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Grace and Free Will According to Clement of Alexandria

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Clement of Alexandria distinguishes two modes of divine activity in the history of salvation: God exhorts all human beings to reach perfection and to receive immortality, while strengthening those who, by their choice and effort, become worthy of divine help. By following the demands of divine education, humanity cooperates with God's will to create humankind "according to God's image and likeness." The project of human effort, however, may only be fulfilled by grace. This paper reconstructs Clement's model of cooperation between God and humanity towards salvation and the concept of grace and free will it implies.

καὶ μὴν ἑαυτὸν κτίζει καὶ δημιουργεῖ, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐπαίοντας αὐτοῦ κοσμεῖ ἐξομοιούμενος θεῷ ὁ γνωστικός.¹

In the writings of Clement of Alexandria questions connected to the problem of grace and free will are usually treated in a polemical context. Two lines of argument related to these issues may be distinguished: one concerned with the continuity of divine activity in the history of salvation and the other with the question of what role human freedom plays within the framework of the divine *oikonomia*. The former line of argument is developed against the polemical background of those "heterodox" teach-

1. Clem. *Str.* 7.3.13.3 (GCS 17:10): "Yes, the gnostic builds and creates himself and also forms those who listen to him, as he becomes like God." Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this paper are mine. Clement's works are quoted according to the latest GCS editions (ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel and U. Treu); *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus*: *Clemens Alexandrinus I*, GCS 12, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972); *Stromata I–VI*: *Clemens Alexandrinus II*, GCS 52, 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985); *Stromata VII*, *Quis dives salvetur* and fragments: *Clemens Alexandrinus II*, GCS 17, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1970).

ings that regard the Creator of the world and the divine Lawgiver as a deity different from the Father of Jesus, while the latter line against those that, according to Clement's understanding at least, interpret the Pauline concept of predestination in the sense of a natural talent for salvation.² As an alternative to the first view Clement presents the model of divine pedagogy whose aim is to show that creation, the Law, and the Gospel come from the same source and have the same goal.³ Against the second view he emphasizes the decisive role of human freedom in the realization of this

2. In the former respect, Clement's opponents include the Marcionites (cf. *Str.* 2.8.39.1, 3.2.12.1–13.1, 3.3.21.2, 3.4.25.1–2, 4.8.66.4, 5.1.4.2–4 [GCS 52:133, 200–201, 205, 207, 278, 328]), Valentinus and his followers (cf. *Str.* 2.7.36.2–4; 4.13.89.1–90.4 [GCS 52:132, 287–88]) and the school of Basilides (cf. *Str.* 2.8.36.1 [GCS 52:131–32]), as well as such groups as the followers of Prodicus (cf. *Str.* 3.4.30.1 [GCS 52:209–10]; 7.7.41.1; 7.16.103.6 [GCS 17:31, 73]) and the Antitacts (*Str.* 3.4.34.3–4 [GCS 52:211]). In the latter respect, Clement is mainly concerned with the Valentinians (cf. *Str.* 2.20.115.2, 5.3.3–4 [GCS 52:175, 327–28]) and the school of Basilides (*Str.* 2.10.1–11.2, 5.1.3.3–4 [GCS 52:118–19, 327–28]).

3. For the polemical background of Clement's concept of divine pedagogy see especially Clement's discussion in *Paed.* 1.8.62–74 (GCS 12:126–33), a chapter called "Against those who assume that one who is just is not good." The title of the chapter alludes to the doctrine of the Marcionites; cf. *Str.* 3.3.12.1 (GCS 52:200) and the testimonies discussed by Winrich A. Löhr, "Did Marcion Distinguish Between a Just and a Good God?" in *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung*, ed. G. May and K. Greschat (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 131–46. The same topic is further developed in *Paed.* 1.9.75–12.100 (GCS 12:133–50) and resumed, in a polemical context, in *Str.* 2.7.32–8.40 (GCS 12:130–34); cf. Henri-Irénée Marrou, "Introduction générale," in *Clément d'Alexandrie. Le pédagogue I*, SC 70 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960), 32–33. Clement was planning to criticize the views of the Marcionites and the Valentinians in his treatise *περί ἀρχῶν* in which he intended to show that "the God proclaimed by the Law and the prophets and the gospel is one" (*Str.* 4.13.91.1; cf. *Str.* 3.3.13.1; 3.3.21.2; 4.1.2.2 [GCS 52:288, 201, 205, 248]; Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe–IIIe siècles*, vol. 2 [Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985], 355–56 and n. 233).

