafted like a wild olive on to a true olive and is nourished until he produces prolific growth (6.15.118.1). The love of knowledge brings incorruption and closeness to God; it results from a desire for knowledge and a disciplined formation through instruction. In the end, man is made like the heavenly king, God, and becomes a royal person. To this end, faithful seeking and finding must go on (6.15.121.3). Faith has nothing to do with mere appearance. Some people sit in the sun, so that they may be seen to be under the sun, but have no desire to absorb the warmth of the sun. Faith comes with genuine effort; the kingdom

19 All this takes place *in one world*, which Heraclitus saw as eternal and yet corruptible, a world of ever-living fire governed by measure (5.14.104.1f).

20 *Anamnēsis* is central to Clement's thought. See Itter, *Method and doctrine*, 85-111.

21 This reflects the Fourth Gospel, where the Jews consistently fail to comprehend.

belongs to the violent who, with kingly force, search, study, practise discipline and pluck the fruit of perfection (6.17.149.5). Book VII of the *Stromateis* presents Clement's most complete picture of human progress.<sup>22</sup>

### *Reciprocity of movement*

God moves perpetually for man's salvation. Man responds by faith and learning towards God. Divine and human movement are reciprocal in the central saving act. The word of God became man, that man might become God (prot 1.8.4). The first reciprocity is between father and son; the second reciprocity is between God and man. God moves to man, that man might move to God. Man must not mistake the world for God, but aim beyond the world at its creator. He must not worship the sun, but long for the maker of the sun; he must not deify the world, but look for the creator of the world (prot 4.63.5). He searches for God, not the works of God, longing after the lord of the spirits, the lord of the fire, the creator who gives light to the sun (prot 6.67.2). Because God is his goal, he should hurry on to salvation and rebirth, on to the love which unites human plurality, on to the good Monad, to the God who welcomes the union and harmony of those who cry, 'Abba, Father' (prot 9.88.3).

In face of God's offer, it is strange that those who belong to God should turn their backs on his goodness and take the downward path to hell. The upward path leads to heaven, where God's sons can walk in his paradise and drink from the spring of life. This is man's peculiar vocation. Pigs are happier in mud than they are in clean water, but men should throw off their chains and become children of light (prot 10.92.3–5). The movement to cross over to the side of God is a dangerous act of desertion, but such danger is sweet<sup>23</sup> (prot 10.93.2). The lord is himself the narrow way by which we ascend to heaven (prot 10.100.1). Salvation is always an interaction of divine and human movement. Clement celebrates the mystery of the divine/human exchange. The lord descends and man rises up. He who fell from paradise receives heaven itself as a prize for his new obedience (prot 11.111.3).

Clement ends his exhortation with a further plea for movement and change. The word calls all men to take their place under the one God and one word of God and to receive the supreme gift of immortality (prot 12.120.3). There is no place for delay. We must run to take his yoke upon

<sup>22</sup> See below, Conclusion, page 269.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Phaedo 114d *kalos ho kindunos* and Horace, Odes 3.25.18f, *dulce periculum est. . . sequi deum*.

us,<sup>24</sup> for he who rode into Jerusalem now rides triumphantly into heaven (prot 12.121.1).

The *Paedagogus* describes the movement which begins the path of faith. Baptism wakes the sleeper and wipes obstructions from his eyes. The divine spirit removes sinful obstacles which impair the vision (cf. paed 2.1.1.3, 2.9.81.1; prot 6. 68.4, 11.113.2) (Plato, Rep. 533d). The holy spirit flows down from heaven to anoint men, so that those who were once darkness are now light in the lord. This is why, says Clement, men are called *phôs*, which means both 'man' and 'light'. There is nothing intermediate between light and darkness, and as we hurry on to the end of resurrection, we anticipate, in time, our arrival in eternity. There is a distinction between faith, which marks our setting out in time, and our final attainment of the promised object, secure for all eternity. As the lord said, the believer will be raised up to life eternal at the last day (Jn 6:40) (paed 1.6.28.1–5). Movement and reciprocity are indicated in the prayer 'that they may be perfected into one' (Jn 17:21–3); for the oneness of God goes beyond unity and the Monad itself, and is immediate in the past, present and future (paed 1.8.71.1).

The exchange between God and man was understood by Heraclitus when he spoke of men as gods and gods as men. The incarnation makes the puzzle plain. God is in man, the mediator fulfils the will of the father as the logos becomes common to each believer and the son of God becomes saviour of men (paed 3.1.2.1). Clement concludes the *Paedagogus* with a prayer to the God who is father and son, that he should transport us to his city and bring us safely across the billows of sin and the calm sea of the spirit, to unending praise of him who is *at once* father and son, son and father, instructor and teacher (paed 3.12.101).

God's movement to man comes in many forms. His preparation (through philosophy) of the Greeks has fallen indiscriminately like rain (1.7.37.1). Yet his relationship to men is not natural, for men are neither parts of God nor his natural children. The mercy which joins him to men is the greatest proof of his goodness (2.16.75.1–3). God's movement calls for man's responsive movement; all ethical endeavour is a participation in God, a twofold end and a twofold hope. All human goodness consists in assimilation to God (2.22.131.2–136.6).

After investigating heresies in *Stromateis* III, Clement again calls for movement and change. We must follow where the logos leads,<sup>25</sup> because

24 Always the note of reciprocity!

25 Here there is a play on the ambiguity of 'logos' as 'reason' and 'Christ'.

departing from the logos is the way of endless evil. We must follow the scripture which is the path by which believers travel in hope (3.5.42.4–6). The journey beyond this life is described by Paul, who is torn between desires either to depart to be with Christ or to remain in the service of Christ on earth. The reason for departing would be perfection in the love of God. The reason for remaining is the salvation of those who are still on earth.

While there is no great divide within humanity, and no one is a stranger to the world by nature, because being is one and God is one, nevertheless the elect man lives as a stranger, sent in his body on a long pilgrimage. He uses and vacates the travellers' inns along the way. He never turns back and even while thanking God for his brief stay on earth, he anticipates his mansion in heaven. As Paul said (2 Cor. 5:1f) 'for we know that if our earthly house be dissolved we have a building of God, . . . eternal in the heavens' (4.26.165.4–166.2).

The interlocking movement of man and God reflects the unity of faith with knowledge and the unity of father with son. Faith and knowledge cannot be separate, for faith in the son believes that he is the son, that he has come to mankind in a certain way and for a certain purpose, and that he has suffered on the cross. Such faith includes knowledge that the object of faith is the son of God. Father and son cannot be separated because simultaneously the father is the father of the son and the son is the true teacher about the father (5.1.1.3). Faith in the son implies knowledge of the father and knowledge of the father implies faith in the son, because the son is the only teacher of that knowledge. There is reciprocal movement within unity from faith to knowledge and from the son to the father. Truth is apprehended and discerned by means of truth.

THE END OF THE DIVINE PLAN/ECONOMY IS TO BRING  
MEN CLOSE TO GOD

As with Irenaeus, the economy is a rational plan which educates, and which accustoms man to God (4.23.148.2).<sup>26</sup> Appropriation of intellectual things leads to a turning from sensible things.<sup>27</sup> The man of knowledge begins from admiration of creation, adores the holiness of the creator and

<sup>26</sup> See my *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge, 2001), 80–82, for 'accustoming' as part of God's saving plan.

<sup>27</sup> Merely turning from sensible things does not lead to the appropriation of intellectual things.

follows the way of assimilation to God to final unity. The goal of accustoming to God is reached in union with God as in John 15 and 17:

I shall be free from lust, let him say, because of adaptation to you, lord. For the economy of creation is good and all things are well administered, everything having its cause. I must be in what is yours, O ruler of all, and if I am there, I am near you. I wish to be without fear so that I may be able to come near to you, be satisfied with little and practise your right choice of good things over those that appear to be good.

(4.23.148.2)<sup>28</sup>

Clement clearly avoids the pitfalls which Pannenberg once predicted for joining Greek philosophy to Christian theology. For Pannenberg, 'The otherness of the author of the world is radically exhibited only where expectations and world pictures are overturned by concrete, contingent events.'<sup>29</sup> Divine irrational freedom produces radical surprise; it puts down the mighty from their seat and exalts the humble and meek.<sup>30</sup> Pannenberg wrongly claims Irenaeus as an ally. For Irenaeus, the economy is marked not by radical surprise but aesthetic fitness and logical coherence. The divine irrational freedom of the mighty acts of God (Ps. 136) has been replaced in Irenaeus and Clement by the universal wisdom of the God whose hand holds us even when we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea (Ps. 139). The divine irrational freedom for Pannenberg is like the grazing kangaroo, who bounds one way and then another. Clement's God, who moves, gives reason to salvation history. Marius Victorinus, a later Platonist, claims that the *esse* of God is *moveri* (adv. Ar. 1.4.3). For Irenaeus, God's movement is part of a rational plan, governed by what is *verum* and *aptum*.<sup>31</sup>

### *The fertility of goodness; perpetual flow of good things*

Everything begins from God's goodness, which never ends. The purpose of God's plan, we saw (7.2.12), was to reveal the only God as good and

<sup>28</sup> This account of *oikeiôsis* as the goal of Christian existence will return at several points of Clement's thought.

<sup>29</sup> W. Pannenberg, *Basic questions in theology*, II (London, 1971), 181.

<sup>30</sup> This is irrational, because the mighty are very good at sitting and the meek do not want to be exalted.

<sup>31</sup> Clement's account of the divine plan as a parable which points to the final reality of Christ crucified derives from both the 'signs' of the Fourth Gospel and the cross as the power and wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians. The first half of the Gospel was once called 'the book of signs' (C. H. Dodd, *The interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953)) because it consists of episodes which point to the cross.

saviour, and never a cause of evil. The divine economy springs from one source, the goodness of God; a corollary to this is that whatever is evil cannot be blamed upon God.

The exuberant goodness which produces the divine economy is Clement's constant point of reference as he answers Marcion's division of the just God from the good God. God is the only perfect and good God (q.d.s. 1). He is the good and the first principle of ethics (4.25.162). God is ineffable, but the one common feature of the names given to him is that they are good names. His goodness is unique, transcendent, yet active and the source of all other goodness. The reply of Jesus to the rich young ruler, 'There is none good but God', is cited or hinted at twelve times in Clement's writing (Mt 19:17). God alone is good (paed 1.8.71) and shows his goodness in his unique salvation of mankind (5.10.63). To know the good father is life eternal, for he alone is good and saviour (7.7.41). While God is not good for a purpose, but good in himself, yet his goodness is always active. God does good in every possible way as he acts in conscious care for humankind:

It is not that God in virtue of his essential goodness remains blessed and immortal, "neither troubled nor causing trouble"; but because he does good in his own unique way, and, both being and becoming very God and good father in unceasing beneficence, he remains changeless in the identity of his goodness. For what is the use of good which is not active and never does good?

(6.12.104)<sup>32</sup>

His unceasing love and care for men declares his goodness (2.9.43). This goodness is in contrast to man's alienation from God (2.16.74), who leads everything on to what is better (6.17.154). 'God's unceasing purpose is to save the flock of men. For this reason the good God sent the good shepherd' (prot 11.116). Many powers declare the unique goodness of God (paed 1.8.74). His wisdom takes many forms, and he leads men by many ways to salvation (paed 1.9.75). The justice, love and mercy of God come from his goodness. 'God is good on his own account and just in this respect on our account, and he is just because he is good' (paed 1.9.88). The variety of human need means that the goodness of God takes many forms. 'Sick, we need a healer, having strayed from the way, we need a guide, blind, we need one who will guide us in the light, and thirsty, we need the spring of life, the taste of which removes all thirst forever. The dead need life, sheep need a shepherd, children need a teacher; but also all humanity needs Jesus' (paed 1.9.83).

32 Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 1129; de latenter vivendo, 4.

The goodness of God is seen supremely in his response to the evil produced by his enemies. In the context of evil the goodness of God is pre-eminent:

It is the chief work of providence not to allow the evil which results from wilful revolt to remain useless and unprofitable and to become altogether harmful. For it is the function of the divine wisdom and virtue and power not only to do good (for this is the nature of God, so to speak, as that of fire is to heat and that of light is to give light), but also and above all to bring to a good and useful end what has happened through the evils contrived by any, and to use to good account things which appear to be bad, as is the testimony which proceeds from temptation.

(1.17.86)

There are some echoes of Stoicism in this account; for the Stoics, evil was a necessary part of a good world and could not be removed (*SVF* 2.1182; Plutarch, *Stoic. repugn.* 1051A). Good things were necessary to balance evil things in the world. It was good for the mind to be in the head, but its position was vulnerable. Everything had a reason and a useful place in the sum of things (*SVF* 2.1181; Plutarch, *ibid.*, 1050f). The aesthetic justification of evil meant that the beauty of the whole was increased by unpleasant elements within a work of art. The god of Cleanthes made the odd even and brought order to what was disordered;<sup>33</sup> he brought all things into unity and good from bad.

Clement replaced the impersonal providence of the Stoics with a saving God. Just as the evil done to Joseph by his brothers was used by God for good, so God turned all evil to the benefit of mankind. Evil became, by the power of God, the medicine of salvation (7.11.61). God uses for good the wrongs which his adversaries have dared against him (4.12.87). The enigmatic verse of Isaiah, 'I shall destroy the wall and it shall become a trampling ground' (Is. 5:5) refers to God's turning of evil into good. When the vineyard produced brambles instead of grapes, God removed the wall which protected it. Animals were then able to trample the vines underfoot. At the same time, the brambles would be destroyed and the vineyard would be cleared of what was wrong and harmful. God uses the crimes of enemies for the benefit of his vineyard, which is his people.

### *Problem of evil*

The goodness of God, revealed in many ways, implies that he is in no way responsible for evil. God is *agathos* and *anaitios* of evil. So exuberant is

33 Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus, *SVF* 1.537, LS 54I, 1.326f.

Clement's account of divine goodness that the questioning of providence does not deserve an answer (5.1.6); yet at one point Clement does give a proof of God's universal dominance (7.2.6). Divine providence includes foreknowledge and omniscience. It is a characteristic of the greatest power to know and be concerned for the smallest parts. God knows the number of hairs on our heads (6.17.153).<sup>34</sup> His providence extends to all who had lived before the coming of Christ and included the descent of Jesus to Hades to give those who had died before he came to earth the same opportunities as others (6.6.48).

The problem of evil was intensified by Christian martyrdom. 'If God cares for you, how can you ever be persecuted and put to death? Does he deliver you up for this express purpose?' (4.11.78). Clement replies that the injustice of the judge who condemns the Christian does not reflect on God's providence, for the judge, like every human, is a free agent (4.11.79). In condemning us, the judge condemns himself. Furthermore, Christians are not ill-treated when they are released by death to go to their lord. Even Socrates knew that death could not hurt him, and we know that the lord is our helper, that the souls of the righteous are in God's hand, where no torment can touch them. It is foolish to claim with Basilides, says Clement, that the martyr has sinned unconsciously or in another life, or that he has a principle of sin within him or a desire to sin. (Basilides had said, 'I will say anything rather than declare providence to be evil.') This would mean that if the martyr should choose to deny his faith, the working of providence could be subverted and his sins go unpunished. Basilides would make the lord a sinner because he suffered a martyr's death. Many absurdities follow from Basilides' explanation; he cannot account for the martyr's faith and love of God.

God did not will that Jesus and the martyrs should suffer. These things happened without his prevention. His providence and goodness are preserved. 'We must not think that God actively causes our afflictions. That is quite unthinkable; but we should be of the conviction that he does not prevent those who cause them' (4.12.86). Good things are caused by God, evil things happen without his prevention. This preserves the free choice of each human being and the goodness of God. Philosophy was due to a wrong act by an angel. Some power or angel stole divine truth with God's knowledge and without God's prohibition. Providence turned the theft to a good outcome.

34 It is therefore wrong for us to pluck them out. 'Hairiness is a symbol of man's nature' (paed 3.3.19.3,4).

Clement uses Stoic arguments against those who claim that non-prevention is equivalent to causation because those who do not prevent a theft, a fire or a shipwreck are responsible for these happenings. It is true that in some cases active neglect is culpable. But if the distinction between not-preventing and causing may be removed, then the wounding of a body can be attributed to a shield that failed to protect, rather than the dart that struck the body. The devil was a free agent and stole the truth which is in philosophy; the lord did not prevent the theft. 'What prevents is a cause while that which does not prevent judges the soul's choice justly; so that God is never in any way responsible for the evil in our lives' (1.17.84). Yet God by his providence brings order to what has been wrongly done and produces a good result. God does everything short of limiting man's free will, to ensure right action (7.2.12).

*Providence and discipline continue to death and beyond*

The goodness of God uses discipline to train and to sanctify: 'Providence is a disciplinary art, in the case of other people because of their own sins, and in the case of the lord and the apostles because of ours' (4.12.87).<sup>35</sup> Martyrdom comes to men because of the sin and injustice of their persecutors. When it does come, God does not let it pass without beneficial results. The martyr is brought by discipline of suffering to greater holiness. We are brought by the lord's suffering and that of the apostles to

35 See S.-P. Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott. Der Begriff der ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ Gottes in der apologetischen Literatur der alten Kirche* (Berlin, 2002). Clement's account of providence has provoked an excellent study which places his argument in the context of early Christian apologetic. All things are governed not by chance but by divine providence, justice and final judgement. Clement links providence and discipline in his response to Basilides (123–70). 'Gottes Pronoia straft nicht mehr – sie erzieht' (123). Clement does not follow Middle Platonism into a stratified providence (330) but joins universal and individual providence under an undivided God, both father and son. 'Die Einrichtung der Welt geht nach Clemens im allgemeinen und besonderen auf den Gott und Herrn des Alls zurück, und ebenso übt der Sohn Gottes Pronoia auf beiden Ebenen, in dem universalen und individuellen Bezug. Das Wirken Gottes wird nicht auf den allgemeinen Zusammenhang eingeschränkt und das Wirken des Sohnes nicht auf die Beziehung zum einzelnen. Die universale und individuelle Pronoia schreibt Clemens nicht verschiedenen Subjekten zu, und wenn es in betonter Weise heißt, daß die Pronoia von dem Sohn und Lehrer herkommt, und zwar *ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ καὶ πανταχοῦ*, liegt die Abgrenzung nicht darin, daß man sie fälschlicherweise auch dem Vater zuordnen könnte, sondern in einer Überschätzung der Engel. Vater und Sohn, Gott und Logos sind in der Frage der Pronoia bei Clemens kaum zu unterscheiden. Gott wisse alles, was ist und sein wird, er sehe und höre alles, er blicke in die Seele und sehe jede Bewegung im Detail voraus. Wie im Theater erfasse er mit einem Blick alles vereint und jedes einzelne im Detail. Clemens weist hier viermal auf die Sicht der Einzeldinge hin, und die Betonung liegt ganz auf dieser Perspektive' (328–9).

our sanctification. God wills our sanctification and for this reason our lord was not prevented from suffering.

Discipline is the work of the *paidagôgos*, who both heals passions and directs behaviour. Reproof is the surgery that cuts away the abscess of passion (paed 1.8.64). It may be necessary to wound an insensitive soul in order to save it from eternal death (paed 1.8.74). The mirror is not evil to the ugly man when it displays his ugliness, and the doctor is not evil to the sick man when he tells him of his illness. A doctor does not cause the fever but rather reproves it. He who reproves a man sick in soul is not wrongly disposed to him (paed 1.9.88).

The goodness of God and the divine economy extend beyond earthly life. Physical death separates the soul from the body (7.12.71) and is not to be feared (2.7.34). The lord crucified death into life (prot 114) and the martyrs go to their lord when they are released by death (4.11.80). Indeed, a rational death already separates the soul from passions in the service of God and brings knowledge (7.3.21). We have already noted the importance of discipline or correction. The most severe form of this is fire (paed 1.7.61). It is a means of averting death (paed 1.7.58) and a means by which the saviour brings men to salvation (prot 8). Sinful souls are benefited by fire when the fire is intelligent and not material. 'But we say that fire sanctifies not flesh, but sinful souls, speaking not of the ordinary fire that mechanically destroys everything it touches but of intelligent fire that permeates the soul as it passes through fire' (7.6.34). Clement gives us the beginning of the idea of purgatory but does not anticipate its later developments.<sup>36</sup>

Clement gives an interesting account of the many mansions to which the faithful attain after death. The complete Christian who has attained perfection is already equal to an angel (6.13.105). At his death, he goes above to join the apostles, earning his place from loyalty to the lord's commands and the excellence of his life. All believers may join the ranks of the elect, but the 'elect of the elect', the twenty-four judges, are chosen because of their perfect knowledge. In heaven, those who have lived in perfect righteousness advance in glory to perfect manhood. This perfection is God's holy mountain, the church above, among God's philosophers, the true Israelites, who are without guile and pure in heart. Here in the eighth heaven, those who have followed good works and the likeness of God will enjoy unceasing contemplation.

36 Jn 14.2. See G. Anrich, 'Clemens und Origenes als Begründer der Lehre vom Fegfeuer', in *Theologische Abhandlungen, FS H. J. Holtzmann* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1902), 97–120.

There is, however, a place for those who do not reach the summit. They receive another mansion in proportion to their faith, their obedience to the commandments and their good works. To reach the appropriate mansion, the believer must rid himself of passions. He will be distressed because he has not reached the height which others have reached and will feel shame for his sins. When the believer is purified, he will find his place in the other fold and will experience 'a very great abiding sorrow'. The justice of God is further revealed in his treatment of the heathen. They rejected his gifts and became the dust which the wind drives away. They have no salvation. In contrast, all believers have a mansion according to their faith. The three elect mansions are hinted at by the numbers 30, 60, and 100 in the Gospel (Mt 13:8; Mk 4:8). He who is perfect in the gospel will achieve likeness to God, the adoption and friendship of God, and the inheritance of lords and gods (6.14.114). The hierarchy remains, and the justice of God reflects his goodness. The unbeliever is dead and resembles the chaff that the wind blows away or the metal that does not respond to the pull of the magnet and falls to the ground (7.2.9). But the man of knowledge, who has reached perfection, climbs God's holy hill and finds heavenly bliss. There he joins the apostles in contemplation of God. The believers who have not gone on to perfection will be purified and then take their place in a lower mansion. Their great, abiding sorrow derives from the knowledge that they could have attained a better place. But in the three cases, the unbelievers who were destroyed, the perfect whose goodness brings them to the presence of God, or the believers who were not good enough to reach God's presence, in all these cases the goodness of God is active and mobile. He is the eternal giver of good things, for 'he who is good seeks in every way to save' (prot 10.105.2,3). 'For being good, if he were ever to cease from doing good, he would cease also to be God, a thing one should not even say' (6.16.141.7).

#### GOD'S PLAN GOES ON

A modern enthusiast for Clement's interpretation of Paul once stated his case:<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> C. E. Raven, *Good news of God: being eight letters dealing with present problems and based upon Romans I–VIII* (London, 1943), 95–7. Dr Raven, when visiting Australia more than fifty years ago, was the first person to speak to me in superlatives about Clement; he pointed the direction of my future studies.

There is, there must be, a meaning in the universe; and Christ must give a fresh significance to that meaning. For in Christ something new and illuminative has happened. For although God had ended His works on the sixth day, He had surely resumed them 'like a giant refreshed' on the eighth. For He was a living god, a God who works, the God who ceaselessly strove with His people. History, therefore, as a record of His works, is still going on. It is incomplete; it is still in the making; and in it there is progress, up to and including and proceeding from Christ.

The process is one of eager expectation. Nature, like a young wife waiting for her firstborn, makes ready for the coming of the child that is to be. When the days are complete, God's family will be born upon the earth. In their manifestation the agony of the ages will find its fulfilment and its justification.

He is himself involved, a partner in the effort, a sharer in the agony. His Spirit gives aid to our infirmity: 'the very Spirit comes in alongside of us with groanings unuttered' (Rom. 8:26). It is as an actor, not a spectator, that God takes His part in the drama. We in our weakness and our pain are not alone; are not the sport of blind forces uncontrolled and perhaps uncontrollable; are accompanied, sustained, encouraged.

Therefore (and so he comes to his fourth and final thesis), the end is sure: 'we know well that God makes everything work together for good to them that love him' (Rom. 8:28). We cannot see His plan; we cannot tell why He thus chooses us for Himself; we very certainly have no merit that deserves and no piety that cajoles His favour. He has chosen us; and we accept His act. And therefore we need not be afraid. A relationship has come into being, a purpose is being fulfilled, which nothing can destroy or foreclose. We are held by the love of Christ whatever befall us upon earth. In that love the weakest of us is a conqueror. From that love neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come shall ever have power to separate us.

Clement's account of the plan of salvation, we have seen, corresponds with that of Irenaeus: God, divine plan/economy (from creation to incarnation), recapitulation and participation.<sup>38</sup> This is the structure of the apostolic preaching. Irenaeus is concerned to expound, against heretics, the divine plan/economy and recapitulation as correction and perfection. Clement is more concerned to expound recapitulation as inauguration, and participation as faith and knowledge. He gives emphasis to the present stage of the plan of salvation. The finality of the work of Christ in recapitulation is common to both Irenaeus and Clement. The reason the world goes on after this end is seen more clearly in Clement. His account of inauguration and participation clarifies the meaning of

<sup>38</sup> See my *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 20–2.

salvation. The divine movement from invitation (*Protrepticus*) through instruction (*Paedagogus*) to perfected humanity (*Stromateis* VII) is as decisive as are the earlier ages of the plan of salvation. Movement goes on in the new age, which has been inaugurated, as humans participate in the salvation which God offers and move from faith to the vision 'face to face'.

'For being good, if he were ever to cease from doing good, he would cease also to be God, a thing one should not even say' (6.16.141.7). Human progress depends at every point on divine goodness. Knowledge of that goodness depends on the prophetic witness of the scripture. The 'holy mysteries of the prophets' lead to the noetic world when they are rationally explored by dialectic.<sup>39</sup> To that move we now turn.

39 Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical authority and spiritual power*, (London, 1969) 198. 'Moses and the prophets, Plato and philosophers – all were already on the way to him; and therefore the teaching of Christ must constantly be elucidated and confirmed from these two sides, prophecy and philosophy'.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Scripture*

#### FROM ECONOMY TO METAPHYSIC; FROM PROPHECY TO PLATO

The chief move in early Christian thought which joins Jerusalem and Athens together is not the introduction of multitudinous philosophical terms, but the movement from biblical text to metaphysic, or, to be more precise, from prophecy to Plato.

The plan of salvation is set out in the bible, which is prophetic. The prophets saw the noetic world, but spoke in metaphor and riddle. To reach the noetic world we must regard the text of the bible as metaphorical and with the help of Christ, who is not a metaphor, discern the noetic world where God's economy is seen.<sup>1</sup>

Justin had already pointed to the superiority of the prophets over the philosophers. They had been able to see the *noëta*, while philosophers were still confused. Clement shows a process of reasoning which joins the bible with a Platonic metaphysic and dialectic. He has already indicated to the Greeks the exclusive excellence of prophecy as the way to piety and truth (prot 8.77).

The first step for anyone who wishes to expound the bible is to turn narrative and prophecy into parable and metaphysic.<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus and others

1 'Auf heilsgeschichtlichen Grundsätzen beruht diese Schriftlehre insofern, als Clemens eine allgemeine Entwicklung annimmt, die von einem einfachen, bildhaften, mehr am Äusserlich-Ästhetischen haftenden Verständnis zum tieferen, die Symbole entschlüsselnden noëtischen Sinn weiterschreitet'. U. Schneider, *Theologie als Christliche Philosophie* (Berlin, 1999), 300.

2 For difficulties, note A. Momigliano, 'Time in ancient historiography,' *History and Theory* V, Beiheft 6 (1966), 1-23. 'The relation between the historian and the prophet is the Hebrew counterpart to the Greek relation between historian and philosopher. But at least since Plato fully formulated the antithesis between time and eternity, there could be no collaboration in Greek thought between history and philosophy as there was in Hebrew thought between history and prophecy' (20). However, note C. Andresen, *Logos und Nomos: die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (Berlin, 1955), 141-5. Allegory was not a Jewish and Christian monopoly. We must recognise that the place of allegory in the work of Celsus, a contemporary Platonist, is tied (as it is in Clement and Philo) to the history of the logos as found in the wise men and poets of the past.

before him had given to the world of prophecy the same function (source of truth and knowledge) as the Platonic world of forms; Clement is the first to give a logical explanation of this fundamental move.

Clement is offering the Greeks a new creation in which the saving power of God has taken over the world of forms, transforming the universe into an 'ocean of good things', the reality which lay at the summit of Plato's vision in the *Symposium*. However, Plato should not be assimilated as readily as this, for forms are fixed and unchanging.<sup>3</sup> What is needed is an account of how one God in age after age *moved* in this way. The truth of present salvation depends on a credible account of the divine plan/economy. The rationality of the economy takes over the rationality of the forms without losing the mobility of God's plan.

The divine economy is marked by a rational, aesthetic and moral order, similar to that found in Plato's forms. It comprises a universal providence (5.1.6.2; 1.24.160.5; 2.6.29) and is a source of instruction and education (paed 3.12.99.1; 1.11.52.3; paed 1.1.3; paed 1.8.64.3), a prophetic source of knowledge (2.19.99.3; 2.5.20.2; paed 1.8.69.3). In its universality it is joined to creation (6.12.102.1); the descent of the lord to Hades enabled all, Jews and Greeks, to hear the gospel (6.6.47.1). The economy possesses a goodness which defines creation, providence and salvation (1.27.173; 4.23.148.2; 1.11.52.2; q.d.s. 36.2) even when it appears harsh (paed 1.10.89.1) and takes different forms (paed 1.8.74.3). Its justice (in contradiction to Marcion) is inseparable from goodness (paed 1.8.70.1; 4.6.29.1; 7.12.73.4). Those who work for the plan of salvation receive, as Plato says (Phaedo 114b–c), higher places in heaven (4.6.37.1).

### *Metaphor and parable*

The divine plan/economy is the noetic world which prophets saw. Clement's argument has four steps: metaphor, simultaneity, dialectic as question and answer, dialectic as upward path. The economy leads beyond parable to truth. It appears in scripture as parable or metaphor, which is the means by which the lord leads to the higher, intellectual

They used allegory to indicate higher truths. Indeed, allegory becomes a lens through which the diverse rays of historical tradition may be brought into one philosophical focus. In the case of Celsus, allegory leads the Platonist away from the disabilities of the physical world to the vision of God. The unimpeded apprehension of God is the goal of his dualist tradition, and without allegory the true logos cannot speak its fullness.

3 Phaedo 78–80. See E. F. Osborn, 'Causality in Plato and Origen', in *Origeniana Quarta*, ed. L. Lies, (Innsbruck, 1987), 362–4.

world through stimulating our inquiry (6.15.126.1). Clement moves from parable to metaphysic.<sup>4</sup>

The lord who was not of this world came in worldly form, to lead men to the intellectual (*noêta*) and paradigmatic (*kuria*)<sup>5</sup> by knowledge, from one world to another. He used metaphor, which is the same as parable,<sup>6</sup> a form of oblique discourse which is not explicit on the real point, but says something similar which leads to the noetic paradigm and presents it forcefully.<sup>7</sup> The whole economy as prophesied appears as metaphor/parable and is a stumbling block to those who are ignorant of the truth (6.15.127.1). When the scriptures are opened up,<sup>8</sup> *the flesh which suffered appears as the power and wisdom of God*. This is not parable but the final truth to which all parables point.<sup>9</sup> In prophetic teaching, which is more ancient than that of philosophers, we find an unending variety of parables and enigmas which tell of Christ, his coming, his death on the cross and his resurrection. They are signs which point to Christ, the power and wisdom of God.

In this remarkable passage Clement shows how the economy embraces history and theology, narrative and metaphysic, just as his sources (John, Hebrews and Ephesians) claim.<sup>10</sup> Christ himself is the source of our knowledge, our divine teacher and our guarantee of truth (6.15.122.1,2). With him stand the prophecies whose truth defines his person. Both Christ and the prophets speak in parables and form an unbroken unity in the rule of the church (6.15.125.3).<sup>11</sup>

The twofold nature of parable provides a tool for moving from narrative to final truth and reality. How do prophets agree? Clement replies

4 Clement fabricates a metaphor a minute. Mary Hesse has shown the place of metaphor in relating religion and science. Clement uses it to bridge Athens and Jerusalem.

5 In a commentary on Aristotle, *On the Forms*, *kuriôs* is used by Alexander of Aphrodisias (Ad metaphysica 82f) to describe the relation of the form to the particular. In the case of the form of man, the form is 'man', *kuriôs*, that is 'in a sovereign or primary sense'. See C. J. Rowe, *Plato* (Brighton, 1984), 56. Plato uses *kuriôs* in the sense of 'authentic', and it is used elsewhere in the sense of 'paradigmatic'.

6 In modern usage there is a difference between metaphor, which is punctiliar, and parable, which is durational.

7 Schneider, *Theologie*, 35, cites H. J. Horn ('Zur Motivation der allegorischen Schriftexegese bei Clemens Alexandrinus', *Hermes* 97 (1969), 489–96) to the effect 'dass Clemens die Metapher als den Weg vom Uneigentlichen zum eigentlich Gemeinten (τὸ κύριον) im Unterschied zu Aristoteles auch real, heilsgeschichtlich verstehe'. As Horn points out, this is an inversion of the use of τὸ κύριον by Aristotle and grammarians. See below, chapter 3, page 79.

8 That is, when prophecies are understood.

9 It is, as Paul put it, not letter but spirit.

10 The economy in Irenaeus and Clement is linked to creation and saving history; for Gnostics this happened at the heavenly level. Ephesians clearly joins heaven and earth in one economy.

11 Irenaeus includes the rule of faith in his proof of the apostolic preaching (dem. 6).

that they are all parabolic and their agreement is found through analysis of each parable. 'Parabolic' is widened to mean 'oblique', 'indirect'. In the *Kerygma Petri*, he says, the prophets point to Christ by parables, riddles and plain words, indicating all the detail of his life and death (6.15.128.1). Prophecy does not bother about lucidity of style but conceals the truth in many ways, so that the light will dawn only on those initiated into knowledge, those who in love seek the truth (6.15.129.4). They read the syllables of scripture, as Hermas put it, not merely the separate letters (6.15.131.3). Above all, they read the scripture as a book which is ever renewed, which contains things not yet known. The unwritten exposition of scripture by the saviour is handed down to us who are made new by this book (6.15.131.5).

We do not look to the words but to the thoughts or noetic realities displayed by the words. The words are the body of the earthly Moses. We make every effort to find the heavenly Moses who is with the angels (6.15.132.3). Knowledge of the son does not come from flesh and blood but by the power of the almighty father (6.15.132.4).

Finally, it is not only beginners who find the truth with difficulty, but those who already have some knowledge. As the story of Moses shows us, they are not able to grasp a total vision of God; we must, too, wait for the vision face to face. However, just as the Hebrews saw the glory of Moses and of others in the presence of angels, so we shall be able to look directly upon the brightness of many-splendoured truth, the noetic world comprised within Christ.

### *Simultaneity of prophecy*<sup>12</sup>

The objection may be raised, against this assimilation, that prophecies are divided by time, contingent on past, present and future, and that therefore they do not resemble a noetic world like the forms. The answer to

12 C. Lucca, 'Tratti profetici dei martiri in Clemente Alessandrino ed in Origene', in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven, 2003), 409. Clement intended to write a book on prophecy but did not do so and leaves us with a complex idea. Prophecy is one of the aspects of gnosis or wisdom (2.12.54.1f). Prophecy is a pre-gnosis and gnosis is an understanding of prophecy. It has three parts: that which is past and fulfilled, that which is now in process and that which will be. Wisdom is a firm knowledge of the divine reality, a sure and unchangeable comprehension which embraces present, past and future (6.7.54.1). The martyr has demonstrated the perfect work of love both in his life and in his speech (4.4.14.3; 15.3). There is a link between prophecy and martyrdom because all the prophets who announced the coming of Christ suffered death (6.15.127.4f). Further, Clement makes the true gnostic a similar figure to the martyr, who does not fear because he is joined by love as a friend to God (6.9.75; 6.9.76.3). For him, as for Stephen, the heavens open.

this objection is that past, present and future are simultaneous in fulfilled prophecy.

What the prophets saw was related to linear, temporal events in the saving history; but it was a unified noetic world. When the saving history reached fulfilment in Christ, this unity was apparent. All the promises were affirmed in him (2 Cor. 1:20) who recapitulated all things in himself. Therefore Clement's next argument makes all prophecy simultaneous. Here he had been anticipated by Irenaeus. Prophecy, for Irenaeus, defends the unicity of God and the one plan of salvation against Gnostic and Marcionite divisions of divine dispensations.<sup>13</sup>

For Irenaeus, all God's economies are united in one economy which leads to Christ. The central moves are clear (haer. 4.20.1-8). The invisible and incomprehensible God created all things by his word and wisdom; to his incarnate word all things were subjected and by the same word God was known. He gave a *charisma* to the prophets so that they could foretell his incarnation and announce future events, declaring that God would be known according to his love. Prophetic vision participates in the incarnate God.

Prophetic vision saw and made known the continuous activity of God, father, son and holy spirit, as the word constantly gave knowledge of the father through the changing economies. The prophets, through the spirit, have lived the future life of which they spoke. Again, through the spirit God was seen prophetically, through the son he was seen adoptively, and through the father he will be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven (haer. 4.20.5). The vision of God is participation in God, and only within the glory of God can man live (haer. 4.20.5).<sup>14</sup> The tension between the greatness (*magnitudo*) and love (*dilectio*) of God requires that the divine economy be gradual.

All happens through the economies wherein the prophets saw, spoke and acted. Their visions displayed, their words announced and their actions signified through types (haer. 4.20.8). The countless economies are joined in the one divine economy, the one plan which gradually brings mankind to the father, through the summing-up of all things in Christ.

This leads to the important move from history to simultaneity. How this happens is shown in a recent study.<sup>15</sup> Through all the different economies the same God leads man to the goal of life eternal in his presence. By visions, words and works, the prophets announce man's future when he, 'implanted in Christ and sanctified by the spirit, will be

<sup>13</sup> R. Polanco Fernando, *El concepto de profecía en la teología de san Ireneo* (Madrid, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 384-97.

able to approach and to see the father without succumbing to death'.<sup>16</sup> Prophecies about Christ are only intelligible within the totality of what is said about him. The prophetic corpus is not understood through a list of particular fulfilments but through a critical awareness of its coherent vision. Prophecies about Christ are an invitation to believe in him whose incarnation offers the key to understanding prophecy (haer. 1.9.44.2) and the gospel (haer. 3.11.6).

All the divine economies depend on recapitulation of all things in Christ, on whom depend the being and purpose of all humanity. The New Testament and the outpouring of the spirit do not put an end to prophecy, for the spirit continues to preserve truth through the *charisma* of the presbyters; indeed all the baptised proclaim Christ. In the end we may define prophecy backwards rather than forwards as 'one of God's saving economies by which, through the mediation of the spirit, the same God brings the reality and the results of the incarnation of the word back to the time of the Old Testament'.<sup>17</sup>

This careful and extended study displays the move from prediction to presence, from economy to recapitulation. Economies remain, but their linear, temporal significance is governed by their recapitulation. Irenaeus reaches the noetic world of Justin without Plato's help. Recapitulation brings all the economies together; the temporal dimension is not lost but included among all things in Christ.

After Irenaeus the fusing of the ontological and eschatological, of metaphysic and apocalypse, the insistence that the object of Christian hope was also the ultimate being which philosophers sought, turned scripture into a higher world which gave the believer understanding of the lower world in which he lived. The world of prophecy took the place of the world of Plato's forms, which it absorbed. The synchronisation of Gospel, prophets and law was to have enormous consequences. A whole culture found the imagery of the Old (when joined to the New) a source of inspiration in every aspect of its life. Yet the world of the spirit was never divorced from movement and history, and the particularity of Jesus remained the key to all understanding.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>18</sup> Plutarch faced a related problem. See J. Whittaker, *God, Time and Being*, *SO.S* 23 (Oslo, 1971), 12f. 'As Plutarch indicates, the Now, which was irrelevant to the being of the impersonal Forms, assumes importance when conscious deity is equated with Platonic reality. If we demand that God fulfil the requirements of Platonic reality, then we cannot permit Him to move, as does our human consciousness, through a succession of Nows. In an effort to reconcile immutability with the possession of consciousness Plutarch declares that the whole extent of God's reality is embraced in a single Now. Thus, the doctrine of non-durational eternity in Greek thought is in origin essentially linked with the problem of God's consciousness in relation to His immutability.'

Clement begins (2.12.54) his brief argument for simultaneity with the claim that prophecy is foreknowledge and that knowledge (*gnôsis*) is the understanding of prophecy. This knowledge has as its object what the lord who reveals all things teaches. Knowledge of what is predicted is three-fold: past, present and future. When fulfilled it points to the past, and to the present; when it is still to come, it points to the future. Faith unites the extremes, 'because it is concerned with things accomplished or things hoped for, and present activity gives the conviction which confirms the two extremes' (2.12.54.3). In the unity of prophecy (*mias ousês tês propheteias*), past prophecies are already accomplished, and future prophecies which are hoped for are happening now. In the words of a modern poet, 'the past and future Are conquered and reconciled'.<sup>19</sup> Faith in the past becomes comprehension in the present and hope in the future becomes comprehension of things to come.

### *Dialectic as question and answer*

Since the prophetic and apostolic scriptures present the noetic world, they must be explored by rational procedures. Their beginning in creation and the fulfilment which reveals their unity (the divine economy derives its order and meaning from its end) are entirely the work of the logos. Therefore, says Clement, they must be understood logically.

From the beginning of the *Stromateis*, Clement makes it clear that the way ahead is through the use of philosophy and other preparatory disciplines. Clement shows, using Aristotelian and Stoic terminology, how dialectic is useful for the explanation of a passage of scripture.<sup>20</sup> With the Greeks is associated a gift of logical discernment, of perceiving things which are not evident at first sight. So it is fitting for the believer to follow the Greeks in spite of the bad example of the sophists, who are at best useless and at worst the enemies of truth.

The believer stands apart, crowned by the head of the universe, the kind and gentle logos, who, as Paul says, takes the wise in their own craftiness and knows that their thoughts are vain (Job 5:13; 1 Cor. 3:19f; Ps. 94:11) (1.3.23.2). Wisdom comes in many forms (Eph. 3:10; Heb. 1:1) (1.4.27.1), but it is never separated from God. All good things come from God, some directly or primarily, like the Old and New Testaments, and some in a subordinate way, like philosophy. Philosophy was given to the

19 T. S. Eliot, 'The dry salvages', *Four Quartets* (London, 1944), 33.

20 Apostolopoulou, *Die Dialektik*, provides an excellent account.

Greeks, as a *paidagōgos* to bring them to Christ (1.5.28.3). There is only one truth, and philosophy investigates this truth, which is identical with Christ who claimed, 'I am the truth.' In preparation for the perfection of Christ, philosophy and other preparatory disciplines provide mental exercise, stir up the intelligence and produce a ready and inquiring mind. This comes from the true philosophy, or indeed, from Christ himself (1.5.32.4).

Clement is not turning to philosophy to become accessible to Greeks.<sup>21</sup> Here (1.9.43), he shows a motivation from within the Christian community. Some Christians want to read their ideas off scripture without considering questions of coherence. They present a confused barrier to understanding. Clement identifies them as those who think they are so well endowed that they have no need of philosophy, dialectic or sciences: 'They demand only bare faith' (1.9.43.1). He then uses five analogies or metaphors: the vine-grower, athlete, pilot, doctor and hunter. All these get nowhere without preparation and experience. The vine-grower gets nowhere unless he works on the vine with his many tools or instruments. He must prune and dig, tie up his vines, or they will not produce any suitable fruit. The farmer needs to learn different skills if he wants to cultivate, just as the doctor and hunter need to learn many things if they are to heal or hunt. And so must he who wishes to gain from the scripture and from Christ learn all rational and logical skills. He must go to geometry, music, grammar and philosophy itself and take from them what is useful, in order to defend his faith against those who plot to destroy it. If he does not do this, he is, as Plato says, like the athlete who turns up unprepared for the games (Rep. 3.404ac). Experience and preparation are everything: we choose the pilot who has travelled far and the doctor who has seen many cases. He who studies widely and draws on both Greeks and barbarians will be the experienced hunter who can follow the footsteps of truth. He will have the Lydian stone which enables him to distinguish gold from counterfeit. Our sage will know the difference between sophistry and philosophy, between cooking and medicine, between rhetoric and dialectic and, within Christian philosophy, between heresy and truth (cf. Plato, Gorg. 465c): 'How can it not be necessary, for him who wishes to lay hold of the power of God, to

21 This is the position which he holds in *Stromateis* V when he speaks of accommodation to Greek views as important for their evangelisation. Here, however, he attacks those Christians who follow what Dawson recently espoused as a 'voice-based' hermeneutic or a 'metatextual divine voice' (*Allegorical readers*, 217), which claims simply to listen to the voice of Jesus without facing logical problems.

philosophise and to grasp with comprehension intellectual concepts?' (1.9.44.3).

He who reads the bible must know how to detect ambiguities and multiple meanings in the biblical text; this is where philosophy helps. Our lord, at his temptation, overcame the devil, by the use of ambiguity and dialectic. How stupid, then, are those who reject philosophy and dialectic as works of the devil, when it is clear that the devil himself was defeated by dialectic? (1.9.44.4).

Of course, the prophets and the apostles did not know the abstract rules of logic and philosophy, but what they wrote cannot be understood unless these skills are used. The prophets grasped the meaning of what they were saying, for the spirit spoke to them in the way of faith without making things easy to understand.<sup>22</sup> But those who listen to what was said to the prophets cannot receive these communications as they did (1.9.45.2). That is why the scripture itself speaks of a double transmission: one spoken and one understood. The knowledge which understands is that which responds to the questions which are asked of it (Prov. 22:20f). What scripture calls response to questions is dialectic, and *logos* means both speaking and reasoning, for to speak is an act which proceeds from reason. If we do not act rationally, then we are like unreasoning animals; but the work of reason is a work of (*kata*) God. Indeed, in creation, nothing was made without him who was the reasoned word of God. The lord did everything according to reason or his word. The way of the *logos* who made all things requires our logical activity (1.9.45.5).

Logic should be used to cast down and to build up, to destroy false opinion and to develop and defend true belief. In *Stromateis* 3.2 and *Stromateis* 3.5, Clement uses argument against the exegesis of the Carpocratians. Righteousness is not to be lifted into the heavens to give liberation from all laws, nor is communion to be extended to include the sharing of husbands and wives. Clement's reply is entirely logical and has five steps.<sup>23</sup>

22 Justin described the prophets as *seeing* intelligible realities and reporting on their perception (dial. 6).

23 1. Counter-induction. Communion cannot include promiscuity because there are specific commands against lust and adultery.

2. To have communion simply means 'to share', and sharing can be good or bad according to what is shared.

3. If some commandments are rejected solely because they come from an inferior god, then all the commands from that god should be rejected.

4. Scripture is accessible to reason.

5. Reason becomes a divine image.

*The upward path of dialectic*

For Plato, dialectic only led to truth when it was determined by the form of the good which imparts truth to the things which are known and the power of knowing to the knower. It is the cause of knowledge and truth (Rep. 508e). For Clement, dialectic only led to truth when it was governed by Christ. The task of Plato's philosopher and Clement's believer is to ascend the path of dialectic to the supreme essence.

In Clement's account of the true dialectic he follows Plato. *Stromateis* 1.28 sets out Clement's understanding of scripture as it shows how the believer may rise to the vision of God. He is raised aloft by the saviour and then is able to return to his daily life being guided by scripture through the vision of God he has achieved.<sup>24</sup> In the *Statesman*, says Clement, Plato distinguishes this kind of dialectic which is able to reach the highest vision of being. It is not used as the sophists use dialectic, for purely human affairs. Its goal is to be able to speak as God wills and to do what God wills with all one's power. The true dialectic mixed with the true philosophy examines particular things, tests forces and powers, then ascends to the supreme essence and boldly goes on to the God of all things.

The joining of the forces and powers which lead up to the supreme essence with the forms of Plato is an important move. The forces and powers are the technical terms in the New Testament for the world of angels, and the testing of them is the necessary discernment of spirits. The supreme essence is the son of God whom Christian tradition designates as all-powerful.<sup>25</sup> The identification of the *noêta* with angels can be authorised from the text of Soph. 248e–249a concerning the animation of the intellectual world. This is a constant element for Jewish and Christian Platonism in Alexandria. The heaven of heavens is the intellectual world. Supreme over this world is the son of God, so that spiritual ascent must go beyond the forms to reach him and then go beyond to God the father. As Clement puts it elsewhere, the inscription on the headpiece of the high priest points to the fact that the lord is above the whole world and even beyond the intelligible world; the name inscribed on the headpiece of the high priest is above every principality and power (5.6.38.6). This text includes Eph. 1:21<sup>26</sup> and is reflected in several parts of Clement.<sup>27</sup> It is

24 This is Plato's pattern in the *Republic*.

25 Rev. 1:8; J. Pépin, 'La vraie dialectique selon Clément d'Alexandrie', in *Epektasis: mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. C. Kannengiesser (Paris, 1972), 381.

26 The risen Christ is for all eternity exalted above every principality, authority, lordship, name.

27 2.2.5.1–3; 6.8.68.1; 7.1.2.3; 7.3.17.2; see Pépin, 'La vraie dialectique', 382.

worth noting that elsewhere Clement speaks of the logos not so much as of higher rank than the forms, but as the place wherein they find their meaning. 'The mind is the place of the ideas, and God is mind. . .when the soul, ascending above the sphere of becoming, becomes aware of itself and has commerce with the ideas... it becomes a kind of angel and will be with Christ' (4.25.155.2-4).<sup>28</sup> The knowledge here gained dares to go to the God of the universe. It is followed by the right use and practice of human things on earth.<sup>29</sup> The true dialectic promises not a mere routine of mortal things, but a science of divine and heavenly things from which the specific usage of human things, words and actions, is to be derived (1.28.177.1). Dialectic, then, is discernment which is informed by the vision of the highest reality. Scripture, says Clement, recommends this dialectic and tells us to become good money-changers, rejecting what is counterfeit and retaining what is good. Here Clement quotes a saying not found in scripture but which reflects the words of Paul, 'Prove all things and hold fast to what is good' (1 Thess. 5:21). This dialectic discriminates among intellectual things in their unmixed purity; from such discernment it is possible to descend to particulars in the world.

For this reason, the true dialectic alone can bring true wisdom, a faculty from God, which knows realities as they are and grasps their perfection. Free from passion, it is possible only through the saviour who by his divine word scatters the ignorance and evil which cloud our spiritual vision. Through him, we are able to recognise and distinguish the human and divine. He shows us how to know ourselves and reveals the father according to the capacity of each person. No one knows the son but the father, and no one knows the father but the son and those to whom the son has revealed the father. This is the revelation which the apostle has spoken of as a mystery of which he knows but can only write briefly. The central mystery of Christ is the critical and apocalyptic centre from which scripture is judged; those who receive it are able to judge between the different senses of the law, which may be symbolic,<sup>30</sup> prescriptive or prophetic. The complexity of scripture must be respected; it must not be treated as a bald simplicity. 'Those who hunt for the sequence of the divine teaching must approach it with the utmost logical skill' (1.28.179). Those who receive the mystery must receive it as milk and then go on to solid food. They may not even be able to receive the pure milk (1 Cor.

28 Clement quotes Plato on the 'ideas'. In his own words he speaks of 'powers of the spirit'.

29 Mondésert identifies the forces and powers with the possibilities of the soul.

30 Like the account of the ten commandments, to which we return below.

3:2). Scripture is not a simple Mykonos where everything is straightforward. The connection or *akolouthia* of divine teaching must be tracked down through dialectic. The reference to Mykonos here links with the belief that the inhabitants of this island were bald-headed and therefore possessed no capital complexity. Through complex scripture with the help of the saviour, the human mind can ascend to an understanding of God, be joined in fellowship with God and thereby gain knowledge of how to live a right life and how to use the things of the earth.<sup>31</sup>

This account of the true dialectic<sup>32</sup> is Clement's fourth and final step in his move from prophecy to Plato. It explains how 'Scripture was theology, and theological doctrine was all to be found in the bible.'<sup>33</sup> The divine economy includes philosophy and dialectic. Dialectic works well in philosophy and should be applied to the bible.

Clement's dialectic is only possible because the intellectual world is within the mind of God. A world of forms (as in *Timaeus*) which stood over against God was of no interest to him. God's conceptual activity is, like his creative act, subject to his will. It is not static but dynamic.<sup>34</sup> Creation is not a finished act but a continuous process of producing and preserving the order of the world. The beauty of nature is a sign of salvation (3.17.103; 6.16.141f). God is the supreme artist and man a work of art far superior to any man-made statue (prot 4.51; prot 10.98). In his account of the forms, Clement takes elements from Plato, Stoics, Middle Platonists and Philo; he transforms them by making them objects of God's will and act.<sup>35</sup> Clement also modifies the relation between forms and particulars. Things do not derive from forms but depend on God for their existence. Participation and assimilation belong to man, who is made in the image of God. Faith is a new way of knowing directed to the intelligible world and helped by music, astronomy, geometry and

31 See E. F. Osborn, 'Logique et exégèse chez Clément d'Alexandrie', in *Lectures anciennes de la Bible* (Strasbourg, 1987), 169–89.

32 This true dialectic begins in the philosophy of Moses, which includes ethics (history and law), physics (sacrifice) and theology (the vision of supreme mysteries). Plato describes dialectic as the science which discovers the reasons of things; the wise man acquires this science so that he can please God in word and act. In the *Statesman*, Plato discusses what it is that makes a good argument. Suitability and brevity will not suffice for 'the ability to divide according to real forms' may take more or less time to achieve its end. Anyone who complains about the length of an argument has to prove 'that a briefer statement of the case would have left him and his partners in discussion as better philosophers, better able to demonstrate real truth by reasoned argument': only truth and reason matter (Pol. 286e–287a). Again in *Philebus* (22c) Plato distinguishes between his own reason and the 'true divine reason' before which all common objections fall.

33 F. Young, in *The first Christian theologians*, ed. G. R. Evans (Oxford, 2004), 37.

34 Apostolopoulou, *Die Dialektik*, 78. Apostolopoulou also uses the psychological term 'volitiv'.

35 *Ibid.*, 85, attributes the transformation to Pantaeus.

arithmetic. A personal God replaces the form of the good and is the source of becoming and of being.<sup>36</sup>

It is useful to identify the move which Clement makes. In the Platonic tradition, 'kosmos noëtos' can refer to the patterns of forms followed by the creator, to the way in which the forms fit together epistemologically, or to the higher world beyond the senses.<sup>37</sup> In Justin (dial. 68.1) and Irenaeus, scripture as the mind and will of God had been ordered by the one divine plan/economy (which united particular economies). The gospel, which reflects the vision of the prophets, is the true philosophy. Clement adds to this take-over of the world of forms by divine economies a take-over of Platonic method.<sup>38</sup>

#### INVITATION TO THE AUTHORITY AND TOTALITY OF SCRIPTURE

Clement's move from prophecy to Plato prompts the question: was he a Christian Platonist or a Platonising Christian? His massive use and profound reverence for the bible favour the second description. The mass of biblical citation in Clement is remarkable. There are 1,842 references to the Old Testament and 3,279 to the New; this means about 5 biblical citations to each page of Stählin text.<sup>39</sup> While Irenaeus and Theophilus

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 110f.

<sup>37</sup> See D. T. Runia, 'A brief history of the term ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΝΟΗΤΟΣ', in *Traditions of Platonism, FS John Dillon*, ed. J. J. Cleary (Aldershot, 1999), 163, 168.

<sup>38</sup> The move from prophecy to Plato explains why a recent Discourse Power treatment of Clement's allegory (Dawson, *Allegorical readers*) misses the point. For 'reliance on *logos* is understood as a particular way of exercising hermeneutical authority, based on a claim to have obtained access to the primordial source of authentic meaning and truth' (2). What is inconsistent for such interpretation is inappropriate, not because it is illogical but because it violates 'cultural decorum' (10). The simple logic of Jesus' reply to Salome does not register (228). Clement's appeal to the 'body and texture' (7.16.96) of prophecy has nothing to do with logical coherence but with various revisionary patterns (229). For his interpretation is based on the 'new voice of the *logos*' which is a 'fully present metatextual divine voice' (217). Strangely, this voice is traced to Justin, who on the contrary joined the prophetic voice to philosophical reason (cf. 192). The universal *logos* reaches 'the limit of revisionary extravagance' (213) and is a 'social matter' because he has 'entered the social order in definitive form as Jesus of Nazareth' (223). On the contrary, for Clement, *logos* means logic: 'Those who hunt for the sequence of the divine teaching must approach it with the utmost logical skill' (1.28.79). The interest of this tidy and readable work is that it openly espouses 'the Valentinian–Emersonian' tradition (239). In loyalty to this tradition, the writer misses a turning-point in European intellectual history. See J. M. Rist, in *The first Christian theologians*, ed. G. R. Evans (Oxford, 2004), 112, and Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 255f. On Discourse Power theory, see R. Freadman and S. Miller, *Re-thinking theory* (Cambridge, 1992), 166–92 and C. B. McCullagh, *The logic of history* (London, 2004), 70–115. Also see below, chapter 13, page 279.

<sup>39</sup> J. A. Brooks, 'Clement of Alexandria as a witness to the development of the New Testament canon', *SecCent* 9 (1992), 41–55. This is a very useful and concise account.

of Antioch had recognised the Gospels and Paul as divinely inspired, Clement is the first to refer to the 'New Testament' as a document to be read (5.13.85).

Final authority is given to the bible, which has a power like that of the Sirens. 'He who believes in the divine scriptures with sure judgement, receives in the voice of God, who gave the scripture, a proof which cannot be challenged. . . The songs of the Sirens displayed a supernatural power that fascinated those who came near, and convinced them, almost against their will, to accept what was said' (2.2.9.5-7).

Among Clement's arguments for faith we shall find the Stoic demand for deliberate assent (the grasping, as with the hand, of sensations) on which all knowledge depends, as well as Plato's contrast between materialists and idealists who *see* different things, and the need for perception of intellectual objects with a new eye and ear. None of these arguments will work if there is no presentation to which assent may be given or no voice of God which may be heard. The bible offers such a presentation. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The scriptures declare that we are free to choose or reject, that we receive faith as an infallible criterion when we choose life 'and believe God through his voice' (2.4.12).<sup>40</sup>

The disciples of Pythagoras found their ground for faith in their master's voice. No lover of truth will refuse faith to so credible a master as the only saviour and God (2.5.24). From God's son come the word of the lord, the preaching of the apostles, the hearing which turns to faith (Is. 53.1; Rom. 10:14-17) (2.6.25). Plato (Tim. 41de) says that truth may be learnt only from God or his offspring. We trust in the divine oracles and the truth which was first prophesied and then fulfilled (6.15.123).

In his account of his teachers, Clement indicates the ultimacy of scripture and the way in which it is to be used. His final teacher, Pantaenus, was like a bee who gathered from the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow and thereby engendered in his hearers immortal knowledge. Scripture, then, is the source of knowledge for those who visit it and use it not in isolated fragments, but as it can be joined together.

Clement introduces the prophets in the *Protrepticus*. First, he shows how philosophers have grasped some insight into truth and then how the poets have also achieved some knowledge. However (chapter 8), it is to the prophets that we must go if we wish to discover the truth about God.

<sup>40</sup> Homer, says Clement, uses 'hear' instead of 'perceive', a specific form of perception instead of the generic concept (5.1.2).

Their oracles open the clearest way to piety and are the foundations of truth (prot 8.77.1). The divine scriptures are not only the source of rules for a virtuous life: they offer the direct road to salvation. Here Clement builds on a Cynic definition of philosophy as the direct, short road to virtue. The scriptures are devoid of pretension and ornament, but offer support when humans wobble towards wickedness. They speak with one voice but perform many functions, turning us from fatal error and exhorting clearly.

The song of the Sibyl calls to salvation, a salvation which comes from the only God who rules over all the elements. Error is darkness, knowledge of God is light, and between them we must choose. God declares himself as a God who comes near and who fills the heavens and the earth (Jer. 23:23f). The spirit speaks through Isaiah to declare the immeasurable greatness of God, and the awe which man must feel in his presence. God's throne is in heaven and his footstool on earth. The mountains melt like wax before him. When heaven opens, men tremble before the power of God and idols are destroyed by his power. The earth and its elements will pass away, but God's word will last forever. Typically in these passages from Isaiah, Clement moves from chapter 64 to 66, back to 64 and then to 51; he divides and joins in his own coherent dialectic.

Moses also speaks of the God who is present in universal power over all and who has no other God beside him (prot 8.79.1; Deut. 32:39). Then come 'the whole prophetic choir, the associates of Moses' (prot 8.79.2). Clement mixes Hosea with Psalms, and Jeremiah with Isaiah. Isaiah affirms that there is one God and that idols are nothing but human fabrications. Those who once turned to idols must now fear the lord, who shakes the whole world and holds it in his hand (Is. 10:14).<sup>41</sup>

Finally, with his great mercy the lord sends out a vigorous call to the way of salvation, asking men to turn from heaviness of heart and falsehood to himself. The vanity and falsehood of which he speaks is described by the apostle, who tells how men, although they knew God, did not glorify him, but worshipped his creation. Falsehood turns from the creator to the creature. Therefore the prophet emphasises the eternal power of the lord over his creation, which will come to an end before

41 The Book of Wisdom tells of the mysteries of the Hebrew child, wonderfully formed. This child is wisdom, knowledge and understanding, and in his presence man must awake from sleep. He is 'the word of the father, the good lantern, the lord who brings with him light, faith and salvation for all' (prot 8.80.2). The same creator God has given us wisdom and directed us towards the truth and away from idols. Moses speaks magnificently when he cries, 'Hear, O Israel, the lord your God, the lord is one, and you shall worship the lord your God and serve him alone' (prot 8.80.4). David calls us to the blessedness of those who trust in him and those who escape destruction.

the face of the eternal God. This final prophetic utterance joins together Isaiah, Ezekiel, Matthew, Isaiah again, Psalms and Joel. While such conglomerations are found elsewhere, they are especially dear to Clement and indicate his true dialectic which divides and joins different parts of prophecy (prot 8.81.4).

#### MYSTERY AND ERUDITION

Clement's use of scripture conveys overtones of mystery. He speaks of initiation, revelation, the distinction between those who are worthy and unworthy to hear, and of secret doctrines. He sees knowledge not as a simple possession of truth, but always as a way to penetration of fresh mysteries. Knowledge is as much a moral and spiritual state of the whole soul, will and intelligence as the pure action of reason. The esoteric strain in Clement is not concerned with particular propositions but with a hermeneutic which is difficult and dangerous to disclose. Like Paul before him, Clement uses the terminology of mystery religions to convey an esoteric tone in his writing.<sup>42</sup>

Besides this esoteric element in Clement stands his vast biblical erudition. He does not merely quote scripture, but derives his style and vocabulary from scripture. He may have used collections of proof-texts; but his knowledge cannot be explained sufficiently by any compilation. He knows all the books of the Septuagint, and he treats them on the same level. God has given the scriptures and speaks in their text. If Plato and Democritus can recognise divine inspiration in the poets, 'how then, can one not be struck with admiration when one hears the words of the prophets of almighty God, the prophets who have been the instruments of the voice divine?' (6.18.168.3). Yet the bible is not merely a transcript of the words of God and the divine logos, but a record of the relation between God and humanity through the whole of history. Prophecy and Plato do not obscure the history of salvation: they show the nearness of God.

For all its connection with human history, the bible is full of riddles, allegories, parables and symbols, which point to noetic realities.<sup>43</sup> There

42 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 61. The remaining paragraphs of this section are indebted to Mondésert.

43 *Ibid.*, 81–90. Symbols are aesthetic copies of noetic, paradigmatic originals. Typology is simply allegory or symbol applied to the divine economy. Daniélou distinguished typology from allegory; de Lubac found no such distinction in early Christian theology. Cf. Schneider, *Theologie*, 16–18.

are some things in scripture which are clear, and not symbolic. Moral exhortation is direct and concrete; but there is a second element which is obscure, enigmatic and in need of interpretation (paed 3.12.97.1–98.1). What drives Clement is his lively curiosity, his desire to know truth in a way which he describes as philosophic,<sup>44</sup> the movement through metaphor to the true dialectic. Scripture is a medium that can place him in contact with God, who reveals and saves through his word.<sup>45</sup> He seeks to understand by conversation with scripture; for the living word of God is the key which unlocks meaning, the central light which illumines the whole.

To sum up, Clement begins from respect for a text which, he believes, is handed down by the first hearers of the Gospels and Epistles. The church protects the tradition of scripture, transmitting it faithfully, and guiding its interpretation.<sup>46</sup> To this sense of living continuity, Clement applies scientific enquiry in history, philology, geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy and especially dialectic (1.28.177.1,3). For, thanks to the prophets and Plato, scripture is the way to the *noëta*, the intellectual realities.

#### VISION AND SYMBOL

Philosophers, said Plato (Rep. 475e), contemplate the truth (5.3.16). Clement gives reasons for the use of symbols and concealment as ways to such vision. The pure in heart see. Symbols conceal from the unworthy and reveal to the worthy (5.4.19). The pleasure-seeking soul cannot see, but is like the uninitiated at the mysteries and the tone-deaf at dances. Like perceives like, so whatever is discordant, disordered or material cannot approach God, whose truth is shut away in the sanctuary or hidden by a veil. 'Therefore the method of concealment is truly divine and, because of the pure and holy teaching which it shuts away in the sanctuary, is most necessary for us. The Egyptians signified this by the places they called "*aduta*", and the Hebrews signified it by the veil of the sanctuary.'<sup>47</sup>

44 'Philosophy is the desire [*orexis*] for what truly is', 2.9.45.6.

45 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 95.

46 Clement speaks in glowing terms of the unity of the church in contrast to the multiplicity of heresies. See 7.17.106f, esp. 107.2–4.

47 'Entry was allowed only to those who were consecrated, that is dedicated to God, circumcised in the lusts of the passions because of their love to the one God. To Plato also it seemed not right for the impure to touch the pure' (5.4.19).

Indeed all, barbarian and Greek, who have spoken of the divine or the first principles have 'handed down the truth in riddles, signs, allegories, metaphors and similar figures' (5.4.21). The Greeks have their maxims and poetry. Scripture is full of parables which call for maturity in understanding. Jews could not hear or see the deep things of God; but the spiritual man and true gnostic are disciples of the holy spirit and have the mind of Christ (5.4.25). They are fed meat, not milk. They build silver and gold on the foundation of faith; heretics build stubble, wood and hay.<sup>48</sup>

Nearly the whole of scripture is enigmatic. The high priest's robe gives a Christian account of the universe (5.6.37). Symbolic discourse is a help to right theology, piety, brevity, the exhibition of intelligence and wisdom (5.8.46), memory and attraction to truth (5.9.56). Symbols do not oppose, but point to reason. Yet interpreters are needed to explain their meaning so that a tradition is carefully preserved within the circle of those who are worthy.<sup>49</sup>

Symbols make a more vivid impression on the mind and say several things at once (5.9.56.5). Arguments contain ambiguous words, and unless we distinguish the variety of meanings we shall not follow the argument. Paul and Plato (Clement's main sources), Barnabas and Isaiah (Christian and prophetic tradition) all commend the concealment of mysteries (5.10).

The barbarian philosophy recognises two worlds, spiritual and material, archetype and image (5.14.93.4). Every text must have at least a second sense, because it comes from God and his gifts retain something of his infinite richness and wisdom, 'grace upon grace'. Just as John the Baptist spoke of unloosing the sandal of his lord, so in the true dialectic, ideas need to be untied and joined again.

Clement's method enabled him to accept the Old Testament in its entirety and to be confident of its agreement with the New Testament. He could approach the Marcionites and prove that the New was the fulfilment of the Old. Clement could give the whole bible to pagans and indicate that it contained material that was older than their myths and traditions. The dangers of symbolic exegesis were that it could evade direct moral commands and separate itself from historic elements in the bible. Although Clement uses allegory with critical care (6.16), in his 'gnostic' exposition of the decalogue, his dialectic omits two

<sup>48</sup> Here Paul (1 Cor. 2 and 3) is Clement's source.

<sup>49</sup> After Pythagoras and Socrates, the importance of teachers runs through the whole western tradition.

commandments and treats others out of order. The first commandment means that there is only one sovereign God, and the second commandment means that we should not give his name to created things. He-who is unique. The fourth commandment does not mean that God ever needed or took a rest, but declares our true rest which is Christ. The fifth commandment requires that we honour God as our father and wisdom as our mother. The seventh commandment forbids the adultery which is false opinion about God and deifies created objects in that idolatry which Paul denounced as fornication. The sixth commandment forbids the murder which destroys the true doctrine of God and the immortality it brings. The eighth commandment forbids stealing what is another's, giving divine honour to a statue, assuming for created things anything which belongs to the sole creator. The tenth commandment forbids all lusts, the desire of false things, the belief that animate things have a power of their own, or that inanimate things can save or hurt without an intervening agent. For there is one first cause, one providence which works through many intermediate causes. Clement has exalted the decalogue to a stringent monotheism and neglected the demands for Sabbath observation and filial piety, as well as the prohibitions against adultery, murder and theft. Beyond the veil of particular commands lies the one ultimate allegiance. Just as Paul read scripture by the rule, 'What does this mean in the presence of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, was raised for our justification and is coming to judge us all?' So Clement reads all scripture by the same rule.<sup>50</sup>

50 E. Käsemann, 'The spirit and the letter', in *Perspectives on Paul* (London, 1971), 138–66. The distinction between letter and spirit means 'The scripture must be read in the light of Christ and as a preparation for him' (155). Käsemann's essay sets out the theological hermeneutic which guided Paul in his exegesis of Old Testament scripture. Paul's central antithesis of spirit which gives life and letter which kills is found in three short accounts: Rom. 2:27–29 and 7:6, and 2 Cor. 3:6. A careful analysis of these passages enables the key idea to be understood. Letter means the law of Moses in its written form, seen by the Jew as the source of his own unique salvation and regarded by him as identical with the holy scripture. The scripture was known as 'sacred letters', and Paul was probably the first to refer to it by the singular, 'letter'. Jewish interpretation and tradition, Paul believes, have misunderstood the intention of the divine will. The law confirms this misunderstanding by its demand for works, perverting the relationship between God and the pious Jew, and bringing sin and death. Letter can only mean slavery. Freedom comes from the spirit, which is defined christologically: it means participation in the event of Jesus Christ, (*ibid.*, 152). It starts from the revelation of God as one who creates out of nothing and raises the dead; by contrast the letter kills because it ties man to his own strength and piety, taking him away from the sovereign grace by which alone he can live. The spirit gives life because it is the power which reveals the presence of the risen lord. The Old Testament may be read through a veil and misunderstood as a demand for works. On the other hand, when the veil is taken away by Christ, the message of justification may be seen. 'Christology interpreted in terms of the doctrine of justification is the criterion for distinguishing between spirit and letter, both of which may be

## CLEMENT AS A BIBLICAL THEOLOGIAN

For one of his best modern interpreters, Clement's fusion of prophecy and Plato opens the way to a biblical theology.<sup>51</sup>

Clement finds in scripture the progress<sup>52</sup> of the soul to God.<sup>53</sup> To sum up, in 'his profound and concrete religious sense, in the richness of his theological ideas, in his reflection upon the nature of symbolism which is present in the natural world and especially in scripture, by his continual investigation into the problems of the knowledge of God and in the relation of Greek philosophy and Christian faith'<sup>54</sup>, he goes beyond exegesis to biblical theology.

He is not writing a commentary on scripture but exploring the logos theology of the Fourth Gospel, the drama of salvation drawn from Paul and a sense of the relation between God and man as it runs through the whole of scripture.<sup>55</sup> Scripture sets for him the problems of theology and controls the formation of his thought. He is a Platonist as well as a biblical theologian.<sup>56</sup> Without Platonic dialectic he could not handle the complexity of the bible; with it the bible displays coherence. Clement has an intellectual audacity which leads him to the knowledge of God and a contrasting reserve which insists that there is no hope of knowledge without the grace of God.<sup>57</sup>

Interpreters who lack conceptual stamina have commonly missed the complexity of his achievement. He is able to work with and against both Jew and Gnostic, using Philo but attacking Jews, using points of Valentinus, Theodotus and Basilides but persistently attacking Gnostics. He is (like Plato) able to use logic and vision without letting one swallow the other. He reveres the whole of scripture, but he is a theologian and not a biblicist: those who bother with words, he says, miss the realities (2.1.3.2).

deduced from scripture' (*ibid.*, 155). Having explored the three passages and found these principles, Käsemann turns to Rom. 10:5-13 as an example of Paul's use of the Old Testament. In these verses the antithesis between spirit and letter is shown in different ways.

51 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 237-52.

52 Cf. chapter 2 above on movement.

53 As Augustine says in his Soliloquies (1.27), 'God and the soul I long to know; Nothing more? Nothing whatever.'

54 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 183.

55 Mondésert's three themes correspond remarkably with the three problems of this book.

56 *Ibid.*, 267.

57 *Ibid.*, 266.

## TEXT AND CONTEXT

The authority and certainty of scripture for Clement is matched only by the difficulty and uncertainty of its form. For him the canon is not a list of books. He uses all the books of the Hebrew canon with the exception of Ruth, Obadiah and Nehemiah, and (remarkably) Esther and the Song of Songs. Esther he knows, but does not treat as authoritative. The works of the Apocrypha are much used: Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom are divine scripture. In the New Testament Clement shows great familiarity with Paul and John. Paul is God's apostle, appointed directly by God rather than by the earthly Christ (*theios* in the sense of *thespesios*). John wrote a spiritual Gospel, one in which the events are specific signs of the cross and glory of Christ. He probably knew James and 2 Peter but did not know 3 John and Philemon. He regarded with great respect other Gospels (Hebrews, Egyptians), Hermas, Didache, Preaching and Apocalypse of Peter. He quotes 1 Clement with the formula 'it is written'.

He has his limitations. He quotes, incorrectly, texts which he knows well. Yet he (or a later scribe) can also write with a text before him and quote the first and last sentences of a passage, joining them by phrases such as 'down to' (*heôs*) (2.22.136.2). His text of scripture cannot be identified. The evidence for dependence on Codex Alexandrinus or Sinaiticus is roughly equal. One verdict on the text of Mk 10:17–31 ('It is impossible to produce a fouler exhibition') has some grounds despite its comic form.<sup>58</sup> When it comes to the Prologue of John's Gospel, the most influential passage for Clement's theology,<sup>59</sup> we find that in verse 18 he prefers *theos* to *huios* three times out of five. The disregard for many questions dear to nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship is not casual. He knew better than modern theologians what modern philosophers have reiterated, namely, that words and concepts are not the same, that the same words can refer to different concepts and the same concepts can be expressed in different words.<sup>60</sup> That does not mean that his contribution to textual criticism is worthless. It is still remarkable 'that his New Testament in its five longest books was closer to the Western text than to that of Origen'.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*, 2.185.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.188.

<sup>60</sup> See below, chapter 9, page 204 for his distinction between *onomata* and *noêmata*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.191.

Clement echoes elements found in Gnostic Gospels. The Gospel of Truth (18) points to hidden mystery, and the Gospel of Philip (101–33) insists on the secrecy of knowledge.<sup>62</sup> Knowledge and rest are joined in the Gospel of Truth and elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> Negative theology is found in the Gospel of Truth (11–13, 17, 39).<sup>64</sup> The transmission of knowledge to a few by the risen Christ is matched by the general insistence that Jesus is the one revealer.<sup>65</sup> Useful work has been done in the exploration of Clement's relation to Gnostic writings.<sup>66</sup>

*Narrative to prophecy, to Plato, to one word incarnate*

Clement's transformation of all narrative, except that which refers to Christ crucified, into metaphor has been seen as the major weakness of Alexandrian theology: 'The allegorical method of interpretation, though derived from belief in the truth of the documents and devised as a means to protect that truth, nevertheless effectively emptied them of historical worth. The record of events became nothing but a book of elaborate enigmas, to be interpreted by the ingenuity and applied at the discretion of the teacher.'<sup>67</sup> This criticism from an admirer cannot be applied to Clement. For all the metaphor and parable which he uses, he retains an abiding concern for the words and deeds of Jesus on earth. The whole point of the incarnation was that the word might be seen (*theathêi*) (5.3.16.5). In his *Hypotyposeis*, Clement records vivid detail which is otherwise not available to us. Quintilian had spoken of a hypotyposis as a style of writing which appears to the eye more than to the ear, a form of vivid description.<sup>68</sup> The same vividness struck D'Antraigues when he saw a copy of the *Hypotyposeis* for the only time in recent centuries.<sup>69</sup> This

62 Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 152.

63 *Ibid.*, 188.

64 *Ibid.*, 220f.

65 *Ibid.*, 162.

66 By J. L. Kovacs: 'Concealment and Gnostic exegesis'; 'Paideia, the care of the soul, and concealment in Clement of Alexandria', *Phasis: Greek and Roman Studies*, vols. 2–3 (2000), 228–31; 'Divine pedagogy'; 'Echoes of Valentinian Exegesis in Clement of Alexandria and Origen', in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. L. Perrone, (Leuven, 2004), 317–29; 'Clement of Alexandria and Valentinian exegesis in the Excerpts from Theodotus', *StudPatr* (forthcoming, 2005). See also A. Le Boulluec, 'De l'Evangile des Egyptiens à l'Evangile selon Thomas en passant par Jules Cassien et Clément d'Alexandrie', in *Actes du colloque sur l'Evangile de Thomas*, eds. P.-H. Poirier and L. Painchard, *BCNH* (forthcoming, 2005).

67 Raven, *Good news*, 100.

68 *Institutio Oratoria* 9.2.40

69 Osborn, 'Hypotyposeis', 67–83.

work discusses passages of scripture, with interpretation and added detail. The story of Jesus' healing of the leper is expanded. The priests had said that no one would heal this leper except the Christ, if he should come. Therefore Jesus, when he had healed the leper, sent him to give testimony to the priests that 'Christ has come, believe in him' (frag. 12). The two Gospels with genealogies were written first. Mark wrote down what he learnt from Peter without Peter's supervision. Finally, John wrote a spiritual Gospel (Eusebius, H.E. 6.14.5-7), that is a Gospel which displayed both letter and spirit, both parable and noetic reality, as it pointed from 'signs' to the glory of the cross. The lord committed knowledge to James the Just, John and Peter, who in turn passed it on to the other apostles, who passed it on to the Seventy. James the Just was thrown down from a pinnacle and then beaten to death with a fuller's club. The other James was beheaded (H.E. 2.1.4). At the execution of the latter, his accuser was so moved that he confessed Christ immediately and asked James to forgive him. After brief consideration, James wished him peace and kissed him, 'and so they were both beheaded together' (H.E. 2.10.3).

This concern of Clement for historical detail confirms the use of scripture which we find in *Quis dives salvetur*? The narrative of the Gospel is treated with final authority, even if the salvation of the rich man is a matter of his disposition, not his money. To grasp the originality of Clement in joining the historical and allegorical, the literal and non-literal, we return to his thematic statement (6.15.126).<sup>70</sup> Here he begins from the account of metaphor in Aristotle and the Platonic tradition. The metaphor bridges the gap between literal and non-literal, between historical and transcendent; but the gap remains. For the philosopher it offers an analogy between the known particular and the unknown first principle; indeed, for Aristotle it is set in contrast to the common meaning, pointing to higher truth by analogy. However, for Clement (following John) the two worlds, visible and invisible, have been united in Christ, who was not of this world (*kosmikos*) but came as of this world (*kosmikôs*). The noetic meaning is the real meaning, covered in such a way that it is seen only by those whose mature understanding enables them to follow the true dialectic. The motivation of philosophical allegory is to indicate an analogy to the transcendent, unknown God; but the motivation of Clement's theological analogy is to disclose what has been given, and

70 See above, chapter 3, pages 56f.

which belongs to both worlds. While there is an appearance of identity between philosophy and theology on this point, there is genuine polarity in motive. 'The way of analogy, when taken over into theology, serves as a (mere) tool.'<sup>71</sup> Metaphor and parable lead Clement to the real (*kurios*) meaning, not away from it to a higher world. The two worlds are joined in scripture, just as they are joined in the 'word made flesh'. This is final reality, not allegory. In the first half of the Fourth Gospel, 'the book of signs' points forward to the reality of the cross, where the glory of the incarnate word is to be seen. Clement is using the same Johannine logic, in combination with the Pauline logic of letter and spirit. The unbeliever has no access to the second half of the Fourth Gospel, the revelation to which the signs point and which he does not know. For the believer, the word made flesh joins cosmic and noetic in one meaning. Clement uses philosophical or rhetorical terminology to explain the distinctive Johannine unity of word and flesh. A similar unitive meaning was advocated by William Tyndale, who ridiculed the 'chopological' interpretations by which 'twenty doctors expound one text twenty ways'.<sup>72</sup> Lancelot Andrewes was equally emphatic. 'There is but one onely *sacrifice*. . . *CHRISTS death*. And that *sacrifice* but once actually performed, at his *death*; but ever before represented, in *figure*, from the beginning; and ever since repeated, in memory, to the world's end. That onely *absolute*; all else *relative* to it, *representative* of it, *operative* by it. . . That, the Center, in which their *lines* and ours, their *types* and our *antitypes* doe meet.'<sup>73</sup>

As elsewhere, Clement is modifying classical thought to explain what he finds in the New Testament. The doxographer who is happy to identify a classical source, or the Discourse Power theorist who thinks that languages join themselves unaided, is hopelessly inadequate. What matters is how Clement uses philosophy to explain scripture, what he does with the material he borrows from another context. His own dexterity is his claim on our attention. The strict classicist and the strict biblicist may disapprove; their disapproval proves Clement's originality. The true dialectic works because the highest essence became the word incarnate and, as saviour, is present to the thinking exegete to clear his mind (I.28.178.1). Also because those who, like the prophets and the lord

71 H. J. Horn, 'Zur Motivation der allegorischen Schriftexegese bei Clemens Alexandrinus', *Hermes* 97 (1969), 496.

72 See W. Tyndale, *Doctrinal treatises*, ed. H. Walter (Cambridge, 1848), 303–09, 25–28, cited by V. Harris, 'Allegory to analogy in the interpretation of the scriptures', *PhilQ* 45 (1966), 7.

73 *XCVI Sermons* (1631), 458. Cited by V. Harris, *Ibid.*, 8f.

before them, risk their lives in declaring the word of the cross (6.15.127.5). No one can approach the word without blood (paed 2.8.73); the true dialectic belongs to the faith which sheds blood along the path of life (4.4.15.3). As for Paul and John, the highest essence and divine glory are seen on the cross, which continues in the contingency of earthly life. For 'the glory of Jesus is that he makes his disciples on earth ready and able to carry the cross after him, while the glory of the church and of Christian living is to be counted worthy to praise the Crucified as God's wisdom and power, to look for salvation in him alone and to make life an act of worship under the sign of Golgotha.'<sup>74</sup>

74 E. Käsemann, *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen, 1969), 106f; English translation *Perspectives on Paul* (London, 1971), 59.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Philo and Clement: from Divine Oracle to True Philosophy*

We have just seen how Clement moved from narrative to metaphysic by means of parable or metaphor. Philo faced the same problem. Just as Christians began from a recital of events – the birth, life, suffering and death and resurrection of Jesus – so Jews centred their faith on the events of the wandering Aramaean who went down into Egypt, was afflicted and delivered through Moses to Sinai. The narrative section of the Fourth Gospel has been called the ‘book of signs’ because the events point to the cross which dominates the Gospel; similarly for Philo, the events of the Pentateuch point to the revelation of the law on Sinai.

The relation between Philo and Clement raises many questions and a variety of answers. Fortunately, the problem is now more accessible through two magisterial works. In the first, evidence is assembled and the wider question of Philo’s adoption by early Christian writers illuminated.<sup>1</sup> For Clement, two positions are set out: some writers maximise while others minimise the debt of Clement to Philo. A third position is adumbrated. Clement knew Plato and the bible; Philo showed him how they could fit together. ‘Philo did not teach Clement Platonism, but rather how to connect his Platonism to biblical thought, and specifically to biblical exegesis, above all through the use of allegory.’<sup>2</sup>

In the second work<sup>3</sup> we have a splendid study of Philonic passages in the text of Clement. Four long sequences (Hagar and Sarah, Moses as philosopher, the law and the virtues, temple vestments and high priest)<sup>4</sup> are separated from four short sequences (divine transcendence, immutability, rejection of anthropomorphism, divine singularity).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Runia, *Philo in early Christian literature*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> Van den Hoek, *Use of Philo*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

*A great gulf; rational reconstruction*

A rational reconstruction of the two writers shows common ground in their essential monotheism; but there are differences which point to a great gulf.<sup>6</sup> We may set out the main points. Philo moves from divine oracle to true philosophy with a centre in Moses and the law. Clement moves from divine oracle to true philosophy with a centre in Jesus and the gospel. Philo's one God is creator of all things, while Clement's one God is creator of old and new creation, the saviour of the world he made. In Philo, there are two powers under God, the creative, gracious power and the sovereign, punitive, legislative power (cher. 27f; her. 166; Abr. 125f). All the powers unite in the logos. For Clement there is reciprocity of God and logos, father and son. All powers of the spirit are united in the logos. For Philo, the law is perfect. The cosmos is in harmony with the law. The Pentateuch is the totality of scripture. For Clement, however, the law is imperfect, fulfilled in Christ, good but dangerous because it cannot give life (q.d.s. 8,9). Philo has little to say on universal redemption, nothing on the fall of the first man, nothing on the descent of a redeemer. In Clement there is a central message of one God from age to age saving by the son.

The decisive difference lies in the relation of logos to God. Clement's logos was reciprocally joined to the father within the Godhead. Here Clement and Philo part their ways. For Clement, as for Irenaeus, Jews, like heretics, are unclean animals (7.18.109f). Clean animals must part the hoof and ruminates. Jews ruminate on scripture but do not part the hoof through faith in both father and son. The parting of the hoof gives stability. Clement's idea of God depends on a reciprocity between father and son: son in father and father in son. 'O the great God! O the perfect child! Son in father and father in son!' (paed 1.5.24.3). 'Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will have a vision of the bosom of the father, whom the only begotten God alone declared. God in his very self is love and for love's sake became visible to us' (q.d.s. 37).

Secondly, Clement's view of the Jews differed strikingly from that of Philo.<sup>7</sup> The Jews are, for Philo, God's chosen people with the unqualified

6 We follow Rorty's advice and initially separate rational reconstruction from historical reconstruction. See his paradigmatic analysis, 'The historiography of philosophy: four genres', in *Philosophy in history*, ed. R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1984), 49–75.

7 For a useful statement of Clement's relation to Judaism see J. Carleton Paget, 'Clement of Alexandria and the Jews', *SJTh* 51 (1998), 86–97.

privileges of the Pentateuch. Clement's account is more complex. It is also more abstract, because Clement does not have direct contact with Jews.<sup>8</sup> Clement makes four points:

- (i) *Failure and inferiority*. Among the three races of Plato (gold, silver, brass), the Jews are, for Clement, the race of silver (5.14.98.2). Jesus accused the Jews of hardness of heart (paed 2.2.32.4) and called them a wicked and adulterous people (3.12.90.2). For Paul, the folly of the wise belongs to the Jews (5.4.25.3).
- (ii) *Antiquity*. The Jewish people are the most ancient race of all (1.15.72.4). The date of their exodus may be determined as 1,580 years before the fifth year of the reign of Demetrios I Soter (1.21.141.5).
- (iii) *Purity and zeal*. Moses taught the Jews the importance of chastity (3.11.72.2). As the Jews left Egypt, so the true gnostics leave the things of the world behind them (7.7.40.2). The Jews at the time of Christ were renowned for their piety (exc 75.2). Paul bears witness that they have a zeal for God (2.8.42.4).
- (iv) *A people of hope*. The law of Moses had a value for Jews (1.27.174.1) and prepared them for the coming of Christ (6.17.159.9). The prophets also have meaning for the Jews (6.5.42), who are the bound prisoners to whom Isaiah (49:9) offers release.

Yet there was no divergence in the central issue for Clement and Philo. Their chief affirmation was the same: the one God was first principle of physics, logic and ethics. Philo found this in the Pentateuch and joined Plato to scripture at a simpler level than did Clement. His exegesis is a seamless robe.<sup>9</sup> Clement had a more complex task when he attempted to do the same for the whole of Christian scripture and to go beyond exegesis to theology. Philo had begun and succeeded as a philosophical exegete, and Clement could follow for the first part of his journey. When Clement moved to biblical theology, there was greater complexity under the same central canon of one God.<sup>10</sup>

8 For a contrary view see R. van den Broek, "The Christian "School"". There exists a continuity of ideas and practices between Jews and Christians in Alexandria. This includes not merely literary sources but perceptions, religious expectations and perhaps even institutions (196).

9 He had difficulty in applying any exegesis to his philosophical treatises where he does not add to what had been said by Greek philosophers.

10 The Pentateuch provides only 11 per cent of Clement's scriptural base. Even if we allow the relevance of Philo to half of this material, his contribution to Clement's wider enterprise is limited.

*Many bridges across the gulf; historical reconstruction*

From Philo to Clement is roughly 150 years. The Philonic tradition became part of the complex Christian tradition of the second century.<sup>11</sup> It has long been customary to acknowledge our ignorance of early Alexandrian Christianity, an ignorance explained by Bauer as due to a dominant Gnostic tendency in that place. We can now be more confident in describing what went on in Alexandria before Clement.<sup>12</sup> Six different groups of Christians may be identified. There were Jewish Christians whose number was small after 117, apocalypics like the Sibylline oracles, *simpliciores* whose Christianity was a matter of 'faith alone', ascetics who practised *enkrateia*, Gnostic Christians, who found in Christ a transcendental knowledge, and Platonist Christians who made use of Greek philosophy.

Literature from Alexandria at this period includes the Epistle of Barnabas, and the remarkable Preaching of Peter. We know the names of Christian teachers before Pantaenus: Basilides, Carpocrates and Valentinus. Beyond their names, we know little of their teaching, and they have been generally classified as Gnostics. The fragments which we have confirm this judgement, except for Valentinus, whose position is more elusive and whose theology cannot be assigned to Gnosticism.<sup>13</sup>

Other documents further illuminate the Alexandrian tradition before Clement. The Sentences of Sextus bring together the moral teaching of pagan philosophers with the wisdom of the church. The Teachings of Silvanus is opposed to Gnosticism and shares with Philo and Clement certain features: a Platonic account of the transcendent God, the personification of Wisdom, Platonic anthropology with a tinge of Stoicism, a negative attitude towards the body and the use of allegory in the understanding of scripture. Although it is found among Nag Hammadi writings, the *Authentikos Logos* is not a Gnostic work; it sets out a form of Platonic Christianity which at some points anticipates Clement. Another Nag Hammadi document, the Testimony of Truth, is plainly Christian, but has Gnostic and ascetic features. The flesh is denigrated, and the perception of the mind surpasses that of eyes and ears. A simpler form of Christianity is found in the Letter to Diognetus, which is linked

11 Clement finds Philo within this tradition as well as in his writings.

12 Runia, *Philo in early Christian literature*, 119–31, who acknowledges van den Broek as a source.

13 See C. Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen, 1992).

by many to Alexandria. These various writings provide some background to Clement's use of Philo; but they contain no certain references to Philo.

At Alexandria, Clement met both the writings of Philo and the tradition to which Philo belonged. He calls Philo a 'Pythagorean', in contrast to Aristobulus, whom he names a 'Peripatetic'. This puzzle has been elucidated<sup>14</sup> and only two comments are needed. Within a Platonic environment, some would seem Pythagorean in contrast to others who were Peripatetic; Philo is more Pythagorean than is Alcinous, whose use of Aristotelian categories and general approach to philosophy mark him off from Philo. Secondly, Clement would have good reasons for not advertising his Jewish source. He is fighting on many fronts: against Marcionites who reject the Old Testament and against Judaisers who think the Old facilitates an improvement on the New.

To sum up, historical reconstruction offers bridges across the gulf between Philo and Clement. Alexandrian tradition had already assimilated Philo in a stream of religious Platonism. Clement is concerned to use whatever has been 'well said' and is convinced that all<sup>15</sup> are illuminated by the dawning light of Christ. On the power of truth to gather its scattered seeds he sets no limits.

#### MONOTHEISM AND THE 'SHORT SEQUENCES'

Clement's account of God, we have noted, derives from three major problems. First he is governed, like Irenaeus, by the apostolic kerygma of one God, creator and ruler of the saving economy which moves to fulfilment in Christ and to the offer of salvation.<sup>16</sup> The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Clement adds to this divine plan the gift of philosophy to the Greeks to prepare them for Christ. We may call this concept the 'prolongation' of God. Secondly, the one God is marked by ultimate balanced reciprocity.<sup>17</sup> Always, the word was with God and was God. No one comes to the father but by the son and no one comes to the son unless the father draws him. The father transcends human apprehension, while the son is the known centre of the unknown God. The mysteries of divine love are displayed by three ellipses which join son and father, God and man, man and man. We may call this Johannine concept 'reciprocation'. Thirdly, in salvation by faith or 'new

<sup>14</sup> D. T. Runia, 'Why does Clement of Alexandria call Philo "the Pythagorean"?' *VigChr* 49 (1995), 1–22. Reprinted in Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers: a collection of papers* (Leiden, 1995), 54–76.

<sup>15</sup> Even Epicurus.

<sup>16</sup> See chapters 2, 3.

<sup>17</sup> See chapters 5, 6.

creation',<sup>18</sup> the one God is the first principle of being, goodness and truth, so that all that exists, is good or is true derives from, or participates in, him alone. From his fullness believers receive grace upon grace. He is before all things and all things come together in him. This Clement calls the Mosaic or barbarian (non-Greek) philosophy because it is what the bible teaches.

Clement's monotheism follows the themes of economy, reciprocity and saving faith. These concepts find parallels in Philo. Philo's prolongation of God culminated in Sinai. Philo knew nothing of the reciprocity of father and son, but there is unbalanced reciprocity between God and Israel. Finally, Philo's monotheism anticipated Clement's third concept of one saving God who was the source of being, truth and goodness, but it knew nothing of a new creation.

The monotheism of Moses was central to Paul and John, despite their explicit claims of Mosaic deficiencies. Faith no longer loves or fears other gods. With this monotheism, Philo and Clement were trying to do similar things. They took non-philosophical writings (Jewish scriptures – chiefly the Pentateuch – on the one hand, and Christian scriptures – chiefly not the Pentateuch – on the other hand) and expressed their content in philosophical or theological language. Philo and Clement wanted to show how scripture affirmed one God who was the first principle of being, truth and goodness. Philo concludes his work on creation with a statement of belief: 'First that the deity is and has been from eternity.. Secondly that God is one. . . Thirdly. . .that the world came into being. . .Fourthly that the world too is one as well as its maker. . .Fifthly that God exercises forethought on the world's behalf' (opif. 171f). Philo finds, at the burning bush, the ultimate being who is truly existent and also the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (VM 1.74–6; Abr. 50–52; mut. 11–14). This Clement accepts as the barbarian or Mosaic philosophy.

A similar monotheism motivates Clement's theology of Paul and John: 'And God is without beginning, the all-complete first principle of all things and the maker of the first principle. In the respect therefore in which he is being, he is the first principle of the natural world; in the respect that he is the good, he is the first principle of ethical things; again in respect that he is mind he is the first principle of reasoning and judging' (4.25.162.5). Belief in one God, who is the first principle<sup>19</sup> of being, goodness and reason define the shape of early Christian thought.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See chapters 7–12.

<sup>19</sup> A first principle, for Aristotle, is 'the first point from which a thing either is or comes to be or is known' (met. 1013a).

<sup>20</sup> Augustine later uses similar terms: 'For if man was created, so that his most excellent part might attain to that which excels all things, that is, to the one, true, supremely good God, without

In the so-called 'shorter sequences' Clement uses Philo to expound their common monotheism in a forceful and imaginative way.

- (i) *The darkness and nearness of God* (2.2.5f) speaks of the transcendence of God above space, time and all created things. God is both remote and near. He recedes from our grasp and yet comes near. Moses, convinced that human wisdom cannot reach God, asks to see God and follows God's voice into the darkness. Clement takes over Philo's words: 'that is, into the inaccessible and invisible conceptions of the One who is. For God is not in darkness or in space but above both space and time and the distinctive properties of created things' (2.2.6.1). Clement moves along the line of biblical texts which Philo has used. He stresses both the transcendence and nearness of God because these confirm the need for faith, which is his chief concern. Faith is superior to knowledge and its test of truth (2.4.15.5). One must obey one's teacher in order to learn. 'To obey the logos, whom we call teacher, is to believe in him and not to go against him in anything' (2.4.16.2).
- (ii) *God's immutability and faith's stability*. The second short sequence draws support, from Philo, for the stability of faith against the instability of error. Progress to perfection never denies the affirmation of its starting-point, for it is only strong through dependence on that starting-point. The highest proof comes from scripture, which produces faith in those who desire to learn and may lead them on to knowledge (2.11.49.3). The texts which substantiate the divinity of scripture as the object of faith – 'You shall keep all my commandments and do them. . . I am the lord your God' (2.10.46.4) – are found in Philo. From faith, Clement proceeds to discuss knowledge. He uses Philo's account of the three measures: sensation, language and intellect, and also Philo's description of the immutable stability which belongs to the presence and knowledge of God (2.11.51.6). 'Faith therefore', says Clement, 'and the knowledge of the truth make the soul that chooses them always constant and equable' (2.11.52.3). The changefulness of falsehood is contrasted with the rest and peace of the true gnostic.

Clement makes the transition by moving from the number three to the number ten; both numbers refer to man. In the latter the highest part is mind. Quoting Philo, Clement tells us that we must

whom no nature subsists, no teaching teaches, no good has use, then let him be sought, in whom for us is all that is sure, let him be discerned in whom for us is all that is true, let him be loved in whom for us is all that is right' (civ. dei 8.4).

go beyond the nine parts to the tenth, 'to the knowledge of God, desiring the creator beyond the creation' (2.11.51.1). Faith firmly fixes the believer, whereas he who thinks himself wise is unstable, like Cain who left Eden ('delight') for Naid ('commotion'). Faith, knowledge and peace are delight which the disobedient forfeit and those wise in their own conceit never know. They throw off the guiding reins of God and plunge into a billowing commotion of ever-changing ignorance (2.11.51.3–5). Clement concludes with Philo's help that faith and knowledge of the truth bring stability, calmness and peace, while falsehood is never still and constant (2.11.52.4).<sup>21</sup> Philo's imagery of three measures, the perfection of the number ten, and the contrast between Cain and Abraham enliven Clement's account of faith.

- (iii) *Rejection of anthropomorphism.* The third short sequence (5.11.67f) links faith to a detachment from the body and its passions. Accordingly, Socrates called philosophy the practice of death and Pythagoras required five years of silence from his disciples. This spiritual migration, says Clement, came from Moses; he turns to Philo for the images to support his case. Just as burnt offerings must be skinned and cut into parts, so the soul must be stripped of matter and divested of the lusts of the flesh. Now follow Philo's striking images of the snail and hedgehog. Anthropomorphic accounts of God must be rejected; men curl up in themselves like snails and hedgehogs and think of the blessed and immortal God in human terms. But God has given us ten thousand things in which he does not share, such as birth, food, growth, long life and happy death. God is immortal and ageless. Where scripture refers to passions in God it must not be taken literally. In this passage Clement uses Philo to enliven his negative theology, which moves on to the next sequence.
- (iv) *The alone to the Alone.* The fourth short sequence (5.11.71–74) is introduced by an important statement about God. In Alcinous (did. 10.5) and Plutarch (Quaest. Plat. 1001e–1002a) the way to the One is the way of analysis removing all attributes from an object until only

21 Van den Hoek, *Use of Philo*, 159. 'In Clement, the connections between the biblical quotations and the interpretation are strained to the limit. Only with the text of Philo in the background is it possible to retrace the jumps in thought, especially that from the number three to the number ten. Clement interprets three by *αἰσθησις*, *λόγος* and *νοῦς*, and he links them with sins (*ἁμαρτήματα*); in doing this, he gives a strong ethical accent to his treatment. The perfect number ten, moreover, is linked to mankind, which is held together by ten elements. These different foci make it clear that the liturgical and theological interpretation of Philo is replaced by a more ethical and anthropological interest.'

unity remains.<sup>22</sup> Clement moulds contemporary Platonism into an unambiguous Christian statement: after removing all physical dimensions, we cast ourselves into the grandeur of Christ and go on through holiness into the void. Quoting Philo, Clement says, 'The first cause, then, is not in any place, but above place and time and name and thought' (5.11.71.5; post. 14–16). That is why Moses asked God directly, 'Show yourself to me.' God cannot be taught in human speech. Clement repeats his christological refrain: 'the grace of knowledge is from him by the son' (5.11.71.5). God's wisdom is praised by Solomon and described by Moses as the 'tree of life', planted in paradise, which is the world wherein the word became flesh, blossomed and bore fruit.

God's transcendence is further developed by a citation from Philo. 'Abraham, when coming to the place of which God had told him, looking up on the third day, sees the place from afar' (5.11.73.1; post. 17). God's place is hard to reach. Plato called God the place of the ideas because he had learned from Moses that God contains, as a place, all the kinds of things (5.11.73.3). Clement's sequence refers to Philo (post. 14–20), as did 2.2.5f. Clement uses the passage in two different ways and orders the material differently. He is more philosophical here than in *Stromateis* II and develops the notion of 'place' (5.11.71.5–74.5). He is emphatically christological.

In the short sequences, Philo provides elements in Clement's account of faith and knowledge, but little of its structure. In *Stromateis* V, however, when the setting is drawn from Philo, there is a more intimate connection with the substance of Clement's account. One of Clement's obvious Platonic statements ends with a citation from Philo on the transcendence of God. Another begins from the Platonic account of God as the place of the ideas. In each case a short saying of Philo is used to illuminate an important element of Clement's thought. The brilliance of Philo's imagery – darkness and nearness of God, snails and hedgehog, the alone to the Alone – provides the appeal of Philo to Clement.

As far as literary structure is concerned, in the short sequences a small amount of Philo is inserted into arguments which are already important for Clement. In the major sequences much Philonic material will be used with small insertions from Clement. These redirect whole passages and become important for Clement.

22 See below, chapter 5, page 122 (God beyond God).

*Movement. Law as preparation. Sarah and Hagar. First 'long sequence'*

There is a common logic of Mosaic Platonism or barbarian philosophy when one examines the four 'major sequences': Sarah and Hagar (the necessary preparation); the life of Moses (true philosophy); the law and virtues (the gentle law); and the temple vestments and high priest (cosmology to christology). Philo's Platonic version of Mosaic scripture is affirmed and carried a further step to Paul and John. Philo provides the philosophical interpretation from which Clement goes on to make his own claims. In the case of Sarah and Hagar, of Moses the philosopher, the law which is a preparation for assimilation to God and the vestments which declare a cosmology of Christ, Clement begins from the imagery of the bible and Philo's Platonic exegesis, as well as his twofold logic of affirmation and progress; all these prepare for Christ's perfection. It is obvious that, however different, Clement's claim advances from Philo's interpretation of the text. Philo has turned Moses into a philosopher who affirms God as first principle and calls on men to migrate forwards. Clement moves to a Platonism which is based on Paul and John.

The subject of the first long sequence is the need for preparation (Sarah and Hagar). Just as Philo saw secular studies as preparation for the law, so Clement saw philosophy and law as preparation for Christ.<sup>23</sup> Clement uses Philo to enliven the logical move which he wishes to make. The narrative of Hagar and Sarah provides an allegory which illuminates and a scriptural precedent which justifies. The allegory had already been used by Paul to move from law to Christ. Clement has simply added this extra move to Philo's progression. Philo moves from preparatory studies to philosophy to wisdom as found in the law. Clement moves from preparatory studies to philosophy and law to wisdom in Christ. The motif of affirmation and progress is common to both. Clement believes that migration must go a step further to the perfection of Christ. Earlier he

23 Before the coming of the lord, philosophy was necessary for the Greeks as a preparatory training for those who would later reap the fruit of faith through proof by argument (1.5.28.1). The law brought the Hebrews and philosophy brought the Greeks to Christ. Philosophy prepares the way for perfection in Christ (1.5.28.3). Clement's purpose in the *Stromateis* was to make true gnostics and to propound the true philosophy which must be based on the bible, the barbarian philosophy. So, with help from Philo, Clement turns to the relation of Sarah with Hagar. Here both Philo and Clement move from preparatory studies (grammar/rhetoric, geometry/arithmetic, music, dialectic) to philosophy, and from philosophy to wisdom (1.5.30.1; congr. 39). 'Wherefore also, when Sarah was jealous of Hagar who was more highly favoured, Abraham, choosing only what was useful in secular philosophy, said "Behold the maid is in your hands, treat her as you please" (Gen. 16.6). He plainly meant "I recognise secular learning as younger and as your handmaid; but your knowledge I honour and revere as full-grown mistress"' (1.5.32.1; congr. 153f).

goes further and claims that in the divine plan, philosophy was to the Greeks what the law was to the Jews: a preparation for Christ. Philo would have been horrified at the claims that the law was imperfect and that it was parallel to philosophy in divine providence.

*Movement. Bible as philosophy. Divine oracle to true philosophy.  
Second 'long sequence'*

In order for the biblical narrative to be true or false philosophically it had to be stated in a form which allowed those two possibilities. Philo had done this for the Pentateuch, and Clement's use of metaphor follows this important move. In order to present the bible as philosophy Clement turns to Philo's *Life of Moses*. This was his most important debt to Philo.

The theme of progression or migration rules the colourful story of Moses. Clement (1.22.150–1. 29.182) draws heavily on Philo in earlier sections, and begins from Numenius' account of Plato as Moses in Attic dialect. 'This means that Moses was a theologian and prophet, and, as some say, an interpreter of sacred laws' (1.22.150.4).<sup>24</sup>

Clement has taken a story from Philo and added another step in the progress to perfection, which progress is the theme of the story. Philo's account of philosophy is sufficiently fluid for Clement to take and modify his divisions. The first meaning covers Greek philosophy. The second meaning includes all ancient wisdom and 'barbarian philosophers'. Thirdly, philosophy studies the law and the interpretation of nature through the law. 'This is the authentic philosophy, the philosophy which Philo practises . . . exegesis of the sacred text, both as an activity and as embodied in resultant thought and doctrine'.<sup>25</sup>

24 He goes on to speak of Moses uniquely as a 'theologian', a word which Philo only uses twice in all his writings. Moses was educated in all Egyptian learning, including philosophy. He grew in wisdom and continued to learn when he was a shepherd. 'Moses then stands before us as a prophet, a legislator, skilled in military tactics and strategy, a politician, a philosopher' (1.24.158.1). He led his people through the desert so that they might learn one God and the discipline of endurance (1.24.160.5). So Moses is a giver of philosophy, which has four parts: historical, legislative, liturgical and theological. Theology is concerned with vision, great mysteries or metaphysics. Philo's four parts had been historical, legislative, liturgical and prophetic. The important thing for our exploration is that Clement now sees Moses as a *philosopher*, something which no modern reader would have guessed, and which was not in the citation of Philo. The idea is found earlier in Philo (VM 1.48), where Moses is always reading philosophy, memorising and practising it, and later (VM 2.1) where Moses is a philosopher-king. The true philosophy unites thoughts, words and deeds for the attainment of happiness (VM 2.212).

25 D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1986), 536.

Clement's account of philosophy is developed further. He identified the biblical message as the 'barbarian philosophy' and Moses as a philosopher. Clement spoke of philosophy in five senses. For him, philosophy, as dialectic or argument (6.18.162.5; Crito 46b), was necessary, because it would have to be used to prove that it was unnecessary.<sup>26</sup> As dogma, the word was used to describe Greek philosophy, which served the Greeks as the law served the Jews. Again, Clement spoke of philosophy to cover a corpus of all that the schools of philosophy had said well, teaching righteousness and pious knowledge (1.7.37.6). This dogma and ethic were prior to particular schools of philosophy, which had cut off part of its truth.

Finally, two terms take an important place in Clement's account: barbarian philosophy and true philosophy. The former commonly refers to the bible.<sup>27</sup> The barbarian philosophy, which Christians follow, is really perfect and true (2.2.5.1). It drives out all strife (8.1.1.2) and professes works not words (1.16.77.4). Although despised and neglected (1.18.89.2), the barbarian philosophy is indeed divine (1.20.99.1). It has its own writings (5.9.56.2), in which it prophesies in hidden ways and through symbols (2.1.1.2; 5.8.51.1). Understanding both the world of thought and the world of sense (5.14.93.4), it knows the only God and the virtue which is sufficient for happiness (5.14.96.5). Not all the names in it should be allegorised, but only those indicated by their context (5.9.58.6). This barbarian philosophy deals in metaphor, parable and enigma (6.15.128.1).

Frequently we find the theme that the Greeks stole their wisdom from the barbarian philosophy (5.14.134.1; 5.14.89.1). Scripture has pronounced Greeks to be thieves of the barbarian philosophy (2.1.1.1). Heraclitus learned from the barbarian philosophy of cleansing by fire (5.1.9.4). Plato was a pupil of the barbarian philosophy (paed 2.10.100.4) and learned there that all good men were mutual friends (5.14.95.2). The muse of poetry and Greek philosophy took over the idea of penalties after death from the barbarian philosophy (5.14.90.4). Indeed, all Greek wisdom may be proved to come from barbarian philosophy (5.14.140.2). On all these points, Philo had anticipated Clement.

For all the excellence of the barbarian philosophy, Clement has a higher truth which he specifically calls the 'true philosophy'. The true

26 See Aristotle, frag. 51 (Rose 3) (Alexander, *Commentarius in Topica*, 149. 11–15).

27 Clement is also happy to point out that the Greeks received their philosophy from extra-biblical barbarians (1.15.66.1), before he tells, with Philo's help, of the career of Moses the philosopher (1.23 and 24), and declares Plato an imitator of Moses (1.25).

philosophy is the true wisdom handed down by the son (1.18.90.1) and is really true (8.1.1). It is to be followed (7.16.98.5; 5.11.67.2). It trains the soul (1.6.33.1), and begets a ready, inquiring mind (1.5.32.4) in those who come home to it (6.11.89.1). John showed the type of the true philosophy to the Hebrews (paed 2.11.117.4). Thieves may imitate it (6.16.147.3) and Greeks uttered some of it, by good luck or accident (1.19.94.1). It remains the higher way, and the *Stromateis* are 'gnostic notes according to the true philosophy'. The true dialectic is mixed with the true philosophy; Clement has a place for philosophy as dogma which is mutually dependent on philosophy as dialectic.

The most thorough and perceptive treatment of Philo describes him as a philosophically oriented exegete of scripture.<sup>28</sup> His thought is centred not on Plato but on Moses, whose law is a copy of the law of nature and the authentic philosophy.<sup>29</sup> 'The task of the exegete, according to Philo, is to extract the philosophical ideas concealed in the text, not to use the commentary as a platform for his own reflections.'<sup>30</sup> In this sense Philo emerges as a philosophical exegete of scripture.<sup>31</sup>

Both Philo and Plato see the world as *genêtos*, something which has come into being, and which is modelled on an intellectual world, a *kosmos noêtos*. Philo sees Plato through the eyes of later Platonism and is therefore able to see him (like Numenius) as an Atticising Moses. The ideas of Middle Platonism were original to scripture. Moses is preferred to those who come later because what is old is truer than what is new; there were sages before Moses but they left no writings, so Moses has no rivals. There is no limit to Philo's admiration for Moses and his law, as he sees himself as an exegete of scripture which is the 'authentic philosophy'.<sup>32</sup> Philosophy, he says, is 'knowledge of the highest and oldest cause of the whole of reality' (virt 65), and this knowledge is what Jews find in their law. Moses can therefore be used as a test of what is the highest philosophy. Philo's philosophical training determines his idea of exegesis.<sup>33</sup> Yet he shows also the spirituality of the Psalms modified by philosophical values. Nearness to God is removal from the world of sense, the blessings gained are intellectual, and the progress of soul is towards knowledge and wisdom.

Philosophical exegesis is still exegesis. Since Philo is an exegete who writes in subjection to the biblical text with all its variety, he will be understood through exegetical themes. What are these themes? The most

<sup>28</sup> Runia, *Timaeus of Plato*, 544.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 535f.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 536.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 545.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 541.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

important is that of movement,<sup>34</sup> of spiritual migration from a material to a spiritual world, from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of Canaan, from the land of virtue to the city of God.<sup>35</sup> In his account of the migration of Abraham, Philo moves from the command to depart from country, family and father's house to the gifts of a new land, a great nation, blessing and exalted name. So 'the mind, gradually changing its place will arrive at the father of piety and holiness' (migr. 194). It moves from astrology to self-knowledge, whence it hopes to discern the father of all, who is so hard to trace and decipher. To reach the knowledge of God, 'it will stay no longer in Haran, the organs of sense, but withdraw into itself. For it is impossible that the mind whose course lies in the sensible rather than the mental should arrive at the contemplation of him that is' (migr 195). Having left Haran the mind travels through all branches of learning, 'reluctant to leave anything unexplored whether it be material or non-material' (migr. 216).

Clement and Philo are intellectual emigrants to different destinations. They use the words of philosophy with a new meaning which they find in Judaism or Christianity. From the Platonic philosophy they are fortified by the Platonic love of truth which follows the wind of the argument, discards the old and moves on to the new.

*Movement. The gentle law. The law and the virtues*  
(2.18.78–100; virt. 34–100).<sup>36</sup> Third 'long sequence'

The movement of the Christian philosophy could only be maintained if there were both consistency and genuine continuity between law and gospel. Marcionites denied this and pointed to the harshness of the law. Clement found in Philo argument for the humaneness of the law and the motif of progress or migration. For Clement, the law and the virtues are an earlier stage on the way to knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

Clement's purpose begins from polemic against Marcion – law and faith cannot be separated; Philo's defence of the law is useful to Clement's purpose. 'Does not the law then which conducts to Christ appear humane and kind? And is not the same God good and just from the beginning to

34 Cf. above, chapter 2.

35 V. Nikoprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie* (Leiden, 1977), 239.

36 There are thirty-two excerpts from Philo, virt. 34–100 on this theme.

37 'For Philo it is the unallegorized law that incorporates the totality of the virtues and that leads in a dynamic movement to knowledge. Virtues and knowledge, although distinguished, are at the same time interchangeable.' See van den Hoek, *Use of Philo*, 114.

the end as he deals fittingly with each generation to bring it to salvation?' (2.18.91.1).

Beyond the mass of detail, Philo moves to the central motif of his and Clement's ethics (2.18.80.5; virt. 8,9), which is assimilation to God. In connection with the same theme, Philo speaks of immortality; but Clement repeats Plato's *kata to dunaton* (Theaet. 176b) and adds 'mortal as we are' (perhaps to correct Philo's immortal longings).<sup>38</sup> Much Philonic detail is adduced to show, against Marcion, that the law which looks to Christ is humane and kind, proving that there is one God, who is both just and good (2.18.91.1). Here the contingent, narrative content which strengthens Clement's general argument does not consist of a single story: there are numerous examples from the law which prove its practical concern for specific human virtues. Repentance, Clement quotes from Philo, 'adjusts our lives from a state of derangement to a change for the better by these three things: mouth, heart and hands. These are symbols: the hands of action, the heart of volition, the mouth of speech' (2.19.97,1–98.1). Philo's account of those who repent, says Clement, is beautiful: 'You have chosen God today to be your God and the lord has chosen you today to be his people.'<sup>39</sup> For him who is eager to serve the One-who-is, being a suppliant, God adopts to himself' (2.19.98.1; including Philo, virt. 185). Clement's admiration follows Philo's note of divine reciprocity! The examples of Adam, Abraham and Noah enliven the argument (2.19.98f).

All is subject to Philo's and Clement's theme of the imitation of God as far as men may (2.19.97.1; virt. 165–168). As Mt 5:19 says, he is greatest in the kingdom who shall do and teach, 'imitating God by conferring like benefits; for God's gifts are for the common good' (2.19.97.2; virt. 171f). Philo is part of Clement's lengthy proof that Greek ethics came from Moses, that the true gnostic imitates God and in the end that Plato's chief good (assimilation to God) agrees with scripture, notably Paul. Clement, as before, affirms the excellence of Moses and calls for progress to perfection in Christ.

*Movement. Temple, vestments and the new creation (5.6.32–40).  
Fourth 'long sequence'*

At first glance, the fourth 'long sequence' confirms the despair of Mondésert, who insisted that Clement used Philo extensively on questions

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> It isolates the reciprocity which Clement holds to be central to God. See Part 2 below.

which are of minor interest to him and to us.<sup>40</sup> My review of van den Hoek's work claimed that 'Unless someone can produce a convincing account of Clement which gives pride of place to Hagar and Sarah, Moses, law and virtue, temple vestments and high priest, we remain with the puzzle.'<sup>41</sup> For me that puzzle has now been resolved.

Philo uses the temple and vestments to describe the universal rule of God over the cosmos. Clement transforms this account by giving sovereignty to Christ. 'The golden candlestick has another enigma of the sign of Christ. . .by casting light at many times and in many ways on those who believe and hope in him' (5.6.35.1). The 360 bells proclaim the magnificent epiphany of the saviour; the cap that points upward indicates his regal power (5.6.37.4f). The breastplate and ephod indicate that all is subjected to Christ (5.6.38.2); the son is God and saviour, first principle of all things (5.6.38.6f); the law and the prophets are placed below him (5.6.38.5). Clement 'remodels Philo's cosmology in a Christological, Gnostic and eschatological sense; in the various concluding allegories there is a continuous concern with the history of salvation'.<sup>42</sup>

#### METHOD. PARABLE, ALLEGORY AND DIALECTIC

Philo anticipates parts of Clement's 'true dialectic' but lacks his all-important redefinition in terms of prophecy and economy. Allegory does not discount the text but is the only way to discover its ideas, which lead on to the vision of God. Philo and Clement use allegory (or metaphor) in a way which divides and joins the concepts presented through the text. The working of a symbol can be illuminated by Philo through the categories of Aristotle. From similar words, the symbol joins the biblical concept to another concept in which there is partial similarity. Indeed, the biblical word may be joined to many other concepts by a synthetic symbol.<sup>43</sup> As well as joining by symbols, allegory divides (*diairesis*). For example, in husbandry we divide the farmer from the labourer who works the land, the shepherd from the man who guards the stock, the horseman from the rider, the soul from the body, the mind from the irrational part of the soul, rationality from evil passions. Different ideas are divided from their opposite and brought under the one idea of rationality. 'The

40 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 183.

41 *JThS* 41 (1990), 655.

42 Van den Hoek, *Use of Philo*, 146.

43 I. Christiansen, *Die Technik der allegorischen Auslegungswissenschaft bei Philon von Alexandrien* (Tübingen, 1969), 98.

movement to the lowest and highest Idea in the system of diairetically ordered concepts defines the total coherence of this interpretation of Philo'.<sup>44</sup>

According to Philo, the soul is stripped bare of its encumbrances 'in order that first the soul should be seen in its nakedness without the covering with which false and idle conjectures invest it, and then be divided as the limbs demand' (sacr. 84 LCL). Philo then proceeds with dialectic or noetic exegesis. The purpose of the division of the sacrifice into its parts and limbs is that the soul:

be not confused by vague, wholesale, indiscriminate ideas of things, but may divide and classify such things as come before it, and look closely into each so that it may make its scrutiny with strictest care. And so too we must train our reason, which so long as it flows in disordered current can only create obscurity, but when divided into its proper heads, with the arguments and demonstrations suited to each, will like a living animal be compacted of parts complete in themselves, and made into a harmonious whole.

(sacr. 85 LCL)

This is the tradition of diairetic exegesis and dialectic into which Clement enters.<sup>45</sup>

Dialectic may move from the particulars below to the universal above, or it may move down from the universal to the particulars. Allegory is concerned with participation of forms in a higher form or of concepts in a synthetic idea.<sup>46</sup> Allegory unfolds the plurality of concepts which are wrapped up in the word of scripture; it begins by setting beside the word of scripture a similar but more general concept. For this reason, allegory is at the same time a unity and a duality, a *hen* and a *duas*. One part of the allegory belongs to the physical realm (*sômata*) in opposition to the spiritual realm.<sup>47</sup> Philo's account is parallel to Clement's account of metaphor and dialectic, as examined in the last chapter.

As divine revelation, holy scripture is free from all deceit and falsehood. It reveals divine and spiritual things. However, allegory is needed as a method to lead from scripture to the knowledge of divine things. This it does through the help of God. Allegory links the limitations of human knowledge with the clear goal of divine revelation. Certainly, human ways

44 Christiansen, *Technik*, 133.

45 In Philo's *de agricultura*, we find a good example of the technique. Here one idea extends through many individual concepts. Though these are many and separate, they are joined together by the symbol so that an *idea* is understood both as the one concept which holds the many together and as the many concepts into which it can be divided.

46 Christiansen, 'Der dritte Art der Ideenschau', in *Technik*, 133.

47 The relation of the two members of this opposition is recognised as '*heteron-heteron*'.

of knowing are always touched by falsehood, but God has given in the logos of Moses a way of knowing that is free from every falsehood. God gave to Moses the vision of reality, access to the world of forms.

Because Moses gained this supreme knowledge, he is able to offer it to men in the true logos of holy scripture. Those who love and seek God may find it here if they follow the method of allegory. In scripture, God offers a knowledge of reality without contradiction. From the knowledge of the created cosmos as the scriptures describe it, man rises to knowledge of the spiritual cosmos, of the world of ideas and beyond this world to the vision of God. In the vision of God, *nous* finds its goal of certain knowledge of the divine.<sup>48</sup>

#### CLEMENT AND THE NEW CREATION

Clement's evangelical use of the New Testament points him to all humanity.<sup>49</sup> In this wider world he finds criticism levelled against his gospel which is harsher than that faced by Philo. Therefore his apologetic is more philosophical, argumentative and complex than that of Philo.<sup>50</sup>

This may be seen in the program of his works. The *Protrepticus* is an invitation to Greeks to move from their religion through philosophers and prophets to the perfection of Christ. The *Paedagogus* describes the Christian life in the world, moving far beyond the law of Moses. The *Stromateis* depict the true philosophy which begins from the barbarian philosophy of Moses and moves with the help of Christ through the true dialectic of scripture to God. It then defends faith against philosophers and shows that assimilation to God is found in the imitation of Christ. Against heresies it shows their illogicality and immorality. It links martyrdom to the highest knowledge of God. The way to the mysteries of divine knowledge finds its climax in the perfect Christian sage.<sup>51</sup>

Because in both Philo and Clement, Greek metaphysics helped to make Jewish and Christian monism intelligible, the difference between the two accounts is all the more striking. Clement's Paul/John theology

48 *Ibid.*, 171. See also my 'Philo and Clement: quiet conversion and noetic exegesis', *StPhilo* 10 (1998), especially 117–24. Both Philo and Clement have a complex scriptural hermeneutic which resists compression.

49 Where he begins. See above, chapter 2.

50 1.8. We must obey the best logos (Crito 46b). Men are deprived of good unwillingly through theft, witchcraft and force (Rep. 412e–413a).

51 On the way Clement tackles the anti-Marcionite and anti-Gnostic problems already mentioned (faith and logic, free will and determinism, the importance of the natural world) which are the tip of the iceberg that separates him from Philo.

cannot stand without the economy of the gospel. Only the summing-up of all things by Christ makes the one first principle true. Human existence is not entirely good and rational but is flawed by death, sin and the irrational; however, the first principle had entered and transformed human history, turning sunset to sunrise. For Clement, this divine initiative made monotheism credible. God was the first principle of all being and giver of all life, because of his saving act in Jesus Christ. Certainly he was the creator; but the chaos of sin had perverted the original design of Philo's creator. The Platonic world of the divine mind existed in the saving work of God in Christ. His new creation was the ultimate reality. What lies behind the visible world and the metaphor of scripture is the cross and resurrection, the kingdom which is Christ.<sup>52</sup> Creation and redemption are joined because the maker is also the remaker, and all is summed up in Christ.

#### LANGUAGE OF HOPE. ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE

For Philo, Moses was the law-giver and supreme revealer of God; for Clement, Moses was a prophet of hope who pointed to the final truth of Christ. Philo was important to Clement because he had already *joined* biblical and philosophical 'language-games' together. As a rule, the illocutionary force of Philo was apologetic and traditional, while that of Clement was kerygmatic and evangelical.<sup>53</sup>

Did they share any intellectual qualities? To one of his interpreters, Clement's four key qualities are audacity and reserve, particularity and passion.<sup>54</sup> His intellectual daring unites, under John and Paul, the whole bible with Plato and offers a higher way than paganism (*Protrepticus*) and Gnosticism (*Stromateis*). His reserve is evident at many points where he begins 'I think'; it does not qualify the audacity of his enterprise but indicates a consistent rationality. However sweeping his central move, it

<sup>52</sup> Cf. H. de Lubac, *Histoire et esprit: l'intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène* (Paris, 1950), 294.

<sup>53</sup> Yet even here the generalisation has limits, for Philo writes of the offering of first fruits, 'To those who cling to the old-world days with their fabled past and have not realised the instantaneous and timeless power of God, it is a lesson bidding them accept ideas that are new and fresh and in the vigour of youth. It bids them feed no more on effete fables. . .but rather receive in full and generous measure new, fresh, blessed thoughts from the ever-ageless God' (sacr 76 LCL). There is no place for rigid traditionalism. 'Yet when God causes young shoots of self-inspired wisdom to spring up within the soul, the knowledge that comes from teaching must straightway be abolished and swept off. . .God's scholar, God's pupil, God's disciple . . .cannot any more suffer the guidance of men' (sacr 77 LCL).

<sup>54</sup> According to Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 266.

does not offer general answers to every question. He is undecided on many issues.<sup>55</sup> Clement's particularity appears in his concern for the detail of Christian behaviour. There is no 'Love, and do what you will!' but precise instruction for every aspect of Christian conduct. Clement's passion is for Christ. 'Show yourself always a partner of Christ who sends God's light from heaven. Let Christ be to you continual and unceasing joy' (*To the newly baptised*).<sup>56</sup>

Philo's achievement covers similar points. In joining Moses and Plato, Philo's audacity pioneers the way for Clement. On the other hand, he attempts less. He does not have to handle the divine duality of John nor the variety of the biblical economy outside the Pentateuch. Further, he is normally writing a commentary where the verses impose a simplicity of order not available to a biblical theologian like Clement. Secondly, he shows the same reserve as does Clement, indicating alternate views with the word *isôs*. On the third point, while he is concerned for the particularity of the Mosaic law, he does not provide the rich detail of daily life which we see in Clement. Finally, he is passionate in his loyalty to one God and the law. But the piety of the Pentateuch is far from Paul and John. Clement hopes that the Jew may turn from *the things* he has believed to *him whom* he has not believed (2.1.2.1).

A difference in starting-point is in the concept of philosophy in the two writers.<sup>57</sup> Both possessed the dogmatic approach to Plato which we find in later Platonism; both are prisoners of their time. Clement, however, went further and saw philosophy as argument. The question 'Should one philosophise?' was only capable of an affirmative answer, for philosophy consisted of argument and not merely of dogma. Therefore, said Clement, when one begins to give arguments for or against philosophy in answer to the question, one has already, willy-nilly, begun to philosophise. So Clement argues with an energy not found in Philo. At some points his Platonism is purely dogmatic, a set of opinions; but in face of a variety of opposition, he argues strenuously.

In contrast, it was said of Philo that, 'however, there is no question that he lacks both a talent and a sense of the need for argument'. Philo either approves or rejects. Sometimes discussions may be borrowed from others and sometimes broken off because Philo cannot see the point of them.

55 Völker speaks of his tendency to wobble – *schwanken*. He makes the same criticism of Philo in his *Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandrien* (Leipzig, 1938). See below, Conclusion, page 274.

56 O. Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, ed. O. Stählin GCS, vol. III, 222.

57 See above, n 26. Aristotle, frag. 51 (Rose 3).

Philo's lack of argued criticism is evident, for 'he shows no trace of the combative attitude which Christian apologists were to adopt later'.<sup>58</sup> Clement argues persistently, defending the use of faith by philosophical argument. Philosophers like Celsus attacked faith as logically spurious. Philo knew nothing of this problem; he recognised the faith of Abraham (Gen. 15:6) but he neither gave it the pre-eminence which Paul and Clement were to give it nor did he justify it philosophically. Clement's account of knowledge joins truth in a flow of argument which is never still. While Philo has invented and passed on to Clement a new language, he was not troubled by the logical objections which concerned Clement.<sup>59</sup> The relation between Philo and Clement will continue to puzzle all who explore it, for no one can deny either the achievement of Philo or the radical transformation which takes place when Clement uses his ideas.

#### LITERARY PROBLEMS

When we have found our way through the ideas of Philo and Clement, literary problems remain. Why did Clement use Philo without acknowledgment? Clement does not mention Philo except in four places. Philo's accounts of Hagar and Sarah (1.5.31) and of the life of Moses (1.23.153.1; 2.19.101) are acknowledged. He calls him the Pythagorean (1.15.72.4; 2.19.100.3). Philo shows that great natures, bare of passion, sometimes hit the mark in matters of truth.<sup>60</sup>

Unacknowledged citation (as in the *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus) was a common practice in Clement's time; citation could omit details of authorship and be worked into the framework of conversation.<sup>61</sup> The *Deipnosophistai*<sup>62</sup> illuminate the world of Clement.<sup>63</sup> Clement's *Paedagogus* can be understood in the context of the life which they describe and his lists of citations from secular authors show his conformity with the literary style of his time. 'Ancient authors often cited each other inaccurately through misunderstanding or carelessness.'<sup>64</sup> It is often impossible to

58 E. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1908), 315.

59 For this reason he can be more lucid. See J. C. M van Winden, 'Quotations from Philo in Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*', *VigChr* 32 (1978), 209. Clement's adaptation of Philo sometimes lacks Philo's lucidity.

60 See above, chapter 4 page 85. Cf. Runia, *Philo and the Church fathers*, 75: 'Clement is not trying to conceal Philo's Jewishness.'

61 C. Collard, *Athenaeus, the Epitome, Eustathius and quotations from tragedy*, RFIC (1969), 157.

62 Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, with an English translation by C. B. Gulick (7 vols.), LCL (London and Cambridge, MA, 1927-41).

63 I am grateful to the late A. Dale Trendall for comments on the *Deipnosophistai*.

64 R. W. Sharples and D. W. Minter, 'Theophrastus on fungi. Inaccurate citations', *JHS* 103 (1983), 154.

distinguish between inexact citations from extant works and citations from works which are now lost.

Clement is concerned in the *Stromateis* to save from oblivion his Christian teachers whom he distinguishes by geographical location but not by name at the beginning of the *Stromateis* (I.I.II.IF). He shares a common tradition of noetic exegesis with them and Philo.<sup>65</sup>

Clement's *Stromateis* are written for Christian teachers. To what extent is he, like Philo, dependent upon the earlier teaching of the schools of Alexandria? Bousset argued for the dependence of both writers on the learning of their schools:<sup>66</sup> Philo used, as sources, expositions of biblical text or biblical words which were much closer to Greek rationalism than he himself could ever be.<sup>67</sup> Clement also depended on the teaching of the catechetical school of Alexandria which was much more Gnostic in its orientation than he was.<sup>68</sup> Bousset's account of Clement's school tradition is not convincing. For this tradition is opposed to the teaching of Clement, and he moves away from it to an opposite position.<sup>69</sup> Since both Philo and Clement acknowledge debts to their predecessors, some background of school tradition must be acknowledged. It is probable that Clement knew some of his Philonic material through this source.

However, Clement draws on the text of Philo rather than on his memory of the tradition. Clement has used collections of excerpts which, with some secretarial help, he made himself.<sup>70</sup> From these notes he produces first a private draft and then a work for publication.<sup>71</sup> We may envisage the preservation of Philo's works by his own disciples until one of them, before the destruction of the Jewish community, converted to Christianity and brought the library with him.<sup>72</sup> Philo's hermeneutic and his library passed from the private school which succeeded him to a Christian school. The preservation of Philo's works at Alexandria is a remarkable achievement, and Pantaenus may well take the credit for this.<sup>73</sup>

65 See my 'Philo and Clement', 108–24.

66 W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandrien und Rom* (Göttingen, 1915).

67 *Ibid.*, 153.

68 *Ibid.*, 267.

69 'Dennoch ist hier allmählich eine *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος* erfolgt; von der dualistischen, pessimistischen, weltfeindlichen Gnosis zu der weltaufgeschlossenen, echt hellenischen, im Grunde optimistischen Gnosis eines Clemens.' *Ibid.*, 270.

70 See T. Dorandi, *Le stylet et la tablette dans le secret des auteurs antiques* (Paris, 2000).

71 T. Dorandi, 'Den Autoren über die Schulter geschaut, Arbeitsweise und Autographie bei den antiken Schriftstellern', *ZPE* 87 (1991), 32.

72 G. E. Sterling and D. W. Minter, 'The school of sacred laws: the social setting of Philo's treatises', *VigChr* 53 (1999), 163–4.