4. For the polemical background of Clement's concept of free will, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria's Refutation of Gnosticism* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1977), 45–65, 87; Peter Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 122–26. Clement occasionally stresses the importance of choice and moral effort while explicitly rejecting the view that the status of the "elect" or "spiritual" persons is based on their special nature (cf. *Str.* 2.3.11.1–2; 2.20.115.2; 5.1.3.3–4; 6.13.105.1 [GCS 52:118–19, 175, 327–28, 484–85]). Sometimes his polemical intentions are expressed in a more subtle way, however, e.g., by way of a subversive allusion to his opponents' terms and metaphors. In *Paedagogus*, after quoting 1 Cor 13.11 ("When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child, when I became a man, I put away childish things"), Clement explains that the Apostle "applies the name 'children' to those who are under the law, who are terrified by the terrible as children by bugbears, and 'men' to those who are obedient to reason

goal.⁴ The aim of the following paper is to expound, in a concise manner, these two closely interrelated aspects of Clement's religious philosophy.⁵

PEDAGOGY OF SALVATION

In the seventh book of *Stromata* Clement distinguishes two kinds of divine activity towards salvation. In the context of a discussion of the perfect virtue of the true gnostic, after saying that God, "having honored [the gnostic] with a closer oversight," helps him reach his perfection, the author proposes, by means of a rhetorical question, a thesis about the original goal of creation: "Is it not the case that everything came to being for the sake

and free to decide (ἀντεξουσίους)—to us," continues Clement, "who have become believers and are to be saved by voluntary choice (ἐκουσίῳ προαιρέσει σωζόμενοι)" (*Paed.* 1.6.33.3 [GCS 12:110]). Since the whole chapter is clearly marked by an anti-Valentinian overtone (cf. Marrou, "Introduction," 30–31; Judith L. Kovacs, "Echoes of Valentinian Exegesis in Clement of Alexandria and Origen: The Interpretation of 1 Cor 3.1–3," in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. L. Perrone [Leuven: Peeters, 2004], 320–23), we may safely assume that the expression ἐκουσίῳ προαιρέσει σωζόμενοι is a polemical allusion to the phrase φύσει σωζόμενοι, by which some Valentinians designated the status of the "spiritual" persons (cf. *Str.* 2.3.10.2, 2.20.115.1, 4.13.89.4, 5.1.3.1 [GCS 52:118, 175, 287, 327]). (Most probably the mediopassive present participle σωζόμενος is to be understood in the future sense in this context; cf. Luke 13.23; Act 2.47; 1 Cor 1.18; 2 Cor 2.15; cf. Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 7th ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943], §323.) Other examples include Clement's employment of the metaphor of gold in *Str.* 2.20.116.2 (GCS 52:175–76), cf. Iren. *Haer.* 1.6.2 (ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, SC 264 [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1979], 94.623–95.629). Compare also the way Clement uses the phrase διαφορὰ τῆς ἐκλογῆς in *Str.* 5.14.141.3 (GCS 52:421). For the last mentioned passages see Matyáš Havrda, "Some Observations on Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Book Five," *VC* 64 (2010): 25 n. 81, 28–29.

5. Notwithstanding the fact that the outlines of Clement's thought discussed in this paper are formulated in the polemical context indicated above (a context which Clement shares with his heresiological predecessors, especially Irenaeus who developed his response along similar lines), it should be noted that Clement employs some of these tenets also for apologetic, or more precisely protreptic purposes; for Clement's protreptic discourse, see Annewies van den Hoek, "Apologetic and Protreptic Discourse in Clement of Alexandria," in *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, ed. A. Wlosok and F. Paschoud, Entr. Hardt 51 (Genève: Vandœuvre, 2005), 69–93; Daniel Ridings, "Apologetic or Protreptic? Audiences and Strategies in Clement of Alexandria's *Stomateis* and *Protrepticus*," in *Sacri erudiri* 44 (2005): 5–35. This paper leaves open the question to what extent the apologetic/protreptic context of Clement's thought may have contributed, for example, to his emphasis on the freedom of God's and human will, or to the way Clement elaborates the doctrine of divine pedagogy (cf. below, n. 29). I am grateful to an anonymous reader of *J ECS* for drawing my attention to this point.