73 Van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School', 86.

Yet for Clement, oral teaching was superior to writing; he has to begin the *Stromateis* with a defence of writing as a method of teaching.<sup>74</sup> Oral sources and the school tradition will explain some elusive passages of Clement which might equally derive from different parts of Philo: 5.8.52.5 could be traced to somn. 2.267f, agric. 82f, or leg. alleg. 2.99, while 5.6.33 could depend on VM 2.81, opif. 62, plant. 133, or migr. 201.<sup>75</sup> These isolated references, originally from Philo, had become part of the mental resources of Clement's teacher and had been assimilated to varying degrees.<sup>76</sup>

#### CONCLUSION. HISTORY OF IDEAS AND CHILDREN'S PLAYPENS

Käsemann once scornfully described different 'schools' of theology (Barthian, Bultmannian) as children's playpens, which were useful only until a theologian had learned to stand and walk by himself. While the desire to classify different thinkers as belonging to a school has the virtue of simplification, we have seen how a homogenisation of Philo and Clement will not work. Clement did not follow Philo mechanically; similarities and differences are both important. This result is useful for the history of ideas, because when someone accepts, without remainder, another's conclusions he ceases to be a thinker and opts for the children's playpen with its supporting rail.

Both Clement and Philo were original and passionate thinkers. Clement's openness was selective, not blind. No one apart from Christ had possessed all truth; but all were illumined by the dawning light of Christ. We should not expect total coherence between Clement and Philo any more than we expect it between Clement and his other sources: Plato, Stoics, Epicurus, Homer, Sophocles, Euripides and hundreds of others. For Clement, the members of truth had been torn apart. Only Christ could bring them together, and they must be loosened from their present context. Clement's use of Philo is similar to his use of other ancient writers. Philo had the singular interest that he had joined scripture and philosophy, but he was one of a multitude who had grasped a part of the truth. Apart from scripture, all writers have a double status. They belong to the past. They also belong to the present for, Clement insists, the

74 This is one reason the *Stromateis* is the *Didascalus*; for Clement did not need to defend the writing of the *Protrepticus* or the *Paedagogus*. See Osborn, 'Teaching and writing', 342–3.

75 Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 165f.

76 As indicated by van den Hoek.

dawning light of Christ shines on the monuments of the past. Through this light they are brought into the present and renewed to life. They become living members of the body of truth. As rational images of the true logos, Clement converses with them and joins their broken lights. Philo past and Philo present, Plato past and Plato present, are part of his intellectual world.

Philosophies do not join themselves in easy, predictable ways.<sup>77</sup> An agent is necessary, and the complexity of the move is such that a passionate agent is needed.<sup>78</sup> Hegel and Marx used a common dialectical view of history to reach widely different conclusions. Marx wrote in anger, just as Philo and Clement wrote with passion. Philo joins Greek *paideia* and Jewish apologetic to declare the teaching of Moses as the authentic philosophy. Clement uses Greek learning and kerygmatic zeal to declare the true philosophy of Christ. Their passion was needed to carry them from oracle to philosophy, beyond the less demanding half-way mark of theosophy. Both Philo and Clement followed the Platonic way until the 'beltistos logos' was reached.<sup>79</sup>

There is no doubt that the joining of Athens and Jerusalem in Philo and Clement provided a major element of western culture. Philosophy, language, art and society show traces of common influence. However, it was not a simple matter. Wolfson was right to see the novelty and importance of the move which Philo made in joining bible and philosophy.<sup>80</sup> He was wrong in thinking that those who later made the same move drew their Platonism through Philo. Clement goes direct to Plato and also knows Middle Platonism; he cites Plato twice as often as he cites Philo. Clement's commitment to Plato was stronger than that of Philo, for Clement believed that philosophy was to the Greeks what the law was to the Jews.

Further, Clement was drawn by Philo's powerful images and 'the profundities of poetic influence cannot be reduced to source study'.<sup>81</sup>

77 Books do not write authors; authors write books. See Conclusion, n 16, page 279.

78 See A. Giddens, *Central problems in social theory* (London, 1979), 132, for Marx's strong rejection of Hegel's claim that negativity is to be found in the essence of the real. Despite the popular picture of Marx's dependence, Marx insists that Hegel was afactual and speculative, ignorant of the real history of man. See K. Marx, *Early writings*, ed. T. B. Bottomore, 198 (New York, 1964).

79 Gfrörer argued that Philo stopped half-way and should be considered a theosophist. A. F. Gfrörer, *Philo und die jüdisch-alexandrinische Theosophie*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1831). Runia's work has shown the inadequacy of this conclusion. Runia, *Timaeus of Plato*.

80 H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: foundations of religious philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1948).

81 H. Bloom, *The anxiety of influence* (New York, 1973), 7.

Between two writers there is a dialectic of influence which may include amazement and delight. 'For the poet is condemned to learn his profoundest yearning through an awareness of *other selves*. The poem is *within* him, yet he experiences the shame and splendour of *being found by* poems – great poems – *outside* him.'<sup>82</sup> As with poetic influence, so Clement's use of Philo 'always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation'.<sup>83</sup> It is at this deeper level that we must look for influence, not in 'the wearisome industry of source-hunting, of allusion-counting, an industry that will soon touch apocalypse anyway, when it passes from scholars to computers'.<sup>84</sup> The tension between a thinker's acceptance and rejection of another thinker means that philosophic or poetic influence is always an oxymoron.<sup>85</sup> Clement rejects as much of Philo as he accepts; that is the way poetic and philosophic influence work.

To passion and poetry we add humanism and wonder. Clement quotes Philo to the effect that great natures, bare of passion, sometimes hit on the truth.<sup>86</sup> He saw in Philo not a rival but one of the many who had said something well. It did not matter where and why Philo said the things which Clement appropriated. The beauty of his imagery and his sense of divine mystery moved Clement. As for Justin, it did not matter who had said something; the only consideration was whether it was true. Doxographical 'stamp-collecting', mere listing of parallels in Philo and Clement, may miss the point. Clement found in Philo the wonder of the elusive God and the richness of the history of Moses. Wonder was for Clement the beginning of knowledge and, time and again, Philo pointed to the wonder of scripture.

82 *Ibid.*, 26.

83 *Ibid.*, 30.

84 *Ibid.*, 31.

85 *Ibid.*, 31.

86 'Great natures, bare of passion, somehow hit the mark in matters of truth.' This view is attributed by Clement to 'Philo the Pythagorean'. The words are not found in Philo. Yet it is one of the four occasions when Clement names Philo as a source.



## PART II

### *Divine Reciprocity*

#### INTRODUCTION TO PART II: THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE, RECIPROCITY AND PROLIFERATION

The centre of Clement's understanding of God is the reciprocity of father and son. This is the first ellipse, with the two foci being father and son. The second ellipse has, as its foci, God and the human person, whose reciprocity culminates in vision 'face to face'. Finally, the third ellipse is the reciprocity of man with man in godlike forgiveness. These themes spring from John (e.g. 15 and 17) and 1 John 4.

Clement's fascination with the idea of reciprocity is evident in *Stromateis* VII where he quotes two jokes. In ridicule of superstition, he points to the alleged miracle of a mouse eating through a sack and a second miracle of a snake coiled around a pestle. Arcesilaus had pointed out that it would have been more of a miracle if the sack had eaten the mouse; Diogenes had similarly claimed that it would have been a greater miracle for the snake to have been erect and the pestle to have been coiled around it (7.4.24, 25).

Clement's first reciprocity is the relation between the son and the father; from the son, the sage learns of the higher cause, the father of the universe (7.1.2). A parallel problem was found in Platonists like Moderatus and Alcinous, who had a duplicity in their first principle. The one was both simple and transcendent, and multiple and inclusive. Plotinus later separates the two divine minds. Clement does not. The son is most perfect and holy, approaching most closely to the almighty being of the father. He is the light of the father (7.2.5). He was the father's counsellor before the foundation of the world, the wisdom in whom God rejoiced (Prov. 8:22–30). As the power of God, the original word of the father, he precedes all created things (7.2.7). The universe is set out in ranks below him (7.2.9). He is the face of the God of Jacob in that he preached and taught concerning the father and, because he was the exact

image of the father's glory, was rightly able to teach concerning the only God. No one knew the Almighty but the son and those to whom the son revealed him (7.10.58). Faith in the father must be joined to faith in the son; only those animals which divide the hoof can be clean animals. Understanding will only come to those who begin from the first reciprocity between the father and the son (7.18.109).

Clement's second reciprocity or ellipse begins from his adoption of Plato's 'The blame is on the one who chooses. God is without blame' (Rep. 617e; Tim. 42d). God and man are distinct foci of an ellipse. The complete Christian by his free choice lives as one whose mind and heart, whose theory and activity, are concerned with the process of becoming like God (Theaet. 176ab) so that he will one day become divine; his prime concern is to be a lover of God.<sup>1</sup> Clement took over not only 'assimilation' (*homoiôsis*) but also the Stoic 'appropriation' (*oikeiôsis*), 'imitation' (*mîmêsis*) and 'following' (*akolouthia*). From the side of the saviour, the same love reaches out to all from his watch-tower (Pol. 272e). For all men are his and he is universally present to all. Some become his servants, some go further to become friends (7.2.5). He rules and directs all things by his providence in a universe which is his household and home. In this providential rule, those who believe are joined to the word who rules all (7.2.9). Like Plato's magnet in the *Ion* they are drawn upwards (Ion 533–6). From the beginning, virtue has always been a matter of choice for man, and he climbs upwards to perfection in Christ drawn by the power of divine loveliness (7.2.10).<sup>2</sup>

Clement's third ellipse, the relation of man to man, flows on from the second ellipse. Christ laid down his life which is equal in value to the whole world and asks in return that we should do the same for each other. From this reciprocal compact with the saviour flows the love of man for man.<sup>3</sup>

The first goal in life for the complete Christian is to hold communion with God through the great high priest and to be made like this high priest in service to others. Likeness to God (Rep. 613ab) is marked by gentleness, kindness and a noble devotion (7.3.13). Both communion and

1 Assimilation is supported by the idea of *oikeiôsis*. See below, chapter II, page 241.

2 Those who do not make the choice are without excuse, for God leads both Greek and barbarian from their preparation in philosophy or the law to his short-cut to perfection, that of salvation through faith.

3 G. Quispel, 'Love thy brother', *Ancient Society* 1 (1970), 83–93, 'We dare to suggest that this ideal of brotherly love was one of the features which distinguished Christianity from other mystery religions and contributed to the ultimate victory of Christianity' (84).

likeness to God are Platonic themes transformed by the theme of the imitation of Christ. In this relation to God, holiness joins man to his God in a unity that cannot be broken; the lusts that divide the human person must be discarded and a life of *apatheia* springs from faith (7.3.14). The link of man with God is not achieved by sacrifices or honour but only by a life of virtue (7.3.15). Likeness to God means that the just man becomes a third divine image and the son is the one saviour individually to each and in common to all (7.3.16). Here Platonic participation defines the divine indwelling of the believer as declared by John. Submission to God shows itself as a response to his salvation in obedience and faith. Such obedience and faith is friendship with God (7.3.21).

The relation of reciprocity with God endures when all else has failed. When Peter saw his wife on the way to execution, he spoke her name and told her affectionately to remember (fix her mind on) the lord.<sup>4</sup> Only these relationships could have meaning at such a time (7.11.63). The cost of discipleship can be martyrdom, but those who are friends of God 'willingly obey God's call, owing to their love to God, not for the sake of the prizes of the contests, since they prefer no other aim to doing that which is well pleasing to God' (7.11.67). This is only possible because love has joined man to God as friend and son. He goes to God in whom he finds his rest (7.11.68). Life has meaning within this love between God and man. The sage would rather pray and fail than succeed without prayer, for all his life is prayer, reciprocity and communion with God (7.12.73). He hangs upon the words 'no longer do I call you servants, but friends' (7.12.79).

Elements of Middle Platonism helped to explain the reciprocity of father and son by a twofold account of the divine mind. Other elements helped to explain the reciprocity of God and man by the relations of participation, assimilation and imitation. They clarified the account of Irenaeus. Both on economy and participation Irenaeus had more to say than Clement. Fragments of Platonism gave to Clement a clearer account of what was already in Irenaeus.

The simple believer may achieve some of the things which belong to the sage, but he cannot achieve them all. Through love, the believer must rise to achieve perfect manhood, the measure of Christ's stature, being made like God and equal to the angels (7.14.84). This is the perfection to which the lord calls ('be perfect as your father is perfect') and it is marked

4 *Memnêso tou kuriou*. See below, chapter 12, page 264.

by the forgiveness of others' sins,<sup>5</sup> the forgetting of injuries and being habitually free from passion. Human perfection never equals that of God, despite what the Stoics have said. It is impossible for anyone to become as perfect as God. But the father wishes that we should reach the perfection which follows the obedience of the gospel, in a life of piety and aspiration (7.14.88). Whoever obeys the lord becomes perfected in the likeness of his teacher and becomes 'a god, while still moving about in the flesh' (7.16.101) because he has found reciprocation with God, all of which goes back to reciprocation within God.

5 Cf. Irenaeus. See my 'Love of enemies and recapitulation', *VigChr* 54 (2000), 12–31.

## CHAPTER 5

### *God beyond God and God within God: The known centre of the unknown God*

Clement's work, which declares the gospel to the Greeks, includes a statement of Christian belief in one God, father and son. He finds, in the scriptural account of God and logos, problems of coherence. He turns to philosophy for illumination and commends his composite account as prior and superior to philosophy. He is at once exegete and apologist, using philosophy to elucidate and promote his biblical theology. Exegesis should be added to the other uses of Plato which have been found in Clement: propaganda for Christianity, defence of the Christian position, attack on heretics, comfort in face of martyrdom and the ascent to knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Problems about one God were evident in the prologue to John: God the father is beyond knowledge (1:18). God the knowable only begotten is in the father (1:18). The word was with God and the word was God (1:1).<sup>2</sup> In eighteen of the most influential verses of the New Testament we have God beyond, within and beside God.

#### GOD BEYOND GOD, GOD WITHIN GOD, GOD BESIDE GOD

In paed 1.8.71.1, Clement rounds off a discussion of the goodness and justice of God. His final proof of God's goodness and justice is that God is good, God is one, God is just in the balanced relation between father and son. He quotes Jn 17:21–23, which includes the prayer that 'they all may be one as you father are in me and I in you'. God is within God and God is beside God. Clement comments, 'God is one and beyond the one

1 As set out by Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung*, chapters 3–7.

2 The translation of *pros* as 'with' or 'among' is clearly justified by C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John* (London, 1978), 155. As an example, Mk 6:3 is quoted. However, the French translation as 'vers', which has some acceptance, gives strong support to the relationality which is important for Clement.

and above the monad itself.<sup>3</sup> Clement uses something which has been ‘well said’ (cf. 1.7.37.6) by philosophers concerning the puzzle of unity to express his understanding of God. What is beyond the one is the divine being, addressed in the same prayer of Jn 17 as ‘thou’,<sup>4</sup> a personal pronoun used as a demonstrative, pointing to the real, only God: he who was, who is and who will be. This God who is (*ho ôn*) spoke to Moses at the bush. Moreover, this same being, the only God, is ‘righteous/just’, as the prayer of Jn 17 continues:

Father, those whom you have given me, I will that they also may be where I am, with you, so that they may behold the glory which you have given me in that you loved me before the foundation of the world. *Just father*, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. I have revealed to them your name, and I will reveal it.

(Jn 17:24–26)

Here the divine identity is displayed, and the will of the son (*thelô*) is expressed strikingly to the father. There is a reciprocity which the fact of the prayer indicates. At the same time, the prayer reiterates that father and son are one. The justice of the father is that of one who visits the sins of the fathers on the children of those who hate him and who shows kindness to those who love him (Ex. 20:5–6). He places some on his right and some on his left.

‘While God as father is simply called good, God as the son and logos in the father, because of their relation of reciprocal love, is called “just”: a name of the power which is measured equally’ (*ek tês pros allêla scheseôs agapês isotêti memetrêmenon onoma dunameôs*) (paed 1.8.71.3). It is written ‘he will judge a man according to his works’, for God has revealed to us Jesus, a good balance of justice through which we also came to know God as from a balance whose scales were exactly equal.<sup>5</sup>

In this one passage, Clement talks about God beyond God, God within God, God beside God. Where could Clement find clarification for his account of God? The invisible transcendent God is seen from the God within him. Can philosophy help him with this puzzle? Greek philosophy

3 The word *epekeina*, goes back to Plato’s account of the form of the good which is the cause of being but beyond being (*Rep.* 509b). Clement’s later account of the ascent to God moves by abstraction to bare unity and then goes beyond to the magnitude of Christ through whom the apophatic apprehension of God is reached.

4 Cf. Justin on names of God as *prosrêseis* (2 apol. 6.1f).

5 The balance of the scales indicates the equality of father and son and is important for the development of Christian doctrine.

had been concerned with the problem of the one and the many and the problem of the one and the mind. There were multitudinous ambiguities. The clearest account ran back to the *Parmenides* of Plato, where the ambiguity of 'one' was set out. The persistence of this ambiguity into Plotinus has been readily acknowledged.

As indicated earlier, my first examination of Clement took the *Parmenides* as the clue to his whole thought, where the relation between the *hen* and the *hen panta* explained Clement's account of God, goodness and truth.<sup>6</sup> The book finished with the claim that Christ brought both together, so that in Clement's words 'both are one, namely God', but did not elucidate this claim. A general survey of Middle Platonism had shown the widespread presence of simple and complex unity, but did not acknowledge the differences between the two terms in their different settings.

Later, I noted the differences between Middle Platonists and the importance of a metaphysic of mind (*Geistmetaphysik*).<sup>7</sup> The problems facing early Christian theology were: is there one God who is creator of this ambiguous world; how is one God both father and son; how is one God the *archê* of being, truth and goodness? The answers to the first and third questions were possible only through an answer to the second question. God was credible as a creator and first principle only if he were both father and son, for God could be believed only if he had redeemed as well as created the world. The evil of the world was inconsistent with one God unless he had in Christ begun to set right what had gone wrong. Yet the question remained: how is God father and son?

This chapter, 'God beyond God and God within God', is devoted to divine duality in Platonism as parallel to Clement's account of the relation between father and son. The key statement is Jn 1:18. 'No one has seen God at any time. God, the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the father, has revealed him.' Clement comments, 'He gives the name of "bosom" to the invisible and ineffable character of God. This is why some have called God "abyss" (*buthos*) because he envelopes and contains in his bosom all things, while remaining himself inaccessible and without limit' (5.12.81.3). God is an endless and bottomless sea.<sup>8</sup>

6 Osborn, *Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria*.

7 *The emergence of Christian theology* (Cambridge, 1993).

8 See below for two kinds of infinity in God, chapter 5, page 126.

## MIDDLE PLATONISM; MIDDLE NOT MUDDLE

Middle Platonism turns the puzzle into an account of two gods, and this is where it is interesting for Clement. Those who speak of the One may also be designated as Neo-Pythagorean. The movement begins with an extreme monism. For Eudorus of Alexandria,<sup>9</sup> the One is the ground of all being<sup>10</sup> and above attributes of any kind. Then follow monad and dyad, as opposites, the former being good, limit and form, the latter being bad, limitless and formless matter. There is a tendency to greater unity:

The postulation of a supreme, utterly transcendent First Principle, which is also termed God, is a most fruitful development for later Platonism. . . The One is the ground of all existence; it is also the causal principle of Matter. This doctrine of Eudorus', which contradicts not only Old Pythagoreanism but also strict Platonism, leads to a monism more extreme than that favoured by later Middle Platonism.<sup>11</sup>

A monism which includes but transcends Plato's Parmenidean puzzle is relevant for later Christian tradition; God would not be God if he were not the source of all being and the cause of matter. But the dualism of Middle Platonism will still prove useful for an account of the God beyond and the God within God.

Philo<sup>12</sup> resembles the monism of Eudorus and identifies the One with the God of the Old Testament, who was revealed to Moses at the burning bush as *to on* and *ho ôn*. The monad is also described as the incorporeal image of God,<sup>13</sup> who is beyond the monad and above all. His transcendence requires the beginning of negative theology, for God is *akatonomas-tos, arrhêtos, kata pasas ideas akatalêptos*.<sup>14</sup> The stars are not gods, there is only one God and lord of all; on him alone depends the preservation of all things.<sup>15</sup> Because he is one and indivisible, God is incomprehensible. The intellectual world can be grasped clearly, but God cannot.

9 Eudorus (early first century BC) plays a crucial role in the formation of Middle Platonism by blending Platonism with Neopythagoreanism. See J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (London, 1977), 114–35.

10 Simplicius, in *Phys.*, 181,10f, cited Dillon, *Ibid.*, 126f.

11 Dillon, *Ibid.*, 127f.

12 'La Révélation y introduit un élément nouveau irréductible à la tradition platonicienne: la transcendance absolue du Dieu biblique.' J. Daniélou, 'Bulletin d'histoire des origines chrétiennes', *RSR* 54 (1966), 300. Note also E. des Places, *Etudes platoniciennes 1929–1979* (Leiden, 1981), 273.

13 spec. leg. 2,176.

14 somn. 1.67.

15 spec. leg. 1.13, 20.

Moses desired insatiably to see God and to be seen by him, so he asked him that he should show clearly his reality which was difficult to comprehend. He wished to exchange his uncertainty for a firm faith. . . He penetrated into the darkness where God is, that is, in the hidden ideas of formlessness of being. For indeed, the cause is neither in time nor in space but transcends time and space; so that the soul, which is friendly to God, when it seeks true being, discovers what is invisible and without form. From here it comes to the greatest good of all, to grasp that the being of God is beyond the grasp of every creature and to see that which is invisible.<sup>16</sup>

Transcendence has no limit, and goes beyond the good, the One and the monad.<sup>17</sup> There is, for Philo, no duality within God.

For Middle Platonists there is an ultimate duality. Moderatus of Gades, Neo-Pythagorean and Middle Platonist, develops the ambiguity of unity from the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*, each of its movements corresponding to an hypostasis.<sup>18</sup> He claimed that Pythagoras had said everything useful and that later philosophers appropriated what they wanted from him.<sup>19</sup> The unity of mind, its principle of unity (*heniaios logos*), mediates between the transcendent first One and the realm of soul, which participates in the two higher hypostases. The realm of sense and matter merely reflects as a shadow what is above it.<sup>20</sup> The interplay of monad and dyad begins the exposition of the decad.

Thus the principle of Unity and Sameness and Equality, and the cause of the *sumpnoia* and *sumpatheia* of the Universe and of the preservation of that which is always one and the same they call One, while the principle of Otherness and Inequality and of everything that is divisible and in the process of change and different at different times, they termed the dual principle of Dyad; for such is indeed the nature of Two in the realm of particulars.<sup>21</sup>

The second One generates beings by withdrawing its *heniaios logos*, so depriving itself to make room for quantity without form, quantity as privation, dispersion and severance. What follows is the realm of matter, of the indefinite dyad, the realm of particulars.<sup>22</sup>

16 post. 13–15.

17 vita contemp. 2.

18 See E. R. Dodds, 'The Parmenides of Plato and the origin of the Neoplatonic "One"', CQ 22 (1928), 129–42.

19 Porphyry, vita Pyth. 53.

20 Simplicius, attributed to Moderatus rather than to Porphyry, Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 347.

21 Porphyry, vita Pyth. 49.5. Translation by John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (revised edn, 1996), 346f.

22 An interaction of monad and dyad is set out lucidly in Sextus Empiricus, adv. math. X.258–63: 'Pythagoras, moved by these considerations, declared that the One is the principle of existing things, by participation in which each of the existing things is termed one; and this when conceived in its self-identity is conceived as One, but when, in its otherness, it is added to itself it

Plurality is also found in Numenius, whose first God is simple and indivisible, separate from the demiurge and the created world (frag. 11). '[T]he God of both these writers remains a superior nous, and neither of them speaks of him as the One.'<sup>23</sup> These constitute three gods, the first 'father', the second 'creator' and the third 'creation' (frag. 21). The first God is entirely given to contemplation, while the second God is double, both goodness and being, creating both his own form and the cosmos which is the third God. The triadic structure is imprecise, as it is in the Second (pseudonymous) Platonic Epistle (312e): 'All things are related to the king of all, and they are for his sake, who is the cause of all things fair. The second things are related to the second, and the third things are related to the third.' While the first God is at rest and concerned with the intelligible realm, the second is in motion and concerned with both the intelligible and sensible (frag. 15). Here we find the distinctive plurality of Middle Platonism: while the first god is pure unity, the second god is twofold (frag. 25).<sup>24</sup> In Xenocrates, the monad and the dyad, the ground of being and the soul of the world were not divided. The first god was both nous and monad. Xenocrates had claimed that the contradiction between simplicity and plurality could be solved by the analogy of the thinker and his many thoughts. Numenius and others preserved duality.<sup>25</sup>

Plato included in his *Parmenides* an account of two kinds of unity, one simple (one and nothing but one) and one complex (one and many). Loosely speaking, we may distinguish these as the unity of the pinpoint and the unity of the spider's web. In Middle Platonism these were taken as metaphysical entities or gods within an ultimate duality. This duality was of great value to Clement.

Clement insists that there is no father without the son and no son without the father. The word was God and the word was with God. In Jn 8, Jesus bears witness of himself, and because two witnesses are necessary, he points to the father who also bears witness concerning the son.

creates the "Indefinite Dyad", so called because it is not itself any one of the numbered and definite dyads but they all are conceived as dyads through their participation in it, even as they try to prove in the case of the monad. There are, then, two principles of existing things, the First One, by participation in which all the numbered ones are conceived as ones, and also the Indefinite Dyad, by participation in which the definite dyads are dyads.'

<sup>23</sup> Dodds, 'Parmenides', 132.

<sup>24</sup> Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 126.

<sup>25</sup> A second problem is the dialectic between the One and the Two, which is here found in the second God rather than between the first and the second. Since, however, our evidence comes in part from Proclus, and the fragments of Numenius have several obscurities, we may allow for the possibility that the ideas of Numenius were forced into a later mould. Perhaps he was nearer to the monism of Plato and Plotinus than Proclus would allow.

Clement sees in this reciprocity a similarity to the Platonic simple and complex unity. From Plato's *Parmenides*, these two concepts of unity are evident.

Think of a principle of unity which so completely transcends all plurality that it refuses every predicate, even that of existence; which is neither in motion nor at rest, neither in time nor in space; of which we can say nothing, not even that it is identical with itself or different from other things: and *side by side with this*, a second principle of unity, containing the seeds of all the contraries – a principle which, if we once grant it existence, proceeds to pluralize itself indefinitely in a universe of existent unities. If for the moment we leave fragments out of account and consider only the extant works of Greek philosophers before the age of Plotinus, there is one passage, and so far as I know one passage only, where these thoughts receive connected expression – namely, the first and second 'hypotheses' in the second part of Plato's *Parmenides*.<sup>26</sup>

A one is either a bare unity which can be nothing but one, or a universal whole which unites all things. Later Platonism, moved by Pythagorean sequence, made a hierarchy of these two kinds of unity. This is evident in Moderatus and is developed in the system of Plotinus.<sup>27</sup> In Plato himself, the reciprocity between the form of the good and the world of forms remains. The need for this ambivalence was evident in early Christian thought because the chief argument against Gnostics and pagans was that there had to be a first cause or else reason would be lost in infinite regress. The first cause had to be simple, otherwise a more ultimate cause was required to govern the relation between its parts. The simplicity of the ultimate cause produced a problem for Platonists like Plotinus. The One could not produce anything. Plotinus had to add the concept of power (*dunamis*) to the One in order to make it an effective cause. Christians did not have the same problem because the one-one and the one-all were not part of a hierarchy but reciprocal, and from this reciprocity all things came into being. There was no father without son or simple unity without complex unity.

Throughout the early centuries of the Christian era, the *Parmenides* provided a basis for prolific thought. Porphyry (vita Plot. 20f) says that Thrasyllus, Moderatus, Numenius and Cronius wrote about the first principles of Pythagoras and Plato. Moderatus (Simplicius, in Phys 230f) and Numenius (frag. 24 [des Places]) combine the *Parmenides* with

<sup>26</sup> Dodds, 'Parmenides', 132.

<sup>27</sup> In Plotinus, there is a tendency to overcome the hierarchy by telescoping the complex one (*nous*) into the simple one (*hen*). This, however, is only a tendency, and there is no doubt that Plotinus stays with a hierarchy.

Pythagorean teaching to produce a one, a one-many and dyadic matter as first principles. Commentaries of Numenius and Cronius were known to Plotinus (Porphyry, *vita Plot.* 14). There was continuous interpretation of the *Parmenides*. Our chief source, Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* 630.77f, reported that there had been four interpretations of the *Parmenides*, two logical and two metaphysical.<sup>28</sup> Of the metaphysical interpretations there was 'one regarding it as a revelation of a Parmenidean One Being in which the Platonic Ideas were founded, and one taking it to deal not simply with this Being but with all that derives from it.'<sup>29</sup> Proclus limits the derivations to five hypostases because he followed Plutarch of Athens, who followed the 'philosopher from Athens' (1057), who followed Plato's Divided Line.<sup>30</sup>

We shall look briefly at a detailed exposition and then note alleged confusions.

- (i) Middle Platonism is best examined in Alcinous.<sup>31</sup> A Platonist, he lacks the Pythagorean tendencies of some Middle Platonists. He taught in Smyrna, where Galen was his pupil at some time between 149 and 157. Two handbooks, a very short introduction (*Eisagôgê*) and a survey of Platonic teaching (*Didaskalikos*) have been preserved. The relevant section of Alcinous' second work is chapter 10, where he speaks of God as the third of his first principles, the earlier chapters having dealt with matter and the ideas. Here the subtleties are valuable to illuminate what Clement is saying. It is argued that there must be objects of thought, the ideas, and that the intellect which knows them must be a divine intellect. Alcinous goes on to say that there must be, prior to this eternal, active intellect, an intellect which transcends any substratum, and that this is what is elsewhere known as the unmoved mover of Aristotle's metaphysics.<sup>32</sup> So we finish with a cosmic intellect *and* a first cause which is beyond it and to which Alcinous attributes the features of Aristotle's unmoved mover. The

28 H. A. S. Tarrant, *Plato's first interpreters* (New York, 2000), 185.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*, 190.

31 Now accessible through a fine commentary and translation: J. Dillon, *Alcinous, the handbook of Platonism* (Oxford, 1993).

32 J. Mansfeld, *Studies in later Greek philosophy and Gnosticism* (London, 1989). Mansfeld clarifies the problem as to whether Alcinous has yet a higher principle than the cause of *nous*. He concludes that there is no principle higher than the transestelial *nous* but indicates the problem for Platonism of this period, which lacks a terminology for the supra-cognitive faculty reaching out to what is above thought. This problem is handled by Plotinus, but for Alcinous 'Both the transestelial god and the celestial god are called *nous*' (66f).

adoption of Aristotle at this point helps further understanding of the problem. For here we have a divine mind which knows itself and whose thinking is a thinking of thinking (*noêsis noêseôs*).<sup>33</sup>

Since Mind is better than Soul, and Mind in activity (*kat'energeian*), intelligising all things simultaneously and eternally, is better than mind in potentiality (*dunamei*), and nobler than this is the cause of this and whatever might exist superior to these, this would be the Primal God, which is the cause of the eternal activity of the mind of the whole heaven (i.e. of the cosmos). The former, being motionless itself, directs its activity towards this latter, even as the sun towards vision, when someone looks at it, and as an object of desire sets desire in motion, while remaining itself motionless; even thus will this Mind move the mind of the whole heaven. But since the first Mind is the noblest of things, the object of its thought must also be noblest, and nothing is nobler than it is itself; so therefore it would have eternally to contemplate itself and its own thoughts, and this activity it has is Idea.<sup>34</sup>

What epithets may be applied to this supreme, ineffable God, a God who is? The epithets come from Plato's *Philebus* 65a and characterise the essence of the good or the first principle. The two fundamental attributes of ineffability and eternity are followed by three epithets: self-perfect, ever-perfect, all-perfect (*autotelês, aeitelês, pantelês*). The epithet of 'self-perfect' is supported by the epithet 'non-deficient' (*aprosdeês*).

Five more epithets follow: divinity, essentiality (*theiotês, ousiotês*), truth, commensurability, good, which are not distinct, for 'one single thing is being denoted by all of them' (Alcinous, *did.* 10.164). Goodness, beauty, truth led up to the final epithet, 'father', which comes from *Tim.* 28a and (like goodness and truth) points to a causal relationship between God and the world. God is 'goodness and truth' in that he produces goodness and truth in other things and he is 'father' as being the cause of existence and order for all things. Alcinous has joined together the form of the good from the *Republic* (also *Philebus* 65a–66b) and the demiurge of the *Timaeus*. God as the good is blended with the good god of the *Timaeus*. The distinction between the masculine 'good' and neuter 'good' will give Numenius reason for dividing the good of the *Republic* from the Demiurge and subjecting the latter to the former. Alcinous denies this division, insisting that God is good because he is the cause of goodness in other things and not because he participates in a higher good. The

<sup>33</sup> Alcinous substitutes 'idea' or 'form' for Aristotle's *noêsis*.

<sup>34</sup> Chapter 10.

father is related to the intellect of the world-soul, an intellect which the father produces by bringing the soul into contact with the forms which are the thoughts in his own mind.

We move next to the first way of understanding God, the *via negativa*. God is ineffable, to be grasped only by the intellect and accessible only when all logical categories have been denied of him. Using Aristotelian categories, Alcinous concludes that there cannot be a scientific but only an intuitive knowledge of God. None of the epithets applied to him can be taken as definitions of God, but are labels which point to his powers, his relations to the world, and to names which help to identify him.

God transcends opposites – good/bad, qualified/unqualified, part/whole, same/different, motive/mobile. The last three epithets are taken from the *Parmenides*, where they refer to the First Hypothesis.

The way of abstraction is supported by two other ways: the way of analogy and the way of pre-eminence.<sup>35</sup> Alcinous illustrates the way of analogy from the simile of the sun in *Rep.* 507f and the way of pre-eminence from Diotima's account of ultimate beauty in the *Symposium* (210a f).

Now follows a set of proofs that God is without parts, without motion and without body. The first argument, that God is without parts, is dependent on *Parmenides* (137c f) and *Sophist* (245a). The argument for motionlessness is derived in part from *Parmenides* (138b–139b) and *Republic* (380d f). Finally, God has to be without body, because to be a body he would have to be both matter and form and, if matter, then composed of some or all of the four elements. All of which is impossible because of his unity.

- (ii) Middle Platonism was seen as muddled by Festugière, who set out the main characteristics of its supreme being.<sup>36</sup> He found the account confused and built over a contradiction between two concepts of God or two ways towards God. If we accept his criticisms we should rename Middle Platonism as 'Muddle Platonism'. First of all, we look at the ten characteristics which troubled him:

1. A distinction between existence and essence (Maximus of Tyre).<sup>37</sup>
2. God is *asômaton-noêton*. This is found in all Middle Platonic writers: Alcinous, Apuleius, Maximus of Tyre, Celsus, Numenius and the Chaldaic Oracles.

<sup>35</sup> These three ways are also brought together by Celsus (*Contra Celsum* 7.42).

<sup>36</sup> A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste, IV, Le dieu inconnu et la gnôse* (Paris, 1954).

<sup>37</sup> Festugière, *Ibid.*, 109–11. This distinction is not laboured in ancient Platonism.

3. God is the supreme *noêton* with a move from this *noêton* to *nous* (Alcinous; Maximus of Tyre; Numenius; Chaldaic Oracles).<sup>38</sup>
4. There are two divine intellects for Alcinous.<sup>39</sup> Numenius goes further and speaks of three divine intellects.<sup>40</sup>
5. Because he is bodiless and intellectual (*asômaton-noêton*), God remains inaccessible to sense-perception and is seen only by the purified mind (Maximus of Tyre; Celsus; Numenius).<sup>41</sup>
6. This knowledge of God by the purified *nous* is confused and differs according to whether one acknowledges attributes in God (Alcinous; Apuleius)<sup>42</sup> or whether one considers him as completely without attributes, indefinable and indivisible (Alcinous; Apuleius; Maximus of Tyre; Celsus; Numenius).<sup>43</sup>
7. Considered in the first way, God can be reached by analogy (Alcinous; Maximus of Tyre; Celsus)<sup>44</sup> and by the way of eminence (Alcinous; Maximus of Tyre; Celsus).<sup>45</sup> When God is considered in the second way, as completely beyond attributes and definition, he is to be reached by the *via negativa* alone (Alcinous; Celsus; Numenius).<sup>46</sup> Alcinous and Celsus join the three ways, while Maximus of Tyre joins the first two ways and Numenius follows the *via negativa* only. Maximus of Tyre joins to the argument of the *via negativa* the concept that God is not a particular thing but always the cause of this thing (Maximus of Tyre).<sup>47</sup>
8. Because of these considerations, one can say that God is difficult to know (Apuleius; Maximus of Tyre; Celsus)<sup>48</sup> either because he is beyond speech or language or because, like *nous*, he is the sun whose light brings blindness (Celsus).<sup>49</sup> Alternatively, one can simply say that God remains entirely unknown (Numenius).<sup>50</sup>
9. But the unknown god is still accessible or knowable by a special method (Maximus of Tyre; Celsus; Numenius; Chaldaic Oracles).<sup>51</sup>
10. Some Middle Platonic writers (Maximus of Tyre and Celsus) admit the notion of intermediaries who are satellites to God.

Festugière's difficulty of finding coherence in these statements is not insuperable. The way of eminence and way of analogy lead to the cosmic God who has many names. Festugière claims that this is not the

38 *Ibid.*, 96, 112f, 127, 132.

41 *Ibid.*, 114, 116, 128–32.

44 *Ibid.*, 99f, 113, 117.

46 *Ibid.*, 99, 116, 122, 128–32.

49 *Ibid.*, 116.

39 *Ibid.*, 96f.

42 *Ibid.*, 97f, 106f.

45 *Ibid.*, 96, 100, 111, 116, 119–23.

47 *Ibid.*, 114.

50 *Ibid.*, 128.

40 *Ibid.*, 123f.

43 *Ibid.*, 98f, 108f, 113, 115, 128f.

45 *Ibid.*, 96, 100, 111, 116, 119–23.

48 *Ibid.*, 105, 111, 116.

51 *Ibid.*, 111f, 116, 128–32, 132–5.

indefinable and unknowable God. From the second century, he says, in Numenius and in the Chaldaic Oracles, the *via negativa* takes control as the only way of approaching a God who is unknowable. The supremacy of the *via negativa* is, according to Festugière, the reason for a decline of rationality in this epoch. Against this claim it must be recognised that the three ways are not inconsistent and that Plato himself found it possible to employ each of them. When we add perfection to perfection, when we pile analogy upon analogy, we reach a point where the object of our knowledge moves beyond our reach and becomes, in the plain sense of the words, beyond knowledge.

It is therefore right that Clement should be understood with those Middle Platonists who united all three ways and who recognised duality in God. If God is *nous*, there must also be a *noêton*. If we remove the *noêton*, then there can be no *nous*. The unity of the God beyond with the God within implies the compatibility of the three ways with one another and is of great assistance to Clement in his account of God. He did not derive his account of God from contemporary philosophy but from the Fourth Gospel, yet he looked always for what had been 'said well' by philosophers and included it in his eclectic explanation. Above all, it was the alleged 'muddle' of Middle Platonism, the duality in God, that shared his problem.

The origin is on the one side the absolute simplicity which withdraws from any closer definition and can only be understood adequately in terms of the perfect abstraction of the *via negativa* (*aphele panta*), but at the same time seems to be positively defined as *nous* and moreover dismantled into the explicit plurality of the pyramid of ideas.<sup>52</sup>

#### GOD BEYOND GOD. THE UNKNOWN GOD<sup>53</sup>

'No one has seen God at any time.' The Platonic tradition echoes, with manifold ambiguity, the transcendence (*epekeina*) of the ultimate first principle. For Clement, God is transcendent and universal father, maker and cause of all good things.

<sup>52</sup> Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 119.

<sup>53</sup> The Platonic tradition in Plato and Speusippus, but not, according to Krämer, in Middle Platonism, echoed the transcendence (*epekeina*) of the ultimate first principle. *Ibid.*, 60. The one as first principle in Xenocrates, Alcinous and Numenius is *ousia*, *to on* and not *epekeina tês ousias* as in Plato and Speusippus. *Ibid.* 124. For the ambiguity of *epekeina* in the Platonic tradition see the valuable study of J. Whittaker, *ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ*, *VigChr* 23 (1969), 91–104.

- (i) God is beyond idols and earthly things. In prot 6, Clement turns to the philosophers as those who by inspiration have sometimes spoken what is true. Idolatry and pagan myths are infantile and clutter the universe with idolatrous images, turning all the elements into a multiplicity of gods. Clement wants the maker of the universe, the lord of the spirits and of fire: 'I seek for God, not the works of God' (prot 6.67.2). Who will be his helper? He chooses Plato, who replies that it is a great matter to find the father and maker of this universe, and when one has found him, it is impossible to explain him to all (Tim. 28c). Why is it so difficult? 'He is absolutely ineffable' (Plato, Ep. 7,341c). God is the measure of the truth of all that is. As measured objects are comprised by the measure, so the truth is measured and comprehended by the knowledge of God (prot 6.69.1). Moses spoke against having one's own measure put away, because 'the only just measure is the only true God, who is always equal to himself in the same way and who measures all things and weighs them because he contains and maintains by his justice, as in a balance, the nature of the universe' (prot 6.69.3).<sup>54</sup>
- (ii) God is beyond dialectic. There is a way to go 'beyond' to God (1.28.176, 177). Dialectic ascends to God, reaching first the highest substance and then daring to go beyond (*epekeina*) to the God of all things. It offers knowledge of perishable things, but it also offers a way to God. The technique of dialectic must be applied to scripture, and as it is, so knowledge of God and man is achieved (Iliad 5.127). The supreme knowledge which stands at the peak of the dialectic comes from the son of God alone, from the revelation, says Clement, of the mystery to which Paul points (Rom. 16:25).
- (iii) God is beyond categories. 'Indeed this is the most difficult question about God. For since the first principle of everything is hard to find, the absolutely first and oldest principle is in all respects hard to show, which first principle is the cause of all things coming into being and being. For how could that be spoken of which is neither genus, nor differentia, nor species, nor individual, nor number, and on the other hand is neither an accident nor that to which an accident pertains?' (5.12.81.4f).

<sup>54</sup> On the concept of 'measure' see D. T. Runia, 'Clement of Alexandria and the Philonic doctrine of divine powers', *VigChr* 58 (2004), 273–5.

The way to the knowledge of God is, for Plato, the way of symbol and of costly sacrifice. Such a sacrifice, says Clement, has been made for us in Christ our passover (5.10.66.5), and requires from us the negation of physical distraction and passion. So philosophy was for Socrates the practice of death, and a concentration on purely mental objects, while Pythagoras required five years' silence from his pupils. All these ideas came from Moses (5.11.67) who required that the holocaust be skinned. The soul must be free from matter, passions, lusts, lest it project these things on God. Just as snails and hedgehogs roll themselves into a ball in which they can see only themselves, so men turn in on themselves and can see only a God like themselves. The Greeks longed in vain for the higher knowledge and mysteries; but that way is now open in Christ. It begins from the elements of mathematics.

1. All physical properties must be abstracted from an object: first depth, then width and length.
2. From the remaining point, position must be taken, to leave unity alone.
3. From this unity we throw ourselves into the magnitude of Christ '*megethos tou Christou*' and then by holiness<sup>55</sup> advance into the void '*achanês*', so that we come to a '*noêsis*' of the '*pantokratôr*', knowing not what he is but what he is not (5.11.71).<sup>56</sup>

Clement dominates the negative process with the magnitude of Christ and compares the Christian way with that of the mysteries which proceed from lesser to greater secrets.<sup>57</sup> The *megethos tou christou* is the point of entry into the mystery of God and into the unity of all things.<sup>58</sup>

What does the *megethos tou christou* mean? Paul, John and Ephesians explain. In Paul, the believer is buried and raised with Christ (Rom. 6:4), crucified with Christ so that he no longer lives while Christ lives in him (Gal. 2:20). The life of faith is a life in Christ. For John, the logos is the source of life and light to men, who receive from his fullness grace upon grace. The father has never been seen; the *monogenês* who is in the bosom

<sup>55</sup> This is distinctively Christian rather than Greek.

<sup>56</sup> As a standard example of reaching a concept of an immaterial universal, this method may well go back to the Old Academy. See Dillon, *Alcinous*, 109–11.

<sup>57</sup> Plato has used similar terminology in the *Symposium*.

<sup>58</sup> L. Rizzerio, 'L'accès à la transcendance divine selon Clément d'Alexandrie: dialectique platonicienne ou expérience de l'"union chrétienne"?' *REF* 44 (1998), 159–79. The relation of Clement's dialectic and union with Christ in 5.11.71 raises important problems. The first part is logical and cathartic, while the second part is a matter of vision (163). The move from logic to personal knowledge is achieved by love (178).

of the father has declared him (Jn 1:18). The cross draws all together (Jn 12:32). Union with Christ, the unique source of life and truth, is described as remaining or abiding *in* him. The final prayer (Jn 17) is for knowledge which is life eternal and unity with the father and son in divine glory.

The link of Christ's magnitude with knowledge of God is developed in Eph. 3.14–20: grounded in love, believers are to be able to comprehend the length, breadth, height and depth of the love of Christ and be filled with the divine fullness. Christ has restored unity between earth and heaven.<sup>59</sup>

In Clement, the recapitulation of all things and the cosmic unity of the logos have already taken a Platonic turn in 4.25.156.2, where the son is described as 'one thing as all things', in contrast to the unknowable father who is one thing as one thing or rather beyond unity itself. All the powers of the spirit (one and many) come together in him who is Alpha and Omega, '*one as all*'. This is the dimension of Christ, and from this, says Clement, God is being, truth, mind and the first principle of physics, ethics and logic (4.25.162.5).

Holiness goes on from the *megethos tou Christou* through the *achanês* or void, which may refer to the cross, and which is also the tree of knowledge (5.11.72.3). The God beyond is found through the God within God. This is clear where (5.12.81.3–82.4) Clement expounds the unknown God of the Johannine prologue with the help of Platonic language. Knowledge of God, as Moses and Solomon declared, can come only from God. The gift of knowledge comes from the son who is the tree of life and knowledge, bearing blossom by his knowledge in the garden of the earth. the mysteries of the third day, which Abraham saw from afar (Gen. 22.3f), the mind gains access through the teacher who rose on the third day. 'God's country is hard to reach; Plato called it the land of ideas, having learnt from Moses that it was the place of all things universally' (5.11.73.3). Paul's vision face to face will come, said Plato, only when, from within the world of real existences, the mind, by itself, moves to the God who transcends them (Rep. 7.532; 5.11.74).

59 J. Daniélou, *The theology of Jewish Christianity* (London, 1964), 281. In Irenaeus, this unity is depicted in the cosmic cross. 'In his obedience which he practised unto death by hanging on the tree, he undid the ancient disobedience occasioned by the tree . . . in every place' (dem. 34). The cosmic cross is central to the recapitulation of all things (haer. 5.18.3–5.19.1). In the Odes of Solomon (22, 23) the saviour descends from on high and ascends from below, joining what is in between (22). Everything is reunited under the head, the true son, who came from the most high and inherited the universe. Similarly in Valentinian thought the cross has a spatial reference, consolidating, sustaining, dividing and separating (haer. 1.3.5). In Justin (1 apol. 60), the cross is linked with Plato's cosmic cross in Tim. 36bc.

To know this inaccessible God, Moses had to enter thick darkness and Paul had to ascend to the third heaven. Plato thought that there was only one heaven; but Paul saw infinity in the judgements and ways of God. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, hidden in three measures of meal, point to the threefold soul which is drawn by the power of the word into unity. ἔλκει καὶ τὸ πᾶν αὐτοῦ σύστημα εἰς ἐνότητα συνάγει (5.12.80.8f). Solon spoke of God's infinity<sup>60</sup> and Empedocles insisted that God, though inaccessible to the senses, could be grasped with the mind.

John tells of the only begotten God, who is in the infinite bosom of the father, and who declares the God whom no one has seen. The invisible and ineffable has also been called Depth by some people (Valentinians), because it contains and embraces all things, being inaccessible and without limit (ἀνεφικτόν τε καὶ ἀπέραντον) (5.12.81.3).

Finally, the transcendence of God is described in negative terms similar to those of Alcinous (did. 10). God is infinite and difficult to describe because he lacks limits, being contracted into One. He is not the 'whole' because he is father of all things and no parts can be predicated of him who is the indivisible One. God and his bosom are infinite in different ways. The father includes nothing; the bosom includes all things. One can be limitless in two ways: by drawing limits together until they disappear, or by unceasingly pushing them further apart. The father is infinite in the first way, the son in the second. Both are God who is infinite in both ways; this is why it is hard to talk about him.

His indivisibility makes him infinite in the sense that he cannot be broken up into logical parts, and has no limit. Therefore the names we give him indicate his almighty power but do not describe him. His existence cannot be proved because there is nothing more ultimate from which he may be inferred. As Paul told the worshippers of the unknown god, he can be known only by his grace and the word which comes from him. The God beyond can only be known through the God within God.

#### GOD WITHIN GOD. THE KNOWN CENTRE OF GOD

##### *The bosom of God is his mind. Delimitation of substance*

In his commentary on *Excerpts from Theodotus* (or *Excerpta*) Clement gives an account of the identity (*tautotês*) of the logos. Whatever Clement

60 On Stromateis 5.11 and 5.12 see the excellent commentary of A. Le Boulluec. *Les Stromates* V. vol. II (SC 279) (Paris, 1981). 235–68.

knows about divine glory he has learnt from Christ, so we learn of the identity of the logos through the transfiguration of Jesus. His account of this incident reflects his concern for detailed explanation. The transfiguration on Mount Tabor displays the divine glory of the logos. The saviour appeared not as an angel but as a man. He did this for the sake of the church, that it might know to what the lord had progressed after departing from the flesh. Glory below is not inferior to the glory which is on high and in his descent from on high he was undivided and retained the higher glory. He was omnipresent, present both in heaven with the father and here on earth with men, for he was the power of the father, working the father's work (exc 4.2). In transfiguration he fulfilled the word which promised that there were some who would see the son of man in his glory before they died, and those who saw him were Peter, James and John. They saw him on Mount Tabor and, later, died. One may ask why they were not overwhelmed with fear when they saw the luminous vision, but fell to the earth only when they heard the voice. The reason is that ears are more difficult to persuade than eyes and that an unexpected voice has a more violent effect than an unexpected vision.<sup>61</sup>

The disciples were told not to speak of the vision they had seen because there is no natural relation between the transcendent light of the vision and the flesh on earth. They had been given by the saviour the power to contemplate this vision in the flesh (exc 5.3). There is a second reason the disciples were commanded not to speak of their vision. Had they done so, those who heard would have been reluctant to lay violent hands on their lord and consequently the economy of salvation would not have been fulfilled. An attack upon the lord would have been seen as a pointless exercise doomed to failure (exc 5.4). Remarkably, the reason the disciples were struck by the voice on the mountain was that they were already chosen and initiated; they were moved by the witness which was given to the object of their faith. The earlier episode at the baptism by the Jordan was different because those who heard the voice had yet to believe and neglected the voice because they were still under the servitude of teachers of the law (exc 5.5).

In commenting on the Gnostic subdivision of the *plêrôma*, Clement objects that there is no division between Jesus as the first-born of creation and Jesus as the only begotten within the *plêrôma*. For he is identical in

<sup>61</sup> It is true that, at the Jordan, the Baptist was not terrified when he heard the voice from heaven, but he was already in the spirit and heard it spiritually, as he was accustomed; but anyone who was not accustomed to it would be fearful (exc 5.2).

each case. As the apostle said, he who ascended is indeed the same who has also descended (Eph. 4:10; Jn 3:13) (exc 7.3, 4). This brings Clement to the centre of his theology, with the claim that there is no division in the one God: 'but we say that this logos in his constant identity (*tautotês*) is God in God, he who is also said to exist "in the bosom of the father" indivisible, without parts, one God' (exc 8.1). The operation of the logos in his constant identity brought all things of spirit, intellect and sense into being: 'all things were made by him.'

He has declared the bosom or thoughts of the father (exc 8.2). He, the first-born of all creation, declares the operation of the father (Jn 1:18; Is. 65:7; Col. 1:15). By the indivisible power of the only begotten in his perfect identity (*en tautotêti*), the saviour, the light of the church, works (exc 8.3). Outside the church, men did not know him. The failure of darkness to comprehend the light means both that men did not understand and that death did not overcome that light (exc 8.4).

The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the father has declared him. The word became flesh when he came to earth as a man, and also in the beginning when he was delimited within the father. He became the son by delimitation and not by a change of substance from the father (exc 19.1). Again, he became flesh when he worked in the prophets, and the saviour is the life which comes into being in the word (exc 19.2; Jn 1:3, 4); this is the new humanity which Paul asked us to put on, created according to God, the word who is in God, the image of the invisible God and the first-born of all creation. For 'in him' the father made all things (Col. 1:16). He took the form of a slave, not only when he came to earth, but also in his substance as being subject to the active and supreme cause who is the father (exc 19.5).<sup>62</sup>

Elsewhere, the key statement remains Jn 1:18: 'No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the father, has revealed him.' He is the known centre of the unknown God, for the 'bosom' is the invisible and ineffable character of God (5.12.81.3).

The son himself, who is called 'light inaccessible', is what eye has not seen nor ear heard, and excels the first-created of whom the highest seven contemplate the face of the father, but he is the face, the son through whom the father is known. Inevitably, what is seen has to have a figure

62. Clement's complexity follows from the variety of scriptural material which he uses. The verse of Psalm 109:3, 'I have begotten you before the morning star', he says, applies to the logos of God, who is the first-created. His name is before the sun, the moon and indeed before all creation (Psalm 71:17). The meaning of first-created here is clarified. The logos is not a creature, but he is called first-created because he comes before all creatures (exc 20).

and a body. This body will be seen not by the physical eye, but by an eye which the father gives for intellectual vision (exc 10.5f).

The descent of the saviour was visible not merely to the angels who announced the good news of the nativity, but to Abraham and to all the righteous who were in the state of rest (*anapausis*) and who were on the right hand of the saviour. That is why the lord, when he was risen, took the good news to the righteous who were in a state of rest and then transposed them so that they would live in his shadow. For the shadow of the glory of the saviour, the glory which he enjoys through his nearness to the father, that shadow is his coming here below, 'and the shadow of light is not darkness, but illumination' (exc 18.2).

*The place of the ideas is the mind of God*

In the reference to God as the place of the ideas we have already seen how Platonism offered support for the concept of God within God. From the Nous-Monad of Xenocrates the ideas were located within the mind of God.<sup>63</sup> Xenocrates had claimed that the contradiction between simplicity and plurality could be solved by the analogy of the thinker and his many thoughts. Clement develops this idea out of the *Phaedrus* of Plato (5.3.16.3).<sup>64</sup>

63 Cf. R. Radice, 'Observations on the theory of the Ideas as the thought of God in Philo of Alexandria', *StPhilo* 3 (1991), 133. Radice proposes that Philo is the catalyst of Middle Platonism. The Philonic topos of the ideas as the thoughts of God may be seen as the element which crystallised the metaphysics of Platonism in the first and second centuries AD (134).

64 *Ibid.* The concepts of the mind as the place of ideas and the ideas as thoughts of God (4.25.155.2; 5.11.73.3) are found first in Philo (cher. 49.149, somn. 1.64–6) and widely in Middle Platonism. See also A. N. M. Rich, 'The Platonic ideas as the thoughts of God', *Mn.* 7 (1954), 123–33. Could the transformation of Platonic ideas into the thoughts of God have come from Aristotle's account of immanent form which must be present in the cause? A human father begets another member of the same species because he already possesses the form of manhood, and a craftsman builds a house because he has the logos of the house within him. 'What, therefore, more simple than to transform the Ideas into immanent *eidē* by interpreting them on the human level as *logoi* in the soul, and on the divine as concepts in the mind of God?' (133). Also J. C. M. van Winden, 'The world of ideas in Philo of Alexandria. An interpretation of *de opificio mundi* 24–25', *VigChr* 37 (1983), 209–17. 'One discerns three steps: 1. First Philo puts forward his thesis, *viz.*, that the noetic world is nothing else than the logos of the creating God. 2. Then this thesis is illustrated by the example of the human architect. 3. Finally Philo shows that this thesis is not his own intervention but is already present in Moses' words in Genesis 1,27' (211). See also D. T. Runia, 'The king, the architect and the craftsman: a philosophical image in Philo of Alexandria', in 'Ancient approaches to Plato's "Timaeus" *BICS Supplement* 78 (2003), 89–106. 'There can be no doubt that our text is an important witness to the development of Platonism in the first century BCE and CE. As we saw, the concept of the *νοητός κόσμος* is used in a clear and articulated fashion for the first time' (102). 'There can be no doubt whatsoever that Plato's ideas have here been reinterpreted so that they are regarded as the "thoughts of God" in contrast to the fully independent status that the ideas enjoy in the *Timaeus*' (103).

Clement has quoted *Parmenides* on the need to observe mental entities which are not present to the eyes.<sup>65</sup> What is just, good or true can be perceived only through mental apprehension. The logos of God who claims 'I am the truth' is to be contemplated by the mind alone. Truth, says Plato in the *Phaedrus*, is an idea and an idea is a thought of God which is exactly what the barbarians have called the logos of God. Plato says, 'One must have the courage to speak truly, especially when one speaks of the true being, for it is colourless, shapeless and intangible, the essence of pure being which can be seen only by the mind which steers the soul.' Even in the logos incarnate, truth is still contemplated with the mind. What does this mean for the just man? It means 'that he will seek a much loved discovery and that he will find happiness as he speeds towards it' (5.3.16.6).

Here Clement draws from Plato the concept of ideas, truth, logos, which dwell within God and are the object of contemplation. The dependence of thinker and thought is reciprocal. There can be no thought without thinker and no thinker without thought. From this notion of the logos as the thought of God Clement draws his first explanation of the way in which logos and God, word and father are related. He turns to Plato for clarification, insisting that the barbarians had said the same thing. Elsewhere Plato had spoken of the trinity.<sup>66</sup> After John, Clement's source is Plato, although Alcinous argues that there must be objects of intellection, the ideas, and that the intellect which knows them must be a divine intellect.

#### CONCLUSION

To sum up the puzzle of God beyond and within God, of the known centre of the unknown God, Clement describes the *via negativa* of Platonic abstraction which leads to the magnitude of Christ (5.12.81f). His apophatic account of God ends in a claim that the divine word and grace is the sole source of human knowledge of God. He quotes Paul

65 The mind can grasp with certainty what is not present because it knows the unity of being and will not divide this unity however far that unity may extend. He who hopes and he who believes see intelligible and future realities with the mind. Intellectual objects include all the important attributes.

66 5.14.102.5. Plato and the trinity. In a lengthy chapter which shows how much the Greeks have stolen from the Hebrews, Clement returns to a conflation of the Second Letter and the *Timaeus* for the account of God which makes sense of the Christian claim. God is king of all that is and the cause of all that is good. After the king, the second is surrounded by second things and the third by third things. God within God leads to an understanding of the mystery of the trinity.

(Acts 17:22f) on the unknown God who is declared by his word (5.12.82.4). He constantly repeats the claim of Jesus that no one knows the father but the son, and no one knows the son but the father. Yet through the son, this knowledge of God is imparted to the believer (5.12.84.3). Such knowledge leads to confidence, for our teacher is the son of God, and therefore we have a confidence in truth which grows from faith in him (5.12.85.3).

A similar combination of transcendence and immanence, of the God beyond and the God within, may be found in Middle Platonism. The 'muddle' of Middle Platonism avoids the later hierarchy of Plotinus. The God beyond God and the God within God remain. Clement uses Platonism to explain the Johannine account of God. In speaking of the God within God, he moves on to speak of reciprocity, of God beside God. To that third element in his account of God we now turn.

## CHAPTER 6

### *God beside God: the ellipse*

#### *Divine reciprocity. The first ellipse*

The word was with God and the word was God

In the preceding chapter, on God beyond and God within, we have already found duality which anticipates the divine reciprocity of God beside God. Clement describes this with the help of the Fourth Gospel and Middle Platonism, and with assistance from the two kinds of unity which are found in Plato's *Parmenides*. Especially valuable is Alcinoüs, in whose thought the presence of the two divine intellects is clear. Compared with Plotinus, Middle Platonism may appear muddled on the relation between the One and Nous. This difference makes Middle Platonism more useful to Clement.<sup>1</sup>

From Xenocrates onwards, we may see the emergence of a metaphysic of mind.<sup>2</sup> Where there are three principles (God, ideas, matter) God is mind/*nous* and the ideas are embraced within him.<sup>3</sup> His relation to the ideas is therefore different from his relation to the world. The apophatic God of Middle Platonism derives from Academic tradition and Pythagorean sources. Between the simplicity and negativity of the first God and his definition as mind/*nous* containing the world of ideas there is a tension which has clear affinity with Clement's God beside God.

A standard work<sup>4</sup> claims as distinctive of Middle Platonism a first and second god, the first being the Good of the *Republic* and the One of the first hypothesis of *Parmenides*, and the second being the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*. Philo is too monotheistic to have two gods, so he has only God

1 Festugière, see above, chapter 5, page 120, found imprecision in Middle Platonism, just as some have found imprecision in Clement. Festugière, *La révélation*, IV, 42. Dillon sees this characteristic vacillation of Middle Platonism as derived from Stoicism. *Middle Platonists*, 466.

2 Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, 118f.

3 Following Academic rather than Aristotelian tradition.

4 Dillon, *Middle Platonists*.

and the logos. However, in Alcinous and Apuleius there are two gods, both of whom are Nous, one at rest and the other in motion.

As well as the metaphysic of mind, Clement also interweaves the two concepts of unity from Plato's *Parmenides* to describe ultimate reciprocity. Most recently, the category of relation has been shown to provide an explanation of Plato's *Parmenides*.<sup>5</sup> The best way to understand what Plato is saying is to recognise that he is speaking about two kinds of relation: the relation of a concept or thing to itself (*pros heauto*) and its relation to others (*pros ta alla*). This interpretation of the *Parmenides* makes sense of Plato's doctrine of the forms and gives coherence to the whole dialogue. Clement had to find such an analysis if he were to make sense of the fundamental claims of the Johannine prologue. How can God be beyond and within and beside God? Clement's answer is similar to that of Plato, that it is a matter of relation. The relation of the father to the son means that God is in relation to himself a transcendent, indivisible unity; in his relation to others he is multiple and universal. For Clement, what John is trying to say is that the relationship of the logos to God (*pros ton theon*) joins these two relations. The word is God and in relation to God. At no stage do we move beyond the ultimate reciprocity within God. When we have removed all attributes and arrived at bare unity we throw ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and it is only from there that we advance through the void into the mystery of God. Later Platonism was to set the transcendent God above the immanent *nous* or logos. In Clement, their reciprocity remains the elucidation of the central mystery. Son is in father and father in son. The great God is the perfect child. Father and son are just or righteous because they are a balance where power is equal on either side. While Clement was aware of Neo-Pythagorean Platonist writers such as Eudorus, Moderatus and Alcinous, his understanding of Plato is fundamental. This understanding, most recently established by Wyrwa,<sup>6</sup> extended to the use of Plato's *Parmenides* to explain the ultimate reciprocity of God. At the same time Stoicism, with its account of relations, guided him as much as it did Tertullian in his account of the trinity. The gap between Stoicism and Platonism in the second century is not great, and Clement was able to take the concept of relation from both to elucidate his ultimate problem concerning God.

When he talks about the *hen* he moves to the *hen panta* and vice versa. He used a reciprocity of *hen* and *hen panta* to express the reciprocity

<sup>5</sup> Meinwald, 'Third Man'.

<sup>6</sup> Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung*, 269.

which he found in the Fourth Gospel's account of God. It was the most important thing he had to say about God. For God is love, and highest love needs two subjects which reciprocate. There is no father without son and no son without father. In a similar way there is no simple unity (*hen*) apart from complex unity (*hen panta*), and no complex unity without simple unity.

After the God beyond, we saw, Clement needed God within God. For an account of the *archê* of love he needed father and son, both of whom he called *anarchos archê*. Their reciprocity enabled him to say his final thing about God: that the relation of love (*hê pros allêla schesis agapês*) between father and son was ultimate (paed 1.8).

Clement's account of God and the logos derives from the Fourth Gospel, especially the prologue and chapter 17. In the prologue, the word is both God and with God in a relation of unity and reciprocity. The word is both one with God and also related to God as son to father.<sup>7</sup> In chapter 17, which sums up the Gospel, the father glorifies the son as the son glorifies the father, and the whole prayer indicates the reciprocity of father and son. The logos, the son, is one with the father, and into that unity believers are to be drawn by extended divine reciprocity. So at the beginning and end of this Gospel the themes of unity and reciprocity are found. They are connected with the father's saving work in which the son shares. An early Christian attempt to explain how the word can be both with God in a reciprocal relation and one with God found a possibility in the Stoic distinction between inner logos (thought) or uttered logos (speech). There has been much discussion on the unity of the logos in Clement because of its relevance to the development of doctrine. The plurality found by Photius or more recently by Lilla and Wolfson has proved illusory.<sup>8</sup> The distinction between inner or uttered logos (thought and speech) was rejected by Clement because it suggested a division which

7 As the Gospel develops, the themes of unity and reciprocity are joined by a theme of subordination, yet always it is a subordination of unity with the father and never an estrangement from him.

8 It is now certain that Photius' account of two logoi cannot be attributed to Clement. The issue has been clarified in a magisterial article by Christoph Marksches, 'Die Wunderliche Mär von zwei Logoi', *Logos*, FS L. Abramowski, ed. H. C. Brenneke, E. L. Grasmück, Christoph Marksches (Berlin, 1993), 193–219. See my *The beginning of Christian philosophy* (Cambridge, 1981), 220, 240–4. The objections are carefully destroyed by M. J. Edwards, 'Clement of Alexandria and his doctrine of the Logos', *VigChr* 54 (2000), 159–77. I also gave reasons for discarding Photius, 'Hypotyposesis', 67–83. For an extended account of Clement's Logos doctrine see P. Ziegert, *Zwei Abhandlungen über T. Flavius Clemens Alexandrinus, Psychologie und Logoschristologie* (Heidelberg, 1894).

limited both the unity and reciprocity of father and son. Similarly, in response to Gnostic subdivision of the divine fullness Irenaeus united the logos within God as a universal mind; the thought, speech, intelligent activity of humans may be subdivided in different ways, but the divine mind holds all together, and logos is within the divine mind from which it cannot be separated. In Irenaeus there is little account taken of reciprocity.

*Johannine unity and reciprocity*

Two verses express it all: 'No one comes to the father but by me' (Jn 14:6); 'No man can come to me except that the father who sent me draw him' (Jn 6:44 cf. 6:37; 6:65). In the Fourth Gospel, the father is inseparable from the son whom he sends. The activity of the father continues from creation (Jn 5:17) and the son follows what the father does (Jn 5:19). Because the father has given the work of judgement to the son (Jn 5:22), the son is honoured as the father (Jn 5:23), who furnishes evidence for his authority (Jn 5:37). The son is the heavenly bread whom the father gives (Jn 6:32f). In controversy, Jesus can point to the father who sent him and who is the source of his teaching and glory (Jn 7:17f). Jesus does nothing by himself, but speaks according to the instruction of the father (Jn 8:28). He does not glorify himself; but the father glorifies him (Jn 8:54). When Jesus raises the dead (as only God can do), he prays 'Father, I thank you that you heard me', so that others should learn of his unity with the father (Jn 11:41f). A voice from heaven confirms the glory of the father's name (Jn 12:28).

Divine reciprocity is everywhere. The father is in the son as the son is in the father. The father who is in Jesus speaks his words (Jn 14:10). To know Jesus is to know and see the father (Jn 14:7, 9). Jesus is the way to the father. 'Only Jesus alone is in perfect solidarity with the Father.'<sup>9</sup> Jesus' works, done in the father's name (Jn 10:25), testify that the father has sent him (Jn 5:36). Glorification of father and son is reciprocal (Jn 13:31f).<sup>10</sup> Reciprocity in mutual knowledge, glory, love, witness and work, points to the unique oneness of father and son.<sup>11</sup>

9 M. L. Appold, *The oneness motif in the Fourth Gospel: motif analysis and exegetical role into the theology of John* (Tübingen, 1976), 18.

10 Appold, *Oneness motif*, 31. 'Jesus comes and he goes; he is sent and he returns; but his glory, though extending into different spheres, remains the same.'

11 Osborn, *Emergence of Christian theology*, 99.

How is this unity indicated? Jesus possesses all that the father possesses (Jn 16:15), and is God from God. Prayer offered to the father in his name will be answered positively (Jn 16:23). The divine glory which was shared before the beginning of the world is to be revealed on the cross (Jn 17:5).

The end of the Gospel points back to its commencement, for everything depends on the word who was God and with God in the beginning (Jn 1:1). So long as he is in the world he remains the light of the world (Jn 9:5). He continues his work of creation, placing mud on blind eyes so that they are perfected and healed (Jn 9:15). In all this he is one with God from whom his power comes (Jn 9:33). As good shepherd, he gives his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11) and has power to lay down his life and to take it up, as his father commands (Jn 10:17).

Reciprocity between father and son becomes more evident as the son approaches the cross with knowledge of his father's will (Jn 13:1) and with authority over all that he does (Jn 13:3). Reciprocity is declared supremely in the event and content (all mine are yours and yours are mine, 17:10) of the final prayer. Distress comes from the failure of one of his disciples (Jn 13:21). As way, truth and life, he is one with the father; he is in the father and the father is in him. His father speaks and works through him (Jn 14:10). He is the source of life, the true vine, cultivated by the father (Jn 15:1). He loves his disciples as his father has loved him, and he invites them to remain in that same love (Jn 15:9). In the hour of his arrest and trial he rules as lord, meeting his accusers with the words 'I am' (Jn 18:5). His kingdom is not of this world, but he is a king (Jn 18:36). The words of peace and victory are spoken to disciples (Jn 20:19), and he is acclaimed as lord and God (Jn 20:28).

To explain the puzzle of reciprocity and unity in God and logos, we began with the figure of an ellipse in which two foci, God and logos, father and son are joined. Within the divine ellipse, father and son remain in the relations of reciprocity and unity. Spatially, this is hard to depict. Reciprocity can be shown by placing God at one focus of the ellipse and the word at the other, but this omits the second relation of unity which requires that, together with reciprocity, father and son are joined. The problem is solved by love, which requires father and son as both subjects and objects of divine love.<sup>12</sup>

12 See below, chapter 6, page 150, for Tertullian's account of the trinity, using the same category of relation.

DIVINE SALVATION. THE SECOND ELLIPSE:  
GOD AND THE WORLD

We may clarify the structure of Clement's thought through a second ellipse where the two foci are God (father and son) and the world. Upon this ellipse depends Clement's understanding of God's work of salvation. For salvation is nothing less than the joining of man to God in the reciprocity of love.

On behalf of each of us he laid down the life that is reciprocal in value (*antaxian*) to the whole world. In return he demands (*antapaitēi*) this sacrifice from us on behalf of one another. But if we owe our lives to the brethren, and admit such a reciprocal compact with the saviour (*sunthêkên pros tēn sôtēra anthônologēmetha*), shall we still husband and hoard up the things of the world, which are beggarly and alien to us and ever slipping away?

(q.d.s. 37.4 f)

The word cannot pass on to men his identity with God; he can pass on his relation of reciprocity and love. The sequence is clear. The first ellipse (father and son) produces the second ellipse (God and humankind), which produces the third ellipse (love of disciple for neighbour). The foci of the first ellipse unite into the first member of the next ellipse: father and son unite in the saving God. Saviour and the world unite in the redeemed child of God or disciple who must love his brother. This is Clement's understanding of the Gospel and First Letter of John.

- (i) The ellipse of divine love flows on to all humanity (paed 1.3.7.1).

Here Clement begins from the notion of divine philanthropy which is a theme of both the *Paedagogus* and the *Protrepticus* (1.6.3; 2.27.3; 9.82.2; 10.104.3; cf. 7.2.8.1). The lord comes to help because, as man and as God, he always does good. As man he teaches us not to sin and as God he forgives our sins. The divine philanthropy is later (paed 1.3.8.1) expressed in Stoic terms. What is worthy of choice is chosen for itself. Man is to be loved and is therefore loved by God for himself. This love is evident because the only son descended from the bosom of the father to be the logos of our faith. The centrality of reciprocal love to the divine act is proved for Clement by two quotations from John. 'The father loves you. . .because you have loved me' (Jn 16:27), and in the final prayer of Jesus he speaks to the father, 'You have loved them as you loved me' (Jn 17:23). These passages point to a central theme: the act of salvation and the nature of divine being are defined by reciprocal love. Within the

divine ellipse, father and son are joined by love, and through the son this love flows out to all humankind.<sup>13</sup> Here we are again at the centre of Clement's understanding of God.

- (ii) The child of God is given to us that we might become children of God (paed 1.5.24.1).

His reciprocity with the father is passed on.

Within the divine ellipse, the father is the unknown God, a simple unity. The son shares human complexity and thereby communicates to mankind the salvation which comes from God. Yet in his antitheses and paradox, the son remains one with the father, the perfect revelation and agent of his truth. Commenting on Isaiah 9:6f, Clement indicates that here Christ is called a child (*paidion*). This child is given to us, who become little children (*nêpioi*), images of the child (*paidion*). The child, who is Christ, is described further by Isaiah as wonderful counsellor and mighty God, everlasting father and prince of peace. Clement exclaims in wonder, 'O the great God, O the perfect child, son in father and father in son!' (paed 1.5.24.3). The logos, who is God, became man for us so that he might be like us in all things. He is the son of God, the little child of the father. In the divine condescension, the son who is the child of God becomes for our sakes a little child that he might be like us in all things and bring us to the father. His reciprocity with the father is passed on to us.

Here Clement shows us the limits of the diagram which we have chosen. The divine ellipse must be allowed neither to separate the father from the son nor exclude the father from the saving operation of the son. Son and father, for all their reciprocity, are united in the one act of humankind's salvation, which is made evident in many acts from every part of the saving plan. In order that we might become little children, the child of God is both wonderful counsellor and mighty God who, at the same time, becomes a little child for our salvation. His reciprocal unity with the father is that of great God and perfect child, son in father and father in son. His reciprocal unity with us is that of a child who for our salvation becomes a little child so that we might be little children within the family of God.

- (iii) Son and father strive together (*sunagonistês*) in love to humankind (paed 1.8.63.3).

<sup>13</sup> Clement is the first Christian theologian to speak at length of God's *philanthrôpia*.

Here the relation between son and father, between logos and God, occurs within an argument on a different topic. The vexed question is whether God can be good when he chastises, threatens and invites fear from humans. Some (Marcionites) argue that justice and goodness cannot go together. Elsewhere, Clement argues that justice and goodness imply one another and cannot exist without one another. Within the argument on justice and goodness, Clement introduces the relation between the father and the son because God's goodness is most apparent in the son, who is not separate from the father but joined to him, so that the love of the son reflects the love of God. The great argument for a just God who is good is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews (4:15). The lord suffered like us, Clement says, in reciprocity he 'suffered in sympathy with the nature of each of us through an excess of love' (paed 1.8.62.2). The logos does not hate any created thing because as God he gives it existence. Nothing is hated by God and the logos, else it would not exist: 'For both are one being, God' (paed 1.8.62.4). God shows his care for man by teaching him through the logos 'who is the true collaborator (*sunagonistês*) of God's love to man' (paed 1.8.63.3).

- (iv) The just balance of reciprocal love (paed 1.8.71.3).

Here Clement continues an extended discussion of the goodness and justice of God. His final proof of God's goodness and justice is that God is one, father and son. This leads him to the source of his understanding of the divine unity, which is Jn 17. He quotes verses 21–23, which include the prayer that 'they all may be one as you father are in me and I in you that they may be one in us so that the world might believe that you have sent me'. The glory which the father gave to the son has been given by the son to those who believe 'so that they might be one as we are one, I in them and you in me'. The divine reciprocal unity is communicated to those who believe.

God is addressed as 'thou', the God who truly exists: he who was, who is and who will be (*ho ôn*). This same being, the only God, is 'righteous/just' as the prayer continues (Jn 17:24–26). The justice of the father is that of one who visits the sins of the fathers on the children of those who hate him and who shows kindness to those who love him (exc 20:5–6). He places some on his right and some on his left. Yet the father as father alone is called good, and the son in the father is called just because of their relation of reciprocal love where the name 'just' indicates the equality of the power (*ek tês pros allêla scheseôs agapês isotêti memetrêmenon onoma dunameôs*). God is a

good balance who has shown his face to us in Jesus through whom we know God as from a set of balanced scales (paed 1.8.71.3). The father shares the goodness of the son, and the son shares the justice of the father. The highest rung of the ladder of being is not a rung, but a beam-balance.

We have looked a second time at this passage because here Clement tells us more than elsewhere concerning the reciprocity of father and son and their unity within the godhead. He shows that this divine ellipse not only includes the pinnacle of the Monad, but also moves down in the love of the father and the son for the salvation of men. So, then, those who believe are joined to the son and, in being joined to the son, are joined to the unity of the godhead, able to gaze on the face of God, which is his son. Clement's main ideas come, not from philosophy, but from the Fourth Gospel, where the unity of God is reciprocal as in the first ellipse and draws all who believe into the second ellipse of fellowship with the son and the father. The defining reality of God is therefore the love of the father for the son and son for father. This love is both the source of the divine activity within the world and also the mark of the salvation which that activity brings.

- (v) Father and son join believers together as members one of another (paed 3.12.101.1).

Consistent with the whole work, Clement brings his *Paedagogus* to a conclusion with a prayer to the logos, which declares the unity of father and son as the object of prayer. Having celebrated the work of the *paidagôgos* and the purity and innocence of the children of God, Clement offers a similar celebration in honour of the logos: 'Be merciful to your little children, O teacher, father, guide of Israel, the son and father, two in one, and lord' (paed 3.12.101.1). As we follow the commandments which God has given us, may we perfect the likeness of our image of God and experience as far as is possible the goodness of God, learning that he is not a merciless judge:

Do you yourself grant in all things that we may live in your peace, that we may be transferred to your city, that we may cross over without sinking in the tumultuous floods of sin, that we may be carried over a calm sea by the holy spirit, the inexpressible wisdom, and that by day as by night, until the last day, we may sing thankful praises to the only father and son, to the son and father, to the son who is instructor and teacher *and at the same time to the holy spirit*. All praise to the one, in whom are all things and by whom all are one, by whom is eternity, by whom we are all members together, to whom belongs the glory

through all ages. All praise to him who is good, all praise to him who is beautiful, all praise to him who is wise, all praise to him who is just. To him be glory now and to all ages. Amen.

Here the unity of God, of father and son, overflows to the salvation of the world in a second ellipse, so that those who receive the goodness of God are joined to him for all eternity, becoming members of one another in a third ellipse. Supporting material comes from every side.

- (a) The father commends the son (paed 1.11.97). The law prepares us for our true *paidagôgos*, and we have only one such instructor; he acts from within the first ellipse. He is the only true, good, just son, who is the image and likeness of God. He is Jesus, the logos of God, the *paidagôgos* to whom the father has entrusted us and whom the father explicitly commends to us: 'This is my beloved son. Listen to him!'
- (b) Looking from head to head (5.6.37.5). The golden mitre of the high-priest points to the royal power of the saviour who is the head of the church. He is the head who looks beyond to God, who is the head of Christ (5.6.38.1; 1 Cor. 11:3).
- (c) The first principle of all things is the image of the invisible God (5.6.38.6). As the lord is above the whole world, and indeed above the noetic or intelligible world, so the name which is on the breastplate of the high-priest is above all authority and power (Eph. 1:21; Phil. 2:9). He is called by the name of God, because he looks on the goodness of God as he acts (Jn 5:19). He is called the saviour God. He is first principle of all things, the image of the invisible God, the first who has shaped all who have come after him (Col. 1:15–18).
- (d) The father's power proceeds through the word (5.11.71.5). Moses asked of God, 'Show yourself to me.' This indicates that God cannot be taught or described by men, but only known by the power which proceeds from him (cf. Plotinus, Enn 6.9.6; 3.9.4–9). The object of our search is formless and invisible, and we can know God only as the grace of knowledge comes from God through his son.
- (e) The word proceeds from God (5.12.82.4). Here Clement, after speaking of the ineffable God in philosophical terms, quotes Paul's speech on the Areopagus (Acts 17: 22–31). Paul, according to Luke, speaks of the unknown God who is conceivable, understandable by divine grace and only by the word which comes from him.
- (f) Only the son can tell of the father (5.13.84.3–85.1). The Greeks, for all their wisdom, cannot give a clearer witness than can our saviour,

(who is son of God by nature) and the prophets (who have received their gift from God and are sons of God by ascription). The prophets are true witnesses of divine realities and they know that God himself has declared the scriptures through his son. As Plato puts it in the *Timaeus* (40e), he who speaks of his own descent is to be believed. And the words of our lord say the same thing: 'No one knows the father but the son and he to whom the son reveals' (Mt 11:27).

#### KNOWLEDGE, RECIPROCITY AND PHILOSOPHY

Reciprocity leads to knowledge of God. How, asks Clement, does Paul reach knowledge of God and his word? Paul is spiritual, a man of knowledge and a disciple of the holy spirit who is given by God and is the mind of Christ imparted to the believer (5.4.25.5). Without the son and the spirit there can be no knowledge of God. The voice of God leads into the shadow and darkness (*gnophos*), which is the impenetrable, shapeless world of ideas (2.2.6.1). Yet the same voice leads to him who rules the universe, who is hard to grasp and encapsulate and who is ever retreating from, and remaining aloof from, his pursuers. Only the wisdom, who made all things, can lead to God (2.2.5.3).<sup>14</sup>

#### *One thing as all things*

In his account of the logos as one thing as all things (4.25.155–162), the reciprocity of father and son is joined to the believer by faith. The argument has four steps: from son (one-many) to father (one) to son (one-many) to father (one). The unknown God is known, according to Plato, as mind by those who live as gods among men. The Eleatic stranger (Soph. 216ab), a dialectician, is such a stranger because he lives among the eternal ideas. What Plato attributed to the Coryphaeus in the *Theaetetus* (173c) is now found in perfect contemplation in the life Christ gives in the midst of death. The life-giving power of one spirit can be known in the son.

- (i) The indemonstrable unknown God is known in the son, who is wisdom, knowledge and truth.
- (ii) In him the powers of the spirit come together so that he is *ὡς πάντα εἶν* (4.25.156):

<sup>14</sup> Here Clement draws on Philo, Post. 18.

All the powers of the spirit, becoming together one thing, converge in the same point, the son; he cannot be described by listing each concept of his powers. For the son is not simply one thing as one, nor many things as parts, but one thing as all things. All things come from him. For he is the circle of all the powers rolled into one and united.

- (iii) As Alpha and Omega he joins the end to the beginning.
- (iv) Faith in him means that the believer becomes one as he is drawn together in an indissoluble unity (4.25.157.2).
- (v) The transformed life is described in all its heavenly dimensions.
- (vi) God is the unbegun first principle and the highest mystery. As being, he is the first principle of physics, as good he is the first principle of ethics, and as mind he is the first principle of logic.

Here the concept of the God who is mind moves beyond mind to the transcendent One and back to the universal son before moving to the one first principle. The powers of the spirit come together in the son, who is one thing as all things, 'the circle of all the powers rolled into one and united'.<sup>15</sup>

The power is universal, belongs to the father and provides the knowledge which gives life. Christ is the power of God, active everywhere and always (6.6.47.3f). The son is the power of the father, governing all things to the last detail (7.2.9.1), working all things with untiring and invincible power according to the father's will (7.2.5.4), as the undivided universal watchful power of God (3.10.69.1). All things are filled by our teacher's holy powers of creation, salvation, providence, prophecy and teaching (prot 11.112.1).

The powers belong to the father. The word of the father is his wisdom, goodness and almighty power and is truly divine, although he remains unknown to those who do not confess him (5.1.6.3). The son is God's will, symphony and harmony, word of God, arm of the Lord, power of the universe and the will of the father (prot 12.120.4).

God's power leads men to his knowledge and spreads through the universe to declare the light inaccessible (6.3.32.4). His providence works on us so that we must confess the only God (prot 10.103.1). The man of knowledge knows the son of God through the power of the father (6.15.132.4).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 4.25.156f. Cf. Plotinus, Enn. 5.1.7.

<sup>16</sup> Clement's use of Platonism and Plato's *Parmenides* to explain the reciprocity of father and son cannot be reduced to parallel words. Clement uses philosophy where Plato has seen a puzzle similar to that which concerns him, and this puzzle, so far from being isolated and identified by a mere citation, is a problem which engages the whole of Clement's thought.

Just as one God is related to the totality of the logos, so the believer must become one and be joined to him who is one thing as all things.

Clement's first concern is the knowledge of the God who moves in salvation to the entire universe. Clement's use of philosophy to clarify his understanding of scripture is more subtle than any collection of verbal parallels can show.

*Self-knowledge and the way to deification (paed 3.1.1, 2)*

Heraclitus helped Clement to claim, with the Fourth Gospel, that there could be a third god beside the father and the son, a god beside the son who was beside the father: 'that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me' (Jn 17:22). God became man that man might become God. How could this be explicable in terms of an apophatic theology? Clement turns first to Socrates and then to Heraclitus. The first of all studies is to know oneself. If one knows oneself, one will know God. This knowledge of God brings transformation, for like is known by like, and man is able to know God only as he is assimilated to him. He becomes like God by doing good and by requiring little. Only through a knowledge of God can the self be known. This theme of the Platonic tradition enables Clement to explain his second reciprocity.

The transformation of man is profound. It has nothing to do with external appearance; rather, the logos who is joined to man bestows on man his own form so that man becomes like God, with true beauty. This means that by the will of God, man becomes god. Heraclitus had said, 'Men are gods and gods are men' (DK 62). The incarnation is therefore not an isolated event, but rather the revelation of the final mystery of God, which is God in man and man in God. The word is the mediator, common both to God and men. He is son of God and saviour of men. He is servant of God and teacher of men. He left the form of God to take the form of a servant. He emptied himself that man might be filled. As Irenaeus said, God became what we are, that we might become what he is. The divine exchange is declared by the Fourth Gospel, where the word becomes flesh that men might see his glory and, seeing that glory, find life which is the light which comes from God.<sup>17</sup> The important thing here is that Clement, in order to explain the central mystery of a saving God,

<sup>17</sup> The best-known verse, 'The word became flesh . . . and we beheld his glory' is a chiasmus, which defines the exchange.

turns to Platonic self-knowledge and to Heraclitean interchange (paed 3.I.2).

To sum up, Clement's knowledge of the God beside God solves the puzzle of God beyond and within God. Clement describes the *via negativa* of Platonic abstraction which leads to the greatness of Christ (5.12.81f). His apophatic account of God ends in a claim that solely from God's word and grace comes the knowledge of God (5.12.82.4). In the end, reciprocity rules.

#### THE HELP OF HERACLITUS

Platonism remains with the ambivalence between simple and complex unity, between the simplicity and negativity of the first God and his designation as the mind which contains the world of ideas. This ambivalence is parallel to Clement's account of the God beside God. Middle Platonism leaves room for but cannot support the strong place which Clement gives to divine reciprocity. The hierarchy which emerges in later Platonism evades the Johannine claim on this point. In Alcinous, Aristotelian influence places the first *nous* prior to all else. The problem of Christian theology and especially of Clement was parallel to the problem in Middle Platonism until a hierarchy of being subordinated the one/all to the one/one.<sup>18</sup> Where, outside Platonism, might Clement have found illumination? We have seen that he turns to Heraclitus for his account of the deification of the believer. Indeed, Heraclitus is the most obvious choice for he speaks of the *hen* and *panta* as being reciprocally derived from one another. The *hen* is from the *panta* and the *panta* is from the *hen*. Yet one interpreter found little in Clement beyond scattered allusions and an epistemology of faith.<sup>19</sup> Another is equally negative. Clement, he says, uses Heraclitus for his own purposes.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Heraclitus (described, like Plato, as 'noble' or *gennaïos*) is quoted at

18 There have been many objections to Clement's appropriation of Platonic terms. C. Bigg (*The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1886), 65) insisted that Clement's account of the One was essentially pagan, with no basis in Christian belief at all, and marked the birth of Neo-Platonism. The transcendent One could not be the God and father of Jesus Christ, nor the God who had created the world and had disposed the order of its salvation.

19 Valentin, 'Héraclite'.

20 There is little direct engagement with Heraclitus' statements, it is claimed. Clement cites them and takes them for granted or uses them to prove an independent thesis of his own (e.g. Greek theft from the barbarian philosophy). Heraclitus is a support to Clement's argument, but never a source. He provides evidence to justify Christian opinion, to establish the misuse of philosophy by heretics and to provide phrases which may be used against a common enemy. H. Wisse, 'Heraklit bei Klemens von Alexandria' (Dissertation, Kiel, 1963), 282.

critical points of Clement's argument. Above all, Heraclitus' way of speaking, which is prophetic, apodeictic, abusive, obscure and aristocratic, commends itself to Clement. Clement agrees that the knowledge of many things is not enough and that faith must be set as a limit to philosophical reason.<sup>21</sup> It has been claimed that Clement finds in Heraclitus a moral philosopher rather than a theologian and that there is no place in Clement for the play of opposites which is central to Heraclitus.<sup>22</sup> Against these accounts,<sup>23</sup> I would suggest that it is precisely in the interplay of opposites that Heraclitus provides support for Clement's central claim about God. Indeed, Clement's answer to the question concerning the relation of father and son reflects the same reciprocity which Heraclitus expounds. 'O the great God! O the perfect child! Son in father and father in son!' (paed 1.5.24.3). The terminology of one (*hen*) and all things (*panta*) reinforces the presence of this reciprocity. Heraclitus insists that it is wise to confess that *panta* are *hen* (DK 50), that the *hen* is from *panta* and that *panta* are from the *hen* (DK 10), that the way up is the way down (DK 60), and that the beginning and end of a circle are the same (DK 103). We see the help of Heraclitus for Clement both in his account of the way to the one, where he moves from son to father and father to son, and in his account of the way to the one-all (*hen panta*), where he moves from father to son to father. Above all it is the interplay of opposites which indicates a deep affinity. 'Such a sport, Jove sports' (DG 52). A perceptive recent analysis shows the divine importance of '*il gioco*'.<sup>24</sup>

21 To sum up, Wisse identifies in Heraclitus those things which Clement finds of value: the contrast between true and false piety, judgement by fire, the virtues of faith and knowledge, the virtue of the fear of God and his law and the value of passionlessness, *apatheia*.

22 Wisse, 'Heraklit', 297. 'Das aber fehlt in der Betrachtung des Klemens vollständig: die Deutung der Phänomene des Kosmos durch die Lehre von den Gegensätzen in ihren verschiedenen Aspekten.' The long examination of Clement ends in the conclusion that Clement does not touch the genuine Heraclitus. He starts from a different point, he thinks in a different way, he is separated by historical distance which he does nothing to overcome. At the same time, for Clement Heraclitus has the seeds of the one truth in him and is akin to Plato. Clement is influenced, not directly but indirectly, through Justin, who found in Heraclitus a Christian before Christ. Finally, without Clement, we would know far less of Heraclitus, for Clement preserves fragments of Heraclitus which are not found elsewhere.

23 Valentin and Wisse do not say where Clement might have gained his passion for reciprocity and opposites.

24 A. M. Grosso, 'Clemente Alessandrino: il cristiano come "uomo che sa sorridere"' *Quaderni del dipartimento di filologia linguistica e tradizione classica*, 'Augusto Rostagni', Torino (2001), 219–42. See below, Conclusion, page 276 (Cheerfulness and coherence).

THREE ELLIPSES. FATHER:SON; GOD:WORLD;  
MAN:NEIGHBOUR

How does the God within God reveal the God beyond? Only as God beside God, as son who is in the father's embrace, can this be achieved. So the first ellipse is the bosom of the father, constituted by the love which holds all three ellipses together. Love is the uniting force of the divine being. The mysteries of love concern the bosom of the father which the only begotten God unites and has declared. 'God in his very self is love, and for love's sake he became visible to us. And while the unspeakable part is father, the part that has sympathy with us is mother' (q.d.s. 37.2). In his love, God became feminine, begetting from himself, and the fruit that is born of love is love. So the son came to earth as a man and endured our human existence, experienced our weakness, that we might in reciprocity experience his power. As he gives himself up as a ransom for the world, he leaves this testament, 'I give you my love' (cf. Jn 13:34; 14:27). This is the great love which he showed to each of us, laying down the life which is equal in value to the whole world, and in return we are to love one another in a reciprocal covenant with our saviour, sharing what we have, for he who does not love his brother is a murderer, and has no tender-hearted God, no hope of better things; he is without seed and without offspring; he is no branch of the ever-living heavenly vine. He is cut off; he awaits instant fire (q.d.s. 37). So Clement sees three ellipses: the mystery of love within the Godhead, re-enacted in incarnation and in human love. However abstract his account of God may seem, the essential element, which is *reciprocal love*, recurs in God's salvation of mankind and the love of man for neighbour.<sup>25</sup> He laid down his life which has the value (*antaxian*) of the whole world. He demands (*antapatei*) that we do the same for one another. When we admit such a reciprocal compact with the saviour (*sunthêkên pros tèn sôtêra anthônologêmetha*) (q.d.s. 37.4f),<sup>26</sup> we cannot hoard up the trivial, alien and transient things of the world. The three compounds of 'anti' show the dominance of reciprocity in

25 The incarnation is essential to Clement's philosophy, which promises the study, backed by good conduct, which leads through wisdom, the wisdom who made all things, to the ruler of the universe. This supreme ruler is hard to lay hold of, always retreats from his pursuers and keeps his distance. He is accessible only through the creative wisdom, who made all things (2.2.5.3; Philo, Post. 5–18). In commenting on the Gnostic subdivision of the *plêrôma*, Clement makes the central objection that there is no division between Jesus as the first born of creation and Jesus as the only begotten within the *plêrôma*. As John said, he who ascended is indeed the same who has also descended (Jn 3:13; Eph. 4:10) (exc 7.3.4).

26 See above, chapter 6, pages 132–42 (Divine reciprocity).

Clement's thought: the flow of the divine ellipse of father and son to the ellipse of God's saving love for man, and the ellipse of man's love for neighbour, is clear.

In this way, Clement elaborates the relation between father and son and illuminates the mystery of love which passes from God to man. The commandments, says Jesus, are to love God and love one's neighbour. In these, the concept of love is common. There is an order of love:<sup>27</sup> supremely, God must be loved, and secondly, the neighbour must be loved; but these loves cannot be divided. With his consistently christological exegesis, Clement asks who is the neighbour, and identifies him with Jesus, the saviour. Like the good Samaritan, Jesus has shown pity on those who were wounded and has given them healing. He has poured over wounded souls the wine which is the blood of the vine of David. He has given us the oil which is the pity from the father's heart and has shown the bonds of health and salvation which are love, faith and hope. He has put angels and principalities to his service, and we must love him as God and do what he says (Lk 6:46; Mt 13:16f; Jn 13:17) (q.d.s. 29). The love of God takes priority and demands every faculty of the soul. This supreme commandment indicates our response to the love of him who first loved us, who gave us being and to whom we owe thanks for every blessing we have received. Our love for God does not repay what he has done for us, for he is perfect and needs nothing, but it brings us to incorruption, 'for in proportion as a man loves God, he enters more closely into God' (q.d.s. 27.5).

The second ellipse indicates how the knowledge and love of God flows on. The supreme teaching which brings life is 'to know the eternal God as both giver of eternal gifts and as first, supreme one and good God' (q.d.s. 7). We can possess God through knowledge and apprehension as a firm beginning and foundation for life. This knowledge apprehends the God 'who truly exists and is the bestower of things that exist, that is of eternal things; in him the rest of things take their existence and continuance' (q.d.s. 7.2). Not to know him is death, but to know him fully, to be his friend, to love him, to grow in his likeness, is the way of life. This knowledge in the strict sense belongs, as Clement repeats many times, only to the son and to him to whom the son reveals the knowledge (q.d.s. 8.1).

There is another remarkable passage which shows the importance of the second ellipse. Clement has been speaking about the elect of God who withdraw from the world and who do not wish to appear holy, yet hide in

27 On Augustine's *ordo amoris*, see J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (London, 1936), 113–37.

the depth of their mind the unutterable mysteries. These are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, the seed which is God's image and likeness, his child and heir, sent here as a kind of foreign service by the father's dispensation. For the sake of this seed, all was created, and when this seed no longer remains on earth, then all things will be gathered back and the world will be dissolved (q.d.s. 36).

The first ellipse, which is the love of father for son, is followed by the second, which is love of God for man, and the third, which is love of man for neighbour. This is the mystery of love. In each case the love is reciprocal and linked to the other ellipses. The third ellipse is always present. If we begin from the neighbour we find that he is already identified with Jesus (Clement says elsewhere, 'You have seen your brother, you have seen your God'), and Jesus is identified with God because of his love. More important than the *homoousia* of the *Excerpta* is the love which descends from and ascends to the father and son.<sup>28</sup> For the being of God is God beside God, the reciprocal love between father and son. Jesus is the man who loves God the father as much as the father loves him.

#### WORD AND SPIRIT

What place do Clement's three ellipses leave for the holy spirit and the trinity? In depending so heavily on chapters 1 and 17 of the Fourth Gospel, can Clement provide a place for the 'other paraclete', the spirit of truth (Jn 14:16–20)? When he comes, the reciprocal knowledge and indwelling of father, son and believer will be evident (Jn 14:20). Because of the reciprocity of father and son, the spirit will lead into all truth, because he speaks from their fullness, not from himself, joining believer with father and son and thereby proliferating reciprocity (Jn 16:13–15).

For Clement, reciprocity proliferates from father and son to spirit. Standing close to the Fourth Gospel (prologue and chapter 17), and using one genuine epistle of Plato and one epistle by a later Platonist, he extended his account to the trinity. God, who is cause of all, is also father of the leader and cause (5.14.102; Plato, Ep. 6). More explicit is the citation from Epistle 2: 'The king of all things is their cause. Second and third to him are joined those who govern in second and third place.' Clement claims, using the categories of the Fourth Gospel, 'I cannot understand these words in any other way than as a reference to the holy

<sup>28</sup> See above, chapter 5, page 128, and exc 19.1.

trinity; for the third is the holy spirit and the second is the son through whom all things were made according to the will of the father' (5.14.103).<sup>29</sup>

For Clement, trinity is a matter of relation, but not in the Stoic formulation of Tertullian (Prax. 10).<sup>30</sup> Clement's trinitarian theology sees the reciprocity of father and son proliferated in the spirit. The trinity is a proliferation of divine reciprocity. This is well grounded in the Johannine account of the reciprocity of father with spirit and son with spirit (Jn 14:15–20; 16:7–15).

- (i) Word and spirit make God known, comprise reality and work man's salvation. Spirit works through word. For Clement, the reciprocity of word and spirit is clear on every hand. Spirit is the strength of the word as blood is of flesh (paed 2.2.19). The lord is spirit and word (paed 1.6.43). The word of God is spirit incarnate (paed 1.6.43). As with Paul and Justin, all the powers of the spirit terminate in the son (4.25.156f). As the divine word, by his providence, rules and presides, the holy spirit, like a magnet, attracts the virtuous in their different degrees and grades (7.2.9).
- (ii) The word is universal, diffused like the sun over all things (7.3.21). The word is all eye, seeing all, hearing all and knowing all (7.2.5). God is all ear and all eye, if we may be permitted to use those expressions (7.7.37). By the holy spirit, the word orders the cosmos (prot 1.5.3). The Pythagoreans have rightly spoken of God as within the world, one mind and vital power holding all together (prot 6.72). God is a god who draws near, remote in essence but near in the power which holds all things in its embrace (2.2.5). Within this universal word all are called to take their place in the harmony of the divine will (prot

29 See C. Marksches, 'Platons König oder Vater Jesu Christi?' in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult: im Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt*, ed. M. Hengel et al (Tübingen, 1991), 385–439. Clement is the first and only Christian theologian for whom the metaphor of king has the same central function as it has for Plato. However, 'Platons König und Jesu Vater waren in bestimmten Kreisen längst und selbstverständlich identifiziert; Clemens bietet nur die systematische Darstellung und Begründung dieser Selbstverständlichkeit' (429).

30 The final Stoic category 'relative disposition' arises out of the distinction between 'sweet and bitter' on the one hand and 'father and son' on the other. 'Sweet and bitter' point to intrinsic qualities which are also in a certain disposition to one another. 'Father and son' do not point to intrinsic qualities but only to a disposition. This final category is *relatively disposed* and comprises 'all those whose nature it is to become and cease to be a property of something *without internal change* or qualitative alteration, as well as to look towards what lies outside'. See Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, first theologian of the West* (Cambridge, 1997), 126. 'If, then, despite being unaffected in themselves they change because of something else's disposition relative to them, it is clear that relatively disposed things have their existence in their disposition alone and not through any differentiation.' Simplicius, *On Aristotle's categories* 165.32–166.29 (15–29). SVF 2.403; LS 29c.

- 9.88). Truth is a universal presence; since God is everywhere, an oath is always inappropriate (7.8.51). Similarly, the spirit is one and the same everywhere (paed 1.6.42); his is no static identity, but he works through all things (5.6.38).
- (iii) In truth and knowledge, the spirit is intellectually active. Those who possess the holy spirit search the deep things of God, that is, they grasp the secret that is in the prophecies (2.2.7). The man of knowledge is united to the spirit by unending love (7.7.44). The prophetic and teaching spirit works through the mind or *nous* (1.9.45). The spirit is above all the spirit of prophecy, who speaks in both the Old and New Testament (passim). The truth of the scriptures comes from the divine word, for Plato insisted that truth could only be learnt from God or from the off-spring of God (6.15.123).
  - (iv) Spirit joins intelligence to holiness. It is the spirit who wings the believer to the Jerusalem above (4.26.172). In the face of death, the spirit of the father testifies in him (4.9.73). Worship in the spirit is secret prayer (1.6.34). Spirit is the light of truth, indivisibly distributed to all who are sanctified by faith (6.16.138). In spite of Clement's strong bias against materialism, the New Testament and Stoic insistence on the importance of the body comes through. The body is dignified by the holy spirit through the sanctification of soul and body (4.26).
  - (v) Word and spirit continue to proliferate in the work of salvation. Spirit blows on man as on a pipe (prot 1.5). The holy spirit anoints and brings a sweet fragrance (paed 2.8.61). The work of the spirit is continuous in old and new covenants (exc 24). The spirit leads to immortality (paed 2.2.20) and pours down on men from heaven (paed 1.6.28). Mouth and body may, like a lyre, be plucked by the spirit (paed 2.4.41), who is the mouth of the lord (prot 9.82). Father, son and holy spirit are all in one, in whom is all (paed 3.12.101). The spirit is the third (5.14.103), and Plato spoke of him, pointing to the holy trinity (*ibid.*).

All these points – active, saving power, universality, intellect and truth – are found in the decisive passage for the doctrine of the trinity in Clement (4.25). Here *nous* is called the place of the ideas, following Plato, and *nous* is God. Now God cannot be the object of proof and demonstration; but the son is wisdom and knowledge and truth. 'All the powers of the spirit become collectively one thing, and come together in the same

point – the son.’ According to Posidonius and Philo, the cosmos was governed by a system of powers, which took the place of the forms of Plato and the immanent logos of the earlier Stoics. A still stronger influence on Clement was the concept of the manifold powers of the spirit in the Old Testament and especially in Paul (1 Cor. 12). The son is one thing as all things, the circle of the powers rolled into one, a metaphor which Plotinus was later to use. Indeed the parallel with Plotinus – one, one-many, one and many (Enn 5.1.8) – is striking.<sup>31</sup> To believe is to become one in this unity of the son, while to disbelieve is to be separated, estranged, divided. To be one in Christ is to be pure, free from the sin which separates from God, to be born again to a life of righteousness, to serve God with our whole being in the world which he has made, and to exchange an earthly for a heavenly life.

Modern objections to the doctrine of the trinity do not have the same force when the trinity is seen in terms of the relation of reciprocity. For this relation proliferates from father and son to spirit and then to the ultimate union of believers in God. Reciprocity is the heart of the divine mystery of love whereby God is joined to man.<sup>32</sup>

It is clear why a modern theologian claimed that Clement and Origen gave a more adequate account of the holy spirit than other theologians. The activity of the spirit in the created world, as it has been renewed by Christ’s recapitulation, is more direct than in other accounts.<sup>33</sup>

But this theology possessed the one thing necessary, a full and proportionate concept of God’s nature and work. It had, what no subsequent age has yet recovered, a real doctrine of the continuity and energy of God’s working in the world – that is, a worthy theology of the Holy Spirit. Clement may have assigned to the *Logos* the functions of the Spirit: Origen may have failed to discriminate clearly between the functions of the Second and Third Persons of the trinity: but both of them had the root of the matter in their lives and in their thought. For

31 The parallel is incomplete because Plotinus subordinates the second and third hypostases to the first.

32 The stimulating work of G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit* (Oxford, 1977), is the best example and points to reciprocity. For Lampe, the classical doctrine of the trinity is, in the end, less satisfactory than the unifying concept of God as spirit. It is too hierarchical and not sufficiently direct. Arius the heretic had given wrong questions as well as wrong answers, and those who rejected his answers still accepted his questions. Going behind these questions, Lampe insists that Jesus is divine because the one God revealed himself and acted decisively for man in Jesus. The holy spirit is divine because the same God is here and now, not far from everyone as creator and saviour spirit: ‘for in Him we live and move, in him we have our being, in us, if we consent to know and trust him, he will create the Christ-like harvest: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control’ (228).

33 See Raven, *Good news*, 100.

them the constant, vitalising activity of God at work in His world was the essential element of their teaching. It is infinitely regrettable that the lines which they laid down so well were never followed.

In the great creeds the holy spirit was neglected and the rich content of logos doctrine lost.

Nor had the functions of the *Logos* as creative energy in nature and history and the divine and educative reason in men been transferred, as they should surely have been, to the Holy Spirit. That great name, in some sense the centre and theme of Apostolic Christianity, was now a *nomen nudum*, a word without content, a formula in prayers, a clause, but a bare clause, in the Creed of Nicea.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.



### PART III

## *Faith and Salvation*

#### INTRODUCTION TO PART III

'Faith is the one universal salvation of mankind'  
(paed 1.6.30.2)

Faith is a simple thing which, like the parabolic mustard seed, grows and branches out magnificently; it is linked to divine knowledge which is life eternal. Salvation is the sovereignty of grace, God's kingdom as it comes on earth, a hidden power of healing which transforms and sustains the universe. The son, the divine saviour, is at the peak of the pyramid of reality. From him, grace descends to enliven and illuminate all things.

Clement's final problem was the simplicity and infinity of faith and salvation. Faith is not passive acceptance, but the explosive force of a new beginning, a rebirth to new life, a renewing of the mind to the tireless activity which searches for the 'best reason'. Similarly, salvation stretches through the universe to all eternity.<sup>1</sup>

Clement's source again is scripture. For this reason, we begin from Clement's use of Paul (including Hebrews) on the subject of faith. The verses which he cited point to his concern with the gospel as Paul had proclaimed it. The first chapters of the First Letter to the Corinthians, a verse from Romans and the eleventh chapter of Hebrews provide the evidence in Clement's text.

- I. *Power of God.* Faith is set by Paul in opposition to the wisdom of the wise, which God has destroyed and replaced by the folly of the kerygma which saves believers. Christ crucified is to faith the power and wisdom of God, whose weakness is stronger than all human

1 Clement's interesting arguments for faith combine Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean and Aristotelian concepts. He wishes to present faith in terms that will be understood by all human beings. God wants us to live rationally and well, and an approach should be made to all on grounds which seem to them to be reasonable.

intellect (1 Cor. 1:19–24). Paul appeared weak and fearful to the Corinthians and abstained from eloquence and argument. This he did, so that their faith might not be in human wisdom, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:5). When human teachers are exalted, the central claim of the gospel to be the power of God is ignored. God is the farmer who grows the fruit of faith and the builder who builds the house of faith (1 Cor. 3:9). All comes from his grace and all is built upon the foundation of Christ. The outward folly and feebleness of the gospel is extreme. The apostles are last in the show, according to God's dispensation, and they are a spectacle of contempt to the world, angels and men (1 Cor. 4:9, 11–13). Those who are puffed up will be discredited by Paul when he comes to Corinth. The kingdom of God is not revealed in their pretentious way of speaking, but only in the power of God (1 Cor. 4:19, 20).

2. *Perception.* Paul and Clement speak of the wonders which are visible to the eye of faith: 'what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into man's heart.' These are the things which God prepared for those who love him (1 Cor. 2:9). The common crowd, says Clement, will stay with their five senses; but believers must go within the veil. We walk by faith, not by the sight of the eyes (5.6.34).
3. *Divine mystery.* The perceived wonders of God's revelation have been disclosed to us through the spirit. The spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God. These deep things of God, said Clement, are found in the scriptures, which are to be understood through the spirit. Faith depends upon scripture and the mystery which is the wisdom of the spirit (1 Cor. 2:10, 13).
4. *Hope.* Faith, says Clement, is denigrated by the Greeks, but it is what they recognise as a deliberate anticipation or preconception (*prolēpsis hekousios*). Hebrews 11 has offered the same defence of faith: faith gives substance to our hopes and takes them as real (2.2.8). The structure which the believer builds on the foundation of Jesus Christ is built in hope. The fire will reveal whether it can stand the test of God's judgement. Clement sees this edifice as the structure of knowledge built on faith in Christ (5.4.26.1).
5. *Magnificent faith.* Clement quotes Paul (Rom. 1:11f) on the common faith which he holds with his readers and then on the righteousness of God which is revealed from faith to faith (Rom. 1:17). Paul speaks, says Clement, of:

a double faith or rather a single faith which is capable of growth and perfection. For the common faith remains as the foundation. . . The other, the higher faith, builds on the first and is perfected with the believer. With study it achieves its goal of obedience to the commands of the logos. This was the disposition of the apostles of whom it was said that their faith could move mountains and transplant trees. Consequently, perceiving the greatness of this power, they asked that faith might be increased in them, the faith which, like a grain of mustard seed, stimulates the soul for good and grows in it magnificently so that the loftiest reasons rest upon it.

(5.1.2,3)

Faith is the grain of mustard seed which, far from being a fixed deposit, grows into knowledge, exactly as Platonic reasoning stops only when it reaches the best reason.

#### PAUL AND PLATO, LOVERS OF TRUTH

‘Love which rejoices in the truth’ (1 Cor. 13:6; q.d.s. 38.2). These words were taken by a modern expositor of Paul as the best summary of Paul’s theology.<sup>2</sup> The love of truth was the theme of Justin, who found it in the *Apology* of Plato. If we want a central point on which to hang the relation of Clement and Plato, it is the love of truth. At the beginning of the *Stromateis*, Clement makes the remarkable claim that on the believer alone rests the head of the universe, the kind and gentle logos (1.3.23.2f). God is the cause of all good things, some principally and others as a consequence or corollary (1.5.28.2). He is the cause principally of the Old and New Testaments and the cause, as a corollary, of Greek philosophy. However, one may also say that perhaps to the Greeks he is the cause principally of philosophy (1.5.28.3).

Philosophy is the inquiry into truth and the nature of things; this truth is that of which Christ claimed, ‘I am the truth’ (1.5.32.4). Clement sees philosophy, like the law, as a gift from God, to be superseded, like the law, by the grace which comes through Christ. The sophists (1.8.39) are not concerned with truth, but with pleasing the mob and the pursuit of glory. In contrast, Plato, ‘the lover of truth, as if inspired by God’, declared his sole aim to be obedience to that logos which upon examination appeared best (1.8.42.1; Crito 46b).<sup>3</sup> Clement links faith to Platonic reason and thereby confirms Paul’s commitment to the love of truth.

2 E. Käsemann, ‘Liebe die sich der Wahrheit freut’, *Kirchliche Konflikte*, I (Göttingen, 1982), 157–67.

3 ὡς ἐγὼ τοιοῦτος ὁποῖος οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ ἢ τῷ λόγῳ πείθεσθαι, ὃς ἂν μοι σκοποῦμένῳ βέλτιστος φαίνεται (1.8.42.1).

## SALVATION AND A NEW WORLD

'Faith is strength to salvation and power to eternal life' (2.12.53). The sovereign grace of Christ spreads from him as cause of being, goodness and truth, preserving the universe by his powers and leading it on. He has turned the world into an ocean of blessings. This is the new creation into which the believer is born by faith. The whole of the new creation is a saving activity. Every part does something to carry the world forward and to lift it higher. It is saving and being saved. Its hierarchy expands the Platonic world of forms. It is powerful as the *energeia* of God. The world culminates in the ever-present word whose light penetrates everywhere and casts no shadow.

The pre-eminence of the son as the power of God is marked by reciprocity (7.2.7.4, 6); he is the most original word (*archikôtatos*) of the father and existed before all things came to be. He must be saviour and lord of all, since his activity springs from the God who rules all.

The final element of the apostolic kerygma – the inauguration of a new world – governs Clement's thought. The day of resurrection is the renewal of the world. It is evident that the kingdom of heaven has come. Closer to our own day, Novalis was to write the same thing.

Dass bald an allen Orten tagt  
 Das neue Himmelreich.  
 Jetzt scheint die Welt dem neuen Sinn  
 Erst wie ein Vaterland;  
 Ein neues Leben nimmt man hin  
 Entzückt aus seiner Hand.  
 . . . Er lebt, und wird nun bei uns sein,  
 Wenn alles uns verlässt!  
 Und so soll dieser Tag uns sein  
 Ein Weltverjüngungs-Fest.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Novalis, *Geistliche Lieder* ix. Novalis, *Schriften*, I (3rd edn. Stuttgart, 1977), 170. See below, Conclusion.

## CHAPTER 7

### *The Spark and ferment of faith (exc 1.3)*

Clement's account of faith indicates the two sources of all his work: derivation from scripture and use of philosophy. In scripture he now begins from Paul,<sup>1</sup> first from Corinthians and then from Romans. His main points may be set out. The act of faith unifies the believer in dependence on one object and source, namely the power of God. Faith is achieved through an interaction between believer and God, between reasoning and perception, between seeking and finding. Faith is joined to knowledge by reciprocity (2.4.16.2) in a process of growth. Faith has a firm beginning, continuity and a necessary development. Faith is a rational act and sees the whole divine economy under one God. We shall look at these points in their order.

#### THE POWER OF GOD AND THE UNITING FORCE OF FAITH

The wisdom of the world is folly before God, on whose power faith continually depends (1.11.50; 1 Cor. 3:19f; 2 Cor. 1:9, 10; 1 Cor. 2:1–5). Faith unites the believer in one obedience and one dependence. This is his sole possession, the unique good which no one can take away; most precious, it joins him to the one who suffered, and it flows out in good works to his fellow-men. Pretensions are denied and the glory of the world is stripped away, so that God alone is followed (paed 2.3.36.2).

The certainty of faith looks to the power of God. The cable of faith joins the believer to this power in unbroken solidarity (paed 1.4.10.1). Faith follows one creed in singleness of life (4.8.67.1). Here Clement notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Schneemelcher, 'Paulus in der griechischen Kirche des zweiten Jahrhunderts', *ZKG* 75 (1964), 19f. Wrongly, Paul's influence in the second century is claimed to be minimal. Even in Irenaeus, there are differences, although Irenaeus wishes to be a biblical theologian. Clement's use of Paul has been widely denigrated. 'Eisegese statt Exegese' (Köhler). It would be tedious to show where the sad cavalcade (listed by Schneider (*Theologie*, 7–13)) went wrong. However, as a beginning, see my 'Paul and Plato in Second-Century Ethics', *StudPatr* 15 (1984), 474–85.

common ground with philosophy. There is a Pythagorean saying that 'man ought to become one'. Just as God is one in his perpetual out-flow of good things, so the believer who receives from God becomes a unity (4.23.151.3). Man is assimilated to God by faith. God is the anchor by which he is drawn to the divine unity (4.23.152.2) and becomes a unit (*monadikos*). To disbelieve is to be divided and confused; to believe is to be indivisibly made one in God (4.25.157.2).

The unity of faith brings light to the world. Wise souls, pure as virgins, bring light to darkness as they search and wait for truth (5.3.17.3). The union of the believer to God joins 'like to like' in a reciprocity which enables a man *from his own ideas* to come to faith in the truth (5.3.18.6). The focus of faith is the supreme power of God. Only through God can truth and goodness be found. It is pure accident if those who do not know God do good; like all men, Abraham was justified by faith alone and there is no point in good works if they are done without faith.

The antithesis between faith and human wisdom in 1 Cor. 1 and 2 becomes the antithesis between faith and works in Romans. Clement follows Paul: 'that your faith should not stand on the wisdom of men but on the power of God' (1 Cor. 2:5) (1.11.50.3; 5.1.9.2). Clement sets out clear antitheses: on the one hand there is learning and practice, on the other hand there is power and faith; on the one hand there is talk about truth, on the other hand truth speaks and interprets itself; on the one hand we may guess at truth, on the other hand truth itself stands above all conjecture. The teaching of piety is a gift (*dôrea*), while faith is grace itself (*charis*). Clement's contrast joins Paul to John, where the law is given to Moses but grace and truth come through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17). Through grace, men know the will of God by doing it. Continuing his antitheses, Clement contrasts the many paths of salvation with the one gate of the lord, the true and royal entrance. There are many gates, but the one gate of righteousness is in Christ (1.7.38.7).

Even when speaking, with Paul, of the sovereign power of God, Clement finds parallel points among the Greeks. Empedocles speaks the truth but knows that belief is difficult, indicating that faith in the power of God is greater than the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 2:5) (5.1.9.1f). Numa, a Pythagorean king, built a temple to faith and peace (5.1.8.4). The sublimity of faith was displayed in Abraham, whose new name means 'sublime father' (5.1.8.5).

The power of God as first principle provides a basis for faith. Here faith finds a criterion for truth and a source beyond proof from which flow many proofs (7.16.95f). We shall see, when we consider the arguments for

faith (chapter 8), that one unprovable first principle is necessary for any argument. Infinite regress provides no basis for thought. Once the first principle has been grasped, it leads on from what is already believed to new beliefs (8.3.6.7–7.8).

#### RECIPROCITY OF FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

Faith and knowledge are joined by a 'divine sequence and reciprocity' (2.4.16.2). Clement is concerned to reject the Gnostic division of Christians into two classes of people – believers and Gnostics. The distinction derives from Paul's separation of soul-people (*psychikoi*) and spirit-people (*pneumatikoi*)<sup>2</sup> (1 Cor. 2:6, 12–15). Clement denies that he and most Christians are soul-people (4.13.89–94) whose simplicity is surpassed by the gnosis of those who possess a spiritual seed (2.3.10.2–11). In a long defence of simple believers (paed 1.6), he begins with an account of baptism (paed 1.6.25.2–32.1) as illumination, knowledge and perfection. Paul's contrast between milk and meat could point to a difference between what is given now and what is reserved until after death (paed 1.6.36f). It could also point to an identity between milk and meat (paed 1.6.42.1) which proves that the way of the believer is not childish but spiritual.

Another defence of faith makes it the foundation on which perfection is built (5.4.26.1). Paul divides those who build a superstructure of gold, silver and precious stone from heretics who build wood, hay and stubble. Perhaps the chief verse that Clement turns to for a defence of faith is Eph. 4:13, where the unity of faith is identified with knowledge of the son of God and the fullness of Christ. This is the goal of every believer.

For all its simplicity, the ferment of faith spreads through different kinds of reciprocity. Faith is twofold, in that no one knows the father but the son and he to whom the son reveals him. There is reciprocity both between father and son and between son and believer. Jews slip and fall because they do not have the duality of faith in son and father on which to stand (7.18.109.3f).

The reciprocity of faith also links the believer's faith with the trustworthiness of the object of faith. Jesus said, 'Whatever you ask, if you ask in prayer with faith, you will obtain.' Pindar has a similar idea when he says, 'Nothing is trustworthy for those who lack faith' (paed 3.12.92.4).

2 I owe this terminology to J. L. Kovacs.

Reciprocity affirms a distinction but denies a separation of faith from knowledge or the son from the father. For belief in the son implies faith in his coming, his purpose, his cross and his divine sonship. There can be no knowledge without such faith and no faith without knowledge, just as there can be no father without son and no son without father. Only the son can teach the truth concerning the father. One must know the son in order to believe in the father, and to know the father one must believe in the son, that he is the son of God who teaches us concerning God. So we go to knowledge through faith and to the father through the son. The true rule of knowledge, which points to knowledge of father and son, attains and comprehends the truth through the truth. Antithesis is evident because we believe in him who is not believed and know him who is not known by all; however, the spark of faith prevails, for he is believed and known by a few, who do not merely describe him, but contemplate and perceive him (5.1.1).

Faith is the ear of the soul; hearing is perceiving (5.1.1-5). The link with hearing is later developed by Clement through a singular analogy. Faith does not listen to all who speak rashly. Just as cups when handled by their ears can lose those ears, so verbal stupidities can corrupt the pure hearing of faith. The ears of cups are the handles which through careless use may be lost (5.1.12.3). Selective listening is part of faith, and the practice of discrimination. Children hold the ears of parents and siblings while they kiss. Love is linked with listening, and God is love, known to those who love, as he is faithful and taught to those who are faithful (5.1.13.1). We must adapt ourselves to God's love because like is seen only by like (5.1.13.2).

A reciprocity of ignorance and knowledge belongs as much to faith as to philosophy. We move from ignorance to seeking, to finding, to believing and to hoping. Socrates (1 Alc. 109e) pointed to the need for seeking from a position of acknowledged ignorance (5.3.17.1f). Another kind of reciprocity provides the basis for symbolic expression. Symbols can only be understood as we compare spirit with spirit and discern spiritual meaning by and for the spirit (5.4.19.3).<sup>3</sup>

Reciprocity leads to growth. The pinnacle of progress is the martyr who truly believes and is faithful through love (4.4.13f). It cannot be, as the heretic Heracleon claims, that public confession by word of mouth before authorities is inferior to inner faith. Rather, faith and conduct join in

3 This is Clement's true dialectic.

the public confession of the martyr (4.9.71.1f). This is the faith which is the light of the world, as it shows up the poverty of unbelief. The excellence of martyrdom is confirmed by Plato (Apol. 30cd), who tells how Socrates was unwilling to change his conduct even if threatened with a hundred deaths. The accusers of Socrates were in greater danger than Socrates, for God's law does not permit a better man to be harmed by a worse (cf. Psalm 118:6; Wisd. 3:1) (4.11.80.5). The heretical and foolish denigration of martyrdom as retribution for sins would imply that faith and doctrine cooperate to cause the punishment of the martyr. No place is then left for the faith or love or praise of the martyr (4.12.85.3).

The growing seed of faith brings many gifts to the fullness of Christ. Clement speaks (following Eph. 4) of the many gifts which lead to the unity of faith in the knowledge of the son of God, to perfect humanity and the stature of the perfection of Christ. The differences between *charismata* (of which Homer also speaks) point to varieties of perfection, which are joined in the oneness of faith and the final perfection of Christ (4.21.132.1-3).

When Paul speaks of righteousness revealed by the movement of faith to faith (Rom. 1:17), he shows that faith is twofold but not of two kinds. There is one faith, which grows continuously from common faith, which is the foundation of the ascending faith which builds on it. Faith is the grain of mustard seed which bites the soul so that it grows into a tree on which the highest reasons fly to rest (5.1.2.3f). The power of faith moves through a sequence from a common faith to higher faith. The common faith is the foundation of salvation as it is of knowledge: 'Thy faith has saved thee' (5.1.2.5). The higher faith is built on this foundation and grows to perfection through study and obedience. It becomes the apostolic faith, which is able to move mountains (5.1.2.6). The power of faith is evident when it decides a question where contradictory answers carry equal force. Faith chooses in the face of this indecision or ambivalence (5.1.5.3).

All men do not reach the highest good; but the free choice of faith goes on. It requires a zeal for goodness, a healthy mind to pursue the good, with the help of divine grace, right teaching and pure disposition. It moves beyond the senses to truth, to the vision of God, face to face, which is granted to the pure in heart as their final perfection (5.1.7.1-7). Faith is active in investigation and never inert and solitary; only those who seek will find (Mt 7:7), as both Sophocles and Menander confirm (5.1.11.1).

Using again Paul's two metaphors of building on a foundation and moving from milk to solid food, Clement describes knowledge as built on

the Pauline foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only foundation for faith (5.4.26.1, 4). Guided by true faith, the path to knowledge mixes true philosophy and the interpretation of prophetic imagery through constant perusal of scripture (5.9.56.3).

From faith grows solid proof because truth follows from what God has handed on (6.8.70.3). The need for progress to knowledge remains, since faith is incomplete when it is chosen simply to avoid future punishment. Fear, while good, falls short of the sufficiency of knowledge (6.12.98.3). Faith needs works. Jesus said 'Thy faith has saved thee' to a Jew who had already achieved the works and needed only faith for salvation (6.14.108.4). There is always progress, for the spark burns brighter and the seed grows. Knowledge is more than belief: to be judged worthy of highest honour after being saved is more than simply being saved (6.14.109.2). Faith is perfected by knowledge and moves through knowledge to love. Faith is the beginning and love the end of piety; remarkably, neither can be taught; they must be chosen and received. The progress of faith ends in the heights of love (7.10.55, 56); those who walk about Zion and tell its towers are themselves lofty and tall, as they stand secure in faith and knowledge (7.13.83.5).

For Clement a decisive link between faith and philosophy, including Platonic philosophy, is mental perception. Both Empedocles and Parmenides see with the mind (5.2.15.4), just as he, who hopes and believes, sees with the mind present ideas and future events. For the world of intellectual ideas, contemplated by the mind, is the logos, who is truth (5.3.16.1). Because it is vision, faith should never be blind and must be exercised rationally. Blind belief, which cannot see truth, has done bad things, whereas unbelief exercises the sinews of the mind. Yet to disbelieve truth brings death, while to believe the truth brings life. Faith directed to the wrong object can have disastrous effects, for to believe a lie brings death (4.3.8.1-4). Belief and disbelief must be exercised, with discrimination, towards diverse objects.

Faith depends on the scriptures, which have absolute authority and display the whole economy of God (4.1.2.2), which includes the Old Testament. In argument, Paul depends on the Old Testament and breathes and speaks from it; indeed, faith in Christ and knowledge of the gospel come from exposition and fulfilment of the law. That is why it is said to Hebrews, 'Unless you believe, you will not understand' (Is. 7:9). Christ himself expounded the Old Testament by his own coming (4.21.134.3, 4). Basilides, by his claim for innate faith without the rational

assent of a free soul, rejects the divine economy: if faith were implanted by nature there would have been no need for the coming of the saviour (5.1.3.2f). Marcion is also wrong, when he removes the good God from the process of salvation (5.1.4.2–4). Scripture is needed finally to convey what God has placed beyond the limits of our rational enquiry; not to believe these things means not to understand (*apistoi, anoëtoi*) (5.1.5.1).

#### FAITH AS CREATIVE WONDER

Faith, by its simplicity, may be contrasted with complex knowledge. Yet the wonder of faith gains a complexity through its relation to philosophy, knowledge and virtue.

#### *Faith and philosophy*

Just as Paul does not disparage the Old Testament, says Clement, so he also regards philosophy as valuable. Yet to rely on philosophy alone is a regression similar to that which returns from faith to the law (Heb. 5:12), for philosophy regresses to the elements of the world (6.8.62.1–4). God's plan included the pagans, to whom God gave philosophy as well as the sun, moon and stars to be a path by which they might ascend to God. Hence God may justly judge pagans (6.14.110.3). From the universal providence of the divine logos, some have chosen to join themselves to the logos and be perfected by faith. Faith is common to all who choose to follow the universal logos (7.2.8).

Philosophy, when by faith it receives divine power, is transplanted into the goodness of knowledge. Without this divine gift, it is like a wild olive tree, wild in its eagerness and undigested concepts. But when the wild olive is grafted into the logos who is truly good and merciful, it receives such nourishment that it becomes a good olive tree (6.15.118.1).

Faith and philosophy may go together provided the primacy of faith is guarded. Philosophy may serve faith as a colleague in wonder (7.11.60.1) and then become a friend (7.11.62.7). For all knowledge begins from wonder, as Plato (*Theaet.* 155d), the Tradition of Matthias and the Gospel of the Hebrews declare. The Gospel of the Hebrews points to a movement from wonder to sovereignty and final rest. Ignorance and philosophy cannot go together, for philosophy points to the desire for true being and all that is appropriate to this end. It leads to assimilation to God, who is the saviour, to serving the God of the universe through the

great high-priest, who is the logos. Through him alone we see what is good and right as our piety follows the footprints of God (2.9.45; (cf. *paed* 1.12.98.3).

The primacy of faith depends upon the power of God and has all the force of truth. It moves mountains, it heals the sick and raises the dead (2.11.48f). Is there any place for human wisdom? At the beginning of 1 Corinthians, Paul contrasts faith with the wisdom of the world and insists that faith must depend not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God. Yet there are many ways of wisdom, which all lead to the true way of faith. Those who hold to God's providence and economy will not stumble as they make their way towards faith. They must not be wise in their own eyes and must not deny the providence of God. They must fear God, who alone is powerful and free from evil, and who forms them either through the path of pain or the gift of incorruption (2.2.4.2-4).

The barbarian philosophy, which is the philosophy of faith, is alone perfect and true because it depends on knowledge of real existences. It has taught the nature of things visible and intellectual. Because its teacher is wisdom and is the maker of all things, this philosophy leads to the creator king of the universe, to the distant God who has now come near (*Jer.* 23:23). This ineffable wonder is the nearness of the power of God, who is always present, watching, doing good and training those who believe in him and yet at the same time remaining above any thoughts, images or places men might envisage. He rests above, delighting in his creation (2.2.5.1-6.4).

Faith depends on the scriptures, which are the voice of God (2.2.9.6), and only by faith can we reach the first principle of all things, which is the foundation of all knowledge (2.4.14.1). For faith gives a new eye, ear and heart to grasp new things. These come to the disciples of the lord as they are moved by the spirit (2.4.15.3). Because of this direct access to God, who is the first principle of all things, faith becomes the criterion of knowledge (2.4.15.5). The Pythagoreans founded their beliefs on the word of their master, and this is how we regard the words of scripture (2.5.24.3). For faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from the word of God (2.6.25.1). We can only call on him whom we have believed. Faith depends on the teaching and preaching of the word of the lord who is the son of God. This word stands in no need of proof. Faith hears it in a reciprocal response. The activity of word and faith resembles a ball game. What is thrown must be caught, what is said in the word of the lord must be received; from the rhythm and the rules of the game, faith proceeds (2.6.25.2-4).

The reciprocity of faith is well declared by this metaphor, which has in modern times been used by Rilke and quoted by Gadamer on the title page of his work, *Truth and method*.<sup>4</sup>

Catch only what you've thrown yourself, all is  
mere skill and little gain;  
but when you're suddenly the catcher of a ball  
thrown by an eternal partner  
with accurate and measured swing  
towards you, to your centre in an arch  
from the great bridge-building of God  
why catching then becomes a power –  
not yours a world's.

The faithful servant hears the faithful God. Faith ascends to something which is strong, and what is more powerful than God? (2.6.27.3f). The movement from unbelief to belief is so great a change that the power of God must be present. When we begin to believe through hope and fear, God is active in our first movement towards salvation (2.6.31.1). Barnabas speaks of the movement from faith to knowledge and shows how faith is helped by fear and patience as the battle of faith continues. In the good fight of faith, long-suffering and self-control are its allies (2.6.31.2).

*Faith generates knowledge*

The way to knowledge begins with wonder (7.11.60.1), which inspires the total dedication of the disciple to the lord, the exploration of every source and the determination to search below the surface of things. In this vigorous pursuit, faith is essential. The dependence of knowledge on faith displays a reciprocal relation. Knowledge offers proof of the truths which the true philosophy of faith, the wisdom taught by God, puts forward (2.11.48.1–3). The man of knowledge is fixed by faith, for wisdom cannot depend on what is unstable. Cain went out from the face of God to a place of agitation (Naid), a place where the commandments were ignored, where instability governed the billowing sea into which he plunged; but there was a stable alternative in Eden which offered the delights of faith,

4 Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 'Solang du Selbstgeworfnes fängst, ist alles/Geschicklichkeit und lässlicher Gewinn; erst wenn du plötzlich Fänger wirst des Balles, den eine ewige Mitspielerin/dir zuwarf, deiner Mitte, in genau/gekonntem Schwung, in einem jener Bögen/aus Gottes grossem Brückenbau: erst dann ist Fangenkönnen ein Vermögen, – nicht deines, einer Welt.' R. M. Rilke, *To Niké*, (Jan. 31, 1922) SW (ii), 132 (1956–7).

knowledge and peace (2.11.51.3–5). Such knowledge moves from the unbegotten God to mortal and created things. While those who forsake this knowledge for unceasing change float like leaves haphazardly, reason, the governing principle, is unmoved and guides the soul to changeless reality. The stability of faith is shown in Moses and Abraham, who *stand* before the lord. In contrast to falsehood, deviation and defection, quiet faith brings rest and peace. Knowledge can be slandered by false knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20f), which is marked by profane and empty babbling and by contradictions which display its falsehood. In contrast to all this instability, the lord communicates truth to the true man of knowledge, so that ‘the lips of the righteous know lofty truths’ (Prov. 10:21) (2.11.52.5–7).