of good men, for their use and benefit, or rather salvation?”⁶ According to Clement, God does not deprive humanity of anything they possess for the sake of this goal, and those “who have chosen to lead a good life” he even strengthens by inspiration: “Surely God will not deprive those for whose sake everything came to being of things they possess for the sake of virtue. For it is obvious that their good nature and holy choice is honored by him, as is clear from the fact that people who have chosen to lead a good life are strengthened by his inspiration for the ensuing salvation.” The pattern of divine activity is then explicated in the following manner: “There are people whom [God] only exhorts (προτρέπων μόνον), but he also helps (καὶ συλλαμβανόμενος) those who have become worthy of it by themselves.”⁷ This sentence comprises the main elements of Clement’s concept of divine grace as universal exhortation to salvation on the one hand and as special support earned by human effort on the other.

The distinction between the “exhortatory” and “helping” modes of divine activity is theologically based on Clement’s concept of the divine Logos as a rational principle of the universe whose specific demands addressed to human beings are gradually manifested in the history of salvation. Clement outlines this concept already in his *Protrepticus* where he interprets various significant events of biblical history whose culmination, from the Christian point of view, is the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus, as different ways by which the divine Logos “exhorts” human beings to salvation.⁸ As the first chapter of the *Paedagogus* shows most clearly, the author understands his own work as an expression of the same salvific intention.⁹ In this chapter he distinguishes three basic kinds of divine activity, the “protreptic,” the “pedagogic,” and the “didactic” Logos, and he lets the first two kinds “speak” in his *Protrepticus and Paedagogus* respectively.¹⁰ The difference between the methods of divine “pedagogy” (as we

6. *Str.* 7.7.48.1 (GCS 17:36). For Clement’s anthropocentrism cf. also *Prot.* 4.63.4 (GCS 12:48); *Paed.* 1.2.6.5–3.7.3, 2.1.14.4, 2.3.39.1 (GCS 12:93–94, 164, 180); *Str.* 6.14.110.3 (GCS 52:487); Marrou, “Introduction,” 34–35. A similar thought is expressed by Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.29.1 (ed. Rousseau, SC 153 [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1969], 363.3–8); cf. Matthew C. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation. The Cosmic Christ and the Saga of Redemption* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 145–50.

7. *Str.* 7.7.48.1–2 (GCS 17:36).

8. *Prot.* 1.8.1–4 (GCS 12:8–9); cf. *Iren. Haer.* 4.14.2 (ed. Rousseau, SC 100 [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1965], 543–46), on the pedagogy of the Logos (cf. SC 100:544) in the history of salvation.

9. Cf. Judith Kovacs, “Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria,” *J ECS* 9 (2001): 3–25.

10. *Paed.* 1.1.1.3–3.3 (GCS 12:90–91). In this paper I refrain from discussing the much debated question whether Clement planned to write, or even wrote, a book

shall call the activity of the Logos according to all three modes)¹¹ is conditioned by the level of moral progress reached by the auditors or readers addressed. The goal of the “protreptic” Logos is to persuade the auditors to abandon the “old” (i.e. pagan) views and “become young for salvation,” that is to say, to lay within the “space of their mind” a “foundation” consisting of “the desire to reach eternal life through rational obedience.”¹² The goal of the “pedagogic” Logos is to heal the soul that has already undergone this conversion from irrational inclinations (“affects”) and thus to “improve” it (βελτιῶσαι) by means of practical recommendations and prescriptions.¹³ Finally, the goal of the “didactic” Logos is to “instruct” the soul that has already been sufficiently purified so that the nature of the Logos itself might be disclosed to the adept of the true knowledge.¹⁴ Here Clement expounds the theological framework of his own writings, but he obviously applies a similar model to the various forms of the divine activity in the biblical history. In the above-mentioned outline of divine pedagogy in the *Protrepticus* Clement indicates that the manner in which the divine Logos manifests itself in history primarily depends upon the recipients of these manifestations. The Logos exhorts those who are “stubborn” (as were the Jews in the desert) by means of miracles and terrifying signs.¹⁵

that would, in his view, correspond to the third, “didactic” level of divine education. For the history of the debate cf. Eric F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5–15. Recently the problem has been revisited, with different conclusions, by Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 6–27, and Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15–32, 221 and *passim*.

11. Cf. *Paed.* 1.7.53.3–54.1 (GCS 12:122); for “pedagogy” (παιδαγωγία) in the general sense of “guidance” (ἀγωγή) to salvation, see Werner Bierbaum, “Geschichte als Paidagogia Theou. Die Heilsgeschichtslehre des Klemens von Alexandrien,” *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 5 (1954): 249–51; Rüdiger Feulner, *Clemens von Alexandrien: Sein Leben, Werk und philosophisch-theologisches Denken* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2006), 145–50.

12. *Paed.* 1.1.1.1 (GCS 12:89–90). For the motif of desire cf. *Str.* 2.2.9.2 (GCS 52:117): “If faith is choice, because it desires something, the desire in question is a rational one (ἡ ὄρεξις νῦν διανοητική).” Clement then (GCS 52:117) characterizes faith as a “foundation of rational choice” (θεμέλιος ἔμφορονος προαίρεσεως). Cf. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1139b4–5 (ed. I. Bywater, *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975]), who defines choice in the sense of προαίρεσις as “rational desire” (διὸ ἡ ὀρεκτικὸς νοῦς ἡ προαίρεσις ἢ ὄρεξις διανοητική).

13. *Paed.* 1.1.1.2, 4 (GCS 12:90).

14. Cf. *Paed.* 1.1.2.1, 3.3 (GCS 12:90–91).

15. *Prot.* 1.8.1–2 (GCS 12:8); cf. *Paed.* 1.11.96.3–97.1 (GCS 12:147); *Str.* 2.8.37.2 (GCS 52:132). For the education of the “stubborn,” see Matt 19.7–8; *Iren. Haer.* 4.15.2 (SC 100:554).

Those who “have ears” and already are willing to listen to the voice of the Logos are exhorted in a more rational manner (λογικώτερον) through the prophets. And finally, having become a human being, the Logos addresses even those who do not believe the prophets and who regard the miraculous narratives as myths (i.e. primarily the Greeks).¹⁶

The pedagogical model of divine activity enables Clement to explain the difference between the demands of the “old covenant” mediated by Moses (and summarily described as “the Law”) and the promises of the “new covenant” sealed by the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁷ The difference between the severity of the biblical divine Lawgiver and the kindness of the “compassionate God” (ὁ φιλοκτίμων θεός) who “emptied himself” in his effort to save the humankind¹⁸ is explained by Clement not as a conflict between the activities of different gods, but as different means by which the “governing providence” brings about salvation: “The governing providence must be both lordly and good. There are two ways by which the [divine] power brings about salvation: as a lordly power it chastens humankind by punishment, as a benefactor it shows them kindness by beneficial deeds.”¹⁹ As the following lines indicate, the two ways are different kinds of divine pedagogy corresponding to the stages of the spiritual progress from the initial “disobedience” through a “slavish” subordination to the Law which is further transformed into the fearful loyalty of a believer in order to culminate in the filial love:

16. *Prot.* 1.8.2–4 (GCS 12:8–9).

17. Cf. e.g., *Paed.* 1.7.59.1 (GCS 12:124–25).

18. Cf. *Prot.* 1.8.4 (GCS 12:9); *Phil* 2.6–7. See also *Paed.* 1.11.97.3 (GCS 12:148).

19. *Str.* 1.27.173.5 (GCS 52:107); also references in n. 3 above. A similar doctrine of providence is developed by Irenaeus in his polemic against Marcion; cf. *Haer.* 3.25.2–3 (ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, SC 211 [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1974], 480–84). However, Clement’s distinction between the providential power as a “lordly power” (κυρία) on the one hand and as a “benefactor” (εὐεργέτης) on the other is more closely reminiscent of the division of powers in Philo of Alexandria; cf. esp. *De specialibus legibus* 1.307 (trans. F. H. Colson, *Philo VII*, LCL 320 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939], 277): “Cannot you see that the primal and chief powers belonging to the Existent are the beneficent and the punitive (εὐεργέτης καὶ κολαστήριος)? And the beneficent is called God (θεός) because by this He set out (ἔθηκε) and ordered the world; the other is called Lord (κύριος), being that by which He is invested with the sovereignty of all that is.” See also Philo, *De Abrahamo* 125, 145, *De mutatione nominum* 28, and other passages quoted by Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 79–84. For Clement’s concept of providence as divine power see also *Str.* 2.2.5.5, 5.1.6.3, 7.2.5.4 (GCS 52:115, 329; GCS 17:5).