Clement commends Empedocles because he recognises that in the face of truth belief may yet be difficult for men. That is why Paul insists that our faith should never be in the persuasive wisdom of men, but in the power of God, who alone, without proofs, saves the simple believer. Heraclitus, too, called for caution and warned that fabricators of falsehood would be judged (DK 1, 27, 86). His own knowledge on many points is clear, for he knew that fire would purify those who had led evil lives and that there would be a resurrection (5.1.9.3). Heraclitus again provides support for Clement’s argument when he condemns the ignorance of the many who do not believe. Similarly the prophets declare that the just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4) and that ‘except you believe, you will not understand’ (Is. 7:9) (2.2.8.1f). There is no way to the highest contemplation, if unbelief resists instruction (2.2.8.3).

There must be reciprocity between the word who teaches and the believer who is taught, who will believe in the logos and cooperate with a teachable faith. So knowledge is marked with faith and faith marked with knowledge ‘by a divine sequence and reciprocity’ (2.4.16.2). Faith is a preconception essential to all learning, which turns preconception into comprehension. The preconception is the ear that hears, and hearing is comprehension. Here, reciprocity between faith and knowledge is essential (2.4.17.1).

Heraclitus understood Isaiah’s call for faith as a way to understanding when he insisted on hope and faith in face of inaccessible knowledge. Only with hope for what is beyond hope can knowledge be gained (2.4.17.4). Plato also describes the man who participates in truth for an extended period of time as a faithful man (*pistos*). It is he, and not the unbeliever or lover of falsehood, who will continue to find truth (Laws 730bc; Euthydemus 291d). Since this faith is the way of royal knowledge,

those who have believed in Christ are good and kingly (Pol. 259ab) (2.4.18.1, 2).

Faith is the beginning of exuberant growth, strenuous thought and virtuous living. Clement attacks those who want only bare faith, who will not tend the vines they plant, but expect to harvest fruit immediately (1.9.43). Faith begins the true dialectic, which is mixed with true philosophy and which climbs up to universals and descends to particulars (1.28.177).

Faith becomes knowledge (*gnôsis*) through dialectic and scripture. For Justin and Clement, scripture, as the mind and will of God (dial. 68), replaces the Platonic forms. For later Platonism, dialectic is concerned with the ascending logic of the *Republic*, where hypotheses are destroyed, to be replaced by more ultimate hypotheses.<sup>5</sup> This is what Clement applies to scripture: universal principles like the Sermon on the Mount and the love command stand at the top, while specific injunctions stand at the bottom. Downward movement to particularity appears in the demolition of Gnostic sexual *koinônia* (3.5.42). In *Phaedrus*, *Politicus* and *Sophist*, dialectic is also concerned with dividing and joining specific kinds of thing. This is descent from definitions to particulars.

### *Faith generates virtue*

Faith is the first principle of action because action springs from a wise choice (*proairesis*) and the foundation of this choice is faith (2.2.9.2). Plato praises the universal need for faithfulness, which is linked to every virtue and is required by every law-giver. Faith is moral responsibility, the fidelity which is central to any form of law or virtuous life (2.5.23.1, 3). Wisdom, according to scripture, is to be found in the mouths of men of faith (Sir. 34[31]:8) (2.5.24.1). Xenocrates pointed to wisdom as the knowledge of the first causes, which Clement sees as the object of faith. Prudence, whether it is practical or contemplative, depends on this wisdom, which in turn depends on faith (2.5.24.1). As a virtue, faith belongs with other virtues, for all virtues belong together (*antakolouthia*). Faith is exercised in repentance and in hope. Practice and perseverance

<sup>5</sup> Alcinoüs (did. 5) describes three types of analysis: (i) the upward movement from sensible things to 'primary intelligibles' (as in Symp. 210af), (ii) the upward move from demonstrable to indemonstrable propositions (as in Phaedr. 245cf), (iii) the move from hypothetical to non-hypothetical principles (as in Rep. 6.510bf). We cannot be sure when this organisation of Plato's ideas took place, but it probably occurred in the Old Academy and was taken over by Alcinoüs. See Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 277f.

end in love which is perfected in knowledge – knowledge which becomes wisdom because it depends on the power of God who alone is wise by nature (2.9.45.1).

A different kind of reciprocity is found when faith is linked with twofold time, which remembers the past and hopes for the future. Faith looks to the past, believing that certain events have taken place, that God created the world and made it good, and looks also to the future in hope that God will extend our days on earth in piety and fear. Our life progresses from fear through faith into love, just as fear is mixed with love when directed to an earthly father. Faith is not the fear of the wild beast, which is joined to hatred of that beast. Again, fear of punishment goes back to love of self, but fear of a father leads on to love. He who has faith is blessed because in him love and fear are joined together; but faith remains the force which brings salvation, the power which brings life eternal (2.12.53.1–5). Hermas speaks of a sequence of virtues which begins with faith, continues with edifying fear and ends in the perfection of love (2.12.55.4).

Love and faith are never separate and show yet another kind of reciprocity, by pointing to man's loving faith in God and the faithful love of God for man. This mutuality confirms that like is known to like. As we love and trust God, so the loving and faithful God is known to us, and from this relationship the purity of faith is extended (5.1.13.1).

God requires both goodness and reason. Faith is the royal wisdom of Plato.<sup>6</sup> Believers in Christ are good (*chrêstoi*), as those cared for by the true king are kingly. Law rules over all (Pindar, frag. 169). To Plato and the Stoics, only the wise man is king and ruler (2.4.18), and Plato (Laws 630bc and Rep. 475bc) commends faithfulness. Faith, the mother of virtues (2.5.23), is divine and cannot be eroded by worldly friendship or fear. Faith and love are reciprocal, for love leads to faith and faith is the foundation of love (2.6.30). Faith, the first impulse to salvation, is followed by fear, hope, repentance, temperance, patience and the apex, which is love and knowledge (2.6.31). The sequence of the virtues may also be seen as faith hoping through repentance, fear hoping through faith, patience, practice, love and knowledge (2.9.45).

Hermas (cf. Vis. 3.8), Clement continues, gives another sequence: salvation by faith is followed by continence, simplicity, knowledge, innocence, modesty, love, all of which are the daughters of faith (2.12.55). God

<sup>6</sup> Euthydemus 291d and Pol. 259ab.

is faithful and known to those who are faithful (5.1.13). His temple is built on the triple foundation of faith, hope and love (5.1.13).

*Perfection of faith (paed 1.6.25–32)*

Faith brings life and is perfect in itself. It brings universal salvation and equality before God. The law was our *paidagōgos* until faith came; now, as God's children through faith, we are one in Christ. We have abandoned carnal desires and have been baptised by one spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Mature Christians are children in wickedness, but men in understanding (1 Cor. 14:20). The childish things which Paul has put away (1 Cor. 13:11) are not smallness of stature or age; because he is no longer under the law (Gal. 4:1–5), he has lost the fear of childish phantoms. A grown man is obedient to the word, master of himself, a believer by voluntary choice, free from irrational fear, a son and not a servant (Gal. 4:7). Childhood in Christ is full maturity, instead of infancy under the law. The infant milk of children in Christ (1 Cor. 3:2) is linked through physiology with the perfection of milk and honey (paed 1.6.34f).<sup>7</sup>

Greek philosophy cleanses and prepares the soul for faith, which is the foundation for knowledge (7.3.20). Knowledge starts from faith and goes on to love, which is the inheritance and the endless end (7.10.55). Faith is a grasp of essentials; knowledge proves the content of faith and goes on to certainty (7.10.57). Yet faith remains supreme, for some who have tried to surpass it have deviated from the truth (7.16.97).

For critics like Celsus, faith was feeble and an affliction of weak minds. But, says Clement, faith is the power of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2.5) and the strength (*ischus*) of truth. It can move mountains and determine what we receive (2.11.48f). Paul, says Clement, pointed faith away from the feeble wisdom of men to the saving power of God (5.1.9). The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10; 2.7.33) and the hope of strength (Prov. 14:26; 2.8.40). Faith brings stability to the man of knowledge, while others are moved by uncertain and capricious impulses (2.11.51). Lack of faith brings confusion, while faith in the son of God brings stability (4.25.157). Faith is the standing (*stasis*) of the soul concerning what is (4.22.143). Yet it is a strange stability. The crown of thorns which the lord

7 G. Filoramo, 'Pneuma e photisimos in Clemente Alessandrino', *Aug* 21 (1981), 329–37. Against Gnostics, Clement claims that in baptism all receive the spirit, are washed of sins, by divine grace illuminated and reborn, anticipating the final end. 'He will be, so to say, a light standing and stable for eternity, completely unchangeable in every way' (7.10.57.5). On Clement's physiology, see Parel, 'Theological anthropology', 74–99.

wore is a type of faith: of life because of the tree, of joy because it is a crown, of danger because of thorns. No one can approach the word without blood (paed 2.8.73).

Faith grants divinity to the believer. On the believer rests the head of the universe (we have the mind of Christ, 1 Cor. 2:16), the kind and gentle word who subverts the craftiness and empty thoughts of the wise (1.3.23; 1 Cor. 3:19f). The faith which, by love, ascends to knowledge is desirable for its own sake. If we had to choose between the knowledge of God and eternal salvation, we should choose knowledge. The soul never sleeps, and the constant exertion of the intelligence is the essence of an intelligent being (4.22.136); this is the divine perfection to which we are called. Faith is always on the move, from faith to faith, moving up the ladder of dialectic. It is the grain of mustard seed which stimulates the soul to grow. Faith is fixed on God and in some way divine, a source of power and stability. From the shifting sands of error, it moves to the firm ground of truth, and there it remains.

#### RULE OF FAITH: CANON

The rule or canon of faith defined essential beliefs. 'Canon' and 'criterion' permeated Hellenistic philosophy as it answered Sceptical challenges to truth and knowledge.<sup>8</sup> Stoics and Epicureans affirmed that truth was to be found by following a criterion or canon. Sceptics denied truth and attacked canons which others proposed.

Plato had used 'criterion' to explain the claim of Protagoras that man is the measure of all things, 'having in himself the criterion for these things' (Theaet. 178b; cf. also Rep. 582a). The *Canon* of Epicurus is devoted to the theory of criteria. Elsewhere, in a fragment from *On Nature*, Epicurus insists that without a canon which discriminates (*epikrinôn*) opinions, no inquiry is possible and the foolish will be wrongly encouraged.

The builder and carpenter needed their rule to test the straightness and length of their materials. Aristotle explains: 'By means of the straight line we know both the straight and the curved, the carpenter's rule enables us to test both, but what is curved does not enable us to distinguish either itself or the straight' (de anima 1.5.411a). The Epicureans saw that without a straight rule the foundation of no building was safe (Lucretius, de rerum natura, 4.513–21).

<sup>8</sup> See E. F. Osborn, 'Reason and the rule of faith in the second century', in *The making of orthodoxy, FS for H. Chadwick*, ed. R. Williams (Cambridge, 1989), 41–61.

The rise of a Christian rule of faith or truth in the second century has been criticised either as a restriction on reason or as part of a decline into intellectualism.<sup>9</sup> Yet Tertullian uses it to govern all inquiry: argument from scripture is useless and leads to a pain in the head or belly. Only the rule is decisive, because it comes from an apostolic source, which cannot be denied. Whoever has the rule does not need to go further, for after Christ there is no place for disputation and inquiry (praescr. 7f). Clement claims that argument needs the rule as starting-point but also insists on the need of scripture for logical inquiry; Irenaeus regards the apostolic preaching which includes the rule as capable of proof from scripture.

For Clement, the canon is also important because it defines the degree of accommodation which can be given to beliefs not uniquely Christian. Plato saw that the truth could come only from God or from the off-spring of God (6.15.123.1). However, there are things which work together with the divine truth, such as philosophy when it speaks of providence, reward for good and punishment for evil.<sup>10</sup> The rule of faith indicates where philosophical opinions are right and wrong.

On the question of accommodation of right belief to other opinions, Paul was prepared to circumcise Timothy on account of Jewish Christians; and indeed he became 'all things to all men'. This is something quite different from heresies, which go wrong on important things and are utterly false. The crucial test is the way they handle the deposit or tradition given by the lord to his apostles. What we are given privately we must declare from the roof-tops: 'What you hear in the ear, proclaim on the roof-tops.' This means that we should take the tradition and proclaim it in a confident and lofty way.

The deposit or rule governs the interpretation of scripture (6.15.124.5). For the lord spoke everything in parables, and because he is the author of every part of the economy, prophecy and law were also given in parables. Those who interpret rightly do so because they understand (Prov. 8:9) and depend upon the rule of the church by which scripture is explained. 'The rule of the church is the agreement and unity of the law and the prophets with the covenant or testament handed on at the coming of the lord' (6.15.125.3).<sup>11</sup>

9 Cf. F. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte* (Halle-Saale, 1950), 85–97.

10 However, philosophy does not speak accurately of such important matters as the son of God or the divine economy and therefore cannot be given more than an auxiliary status.

11 H. Ohme, *Kanon Ekklesiastikos* (Berlin, 1998), 146. The lost work 'Against the Judaizers' concerned the interpretation of scripture.

The canon is linked with truth, knowledge and tradition. Interaction or reciprocity is seen in the claim that the canon of truth is received from the truth itself, that it is given by Christ and to be understood in relation to him (7.16.94.5). Again, there is interaction or reciprocity where Clement's canon of knowledge, as distinct from the false Gnostic canon, is concerned with the apprehension and discernment of truth through the truth (5.1.1.4). A canon governs the process, which proceeds beyond the church catechism. When Paul speaks about going to 'the regions beyond', he is not speaking geographically, but speaking about the way in which knowledge goes beyond elementary catechesis (6.18.165.1).

Furthermore, the canon has ethical consequences which dominate parts of Clement's argument. When he is arguing against the Carpocratians and others in *Stromateis* III, he speaks of the right canon of self-control, which is preserved on grounds of reason (3.11.71.1). Celibacy may be chosen according to the authentic canon, and such a choice is lawful (3.18.105.1). On the other hand, illicit indulgence goes against the canon (3.18.109.2). Clement's opponents will do anything rather than live according to the truth by the rule of the gospel (3.9.66.1). The gospel provides a rule for life, which must be followed (4.4.15.4). There is no division between thought and action; the canon which prescribes true doctrine also defines true conduct, and whatever this canon permits is lawful for the Christian (4.15.98.3). Beyond its bare definition, the canon points the way to moral and spiritual progress. Following the first letter of Clement of Rome, we learn that the glorious and solemn rule of the tradition will guide the progress of the believer to knowledge (*probêsetai*) (1.1.15.2). The perfection of faith which stands above common faith is the love and purity commended in 1 Tim. 4:12 and the self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) of Paul in Phil. 4:11–13, where Paul has learned to be content, whatever his outward condition may be. The notion of a canon of knowledge does not contradict the canon of faith (or truth or church) but shows that the canon is not a static rule but a path to greater knowledge of God and greater dependence on him (4.16.101.1). As so often, Clement finds duality in Christian life. The double goal of the man of knowledge is concerned with both intelligent vision and practice (7.16.102.2). Morality and theology reciprocate in the canons, which govern likeness to God. By mildness, love of men and magnificent piety, assimilation to God is reached (7.3.13.4). The splendour of piety here recalls the splendour with which the words uttered in secret must be proclaimed. The canon of the church is never abandoned, and the authentic man of knowledge is alone truly holy and pious (7.7.41.3). It is wrong to go against the canon of the church (7.15.90.2), for

heretics adulterate the truth, follow their own lusts and seek vain glory to deceive their neighbours. Falsehood and wrong action go together (7.16.105.5). Clement attacks heretics because he sees their misuse of the canon of truth as a form of adultery. Truth and goodness are so joined that the perversion of truth is morally wrong (7.16.105.5).

In conclusion, we may say that the canon, which defines the central elements of faith, is linked to piety and a high moral standard. On the one hand, it declares the essentials with which the believer begins. On the other, it guides to the higher wisdom of Clement's man of knowledge and defines the perfection, which is to be attained.<sup>12</sup>

#### TRADITION TAKES OFF

Just as faith and canon begin from a few essentials but are driven to higher things, so tradition escapes an initial conservatism to soar to rarer air. Two origins have been considered for the idea of tradition in early Christian thought: Hellenistic mystery religions,<sup>13</sup> and the schools of philosophy.<sup>14</sup> The first explanation points to the content of doctrine, while the second points to the people who have handed doctrines down. However, Christian literature before Clement remains a slender source for the notion of tradition. Therefore his account merits careful attention.<sup>15</sup>

For Clement, tradition has a human face.<sup>16</sup> He refers to his own teachers (1.1.11.3), to teachers in general (7.16.103.5), elders (ecl. 27.1), apostles as a group (6.7.61.1 et al), to Peter, John, James and Paul (1.1.11.3), James, John and Peter (hypot. frag. 13), Barnabas (5.10.63.2) and Paul (5.10.64.5). He also names higher teachers, the lord (1.1.11.3) and saviour (6.15.131.5), the son of God (1.18.90.1), Christ (7.16.99.5) and God (1.11.52.2). In the present, he refers tradition to his man of knowledge (7.1.4.2) and to

12 D. van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien, dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles* (Gembloux et Paris, 1933). Clement speaks of the rule of faith, the rule of the church, the ecclesiastical rule, the rule of truth, and the rule of tradition. These have a common reference, claiming as true the doctrine which is received and taught in the church. He also speaks of the confession (*homologia*) of the 'most important things' as the central allegiance of the Christian (299–302).

13 D. B. Reyniers, 'Paradosis. Le progrès et l' idée de tradition jusqu'à saint Irénée', *RThAM* 5 (1933), 155–91.

14 H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical authority*, 159f.

15 For a concise account on which I have drawn, see E. Muench, *Παράδοσις und γραφή bei Clemens von Alexandria* (Bonn, 1968).

16 J. C. Daniélou, 'La tradition selon Clément d'Alexandrie', *Aug* 12 (1972), 18. 'Clément met d'avantage l'accent sur la tradition gnostique comme transmission par les successeurs des Apôtres de la connaissance.'

himself, the writer of the *Stromateis* (1.1.12.1; 15.2 and 4.1.3.2). He qualifies the noun 'tradition' as marked by knowledge (1.1.15.2; 5.10.63.2 et al), as secret (1.12.56.2) and as ecclesiastical (7.16.95.1). All of which helps him to present a substantial account of Christian tradition.

From the tradition come the seeds which generate the truth. These seeds are ancestral (*progonika*) as well as apostolic, and Clement uses the two metaphors of farming and inheritance when he speaks of the founding fathers in the faith (1.1.11.3). Tradition is not handed on mechanically but only to the appropriate person (1.1.12.1).

Tradition hands on mysteries. While Clement insists that what is hidden should be made known, concealment is important because it distinguishes different levels of comprehension (1.1.13.2). Mysteries are handed on in a mysterious way. Clement readily uses terminology of mystery religions, provided that concealment is for building up the body of Christ and equipping the saints (1.1.13.4). He presents his own teaching at two levels, one preparatory, the other bearing a higher knowledge. The tradition tests what is valid and is given to those who have reached maturity (1.1.15.2).<sup>17</sup> There are lesser mysteries, which must precede the great mysteries. In the movement forwards, Clement pleads for the use of such philosophy as survives the test of tradition; he defines the vain philosophy, which Paul disparages, as that which denies providence. There is another philosophy, which corresponds to divine tradition and which declares the truth of providence (1.11.52.2).

In *Stromateis* V, Clement discusses the use of symbols, first by philosophers, and then by the apostles, especially Paul. Their interpretation is handed on orally. Following Colossians (Col. 4:3f), higher interpretation of what is in scripture is not written down (5.10.62.1). Only those duly prepared should receive the mysteries (5.10.62.4). Clement links the fullness of blessing that Paul promises to bring (Rom. 15:29) with the gift of grace (Rom. 1:11) and the tradition of knowledge (5.10.64.5).

The tradition is available to those who have perceived the greatness (*megaleiotês*) of the logos; the divine wisdom which the son of God teaches must be hidden from others (1.12.55.1). It enables its hearer to understand the scriptures and to declare them in a lofty way. Clement quotes 'What you have heard in secret, proclaim on the roof-tops' (Matthew 10:26f) three times to show that the mystery of the tradition is concerned, not with secrecy, but with the declaration of truth (1.12.56.2).

<sup>17</sup> The same division of two levels is found in another passage (1.1.16.2).

In *Stromateis* VII, Clement describes his man of knowledge as one who is able to hand on the tradition of one God and his hidden truth (7.1.4.2). This tradition can be received by those who are purified to receive the truth (7.4.27.6). As always for Clement, esoterism leads to education, wonder inspires learning.<sup>18</sup> Clement distinguishes his true knowledge from that of others by linking it to the tradition and grace of God (7.10.55.6). Knowledge, faith and love join the man of knowledge to his lord; but only to those who are tested is perfect knowledge granted (7.10.56.1, 2). Knowledge is handed down within the tradition of the church (7.16.95.1). Like empty almond shells, bereft of knowledge (7.16.99.5), heretics abandon the inspired words of the blessed apostles and teachers (7.16.103.5). Nevertheless, in life as in teaching, tradition is maintained (7.16.104.2), springing from scripture (7.16.105.1), and passed on from unanimous apostles (7.17.108.1).

In *Stromateis* IV, Clement begins from interpretation of scripture as the content of Christian tradition, which, like the schools of philosophy, handed on a way of thinking (4.1.1.3). He outlines the interpretation of scripture which he transmits (4.1.1.3). Prophecies show the unity and divine authority of the bible (4.1.2.2). Tradition provides a norm of biblical exegesis (4.1.3.2, 3). An esoteric element is marginal and metaphorical, for tradition is concerned with an interpretation which is open to all.

Clement bases his account of a higher tradition on the letters of Barnabas and Paul (5.10.63.2 and 64.5). High demands are made on whoever wishes to understand scripture, and secret knowledge concerning interpretation of the Old Testament must be handed on personally and orally (5.10.64.5). This transmission differs from that of the Gnostic Ptolemy because it imposes personal, moral conditions.

The practice of the godly tradition is possible through the lord and his apostles, by whose teaching the Old Testament is understood (6.15.124.4). Through intimate knowledge of the bible this tradition (6.15.124.5) displays the coherence of law and prophets with the testament delivered by the lord (6.15.125.3). The prophets spoke in parables and symbols because the holy spirit wished to conceal partly both the coming of the lord and his mysterious teaching (6.15.127.3). As soon as the saviour taught the apostles, the unwritten tradition became, through the power of God, written in their hearts as it is in ours (6.15.131.4, 5). Clement speaks of a

<sup>18</sup> They are, says Muench, *erzieherisch* (educative) rather than *esoterisch* (esoteric). Muench, *Παράδοσις und γραφή*, 66.

tradition which is open and hidden linked both to the Old Testament and to ethical renewal, and never a single unit of knowledge but always a coherent body of truth.

Does Clement think of particular truths which have been handed down? No, for Clement speaks always of tradition as a whole rather than as units of supplementary teaching. Esoterism does not restrict the tradition but prepares and sanctifies those who are to receive it. The content of tradition is derived from the bible: 'The true Christian tradition brings the bible into effect because the lord speaks in the bible.'<sup>19</sup> Through tradition the teaching of the bible is known and recognised.

In *Stromateis* VI, Clement shows the superiority of his tradition over Greek knowledge of God, which *had not yet learnt from God's son* (6.5.39.4). He further distinguishes practical daily wisdom from higher universal wisdom, which the lord has handed on both through his coming and through the prophets. The higher wisdom stands above contradiction because it comes from the son (6.7.54.2) and is governed by the bible. Christ speaks in the prophets (6.7.61.1, 3). Unambiguously, Clement claims this knowledge for the succession of the apostles which has come down to us (6.7.61.3). Only Christians who believe find the source of truth which Plato desired, for they receive truth from the son of God. Heretics may approach this truth, but only believers receive it through right interpretation (6.15.123.3).

To sum up, Clement speaks of tradition in several contexts: the purpose of the *Stromateis*, his conversation with Greek philosophy, the symbolic language of the bible and the attack on heretical Gnostics.<sup>20</sup>

#### UNIVERSAL SALVATION BY FAITH

'How could he be saviour and lord if he were not saviour and lord of all?' (7.2.7.6). God has from the beginning of the world sown seed on human soil, seed that was destined to grow. He has rained down continually his all-powerful logos. The times and the places which received the seed of his word were different, and so there is a rich variety of divine goodness (1.7.37.2). Because the son is the name of God and acts from his vision of the goodness of God, he is called the saviour God, the first principle of all things and the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15f). He is the first before all ages and has shaped what comes after him (5.6.38.7). He is not merely the spoken word of the father of all, but both the inner wisdom of

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

God and also his almighty power. The magnitude of this power is conceivable, even for those who do not confess it (5.1.6.3).<sup>21</sup>

It is to *Stromateis* VII that we must go for Clement's account of salvation and the supremacy of the son. The man of knowledge honours every degree of excellence:

In the world of sense rulers and parents and elders generally are to be honoured, in matters of teaching, the most ancient philosophy and the earliest prophecy, in the spiritual world, that which is elder in origin, the son, the beginning and first-fruit of all existing things, himself timeless and without beginning; from whom the man of knowledge believes that he receives the knowledge of the ultimate cause, the father of the universe, the earliest and most beneficent of all existences, no longer reported by word of mouth, but worshipped and adored, as is his due, with silent worship and holy awe.<sup>22</sup>

The lord makes him known as far as is possible for disciples whom he has chosen and whose perceptions, as Paul says, have been exercised and trained (7.1.2).

At the peak of a cosmic hierarchy is the son whose nature is described in superlatives.<sup>23</sup> He is most perfect, holy, sovereign, lordly, royal, beneficent, and closest to the one almighty being. From his supreme eminence he steers the universe on its right course and orders everything according to the father's will. This he does with inexhaustible and untiring power. In all his work he does not move from his watchtower<sup>24</sup> and is never divided but present everywhere. He is the universal *nous* whose power scrutinises all other powers. To him the father has subjected all angels and divine beings (Rom. 8:20f; 1 Cor. 15:27f). All men are his, and only their response divides them into categories. The highest have knowledge, some are friends, some are faithful servants and some are merely servants (7.2.5).

By the will of the father, the son is the first mover of the universe (7.2.8.5). As power of the father, he prevails over all and neglects no part of his rule. The greatness of his power appears in his concern for the smallest part of the universe (7.2.9.1). Rank on rank, the heavenly powers are set below him, *all saving and being saved* (7.2.9.3) through the one power which governs them. Into another hierarchy, humans are saved, for the power of the saviour is like a magnet which draws a series of iron rings. These are the many mansions promised to believers. It is within the

21 Note *megethos tou Christou* (5.11.71). See above, chapter 5, page 124.

22 Trans. from H. Chadwick, in *Alexandrian Christianity: selected translations of Clement and Origen*, ed. H. Chadwick and J. E. L. Oulton (London, 1954), 94.

23 See also below, chapter 12, page 258 (Perfection and sonship).

24 cf. Plato, *Pol.* 272e.

power of humans to be drawn upwards or to fall away from the magnet because, says Clement, he who wants virtue must choose it. The saving cycles of divine activity (*sôtêrioi peritropai*) move through different times and places to end in the final, eternal and direct vision of the lord (7.2.10.2). It is the work of the perfected man of knowledge to talk to God through the great high-priest (7.3.13.2). Such a Christian is raised above the universe, so that his soul becomes an image of God. In him is enshrined the ruler whose commands he obeys, the king who causes all good, who is law and logos, who is the *monogenês* and the *exact image of divine glory*. So the one saviour individually to each, and in common to all, produces a third divine image, as like as possible to the second cause, who is the true life by which we live (7.3.16.6). So intimate is the reciprocity of the logos with humanity that, as master and saviour, he accepts as done to himself both whatever good is done for the help of men and whatever harm is done against men (7.3.21.4).

In the human response to the gospel, Clement finds different degrees of faith. As the saviour said, 'Be it to you according to your faith' (Mt 9:29). Some who are called will not survive the deceit of the anti-Christ, and it is possible that even some of the elect will be deceived (Mt 24:24). There is a difference between those who are called and those who are elect. Those who are called are commanded to leave the house of the father (exc 9.2) (Jn 2:16). They return to the fattened calf, having spent all their wealth, and are brought in from the highways and byways to the marriage feast (Mt 22:9). Indeed, all have received the call from the God who sends his rain upon the just and the unjust. But the elect are those who have gone on in faith. It is to them that the son has revealed the father; they are the light of the world, and are sanctified by the name of the father (Jn 6:46; 1:18; Mt 5:14; Jn 17:11 and 17).

Clement makes the strange claim that all spiritual beings have a form or a shape. Perhaps he is inspired by opposition to Gnostic anti-materialism. Neither spiritual nor intellectual beings, nor the archangels nor the first created, nor indeed the son himself, lack figure or body. The son himself has a form and body in proportion to his pre-eminence over all spiritual beings. In the same way, the first created have a body according to their pre-eminence over lower substances (exc 10.1). While all that has come into being has a substance, the higher beings *do not have the same form or body as we find in our world*, for here below there are male and female and all sorts of differences. But above, the only begotten who is noetic in the strict sense has his own form and his own substance, a pure and sovereign essence which is in direct contact with the power of the father. Below and

after him the first created, although they are numerically distinct from one another and separate, yet act in a similar way and have unity, equality and likeness (exc 10.3). Among these seven 'first created' none has more than another, and none has advanced further than another. They have received from God, through his son, their perfection from the beginning (exc 10.4).

The same discontinuity is perceived in the Letter to the Hebrews where God, having spoken in different ways, finally speaks in him who is the full brightness of his glory and the exact impression of his being (Heb. 1:1-3). Our great high-priest who has passed through the heavens is Jesus the son of God (Heb. 4:14). The high-priest who is within the veil is separate from those who are busy outside the veil (5.6.34.3). Following the great high-priest, he who has become master of his passions can enter the intelligible world and gain knowledge of the ineffable God. He rises above every name which the human voice can utter (5.6.34.7).

Salvation is universal, but the human response is variable. The work of salvation moves through the cosmic hierarchy in different times and places. Saving history never ceases until all believers find their place in the father's house; but they do not find the same place. Universality and hierarchy go together.

## CHAPTER 8

### *Arguments for faith*

#### FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

Can faith be defended with logical argument against its detractors? Faith, we have seen, was for Clement a phenomenon of exploding wonder.<sup>2</sup> Surprised by grace, it grew with the help of rule and tradition. However, some of Clement's critics were reluctant to go 'beyond reason'. Therefore he set out arguments for faith so that it was linked with reason. The danger was that, in defending faith, he might lose the touch of wonder which stimulated growth. Instead, he found the same stimulus to wonder in the philosophers; philosophy and faith were both ruled by his two values of audacity and wisdom. He reminded philosophers that they got nowhere unless they took risks; there could be no wisdom without audacity. Philosophers too found it necessary to hope, choose, perceive, listen to God and find ultimate and unproved truths. They had to make judgements, to move upwards and never lose sight of the summit. Outside the church, criticism of faith was indeed intense. Celsus (and Galen) claimed that Christians always said, 'Only believe', and never gave reasons for their creeds (Cels. 1.9).

Clement had to meet the objections of Gnostics as well as philosophers against the importance which he gave to faith. He turned to Paul, John, Hebrews, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Stoics, Epicurus and others. Middle Platonism blended Plato with Aristotle and the Stoics. Faith

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a revision and abridgement of my article, 'Arguments for faith in Clement of Alexandria', *VigChr* 48 (1994), 1–24.

<sup>2</sup> K. Prümm, 'Glaube und Erkenntnis im zweiten Buch der Stromata des Klemens von Alexandrien', *Schol* 12 (1937), 57. Two things give special vitality to Clement's discussion of faith: first, his sense of the complete newness of faith and the gospel enlivens the aridity of epistemological debate; secondly, his central enthusiasm for the person of Christ gains insights which would not have come from an abstract account of God. Elsewhere Prümm correctly and constantly singles out these two points: *Neuheiterlebnis* and personal allegiance. Contrast the erroneous account of E. Aleith, *Das Paulusverständnis in der alten Kirche* (Berlin, 1937), 90. See Schneider, *Theologie*, II.

was preconception, assent, perception, listening to God in scripture, acceptance of unprovable first principles, judgement by criterion. Despite their diverse origin, all these moves in Hellenistic epistemology served a common end, that of finding a foundation for knowledge. For Clement, they were ways of depending on the power of God and not on the wisdom of men.

The arguments are an invitation to all. Clement wanted pagan readers to learn from the similarities between their own and Christian ideas. 'To those who ask for the wisdom which is in us, we must present what is familiar to them so that, as easily as possible, through their own ideas, they may reasonably arrive at belief in the truth' (5.3.18). What begins as apologetic ends as evangelism. The great variety of Clement's argument does not deny his own first allegiance to Plato but declares a spectacular intellectual hospitality and inventiveness. Even Epicurus has a toe-hold on the truth.

For Clement, as he begins the discussion in *Stromateis* II and returns to it in *Stromateis* V, argument and faith are necessary to one another. Argument for faith is still argument which is a benefit to minds rather than to tongues (2.1.3). Just as those fowls which scratch strenuously for their own food have the best flesh, so mental effort helps those who search for truth (2.1.3). We need wisdom in all our ways (Prov. 3:5f). Faith is the way, and the fear of God is the first requirement (2.2.4). The barbarian (i.e. biblical) philosophy is perfect and true. Wisdom is accurate knowledge of reality, of virtues and of the roots of things (Wisd. 7:17f; 2.2.5). Here Clement begins from the fear of the lord, which had already joined the faith of the Old Testament to Greek philosophy (2.2.4). At every point God is the final ground of faith. His wisdom is a universal guide, who rejects earthly wisdom, conforms to reason, uses secular culture with discrimination, abandons evil and, supremely, fears God (Prov. 3:5, 6, 7, 12, 23). Through wisdom, God gives true understanding of existing things:

a knowledge of the structure of the world and the operation of the elements; the beginning and end of epochs and their middle course; the alternating solstices and the changing seasons; the cycles of the years and the constellations; the nature of living creatures and behaviour of wild beasts; the violent force of winds and the thoughts of men; the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots. I learnt it all, hidden or manifest, for I was taught by wisdom whose skill made all things.

(Wisd. 7:17–21)

With these verses, Clement summarises 'barbarian philosophy' as the wisdom which leads to a God who, although remote in essence, has come

near to men (Jer. 23:23).<sup>3</sup> The riddles of divine utterance and the deep things of the spirit exclude the unworthy. What is holy must be kept from the dogs. Heraclitus limits understanding to the few and rebukes the many who do not believe; the prophets tell us that the just live by faith and that without faith there can be no understanding. Without faith, said the writer to the Hebrews, it is impossible to please God (2.2.4–8), and that is Clement's first concern. 'Be not wise in your own eyes but fear God', who alone is powerful (2.2.4). Only those who possess the holy spirit can 'search the deep things of God' and grasp the hidden secrets of the prophecies (2.2). The logos is the only teacher of faith and knowledge (2.2.9).

Clement's chief arguments, following the order of his text, are:

First, faith is preconception, the substance of things hoped for.

Second, faith is assent or decision, and never an innate possession.

Third, faith is hearing and seeing, as the definition and narrative of Heb.

11 make clear.

Fourth, faith is listening to God's voice in the scriptures.

Fifth, a first principle is unproved and unprovable. To avoid infinite

regress, there has to be a starting-point which is grasped by faith.<sup>4</sup>

Sixth, faith is the criterion which judges that something is true or false.<sup>5</sup>

### *Preconception and hope*

The Greeks, says Clement, denounce faith but practise it in 'deliberate preconception (*prolēpsis hekousios*)'. Heb. 11 offers the same defence of faith: faith gives substance to our hopes (2.2.8).

'Epicurus supposes faith to be a preconception of the mind. He explains this preconception as attention directed to something clear and a clear concept of something. He declares that no one can make an inquiry, confront a problem, hold an opinion and indeed make a refutation without a preconception' (2.4.16). Isaiah also insisted that there could be no understanding without faith (7:9), and Heraclitus wrote, 'Except one hopes for what is beyond hope, he will not find it, for it will remain impossible to examine and to understand' (DK18). This means that the

3 While Clement is here drawing on Philo, his main point (on the coming-near of the unapproachable God) is not from Philo.

4 Much ancient theory of knowledge was deductive and took geometry as its model. There had to be axioms.

5 In my 1994 article I added two arguments which have already been discussed in the previous chapter. Arguments seven and eight are included in chapter 7, page 167–72 above.

blessed and happy man must from the beginning be a partaker of truth, believing and trustworthy (Plato, *Laws* 730bc). The unbeliever is hopeless in the realm of truth and is a fool (2.4.18).

Hope depends on faith. Also Basilides, the Gnostic, saw that faith is the assent of the soul to what is not present to the senses (2.6.27). Basilides went wrong when he denied the free choice of faith. Faith is a wise preconception prior to comprehension (*prolēpsis eugnômôn pro katalēpseôs*). It is an expectation and confidence in the only and all-sufficient God (Clement's constant theme), whose beneficence and kindness are turned to us (2.6.28).

The function of Epicurean preconceptions was to make knowledge possible when the perceiver was confronted by a mass of sensations.<sup>6</sup> Preconceptions are 'a kind of *epibolê tês dianoias*, distinguished from other mental visions by their generic content'.<sup>7</sup> They are able to form universals from streams of unclassified phenomena. By means of preconceptions we recognise different kinds of thing. The mind selects from streams of unrelated images and forms a preconception which enlarges the act of perception.<sup>8</sup> Preconceptions become indispensable starting-points. After Epicurus it is universally accepted that philosophical inquiry is possible only through preconceptions.<sup>9</sup> Sceptics were unmoved, for they claimed that they had several different preconceptions and could not choose between them.<sup>10</sup>

How did the philosopher arrive at his preconception? There were three different theories: they are due to repeated sensations (D.L. 10.33; Epicurus, ep. Hdt. 37f), or they are innate (Cicero, ND 1.44), or (a middle position) they are ingrained (Plutarch, comm. not. 1059c). It has proved difficult to harmonise these different accounts.<sup>11</sup> The first belongs to Epicurus, the second to the late Stoicising Academy, and the third to the Old Stoa.

The 'substance of things hoped for' in Heb. 11:1 is a simple development from Pauline theology. Just as Abraham was justified by faith, so other Old Testament notables are heroes of that faith, without which God cannot be pleased.<sup>12</sup> The notion of anticipation persists in modern

6 A. Manuwald, *Die Prolepsislehre Epikurs* (Bonn, 1972), 103.

7 D. K. Glidden, *Epicurean prolepsis*, Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy III (Oxford, 1985), 194.

8 *Ibid.*, 205.

9 LS 1.89.

10 Sextus Empiricus, *adv. math.* viii.331f. See LS 1.249.

11 Manuwald, *Die Prolepsislehre Epikurs*, 39.

12 They were not made perfect, nor did they receive the promise. The new situation of Christian hope is set out in 2 Cor. 3.1–18. Paul's hope belongs to a minister of the new covenant, which is marked by freedom, boldness and boasting. See R. Bultmann, *TWNT*, 2, 528.

theology. 'To be a Christian, to believe, means to have hurried on ahead of the time of this world. It means to stand already at the end of this world.'<sup>13</sup> In this way faith becomes that victory which overcomes the world (1 Jn 5:4).<sup>14</sup> As so often for Clement, Heraclitus, for whom extravagant hope is essential to understanding,<sup>15</sup> provides a link between philosophy and the bible.

Clement's adoption of *prolēpsis* is not a blind appropriation, because there are different theories between which he must choose. For his own reasons, Clement modifies Epicurus along Stoic lines; but he will not (for anti-Gnostic reasons) concede that preconceptions are innate. Faith is voluntary, and its clear vision of the future links it to fear and hope.

### *Choosing to believe*

The preconception of faith is chosen. It is the 'assent of piety', a turning to God in trust (2.2.8). Faith (2.2.9) is an assent which unites<sup>16</sup> the believer to God. Faith provides a foundation by rational choice. The decision to follow what is better is the beginning of understanding. Unswerving anticipatory choice (*προαίρεσις*) provides the impetus towards knowledge (2.2.9). Here Clement is concerned both to attack Gnostics and to convince philosophers. For Basilides, faith is innate and, as it is for Valentinus, inferior to knowledge; both deny that faith is a matter of free choice (2.3.10). For Clement, faith must be voluntary (2.3.11) and directed to something sure; 'Who is more powerful than God' (2.6.28) whom we know and whose promises will never fail (2.6.28)?

The scriptures tell of free choice, and their command to believe is an invitation to assent. With a willing spirit we choose life and believe God through his voice, which is his word and truth. Rejection of this word is rejection of God (2.4.12). Following Heb. 11, the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, is celebrated. Clement continues with Joseph and Moses, who also chose God's way of faith. Faith is in our power and shows its effects in a repentance which is freely chosen (2.6.27).

Both Platonists and Stoics say that assent is in our power (Chrysippus, frag. phys. 992) (2.12.54). Indeed all opinion, judgement, conjecture and

<sup>13</sup> *vorausseilen, vorangehen, vorausnehmen*. R. Bultmann, *Marburger Predigten* (Tübingen, 1956), 170f.

<sup>14</sup> Anticipation is also the theme of J. Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung: Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie* (München, 1964), 9–30.

<sup>15</sup> The influence of Heraclitus on Clement persists. Heraclitus was important for, and transmitted by, the Stoics. See above, chapter 6, page 145f.

<sup>16</sup> *ἐνωτική συγκατάθεσις*. Declining Stählin's emendation *ἐνωσητική*, as do Mondésert and Prümm.

learning is assent, which is faith. Unbelief shows that its opposite (faith) is possible (2.12.55). As the voluntary assent of the soul, faith produces good works and right action (5.13.86). We may note, in contrast (5.5.28), that David says 'Be angry and sin not' (Psalm 4:4). This means, says Clement, that we should not give our assent to the impression of anger or confirm it by action.

Confession (*homologia*) to God is martyrdom (*marturia*). The soul which has lived purely, known God and obeyed his commandments is a martyr (*martus*) by life and word. It sheds blood all along the way of life until it goes from earth to be with God (4.4.15). In contrast, those (Marcionites or others) who choose martyrdom out of hatred for their creator do not qualify as 'believing martyrs'. They have not known the only true God and their death is pointless. Nor are words enough. The true confession of martyrs is not the utterance of the voice, but the deeds and actions which correspond to faith (4.9.71).

Knowledge, for Zeno (*SVF* i 68), is a form of grasping or comprehension, which cannot be overthrown by any argument. External objects produce impressions which reach the governing principle of the perceiver (*SVF* ii 56), who assents or judges that his impression corresponds to fact. Then he grasps the impression and finally he knows. Zeno described the four stages, by extending his open hand which received the impression, then partly closing his hand to show assent, then clenching his fist to show cognition and finally grasping his fist with his other hand to show the firmness of knowledge (Cicero Acad. 2.145). Many things may be grasped and known by the senses, but never without assent, which we may give or withhold.<sup>17</sup> Some impressions are immediately certain; these cognitive impressions virtually take us by the hair and drag us to assent (Sextus Empiricus, adv. math. vii. 257).

Sense perceptions are like blows from outside to which the assent of the mind must be given from within (Cicero, Acad. 1.40f). The senses send their impressions to the mind, which assesses their testimony. The wise man gives assent only to impressions which are cognitive, and consequently he does not err. Ignorance is changeable and weak assent. While the wise man supposes nothing weakly, but securely and firmly, the inferior man is precipitate and gives assent without cognition.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Yet the living mind must admit what is self-evident as surely as scales sink under weights (Cicero, Acad. 2.37f).

<sup>18</sup> Simplicius, Stob. ecl. 2.111f, LS 1.256.

Assent is given by the ruling faculty of the soul (Aetius 4.21) mediating between impressions and impulses. 'Without assent there is neither action nor impulsion.'<sup>19</sup> Such assent means 'going along with' or 'committing oneself to' the truth of an impression.<sup>20</sup> As well as assent, Clement gives an account of faith as choice when reason fails. We do not inquire into questions which are obvious, opaque, ambivalent, or which have one irrefutable side. If the cause for inquiry is removed in any of these ways, then faith is established, because in scripture it has written evidence of what God says, and this cannot be challenged (5.1.5).

### *Hearing, seeing and believing*

Faith needs to perceive that to which its assent may be given. Faith is the scrutiny of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible (Heb. 11:27). He who hopes, as he who believes, says Clement, sees with his mind both mental objects and future things. What is just, good, true is seen with the mind and not with the eyes (5.3.16).

Faith as a form of perception is prior to argument. For Theophrastus, Clement tells us, perception is the first principle of faith. From perception the first principles (*archai*) come to our reason and intellect (*logos, dianoia*), especially when the voice of God is perceived in scripture (2.2.9). While truth is found in perception (*aisthêsis*), thought (*nous*), understanding (*epistêmê*) and assumption (*hupolêpsis*), thought is first by nature, even if for us, perception (*aisthêsis*) is first in the order of our experience. Perception and *nous* are the essence of knowledge, sharing what is clear (*to enarges*). Perception is the ladder to knowledge. Faith advances through things which are perceived, leaves assumptions behind and comes to rest in truth (2.4.13). Because first principles are not proved but grasped by faith, the *logos* tells us to call no man our teacher on earth. While materialists grasp rocks and oaks in their hands to argue with idealists (Plato, *Soph.* 246a), faith provides a new eye, new ear and new heart which apprehend what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9; Is. 64:4). These new things come to the disciples of the lord. They discern the false from the genuine,

<sup>19</sup> Plutarch, *Stoic. Repug.* 1057a; LS 1.317.

<sup>20</sup> For the New Academy, 'assent' was not an acceptable theory. Carneades had driven it as a wild and savage monster from their minds (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.108). Arcesilaus denied the propriety of assent to any truth (Cicero, *Acad.* 1.43–6). Assents are bad; suspension of judgement is good (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr.* 1.232–4).

like money-changers who tell others what is counterfeit but who do not try to explain why, because only they have learnt the difference (2.4.15). Those who have ears to hear should hear. Epicharmus explains further that it is mind which sees and hears, while all else is deaf and blind (DK 12). Heraclitus describes unbelievers as ignorant of how to hear or to speak (DK 34), while Solomon (Sir. 6:33) links hearing with comprehension and wisdom (2.5.24).

Such hearing comes ultimately and authoritatively from the son of God through his word and the preaching of the apostles; it ends in faith (Isaiah 53.1; Rom. 10:17, 14, 15). Word and preaching need reciprocal cooperation. As in a game of ball the thrower must have someone to catch what is thrown, so faith catches what it hears and is a cooperating cause in the gaining of truth (2.6.25).<sup>21</sup>

Faith is the ear of the soul, whereby he who has ears to hear may hear, and grasp what the lord says.<sup>22</sup> Faith of teacher and of hearer work together to the one end of salvation. Paul speaks of the reciprocal faith which he shares with the Romans (Rom. 1:11f).

Faith directs the sight of the soul to the discovery of mysteries. Obstacles like jealousy and greed must be cleared away (5.1.11). For there are to be no pearls cast before swine; the natural man does not receive the things of God (1.12.56 also 5.4.25). All, both barbarians and Greeks, who have spoken of divine things have veiled their first principles in riddles, symbols, allegories, and metaphors (5.4.21). The common crowd will stay with their five senses; but believers must go within the veil. Plato excluded the uninitiated who thought that all existence could be grasped by their hands. God cannot be known by those who are limited to their five senses. The son revealed the father in the flesh but he is known only in the spirit. We walk by faith, not by the sight of the eyes (5.6.34).

Earlier, in Justin, we may note how the transition from Platonism to the prophets is made by the certainty of spiritual or noetic perception.<sup>23</sup> In scripture the language of seeing and hearing is present on every side. Paul speaks of the new eye and ear, of looking to things unseen and eternal, even of visions in the third heaven. Heb. 11 is full of the evidence of what is unseen. Blindness and deafness are the epistemological illnesses

21 See above, chapter 7, page 165 (Faith and philosophy).

22 Homer, says Clement, uses 'hear' instead of 'perceive', a specific form of perception instead of the generic concept.

23 dial. 4; see E. F. Osborn, *Justin Martyr* (Tübingen, 1973), 26 and W. Schmid, 'Frühe Apologetik und Platonismus', in *Hermeneia, FS O. Regenbogen* (Heidelberg, 1952), 181.

of the Gospels. At the last judgement, condemnation is pronounced on those who did not see, in the hungry, thirsty, lonely, naked, sick and prisoner, the presence of their lord.<sup>24</sup>

*Scripture stronger than Sirens*

Perception leaves us with the question: where is God to be seen and heard? God is the first object of faith, and the arguments for faith only work because God has spoken in scripture, where we receive the divine voice which alone is irrefutable proof. The strength of scripture is, like the call of the Sirens, greater than any human power; it disposes hearers, almost against their will, to receive its words (2.2.9).

Plato (Tim. 40de), says Clement, claims that it is possible to learn the truth only from God or from the off-spring of God. We are confident in the divine oracles which we possess and the truth we learn from the son of God, a truth which was first prophesied and then made clear (6.15.123).

The disciples of Pythagoras found in his authentic words (*autos epha*) a sufficient ground for faith. Therefore the lovers of truth will not refuse faith to a master worthy of faith, the only saviour and God (2.5.24). From him come the word of the lord, the preaching of the apostles, and the hearing which turns to faith (Is. 53.1; Rom. 10:17, 14, 15) (2.6.25).

In general, faith and proof may depend on either knowledge or opinion. From the scriptures we have proof based on knowledge and an obedient faith in God (2.11.48). Even the simplest faith has this knowledge or rationality. The highest proof produces science (*epistêmê*) through scriptures and leads on to knowledge (*gnôsis*) (2.11.49). Faith cannot be overthrown because it is God who comes to our help in scripture (5.1.5). It would be wrong to disbelieve God and ask for proofs from him (5.1.6).

We are taught by God, instructed by the son of God in the truly 'sacred letters' which are the scriptures (1.20.98). Faith in Christ and the knowledge of the gospel provide explanation of the law's fulfilment. We must believe what the law prophesies and delivers in oracles in order to understand the Old Testament, which Christ, by his coming, expounded. Indeed, faith in Christ and the knowledge of the gospel are the exegesis of the law and its fulfilment (4.21.134).

24 A useful philosophical treatment of this kind of perception is found in W. P. Alston, *Perceiving God: the epistemology of religious experience* (Ithaca and London, 1991).

At the same time, philosophy is at least as important as oracle.<sup>25</sup> The scriptures provide the genuine philosophy and true theology if we read them often, test them by faith and practise them in our lives (5.9.56). He who believes scripture and the voice of the lord may be trusted. Scripture is the criterion of judgement. It is reasonable to grasp by faith the unproved first principle and to receive from it demonstrations about the first principle. In this way we are trained to know truth by the voice of the lord (7.16.95). We have already arrived at the next argument.

*Faith and proof*

Scripture makes claims about God and salvation. How can these be rationally accepted? The faith of Abraham points to one cause and principle of all things, to the self-existent God, who justifies the ungodly, raises the dead and creates out of nothing. God, says Clement, who is remote in his being, has come near to us (Jer. 23:23f). Moses, on the mountain, entered into the darkness, into the inaccessible ideas about existence (2.2.6; Ex. 20:21). Hidden truth may now be learnt (Prov. 1:2–6; 2.2.6). With the holy spirit, it is possible to search the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10). That which is holy is not for dogs (2.2.7). Understanding follows faith (Isaiah 7:9).<sup>26</sup>

For the first principles of things are not proved or provable. They are not known by practical *technê* or by *phronêsis* which handles changeable things: the first principle or cause of all things is known by faith alone. All knowledge may be taught, and what is taught is based on previous knowledge. The first principle was not known to Greeks like Thales or Anaxagoras. Since no one can know and teach first principles, we must call no man our master on earth (2.3.14). Wisdom, which begins from the fear of the Lord, the grace and word of God, is faith.

God, we are told later, in *Stromateis* V, gave us life and reason; he wished that our life be both reasonable and good. From Justin's *logos spermatikos* onwards, this was a constant theme of early Christian thought: reason and goodness stand together. The logos of the father of all things is not just a spoken word but his wisdom and transparent goodness, his

25 J. Lössl, 'Der Glaubensbegriff des Klemens von Alexandria im Kontext der hellenistischen Philosophie', *ThPh* 37 (2002), 321–37, makes the two exclusive and defines Clement's understanding of scripture as philosophy, not oracle (332).

26 Clement turns the virtue of faith into a necessity for knowledge. God is not to be found except by abstraction from earthly things and by entering the abyss of faith and the dimension of Christ (5.11.71).

divine and sovereign power, his almighty will, conceivable even for those who do not confess him (5.1.6). Man's own rational power is limited. Paul attacked the scribe and the disputer of this world, who seemed to be wise, while Numa built a temple to faith and to peace. Abram was justified by faith, recognised God as superior to creation and scored an extra Alpha to be called Abraham.<sup>27</sup> The link of justification and the indemonstrable first principle is an important clue to the meaning of faith (5.1.8). While Empedocles claimed truth in his myths, he declared that the inclination to faith (*pistios hormê*) is resisted by the mind (5.1.9). So Paul put his faith not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, which alone and without proofs can save.

In his logic notebook of *Stromateis* VIII, Clement expands his claim that first principles cannot be proved, or else they would not be first principles but dependent on something prior to them. In my first book (1957), I took this argument first and gave it pride of place. I now judge it best to take the arguments in the order of Clement's text.<sup>28</sup> The temptation remains to fit the other arguments around it, as does Lössl.<sup>29</sup> Clement is not merely constructing a Middle Platonic theory of faith as 'rationality, reason and system'.<sup>30</sup> He follows a Pauline model with openness to all, so that his readers, finding what is familiar, may readily make their own way to the truth. Christians must be all things to all men, just as God has rained down his grace on the just and the unjust. 'We teach like from like' (5.3.18.5–8). There is one God of Jew and Gentile and of the variety of Gentile philosophy. The details of Clement's arguments touch on most of the epistemology of later Greek philosophy. He is not contracting the details into a system but throwing the net as widely as he can. We do not have a choice between a Stoic 'model' and one derived from Plato and Aristotle.<sup>31</sup> The undemonstrable first principle is the simplest argument for faith. It is not a proof of God's existence, but a proof that God, because he is God and ultimate first principle, is accessible only to faith (8.3.6f).

An account of unprovable first principles had been central to the logic of Aristotle, as stated in the *Metaphysics*: 'There cannot be demonstration

27 He had always been interested in the heavens; when he grasped the simplicity and unity of God, he received a second Alpha and a new name.

28 Lössl, 'Glaubensbegriff', 329, attributes Clement's order to me. I was nowhere near Alexandria when Clement wrote.

29 Lössl ends with Platonic-Aristotelian total theory, to which the only alternatives are 'ontological rationalism', 'fideism' and 'mysticism' (337).

30 *Ibid.*, 337.

31 Cf. *Ibid.*, 334. Lössl is absolutely right in his attention to Clement's rationality and reason.

of everything alike: the process would go on to infinity so that there would still be no demonstration' (met. 1006a6), and elaborated in *Posterior Analytics* (anal. post. 2.19.100b),<sup>32</sup> where it is insisted that there must be unproved first principles.

The direct relevance of such Aristotelian sources to Clement is doubtful. The argument against infinite regress is found earlier in Plato (Rep. 511b) and elsewhere. Clement does not attribute it here to Aristotle, as he does the argument on *krima*. 'The doctrine of the absolute *archê*, which is regarded by Plato as the end of the dialectic process has however become part of the school tradition. No work dealing with logical and epistemological doctrines could have omitted it.'<sup>33</sup> There are no grounds for seeing the object of faith as reducible to propositions.<sup>34</sup>

By argument and faith, Clement continues, we reach the first principle of all things (2.4.14); the errors of Thales show that there is no other way. Faith is a grace which goes beyond the indemonstrable principle to what is entirely simple, and in no way material. Clement's argument shows how faith and God are correlative. For Paul, faith depends on the God who justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5), raises the dead and creates out of nothing (Rom. 4:17). Such a God is the ultimate first principle and not accessible except to faith.

### *Judgement and criterion*

The first principles which faith grasps are the elements of truth and may be used to test other claims to truth. The faith which holds them becomes the criterion which Hellenistic philosophy sought.<sup>35</sup> The final obedience which is given to the criterion is due only to the word or *paidagôgos* who cannot be resisted because no one is prepared to go against God. The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Aristotle, according to Clement, says<sup>36</sup> that the *krima* which follows the knowledge of a thing and affirms it to be true is faith. Faith, then, is the criterion of knowledge and greater than knowledge, because it determines

32 'The last chapter of the Posterior Analytics is . . . a confession of his epistemological faith, a statement of the source from which in the last resort all knowledge springs.' W. K. C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek philosophy*, vol. VI, *Aristotle, an encounter* (Cambridge, 1981), 179.

33 Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 122.

34 As Lilla proposed, *Ibid.*, 119; cf. Lössl, 'Glaubensbegriff', 325.

35 See Sextus Empiricus, adv. math. 7.29 and J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), 133–51.

36 Theodoret attributes this formula to Aristotle (Graec. affect. cur. 1.90). Stählin points out that it cannot be found in the text. Mondésert suggests top. 4.5.126b.

whether knowledge is true or false (2.4.15). It follows the kingly, living law and the true light.

The only possible reference in our text of Aristotle seems to be in top. 4.5.126b: 'Similarly also the belief will be present in the opinion since it is the intensification of the opinion; so the opinion will believe. Further the result of making an assertion of this kind will be to call intensification intensified and excess excessive. For the belief is intensified; if therefore, belief is intensification, intensification would be intensified.'<sup>37</sup> This is an unlikely source for Clement's simple claim.

There remain four possibilities behind Clement's account. First, it may refer to a lost text of Aristotle. Secondly, it may be a development from what Aristotle said about the importance of a canon (anima 1.5.411a). Thirdly, the claim may come from a rhetorical source. When an orator offers an argument, we call it a belief (*pistis*), because we are intended to believe (*pisteuein*) the conclusion after being convinced by the argument. It is from our belief that we judge the strength of the argument and the knowledge of its author.<sup>38</sup> Finally, because the argument is strongly Stoic, it is probable that a Stoic argument has simply been attributed to Aristotle in error. Inaccurate citation was common in Clement's day.<sup>39</sup>

The Stoic origin of the argument can now be asserted with confidence.<sup>40</sup> The same argument, in an extended form, is attributed by Cicero to Zeno (Acad. 1.41f) and set out in these terms:

1. Assent is a voluntary act.
2. Not all sensible presentations are worthy of faith (*fides*).
3. Only those which possess clarity and are recognisable presentations are worthy of faith.
4. Sensation, firmly grasped or recognisable, is knowledge (*scientia*), irremovable by reasoning. All other sensation is ignorance (*inscientia*).
5. The stage between knowledge and ignorance is comprehension, and it alone is credible ('*sed solum ei credendum esse credebat*') (Acad. 1.42).
6. Hence Zeno granted faith also to the senses, because a grasp achieved by sense was true and faithful, because it let go nothing which was capable of being its object, and because nature had given a canon (or

<sup>37</sup> LCL translation.

<sup>38</sup> I owe this comment to H. A. S. Tarrant. See on this point F. Young, *The art of performance* (London, 1990), 123f, and 131; also see J. L. Kinneavy, *Greek rhetorical origins and Christian faith* (Oxford, 1987), 26–53.

<sup>39</sup> See Collard, *Athenaeus*, 157.

<sup>40</sup> See Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 138–42.

criterion) and a first principle of itself from which the first principle of a thing might be impressed on the mind.

Finally, Cicero remarks that 'the Stoic system should be considered a correction of the Old Academy rather than another new teaching' (Acad. 1.43). This makes the attribution to Aristotle easy to understand.

Clement's summary of this argument, which he could have learnt from a Greek source similar to that of Cicero, is brief: the judgement concerning the truth of a presentation judges whether it is faithful, and this verdict is reached by faith, using its own criterion. Here the argument from assent seems to be repeated, using *krima* instead of *sugkatathesis*, so that faith becomes criterion.

Canon and criterion, as tests of objective truth, dominated Hellenistic philosophy.<sup>41</sup> The canon of Epicurus set out criteria. Clement speaks similarly of the canon of the church, which is the confession of the essential articles of faith (7.15.90). For example, the criterion of faith works at scripture to present an account consistent with faith's first principle. The lover of truth must exercise strength of soul, strict adherence to faith's rule, critical discrimination between true and false, and a sense of what is essential. Heretics do not follow logical rules and plain argument. The believer will not abandon the truth to which the word has appointed him, but stands firm, grows old in the scriptures, lives by the gospel, and finds proofs in the law and the prophets. He must never defile the truth or canon of the church. Heretics do not enter by the main door of the church, the tradition of Christ, but cut a side door through the wall (7.17.106). It seems that the pious forger of the Secret Gospel of Mark took this reference to a hole in the wall literally, and one modern writer tumbled into it, dragging some others with him.<sup>42</sup> The failure of the heretic is a twofold logical error, through failure to use a true criterion and failure to observe simple rules of argument.<sup>43</sup>

41 See above, chapter 7, page 172, and *The criterion of truth*, FS George Kerferd, ed. P. Huby and G. Neal (Liverpool, 1989) and G. Striker, *Kritêrion tês alêtheias*, NAWG.PH (Göttingen, 1974), 47–110.

42 M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA, 1973). See my rejection of this hypothesis in an article, 'Clement of Alexandria: a review of research, 1958–1982', *SecCent* 3 (1985), 219–44, especially pages 223–5. Other reasons for rejection could be added. It is exactly forty years since I first heard this theory expounded in public. The presence of Clement's language and absence of Clement's ideas have always prevented me from taking it seriously. Words and concepts are not the same. The same words can express different concepts. The same concepts can be expressed in different words. Forgery can be proved probable on philological grounds; see A. H. Criddle, 'On the Mar Saba letter attributed to Clement of Alexandria', *J ECS* 3 (1995), 215–20.

43 Osborn, 'Reason and the rule of faith', 51–3.

To sum up, faith and love, the beginning and the end, cannot be taught. Why then does Clement use so much argument to justify faith? He wanted to show that for all its simplicity, it was present in most human thought. Its detractors, if philosophers, knew something of pre-conception, assent, mental perception, divine revelation, unproved axioms, criterion of truth, moving on and faithfulness as an intellectual virtue. Faith was not a denial of reason but its starting-point and enduring integrity. Clement has used diverse arguments with discrimination to explain what faith was doing. Arguments came from all kinds of philosophy because Clement wanted to show that everyone had a point in common with Christian faith and to make that point a ground of invitation. In the end, faith can stand where Paul placed it, as the way to approach the only God. 'Faith is strength to salvation and power to eternal life' (2.12.53).<sup>44</sup>

44 Recently the question has been raised as to which of his arguments for faith is preferred by Clement (Lössl, 'Glaubensbegriff'). My numbering of the arguments is derived solely from their order in the text of *Stromateis* II. Support for each argument is often given from *Stromateis* V, which is the other section where Clement writes about faith. Following the order of the text is a useful principle in analysing Clement; it leaves open the relative value of an argument in Clement's mind.

The 'first idea in Osborn's series' (Lössl, 'Glaubensbegriff', 329) is nothing more than the first idea in Clement's text. 'Clement's second concept according to Osborn' (*Ibid.*, 331) is the second concept in Clement's text (*Ibid.*, 334). Fifty years ago, in my *Philosophy of Clement*, with the confidence of youth, I did assign priority to the unproved *archê* argument, as does Lössl. Now I am reluctant to impose any priority within Clement, for whom different arguments would convince different readers (5.3.18.6). Each argument is for Clement a fragment of eternal truth torn from the theology of the ever-living logos, or a bait to catch a different fish.

## CHAPTER 9

### *Knowledge, sciences and philosophy*

#### PAUL AND UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE<sup>1</sup>

Has Clement argued so effectively for faith that he cannot give much place to philosophy or any other form of knowledge? His epistemology begins from the Corinthian letters of Paul, from the majesty of faith which depends not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. However, Paul, in the same chapters where he establishes the autonomy of faith, finds a place for a deeper knowledge which he commends to the Corinthians. He begins (1 Cor. 1:5) with the prayer that they might be enriched in Christ in all logos and all knowledge, that they might have the one firm foundation in Christ and at the same time receive every charisma. As he turns to the immediate problem of schisms at Corinth, he declares the centrality of faith in Christ crucified. This word of the cross is folly to those who are on the way to destruction, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18). The wisdom of the wise will be destroyed because God has made it appear foolish. Paul preaches Christ crucified, which is a scandal to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but the power and wisdom of God to those who are called. There are not many wise men among the faithful at Corinth, but Christ has become their wisdom just as he has become their divine source of righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Indeed, Paul's very poverty of personal presentation to the Corinthians was designed to fix their faith in the power of God rather than in the wisdom of men.

Of this origin of faith Paul has spoken earlier. Now he goes on quickly to speak of the hidden mystery which faith introduces. God has prepared for those who love him what eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and this knowledge, just like faith, comes from God himself. His spirit searches the profound depths of divine being, and only those who have

<sup>1</sup> Here, as in chapter 7, we begin from the Pauline passages (1 Cor. 1-4) which Clement uses.

received this spirit can know the mystery and wonder of God. We, however, says Paul, have received the spirit of God, so that we might know what God has given to us. The natural man cannot receive these things, for they seem foolish to him and are beyond his knowledge. But we, who have received the spirit, have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

Paul had not found much of this knowledge among the Corinthians. Their divisions showed that their grasp of truth was partial. Therefore they had to lay the foundation of faith in order to reach the fullness which God's spirit offered to them. The one foundation was Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). Every superstructure on this foundation will be tested by fire, and those who are indwelt by God's spirit must realise the demands which this spirit makes upon their life. The wisdom which God gives is not the wisdom of the world, for the world's wisdom is folly before God. What Paul offers is a greater wisdom, accessible only when believers have laid the foundation of Christ. They had boasted of their party leaders and differences. In Christ there was a universality which went beyond these divisions. All things were theirs, for they were Christ's and Christ belonged to God.

To sum up, Paul is pointing towards a universal knowledge which begins from faith and which is opposed to the wisdom of the world. This is, he says, a mystery which belongs to God and is known only through him. There is therefore no ground for boasting but rather a recognition of folly, weakness and dishonour. The apostles make a poor showing in the world; their knowledge is marked by weakness and never by pride.