It is possible not to be “the son of disobedience,” but to “pass from darkness to life” (cf. Eph 2.2, 5.6; 1 John 3.14). If you listen to wisdom you will first be a law-abiding slave of God and then you will become a faithful servant who fears Lord the God. And if you proceed further, you will be reckoned among the sons, for “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet 4.8). You will grow in love and receive the fulfillment of your blissful hope and you will be reckoned among the elected ones adopted as sons whom God has called friends.²⁰

FREEDOM OF FAITH

The distinction between the “exhortatory” and “helping” modes of divine pedagogy opens the space of human freedom and responsibility for salvation. Against the attempt of “heterodox” groups to explain the difference among religious attitudes from unequal dispositions of human nature, Clement believes that religious attitude (faith) is an act of free decision.²¹ Clement understands faith as a response to divine exhortation, a response by which one accepts the demands of divine education. In the *Protrepticus* the relation between exhortation and faith is illustrated by a metaphor of payment: “Let us receive the laws of life; let us obey God who exhorts us (προτρεπομένῳ θεῷ); let us learn about him, that he may be gracious; let us render him (though he is in need of nothing) a recompense of gratitude (μισθὸν εὐχάριστον), obedience (εὐπειθειαν), as a kind of rent (ἐνοίκιον) paid to God for our dwelling here below.”²² Faith as the willingness to accept divine education is a kind of recompense for the work that God does for the sake of humankind.²³

It is a crucial element of Clement’s concept of grace that this “assent” of faith is an act of free choice, in other words, that it is possible for human beings to accept the demands of divine education as well as to reject them. This possibility of choice is what distinguishes an adult from a child or a

20. *Str.* 1.27.173.6 (GCS 52:107).

21. Cf. esp. *Str.* 2.3.11.1–4.12.1, 2.20.115.1–116.2, 5.1.3.3–4, 6.13.105.1 (GCS 52:118–19, 175–76, 327–28, 485).

22. *Prot.* 11.115.1 (GCS 12:81.5–8; trans. G. W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks*, LCL 92 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960], 245, modified). I follow the majority of editors in reading εὐπειθειαν (Heyse), instead of the manuscript εὐπάθειαν.

23. Cf. also *Paed.* 1.12.100.2 (GCS 12:150). In *Protrepticus* Clement stresses that the recompense is small in comparison to “all these great works of creation and gracious gifts [God] has let out to us in return for a little faith” (*Prot.* 11.115.1 [GCS 12:81; trans. Butterworth 245, modified]). For faith as recompense, see also *Str.* 5.13.83.5 (GCS 52:381).

freeman from a slave.²⁴ Interestingly, Clement regards this possibility itself as a result of divine education that has only been reached after an earlier stage in which human beings had complied with the divine demands not by their free decision but out of fear. In this sense the author explains the following passage from the *Letter to the Galatians*: “Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the Law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the Law was our educator until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to an educator.”²⁵ Interpreting this passage, Clement says that “we are no longer subject to the Law associated with fear, but instead are subject to the Logos associated with choice (τὸν λόγον τῆς προαιρέσεως), and he is our educator.”²⁶ Here Clement defines the Christian standpoint over against the concept of religion enforced by fear, a concept he identifies with the Jewish attitude towards the Mosaic Law. When speaking about “fear” in this context, he probably means the kind of fear aligned with hatred that characterizes the attitude of slaves towards cruel despots, as Clement describes it on another occasion where he further specifies that “the Jews depicted God as a despot, not as a father,” and makes a distinction between religion based on coercion (κατὰ ἀνάγκην) and one based on choice (κατὰ προαίρεσιν).²⁷ Similarly, in the seventh book of *Stromata* Clement distinguishes justice “by coercion, by fear, or by hope” (κατὰ ἀνάγκην ἢ φόβον ἢ ἐλπίδα) from the one based on choice (ἐκ προαιρέσεως), and describes the latter as “the royal way trodden by the royal people” (cf. Num 20.17; 1 Pet 2.9), that is, by the Christians.²⁸ It seems that according to Clement it is only in the perspective of the sacrifice of the divine educator, “the good shepherd” who “gave his life for his sheep” (John 10.10), that the orders of the divine Law can be regarded as an expression of the “kindness” (εὐνοια) of God who tries to convince man to accept it “for the sake of man himself” (αὐτοῦ χάριν ἐκείνου [scil. τοῦ ἀνθρώπου]).²⁹

24. Cf. *Paed.* 1.6.33.3 (GCS 12:109–10); *Q. d. s.* 9.2–10.1 (GCS 17:65).

25. Gal 3.23–25 (NRSV, modified).

26. *Paed.* 1.6.30.3–31.1 (GCS 12:108).

27. *Paed.* 1.9.87.1–2 (GCS 12:140–41).

28. *Str.* 7.12.73.5 (GCS 17:52–53).

29. Cf. *Paed.* 1.11.97.3 (GCS 12:148). Clement’s understanding of the Jewish attitude to the Law may be compared with the teaching of Irenaeus who regards the precepts of the Old Testament (with the exception of the Ten Commandments) as “the precepts of slavery” (*servitutis praecepta*) that were imposed on the Jews when they had chosen to turn away from God and become the slaves (*servi*) of idols; cf. *Haer.* 4.15.1, 4.16.5 (SC 100:550, 570). According to Irenaeus, the Logos “first drew [his subjects] into the servitude of God and then liberated them” (*primo quidem servos attraxit Deo, postea autem liberavit eos*) (*Haer.* 4.13.4 [SC 100:534]); cf. *Haer.*

PIETY AS CHOICE

Clement discusses the concept of human free will almost exclusively in the religious context outlined above. In effect he describes it as the freedom to accept or reject the demands of divine education. Most commonly Clement calls the volitional faculty addressed by divine exhortation τὸ αὐτεξούσιον or τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.³⁰ He typically describes the act of choice as προαίρεσις, alternatively as αἴρεσις (“choice,” as the opposite of φυγή, “rejection”) or ἐκλογή.³¹ In the same sense Clement also employs the originally Stoic term συγκατάθεσις (“assent”).³² The “deliberative faculty” (προαιρετικὴ δύναμις), as he also calls it, belongs to the ruling part of the soul (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν),³³ described as the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν)³⁴ or as the human intellect (νοῦς).³⁵ This part of the soul is what distinguishes human beings from animals,³⁶ and the same is probably true of the very ability to choose.³⁷

Clement's philosophy of the will presupposes a theory of action according to which the ruling part of the soul has the ability to choose which—sense impressions presented to the mind, and consequently which impulses

4.13.2 (SC 100:528). Clement's idea that the Logos educates humanity for their own sake is also familiar to Irenaeus; cf. *Haer.* 4.14.1 (SC 100:538–40). However, Clement's concept of divine pedagogy differs from that of Irenaeus insofar as it reckons pagan philosophy (cf. *Str.* 1.5.28.3, 6.14.110.3, 6.17.153.1, 6.17.159.9, 7.2.6.4 [GCS 52:18, 487, 510, 514; GCS 17:6]), and even the worship of the heavenly bodies (cf. *Str.* 6.14.110.3 [GCS 52:487.11–14]), among the pedagogical devices of the Logos. For the difference between Irenaeus and Clement: Wolfram Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana. Die Idee des Fortschritts in der alten Kirche bis Eusebius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 284–97.

30. Cf. *Str.* 4.24.153.1 (GCS 52:316): Αὐτίκα τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶν οὐδὲρ ἐπ' ἴσης αὐτοῦ τε κύριοι ἐσμεν καὶ τοῦ ἀντικειμένου αὐτῶ, ὡς τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ μὴ, καὶ τὸ πιστεῦναι ἢ ἀπιστεῖν. διὰ γοῦν τὸ ἐκατέρου τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἐπ' ἴσης εἶναι ἡμᾶς κυρίου δυνάτων εὐρίσκεται τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

31. For the last mentioned term, see Havrda, “Some Observations,” 22–23. For Clement's terminology of the will, see Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*, TU 57 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), 115; Karavites, *Evil*, 115–21.

32. Cf. *Str.* 2.2.8.4, 2.5.27.4, 2.12.55.1–2, 5.1.3.2, 5.13.86.1, 6.17.156.2, 7.9.53.1 (GCS 52:117, 127, 142, 327, 383, 512; GCS 17:39).