### *Philosophy and science*

Clement wishes to use sciences (*technai*) and philosophy as aids in discovering truth. They are needed for the investigation of scripture, which is like the richly embroidered mantle of the high-priest. They are important to those who come from within Greek culture; for the lord gives universal knowledge (Wisd. 7:16f; see also 8:8) (6.11.92.2-3). Human sciences and philosophy lack direct divine origin; true knowledge is received only from the lord (Wisd. 7:16f; 6.11.93.3). Yet any conflict between human wisdom and divine truth may be overcome, for God even gives the wisdom which governs the construction of a ship (Wisd. 14:6f). Clement uses the two fishes and five barley loaves as an analogy to God's provision of Greek philosophy and the Mosaic law. One fish refers to the sciences and the other to philosophy. The five loaves of barley refer to the law which, like barley, was an early crop; these loaves were

multiplied by the lord (6.11.94.4). The two auxiliary sources of truth (philosophy and law) are subordinate to Christ, the supreme wisdom. He increased as John the Baptist decreased; he made all things, and apart from him nothing was made. He is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20f), and the wisdom which Paul had declared.

### *Truth and philosophy<sup>2</sup>*

Truth comes from God or from the children of God, according to Plato (Tim. 40de); philosophy helps to discover this truth and only falls short when it neglects true worship of God. Similarly, heresies fall short because they have an inaccurate knowledge of the one God and Christ (6.15.123.1–3). Empedocles recognised that philosophers only see a little of the whole (6.17.149.1). Philosophy takes a few points from scripture, says nothing of God, but points to the need for study; for the kingdom belongs to the violent, who take it by force, and with Clement this violence is intellectual and philosophical (6.17.149.5).

The gnostic imitates his lord and receives a 'lordly' quality as he looks to the reality of God (6.17.150.3). For God is lord of all and directs us to realities rather than mere words. Even the incarnation was an ordinary, earthy affair. The physical body of Christ had no striking peculiarities, so that we are not tied to past details but are pointed by Christ to noetic realities. Faith offers these realities; just as it is natural for hands to hold and eyes to see, so it is natural for faith to partake of knowledge. Faith does not merely promise future knowledge, but begins to share the royalty of knowledge. Because God wills the salvation of all and because his providence is marked by progress, he gave philosophy as a preparation for faith and knowledge (6.17.152.3). *Phronêsis* (prudence) has many forms: when it is linked to proof, it is knowledge, wisdom and science. When it is

2 C. Micaelli, 'Linguaggio e conoscenza religiosa in Clemente Alessandrino', in *Lingua e teologia nel cristianesimo greco: atti del convegno tenuto a Trento l'11–12 Dicembre 1997*, ed. Claudio Moreschini and Giovanni Menestrina (Brescia, 1999), 59–93. Micaelli follows Daniélou in recognising that Clement is the first Christian writer to use philosophical language with an awareness of philosophical issues. He sets out nine problems: Il concetto e la sua veste verbale, La dialettica e la distinzione dei significati, La tendenza alla 'circularità linguistica', Un interessante caso di metonimia: 'natura' come equivalente di 'Dio', L'espressione linguistica dell'essere e dell'agire di Dio, Clemente e la riflessione platonica sull' Uno-Tutto, La riflessione sull'Uno e le sue conseguenze sul piano del linguaggio teologico, Il limite del linguaggio teologico nell'ambito della dottrina generale sul linguaggio, Al di là del linguaggio: la contemplazione come forma suprema di conoscenza.

linked to piety, it is faith which receives the holy spirit and a lordly quality (6.17.155.3).

What may philosophy offer? It shares in a higher perception of truth, a form of intelligence, and dialectic, which links and develops noetic objects. Philosophy is not from the devil but from God, given to the Greeks as the law was given to the Jews (6.17.159.1). True science is knowledge of the causes of things. We have to do philosophy or argue in order to find out whether philosophy is necessary (6.18.162.5). On the other hand, just as we must do philosophy, so the Greeks must learn from the law and the prophets (6.18.163.1).

Clement turns to the second Corinthian letter, where Paul speaks of taking the gospel 'to regions beyond' (2 Cor. 10:15, 16). He is speaking here, not geographically, but epistemologically. The gospel must go beyond catechesis. Paul's speech may be feeble, but his knowledge is not (2 Cor. 11:6). His knowledge goes beyond the limits of Greek thought because man by himself cannot speak of God (6.18.165.2).

Those who choose God become accustomed to God.<sup>3</sup> As Paul said, they see the depths of God by the spirit in a way which natural man cannot follow. In the end, all wisdom comes from God. Since the foundation of the world, thousands of prophets and teachers and messengers have pointed to God. God's universality is confirmed by this massive wealth of witness (6.18.166.5). The law and the prophets point to the power and universal manifestation of God's knowledge. Such knowledge is not confined, as philosophy was to Greece, nor does it perish under persecution. It is powerful because 'no gift of God is weak' (6.18.167.5). Plato spoke of the poet as inspired by God. Democritus attributed the enthusiasm of the poet and the beauty of poetry to sacred inspiration. When we are confronted not by poets but by prophets, who are the direct voice of God, we are struck with wonder at the immediacy of God's power.

### *Philosophy, wisdom and gnosis*

Clement must also explain the way in which the one supreme God has conveyed knowledge of himself to humans. Here he uses the Stoic notion of spermatic logos and describes how the truth of philosophy came down in the manner of rain from heaven. God sent down the rain at different

<sup>3</sup> The idea of 'accustoming', so important for Irenaeus, is developed by Clement in the intimacy of *oikeiōsis*. See my *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 80–2.

seasons in different places, and the rain was none other than the lord himself, the logos who grew differently in different places. Clement changes the Stoic concept to an emphasis on the rain rather than on the seed. God's rain falls on all, to bring growth to the seeds which, from the foundation of the world, he has sown. Not only the seed, but also the rain symbolises the activity of God over all times and places. This means that philosophy of many kinds can be used to benefit the exposition of truth (1.7.37).

Clement draws from philosophy not only particular elements but inspiration for his total enterprise. Whether it be the central problem of God or not, Plato and others provide direction for the philosopher. Paul tells us to avoid juvenile disputations. Such things may be all right for youngsters, but virtue, says Plato, is not a matter for little boys, and Gorgias of Leontium<sup>4</sup> points to the need for two virtues in the philosophical contest. These are audacity and wisdom: 'Audacity enables us to face danger; wisdom enables us to understand the enigmatic.' Our teaching sends a call to those who are willing and crowns those who are able (1.11.51.2).

Even when Clement describes the problem of martyrdom, he turns to Plato, whose just man is stretched on the rack with his eyes dug out. Just so, Clement's sage finds happiness in being a royal friend of God and in the love which endures all things (4.7.52). In general, philosophy may come from the intelligence of the Greeks, but that intelligence originally comes from God. Some philosophy, like that of the Epicureans, is restricted to the material world. Yet the intelligence behind it has been a gift of God (6.8.62.3). The Psalms confirm that understanding (*sunesis*) and knowledge (*gnôsis*) come from God. God has no favourites, as Peter (Acts 10:34f) declared, because in every nation his knowledge can be found. His goodness reaches to all (6.8.63f). The gnostic has studied widely and is a man of learning. Protagoras had shown that every logos has an opposing logos, and Clement of Rome insisted that the believer must be able to expound knowledge, to choose words, to do good works, be holy, strong and humble (1 Clem. 48.5f). The gnostic must exercise the same skills as the gardener who prunes, separates plants and performs many other tasks in cultivation of the soil. Together with his central concern for the knowledge of God, the gnostic follows geometry and philosophy (6.8.65.6).

Philosophy, then, is not from the devil. Even if it disguises itself as an angel of light, part of its disguise is to speak words of light. Philosophy does not lie, even if it steals and disguises its real activity. We should never condemn words because of their source, but examine what has been said, and only then come to a judgement concerning their source (6.8.66.1–5).

Philosophy is the covenant which the universal God made with the Greeks; like the law, it is a step towards the philosophy of Christ. Nevertheless, some philosophers are deaf to the truth, for they scorn barbarian language and they fear death through persecution. Among the philosophers of Greece there have been weeds sown within the total crop. The Epicureans are an example of these weeds (6.8.67.1–2). It is this worldly wisdom, hedonistic and self-centred, which Paul calls the wisdom of the world, because it is elementary, partial and subject to terrestrial powers (6.8.68.1).

In contrast, the true and perfect knowledge ascends beyond the world to the intelligible, spiritual realities, which are what eye has not yet seen nor ear heard and which have not entered into the heart of man until the teacher fully explains them. True knowledge or gnostic faith knows and comprehends all things. This kind of gnosis was found in James, Peter, John, Paul and the other apostles. Such knowledge is first given by the lord in prophecy and then made clear by the lord and his apostles. It becomes the property of a rational soul, as that soul practises *askêsis* and gains life eternal through knowledge (6.8.68.1).

Clement attributes to the soul two different powers, that of knowledge and that of driving force (*hormê*). Chrysippus had spoken of the driving force of the soul towards the object of its assent. From study or learning we move to knowledge, to force and to action. Knowledge precedes action as its *archê* and is characteristic of the rational soul; while force is a kind of knowledge of the real, knowledge is a vision of total reality. There can be no scepticism in knowledge, because all is understood by the son of God who teaches what he knows with the love which is demonstrated by his suffering on our behalf. Faith becomes solid proof when truth is found through what has been transmitted by God. The disciple of wisdom achieves vast knowledge, understanding past and future, aphorisms and enigmas, signs and wonders, times and seasons (Wisd. 8:8; 6.8.69, 70).

Clement can never separate knowledge from goodness, or logic from ethics.<sup>5</sup> The gnostic<sup>6</sup> has no passions except those which the body

<sup>5</sup> See below, chapter 11, pages 238–41 for a full account of *apatheia*.

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of clarity, Clement's ideal Christian is the gnostic (lower case), while the heretic is Gnostic.

provokes, and even these were not needed by the lord, who had no need of food but ate simply as an example to his followers (6.9.71.1–2). The gnostic is free from want and desire because he is already united through love to his beloved, to whom he has become assimilated or adapted (*oikeiôsis*) by choice. He makes every effort to imitate his master in freedom from passion (*apatheia*), for both man and God have their reality in mind or *nous* (6.9.72.1f). This quality of life points to the divinity of love, which is not desire but an affectionate appropriation which restores the gnostic to the unity which comes from faith and is independent of time and place. The gnostic has acquired the object of his desire, the totality of goodness, and therefore has no need. In love he is a friend of the passionless God (6.9.76). He is free from the joy which depends on pleasure and from the grief which depends on fear, and is never impetuous, because impetuosity is linked with anger (6.9.74.1). Since he is filled with higher joy, he can no longer find delight in simple, earthly things (6.9.75). He has gone beyond virtue, needing no courage and having no fear, firm in the possession of the object of his love. Through this love, the future is present to him and he prays for faith, which grasps the end and enables him to live a correct life. He gives priority to discourse about the good and always looks to the *noêta*, guiding his life as a navigator who looks to the stars to steer his ship (cf. Phaedo 85d, Laws 803b). So oriented, he is above all hardships and temperate in all his ways. His one pursuit is to gain knowledge (6.9.79.1–2).<sup>7</sup>

### Sciences

The sciences (*technai*) prepare the gnostic for knowledge, as they give intellectual skills which lead to truth. The study of music teaches through the discernment of harmonies. Arithmetic points to the relations between numbers, their reciprocity and general qualities. Geometry brings awareness of substance and incorporeal extension. Astronomy, through its reciprocal harmony (*tên pros allêla sumphônian*) ascends, as did Abraham with the help of the stars, to a knowledge of the creator. Dialectic is useful, as it divides different kinds and species and ascends through discernment and discrimination to contact with the simplicity of the first principle. From these sciences we learn not to be frightened of philosophy (6.10.80.1–5).

7 See below, chapter 11, pages 238–42 (Apatheia and appropriation).

The power of discrimination makes faith invincible and removes fear of specious talk. As the proverb says, we compare purple with purple. Faith gives a right heart, so that we can be skilful money-changers, discerning true from false and judging accurately what is said. The just man is never shaken or frightened by evil. Apart from his faith, he may add the protecting wall of dialectic, whose argument protects him against sophists. He finds joy in the quest for his lord, which is continuous and diversified, because his lord has many ways of speaking (6.10.81.1–6).

Dialectic helps because truth is found through distinguishing what is general from what is particular, through making definitions and distinguishing words from things. Even in scripture these distinctions are important, for many expressions may express different things, while different expressions are saying the same thing.<sup>8</sup> Discrimination also guards against useless questions. In these preparatory skills which science offers, we are protected against the enemies of truth, and receive an accurate transmission of the faith (6.10.82.1–4).

For all these reasons the gnostic defends the use of the encyclical disciplines and Greek philosophy. He uses for good what others use for ill. He finds in philosophy a weapon against the sophists, for philosophy shines like the sun to reveal the true colours of things (6.10.83.1–3).

Clement's description of the encyclical disciplines includes much which today would not be regarded as scientific, for he is concerned to show hidden connections rather than observable facts.<sup>9</sup> In arithmetic, the 318 followers of Abraham point to the salvation by Jesus on the cross and at the same time indicate 300, which is trinity multiplied by 100, while 10 is the perfect number; 8, as the first cube, points to length, breadth and depth (6.11.84.2–6). Again, the number 120 is important as the sum of all numbers from 1 to 15, and the moon appears on the fifteenth day of the month (6.11.84.7). Geometry looks to the tabernacle and to the ark, and its different dimensions enable a move from what is sensible to what is intelligible (6.11.86.1). The number 350 points to the cross, while 50 points to Pentecost and the hope and remission of sins, and 12 to the apostles who brought the kerygma. The table in the sanctuary has dimensions  $6 + (4 \times 1.5) = 12$  (6.11.87.2).

David showed the importance of different modes of music and the value of *sumphônia*, which is essential to law, prophets, gospel, unity and

8 All need to be reminded that the clear distinction between words and concepts is not an invention of analytic philosophy.

9 See Itter, *Method and doctrine*, especially 126–35.

the rhythm of succession (6.11.88.5). Most Christians are indifferent to rhythm and melody; they should use music to order their moral life and appearance (6.11.89.1–4). Just as music glorifies God, astronomy brings us close to creative power, and helps us to make inferences, to distinguish true and false, like and unlike, sense and intellect (6.11.90.3–4).

### *Dialectic*

While dialectic, as the general practice of argument (in question and response) can degenerate into unproductive sophistry, it is still useful (6.17.156.2). It can serve as a protective hedge against false opinion (6.10.81.4).<sup>10</sup> Above all, dialectic shows the sequence of scripture. Clement's account of the true dialectic (1.28) is applied, we have seen, to scripture.<sup>11</sup> It begins with the claim that true dialectic is mixed with the true philosophy, which for Clement is the teaching of scripture. It ends with the claim that scripture is not straightforward. Those who search for its meaning and coherence must possess the highest degree of logical skill. The philosophy of Moses has four parts of which the fourth is theology or vision, which is directed to the highest mysteries. Aristotle calls this metaphysics. Plato describes dialectic as the science which discovers reality, something which surpasses sophistry. It aims to please God, not men. When this true dialectic is mixed with the true (Mosaic, biblical) philosophy, it is able to ascend to God and to know heavenly and divine things, from which knowledge an appropriate way of life on earth will follow. It is able to analyse the forms behind things and to define universals and particulars. It attains to the true wisdom, which knows what is real, apprehends perfection and is free from passion. Clement's upward climb ascends through heavenly powers as well as through noetic forms. This is reflected in the account of the son in *Stromateis* VII.2 as the highest excellence or the universal mind who knows and governs all things and to whom the whole company of angels and gods is subordinate. As ever, Clement here places the goal of dialectic in the son, who is the source of knowledge, who reveals the father and to whom belongs the mystery. Through him it is possible to distinguish between the different senses of the law: symbolic, moral and prophetic.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 534; Philo, *agric.* 14f.

<sup>11</sup> See above, chapter 3, pages 65–8 (The upward path of dialectic) and also the useful assessment of Pépin, 'La vraie dialectique', 375–83. The true dialectic, as in 1.28 and 7.2, determines Clement's thought on most points.

Here Clement makes his central fusion of Plato and Paul, giving pre-eminence to Christ. Between earthly particulars and the son are set the heavenly powers over whom the son rules and whom he unites. From the son alone come knowledge of God and understanding of scripture.

*Logic notebook*<sup>12</sup>

The logic notebook which is preserved as Book VIII of the *Stromateis* differs from the other seven books and is easily underestimated. It contains private notes, which either Clement took from lectures and written sources or which a later copyist has extracted from Clement.<sup>13</sup>

- (i) They reflect his philosophical optimism. Philosophical inquiry should lead to truth; sceptical disputation is satisfied with inconclusive argument. Only the more recent philosophers have been content to argue. If we use logic to seek, examine, question and clarify, we shall find the meaning of scripture and receive knowledge from God. If we seek, we shall find; if we do not use logical inquiry, we cannot learn from scripture. Our questioning must also be directed to common ideas in a fruitful way always from love of truth and always peacefully. Rational proof, Clement insists, will lead to knowledge (8.1.2).
- (ii) Demonstration works only if definitions are clear. It moves from first principles which are accepted by faith, simple, rational or primary (8.3.7). To solve any problem we must have a clear starting-point and must define our terms. Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics had different definitions of 'animal'. The question 'Is the foetus an animal?' cannot be approached without choosing between the different definitions of the key term.

In chapter 6, Clement divides the genus of animal to reach the species of man, who is 'a rational, mortal, earthly, walking, laughing animal' (8.6.21). Some disputes occur because definitions have not been clarified.

Most important for Clement is the distinction between words, concepts and things (*onomata*, *noëmata*, *pragmata*). The same name may apply to different things and different names may apply to the

<sup>12</sup> See Osborn, *Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria*, 148–53.

<sup>13</sup> P. Nautin, 'La fin des Stromates et les Hypotyposes de Clément d'Alexandrie', *VigChr* 30 (1976), 268–302. 'Les textes qui suivent le *Stromate* VII dans le *Laurentianus* ne sont ni des brouillons ou notes de lecture publiées par Clément ou par ses légataires, ni des notes de cours qu'il aurait prises à l'école de Pantène et dont il se serait déjà servi dans les Stromates précédents, mais des fragments qu'un copiste a extraits de l'oeuvre de Clément', 301–2.

same thing. Some things have the same definition but different names. Other things have different definitions but the same name (8.8.23). The distinction between words and concepts makes nonsense of the 'stamp-collecting' of modern doxographers which has hampered the interpretation of Clement's own work.

- (iii) Sceptical suspense of judgement cannot be absolute, because if nothing is certain then we cannot be sure 'that nothing is certain'. Yet it has its place, for people are always changing their minds and the world is a very complicated place (8.7.22). The evidence between opposite views is often equally balanced.
- (iv) Causes are of four kinds – original, sufficient, cooperating and necessary (8.9.25). What does not prevent is not a cause. To Stoic ideas certain Aristotelian elements are added. Causes cannot be understood apart from their effects; they must be the cause of something. Joint causes are important for Clement. While cooperating causes may be auxiliary, joint causes play a direct part in producing an effect.
- (v) These notes on logic represent an important blending of Aristotle and Stoicism which may be traced to Antiochus of Ascalon, who may be seen as the first Middle Platonist.<sup>14</sup> They show the source of the logic which Clement used to clarify specific problems. They display his optimism (that the seeker finds), his rigour (demonstration and definition must be clear), his rejection of verbalism (words and concepts are not the same), his appreciation of complexity (humans change their minds and the universe is ambiguous) and his interest in causality (joint causes differ from cooperating causes). For our understanding of Clement they are of great value.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Modern friends of Antiochus have praised him for wrong reasons. See J. Barnes, 'Antiochus of Ascalon', in *Philosophia Togata I*, ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (Oxford, 1997), 51–96. Barnes suggests the conclusion, 'He had the insight to grasp what was essential, the courage to ignore the accidental. If his syncretism was false in detail, it conveyed a general truth – and a truth pertinent to his day. For when the Athenian Schools were battered by external enemies and fractured by internal squabbles, he was prepared to publish a plain and conservative system of philosophy – and to commend his system to the rulers of the world' (90).

<sup>15</sup> See J. von Arnim, *De octavo Clementis Stromateorum libro* (Rostock, 1894), 12. Cf. Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb*, 199; Pohlenz, *Klemens von Alexandria*, 111; R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the history of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge, 1937), 31–9. W. Ernst, *De Clementis Alexandrini Stromatum libro VII qui fertur* (Göttingen, 1910), 59: 'Hoc potissimum Clementis munus est, neque enim materia oppressus est, sed ipse eam ad propositum accommodat. Quo fit, ut vetustis novitatem det et aliorum cognitionibus usus tamen propria et sua profert'.

*Hierarchy of knowledge*

Clement's account of knowledge conflicts with that given by Gnostics. Fortunately, in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (exc) he sets out the differences between his views and those of Theodotus, a Valentinian Gnostic. Their common concern is a hierarchy of knowledge; their accounts of that hierarchy differ. We shall examine Clement's account.

*Degrees of glory*

When the lord tells us not to despise one of the little ones because their angels contemplate the face of the father, he is, says Clement, giving a model or metaphor. The little ones will be the elect who, after they have received perfect advancement, will be blessed with the vision of God which belongs to the pure in heart (Mt 5:8). But how will they see the face of one who has no shape? The apostle has known heavenly bodies which are both beautiful and intelligent. He could not know them unless they were in some ways delimited by their shape, form and body. He speaks of the different kinds of glory of heavenly beings (1 Cor. 15:40). In comparison with earthly bodies, they are incorporeal and without shape; but in comparison with the son, they are both measured and perceived, just as the son is measured and perceived by the father (exc 11.3). Each spiritual being has the power appropriate to his place in the economy. The first-created have received together their being and their perfection in a service which is common and indivisible (exc 11.4). From the son down, the first-created and the angels see beings of equal and lower station to themselves. The son sees the father and is called 'the father's face' (exc 12.1).

*Degrees of light*

There are degrees of purification in the intelligible fire, which becomes intelligible light. The angels long to see that intellectual light, which is the highest point of their advancement (1 Pet. 1:12). But the son is still purer than this light, for he is the light inaccessible and the power of God (exc 12.3); he has redeemed us by his blood in spotless purity, and his garments shone, as did his face, like the sun (Mt 17:2); it was difficult to look upon the transfigured brightness of his light. He is the heavenly bread, the spiritual food which gives life and knowledge. He is the light of men which is given to the church (exc 13.1). Those who have eaten the manna

which came down from heaven are dead; but whoever eats the true bread of the spirit will never die. He is the living bread which the father has given; he is the son, and those who will, may eat of him. The bread which he gives is his flesh, given in the eucharist to those whom it nourishes. They become his body, the church, heavenly bread, blessed assembly, the elect who are of one substance and who reach the same end (exc 13.4).

### *Body, soul and spirit*

Demons are called incorporeal not because they lack body or definite shape, which lack would prevent them from being punished, but they are called incorporeal in comparison with those who are saved: they are shadowy in their substance (exc 14.1). The angels have bodies too, because they can be seen, and the soul is also a body. Paul distinguishes (1 Cor. 15:44) between animal bodies and spiritual bodies. There must be bodies in order for men to endure punishment for sin (Mt 10:28; Lk 12:5). The story of Lazarus and the rich man shows clearly that the soul is a body (exc 14.4). Paul tells us (1 Cor. 15:49) that we shall change the image of our earthly body for a heavenly body. This advancement we shall receive; just as now we see in a mirror, then we will see face to face. Now we have begun to know, and the reality which we know has a form, a figure and a body; a figure is seen by another figure, a face by another face, and we know things by their form and their substance. This is for Clement a decisive point: that there can be no knowledge of things earthly or things heavenly unless they have a form (*schêma*) and substance (*ousia*) (exc 15.2).

Clement qualifies and limits the mixture of divine and human which gives the soul its progress or advancement. Physical things are mixed and blended together, but the divine power which penetrates the soul and sanctifies it is not mixed in this way. It is not blended but juxtaposed with the soul. The spirit of God is juxtaposed with the human spirit as the human spirit is juxtaposed with the soul (exc 17.3, 4). The final advancement of the soul is not achieved by a change of substance but by the reception of the power and the strength of the spirit which blows where it wills and is never reduced to a compound with anything else (exc 17.4).

The descent of the saviour was visible not merely to the angels who announced the good news of the nativity, but to Abraham and to all the righteous who were in the state of rest (*anapausis*) and who were at the right side of the saviour. That is why the lord, when he was risen, took the good news to the righteous who were in the state of rest and then transposed them so that they would live in his shadow. For the shadow

of the glory of the saviour, the glory which he enjoys through his nearness to the father, that shadow is his coming here below, 'and the shadow of light is not darkness, but illumination' (exc 18.2).

### *Incarnation*

Clement continues with an interpretation of incarnation, which removes from the notion of logos any abstractness. The word became flesh not merely when he came to earth as a man, but also in the beginning when he was delimited from the father. He became the son by delimitation and not by a change of substance from the father. Again, he also became flesh when he worked in the prophets, and the saviour is called the child of the logos in his constant identity. The saviour is the life which comes into being in the word, and the lord is this life (exc 19.2; Jn 1:3, 4). This is the new humanity which Paul asked us to put on, created according to God, the word who is in God and able to reach the goal of advancement for which he was made. So he is clearly described as the image of the invisible God and the first born of all creation. For the image of the invisible God is the son of the logos in his identity, and the first born of all creation is so called because he was begotten without passion and is the creator and first principle of all creation and being. For 'in him' the father made all things (Col. 1:16). He took the form of a slave, not only when he came to earth, but also in his substance, as being subject to the active and supreme cause, who is the father (exc 19.5).

Clement's achievement is indicated by the variety of scriptural material which he uses. This offers an explanation of the richness of his account. The verse of Psalm 110:3, 'I have begotten you before the morning star' (he says), applies to the logos of God, who is the first-created. His name is before the sun, the moon and indeed before all creation (Ps. 72:17). The meaning of first-created here is made more explicit. The logos is not a creature, but he is called first-created because he comes before all creatures (exc 20).

### *Face to face*

What is the face which the angels see? The angels of the elect, who are described as 'these little ones', see and know the lord, each in a particular way. There is no common vision. Here Clement brings out his sense of the plurality of the logos who, for all his identity in the Godhead, is active

and is known in many ways. The face of the father is the son, which each believer comprehends from the instruction which the son has given. Beyond the instruction of the son, the father remains unknown. Clement has combined a universal, pluriform gift of knowledge with a residual mystery. God has been declared or explained by his only begotten, but for those who receive this instruction, there will always be something which is not told (exc 23.4). Within the mystery, the paraclete works on, in close proximity within the church, and without a break, through the Old Testament to the present day (exc 24.2).

In the final extended section, Clement speaks about the all-important entry of the soul, or seed, into the *plêrôma*. Theodotus describes this as taking place through Jesus, who is the gate of entry as well as the limit to which the higher seed will come. How does this entry take place? Clement turns to Hebrews and the account of the high-priest entering the holy of holies. With this extended metaphor, Clement explains in detail the final entry of the soul into close fellowship with the father through the word. The high-priest puts off the breastplate of gold which symbolises the body, a body which has become pure and light through the purification of the soul, just as gold is light and pure. Leaving the body, which is the breastplate and which has become weightless, the high-priest enters within the second veil, that is, within the intellectual world, the world of the *noêta*. This is the second veil of the universe. Then, with a naked soul which depends upon the power of his accomplice in knowledge and which has been changed to resemble the body of this power, he penetrates into the spiritual world. 'The soul has become really endowed with logos and with the station of the high-priest. For it is directly animated, so to say, by the logos, just as the archangels have become high-priests of angels and the first-created the high-priests of the archangels' (exc 27.3). The high-priestly soul has gone beyond scripture and instruction and become worthy to look on God face to face. With a knowledge and grasp of ultimate realities, he is espoused to the logos, but has already become logos and lives among the bridegrooms with the first-called and first-created. These are all friends of the logos through their love. They are sons because of instruction and obedience and brothers because they share a common birth (exc 27.5). Within the divine economy, it is fitting to wear the golden breastplate and to learn about knowledge or *gnôsis*; but only the power of God, which is the logos, can bring man to become divinely possessed (*theophoros*) as he is moved directly and continuously by the lord whose body he has become (exc 27.6).

## ROAD TO REALITY — METAPHOR AND DIALECTIC

Metaphor and dialectic were earlier<sup>16</sup> established as the two principles of Clement's road to reality. Recently, attention has been drawn to Clement's truly gnostic physiology (ἡ τῷ ὄντι γνωστικὴ φυσιολογία) where the ascent of dialectic identifies the God of philosophers with the God of the bible, and philosophy is illumined by the divine logos.<sup>17</sup> Here wisdom is obtained only by endless progress, progressive purification and a profound harmony of soul with the outside world.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, for Clement, ascetic practice and dialectic go together. Physiology originally meant knowledge of the natural world but came to mean the interpretation of natural phenomena as signs of transcendent reality. The contrast between myth and reality (*mythos, phusis*) distinguished between appearance and reality. Justin used the word *physiologoumenos* to describe Plato's perception of the cosmic cross (X). Through allegory, Plutarch and others produced cosmology from myths and religious rites; obscure sacred signs and symbols pointed to the principles of the cosmos. Myths, which were improper when taken in their literal sense, indicated a higher truth. Clement adds precision when he speaks of the truly gnostic physiology which is not just philosophical but depends on the divine logos.<sup>19</sup> His new dialectic does not merely decipher a sign but finds the form behind the particulars and goes on to the *archê* of all forms. In Clement, metaphor and allegory develop into dialectic, for the *noêta* are the thoughts of God, indeed traces of God in the world, and, says Clement, they are all united in the divine logos. The journey to true gnosis requires the work of physiology,<sup>20</sup> which is distinctively Clement's yet holds common ground with Platonic tradition. The knowledge of the forms leads to vision (*epopteia*) of the first principle, so that all reality is seen in the light of the divine logos. The final step of *askêsis* is abandonment to the magnitude of Christ in holiness. Dependence on the scripture leads to ultimate mystery and simplicity.<sup>21</sup>

Few thinkers have a more composite view of knowledge than does Clement. Yet there are some teachers, like Theodotus, whom he rejects. We now look at this disjunction and gain further understanding of Clement through his view of his opponents.

16 See above, chapter 3, pages 56–68.

17 L. Rizzerio, *Clemente di Alessandria e la 'φυσιολογία veramente gnostica'. Saggio sulle origini e le implicazioni di un epistemologia e di un'ontologia 'christiane'* (Leuven, 1996), 291.

18 *Ibid.*, 295.

19 *Ibid.*, 299.

20 *Ibid.*, 302.

21 *Ibid.*, 312.

## CHAPTER IO

### *Church and heresy*

#### THE CHURCH

The whole divine economy flows into one faith and one church. The different covenants which God has made, or the one covenant which he has made at different times, spring from the will of the one God and were made through one lord. The unity of the church is composed of those whom God, before the foundation of the world, has ordained, predestined or known to be righteous. This church has priority in time and perfection in truth over against heresies which are recent and follow falsehood. Its truth comes from its origin, a beginning which precedes all else and brings together all the righteous within God's purpose. Its unity is that of God, for God is one and the lord is one; such unity which imitates the one first principle of all things is to be praised above all else. Joined by nature to the One in substance, in idea, in beginning, in excellence, the ancient and universal church is uniquely one, uniting all who under any covenant have come to know God. Its pre-eminent unity excels all else because nothing equals it and nothing is like it (7.17.107.2-6).

The one church represents the dwelling of God on earth. When God spoke to David, he pointed to the temple where he would dwell as an anticipation of the incarnation and of the church. 'God will truly dwell on *earth* with men' (2 Chron. 6:18). This dwelling of God is the church composed of believers who have come together, of the righteous who are the 'earth' and who replace the incarnate lord (1 Pet. 2:5). The church is the divine place which the lord sanctified on earth. When he said, 'Destroy this body and in three days I will raise it up,' he was referring to the church which would continue his earthly existence (Jn 2:19-21) (Clement, frag. 36; *Canon of the Church or Against the Judaizers*). The flesh of Christ is the bread which has risen through fire as baked bread for the joy of the church (paed 1.6.46.3). The church is the voice of the lord, the power of the enlightening word of the lord, the truth that comes from

heaven above to its assembly below. It has been active with a luminous and immediate ministry from the time of Israel to the present (Deut. 4:12) (6.3.34.3).

The church on earth does the work of its lord. It assumes humanity so that through humanity it might serve the will of the father (Clement, proph. ecl. 23.2). The beauty of the church as the queen to whom the psalmist refers (Ps. 44(45)) is not a beauty of luxury; it is the simple unmixed order of faith in those who have received mercy in the church (paed 2.10.110.2). As God's will is his work and his work is the world, so God's will is the salvation of men, and this salvation is the church (paed 1.6.27.2). When the psalmist calls on us to praise the lord with timbrel and dance, he is referring to the church as it meditates on the resurrection of the flesh in its reverberating skin (paed 2.4.41.4).

The church on earth provides an earthly image of the church in heaven (4.8.66.1). In the heavenly church, God's philosophers are gathered. They are the true Israelites without guile and they rest in the mountain of God, far above the visible world (6.14.108.1). The gnostic soul becomes wholly spiritual and is received into the spiritual church where it remains in the repose of God (7.11.68.5).

So Clement's enthusiasm for the church derives from his awareness of its divine unity under a lord who, from the beginning, joins his people together. The church on earth is an anticipation of the church above, whose members have found rest in God. Typically, Clement uses many metaphors when he speaks of Christ and the church. Christ is the head, indeed the crown, of the church. The church is his body, his bride, both virgin and mother. This church is a holy temple in which God is worshipped and a school in which truth is taught. It is a tree planted by Christ whose fruits it bears. It is the body of faith and the soul of hope.

In contrast to the church, heresy is false and recent. Heretics leave the original church (1.19.95.6). Their purely human factions are more recent than the universal church, and their novelty can be readily proved (7.17.106.3). Jews and heretics are distinct from the church of God (7.18.109), and heretics steal from the canon of the church certain elements which belong to the church (7.16.105.5). The human soul may be in ignorance (the Gentiles), it may be governed by opinion (the heretics), or it may possess knowledge as in the true church (7.16.100.7).

To sum up Clement's account of the church: both on earth and in heaven it declares the *one* God who took human form. Male and female have the same virtue as they share the same God, the same teacher, the same church, the same temperance, modesty, food, respiration, sight and

hearing. This unity, found among humans, points Clement to the ultimate unity of God (paed 1.4.10.1).

### *Heresy*

The notion of heresy begins from schools of philosophy or medicine and moves to Jewish sects, such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, which Philo compares with the schools of Greek philosophy. Irenaeus writes his major work against the heresies, which are an antitype to the church, displaying diversity instead of the unity of true faith.<sup>1</sup>

Such heresies are the work of the devil, who is active from the beginning to destroy truth and encourage sin. Today the contrast between second-century accounts of heretics provided by Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian and the documents discovered at Nag Hammadi has been explained in terms of social theory, where the powerful separate the normal from the abnormal, and define rationality on the basis of this exclusion. While recognising the presence of social forces in disputation, I wish to correct the general conclusion by indicating that, for Clement, rationality is the constant theme for the rejection of heresy and that this rationality is tied to the logical exegesis and exposition of the bible. From the beginning he declares his common quest with Plato for the best reason (*beltistos logos*). When there is so much evidence for logic and argument it is unwise to reduce Clement's account to a struggle for ecclesiastical power. The illocutionary force of his argument is based on reason; he offers logical proof and persuasion. The perlocutionary force is partly linked with power, for he is setting one group of Christians against another.<sup>2</sup>

It is remarkable that Clement returns to the subject of heresy at the end of Book VII of the *Stromateis*, after his exposition of the perfect Christian or true gnostic. Having stated what he wants, he avoids confusion with other claims to knowledge. Here and in Book III, we find an extended account of Clement's attitude to heresy.

He begins (7.15.89) with the initial objection made against Christians that their internal diversity shows that they are wrong: the voice of truth is drowned by the din of conflicting claims. Clement replies that, both among the Jews and among Greek philosophers, there have been many

1 Irenaeus is more concerned than Clement with the ecclesial damage of heresy.

2 The illocutionary force of a statement is what one intends to do by means of the utterance. Perlocutionary force includes all the effects of the statement.

different sects; yet no one abandoned philosophy or the Jewish faith because of this variety. Since Jesus predicted that tares would be sown among the wheat, heresy is mixed up with truth because the prediction of Jesus must be fulfilled. Indeed, what is good and beautiful is always shadowed by a caricature.

Heresy is a matter of breaking commitment to truth, and the good man will be true to his word no matter how many others abandon their allegiance. The confession of the most important articles of faith is the rule or canon of the church and must be upheld. An analogy from medicine is used. There are many different schools of medicine; but no one, when he is ill, hesitates to consult a doctor on the ground that there are different schools of medicine. We must learn how to discriminate the true from the false, just as we discriminate valid currency from counterfeit.

The presence of heresies is a stimulus for a more strenuous search for truth. So far from giving up the search for the true God, we should increase our efforts to discriminate. If natural fruit and an imitation in wax are put before us, we should not abstain from eating because of their similarity, but we should distinguish the real from the apparent, both by intuition and by reason. If there are many roads, of which only one is the royal road, we will not hesitate to travel, but follow the highway of the king.<sup>3</sup> Heresies should encourage us to hunt more carefully for what is true. Just as gardeners do not desist because of the presence of weeds, so we should persist in discriminating 'what is incongruous, unseemly, unnatural and false from what is true, consistent, seemly and natural' (7.15.91.8). Here Clement uses a criterion of fitness as well as a criterion of logic. This is important because, like Irenaeus, his interpretation of scripture must take account of imagery as well as argument,<sup>4</sup> of what is fitting (*aptum*) as well as what is true (*verum*).<sup>5</sup>

Argument is the crucial thing. Irrational grounds cannot support any judgement. We may assume that all people admit the concept of proof or demonstration. This being the case, we must apply this concept to scripture and show where heresies are wrong and how the true and ancient church possesses the most exact knowledge and the highest school of thought. The sequence here in Clement's mind is from logical exposition

3 Clement's passion for metaphor predominates.

4 cf. Irenaeus, haer. 2.10.4: 'incredibile et fatuum et impossibile et inconstans'.

5 The two criteria which govern Irenaeus' thought. See my *Irenaeus of Lyons*, preface and chapters 7-9.

of scripture to authenticity of the knowledge in the church. He does not argue that an opinion held by the church has to be the most accurate, but rather that the most accurate and logical interpretation leads to the church. Those who think that they are wise do not offer any true demonstration; they avoid inquiry for fear of their reputation and avoid instruction because it brings them condemnation. The opinions which they impose on their followers do not reveal knowledge but rather obscure truth with plausible sophistry. Clement insists on the difference between sophistry and true argument. The terms used by heretics appear to be similar to those used by the church, because sophists steal and bury fragments of truth in the systems that they concoct. They are proud of their influence over members of their sect, which is a 'school' rather than a 'church' (7.15.92). The search for truth is directed towards the scriptures, to which are applied common criteria of judgement. Thought and reason distinguish between false and true arguments. Conceit must be abandoned, for there is no rest until the narrow and arduous way has reached its goal. Once the truth has been found, there must be no turning back. Reason and logic must be applied to scripture, which is the source of truth, forever bringing forth off-spring and retaining virgin purity. All men have the same faculty of judgement but, while some follow the dictates of reason, others abandon themselves to pleasure and twist the scripture to suit their desires. 'The lover of truth needs energy of soul, for those who set themselves to the greatest tasks must face the greatest disasters, unless they have received the canon of truth from the truth itself.' Without this criterion, or canon, those who have wandered from the right path have no test of truth which can make a right judgement (7.16.94.5). We begin from faith in the lord, and a dedication to truth which listens for his voice in scripture. From this first principle we make a true judgement. Having grasped the first principle by faith, we are able to obtain proofs from the first principle and are trained by the voice of the lord. Awareness of and familiarity with the voice of the lord enable the believer to progress in knowledge and to judge accurately what is true (7.16.95). In this way, scripture offers its own proof and gains conviction. Heretics do not handle the texts of scripture in this way. They pluck out ambiguous phrases and scattered statements 'without considering what is intended by them, but rather perverting the bare letter'. They change the meaning of words, going against the context and both particular and general usage. Truth is discovered in scripture by considering what is fitting and appropriate to God and by confirming whatever is proved from other passages of the text. Those who do not apply the tests of fitness

and coherence do violence to scripture; argument proves them wrong in their use of scripture (7.16.96). When heretics are shown to be wrong by plain proof, they either deprecate their own consistency or their prophetic source. They prefer their own reason over what has been said by the lord through the prophets, gospel and apostles. They regard the books of scripture which are used in public worship as worthless; when they try to improve on the rule of faith they abandon truth. Their failure is due to three things: ignorance of the mysteries of the church, inability to grasp the grandeur of truth, and lack of critical concern for fundamental issues, a lack which leads them to read scripture in a superficial way (7.16.97). They will argue continuously and belligerently because they want to appear philosophers; but they are not ready to become philosophers. Their rejection of faith brings a rejection of proof. Their opinions cloud the eye of the soul so that they cannot see clearly. They are like eels in murky water, unable to see and easily caught. They are like children who lock their teacher out of the classroom. They have deserted the post which their master has given them.<sup>6</sup> We must not desert our post, but follow God, having rational awareness at all times. Apparent contradiction within scripture must be overcome by coherence which is given by truth in all its sternness and severity. Ignorance, conceit and knowledge are different mental conditions. The first applies to the heathen, the second to heretics and the last to the true church (7.16.100).

In contrast to the unproved claims of the heretics, those who obey the lord and follow the truth of prophecy reach the perfect likeness of their teacher, and become divine while still in the flesh (7.16.101). Those who fall from such a position are those who do not follow God within the inspired writing which he has given. Their failure is due to ignorance or weakness and may be cured by knowledge of scripture and its plain proof on the one hand, and by logical training on the other.

Strangely, those who refuse to search for the truth claim the highest knowledge, 'although they have neither learned nor sought nor laboured nor discovered the coherence of truth' (7.16.103). Only the gnostic who has grown old in the study of scripture guards the right teaching of the apostles and the church; he lives a life consistent with the Gospels, as the lord supplies him the proofs he needs from the law and the prophets. The knowledge gained is a higher knowledge reflected both in his words and acts.

<sup>6</sup> Clement, the man of metaphor, piles metaphor on metaphor, simile on simile.

Heretics do not have the key to the kingdom and cannot enter the main door. They cut a side door and break through the wall of the church,<sup>7</sup> abandoning truth and introducing their own mysteries. Their gatherings are human groups and not divine assemblies; for the teaching of all heretics first appeared after the days of the lord and his apostles. Heresies were founded no earlier than the time of Hadrian and lasted to the age of the elder Antoninus (7.17.106). From then, spurious innovations continue to emerge outside the old and truest church. This one church is pre-eminent because it derives from the one pre-eminent God (7.17.107). Clement offers a final comment from the sacrificial law, which defines clean animals as those which divide the hoof and chew the cud. Chewing the cud is ruminating on the oracles of God night and day, while dividing the hoof is believing in father and son. Jews chew the cud, and ruminate on the oracles of God, but their lack of faith in father and son means they do not divide the hoof. Without a double hoof, they are unstable and unclean. On the other hand, heretics do not ruminate on scripture, and while they claim the names of father and son, 'they have no power to bring out the exact perspicuity of the oracles by subtle distinctions and smoothing away of difficulties' (7.18.109). Clement ends with the claim that he has scattered the sparks of true knowledge and that his own apparent lack of system will make it hard for those who are not initiated in the true faith. He follows those Greeks who reject elegant style and impart their teaching secretly and not in a plain manner. For the various seeds of truth provide a variety of bait to catch a variety of fish (7.18.111).<sup>8</sup>

However much Clement argues for rationality in the use of scripture, he insists that this rationality is possible only within the framework of faith. Argument outside this rationality is not possible, for there is only one first principle. Heretical argument is therefore, for him, a sporadic skirmishing on particular points rather than an attempt to find coherence in scripture as a whole. Clement insists that scripture does not fit together when the rule of faith is denied, and that the incoherence of heretical

7 The pious forger who produced the Secret Gospel of Mark took these statements literally. See my article, 'Clement of Alexandria. A review of research, 1958–1982', 219–44. See also André Mehat's review of Morton Smith, 'Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 190 (1976), 196–7. 'Récupération orthodoxe d'une fabrication carpocratienne: telle est la première hypothèse qui s'est présentée à nous; telle est celle que nous continuons à considérer comme la moins mauvaise' (197).

8 We have seen a clear example of this in the different arguments for faith.

accounts confirms his judgement. While, therefore, he is insisting on tradition, he insists on tradition and rule because of the observed incoherence of heretical accounts. His first objection is to incoherence, lack of logical structure and aesthetic fitness. These he cannot find in heretical accounts, and he gives the first principle of faith, or the canon of the church, as a way of avoiding such incoherence.

### *Heresy and morals*

Clement's account of heresy in Book III begins with moral problems. The enthusiasm of the Carpocratians for sex and their justification of promiscuity raise difficulties for Clement. They define righteousness as a universal balance whereby male and female are joined. Righteousness is the promiscuous coupling of men and women, driven by a strong and ardent desire which no law or custom can restrain; God has decreed that this should be so. How, asks Clement, can this be taken as a Christian view, when the demands of both law and gospel are openly rejected? For the law says 'thou shalt not commit adultery' and the Gospel says 'everyone who looks lustfully has already committed adultery'. The Carpocratian account is plainly inconsistent with scripture. The law which they propose is more appropriate to dogs, pigs and goats; at best it may be based on a misunderstanding of Plato in the *Republic*. Clement insists that, for Plato, women are held in common until they are married, but that, when they are married, they are no longer common to all. The Marcionites are equally at sea because they regard matter and creation as evil and therefore do not marry at all. Clement points out that this is not a rational reaction to creation, for if they wanted to reject the creator, they should stop eating the food he provides and breathing the air which he has set about them. The philosophers, who are wrongly claimed as Gnostic authorities, do not believe that birth is an evil thing but rather that, by means of birth and transmigration, souls are purified. While the Greeks have said negative things about the birth of children, the followers of Marcion have interpreted these claims in a godless way and shown ingratitude to their creator.

The followers of Nicolaus have misinterpreted the meaning of communion (*koinônia*). They use the word to describe copulation; one of them asked a beautiful member of the church for sex on the grounds of the verse in scripture 'Give to everyone who asks you' (3.4.27). Even the words of the lord are perverted by these people, bringing shame on

philosophy and on human life through their corruption of the truth. This kind of communion leads to the brothels. Likeness to God comes when Christians have put off the old humanity and its deceitful lusts and have put on true holiness in the new humanity. In this way, they become imitators of God and walk in his love (Eph. 4:20–24) (3.4.28).

The followers of Prodicus claim that they are by nature sons of the first God, and superior to all laws, which are only for slaves and not for kings. But the apostle says that everyone who sins is a slave (Rom. 6:19, 20 cf. Jn 8:34). They have chosen to disobey the laws and have therefore alienated both human law-givers and the law of God. So far from being kings, they behave like the worst of men (3.4.33). Their use of scripture is irrational because they take literal things allegorically and treat allegory literally (3.4.38). The crux of Clement's argument is found in a passage which joins Plato and scripture together in an intricate way:

We must follow where the word leads [cf. Rep. 394d] and if we depart from it we must fall into endless evil. By following the divine scriptures, the path by which believers travel, we are made like the lord as much as possible [cf. Theaet. 176b]. We must not live as if there were no difference between right and wrong [cf. Theaet. 176–177]; but to the best of our power we must purify ourselves from indulgence and lust and take care for our soul [cf. Phaedo 107c] which must continually be devoted to the deity alone. For when it is pure and set free from all evil, the mind is somehow capable of receiving the power of God and the divine image is set up in it. 'And everyone who has this hope in the lord purifies himself,'<sup>9</sup> says the scripture, 'even as he is pure.'

(1 Jn 3:3; 3.5.42)

Here Clement joins the notion of following the word to the following of Christ, the *logos*, and the notion of discipleship to that of assimilation to God.

What matters is the way in which a person lives. Knowledge is not a matter of mere talk but a light which is kindled in the soul through obedience to the commandments, and which enables a man to know himself and become possessed of God. Freedom is that which the lord confers on men, when he takes away their lusts and other passions (3.5.44).

Other heretics go to the opposite, ascetic extreme and reject marriage and procreation of children because the world is such a wretched place that it is wrong to bring humans into it. Here again, scripture has been logically perverted to reach a conclusion that is contrary to the will of

9 For Clement's identification of ethics and hope, see chapter 10.

God, as declared in both testaments (3.6.45). The statement about those who have become eunuchs for the kingdom of God has been lifted out of its context and misused to justify celibacy (3.6.50). In scripture there is no justification for abstinence from marriage or from food, for the righteous in days of old both married and ate in accordance with the will of God (3.6.52). It is clear that Paul refers to his wife and also speaks of the apostolic practice of travelling with a wife. The wives were able to help in the spread of the gospel by speaking to other wives (3.6.53).

Greek philosophers advocate self-control and the overcoming of desire, but the gospel requires that desire should be eradicated, and this is only possible through the grace which God gives to those who ask (3.7.57). Fundamental to the whole of Clement's ethic is the relationship between human virtue and grace. Some who claim to be under grace reject any difference between right and wrong, but, says Clement, Paul refutes their opinion when he rejects sin: 'What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid' (Rom. 6:14-15). These people do not remember that we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ to receive the recompense of our goodness or evil. Anyone in Christ is a new creation and the old things have passed away; for those made anew, and made light in Christ, there can be no common ground between righteousness and lawlessness, between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between believer and unbeliever, between temple of God and idols. We are called to perfect our holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 6:14-16; 7:1; 3.8.62). Clement concludes his proof on these issues and moves on to quote scriptures which further destroy what he sees as heretical sophistry and to show the right rule of continence which is preferred on grounds of reason. Clement follows Plato in attacking sophistry. Argument of a philosophical kind is wasted on sophists who are not ready to follow a continuous argument and for whom rationality has no place in the governing of the will (3.11.71).

Logical coherence and faith go together because the one author of law and gospel does not contradict himself. The law must be understood spiritually and gnostically. When this happens, then there is no ground in scripture or in reason for immoral acts (3.12.83). Scripture must be checked carefully, and the four Gospels take precedence (3.13.93). Both philosophy and knowledge depend on the logical use and coherent understanding of scripture. The one God who gives the rule of truth is the same God who gives scripture and who makes possible the coherence of scripture from its common source.

*Heresy and definition of community*

Clement's account of heresy has attracted a study<sup>10</sup> which gives a careful examination of Books III and VII and covers the topic in illuminating detail. The author's insight on the particular passages is clear and the total assessment well argued. He begins from the joint judgement of Méhat and Tollinton concerning Clement's attitude to heresy, and insists that there is an openness and precision of judgement in Clement's account. For Clement, like others before him, heresy is a form of dogma where certain people bring together a set of consistent opinions which they consider would encourage the good life (8.5.16.2). Clement's positive attitude towards sects claims that they are incomplete rather than false. Just as the Bacchic women tore apart the limbs of Pentheus, so the sects have torn apart the body of the logos and believe that their own small part constitutes the whole truth (1.13.57.1). He adds the qualification that some schools or heresies have been so amputated from the body of truth as to fall outside all coherence. They therefore lack the necessary harmony of opinion which Clement thinks should belong to any school. They are marked by incompleteness, as well as by pride and presumption, because they regard their little part as the whole. Such decline is especially clear in the barbarian (biblical) philosophy; here disunity is the cause of scandal and is only present because the devil has sown tares among the wheat. However, error is to be found among all philosophers, whether Greeks or barbarian (6.8.67.1, 2). For Clement, Christian heresy does not derive from Greek philosophy, which he considers to have come from God in a special dispensation to the Greeks. The philosophers are to be preferred to the heretics, for the Book of Proverbs tells us that a friend who is near is better than a brother who lives far away (Prov. 27:10). The heretic is one who has fallen into a trap or who traverses a desert without water (Prov. 9:12). He has indeed abandoned God and is condemned to sterility and thirst (1.19.95.7).

Far from being the source of heresy, Greek philosophy is the indispensable weapon which Clement uses against it.<sup>11</sup> It provides a means of testing the coherence and discerning the truth or falsity of each sect.

<sup>10</sup> Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*.

<sup>11</sup> G. May, 'Platon und die Auseinandersetzung mit den Häresien bei Klemens von Alexandrien', in *Platonismus und Christentum*, FS H. Dörrie, ed. H.-D. Blume and F. Mann, JAC 10 (Münster, 1983), 123–32. The relationship between Christianity and Platonism is more complex than

Dialectic is the instrument of discernment, and the ethical position of heretics provides a further test. Dialectic enables ambiguity to be discerned and used against an opponent; for the temptation of Jesus records how he used dialectic to overthrow the ambiguity which the devil tried to exploit (1.9.44.4).

Dialectic becomes the test of truth or falsity when it is applied to heresy. However, heresy is able, by sophistry, fraudulently to deceive. Sophists play with words and do not practise dialectic (1.3–10.22–49). Heretics exploit ambiguity and do not discriminate the different senses of words. The use of *koinônia* for sexual union is an example of this (3.4.27.1, 2). Heretics are also able to pervert the meaning of scripture and justify their sinful indulgence by the verse ‘for sin shall not have dominion over you. You are no longer under the law but under grace.’ As we have seen, Paul destroys their false interpretation by his question ‘Shall we then sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid!’ This is one example of the way in which sophistry may be destroyed (3.8.61.1, 2). By far the majority of Clement’s discussions of heresy are concerned with the exegesis of biblical texts.<sup>12</sup>

Heretics are divided by Clement into two categories: those who regard all moral values as indifferent, and those who practise extreme asceticism (3.5.40.2; 3.5.41.4–5; 3.5.42.5). Clement identifies the sophisms which justify moral indifference (3.8.61, 62).<sup>13</sup> Such a view leads to incest and bestiality (3.6.47.3). On the other hand, Encratites practise exaggerated austerity. They gain no credit for this, because it is done from the wrong reasons; they act from hatred of the flesh and ingratitude to their creator. Ignorant and impious, they practise continence in an irrational way (3.7.59, 60) and become closer to pagans with every step they take.

While the devil may so transform himself as to speak some things that are true, the false prophet or heretic is to be rejected.<sup>14</sup> Yet always what is true may be taken over from those who have spoken falsely and only absent-mindedly lapsed into truth (1.17.85, 86). Clement is able to discuss

commonly assumed. Plato is used as an ally against heresy, but his ideas need to be modified. The objection against heretics is not their use of Plato but their lack of comprehension. They are not real philosophers (129). Clement’s concern is to present Christianity as the true philosophy. Here the warnings of Dörrie are useful. We are not dealing with a synthesis of ancient philosophy and Christianity. ‘Neither is Platonism made Christian nor Christianity made Platonic. But the undertaking to give validity to the universal claim for truth by Christianity, within the context of ancient thought, leads to the beginning of theology in the modern sense and introduces, at least in the west, a new phase in the history of philosophy’ (132).

<sup>12</sup> Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie*, 287.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

propositions of heretical origin in an intelligent and reasonable way, always concerned with the possibility of finding elements of truth. He discusses Basilides, Isidore, Valentinus and Heracleon in *Stromateis* IV. Even more strikingly, the *Extracts from Theodotus* show that Clement is conscious of common ground with heretics and is prepared to respect their viewpoint, even when he opposes his own to it.<sup>15</sup> Yet heresy denies both nature and reason (3.3.12.3). The rejection of the laws of nature and the abandonment of self-control are two marks of heresy.<sup>16</sup> Within his two categories of Gnostic, the libertine and the ascetic, Clement joins many disparate systems, selects general characteristics and ignores detail.

Second only to argument, Clement's attitude to heresy is formed by a conscious movement towards definition of the ecclesial community. The church holds to certain standards and uses them to define itself against others; its alterity is set over against apostasy. Within this framework, Clement is able to clarify his complex situation, yet when he discusses heresy, there is little account of church discipline. The emphasis is always upon reason and the way in which scripture should be interpreted. This is the decisive factor.<sup>17</sup> To this rational factor, however, he adds an ethical judgement, accusing those who behave wrongly of ignorance and weakness.<sup>18</sup> Fidelity to the rule of the church is contrasted with heretical innovation. The heretic by his pride betrays the position which has been entrusted to him, and in his love for pleasure he adulterates the truth. For his errors, he may be judged and punished with a view to being healed. The assimilation of reason and morals which Clement here puts forward goes back to Plato, where loyalty to truth was a matter not merely of logic, but of simple morality.<sup>19</sup> Clement's moral demand for logic and truth is as much Platonic as it is scriptural.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

## CHAPTER II

### *Twofold hope*

#### ETHICS AND HOPE

Justin describes Christians as 'men of good hope' (1 apol. 14.3). For Clement, the good life depends upon a sovereign hope. The hope of Christians is that they should become like Christ, and this is the theme of all ethical discourse. As has just been noted,<sup>1</sup>

We must follow where the word leads;<sup>2</sup> and if we depart from it we must fall into 'endless evil'. For when it is pure and set free from all evil, the mind is somehow capable of receiving the power of God and the divine image is set up in it. 'And everyone who has this hope in the lord purifies himself,' says the scripture, 'even as he is pure'.<sup>3</sup>

Only through hope can the believer have a fitting attitude towards God; for he considers how he should live, who will one day become divine and is now being made like God (7.1.3.6). Life is a preparation which confesses the way of the cross in purity and obedience. It sheds the blood of faith along its path until its final departure (4.4.15.3). Clement draws on Paul, for whom tribulation produces patience and patience leads to unashamed hope (Rom. 5:3–5) (4.22.145.1). Christian hope depends upon the God who works all things for good (4.26.167.4). Clement sees life as an ascent in hope to this God, and he prays that the spirit of Christ will bear him above to the Jerusalem which is the object of his hope (4.26.172.2).

<sup>1</sup> See previous chapter, page 221 (Heresy and morals). For Clement's ethics, see my *Ethical patterns in early Christian thought* (Cambridge, 1976), 50–83.

<sup>2</sup> Plato *Rep.* 394d.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Jn 3:3. On whole passage see above, page 221.

*Martyrdom and hope*

Clement's account of martyrdom in *Stromateis* IV is dominated by the concept of hope. The martyr bears witness that he is faithful and loyal to God. He confirms the kerygma by his act of martyrdom and declares the power of the God to whom he makes haste (4.4.13.2). In love to his lord he departs gladly from this life (4.4.14.1). The hope of consolation is the clue to the glory of the martyr's death and to the patience of every believer. Both the martyr and the ordinary believer depend upon the hope which lies before them (Rom. 15:4) (4.5.19.3f). There is a clear choice for the martyr who, according to his knowledge, chooses and rejects pleasures at different times. While this is the pattern of life for every believer, the martyr especially chooses future pleasure after present pain (4.5.23.1). He knows the need for patience because after doing God's will he will receive God's promise (Heb. 10:36) (4.16.101.3). As scripture declares, martyrs have a hope which is full of immortality (Wis. 3:4) (4.16.103.3).<sup>4</sup>

*The hope of righteousness*

The blessed, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, declare the object of Christian hope. The poor who are blessed do not obtain beatitude through their poverty, but only through the righteousness which is their goal; they have chosen poverty for righteousness' sake, and have disdained worldly honours in order to obtain the highest good (4.6.25.4). Those who lose life gain immortality and the knowledge of God (4.6.27.2). The hope of righteousness points to the single disinterested pursuit of good; there was no reward from Jesus for the man who had kept all the commandments. We must receive the word of salvation not from fear or hope of reward, but for the sake of the good itself (4.6.29.4). We may lay up treasure, but it must be treasure in heaven, for treasure on earth is insecure. Only God, who gives the gift of eternal life, is the unfailing heavenly treasure (4.6.33.7); the vision of the pure in heart is God himself.

4 A. van den Hoek, 'Clement of Alexandria on martyrdom', *StudPatr* 26 (1991), 324–41. Every day, says Clement, there are streams of martyrs (2.20.125.2f). Van den Hoek points out that although persecution was only local, it should not be underestimated. Clement connects martyrdom with gnosis, criticises Gnostic accounts of martyrdom, claims that women may be martyrs and prepares the way for transition in Christian ethics from martyrdom to *askêsis*. Yet at the same time he 'makes Christianity more accessible for moderate, educated people' (341).

Knowledge purifies the ruling faculty of the soul so that it may gaze on the supreme good. Lesser activities fall short of this knowledge (4.6.39.1–3).

The martyr dies for a hidden hope (Rom. 8:24f); yet he who suffers for righteousness can give a reason for the hope that is in him (1 Pet. 3:14f). Every believer fights against principalities and powers, shielded by the invincible helper, through whom he is more than conqueror (4.7.47.5). The believer and martyr follow the pattern of Plato's just man who was persecuted and despised, even crucified, yet able to look beyond present suffering to his chief end, his hope to be a kingly friend of God. Plato's just man and Clement's sage are identical in their hope (4.7.52.2).

Those who suffer for righteousness do good not in hope of reward but in hope of living according to the image and likeness of God (4.22.137.1). This is the hope which defines all their ethical choice and practice. They put on the armour of light, which is the promise of God in which they hope (4.22.141.3). Yet Clement finds a place for rewards when he speaks of the many mansions to which the believer may attain. The meek will inherit the earth, and the mansion of each will correspond to the life he has achieved (4.6.36). Even Plato spoke of different levels where those who have achieved holiness will dwell; in proportion to their holiness, their future dwelling will be high or low (4.6.37).

### *Community of hope*

Contrary to appearance, the martyr or confessor is not alone. He who confesses Christ will be confessed by Christ (4.9.70.1). The lord suffered alone, but those that follow him are not alone. Alone, the lord drank the cup for the sake of others, but in imitation of him the apostles, as true and perfect sages, suffered for the churches they had founded. The sage who follows the apostles suffers for the churches and drinks the cup when he is called to do so. He gives himself up wholly to God and becomes a brother to his lord (4.9.75). When the martyr goes to join his lord and friend, he is welcomed by that lord as a brother because he has performed the perfect act of love (4.4.14.2). Clement of Rome tells us to look to those who have given perfect service to God's glory and who honour their community (4.17.105.3).<sup>5</sup>

The community of hope looks beyond the fellowship of believers, for Christians love their enemies; through this love they become children of the God of universal love whom they, in their love of enemies, resemble

<sup>5</sup> See my *Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria*, appendix C.

(4.14.95.1).<sup>6</sup> They love their enemies but do not love the sin which their enemies commit. Sin is not an existing thing or a work of God but a human activity which must be distinguished from the good things God has created (4.13.93).

### *Hatred and hopelessness*

Heraclitus and Plato declare that those who die in battle gain glory. But those, says Clement, who violently choose death out of hatred to their creator die without hope and in ignorance. There is no glory for them (4.4.17.2f). Human suffering does not imply a God who does not care. Our lord foretold suffering and promised an inheritance which would follow it (4.11.78).

### *Equal opportunity*

Men and women have equal opportunity in hope. Here Clement has a complex ambiguity. Women may philosophise as well as men do, yet men remain superior unless they have become effeminate. Because the same hope is offered to all, the achievement of all is on the same level. If, however, men do not follow the way of hope, but become weak and effeminate, they will lose what the female philosopher has gained (4.8.62.4). Torture calls for endurance. The example of Anaxarchus<sup>7</sup> points to the believer who endures with hope of happiness and in love of God. Freely those who endure ascend to God, not regarding their suffering as evil; both women and men seek that death which lifts them to Christ (4.8.56–58). There is one object of hope, one end for man and woman; each, after being tested, will receive the promised end of their faith and fulfil their hope (4.20.129.2). Here again Clement's passion for the common humanity (*anthrôpotês*) of men and women emerges.

### *Assimilation to God as structure of ethics*

Clement's account of the twofold hope, which he identifies with Plato's twofold end, provides the structure of his ethics.<sup>8</sup> In the short chapter

6 Forgiveness of enemies was the mark of divine likeness (Mt 5:48). See my 'Love of enemies'.

7 Who, when pounded with iron pestles, claimed that he was untouched because the body was only the sack in which he was contained. Rugby football has yet to claim him as founder and patron.

8 See J. M. Rist, *Real ethics* (Cambridge, 2002), 257: 'for morality to function, God must function both as final and (at least in great part) as efficient cause of our moral life.'

(2.20) where he makes this move, he blends Platonic and Christian ideas more evidently than elsewhere. Participation in the good is equivalent to following Christ, and assimilation to God or the good is the imitation of Christ. The chapter remains complex and its meaning expands on successive readings. For one thing, Clement quotes the text of Isaiah and Hebrews incompletely, giving the first verse and the last verse of his citation. The chapter therefore must be read with an open bible. The question remains for the reader of this chapter: is Clement merely listing similarities between the philosophers and scripture, or is he saying something new?

The first half of the chapter is philosophical and the second half is scriptural. At the end of the first half, Clement signs off from his philosophical account with the words, 'That is enough on that subject, these opinions will be refuted when appropriate.' Yet there are scriptural terms in the first half of the chapter and philosophical terms in the second half. Clement's achievement looks lumpy at first reading, but the ideas are mixed thoroughly. He begins the second section with a statement of his purpose and theme. We must, he says, reach an endless end by obeying the commandments, that is obeying God, and living above reproach in conformity with the commandments, as we are illuminated by the knowledge of the divine will. Present illumination and attainment are linked to a hope which has no end. He concludes his account of this hope with the claim that the philosophers have found their ideas about the end in scripture. These similarities indicate their debt to the true philosophy of scripture.

### *Twofold end*

The chapter begins with the claim that Plato's twofold end (virtue and the good in which virtue participates) is similar to the Christian's twofold hope (which is present but has a future reference).<sup>9</sup> In Plato, there is on the one hand the good which is participated in, which is first and exists in the forms, and on the other hand there is human virtue which participates in the good and shares its likeness. For Plato, *eudaimonia* is the complete good, pointing to a good state of the *daimôn* which is the ruling part of the soul. 'Our people', says Clement, have said the same thing when they speak of the image and likeness of God. Man receives the image of God at birth and grows in the likeness of God.

<sup>9</sup> The fusion of eschatology and ontology permeates Clement's thought.

Plato and Clement share a similar starting-point and twofold end:

The starting-point of the good life is the *daimon*, the ruling part of the soul, or the spiritual image of God. These things are present in every man. The twofold end consists of the good life and the perfect Being; the former participates in the latter. The good life consists of *eudaimonia* – keeping one's *daimon* in good condition – or of assimilation – making one's image of God more like him. It is the most complete and perfect good, the life of virtue with all the virtues as contributing causes and parts. It is assimilation to God, participation in the Good, the life of righteousness.<sup>10</sup>

Clement uses Plato to describe both the universality and the limitation of human likeness to God. Likeness to God is joined to humility and to the claim (which is explicit in the words of Jesus) that he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Elsewhere, in the *Laws*, Plato acknowledges his debt to an ancient saying, which indicates, says Clement, his awareness of scripture. God occupies the beginning, middle and end of all things; as he goes straight through them and around the circumference, he is always attended by justice, which avenges those who disobey divine law. Fear of the divine law is joined to the happiness of those who follow the law in humility. This following is the way of life which is in conformity with God. Such conformity is found in the ancient saying that 'like will be dear to like'. He who would be dear to God must become like God. He who has no self-control is confused or inconsistent and cannot be like anything, let alone like God. Again in the *Theaetetus*, Plato calls for flight from this evil world and assimilation to God. Such assimilation is found in holiness, justice and wisdom. After Plato, others have linked *eudaimonia* to the good and shown that it cannot exist without virtue.

### *Endless end*

Clement moves now to his own theme which is found in scripture more richly than in philosophy. We must reach the endless end and become like God by following right reason.<sup>11</sup> This means that we receive the gift of adoption<sup>12</sup> by the son who makes us his brothers and his fellow-heirs. Exuberance and limitation mark Clement's account. Our hope is fulfilled as we become sons of God. Our holiness ends in everlasting life

<sup>10</sup> Osborn, *Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria*, 85f.

<sup>11</sup> See Rist, *Real ethics*, 276: 'To be moral is not only to be rational, but also, far more importantly, to be godlike in so far as we are able – as Plato also said, agreeing with the Old Testament's "You shall be as gods".'

<sup>12</sup> *huiothesia*. Cf. appropriation or *oikeiôsis*, a related idea.

(Rom. 6:22), and there remains something yet to be received. This subtlety of Paul is described as a twofold hope. Some of it is expected, and some of it has been received.<sup>13</sup> The end is the perfect fulfilment of a hope which is unashamed because it has been already anticipated by the assurance of the holy spirit who spreads the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5:4f). Paul, like Clement, distinguishes the act of hope from the object of hope. If hope were now received in its entirety, it would no longer have a future reference and would cease to be hope. The act of hoping is unashamed because of the presence of God's love; the two parts, present and future, of hope are inseparable. This verse of Romans concerning unashamed hope was to be quoted 200 times by Augustine; it points to an intimate fusion of Pauline and Platonic thought.

The act of hope already shares its final fulfilment in a restoration which scripture describes as the promised rest (Heb. 4:1ff).<sup>14</sup> Hope has already obtained a wealth of the divine goodness and love, and can find rest in the love and fulfilment it has found. Clement finds the same claim in Ezekiel's account of the man who does justice and judgement and walks in the ordinances of God. His justice, already evident, is a sign and promise of eternal life given by God (Ezek. 18:4-9). Isaiah also shows the element of hope when he says:

Seek ye the lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the lord who will have mercy upon him and to our God who will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

(Is. 55:6-9)

Clement finds here the same exuberance of divine gifts in the present and the same limitation of man's righteousness in the presence of God. He identifies this with what Paul calls 'the hope of righteousness by faith'. Here there is neither circumcision or uncircumcision, but only faith that works by love (Gal. 5:5f).

Clement finds the most complete account of this hope in Hebrews (Heb. 6:11-20). Hope calls for energetic progress towards full assurance;

<sup>13</sup> It explains why Clement's *theologia viatorum* can never offer the closed system which some have foolishly thought proper to a *Didascalus*.

<sup>14</sup> A. Méhat, "APOCATASTASE" Origène, Clément d'Alexandrie, Act 3, 21', *VigChr* 10 (1956), 196-214. *Apokatastasis* is the definitive fulfilment of all that God has spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets. It is also used as equivalent to *apodosis*, pointing to the fact that God settles his account (207-9).

there is no place for sluggish idleness. God's promise is sure. He swore by himself to Abraham, who after patient endurance obtained the promise. This promise is confirmed by God's truthfulness and faithfulness. From it, we who flee for refuge find strong consolation as we lay hold of the hope that is set before us. This hope is an anchor within the veil, sure and steadfast.<sup>15</sup> Its certainty derives from Jesus, our great high-priest who has gone before us within the veil.

These ideas were already in Wisdom, who says, 'he who hears me shall dwell trusting in hope' (Prov. 1:33). Clement finds great beauty in the claim of such fulfilment. Here there is rest as the believer receives the hope for which he has hoped. He finds quietness and overcomes any fear of evil. The same exalted hope, Clement concludes, is found in Paul, where he calls the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he is of Christ. Through this imitation of Christ they become imitators of God. Here Paul makes the claim which is echoed in every account given by the philosophers about the end. Clement (2.22.136.5) has expanded the exhortation of Paul (1 Cor. 11:1) with the earlier claim, 'All things are yours. . . and you are Christ's and Christ is God's' (1 Cor. 3:21-23). He insists on the exuberance of the offer of Christian hope and defines it precisely as the imitation of Christ.

#### IMAGE AND LIKENESS

This distinction is one of Clement's chief contributions to Christian theology and at the same time a test case which shows that his first loyalty is not to Greek philosophy, but to the New Testament. He sets out the vision of every human as capable of growing like God. The perfection of this ideal finds its fulfilment in deification and life in the eternal vision of God.<sup>16</sup> Clement, for all the variety of his terminology, approaches every question with a clear and precise definition.<sup>17</sup> The question of image and likeness is central to his thought; no other verses from the Old Testament or from the *Dialogues* of Plato are cited so frequently by him as the Genesis account of man made in the image and likeness of God and Plato's call to assimilation to God. Gen. 1:26 sets out, according to Clement, God's saving plan for humanity, a plan which begins at creation and is not yet perfected. Only Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, has

<sup>15</sup> Early Christian art frequently uses the anchor as a symbol of hope.

<sup>16</sup> A. Mayer, *Das Gottesbild im Menschen nach Clemens von Alexandrien* (Rome, 1942), 1. I have used this excellent work extensively because it is not accessible to many.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

fulfilled the plan. God has given to him the human race that he might bring that race into his own divine likeness. Apart from Christ all other men begin as 'according to the image of God', yet Christians are called to fulfil the ideal of Gen. 1:26, to become god-like humans. Humans are called to live the life of heaven in the imitation of Christ, by following him.<sup>18</sup>

All do not heed the command to follow, and so there are men in the image and men in the image and likeness. Indeed, every man is in the image of God (prot 12.120.4), but only those who share completely in the redemption offered by Christ are in the image and likeness. Christ alone fulfils completely the words of Gen. 1:26 and leads others in his way. The division between image and likeness is not exclusive. Clement understands it in terms of *nous*, which is perfect in God, free from passion, as is also the logos who is the true son of God. Man is in the image of God because he possesses *nous* which may grow to ethical perfection in freedom from passion and likeness to God. Yet there are points in Clement where *nous* is restricted to those who, through freedom from passion and ethical perfection, achieve the image and likeness of God. In them, the divine power of God, the logos and holy spirit, impart the strength of God, because they have received the gift of the spirit.<sup>19</sup> Some interpreters have reduced Clement's account of assimilation to a purely intellectual development;<sup>20</sup> but for Clement, only rebirth in baptism and the gift of the spirit can produce this transformation into God's likeness. Such Christian claims indicate the ruling factor in Clement's thought.<sup>21</sup> Even those who dubiously deny Clement's roots in the New Testament are forced to admit the fidelity with which he transmits the concept of spirit from the New Testament writings to his own account.<sup>22</sup> Equally important for Clement are the sacraments of baptism and eucharist by which the believer is tied to the death of Christ<sup>23</sup> and is intermingled with the divine (paed 2.2.19–20.1). In the eucharist the gift of immortality is received. The gifts of God ascend in order. 'Who has given the breath of life? Who has given righteousness? Who has promised immortality?' (prot 10.98.2). Two virtues stand out in Clement's mind as indicating the divine likeness: freedom from passion and unity. From passionlessness comes the unity of the soul, for divisive lusts and appetites can be transformed into faith, knowledge and love (3.10.69.3). Unity

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. See above, chapter 6, pages 149–53.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

(*henôsis*) follows from passionlessness and is not a negative quality, since 'The passions are not eliminated from the nature of God and of the Christian gnostics, who are like him, in favour of an empty simplicity, but are rendered. . . impossible by the realisation of all that is ultimately desirable.'<sup>24</sup> Love leaves no room for passion. Likeness to God is fulfilled in a positive life of 'doing good out of love. Only good action for love's sake is the choice of the gnostic on grounds of goodness alone' (4.22.135.4; cf. 4.6.29.3, 4.18.113.6, q.d.s. 28.4).

The seal of righteousness which is given by God bestows on the soul a love which restores the divine likeness, as a divine power of goodness streams into the soul of the righteous and imprints it with a reflection of its rays. Through love the soul both carries God and is carried by God (Rom. 4:11) (6.12.104.1). The image of light is carried further when the believer, who is illuminated by God's light, himself becomes light and is thereby deified because God is archetypal light (paed 1.6.28.2). It is for this reason that lusts and passions must be removed, 'for, when our spirit is pure and free from all that is evil, so it is able to receive the power of God into itself and the image of God is set up within it' (3.5.42.5f). The righteous soul is the temple of the divine image. So the Christian sage becomes a god in the flesh because he is the perfect reproduction of the image of his master (7.16.101.4).

Clement's account of deification has been condemned by many<sup>25</sup> and defended by others.<sup>26</sup> In his defence, it is claimed that he simply restates Paul's account of sanctification and goes no further than does Irenaeus in his claim that God became human that humans might become God.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps Clement was provoked by heretical accounts into stating more clearly a New Testament version of deification. In his re-statement he turned to Greek philosophy for help, and his concept of deification as the endless end is central. Certainly, he denies the Gnostic account whereby those of the highest seed are unchangeably divine. For him, immortality is the fruit of a Christian life, indeed a striving towards the prize of a good

24 R. P. Casey, 'Clement of Alexandria and the beginnings of Christian Platonism', *HTbR* 18 (1925), 88. See below, chapter II, page 238.

25 E.g. G. W. Butterworth, 'The deification of man in Clement of Alexandria', *JThS* 17 (1915-16), 157-69; H. Seesemann, 'Das Paulusverständnis des Clemens Alexandrinus', *ThStK* 107 (1936), 312-46.

26 E.g. G. Lattey, 'The deification of man in Clement of Alexandria: some further notes', *JThS* 17 (1915-16), 257-62; O. Faller, 'Griechische Vergottung und christliche Vergöttlichung', *Greg* 6 (1925), 404-35; A. Strüker, *Die Gottesebenbildlichkeit des Menschen in der christlichen Literatur der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Exegese von Genesis 1, 26* (Münster, 1913).

27 Mayer, *Gottesbild*, 75.

life which is life eternal (paed 1.10.95.2). Our relation to the world and to God is not given to us by nature, but chosen and pursued in obedience to God.<sup>28</sup> The formulae in which Clement expresses his ideas are consistent with those of Greek philosophy, but the Christian content which fills the formulae takes priority over philosophy. As de Faye puts it, 'almost always Clement sees things as a Christian, but it appears that most often he is incapable of forming a concept apart from the categories which philosophy gives to him'.<sup>29</sup> Clement turns to philosophy to reject the naturalism of Gnostic heresy. For him the virtue of the Christian, based on sacrament and displayed in virtue, is a gift of the holy spirit.<sup>30</sup> For all his optimism, he denies that human virtue can ever reach the level of divine virtue, and condemns the Stoics for their godless teaching to the contrary (7.14.88.5). The unchanging disposition of virtue which philosophy demanded is to be found in the love which marks likeness to God (6.9.78.4). His account of image and likeness sets against Gnostic naturalism an account in which Greek philosophy is lifted to a new level through the concept of likeness to God.<sup>31</sup>

#### VIRTUE, APATHEIA AND APPROPRIATION

Clement's detailed account of the good life is philosophical, biblical and practical. He draws heavily upon philosophical ethics, on the bible and on the demands of daily life. An account of his philosophical ethics runs into his use of the bible, and both find their place in daily life.

Clement defines virtue and insists that all virtues are related to one another.<sup>32</sup> He explains virtue in terms of harmony and rationality. It is the disposition of the soul which is in harmony with reason throughout the whole of life (paed 1.13.101.2). Virtue is the logos which has been handed down or taught through the *Paedagogus* (paed 3.6.35.2). The whole of the Christian life is a related pattern of rational deeds, the practice of the things taught by the logos (paed 1.13.102.4). Virtue, as a harmonious, rational pattern, is taught by Christ, the incarnate reason or logos. In his

28 *Ibid.*, 90.

29 De Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 309. This position is easier for us to grasp because of the recent 'linguistic turn' in European thought.

30 Mayer, *Gottesbild*, 94, 52.

31 *Ibid.*, 95. See also Rist, *Real ethics*, 42: 'The God of the Christians is that which we should strive to resemble and is thus at the same time a Platonic Form, an Aristotelian Mind "in actuality," and an omnipotent, providential and "moral" Jewish personal source of law and command.'

32 This brief account of Clement's use of philosophical virtue ethics begins from the concise account of Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*.

account of harmony, Clement rejects extremes and chooses the middle way (paed 2.1.16.4): virtue calls for human effort and divine grace. Clement's Pauline ideas are tinged with the Platonism of his time, which had absorbed elements of Aristotle. In Maximus of Tyre and in Philo, virtue is both a gift and an achievement. For the good life, virtue is self-sufficient (5.14.96.5), a view which is found in Stoicism and among most philosophers.

Clement speaks of four cardinal virtues in terms which reflect the philosophy of his day. Wisdom is both practical and theoretical, leading to a knowledge of first causes and intellectual reality which governs practical behaviour (2.5.24.1). Such ideas are consistent with contemporary Platonism and with Philo. Courage, the second virtue, is defined in Stoic terms as the knowledge of what is and what is not to be feared and the patient endurance which is governed by knowledge (2.18.79.5).<sup>33</sup> Self-control is the disposition which chooses according to the judgements of wisdom (2.18.79.5). Self-control governs desires (4.23.151.1).<sup>34</sup> Here again, Clement follows a definition which is Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic. Finally, righteousness or justice combines two elements. It is the distribution to each according to what is due (paed 1.8.64.1), and it is the harmony

33 J. F. Procopé, 'Quiet Christian courage: a topic in Clemens Alexandrinus and its philosophical background', *StudPatr* 15 (1984), 489–94. The complete Christian is crowned in the amphitheatre of the universe for his victory over the passions (7.3.20.3). His courage lies in turning the other cheek and not defending himself (4.8.61.2). Victory over the passions had long been a theme of Greek philosophy. Indeed, the essence of bravery for Plato is the knowledge of what should be dreaded and what should be ventured upon (Laches 194c); the guardians will show courage against all their passions (Rep. 429cd). Adding to the philosophical account, Clement follows Eph. 6:12 in identifying the Christian battle against the passions as 'imprints of the spiritual powers against which we wrestle' (2.20.110.1). The struggle against the passions is not simply psychological.

34 D. G. Hunter, 'The language of desire: Clement of Alexandria's transformation of ascetic discourse', *Semeia* 57 (1992), 95–111. 'This paper argues that a key issue in Clement of Alexandria's debate with Gnostic and Encratite Christians was the proper use of language to describe sexual desire and sexual restraint. Against the heretical tendency (evident in both libertine and ascetical writers) to regard "desire" under a single aspect (*epithumia*), Clement deliberately expanded the discourse and used several different terms to describe different facets of "desire" (*epithumia*, *orexis*, *hormê*). By so doing, Clement was able to acknowledge the dangers of desire as well as the proper use of desire. Similarly, his discussion of the restraint of desire by virtue (*enkrateia*, *sôphrosynê*) was fuller and more differentiated than that of his opponents. Clement was thus able to offer an alternative ascetical discourse that was at once more comprehensive and more humane' (95).

'The virtues of *enkrateia* and *sôphrosynê*, therefore, have a very intimate relation with the varied states of desire I have described. *Enkrateia* is especially concerned with rooting out the hedonistic, self-centred lust characterised by the term *epithumia*. *Sôphrosynê*, for its part, is most concerned with the elevation of the natural, created "impulses" (*hormai*) and their transformation into rational, well-ordered desires (*orexeis*). That is why Clement will often modify the word "marriage" (*gamos*) with the adjective *sôphrôn*, or link it with *sôphrosynê*. That is why, too, he can refer to sexual relations for the sake of procreation as a "chaste" (*enkratôs*) use of marriage, wherein all lust (*epithumia*) is extinguished' (107).

of the parts of the soul (4.26.163.4). Clement agrees with contemporary Platonists in dividing the soul as Plato did into the rational, spirited and desiring parts (paed 3.1.1.2). The rational part is the head, the spirited is the heart and the liver is the source of desire (paed 1.2.5.2; paed 2.2.34.2; paed 2.8.72.2). All four virtues are related to one another and depend on one another in reciprocity (2.9.45.1; 2.18.80.2; 2.18.80.3). The life of the sage reflects harmony of all virtues.

Clement's account of passionlessness (*apatheia*) is important because it shows how he modified a Stoic virtue to express Christian claims, indicates the difficulties as well as the success of his account and influences subsequent Christian thought.<sup>35</sup> To begin with, passionlessness applies to God without qualification. God is, from the beginning, free from passion (7.2.7.2). He is the passionless God (6.9.73.6). He does not share the passions or the needs of his creatures (7.6.30.1). He is without irascibility and without desire (4.23.151.1). The son, through his connection with the father is free from need, passionless, born from one who is passionless (7.3.14.5). The son was born with a flesh which was capable of passion; but he raised this flesh to a disposition free from passion (7.2.7.5). He did not eat for the sake of his body but for the sake of appearance. He was completely free from passion (6.9.71.1f). Here Clement accepts the Stoic view that all passion is weakness and vice (7.2.6.5). Yet he insists that the saviour suffered for us as the Gospel tells (paed 1.9.85.1), and his passion, that is, suffering, has rescued us from passion (exc 76.1). He who was life suffered willingly for us so that by his passion we should have life (4.7.43.2). Faith in God and confession of the one who suffered are the chief treasure of the Christian (paed 2.3.36.2).

After passionlessness in God and Christ comes the passionlessness of the Christian who is assimilated to God. His passionlessness indicates his resemblance to his master (6.9.72.1) whose divine passionlessness is linked with God's love for mankind. 'One and unique is he who is without desire from the beginning, the master who loves humanity, who became man for our sakes' (6.9.73.6, 7.12.72.1). The Stoics had regarded passionlessness and love as compatible with one another. For Clement, the divine philanthropy condescends to passions for the sake of humans, and this is an element in the incarnation (paed 1.8.74.4).

Human passionlessness is harder to define than that of God. Clement distinguishes between normal physical passions and passions of the soul (6.9.71.1f; cf. 6.9.74.1). He also commends as good such passions as

35 The following account follows the magisterial work of M. Spanneut, *Apatheia ancienne, apatheia chrétienne* (Berlin, 1994 and Jerusalem, 2003).

audacity, zeal, joy and serenity (6.9.71.3). The account which he gives falls into five stages: measure or mastery of passions; passionlessness proper; ascent in virtue; assimilation to God; and finally, passionlessness as love. His first stage is concerned with *enkrateia*, the mastery of the passions (paed 2.10.94.1). He also speaks of the healing of the passions (paed 1.1.1.2). Simple salvation is an intermediate stage on the way to normal salvation; the simple believer is on a lower level (6.14.111.3) because he has yet to put aside his passions (6.14.109.1–3). Clement points to progress from *metriopatheia* to *apatheia*, which suppresses all desire (6.9.74.1).<sup>36</sup> One must move from the former to the latter, joining the angels in their absence of passion (6.13.105.1).

Passionlessness dominates much of Clement's writing. In his account of the salvation of the rich man, he identifies salvation with the removal of the passions (q.d.s. 20.6). One must fortify oneself against the passions (2.20.108.2) through the exercise of reason (1.24.159.3). The complete Christian has nothing to do with pleasure but only wishes what is necessary and loves his wife without desire, procreating with noble and chaste intention (3.7.58.1f). He ascends through the Pauline virtues of love, peace, giving of thanks as a means of reaching *apatheia* and *ataraxia* (4.7.55.3f). So he becomes resistant to pleasures and regrets, like a diamond is resistant to fire (7.11.67.8). This is the peak of his moral achievement as he leaves behind self-control, moderation of passions, in his pursuit of likeness to God. He is no longer one who controls his passions but one who has reached a state of freedom from passion as he puts on the form of God (4.22.138.1). Yet Clement argues for the fear of God in the face of Stoic rejection of all fear. The fear of God was commanded as part of man's education, to turn him away from evil. It is a rational fear which suppresses evil (2.8.39.4).

In much of what he says, Clement is consistent with Stoics like Epictetus; even in his link of divine likeness with passionlessness, there is no initial contrast. Where Clement goes beyond the Stoics is in his account of love as likeness to God. Throughout the *Stromateis*, knowledge, passionlessness and love are joined together. The passions are discarded to assimilate the believer as far as possible to the goodness of the divine providence (7.14.86.5). The state of knowledge is indestructible through love (6.9.78.4), which is the highest level of human virtue

36 J. M. Dillon, 'Metriopatheia and Apatheia: some reflections on a controversy in later Greek ethics', in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, ed. J. P. Anton and A. Preus, vol. II (Albany, 1983). Dillon identifies the controversy between *metriopatheia* and *apatheia* as originating between the concept of the soul as bipartite or tripartite (the lower parts cannot be eradicated) and as unitary (the passions can be removed).

(7.10.57.4; 2.9.45.1). There is no conflict between love and passionlessness, for love is not desire but the tender familiarity, which Clement identifies as appropriation or *oikeiōsis* (6.9.73). Such love is directed not only to God but also to one's neighbour. The Christian not only endures evil but forgets the evil done to him (7.14.86.5). Passionlessness demands a forgetting of past wrongs and obedience to the teaching of Christ in prayer for one's enemies (7.14.84.7). This forgetfulness of evil, which plays such a strong part in the thought of Irenaeus, is linked both to the Sermon on the Mount and to the words of Christ on the cross.<sup>37</sup> It is by passionlessness that one moves to the forgiveness and forgetting of sins committed against one (7.14.88.4).

There is a place for repentance and for mercy, so that in the end the passionlessness of Clement becomes a virtue full of warmth, the love of God and the service of others.<sup>38</sup> In the attainment of this virtue, man can do nothing without the help of God (q.d.s. 21.1), for it is our master alone who frees us from pleasures, desires and other passions, to bring us into his freedom (3.5.44.4). Clement has integrated a Stoic notion into a new morality.<sup>39</sup> There are limits to his achievement, for he has not seen the positive value of passion and he gives passionlessness a dominant place in his ethics. 'The place of *apatheia* is at once capital and indecisive.'<sup>40</sup> Yet he has set out a spirituality which, far from being negative, is 'a call to love and contemplation'.<sup>41</sup> This new creation which remodels a Stoic virtue under Christian principles must remain an example of the untidy transformation which Christianity brings to ideas from another context.

The final goal of ethics, assimilation to God, includes freedom from passions, as well as steadfastness, purity, contemplation, faith, love, searching for God, separation from sensible things and communion with intellectual realities, gentleness, benevolence, piety, a forgiving spirit, kindness, self-sufficiency and the imitation of Christ. This remarkable list is a mixture of philosophical and biblical virtues.

The ambiguity of *apatheia* needs to be considered within Clement's central motif of assimilation. As God is free from passion, so must the Christian endure in patience (2.20.103.1). His freedom from passion removes the need for self-control because he has been clothed with a

37 See Osborn, 'Love of enemies', 12–31. Ill-treatment of Christians helped to underline this element of gospel teaching.

38 M. Spanneut, 'L'apatheia chrétienne aux quatre premiers siècles', *POC* 52 (2002) fasc. 3/4, 259.

39 *Ibid.*, 260: 'Il a intégré la notion antique dans un ensemble totalement nouveau.'

40 *Ibid.*: 'la place de l'*apatheia* y est à la fois capitale et indécisive.'

41 *Ibid.*: 'un appel à la charité et à la contemplation.'

divine shape and a disposition of *apatheia* (4.23.147.1). It is self-evident that likeness to God will include freedom from passion (7.2.13.3), which must be expelled in order to become assimilated to the good providence of God. At no point does Clement remove the place of such feelings as are appropriate to God: faith and love, gentleness and forgiveness, kindness and benevolence are all part of the perfect Christian. Much that Clement says about freedom from passion is similar to Paul's account of the fruits of the spirit which contrast with the passions that come from the flesh. Clement is advocating a higher ideal, where his perfect Christian meets and surpasses the demands of all philosophers. Similarly, the way in which moderation and destruction of passions are achieved is, for Clement, distinctive. While God does play a part for other writers, the place of Christ, the logos, in the perfection of the Christian offers a direct, reciprocal and personal relation to the son of God. For the Platonist, wisdom is the way to perfection. For Clement, direct communion with Christ is essential.

Reciprocity includes another important idea for Clement. *Oikeiôsis* 'connotes ownership, what belongs to something, but in Stoic usage that notion is also conceived as an affective disposition relative to the thing which is owned or belongs'.<sup>42</sup> There is no forcible appropriation. This is a relationship, first to oneself, and then to one's fellows, beginning with those who are related by blood. Appropriation begins as something innate and of animal origin, from which wider attitudes are developed. We are born with tendencies towards the virtues and these we appropriate, in a way that is fitting and according to nature.

Following John and Paul, Clement, like Irenaeus, was concerned with the intimate indwelling and possession which marked the believer's relation to God. How, some ask, can one be possessed of the good, unless one desires that possession? For appropriation of what is good follows from desire. Clement responds that those who hold this objection do not understand the divine nature of love, which is not a desire on the part of the lover, but an 'affectionate appropriation' which restores the sage to the unity of faith and makes him independent of time and place. For he is already, through love, in the condition through which he will receive, and he has already, through knowledge, received the object of his hope, so that he desires nothing more, having gained, as far as possible, the very object of his desire. So he remains in the one condition, immutable in love,

42 LS 351. 'Nature, as a providential power, establishes values or norms of appropriateness along with the physical structures it creates.'

illuminated by knowledge; he has no envy to imitate good men, because through love of the good itself he is able to be good. He does not need desire, because he has received from love appropriation of and affinity with the God who is without passion, and he has been inscribed through love among the friends of God (6.9.73). This notion of appropriation or *oikeiōsis* is useful to Clement's understanding of reciprocity and love, for it removes the necessity for desire and enables the sage to become like God in freedom from desire. Freedom from desire brings affinity or alliance with God who is himself without desire. The sage prays, 'I must be in what is yours, O almighty one, and if I am there, I am near to you. I would be free from fear so that I may draw close to you, be satisfied with little and exercise your just choice between the things that are good and the things which are similar' (4.23.148.2). This is the peace which the sage finds and the unity which joins him to God. The Pythagoreans said that man should become one, and our high-priest is one, for God is one in the disposition from which good things continue to flow (4.23.151.3). This relationship, as the Letter to the Hebrews suggests, is like that of a man who is held by an anchor. Those who pull on the anchor draw themselves to the anchor and do not pull the anchor to themselves. So those who in the life of wisdom draw God towards themselves imperceptibly bring themselves to God, reverencing both God and themselves. In the life of contemplation, he who worships God also purifies himself in self-control and so becomes, as far as possible, assimilated to God (4.23.151f). The same notion of appropriation is the starting-point of Clement's account of the rich man's salvation. From the beginning, we must store up in the soul the highest doctrines that refer to life. These are to know the eternal God as the one who gives eternal gifts and as the first, supreme, one, good God. We can actually possess God through knowledge and apprehension. And this knowledge of the God who truly exists and who gives being to other things, that is eternal things, and through whom other things take their existence and continuity, is life indeed. 'Not to know him is death, but knowledge of him and appropriation through affinity and love to him and assimilation—these alone are life' (q.d.s. 7).

#### ETHICS IN PRACTICE

Few other documents give us as much detail of the social life of Alexandria in the second century as does the *Paedagogus* of Clement.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus has a similar value.

Here the Christian is guided to proper behaviour in almost every aspect of his life: Clement calls especially for the virtue of moderation in the face of luxury, which throws everything out of place and brings disorder (paed 3.3.21.3). Drinking and eating should be in moderation. Drunkenness distorts the senses, and gluttony turns men into pigs and dogs. Servants should not be whistled at, and there should be no spitting, clearing of throats or blowing of noses in public. Sneezing and belching should not produce explosions, but should be suppressed. Food is to be simple and concocted not for pleasure but for nourishment. Bathing should be done with modesty and never for pleasure. Too much bathing causes weakness and dizziness. The kiss of peace can be a dangerous thing, and an unholy kiss is poisonous and fraudulent; it is no proof of love (paed 3.11.81.2). Men should not gossip in barber's shops and taverns or play dice (paed 3.11.75.1f). Wine is especially dangerous for the young, since it adds fire to fire, joining the burning years of life to the fiery liquid of wine (paed 2.2.20.3). Clement draws ethical material from Musonius Rufus;<sup>44</sup> and while his precepts for moderation are found elsewhere, the variety and detail of his account is his own. While other writers recognised the need for a regimen which covers all human behaviour, no one in antiquity achieved this aim as completely as Clement.

Impressive as Clement's comprehensive instruction is, the question arises as to its place in his total thinking. Is he here giving elementary instruction on proper behaviour so that his Christian pupils will be ready for higher learning, or is he permeating this extraordinary mass of details with the central principles of his thought? Most readers of the *Paedagogus* find instruction, amusement and even bewilderment in the minutiae which Clement regards as necessary for the Christian life; but is it random discourse, or can it illuminate the chief aims of Clement's thought? Clement is clear that the *Paedagogus* has a different function from his other main works. The word exhorts, trains and finally teaches. Standing between exhortation and theology or philosophy, the *Paedagogus* is concerned with practice rather than theory, with improving the soul in virtue, with cultivating right dispositions and character, with setting out Christian duties and with following the commandments at a practical level. From this instruction, passions are healed and the believer is prepared for the higher teaching.

44 P. Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonionae* (Berlin, 1886); C. P. Parker, 'Musonius in Clement', *HSCP* 12 (1901), 191–200. Both argue for the existence of a lost treatise of Musonius in the *Paedagogus*.

But is this practical teaching connected with Clement's central ideas? His beginning leaves us in no doubt. Our *paidagôgos* resembles God his father, and is sinless, blameless and passionless. He is God in human form, the servant of his father's will. Yet he is the word who is God, who was and is in the father and who, at the father's right hand, is indeed God. He presents to us an image without stain, and to him we must strive with all our might to assimilate our souls (paed 1.2.4.2). Here Clement sets the framework for all his ethical injunction. Teaching comes from the word of God who is God and our one aim is to be assimilated to him so that within the second ellipse (God and humankind) we are joined to him, as in the first ellipse (father and son) he is joined to the father. The *paidagôgos* cures man and prepares him, healing him until he lives in harmony with the universe which his teacher has created (paed 1.2.6).

Everything begins from man's relation to God. Man was made by God in his own likeness. While other parts of creation are made by God's command, man was made by the hands of God and received the breath of God. Man is desirable for himself and so loved by God that God sent his only son from within his own bosom for man's salvation. There is reciprocal love between the father and men. Jesus says that God the father himself loves them because they have loved the son, and indeed he loves men as he loves his only son, (Jn 16:27; 17:23). It is for us to return this love of God as he guides us in love to the life which is best. Following his likeness, we are to do the works of our master, and bring to fulfilment what scripture says about our creation in his image and likeness. Here Clement's concept of the reciprocity which obtains between father and son is extended to the second ellipse of the reciprocity between God and the believer. Our relationship to God is one of reciprocal love. We return his love and in returning that love we grow in his likeness. Here in the *Paedagogus*, the centre of Clement's thought introduces all that he has to say concerning the details of Christian life. He is not merely giving good advice to his readers, but rather he is explaining the kind of response which they must make to the love of God so that their love may resemble in reciprocity the love of the son to the father. This constitutes assimilation and divine likeness. It is the heart of the gospel for Clement (paed 1.3.7-9). Such restoration of likeness is possible because the word himself has become flesh and shown practical as well as theoretical virtues. His word is law and his commandments show a short way to immortality (paed 1.3.9.4). Our response is to give ourselves to him and to grasp the cable of faith which joins us to him. In this response there is no difference between man and woman. They have the same God and the same teacher.

They are joined within the one church, one temperance, one modesty. They eat the same food and bear in marriage an equal yoke. They breathe, see, hear, know, hope, obey and love in the same way. They receive a common grace, a common salvation, a common love and a common training. They are both 'man' and they follow the same shepherd who feeds his sheep forever (paed 1.4.11.2).

We enjoy the liberty of the children of God. Clement goes on to explain that in our training for likeness to God we are but children, and for that reason we need a *paidagôgos*. Jesus referred to his disciples as children, and he blessed children when they were brought to him. Only those who become his little children could enter his kingdom. The children of Jerusalem welcomed him, fulfilling the prophecy that praise would come from the mouths of babes and sucklings. As children, we are the lambs on his right hand. We are the chickens gathered under his wings, for so he describes the simplicity of our childhood. He rode into Jerusalem on a young colt, indicating how man is made young in Christ, in an eternal simplicity which knows no age (paed 1.5.15.2). We are no longer children who roll on the ground, but, stretching upward and standing on tiptoe,<sup>45</sup> we pursue the holy wisdom. As children, we grow up into the fullness of Christ, into the perfection of Christ our head. Being children does not mean that we are childish and silly.<sup>46</sup> It means simply that we are gentle and meek in our way of life. Our minds are young because they are new with the wisdom of the new covenant, which gives us knowledge through the son, the only knowledge which is authentic, since no one knows the father but the son. Our childhood again brings the freshness of morning, and we live in perpetual springtime, always young, always mild, always new, but always growing in maturity. We are the children carried on the shoulders of God. 'Our life is a perpetual springtime; because the truth within us cannot be touched by old age, and our whole way of living is saturated by this truth' (paed 1.5.20.4). Our relation to God as children in Christ is one of joy, of divine or mystic sport. Heraclitus speaks of divine sport, and this is our life in festival with God. God looks down and sees our laughter from on high just as the king looked down and saw Isaac with his wife Rebecca (paed

45 A perceptive recent writer has found this expression to typify a more ascetic strain than is found in Irenaeus. The evidence is complex. The *Paedagogus* is not an ascetic work, but is concerned with the detail of daily life. In *Stromateis* VII, Clement's complete Christian praises God as he sails the sea or ploughs his field. He would find trouble if he did these things on tiptoe. See J. Behr, *Asceticism and anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria* (Oxford, 2000).

46 *nēpios* is different from *nēputios* (paed 1.5.19.1).

1.5.21.3). Our place as children in simplicity and joy culminates in the child born as 'wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace'. This child teaches us with his universal instruction, as a teacher leading us who are his little ones. He is indeed the perfect, child and the great God, the son in the father and the father in the son. In him reciprocity with the father is perfect, and it is into such a relationship that he leads his children (paed 1.5.24).

Clement now moves to meet the objection of heretics that childhood implies imperfection and inferiority.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, 'Being baptised we are illuminated; illuminated we are adopted as sons; having become sons we are perfected; and becoming perfect we are made immortal' (paed 1.6.26.1). For Christ himself said that we are gods and sons of the most high. This happens through grace, illumination, perfection or washing, and leaves nothing to be fulfilled. He who by grace knows God lacks nothing (paed 1.6.26.2, 3). There is nothing imperfect in those who have been taught by God. Being born again, they receive the light and contemplate what is divine with the eye of the spirit. This is possible because like loves like, and what is holy loves the source of holiness. They are no longer darkness, but light in the lord (Eph. 5:8). They anticipate eternity in time and, while not at the end, they are in light and not in darkness. They have received life eternal, and in promise they look forward to the consummation of eternal rest (paed 1.6.28f).

This is possible only because believers have put on Christ and because all are equal in the participation of God. As God's children they have put aside the old humanity and put on the immortality of Christ; as a new holy people they receive that gift which the father reveals to his little children. This does not mean that they have not progressed. Indeed, like Paul, they have put aside childish things, which include the fear of the law. Childhood in Christ is maturity when compared with the law, and we defend this childhood.

Yet another difficulty or objection is raised by the contrast between milk and meat. Paul speaks about feeding his followers with milk. This milk is perfection, and the sign that we are nourished to life eternal. It is the same divine word which is fluid milk as is solid meat.<sup>48</sup> Blood is the moister part of flesh, and a kind of liquid flesh, while milk is the sweeter and finer part of blood (paed 1.6.39.2). The spiritual nourishment of milk

47 See above, chapter 7, page 171 (Perfection of faith) and G. Filoramo, '*Pneuma e photismos*'.

48 For Clement's exposition of human physiology see Parel, *Theological anthropology*, 74–99.

is sweet, being given through grace, and white, because it is the day of Christ (paed 1.6.40.2). The divine word is described in many metaphors as meat, flesh, food, bread, blood and milk, and he is all of these (paed 1.6.47.2). These metaphors all show the ways in which we are united with Christ and redeemed by him. Of course we have not reached final perfection, as heretics claim to have done; but like Paul, we press on to the prize of the high calling in Christ (paed 1.6.52.2). The law was given through Moses but not by Moses. It was given by the word through Moses his servant and was his ancient grace. It was only temporary, until eternal grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; this was not given but came into being by him who made all things (paed 1.7.60.2).

Clement moves on to answer the objections of those who divide justice from goodness. God is a God of love and of active goodness. His word cooperates in God's love for man and is good in and by itself. However, justice or righteousness corresponds with goodness and is equal and similar to it. God's goodness is declared in the gospel, where the God who is one and above the Monad is both the God who is and the God who is truly righteous. He is righteous because of the balance which exists between father and son, an equality of love and a good balance made known in the person of Jesus Christ. His goodness extends evenly to those who are just and unjust (paed 1.8.72.3). The reciprocal knowledge of father and son is the symbol of ultimate justice (paed 1.9.88.3).<sup>49</sup> In the bible and elsewhere there is a great mass of injunctions which point towards attaining what is good and avoiding what is evil, 'for there is no peace for the wicked' (Is. 57:21; 48:22). This points to the pervasive ethical relationship of the believer to God, who invites him to the blessed life which is the eternal reward of goodness (paed 1.10.95.2).

Beyond the demands of the law, we acknowledge that Jesus is the only true, good, just image and likeness of the father. He is the word of God; God has entrusted us to him as a loving father commits his children to a worthy tutor. He tells us, 'This is my beloved son, hear him', and through his knowledge, benevolence and authority we have confidence (paed 1.11.97.2).

We are kings and masters, not slaves to food. With eyes fixed on the truth, we contemplate him who truly is and feed on the food which Christ gives (paed 2.1.9.3). Whether we eat or drink, we do all to the glory of God. As with eating, so with drinking, we look to the blood of the grape

49 See above, chapter 5, page 112 (God beyond God, God within God, God beside God).

who is the heavenly word bruised for us, for our redemption and our anointing (paed 2.2.19.3). We can use earthly wine with moderation. In the middle of an extended account of wine and drunkenness, Clement indicates the theme which holds all his understanding of the *paidagôgos* or tutor together. He says:

Reason [logos] must always remain with those who belong to him, even when they are asleep, and indeed the logos should be invited to sleep with us. For wisdom, which is the perfect knowledge of things divine and human, stretches throughout the universe and so becomes, as it watches over the flock of men, an art to govern life; in this way it is always with us, as long as we live, always achieving its own task which is to produce a good life.

(paed 2.2.25.2f)

The reciprocity of the logos with humans is continuous, and so those who serve God follow him stripped of all arrogance and passing show. They grasp what is theirs, what is good and cannot be taken away, 'faith in God, confession of him who suffered, beneficence to men'. This is the most precious possession (paed 2.3.36.2). The one service of one God brings harmony to the whole of the good life because it rules everything (paed 2.3.38.3f). In the presence of God a consistent life may be lived and the values of the world may be rejected. The stupidity of those who have chamber pots of crystal, silver and gold is laughable in the presence of the immortal word, the truly royal gold (paed 2.3.39.2). From this divine presence, all behaviour is regulated. As from the other side the word of the lord who richly dwells in us adapts and conforms himself to circumstances, persons and places (paed 2.4.43.2), so we respond to him who is close to us with hymns that are temperate and fitting (2.4.44.5). Laughter has limits, however pleasing it can be to God. Buffoonery must be avoided. Man, a laughing animal, should not laugh perpetually, any more than a horse should neigh constantly. To giggle and guffaw, or to smile at the wrong occasion, is against reason. Gravity has its place (paed 2.5.45–48). Before we sleep, we give thanks to God for what we have enjoyed. We avoid luxurious bedclothes and gold-embroidered carpets. As children of light, we never exclude the light but we turn to inner truth so that our dreams are true. We know nothing of those who are so loaded with wine as to hiccup or those who are so stuffed with food as to snort and snore with rumbling stomachs. All these things cover over the clear, seeing eye of the soul and fill the mind with all kinds of fantasy. The soul contemplates God always and through its perpetual conversation with him inoculates the body with a certain wakefulness which grasps eternity (paed 2.9.82.3).

Reciprocity with nature brings certain prohibitions. The hyena and the hare are unclean animals because of their unnatural and inordinate sexual habits (paed 2.10.83.4). One can falsify a nature but not replace it by another (paed 2.10.84.1). There is no third androgynous sex between male and female. The hyena is not bisexual by nature. Homosexual behaviour cannot be natural; it is rightly condemned by Paul (paed 2.10.86.3).<sup>50</sup> Sexual union should be directed to produce life. Sterile intercourse is against nature (paed 2.10.87). Paedophilia denies reciprocity. We should regard children as our own sons and the wives of others as our own daughters. Our belly and sexual organs, like every part of the body, must be ruled by reason in ways that are fitting, beneficial and decent (paed 2.10.90.2). The logos speaks through Moses against homosexuality (paed 2.10.91.1). Sex should not be a matter of plain pleasure but of cooperation with the creator in the formation of a child.<sup>51</sup> The tyranny of lust has many forms (paed 2.10.92f). Socrates saw it as a savage master (Rep. 329c; paed 2.10.95.1). Like the Stoics, Clement denounces as unnatural sex which is not for procreation; for this reason marriage is permissible only for those of a certain age, and abortion is murderous and wrong. Our whole life must follow the law of nature (paed 2.10.96.1), and intercourse should not take place at certain times, for example on returning from church, or at the hour of prayer. In the night, the light of reason within the soul provides restraint (paed 2.10.97.1). Natural law is the way we cooperate with the creator. Clement places the whole of life within the reciprocity of the believer and the logos who is both reason and Christ. 'Show yourself always a partner of Christ who makes the divine ray shine from heaven' (*To the newly baptized*).

The presence of the word or logos denies the practice of piercing ears, which is contrary to nature. The best ornament for ears is true instruction.

<sup>50</sup> Clement's grasp of God's righteousness as a saving power flooding the created world follows Paul in Rom. 1. The intensity of his enthusiasm for the inaugurated kingdom carries him with Paul to a rejection of what is unnatural. The rejection of homosexual behaviour is thus tied to a central theme.

<sup>51</sup> See K. L. Gaca, *The making of fornication* (Berkeley, 2003), who isolates 'procreationism' (sex for purpose of procreation) from the context of Clement's thought. This uncritical account can be traced to a neglect of text and context. Text is ignored in the inaccurate claim that for Clement and Epiphanius, God is a 'singular masculine entity. . . they do not consider God as feminine, androgynous or above gender' (276). For Clement, God is above gender but is referred to as 'mother' as well as 'father' (q.d.s. 37.2).

Context is ignored in the detachment of procreation from the rest of Clement's ethics, which are governed by reciprocity with the logos and cooperation with the creator.

The treatment of Clement ignores the structure of his ethical argument which determines his opinion on a particular issue. It rejects the approach of analytic philosophy to history of ideas.

With eyes anointed by the word and ears pierced for perception, a man may hear and contemplate divine and sacred things. For the word truly exhibits the true beauty 'which eye has not seen, nor ear heard before' (1 Cor. 2:9) (paed 2.12.129.4). Cooperation between man and God leads to a transformation of him who lives with the word of God.

But that man with whom the word dwells does not change himself nor make himself up; he has the form which is of the word, he is made like God, is beautiful, does not ornament himself. His is the true beauty, for it is God; man becomes God because God so wills. Heraclitus, then, said rightly, 'Men are gods and gods are men.' The word himself is the revealed mystery: God in man and man in God.

(paed 3.1.2.1).

Love and immortality mark this reciprocity of man with God. Here, as at the beginning of each section, Clement refers to the guiding truth of divine reciprocity, the way in which the reciprocity between father and son passes over to a reciprocity between God and man. All that is said about human behaviour is set against the background of this revealed mystery. Behaviour in the baths is governed by the same principle. For the word, without whom nothing was made, is everywhere. 'For only so may one remain without falling if he regard God as ever present with him (paed 3.5.33.3)'. Such a one has true riches who, having God as his eternal treasure, has everything (paed 3.6.36.3). He who possesses the word is in need of nothing, and in his wealth he will inherit the kingdom of God. Whatever his topic, Clement returns to the ever-present word. It is necessary for those who bathe to wash the soul in the cleansing word, so that pollution is rubbed off (paed 3.9.48.2f).

At the end, Clement returns to the theme of the *Paedagogus*. He will now hand over his pupils to the teacher who will carry them on and explain to them the oracles of God. The teacher is our propitiation, who heals our body and our soul, who died not for our sins only, but for the whole world. He is known when we keep his commandments. 'But whoever keeps his word, in him indeed the love of God is perfected.' 'Hereby we know that we are in him. He that says he abides in him should walk also as he walked' (1 Jn 2:2-6). As listeners to the word, we praise the dispensation by which a man becomes a child of God and has his conversation in heaven. This is possible through the word whose 'action, teaching and instruction cover all things'. It is he who dwells with what he has formed and who leads on those who listen to him, transforming them and taming them by his presence (paed 3.12.98f).

Clement's final prayer sums up divine and human reciprocity:

Be gracious, to us your children, O *paidagôgos*, father,<sup>52</sup> guide of Israel, son and father, both in one, O lord! Grant that we who obey your commands, may perfect the likeness of your image and to the limit of our power may know him who is the good God and not a harsh judge. Grant us all things yourself: that we may live in your peace and be transferred into your city, that we may sail safely over the waves of sin, that we may be wafted on a calm sea by the holy spirit, the ineffable wisdom. Grant that, by night and day till the perfect day, we may give thanks and praise to the only father and son, son and father, the son, the *paidagôgos* and teacher, with the holy spirit. All in one, in whom is all, by whom all is one, by whom is eternity and whose members we are, whose glory the ages are. All things are for the good, beautiful, wise, just One, to whom be glory both now and forever, Amen.

(paed 3.12.101f).

So Clement unites his practical ethical discourse under the theme of the divine image and the unity of the believer with son and father. So, in perfection of the divine likeness, the believer is joined to father and son, as father and son are joined to one another, and in this union he knows the only God. Here the theme of image and likeness is linked to the divine reciprocity of father and son and to the whole work of salvation.<sup>53</sup> The entire *Paedagogus*, with all its variety, is held together by the one theme of the reciprocity of God and man as a proliferation of the reciprocity between father and son.

#### THE SALVATION OF THE RICH MAN

Clement's response to the problem of rich Christians was both sensible and subtle. Most of his interpreters<sup>54</sup> have missed the point because they have limited the solutions to two – either the rich man should abandon his wealth or he should hold on to it. Clement sees the rich man, like other believers, as concerned primarily with his appropriation of God and by God, with movement towards the endless end of likeness to God.<sup>55</sup>

52 The title 'father' is given to the word in Is. 9:5 and in Valentinian Gnosticism (Irenaeus, haer. 1.1.1). See H. I. Marrou, *A Diognète*, SC (Paris, 1951) 192.

53 Those who have described this theme as so ambiguous as to be useless have not appreciated the centrality of image and likeness in Clement's account of human salvation. For example Méhat, *Etude*, 374. It is not sure for Méhat whether 'Clement has expressed more than the vague syncretistic religiosity of the epoch, the desire to take God as a reference and as a "measure" (Plato, Laws 4, 716d, cited by Clement 5.14.95.4)!'.

54 E.g. L. W. Countryman, *The rich Christian in the church of the early empire: contradictions and accommodations* (New York, 1980); M. Hengel, *Property and riches in the early Church: aspects of a social history of early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1974).

55 J. R. Donahue, 'Stoic indifferents and Christian indifference in Clement of Alexandria', *Traditio* 19 (1963), 438–46. Clement affirms that external things like wealth and poverty, health and sickness, life and death are neither good nor bad, but indifferent. They should be treated with

The supreme significance of this spiritual life is shown in the story of St John and the bandit. The apostasy of the young man is equivalent to his death and the bishop risks death in the attempt at his restoration.

The rich man who is being saved gives to the needy and by giving reduces his wealth (q.d.s. 30–33). He prays and follows the guidance of his spiritual director (q.d.s. 40f). His use of wealth and his prayer are part of his appropriation of and by God, which is his twofold hope. Just as the Platonist sees good in the perfection of the forms and the participation in the forms by the virtuous, so Clement seeks good in Christ, the Christian hope and the participation of his disciples in him.

Participation in the good, discipleship of God, imitation of Christ, following of God, assimilation of God – are all twofold, the first element being human/divine and the second divine, the first a *prokopê*, a progression, a process, while the second is divine perfection. Because the end is twofold, progress and perfection, Clement is able to solve the problem of the rich man who is being saved in a life of discipleship and not in the gesture of a moment. The good life is a life of obedience to God, participation in his grace and the imitation of Christ. The practice of giving to the poor is not spectacular. With God's grace it is salvific. 'The inner dynamics of salvation is *prokopê*; it is a continuous progression, continuous advance from unbelief to faith, to knowledge, charity, inheritance. This concept is well transmitted in the concepts of the following and imitation of God and the lord Jesus. In a Christian context the observance of the laws becomes imitation of the person, concerned with the assimilation to the saviour as far as possible.'<sup>56</sup>

Wealth was a major problem in some churches, and the words of Jesus seemed uncompromising. Clement's answer describes the life through which the rich believer is saved. He gives to the poor so long as he is able. It is, for Clement, not possible to hold on to superfluous riches and to hold a correct attitude to wealth (q.d.s. 25.5f). Love and respect for other Christians follow from a love and respect for Christ (q.d.s. 30–33).

We must recognise the priority of the knowledge of God who is one and good, eternal and the giver of eternal things. Ignorance of God is death, 'but the knowledge and appropriation and love and assimilation to him alone are life' (q.d.s. 7). To have this relation is to be perfect; not to have it is to be bereft of the good (q.d.s. 10) and to lose life altogether (q.d.

indifference by the Christian as they are by the Stoics; yet life should not be lived as if its end were indifferent.

<sup>56</sup> A. Brontesi, *La soteria in Clemente Alessandrino* (Rome, 1972), 598.

s. 8). Salvation does not depend on external things but upon virtue, faith, hope, love and other virtues (q.d.s. 18). A man can relinquish his property and still be dominated by concern for it (q.d.s. 12). What he must give up are the sick passions of the soul (q.d.s. 15). In return he will receive life eternal (q.d.s. 19) and a mirror for his soul by which he arranges every detail in the likeness of his lord (q.d.s. 21). Such a life is possible if he has enlisted an army of spiritual helpers (q.d.s. 34).

In the end, the words of Jesus to the rich man, like other simple instructions, call for more rather than less attention than his obscure words. Words of salvation 'should not be taken as they strike the careless ear, but with an effort of mind to reach the very spirit of the saviour and his secret meaning' (q.d.s. 5). Clement does not give a clear answer concerning the rich man's wealth. Can it survive his salvation? Clement does not say, because he is concerned with the salvation of the rich man, not the security of his wealth.

In this work Clement uses Graeco-Roman concepts of friendship to explain the meaning of salvation and church.<sup>57</sup> Clement aims to persuade the rich believer to distribute his wealth to the Christian poor, not in one grand gesture, but over a long period, receiving in return the guidance of a complete Christian as his spiritual director.<sup>58</sup> His chief concepts are 'salvation as the *τέλος* of philosophical ascent' and 'the church as the ideal philosophical community of friends'.<sup>59</sup> The social relevance of this work is matched by its concise exposition of Clement's main ideas.<sup>60</sup>

57 D. P. O'Brien, 'Rich clients and poor patrons: functions of friendship in Clement of Alexandria's *Quis dives salvetur?*' (Dissertation, Oxford, 2004).

58 *Ibid.*, 16.

59 *Ibid.*, 17.

60 *Ibid.*, 55–103. The *Quis dives salvetur?* is brief and lucid; given the demands for conceptual stamina which the *Stromateis* present, anyone who wishes to understand Clement might well begin with this work and the *Protrepticus*.

*Love and reciprocity*LOVE<sup>1</sup>

Love is the unity of all virtues, and they can be known only as they are seen to be joined in love. Faith, hope, repentance, fear, patience, practice, all end in the love which is their perfection. The philosopher loves the truth and becomes through love a friend and servant of that truth. His knowledge begins from wonder and ends in love (2.9.45.1–4). The believer moves from fear to faith to love. Faith may spring either from love or from fear, but finds its perfection in love (2.12.53.3). In the law, love comes in many forms, producing meekness, mildness, patience, liberality, freedom from envy and absence of hatred. It forgets injuries and its totality is indivisible. The nature of love is always to communicate or to share (2.18.87.2), and the goodness of God employs every means to communicate man's salvation (2.18.91.1).

Love is not *erôs*, or desire. Aphrodite, as Antisthenes said, should be shot, because she has destroyed so many good and beautiful women. Yet *erôs* as desire has been deified by those under its power. Love is not desire, but a relation of affection and appropriation which is found within the unity of faith and is independent of all time and place (6.9.73.3).

The summit of love is seen in the marvel of martyrdom. The martyr departs his life in love to his lord and displays the perfect work of love (4.4.14.1–3). Martyrdom, which is performed for love, brings with it hope and patience and righteousness (4.7.46.1–2). In it, the true gnostic<sup>2</sup> achieves his chief end as a kingly friend of God. No misfortune, not even death, can take from him this love of God which he freely chooses (4.7.52.1–4). He can never be separated from it (4.14.96.2; Rom. 8:39)

1 See above, chapter 6, page 147 (Three ellipses) for initial discussion.

2 See above, chapter 1 footnote 83 and chapter 2, footnote 16. Clement's gnostic is distinguished from heretical Gnostics, who are given a capital letter. He is also translated as 'sage' and 'complete Christian'.

and perfect love casts out all fear (4.16.100.5; 1 Jn 4:18). He has moved beyond courage, because there is nothing which can inspire fear within him.

Love is linked with knowledge. The gnostic is a lover of God joined in reciprocal relation to him (7.1.3.6–4.2). Love leads to knowledge which leads to contemplation and grows in perfection (7.2.10.1–3). The process of knowledge begins with faith and ends with love. Neither faith nor love can be taught; but faith points on to knowledge which goes on to love and from love receives the divine inheritance (7.10.55.6–7). Faith follows a simple and divine handbook, which is love (paed 3.11.78.2).

The true gnostic always asks for forgiveness and deliverance from sin; love leads him on from a knowledge of creation and the divine plan to the vision face to face (6.12.102.1–2). Love is the source of all virtues, and while other virtues are needed by those who are children in the faith (7.11.67.2), those who are adult follow the path of virtue out of love. The true gnostic is free from passion (7.11.65.4) because he is inspired by sovereign love (7.11.68.1). Love brings him to full stature in the presence of the God whom he loves (7.11.65.4–68.1). Righteousness inspired by fear may abstain from evil-doing; but righteousness inspired by love performs what is good spontaneously. This is the action of one who is no longer a servant, but a friend (7.14.84.2). The perfect man practises love in divine friendship, obeying all the commands of God from love (4.13.93.2).

Love is the true heavenly food, a feast of reason which should not be smothered by added sauces. Such love celebrates a festival in heaven, and no earthly supper can be a substitute. It points to God's kingdom, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the holy spirit; it is fixed on the holy assembly of love which is the heavenly church. Such love communicates, shares and nourishes. It is divine food (paed 2.1.6.2–7.1) and contemplates true reality with unsatisfied delight. It stands in contrast to gluttony, a way of life which, like that of cattle, is always looking down. It does not refuse human society but regards many human customs with suspicion. Earthly feasts or banquets should never be admired, because they pale into insignificance beside the rich food of the heavenly word (Rom. 14:20) (paed 2.1.9.3–4; 2.1.11.1).

#### RECIPROCITY AND SALVATION

The goal of the relation between humans and God is the movement from the role of servant to that of friend and son. In this movement, reciprocity which has already dominated the concept of love moves into every aspect

of salvation. The word, who brings harmony to mankind as God's instrument of music, opens the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. He leads home the lame and the wanderer into righteousness. He displays God to those who are without understanding, and he destroys corruption and death. His salvation reconciles disobedient children to their father God, and in all this action he shows love and pity towards mankind. Truth delights only in the salvation of men (prot 1.6.2). Just as a shepherd is needed to care for animals, a tutor for children and a master for servants, so the saviour defines our salvation (paed 1.4.11.2). Our instructor is the holy God, Jesus, the divine word who guides all humanity (paed 1.7.55.2). Reciprocity requires that the sick need a healer, wanderers need a guide, the blind need light, the thirsty need the living fountain, the dead need life, sheep need a shepherd, children need a tutor and all humanity needs Jesus (paed 1.9.83.3). God's greatest and most kingly work is the salvation of mankind (paed 1.12.100.1). The woman who honoured the lord with her gift of precious ointment and then wiped the ointment away using her own hair found from this relation the forgiveness of sins (paed 2.8.61.2f). From the beginning, God gave unity to the human race by giving his logos to all in common and by making his whole creation available to all mankind (paed 2.12.120.2f). The reciprocity of man and God leads to the assimilation of man to God, for just as God has the word as his image, so the word has true humanity as his image. In the true man, the soul's energies are assimilated to the divine logos and become rational (prot 10.98.3). The process takes time, for perfect truth is found with the lord in heaven, and in our infancy on earth we are always learning (paed 1.5.17.3). The holy spirit brings us to the vision of God, a vision which is always adjusting itself to its object, for only like can see what is like (paed 1.6.28.2). Reciprocity governs the assimilation of the believer in all things. We are united with Christ in a relation which depends upon his redeeming blood as we are guided into immortality. By this relation of unity we are able to make our boast in the lord (paed 1.6.49.4–50.1) and are born again into the faith of the one who alone is perfect (paed 1.6.52.3). In this relation, Christ makes his commands possible of fulfilment so that a man grows towards God. By his coming to earth he has changed earth-born man into heavenly man and thereby fulfilled the goal of likeness announced at creation, 'Let us make man in our own image' (paed 1.12.98.2). Love joins us in harmony with God; it is in love that God's elect are made perfect (4.18.111.3). Free from all lusts, we are united with God's governance; we are in him and near to him (4.23.148.2). Clement, we remember, has two striking metaphors which

illustrate reciprocity between man and God. When we pull on an anchor, we may think that we are pulling the anchor to ourselves, but in reality we are pulling ourselves to the anchor. So it is with God (4.23.152.1–2). Clement's second metaphor is the ball game which can only be played when there is one who catches and one who throws (2.6.25.4; 1.13.103.1). Clement has other metaphors of relation. Our lord is a garden into whom we are transplanted. He is our light and true knowledge (6.1.2.4). We are grafted into Christ. There are four different kinds of grafting, and the most intimate is that whereby we are inserted into Christ himself. On the other hand, we could say reciprocally that faith is inserted into our soul so that Christ is grafted into us (6.15.119.1–120.2). Love joins the gnostic to his beloved master, and as he grows closer to the one he loves, he becomes indifferent to other things (6.9.72.1). For the man of God loves God alone and has already been made like him (7.1.3.6).

Reciprocity marks the progress of *knowledge* which runs from exhortation, to instruction, to teaching (paed 1.1.1). At each point of advance the relation (exhorter/audience, instructor/instructed, teacher/taught) becomes more intimate and mutual. Ultimately, the reciprocity of father and son within God, their mutual relation in equality of love, enables us to know God because we see Jesus (paed 1.8.71.3). No one knows the father but the son, and no one knows the son but the father, and this mutual knowledge is the symbol of justice which comes to us both in the letter of the law and in the body of the incarnate Jesus (paed 1.9.88.2–3). All knowledge is marked by reciprocity, and wisdom is essentially the communication of one being to another in a relation of love (1.1.1.3). Within knowledge, there is a reciprocity between knowledge and faith (2.4.16.2). There can be no faith without knowledge and no knowledge without faith,<sup>3</sup> just as father and son are mutually dependent. We learn of the truth through the truth (5.1.1.3f).

Socrates rightly saw a reciprocity between knowledge and ignorance. Our first lesson from the word is that we do not know, and therefore we seek a teacher that we may believe, hope and love. Socrates was aware of this when he said that knowledge of what is right had to be found, and what was found had to be sought, and what sought had first to be aware that it did not know (5.3.17.2).

We grasp by faith the first principle of knowledge and receive from that first principle the proofs which enable us to reason. The voice of the lord

3 Paul Tillich's American students reported his plea that their 'face' (faith) should never be separate from their 'noses' (gnosis).

himself, who is the first principle of knowledge, trains us into the knowledge of truth (7.16.95.6). In such selfless love of truth, and reciprocity with truth, we make peaceful progress towards knowledge (8.1.2.5).

Reciprocity with our lord has ethical consequences. We must always behave as in his presence; if we do not, he will not own, as Paul said, the supper which we attribute to his name (paed 2.2.33.5). When we drink, we acknowledge the presence of God, our neighbour and the word who is our guest (paed 2.4.43.1).

Reciprocity reaches its peak in our adoption as sons or acceptance as friends of God. We must return the love that he has shown to us (paed 1.3.9.1). At all points, Christ is our model, and in assimilation to him we move from baptism, to illumination, to sonship, to perfection and immortality, so that we all become 'gods and sons of the most high' (Ps. 82:6) (paed 1.6.26.1). The immediacy of God is first indicated in the story of Jacob who sees God face to face; the face which he sees is that of the word of God (paed 1.7.57.2). In the relation of friendship to Christ, the believer is self-sufficient, for he needs nothing beyond that relation (paed 1.12.98.4–99.1). The word never leaves those who belong to him as friends, even when they are asleep; indeed, he should be invited to our sleep, for perfect wisdom must always be with us (paed 2.2.25.2–3). The most precious human gift is that of speech (paed 2.5.45.4). At the baths, we can rub someone down as they will rub us down. This, says Clement, is a work of reciprocal justice.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, we may sleep beside a sick friend, help the weak or supply the needy out of reciprocal friendship (paed 3.10.52.1).

How do we become sons of God? All comes from the mercy and grace of God. We are neither part of God nor of the same nature as him, but in his mercy he receives us and adopts us (2.16.74.4–75.2). Sonship is also friendship with God. God's image is found in the man who does and receives what is good (2.19.102.2). Paul was a philosopher because he was a friend of God. Moses, too, talked with God as friend with friend. God's truth is generated through friendship with him (4.3.9.1) and consummates in the eternal vision of almighty God 'face to face' (7.11.68.4).

#### PERFECTION AND SONSHIP

Clement of Alexandria is the first writer, after the New Testament, to deal at length with Christian spiritual life. His true sage lives in constant

4 Cf. paed 1.8.71.3. See above, chapter 5, page 112.

prayer, begins in faith and ends in love. Where did Clement find his ideas and are they coherent? He shows pagans that Christians present a perfection which is not inferior to that of the best philosophers and that therefore hostility to Christians cannot be justified. His claims, he insists, come from scripture,<sup>5</sup> and in this case the source is the Gospel of John (chs 1 and 17).

For Clement, the perfection of the true sage consists in the relation which, together with his lord, he holds as a son of God: 'entirely a son, a holy human, passionless, true sage, perfect, being formed by the lord's teaching, in order that he might be brought close to him in deed, word and very spirit and may receive that mansion due to one who has thus proved his humanity' (7.14.88.3).

This perfection is a mystery to be explored, Clement says, so that those who share knowledge will understand what is being said. The command of Jesus, 'Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect', points to our forgiveness of sins against us, forgetfulness of injuries and freedom from passion. As we speak of the perfect physician and perfect philosopher, we may also speak of a perfect sage. Of course this perfection is never equal to the perfection of God. Stoics are wrong when they identify divine and human virtue. Rather, we are to be perfect in the way the father wishes, and this perfection is attained by living according to the gospel. We may take perfection as recognising God's will, living a life of piety and aspiration, and thereby fulfilling his commands (7.14.88.6-7).

Perfection is tied to the father both in the commandment of the lord ('as your father is perfect') and in his requirement of obedience which makes perfect. Determined by the concept of sonship, perfection is linked to the saviour who is son of God and who alone can bring others into the relation of sonship. Clement's account of father and son is linked with the simplicity and mystery of the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The word was in the beginning with God and the word was God. The word is in the bosom of the father and, as only begotten God, declares the unknown father for men to hear and learn. Clement affirms the son of God or word to be within the substance of God, circumscribed so as to be distinguishable, but never divided and always of the same substance as the father. We can, therefore, learn about Christian perfection by looking at the way in which Clement speaks about the relation of the son and the father, and that of the son with those who are saved by him and brought into sonship.

<sup>5</sup> 7.1.1; there is nothing unscriptural in his account of the true sage; he simply takes the imperatives of the New Testament and puts them in the indicative.

The true sage alone is truly pious and holy, worshipping God in a relation which typifies sonship, namely that of loving God and being loved by him (7.1.2.1). The son who is the first principle and beginning of all that exists, who is timeless and without beginning, gives to the true sage a knowledge of the ultimate cause, the father of the universe, worshipped not by word of mouth, but silently in holy awe (7.1.2.2, 3). In this knowledge, the true sage is already becoming like God and will one day become divine (7.1.3.6). This is the result of his love of God, 'for as he who honours his father is a lover of his father, so he who honours God is a lover of God' (7.1.4.1). The son of God, who leads humans on the path of sonship, is the supreme head of the universe, omnipresent and perfect (7.2.5.6).<sup>6</sup>

The son gave counsel to the father before creation. As God's power and wisdom, he teaches those whom he has made. He is saviour and lord, saviour of believers, and lord of the disobedient who refuse his grace. The lord does nothing apart from the almighty father, whose activity (*energeia*) he is (7.2.7.6–7).

Clement uses yet another striking image to indicate the manner in which the word of the almighty father, or the son who is the first mover, brings all good things into being. As the supreme governor of the universe, he directs all humans according to the will of the father. The several ranks are set beneath him and are dependent on him, just as particles of iron are drawn to a magnet through a series of iron rings (7.2.9.4). The highest place is the transcendent orbit which enjoys eternal contemplation of God (7.2.9.3). Those who reach the highest vision move to the unending feast which comes to the pure in heart. 'This, therefore, is the life of the perfected true sage, to hold communion with God through the great high-priest, being made like the lord as far as possible by means of all his service towards God, a service which tends to the salvation of men by his care and goodness.'

The relationship of father to son and of believer to son is set in a Platonic hierarchy and uses the metaphors of copy and impression.<sup>7</sup> The righteous man becomes a divine image because he is indwelt by the son and eternal word:

6 This passage, like 1.28, is relevant to Clement's ethics, epistemology and metaphysics. See above, chapter 7. Like Irenaeus, Clement uses the language of Xenophanes to describe the cosmic mind.

7 Cf. Rep. 596–8 on three beds: the pattern in heaven, the object on earth and the picture of the earthly object.

the one saviour individually to each and in common to all. He is the only begotten, the express image of the glory of the father and he stamps or impresses his own image on the mind of the true sage who now becomes a third embodiment of the divine likeness in his being made as like as possible to the second cause.

(7.3.16.5f).

In such a relation, he is able to grasp intellectual realities which hold the universe together and to see his place within that universe. He is able to become truly human, ignoring the difficulties which others raise and the opinions which they hold. His citizenship of this world is complete because he is a citizen of a higher order and lives with knowledge of the supreme good, because he is a friend of God (7.3.19.1–2).<sup>8</sup>

Within intimacy of prayer and conversation with God the true sage finds perfection (7.7.39.6).

Such prayer is so precious that no occasion for it must be neglected. Our holiness is the response of a friend of God to the goodness his providence has bestowed (7.7.42.3).<sup>9</sup> So close is this relation with the father who is the almighty power, that the content of prayer is received immediately and the believer is joined to the spirit in boundless love (7.7.44.5). Through this love and goodness, the soul moves upwards until it reaches the supreme good, the great high-priest, in the vestibule of the father (7.7.45.3). At the summit, the true sage continues to pray that his contemplation may grow and ever continue.<sup>10</sup> This is for him as important as the prayer for good health, which is offered by ordinary humans (7.7.46.4). The prayer which is offered in every place is prayer to the father which the father always hears, although the father knows the need before the prayer is offered (7.7.49.7). The confidence of prayer and knowledge, the implicit trust in God, is based on Christ as foundation and superstructure, as beginning and end. For the two ends of our relation to God, faith and love, cannot be taught, but the knowledge which leads upward from one to the other is given by God's grace. By it we hang upon the lord and ascend with him to the final presence of God (7.10.56.1). Knowledge of God, by which the pure in heart see him face to face, is the final perfection of the true sage who is for ever with the lord

8 Clement digresses to ridicule lesser gods who foster superstition and behave in a way inconsistent with the highest good (7.4.22). The God who contains all things cannot be contained himself by temples built by human hands (7.5.28.1). God has no human shape, but he is found in his church where he is enshrined within those who are consecrated to the knowledge of God (7.5.29.5).

9 Note literature on friend of God, one of the Johannine themes which Clement develops: E. Peterson, D. Konstan – see Bibliography.

10 Once again we have Clement's antipathy to a closed system, his 'pilgrim theology', which for him is Christian and Platonic.

and in direct subordination to him (7.10.57.2). Knowledge continues to be inspired by wonder, which begins with admiration for the creation and leads to faith when an account of God and providence is offered (7.11.60.1).

Earlier in the same chapter, Clement speaks of the exceptional qualities of the true sage. Temperance and freedom from passion make him unassailable by pleasure or pain, just as a diamond is untouched by fire. Clement's lofty ideal raises doubts and questions concerning its practicality. His answer is confident: 'the cause of these things is love, love surpassing all knowledge in holiness and sovereignty' (7.11.68.3). Love enables the true sage to worship the best and highest, to be marked by the stamp of unity with God, to become a friend and son of God, all the time perfecting his humanity and growing to the full stature of which scripture speaks (Eph. 4:13). Unity, agreement, concord, fellowship produce friendship with God. 'The true sage, therefore, being naturally disposed to love God who is truly one, is himself a truly perfect man and a friend of God, being ranked and reckoned as a son' (7.11.68.1). This perfection is linked to the vision of God, the eternal purity of contemplation face to face. Here God's son finds rest.

The demands of perfection go beyond the requirements of philosophy. To shake ourselves free from fear and other passions we must have a lord who has achieved that freedom. Only one is free from desire, and he is that lover of men, who for our sakes became a man. We may become like him as we receive his stamp and train ourselves to abandon desire (7.12.72.1).

The final goal is *communion/reciprocity* with God, receiving what God gives to those who ask. The opinions of men do not matter, and the best of our actions require only that we and the lord are following God's commandments. Where our heart is, there is our treasure also (7.12.77.5–6). There is nothing exclusive about the goodness of God who makes his sun shine upon the just and the unjust and who sent the lord to the just and the unjust. With the same impartial goodness, the believer, who strives to be like God, forgives seventy times seven. All men are the work of one God, made in his one likeness and receiving one nature; so the true sage finds in creation the energy and will of God and worships it in wonder. Reciprocity marks his perfection, for, as he casts off passions, so he receives the goodness of God and is joined to the divine providence and the gentleness of God's word. He forgives others and receives, in return, freedom from passion and from the flesh, in the state of holiness which transcends the world (7.14.86.5–6). Justification is an intimate gift of the spirit, for God is just and he alone can justify (7.14.87.1).

## THE DIVINITY OF LOVE

The centre of Clement's understanding of God is the reciprocity of father and son. This is the first ellipse, with the two foci being father and son. The second ellipse has as its foci God and man, and here again reciprocity is the secret. Finally, the third ellipse, of which Clement speaks less in this section, is the reciprocity of man with man.<sup>11</sup>

Worshipping God means both loving God and being loved by him. This reflects the relationship between the son and the father, the son from whom the sage learns of the higher cause, the father of the universe (7.1.2.2). The son is most perfect and holy, approaching most closely to the almighty being of the father. He is the light of the father (7.2.5.3). He was the father's counsellor before the foundation of the world, the wisdom in whom God rejoiced (Prov. 8:22–30). As the power of God, the original word of the father, he precedes all created things (7.2.7.4). The universe is set out in ranks below him (7.2.9). He is the face of the God of Jacob, in that he preached and taught concerning the father because he was the exact image of the father's glory. No one knew the almighty but the son and those to whom the son revealed him (7.10.58.4). Faith in the father must be joined to faith in the son; only those animals which divide the hoof can be clean animals. Understanding will come only to those who begin from the first reciprocity between the father and the son (7.18.109). Clement's chief concern, however, is the second reciprocity or ellipse, whereby the sage responds to God. In his life and his unremitting love, the sage cares for what is divine within him. He lives as one whose mind and heart, whose theory and practice, are concerned with the process of becoming like God. As a lover of God, he knows the truth of the Christian faith, obeys the instructions of the divine logos and passes on the divine truth (7.1.3, 4). The saviour rules and directs all things by his providence, to which the universe is a household and home. In this providential rule, those who believe are joined to the word who rules all (7.2.8.3f). God is marked by gentleness, kindness and a noble devotion (7.3.13). In this relation to God, holiness joins man to his God in a unity that cannot be broken. The link of man with God is not achieved by sacrifices or honour but only in a life of virtue (7.3.15.1).

The response of the believer to God in prayer is a matter of the heart and not of outward noise (7.7.39.6), comes as a rebound to providence, or the reciprocal friendship of a friend of God (*antepistrophê*, *antistrophos*).

<sup>11</sup> See above, chapter 6, page 137.

God does not need to learn different languages (as humans do), because he understands at once the thoughts of all men (7.7.43.4). The sage moves upwards as he joins the great high-priest in the vestibule, as it were, of the father (7.7.45.3).

The relation of reciprocity with God endures when all else has failed. When Peter saw his wife on the way to execution, he spoke her name and told her to 'remember the lord'. Only that relationship could have meaning at such a time (7.11.63.3). The cost of discipleship can be martyrdom, but those who are friends of God 'willingly obey the divine call, owing to their love to God, not for the sake of the prizes of the contests, since they prefer no other aim to doing that which is well pleasing to God' (7.11.67.1). This is only possible because love has joined man to God as friend and son. He goes to God, in whom he finds his rest (7.11.68.3). Life has meaning only within this love between God and man. The sage would rather pray and fail than succeed without prayer, for all his life is prayer and reciprocal communion with God (7.12.73.1). He hangs upon the words 'no longer do I call you servants, but friends' (7.12.79.1). The simple believer may achieve some of the things which belong to the sage, but he cannot achieve them all; through love, he must go on to perfect manhood, the measure of Christ's stature, being made like God and being truly equal to the angels (7.14.84.1f). This is the perfection to which the lord calls 'be perfect as your father is perfect'. It is indeed impossible for anyone to become as perfect as God; the father wishes that we should reach the perfection which follows the obedience of the gospel, a life of piety and aspiration (7.14.88.6). Whoever obeys the lord becomes perfected in the likeness of his teacher; while human teachers train men in specific skills, the sage becomes 'a god, while still moving about in the flesh' (7.16.101.4).

#### OPTIMISM OF SOVEREIGN GRACE

Can we find a source in Clement for the optimism which some have found in the complexity of Europe?<sup>12</sup>

Reciprocity of man with God cannot remain a private, one-to-one matter. For the son of God extends his rule throughout the world and to be joined to him is to be introduced into an understanding of the universe and a relation to all that is. The son of God never moves from his watchtower, is never divided, but exists everywhere at all times. He is all

<sup>12</sup> See above, Foreword, and below, Conclusion, page 276 (Cheerfulness and coherence).

reason, all light from the father, seeing and hearing all things, and so he rules over the army of angels and gods in an unqualified sovereignty (7.2.5.5f). Within this kingdom of grace, all men belong to him, some are joined by knowledge, some as friends and some as faithful servants. Their relation to the son of God determines their relation to the world over which he rules, for his providence governs the individual and the universe at large.<sup>13</sup> He is lord of all, both barbarians and Greeks, to whom he gave philosophy through his angels. The peak of this kingdom of grace is the glory of believers, who are the portion of the lowly; but he is not restricted in his sovereign grace. 'How could he be saviour and lord, if he were not saviour and lord of all?' (7.2.6f). His saving providence is an economy which, like the good housewife, neglects no part of the household. The son who is first mover is also the cause of all good things (7.2.8.4f), so that new creation springs from first creator. Indeed, his greatness is shown by his love and concern for the whole creation.<sup>14</sup> His sovereign grace leads Greeks and barbarians to that perfection which comes through faith. If any Greek forgets about philosophy and comes straight to the teaching of truth, then he takes a shortcut to the perfection which is salvation through faith (7.2.11.2). God's sovereignty over the universe is unchallenged, 'for by the lord of the universe all things are ordered both generally and particularly with a view to the salvation of the whole. It is a work, then, of saving righteousness, always to promote the improvement of each according to the possibilities of the case' (7.2.12.2f). Within the kingdom of saving grace, men are drawn to become as like the son of God as possible and to enshrine the one saviour who exists both 'for each individually and for all in common'.

This intimate divine union, which governs the human race, includes a grasp of the intellectual world, for understanding (*epistêmê*) investigates the first cause and 'the things that hold the universe together, partly as pervading it and partly as encompassing it, some in combination and some apart and what is the position of each of these and the capacity contributed by each'. As well as the world of forms, the kingdom of sovereign grace includes an understanding of what man is, his virtues and

<sup>13</sup> See S.-P. Bergjan, *Der fürsorgliche Gott*, 222–332, for the tension between general and particular *pronoia*. See also above, chapter 2, page 51.

<sup>14</sup> See above, chapter 12, page 258 (Perfection and sonship) for the magnet image. This power and concern is shown through salvation, which works like a magnet on all mankind. Just as the remotest particle of iron is drawn by the magnet through a series of iron rings, so by the power of the holy spirit some are drawn to the highest mansion and others to lower mansions. The wicked collapse and fall to the ground (7.2.9).

vices, and the way in which these must be encouraged or ruled within God's world. Further, the virtues are understood by the member of the kingdom of grace. 'He is a citizen of the world, and not of this world only, but of a higher order, doing all things in order and degree and never misbehaving in any way.' His righteousness derives from his 'knowledge of the supreme good and the fact that he is a friend of God' (7.3.19.2). There is no limit to the kingdom of grace, for the sun which lights up the sky and the whole earth also 'darts his rays through windows and every little cranny into the innermost rooms'; so the word is shed abroad and observes every detail of our action (7.3.21.7). Such universality indicates the stupidity of the attempt to confine God in temples made by hands. Here the objection to idols (Acts 17:24) is set out more fully. If a god needs a shrine, then he did not exist before his temple was built, and if he did not exist, he cannot be made to exist by making a place for him. In contrast to the folly of idols and temples is the unique holiness of God, which is transferred not to a building, but to a church or a congregation of saints.<sup>15</sup> 'This is the shrine which is best fitted for the reception of the greatness of the dignity of God. For to him who was all worthy, or rather in comparison with whom all else is worthless, there is consecrated that creature which is of great worth owing to its pre-eminent holiness' (7.5.29.4). The creature which is so holy as to provide a dwelling-place for God is the sage in whom God is enshrined. He is the likeness of God, the divine and sanctified image. The church includes both those who are on the way to this knowledge and those who have achieved it (7.5.29.5f). The kingdom of grace is most evident in the activity of prayer.<sup>16</sup> For God is to be honoured in the whole of life and at all times. Reciprocity with the son of God who is one thing as all things involves a sense of divine presence at all times. This makes the whole of life a sacred festival, since God is present everywhere; whether we plough the ground or sail the sea, we praise him for his grace. The life which so honours God regulates enjoyment of all earthly things, food or drink or ointment, and finds God in all things. 'For he is persuaded that God knows all things and hears not only the voice but the thought, since even in our own case the hearing, though set in action by means of the passages of the body, causes apprehension not by the power of the body, but by a certain mental impression and by the intelligence which distinguishes between significant

15 There were no church basilicas at this time, only *domus ecclesiae* and perhaps only private houses. Clement rejects the notion of any building being a 'church'.

16 See below, Conclusion, page 272 (Prayer).

sounds' (7.7.36.5). Because the divine power penetrates the whole soul, the thoughts of the saints soar upwards, reaching God when the sound of the voice would fall far short. The light of the power that shines to the bottom of the soul searches our innermost secrets. The God who is all ear and all eye (as Xenophanes once said) constitutes the kingdom of grace (7.7.37.5f). Prayer takes place commonly when we lift our heads and raise our hands to heaven, 'following the eager flight of the spirit into the intelligible world'. We spurn the chains of the flesh so that the soul may wing its way upwards to better things in proximity to God (7.7.40.1). Prayer is a response to the universal presence of grace, and every time and place where we think of God is truly hallowed (7.7.43.1). United by love, the man who prays and contemplates understands with the clear insight of science, for his proximity to God is intellectual as well as visionary. He receives 'a clear conception of the things concerning God from the mystical chorus of the truth itself' (7.7.45.1). He makes his way to the final form of goodness, and there he prays that contemplation may stay with him and grow with him (7.7.46.4). He is not longwinded in his prayers, and even when he is walking or in company, resting or reading or doing good works, a simple thought from the secret of the heart can call on the father (7.7.49.7). Vision and faith lead upwards until the pure in heart look upon God face to face; but knowledge remains a 'sure and firm demonstration of the things received through faith. . . carrying us on to unshaken conviction and scientific certainty' (7.10.57.3). Nothing is remote from this knowledge of God, whose providence governs all things. Diseases and accidents are a result of creation, yet 'they are made by the power of God a medicine of salvation' and come from a truly merciful providence (7.11.61.5).

At the peak of God's kingdom is the perfect man and friend of God, who is ranked by God as a son and who will forever see almighty God in a vision face to face. Here the unending end of rest in God is found (7.11.68.3f).

Knowledge of truth involves the use of reason and argument. We must 'distinguish what is incongruous and unseemly and unnatural and false from what is true and consistent and seemly and natural' (7.15.91.8). True demonstration depends on scripture and accurate argument (7.15.92–16.93). Within scripture, the kingdom of grace is found by careful use of logical practice (7.16.96). Those who are too sluggish will remain ignorant of the fundamental truths which come to all who apply their minds to the penetration of scripture (7.16.97.4). Training according to reason follows from faith and fear (7.16.102.1). We must labour and seek

for the harmony of truth (7.16.103) and never adulterate the truth (7.16.105.5). Heretics neglect the truth in favour of their private mysteries.

Within the kingdom of grace, the reciprocity of man with man holds its place.<sup>17</sup> True manhood is found, not in a celibate life, but in the life of the husband and father who cares for his family and reflects the divine providence in such care (7.12.70.7). Perfection is found in the prayer 'Forgive us, for we forgive' (7.13.81.1).<sup>18</sup> The lord gave a command that we should pray for our enemies and we should therefore not remember the wrongs that are done against us and respond in thoughts against our oppressors (7.14.84.5f). We forgive those who have sinned against us and injured us (7.14.88.4). The love of the sage is not restricted to the world of prayer. He never overlooks a brother in affliction, especially when he knows that he could bear deprivation more easily than his brother (7.12.77.6).

The exuberant optimism of Clement's account of love rests on the three ideas which this book has set out: the divine plan and new creation, love as divine reciprocity and the universe of sovereign, saving grace.

'Grace pushes home its attack to the heart of the world; it liberates it from demons. The whole of life including death stands under the promise of *charisma* insofar as it is Christians who are living this life and dying this death.'<sup>19</sup> Clement's optimism of grace rests on sure foundations, for the universe belongs to 'the only real, one, almighty, good God, from eternity to eternity saving through his son' (7.2.12.1). God's goodness does not govern from afar. His energy leads his children one by one and all together to their home.

<sup>17</sup> The third ellipse must never be neglected.

<sup>18</sup> cf. Irenaeus, haer. 2.10.4 and Osborn, 'Love of enemies', 12–31.

<sup>19</sup> Käsemann, *New Testament themes*, 72f.

## *Conclusion*

### CLEMENT REACHES HIS GOAL

Irenaeus and Clement deal with similar problems.<sup>1</sup> They both begin from the God who is universal, spiritual and omnipresent. Their next concern is the divine economy, or history of salvation. Then follow the climax of history and the apex of the universe as it is found in Christ, who sums all things up. Their final questions are again the same, as they ask how humans participate in the new dispensation inaugurated by Christ, what it is like and how it will end. Here, however, their method is quite different. For Irenaeus there is 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 description of the man who is a god walking about on earth. For this reason, Clement's description of the true gnostic, sage, or complete Christian is the end-point of his thought. Here the divine glory is to be seen, here the final episode of salvation is described as man participates in God. Clement claims to be inventing nothing, but simply bringing together what the scriptures say about the new humanity which is in Christ. The complete Christian is marked by knowledge, perfection, progress and prayer.

### *Knowledge*

His knowledge goes to the most ancient philosophy and earliest prophecy. 'In the spiritual world, that which is elder in origin, the son, the beginning

<sup>1</sup> See below, Appendix.

and first fruit of all existing things, himself timeless and without beginning; from whom the sage believes he receives the knowledge of the ultimate cause, the father of the universe. . . worshipped and adored, as is fitting, with silent worship and holy awe' (7.1.2). He knows the facts of the Christian faith, he fulfils what the word commands and hands on to others hidden things of truth (7.1.4). This supreme knowledge is universal, for the saviour is saviour and lord of all (7.2.7). The son of God never leaves his watchtower, existing everywhere, always and without limitation (7.2.5). Knowledge covers the detail of the universe, beginning from the son and moving through the various ranks of spiritual beings (7.2.9). Such knowledge culminates in prayer, which will be the final characteristic of the new life in Christ (7.7.39). Knowledge includes the power of contemplation, a power which increases through the prayer of the complete Christian (7.7.46).

### *Perfection*

The lord who gave commandments to Jews and philosophy to Greeks now leads men by both ways of progress 'to the perfection which is true faith'. Faith offers a short-cut to perfection and salvation (7.2.11). The perfection of the complete Christian is one of participation. He no longer lives; Christ lives in him. Within his soul is enshrined the one universal saviour, and from the in-dwelling of Christ he becomes a third divine image.

At the human level, the qualities of perfection become clear. They are courage, high spirit, magnanimity, generosity and magnificence (7.3.18). Perfection comes from God, and man's part is to submit to God and to return those things which God requires. A full return is impossible, but obedience to God will cover every detail of man's action, since by his word God is ever-present, lighting up heaven and earth (7.3.21). With other Christians, he forms the church, which is not a place, but a congregation of saints: 'This is the shrine which is best fitted to receive the great dignity of God' (7.5.29). He strives towards indefectibility of virtue (7.7.47). There is still room for progress in his perfection, which adds knowledge to faith, love to knowledge and the heavenly inheritance to love (7.10.46). His many qualities of temperance and passionlessness draw their strength from love which surpasses all knowledge in holiness and sovereignty (7.11.68). Sin is alien and contrary to him who has become the temple of God. 'He is entirely a son, a holy man, passionless, gnostic, perfect, being formed by the lord's teaching' (7.14.88).

*Progress*

The complete Christian is 'always moving to higher and yet higher regions' until he no longer gazes on the reflection of God, but enjoys the immediate presence of God. This is the vision of the pure in heart (7.3.13). His progress is always in the direction of the supreme good, towards the company of the great high-priest in the vestibule of the father (7.7.45). He prays that his power of contemplation may continue to grow within him, just as an ordinary man prays for a continuance of good health (7.7.46). No one can have communion with God without purity of soul, having either reached a state of perfect goodness, or making progress as he is filled with longing for that goodness (7.7.49). His path is an upward climb to the presence of God (7.10.56). He ascends the hill of the lord, seeks the face of the God of Jacob, the face which is the saviour who is the direct impress of the father's glory (7.10.58). Intellectually, he ascends the dialectic of the noetic world, going on to higher and more universal truths (7.11.61). In his progress, he awaits with confidence whatever may come to him, strengthened by courage which is based on knowledge, and not on rashness (7.11.66, 67). His knowledge never changes to ignorance any more than good can change to evil; he is strengthened by the tasks which confront him. The third ellipse requires that he be reciprocal with his neighbour as he is with God (7.12.70). A major part of his progress consists in gaining freedom from passion. Only by such freedom is it possible to exercise the divine goodness which shines like the sun on good and evil men alike. The way upwards is never easy, and eternal rest is entered only through a gateway of struggle and toil (7.16.93). The love of truth requires energy of soul, since those who set themselves the highest goals must confront the greatest disasters (7.16.94). Indeed, becoming a Christian is not unlike progress towards other human goals. Just as those who want to be poets follow Homer, and those that want to be orators follow Demosthenes, 'so he who obeys the lord and follows the prophecy given through him is fully perfected after the likeness of his teacher, and thus becomes a god, while still moving about in the flesh' (7.16.101).<sup>2</sup>

2 G. W. Butterworth, 'The deification of man', 157–69. Butterworth finds at least three elements in Clement's concept of deification: divesting of human passions, knowledge and immortality. The term is used similarly by Justin, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Man's spiritual ascent beyond the encircling spheres is seen to be more Greek than Christian. Clement states Irenaeus' exchange formula (God-man, man-god) more carefully, prot 1.8.4. See also the discussion in my *Beginning of Christian philosophy*, 111–20, 'Anyone for deification?'

## Prayer

All human knowledge and progress depends upon man's reciprocal relation with God,<sup>3</sup> which he describes as prayer. Freedom from passion, gentleness, kindness and noble devotion are all achieved by 'undisturbed intercourse and communion with the lord' (7.3.13; 1 Cor. 7:35). The life of the church may be called 'conspiration', for the church's sacrifice is indeed speech rising like incense from holy souls while every heart is laid open to God (7.6.30). The universal saviour and ruler and the father of all is not honoured only on special days 'but continuously, in all our life, and in all possible ways' (7.7.35). Seven times a day God is to be praised, not in a definite place or special shrine, 'for the sage will do this all his life in every place, whether he be alone by himself or have with him someone who shares his belief' (7.7.35). We do not deny that the company of a good man affects for the better those who talk with him: how much more will the uninterrupted presence of God be powerful to change the life of the believer? Life then, is a continuous festival, because God is everywhere; whether we plough the soil or sail the sea, we praise him and feel his inspiration in all we do. From this praise we move to a closer intimacy which is at once serious and cheerful, serious because our thoughts are turned to heaven, and cheerful because we are constantly counting our blessings (7.7.35).

Conversation with God can happen only for those who have a right knowledge of God. The one God hears all prayers as they ask for possession of what is good and for protection from what is evil. Prayer does not need to be expressed in spoken words. 'Even if we address him in a whisper, without opening our lips or uttering a sound, still we call to him in our heart. For God never ceases to listen to the inward conversation of the heart' (7.7.39).<sup>4</sup> Some will fix certain hours for prayer, but the complete Christian prays through the whole of his life, 'striving to be united to God in prayer, and, in a word, to have done with everything that is useless for that higher life' (7.7.40). Every opportunity must be grasped for prayer with God, for it declares the response of the believer to

<sup>3</sup> See above, chapter 6, page 147 (Three ellipses) and introduction to Part 2, page 107.

<sup>4</sup> G. Békés, *De continua oratione Clementis Alexandrini doctrina*, *StudAns 14* (Rome, 1942). This careful study concludes that Clement has transposed the idea of the Greek sage into the sphere of revelation and grace. The life which contemplates eternal, immutable, spiritual truths, which is devoted to instruction and virtue, is certainly to be traced back to Plato. Clement sees life as transformed by grace into a life of constant prayer which glorifies God the father through the great high-priest, Jesus Christ.

God's providence and friendship (7.7.42). Prayer sanctifies every time and place through this relation in which 'it is permitted to man to speed his prayer without a voice if he only concentrates all his spiritual energy upon the inner voice of the mind by his undistracted turning to God' (7.7.43). Because birth and light go together, we turn to the dawning of a new day to offer our prayers.

The relation of prayer is more important than any benefits which we might receive in answer to our petitions. The complete Christian would rather pray and fail, than succeed without praying: 'for all his life is prayer and communion with God, and if he is free from sins, he will assuredly receive what he desires' (7.12.73). His whole life is purified by prayer (7.12.78), and his prayers are marked by forgiveness. He has the right to pray: 'forgive as we forgive', for this is the mark of divine perfection (Mt 5:48) (7.12.81). It is here that freedom from passion has its place, because passion hinders the forgiveness of others and precludes likeness to God (7.14.84).

#### AMBIVALENCE

The two most widely read accounts of Clement's thought (Tollinton and Völker) are agreed that Clement has loose ends and inconsistency. For Tollinton<sup>5</sup> this is evident in his attitude to wealth, where the prime concern for heavenly riches modifies the call to poverty; yet Clement is here bringing different parts of the New Testament together (1.314). In christology, Clement is said to be more generous than rigidly systematic (1.347); Clement's use of abstract terminology is allowed because he has a balance of more intimate personal description (1.349). While identifying 'educator' (*paideutês*) as Clement's most distinctive title for Christ, Clement's emphasis on free will is strangely not seen by Tollinton as the reason for this theme; again, Clement's docetic tendency is noted without reference to its origin in John (2:11). Clement's synthesis is a matter of piety, 'the piety of an intellectual man' which 'blends philosophy and religion' (2.234).

There is tension between Clement's demands for an élite and for universal salvation; but salvation means growth towards perfect humanity, and those who reject these demands of perfection have not understood what salvation is about (2.242). Clement never faced the problem of Marcion (!) because evil was merely the negation of good and not an

<sup>5</sup> Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*.

entity in its own right. This was typical of a man without doubts, antagonisms or a keen sense of penetration, but filled with faith, hope and serenity (2.254f).

Tollinton concludes that as a Christian 'liberal', Clement welcomed all good things, found joy in believing, 'sought light, truth, purity, service. He discerned and taught the breadth and variety of the ways of God. With such natures, it is good to dwell' (2.262). This confident synthesis fails to see Clement's own intricate solutions and to observe that the remaining conflicts show the reality of problems which have always faced Christian belief.

Völker<sup>6</sup> identifies a widespread ambivalence in Clement which he describes as a tendency to wobble (*schwanken*), to compromise, to have things both ways (218). In his own mind, Clement joins the new with the old using the newness of faith as his guiding principle (244). He uses philosophy with Christian ideas in a way which lends charm to his work (380); but philosophy remains a foreign body.

Völker does not distinguish between three kinds of ambivalence. First there is the use of two cultures (bible and philosophy) which produces two ways of saying similar things. On the causes of sin (disobedience and ignorance) Clement juxtaposes philosophy and the bible in a 'characteristic ambivalence' (135) which he shares with Philo. The varieties of sin cannot be tabulated because he draws again on the same two sources (142f).

Second, there is ambivalence on practical issues where argument is balanced between two possibilities. Examples include a recognition that punishment may be disciplinary or retributive (147). The church is both the congregation of the elect and the whole company of the faithful (160). Frequent penance may lead to trivialisation; but God will never reject a penitent sinner (170–73). Hopes of perfection do not exclude the persistence of sin (175). The passions are regarded with ambivalence (183–7). Marriage and celibacy are both commended (190). Wine is to be enjoyed, but the drinking of water is recommended (211). Faith is simple (225) but has steps or stages (228). The contradiction between *Paedagogus* and *Stromateis* on faith and knowledge is apparent and not real (229). While Clement's interpretation of Paul has been seen as confused by interpreters of different persuasion (265), his themes of *paidagôgia* and saving history bring coherence.

6 Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*.

The apparent conflicts are not peculiar to Clement. Indeed, they all are acceptable because evidence is complex. Völker is surprised: 'the more intensively one studies the spiritual life of Clement, the more one is astounded by its inner unity. Behind all the ambivalences which belong more to the superficial level, this unity remains and appears undeniable and ready to be grasped. All progress is nothing else than an ever richer unfolding of the grace given in baptism, an ever clearer expression and representation of the image of God in man, an ever stronger subjection to the spirit of God, an ever more inward following of Christ' (300).

Third, there is reciprocity where two concepts mutually imply one another. The final class of ambivalence is most important. Here Völker mistakes Clement's reciprocity for ambivalence. The saving act of God and the relation of his goodness and justice (82) are marked by reciprocity, as are the variety and unity of the divine economy (85–7). Other reciprocities which are ignored are: the logos as educator and reconciler (107), grace and free will (121) (the holiness of the gnostic is a return back on itself of providence), the responding loyalty of a friend of God (7.7.42.5, 6), baptism and the moral response of the believer (153), faith and knowledge (2.4.16.2), faith as the beginning and criterion of knowledge (238f), works and knowledge (301), gnosis and scripture (394f). Clement's original achievement was to present a clear picture which, despite some gaps, provided a composite account of the movement of Christian life from its first beginnings to the heights of perfection (609). Without rejecting Völker's conclusion, it must be recognised that Clement's synthesis came from a mental dexterity which perceived the way in which apparent opposites were marked by reciprocity.

The strongest answer to the problem of ambivalence lies in a recent treatment which shows such coherence in Clement that it may be seen as a system of philosophy, able to confront other such systems. Theology is in Clement and should become today 'Christian philosophy' in a way which can establish its academic integrity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This impressive claim needs to be worked out in face of the variety of enterprises which have been classified as 'philosophy' and post-Wittgenstein rejection of systems. See Schneider, *Theologie*, 302. 'Clemens hat zu seiner Zeit ein grundsätzliches Beispiel für die Aktualisierung der biblischen Botschaft gegeben, an dem die heutige Theologie lernen kann. Er hat mitgewirkt an den geistigen Grundlagen, auf denen unsere heutige Kultur faktisch, wenn eben auch nicht immer bewußt, steht. Er hat mitgearbeitet an einem Weltmodell, einem geistigen Experiment, dessen Ausgang heute noch offen ist.'

## CHEERFULNESS AND COHERENCE

For Clement, man is, by definition, a rational laughing animal (8.6.21),<sup>8</sup> Christ has turned all sunsets into sunrises and Christian life is a season of ever-renewed springtime. A fragment of his instructions to the newly baptised exhorts them to cheerfulness: 'show always that you are a partner and partaker of Christ, who shines the light of God from heaven. Let Christ be to you continuous and unceasing joy.' Cheerful Christians are not always welcome. Yet fullness of joy is integral to the Fourth Gospel (Jn 15:11). What did Clement mean? His brief instruction to the newly baptised explains further. Their lives should be marked by quietness, proportion and a trace of the divine. When they talk, they should measure their answers according to the need of their hearer, they should be thoughtful of those to whom they speak, they should not interrupt another while he is talking, and their own conversation should be interspersed with silence. They should both gladly learn and gladly teach. The first quality of the Christian is a reciprocity with other humans which is apparent in the way he speaks. At the end, Clement returns to the same thought. Christians should not give way to diseases or hardship but learn to pity others, because God helps as a friend and gives grace and knowledge, and because Christ will finally restore everything according to God's will. In conversation and in private endurance, the Christian puts his neighbour first. Secondly, the Christian does all things for God and speaks always for God. He turns his soul constantly to God and communicates his thoughts frequently to men and to God both by day and by night. His relationship to God is inseparable from his relationship to Christ. He turns constantly to God and leans his thought on the power of Christ, so that his mind is in the safe harbour of divine light, resting in that awareness. He is always in prayer to God and at the same time a partner and partaker of Christ from whom he receives the light of God and constant joy. Here the Christian life is defined in terms of a second reciprocity, an interplay with God, which governs thoughts, deeds and words. '*Il gioco*' marks his life and thought.<sup>9</sup> The Christian does not

8 cf. Aristotle, part. anim. membr. 3.10.673. For Clement, laughter must be rational; there is no place for buffoonery, for the giggle or guffaw (paed 2.5.45–8). See above, chapter 11, page 248.

9 Grosso, 'Clemente Alessandrino', 219–42. A study of the earlier chapters of the *Paedagogus* amply justifies Clement's enthusiasm for laughter and joy. This is not a matter of sentiment, but bound up with his personal adherence less to a new creed or philosophy than to the person of Christ. The joy which animates the pages of his work is a continuing disposition of the author which follows from an enthusiastic interplay with the word of God and which points to a pledge of Christian life. Clement's identification of Isaac with Christ and Rebecca with the church is

indulge in food and drink in order to relax the creative tension of the soul, but finds his joy in hymns to God and meditation on God's goodness. He does not give way to anxieties, because he knows that God rules and cares; he does not collapse under the strain of disease, because the help of God is near.

Thirdly, an ultimate reciprocity has also appeared. Christ and God are joined in unbroken unity. To do all things for God is the same as referring all things to Christ. To turn constantly to God in spiritual dependence is to rest in the harbour which is Christ, and to communicate with God day and night is to be a partner of Christ, sharing in his light and joy.

Clement's thought is governed by these three relations: the perfection of love between God and Christ, the total dependence of the complete Christian on God, and the relation of the believer to other humans in respect, concern and love.

Clement's optimism can be traced to his kerygma of the new creation, the ultimacy of divine love and the sovereignty of universal saving grace. He looks to 'the truly unique, one, almighty, good God who saves from age to age through the son and is in no way the cause of any evil'.

Is this optimism discernible in the European tradition? In his *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, Novalis looks for the meaning of Europe and hope in its future. He idealises the Holy Roman Empire as a state of perfect unity, piety and bliss. 'There once were beautiful splendid times when Europe was a Christian land, when one Christendom dwelt in this continent, shaped by human hand; one great common interest bound together the most distant provinces of this religious empire' (137).<sup>10</sup> 'Humanity was not mature enough, not cultivated enough for this splendid kingdom' (139). After many disasters, humanism reduced 'the creative music of the universe into the uniform clattering of a monstrous mill, driven by the stream of chance, and floating on it a mill of itself without builder or miller and really a true *perpetuum mobile*, a mill grinding itself' (145). Yet the philosophers left place for poetry, and this produced 'the heartbeat of the new age' (149).

marked by a relationship between the two which is characterised as '*il gioco*'. This relation for Clement is permeated by joy, fidelity and merriment, a state of mind which is not antithetical to the pledge of faith but is continually renewed by it. An examination of the text points to three hymns: to joy, to love, to laughter. This characterises the heart of Christian experience for Clement and the way of perfection which leads back to the childhood of paradise. However, as already noted, laughter must never degenerate into buffoonery and must always be rational and sensitive to others (paed 2.5.45–8).

<sup>10</sup> Citations are from *Novalis' philosophical writings*, translated and edited by Margaret Mahoney Stolyar (New York, 1997).

There is need for hope and patience, for 'Christianity will rise again' (151) and 'it must come, the holy time of eternal peace' (152). Today, no one can accept the mythical European history of Novalis. What of his final optimism? Novalis was hopeful of history because he was hopeful of Christendom. 'What has not now reached fulfilment will reach it in a future attempt or in a repetition of that attempt.'<sup>11</sup> Remarkably, at a decisive point in recent history, Mikhail Gorbachev promoted the optimism that Europe would find a better future and that problems would sooner or later be resolved. 'History has left us this German question, which it has produced; history will also resolve it, perhaps in a hundred, perhaps even in ten years.'<sup>12</sup>

The optimism of Novalis is reflected in his Easter poem, which reflects the same faith in a new age as is prominent in Clement.<sup>13</sup> Nothing is lost from history but ever renewed.<sup>14</sup> The view of Novalis was welcomed with some scorn. For us today it remains the dream of a young poet; but it is a dream which has endured and reappeared in the most surprising event in recent history.<sup>15</sup>

Clement claimed that what was written would find a reader who understood. Has he enjoyed this prediction? The twentieth century was a good century for Clement. De Faye denied him a system but Tollinton provided an ordered account for all to read. Mondésert pointed to the priority of scripture; his work has been confirmed and extended by Schneider. Völker and Méhat each provided 600 pages of worthwhile explanation. Lilla provided a valuable collection of parallels, to be qualified by Wyrwa, who pointed back to Plato. Tollinton's two volumes and the vast works of Völker and Méhat have proved Clement's complexity. My youthful work protested his simplicity. It is to another simplicity I have returned.

11 'Was jetzt die Vollendung nicht erreicht wird sie bei einem künftigen Versuch erreichen, oder bei einem abermaligen.' Novalis, *Schriften*, III (3rd edn, Stuttgart 1983), 510.

12 'Die Geschichte hat uns diese deutsche Frage hinterlassen, sie hat sie erzeugt, die Geschichte wird auch darüber weiter disponieren, vielleicht in hundert, vielleicht auch in zehn Jahren.' 'Gespräch mit Michail Gorbatschow: "Schön, ich gab die DDR weg".' *Der Spiegel*, 40/1995, 66–81.

13 See above, Part 3, Introduction to chapter 7.

14 'Vergänglich ist nichts was die Geschichte ergriff, aus unzähligen Verwandlungen geht es in immer reicheren Gestalten erneuert wieder hervor.'

15 Gerhard Schulz concludes, 'Von der Vision eines jungen Dichters aus dem Jahre 1799 jedenfalls bleibt für uns vor allem ein schönes Spiel mit Bildern und Gedanken wie mit Farbe und Klang der Sprache – ein Stück Poesie, nichts weiter. Aber ist das nicht genug?' G. Schulz, '"An die Geschichte verweise ich euch" Novalis' *Die Christenheit oder Europa* zweihundert Jahre später', *Mitteilungen der Internationale Novalis-Gesellschaft*, Heft IV (2002), 9–23.

Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian have all been designated as confused. Certainly the bible they expounded and the culture to which they spoke were complex. However, thinkers can handle such complexity only if they have a simple principle and an active mind. The simple principle of Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian was the apostolic kerygma which Irenaeus set down and which included the rule of faith. Once this is recognised, their different responses can be unravelled. They are each concerned to declare one God who is good, his saving plan which is summed up in Christ, through whom all may share the grace of salvation and find a place in his new creation.

The intention of these writers was clear. Clement makes plain the illocutionary force of each part of his work.<sup>16</sup> The first work exhorts pagans, the second instructs Christians, the third teaches the way from faith to knowledge. At the same time our contemporary 'linguistic turn' is evident. Two distinct languages, the classical and the biblical 'forms of life', combine and conflict in his writing. To deny either language, by retreating to the bible with the *simpliciores*, or by crossing over to pagan philosophy, was a possibility. To pretend that there was no conflict by accepting the myth that the Greeks had stolen their ideas from the Hebrews was a temptation to which Clement sometimes succumbed. It denied his conviction that Greek ways of thought were different and were needed to untangle the bible. *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*) were the way to bring the two languages together.<sup>17</sup> A plain, systematic account would ignore the subtleties, present a target to sophists and forsake Plato's own unsystematic way. Truth was not offered on a platter. There was more to growing grapes than planting vines and picking the fruit. The untrained athlete had better keep away from the games. As his mind was trained, the

<sup>16</sup> Discourse Power theory is not enough. It is not merely a matter of intertextuality. Malcolm Bradbury has written in wise parody: 'And intertextuality – as you well know Charles, if you keep up with these things, and I have no doubt you do – proves that all texts are related to all other texts. Indeed not only does it demonstrate the universality of that pattern of allusion, quotation, cross-reference, parody and parallelism which has always kept us scholars in business and research grants; it also shows philosophically that authors do not write writing at all, but that writing writes authors. . . Many a book has been a proven influence on a later author without his ever having taken the trouble actually to read it', Bradbury, *Unsent letters*, 225. Cited M. A. Rose, *Parody, ancient, modern and postmodern* (Cambridge, 1993), 262.

<sup>17</sup> 'Indeed, it is by stressing in this way the plurality, instability and promiscuity of text, both as written and as read, that intellectual historians may aim to save for the individual author, working within this complex linguistic web, some "room to manoeuvre", so to speak: some discursive space in which to intervene and possibly to change the course of the conversation; and thus to resurrect the teleology of individual historical agents, who are not limited to the discursive realm and are able to *do* things with words rather than be a mere function of them', Brett, 'What is intellectual history now?', 123f.

believer could grow closer to God. So a new creation shone more and more, until the perfect day, to end not in mystic absorption but in reciprocity, face to face.<sup>18</sup>

Clement's three problems (divine plan, reciprocity of father and son, faith as the one universal salvation) and his three ellipses (father and son, God and humankind, love of neighbour) offer an explanation of his coherence and cheerfulness:

For I think that to those who knock, the question of their inquiry is opened, and to those who thus ask questions from scriptures, there comes from God that at which they aim, the gift of God-given knowledge, by way of comprehension through the true illumination of logical inquiry. For there is no finding without asking, or seeking without examining, or examining without analysing and unfolding through questions which clarify the inquiry; nor is it possible to have gone through the whole investigation without in the end receiving as a prize the knowledge which one has sought.

(8.1.2.1–2)

Clement's fusion of faith with Plato's search for the best reason is complete. Rigour of inquiry is balanced by confidence of discovery.

Clement finds four things:

God's saving plan (as revealed in scripture) presents a coherent picture of the divine activity. The movement of the divine plan which culminates in Christ may be assimilated to the forms of Plato which consummate in the form of the good. Just as dialectic is used to find how forms are subsumed under higher forms, so it may be used to show how the divine economies discerned in scripture become one economy governed by God in Christ. To lift verses of scripture out of this plan of salvation destroys their context and meaning. True dialectic works on the truth of scripture to define the true philosophy.

The mystery of divine love between father and son makes God knowable and accessible to humans in love. Clement shows how the metaphysics of mind, which is both a simple transcendent unity and a universe of forms, makes sense of reality when defined in terms of the Christian God, father and son. The final rung in the ladder of being is not a rung but a beam-balance (*zugon, trutanê*) (paed 1.8.71.3). Reality is ruled by reciprocity and love which flows in three ellipses from father and son, to God and humans, then to humans and humans. The transcendent father

<sup>18</sup> 'If philosophy has a further task, it is not to gain a better insight into reality, but analogously to poetry, to stretch our imagination and our language and thus to create a new world for living in.' Brett, 'What is intellectual history now?', 127, with acknowledgement to R. Rorty. Clement claimed a better insight into reality as well as stretched imagination and a new world.

embraces the world of forms, and the universal son brings all into unity. So the intellectual universe points to the salvation which God in Christ imparts.

Faith, initially simple, grows into a knowledge of God which deepens in intimacy and extent. Faith is always moving on, searching, like Plato, for the best reason. As knowledge grows, faith is never supplanted but only enlarged by love.

These things were joined in the salvation of humankind which was God's eternal purpose, the restoration of his children to the vision face to face.

## *Appendix: Irenaeus and Clement*

Second-century Christian thought is concerned to find and declare the unity of the New Testament. Irenaeus, like Clement and Tertullian, saw the Christian bible as dependent upon the proclamation of good news in Jesus Christ. If there was unity to be found in these writings, it would be through the gospel or kerygma that governed their selection.

While the apostolic kerygma is not set out in one fixed formula,<sup>1</sup> if we look at the sermons of Acts, there is a clear pattern. The one God has created all things. From the beginning his plan has guided his people, instructing them and drawing them nearer to himself. All that is said of God and of his promised deliverance is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Here the many strands of prophetic witness come together. This fulfilment is salvation for humankind and in it all may participate by faith.

The fourfold pattern may be discerned quite plainly at the beginning of the Letter to the Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> Scripture confirms kerygma, and kerygma holds scripture together.

Irenaeus finds in the Christian kerygma these concepts: one God as the omnipresent *intellect* whose goodness governs all things (haer. 2.10.3; 3.25.3); the *economy* (*oikonomia*) or plan of creation and salvation; *recapitulation*, the summing up of all things in Christ, who corrects and perfects mankind, inaugurating a new humanity (haer. 3.18.6; 3.19.3);

1 Kerygma refers generally to the act of preaching. Its content includes baptism, repentance, the year of the lord, Jesus, the Christ, Christ crucified, the kingdom, the kingdom of God, gospel, word of faith (TWNT, 3, 703). Similarly 'gospel' (*euaggelion*) has for Paul a fixed content which his readers know, but his accounts in Rom. 1:3, 4 and 1 Cor. 15:1 are not meant to be complete.

2 God, who at different times and in different ways spoke in the past to the fathers by the prophets, has in the last days spoken to us by his son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. The son being the brightness of the father's glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high . . . How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness both by signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the holy spirit according to his own will (Heb. 1:1–3; 2:3, 4).

and *participation*, by which man receives the salvation planned by God and fulfilled in Christ. Adam never left the hands of God (haer. 5.1.3). The son of God became what we are to bring us to be what he is (haer. 5 pref). Under these four headings, Irenaeus' *Against heresies*, which many have found diffuse, emerges as the first major work of a coherent Christian theology.

The *Demonstration of the apostolic kerygma* is a compilation of prophecies which are fulfilled in Christ. It proves and expounds the kerygma by reference to these prophecies.

#### *Divine intellect and disposer supreme*

The first and chief article of faith is that there is one uncreated, invisible God, who is maker of all (dem. 6). In relation to his creation, he is above, with and in all, transcendent, coexistent and immanent (dem. 5). He is a faithful ruler of all his creation throughout all time. The most high, almighty, lord of hosts, who is creator of all and lord of all, upholds and sustains all things. Most merciful, compassionate, tender, good, just, he became father at the end of times through adoption of sons (dem. 8).

#### *Divine economy, the plan of salvation*

Human freedom ensured that God's plan for the world should not be static. Man, endowed with free will, fell when a jealous angel persuaded him to disobey God's command (dem. 16) and was expelled from the garden to suffer miseries (dem. 17). Things grew worse when unlawful unions of angels and daughters of men produced giants (dem. 18). The flood came as judgement on this wickedness (dem. 19).

Yet God appeared to Abraham (dem. 44), to Jacob (dem. 45) and to Moses (dem. 46). The captive people in Egypt found liberation through the blood of the Passover lamb (dem. 25). God guided his people through the desert and, when they did not believe, God kept them in wilderness for forty years, so that all unbelievers would die off (dem. 27).

#### *Correction of sin and death; perfection of saving plan*

Summing up or recapitulation is correction of sin, perfection of divine purpose and inauguration of a new humanity. The sin of Adam was reversed through Christ. Through the second Adam we overcome what had smitten us through the first Adam (dem. 31). The disobedience wrought in the tree of knowledge was undone by the obedience effected on the cross which now permeates the structure of the world (dem. 34).

By the triumph of redemption, Christus Victor destroys man's ancient disobedience (dem. 37). All springs from the mercy of the father who sent his word to save us where we are, freeing captives, bringing light, and raising fallen man (dem. 38).

God perfects his plan of salvation in Christ, the short word on the earth (dem. 87). The perfection of this word is declared, says Irenaeus, by Baruch.<sup>3</sup> 'He was seen on earth and conversed with men', joining and uniting the spirit of God the father with what God had fashioned, so that man became according to the image and likeness of God (dem. 97). The word pervades the universe, in the form of the cross, pointing in all directions (dem. 34). He sums up all things in the triumph of human redemption (dem. 37).<sup>4</sup>

Perfection means fulfilment of promises, the fullness of Christ. The promises of the prophets have been fulfilled and perfected in Christ. Prophets foretell the revelation of Christ, who will renew all things (dem. 30). His incarnation copies the making of Adam, to make a new beginning (dem. 32).

### *Inauguration and participation*

Summing up is the inauguration of a new humanity which participates in God. There is a single upward path which unites man with God; other paths sever man from God and lead to death (dem. 1).

The rule of faith embodies a true perception of reality (dem. 3), which begins with a belief in God as creator (dem. 4). The order (*taxis*) of faith is faith in trinity (dem. 6), and from this faith in the trinity comes rebirth in baptism (dem. 7). Such new birth means adoption by God as father (dem. 8) and follows the word of God incarnate who by rising led the way into heaven and as first-born of the virgin, the just and holy, servant of God, made perfect in all things, frees from hell those who follow him (dem. 39).

Fulfilling the past by taking over all prophecies, Jesus sent out apostles to preach throughout the world; their beautiful feet took good news to all the world and their sound spread into all the earth (dem. 86). His people go forward through faith and love towards the son of God (dem. 89). In newness of spirit they live under a new covenant (dem. 90). They look to the holy one of Israel, placing no hope in the works of their hands (dem. 91).

<sup>3</sup> One of the earliest citations of Baruch. Athenagoras cited him, but not at this length.

<sup>4</sup> God is glorified by his son forever, and by the holy spirit whose universal powers give glory to the father (dem. 10). The word of God is pre-eminent in all things, calling man back to God (dem. 40). The son is the pre-existent saviour of all (dem. 50f).

This new people are sons of the living God who is able to raise up sons from stones (dem. 93). The new calling of the gospel points to a change of heart in the Gentiles (dem. 94). Indeed, now the Gentiles supplant Israel and receive life through their calling. God has restored in Christians the faith of Abraham (dem. 95). No longer do we need the law as our pedagogue, for we speak directly with the father, face to face (dem. 96). All this new order must be kept secure, with good will through good works and sound character (dem. 98).

How does the structure of the kerygma relate to the rule of faith? The four elements – God, saving history, recapitulation, participation in salvation – are collapsed into a trinitarian formula. The order of our faith is God the father, with the second article, the word of God, son of God Christ Jesus our lord, who was revealed by the prophets according to the character of their prophecy and according to the nature of the economies of the father. He became a man among us, visible and palpable in order to abolish death and to bring about communion between God and man. The third article of faith is the holy spirit, through whom the prophets spoke and the patriarchs learnt the things of God and who in the last times was poured out in a new way upon the human race to renew man throughout the world to God. Here the second element of the kerygma, the saving history or divine economy, is joined both to the confession of the son and to the confession of the holy spirit (dem. 6).

However, in his exposition and proof of the preaching, Irenaeus continues to follow a fourfold pattern. After having spoken of God the creator and father and of the world of angels, he moves through the fashioning of man and the story of man's fall and preparation for salvation (dem. 11–30). Then comes the third element of the preaching in the incarnation which unites God and man (dem. 31–39). Finally, the pre-eminent word of God calls man back to communion with God and to participation with incorruption. So the spirit grants to those who believe the culmination of the law, prophets and apostles (dem. 40–42).

Next comes the demonstration from the prophets, the second part of the treatise, and here the kerygma is supported by the witness of the prophets (dem. 43). Moses and Abraham begin the prophetic testimony to the divine dispensation or plan of salvation which culminates in the son of God. Foretold by the prophets, the human birth of Jesus sums up all that has gone before (dem. 53–64). The prophets made known that he is begotten of God and where he was to be born, declaring that he is Christ, the only eternal king. They also foretold that he would heal and raise the dead and finally be crucified (dem. 66). The detail of his miracles, passion

and glorification are all foretold by the prophets (dem. 67–85). Finally, the prophets tell of the calling of the Gentiles, the new people of God, and of the way in which the word of God is active in the world, so that the laws of God are written upon the hearts of men. Christ has ascended into heaven and has joined man once more to the image and likeness of God (dem. 86–97). This is the preaching of the truth, the character of our salvation and the way of life which the prophets announced, Christ confirmed and the apostles handed on. This is handed on in turn by the church to her children (dem. 98). In his proof, therefore, Irenaeus follows the order of the New Testament kerygma and sets out the importance of the divine economy.<sup>5</sup>

What is the relation between Irenaeus' two extant works? Why was the shorter work necessary? The longer work had failed the test of brevity and simplicity which Irenaeus sets at the beginning of the *Demonstration*. Any work of sustained apologetic, by its response to numerous objections, leaves doubt in the mind of the reader as to which side has won. I have compared Irenaeus' kerygma to a splendid highway in which each section strikes rocks or objections which must be answered.<sup>6</sup> This is the reason for the complexity of *Against heresies*. Every part of the kerygma faced unco-ordinated objections from those whom Irenaeus attacked. But the kerygma was concise and therefore had to be stated without all the answers.

#### UNIVERSAL INTELLECT AND DIVINE GOODNESS

What can be said about God? The four concepts of Irenaeus continue in Clement.<sup>7</sup> Universal Intellect is described in poetic detail. There is an apparition of divine power spread over all the universe and announcing a light which is inaccessible (6.3.32.4). So God came, says Aristobulus, on Sinai (6.3.32.3, 6.3.34.3). This unseen presence is supported by a cave in Britain where the wind produces the sound of rhythmic cymbals (6.3.33.2). Elsewhere in the woods that wind can produce the sound of birds calling. Almighty God is able to produce, without aid, apparent

5 The interaction of these four elements with the threefold rule of faith was to persist in Christian theology. When we come to Gregory of Nazianzus, the threefold rule of faith is still distinct from the economy in a relation of mutual dependence. The economy begins from theology, the goodness of God (orat. 38.8) and is summed up in the holy trinity. This does not prevent Gregory from saying, at one point, 'our subject is not theology but the economy' (orat. 8).

6 E. F. Osborn, 'Irenaeus: rocks in the road', *ET* 114 (2003), 255–8.

7 For reasons of brevity and convenience, I have drawn solely on Book VI of the *Stromateis*.

sounds which are heard, These abnormal effects lead to the conversion of the soul (6.3.34.3). Similar is the power of his discourse, the luminous utterance of the lord, the truth which descends from on high on the assembly of the community to work 'by the immediate ministry of light' (6.3.34.3). God is the invisible who sees all (6.5.39.3).

So, says Clement, the Preaching of Peter speaks of God who is not in any place, present in all places, without need but needed by the universe for its existence, incomprehensible, incorruptible, uncreated, who created the universe by the word of his power. Again the Preaching of Peter tells that the Greeks worshipped the same God as we, but in a different way (6.5.39.2, 3).

This Universal Intellect is communicated to men. As the ark received all creatures, so the knowledge of what is real is the wisdom granted by God (6.16.133.5). From philosophy comes the dialectic which proves and elucidates difficulties (6.17.156.1). Those who say that philosophy is not from God run the risk of saying that God cannot know all the details of his wisdom and cannot be the cause of all good things (6.17.156.3). But God knows all things present and future (6.17.156.5, 6). He sees all things *pant'ephorai*, *pant'epakouei*, including the naked soul within. He has an eternal design for every thing.

To all eternity God has no favourites. There are no special times and places to which his goodness is partial (6.8.64.1). His voice on many waters (Ps. 28:3) points to different covenants and his teaching, which leads both Greek and barbarian to righteousness (6.8.64.4). The source of this goodness is not plural but the singular, unique, divine goodness. God does good in his own unique way because he is truly God and father. From a consistent identity of goodness he is engaged in ceaseless well-doing (6.12.104.3). The lord is the Alpha and Omega, the *archê* and *telos* by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made. God did not cease to create on the seventh day. *Being* good, if he ever ceased *doing* good, he would cease to be God (6.16.141.7).

Intricate providence spreads from above over all men, like the oil which flowed on Aaron; it includes philosophy, but only as an outer garment (6.17.153.4). Philosophy was given by providence as a preparatory instruction (6.17.153.1). God gave to his artisans a spirit of perception (*phronêsis*), a contemplative power of the soul which divides and joins unlike and like, prescribes and forbids, predicting the future. This *phronêsis* is not just for *technai* but for philosophy (6.17.154.4). There are varieties of *phronêsis*; among these *noêsis* looks at first causes (6.17.153.3).

## DIVINE PLAN/OIKONOMIA. WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

The divine plan is evident in the new covenant (Jer. 38:31) (6.5.41.5). Christians are a third race which knows God in a new and spiritual way, which supersedes that of the Greeks and Jews (6.5.41.6). God made covenants with the Jews and with the Greeks (6.5.42.1). He even gave the Greeks their own prophets (6.5.42.2, the Sibyl and Hystaspes 6.5.43). All had their appropriate season: gospel, law, prophets and philosophy (6.6.44).

Put differently, there is only one *diathêkê* of salvation from the beginning, given to different generations at different times by the one God who works through one lord (*polutropôs*). By him the wall between Greek and Jew has been broken down (6.13.106.3). The sects (heresies) of barbarian philosophy, while affirming one God and praising Christ, do not lead to the truth because they invent another God and another Christ who is not conformed to the prophecies (6.15.123.3). The rule of the church points to the unity of law and prophets with the covenant given since the coming of the lord (6.15.125.3). The law was to the Hebrews as philosophy was to the Greeks. Both served until the coming of Christ. Now there is one universal call for righteous people, one lord, one God, one universal human race. Since the foundation of the world, the coming of the lord was signified by myriads of precursors (6.18.166.5). The word of our teacher has not stayed in Judaea as philosophy has stayed in Greece, but has spread everywhere into cities, villages, families, hearers and has indeed brought many philosophers to the truth (6.18.167.3).

The purpose of the *oikonomia* is to save mankind. The saviour works universally drawing (*helkusas*) all to salvation (6.6.46.1). He is lord of all (6.6.47.2). His saving power is at work everywhere and always (6.6.47.4). His *oikonomia* extends to Hades (6.6.48.3). The one saviour has saved by faith the one humanity since the founding of the world (6.6.49.2). The gospel was given to pagans so that they should not be judged unjustly (6.6.51.2).

After the gospel there is no return to philosophy which is concerned with the elements of the world and a preparatory discipline (Col. 2:8; Heb. 5:12). Like the law, philosophy is milk rather than solid food (6.8.62.1). Philosophy is elementary instruction (*stoicheiôdê didaskalia*) (6.8.62.4). Yet it was given to the Greeks as a fitting covenant (6.8.67.1); it suffered, as did the barbarian philosophy, from tares sown among the good crop, and this sectarian philosophy is what Paul condemns (Gal. 2:8) as elementary and partial (6.8.68.1).

Music helps us to understand the church's symphony of law and prophets, of gospel and apostles, and the harmony which exists between each prophet in their rhythmical succession (6.11.88.5). There is a similar harmony between Old Testament and New Testament (6.15.125.3). Yet most Christians imperfectly grasp the logos, bypassing not the Sirens but the rhythm and melody of his saving gospel (6.11.89.1).

Some of this neglect comes from the concealment of meaning in many parts and for many reasons (6.15.126.1). To prevent misuse the whole *oikonomia*, which was prophesied concerning the lord is a parable to those who have not known the truth (6.15.127.1). Without beauty of style, prophecy is capable of diverse interpretations, and illumination comes only for initiates who seek the truth through love (6.15.129.4). While illumination may be selective, as it was to the saints of Israel, we are all given the ability to see the glories of truth face to face (6.15.132.5).

RECAPITULATION. HOW DOES THE DEATH AND  
RESURRECTION OF CHRIST CHANGE THE WORLD?

The theme of recapitulation has already been adumbrated in the treatment of *oikonomia*, where all is preparatory to or consequent on Christ. Clement gives the idea a philosophical twist in his famous description of the son as *hōs panta hen*, as the circle of all the powers rolled into one (4.25.125). In Book VI of the *Stromateis* he begins from the claim that our knowledge and spiritual garden is the saviour into whom we are transplanted and in whose perfection we participated (6.1.2.4). Wisdom, true philosophy is the grasp of past, present and future, is wholly true but found in different forms (6.7.54.1-3). Philosophers are lovers of the wisdom who is the creator teacher of all and son of God; their philosophy is a select unity of dogmas which no one can controvert. The Greeks stole some of these but did not work them out perfectly and used guesswork (6.7.55.4). The one God unites all wisdom in one teacher (6.7.58.1). The law is an image and shadow of the truth (6.7.58.3). As all fatherhood mounts back to God, so all teaching of good things, which leads to righteousness, mounts back to the lord (6.7.59.1).

Knowledge is perfection, the unchanging disposition of good action, the attaining of the likeness of God (6.7.60.3). The perfect philosophy goes beyond elementary things, beyond the world to the *noêta* and things still more spiritual. The teacher reveals clear and complete explanations to his true heirs (6.8.68.1).

## PARTICIPATION. HOW MAY WE RECEIVE THESE BENEFITS?

The chief move of Clement is to merge participation with recapitulation so that what is fulfilled in Christ becomes the possession of the believer. Christ is wisdom, *gnôsis* and *epistêmê*, transmitting and revealing a firm and sure comprehension of present, future and past (6.7.61.1). *Theôria* is the end to which the sage moves. Philosophy, divine knowledge needs the prophetic word through which present, future and past are joined. Gnosis has come down from the apostles to a few. It gains wisdom through *askêsis* to reach the eternal unchanging disposition of *theôria*. Here the servant prays for understanding (Psalm 119:125) and to be taught gnosis, because he has believed the commands (Psalm 119:66). He recognises that the covenants come from the lord and are given to the more worthy (6.8.63.1).

This knowledge has been described by Clement of Rome as *pistos, sophos en diakrisei, gorgos en ergois, hagnos, tapeinophrosunein* (6.8.65.3). The sage knows all, having a firm grasp of all that puzzles us, as did apostles James, Peter, John, Paul and the rest (6.8.68.2). The theme of universality persists. Gnosis is perfected in contemplation of *all* things (6.8.69.3). Nothing is incompatible to the son of God, nothing is omitted from his teaching of the love which leads to the cross (6.8.70.2).

Many require zeal. They do not know the divinity of love which is not *orexis* but affectionate assimilation, *sterktikê oikeiôsis*, which restores the sage to the oneness of faith which is independent of time and place. By love, hope and knowledge he acquires what he desires, in unchanging goodness, which by love is assimilated to the passionless God, love which obtains the inheritance and restoration (6.9.73.3).

Others call for courage. But the sage does not need courage, for he has no fear in his total union with his beloved. He does not need temperance because his desires have gone. A friend of God does not fall (6.9.76.1–3). He believes in God who does not lie, and finds through love that the future is already present by love (6.9.77.1). He goes on to meet the future in love because he knows for certain where he is and where he is going (6.9.77.2). The highest good (*teleiôtaton*) is knowledge; it is rightly chosen for itself and other goods follow from it (6.12.99.1). Knowledge is not chosen for its consequences but for itself, (6.12.99.3).

Such knowledge finds expression in continual mental prayer, which is *oikeioumenos* to God through love (6.12.102.1). Such assimilation leads to righteousness which is strong on every side, four-square, equal and like in word, deed, abstinence from evils, doing good in gnostic perfection (6.12.102.4). It is never static. Abraham's faith was accounted as

righteousness because it was a step towards something greater, towards something more perfect than faith (6.12.103.1). This perfection is the culmination of the process of becoming like God, as far as humanly possible, 'perfect as your father in heaven is perfect' (Mt 5:48). The life of the sage is luminous like that of the apostles, not because it is superior by nature but because the sage is chosen by him who foresees the end (6.12.105.1). Caught up in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:17), he moves from glory to glory (1 Cor. 15:41; 2 Cor. 3:18) to perfect humanity (Eph. 4:13). For to know is better than to believe, as to be honoured after salvation is better than to be saved (6.14.109.2).

The perfect inheritance, of the perfect man, is the image of the lord which is not a physical copy (6.14.114.4). He is always prepared to meet argument with argument (6.8.65.1). He says much but also listens, for the sage who loves the lord will understand (6.8.65.2; Barn 6.10f). His final excellence is in discourse on the good, because he looks always to the *noêta* and follows these models for his actions on earth, like a navigator looking to the stars (6.9.79.1). This prime concern for *gnôsis* (6.9.79.2) is supported by logical discrimination. The cause of all error is the inability to distinguish between what is universal and what is particular (6.10.82.1). Yet philosophy is only useful for domestic use, within the true philosophy, for those who have obtained absolute security for the soul (6.11.89.3).

Each good action depends on the *gnôsis* in which it participates. True wealth is found in abundance of virtuous action, while poverty is the lack of well-ordered (*kosmias*) desires (6.12.99.5).

Exploration into God is through teaching given by the son, and is the sign that our saviour is the son of God, and that prophecies are proved by the events of his life. The proof of the truth that is among us is the son of God who has taught us. He has taught truth in person and shown the power of faith when under threat (6.15.122.2). Plato knew that we can only know the truth from God or the children of God (Tim. 4ode) (6.15.123.1). Logic has deep roots. Man is the image of God, not in external appearance, but because God created the world by his logos, and it is the logical, i.e. rational, part of his soul which does good deeds (6.16.136.3). There is nothing mediocre in the practice of exploration, learning, *askêsis*; the pursuit of goodness is violent (6.17.149.5). Imitation is not done through outward appearance but through inward commitment (6.17.150.1). All this is joined by philosophy and logic. The real science which the gnostic has is a firm grasp of realities through firm, true discourse which leads to knowledge of the cause. Philosophy has to be there, anyway, because we have to do philosophy to decide whether it is necessary or not (6.18.162.4,

5). The gnostic has a good conscience towards God and man, his *kuriakê* soul trains to be God; reason and ethics are joined to prayer and piety in a union with God which cannot be broken (6.14.113.2, 3).

Clement's affinity to Irenaeus is very close. Jointly they declare the dominance of the kerygma and an intense personal devotion to the person of Christ. Clement does not draw on Irenaeus verbally, as he does on Philo; he thinks the same gospel in a different intellectual environment.<sup>8</sup>

8 This outline was written when I was reviewing the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition of *Stromateis* VI. It is confined to that book and therefore short enough for an appendix.

More recently, I happily discovered Lloyd Patterson's stronger claims for Irenaeus influence and cite them in support of my case. See L. G. Patterson, 'The divine became human'. 'We may look back at this point over the complex of major themes thus far encountered – that of "the divine became human", Adam as "child", the distinction of "image" and "likeness", and the movement of humanity from "imperfection" to "perfection" – and its use in Clement no less than Irenaeus in countering the views of their opponents. Even if none of the elements of this complex were, in itself, peculiar to either Clement or Irenaeus, their association and similarity of purpose is striking. In view of what we know of the originality and comprehensiveness of their Irenaeus use, familiarity with the work of Irenaeus is the most likely explanation of their appearance, with adaptations consistent with his other commitments, in Clement's work' (508).

'For our purposes, Clement's treatment of the "rule of truth" is important for showing, beyond reasonable doubt, his use and adaptation of a major theme of Irenaeus in his dealing with their common opponents: in this case those who derive from the scriptures of the Church a quite different notion of a secret tradition, and a different gnosis transmitted through it, from his' (514–15).

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