33. Cf. *Str.* 6.16.135.4 (GCS 52:500): τὴν προαιρετικὴν δὲ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἔχει δύναμιν, περὶ ἣν ἡ ζήτησις καὶ ἡ μάθησις καὶ ἡ γνῶσις.

34. *Paed.* 2.2.34.1, 2.9.81.2; *Str.* 6.16.135.2 (GCS 12:177, 207; GCS 52:500).

35. Cf. esp. *Q. d. s.* 14.4 (GCS 17:169): τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ νοῦς ἀνθρώπου, καὶ κριτήριον ἐλεύθερον ἔχον ἐν αὐτῶ καὶ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς μεταχειρίσεως τῶν δοθέντων; *Str.* 6.11.93.1 (GCS 52:478: προαίρεσις τοῦ νοῦ).

36. Cf. *Prot.* 10.100.3, 12.120.3; *Paed.* 1.3.7.1.3, 2.1.2; *Str.* 5.13.87.4 (GCS 12:72, 84–85, 94; GCS 52:383–84).

37. Cf. *Str.* 5.14.133.7 (GCS 52:417).

evoked by these impressions, to assent to, and which to reject.³⁸ However, his reflections on the freedom of the will are not primarily concerned with everyday decisions, but rather with a general attitude on which particular decisions are based. At the core of Clement's reflections on the freedom of the will is the insight that this general attitude is a matter of choice itself. This fundamental choice, rather than any particular decision, is that to which the divine Logos exhorts human beings and that on which Christian education is based.³⁹ As Clement puts it in the *Protrepticus*, this exhortation (προτροπή) is not concerned with partial ethical questions (whether to get married, whether to take part in politics, beget children, etc.), but rather it is universal (καθολική) and relates to life as a whole (πρὸς ὅλον τὸν βίον).⁴⁰ The attitude to which it exhorts is called "piety" or "reverence towards God" (θεοσέβεια), in contrast to "superstition" or "fear of the demons" (δαισιδαμονία), the decadent attitude of those misled by the false images of the divine and the irrational inclinations of their own souls.⁴¹ It seems that this ability to revere God is an important characteristic of the part of the human soul that distinguishes human beings from animals.⁴² Humankind has been endowed with this ability from the beginning, but the ability has been "beclouded by ignorance."⁴³ In this connection Clement evokes the myth of the primordial man who enjoyed "the truly noble freedom which belongs to the citizens under the rule of heaven" and who lived "a heavenly manner of life."⁴⁴ Similarly, in his exegesis of the bibli-

38. Cf. e.g. *Str.* 1.17.84.5, 2.20.111.2,4, 4.18.116.1, 5.4.28.2, 7.16.100.4 (GCS 52:54, 173–74, 299, 343–44; GCS 17:70).

39. For Christian education cf. *Paed.* 1.11.99.2 (GCS 12:149): Ὡς δὲ ἔστι τις ἄλλη μὲν φιλοσόφων ἀγωγή, ἄλλη δὲ ῥητόρων, παλαιστῶν δὲ ἄλλη, οὕτως ἔστιν γενναία διάθεσις φιλοκάλλῳ προαιρέσει κατάλληλος ἐκ τῆς Χριστοῦ παιδαγωγίας περιγινόμενη κτλ.

40. Cf. *Prot.* 11.113.1 (GCS 12:79); cf. *Prot.* 12.123.1 (GCS 12:86): Καὶ γὰρ οὗν ὧδέ πως ἔχει τὰ ἡμέτερα τῶν Χριστοῦ ὁπαδῶν· οἶαι μὲν αἱ βουλαί, τοῖοι καὶ οἱ λόγοι, ὅποιοι δὲ οἱ λόγοι, τοιαῖδε καὶ αἱ πράξεις, καὶ ὅποια τὰ ἔργα, τοιοῦτος ὁ βίος· χρηστὸς ὁ σῶμας ἀνθρώπων βίος τῶν Χριστῶν ἐγνωκότων.

41. Cf. *Prot.* 4.58.4, 10.90.3, 10.108.3, 11.113.1 (GCS 12:46, 67, 77, 79). For piety cf. also *Prot.* 9.85.3 (GCS 12:64.18–20), quoting 1 Tim 4.8 (NRSV, modified): "Piety is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." For superstition, see also *Prot.* 1.3.1, 2.25.4 (GCS 12:4–5, 19).

42. Cf. *Paed.* 1.8.63.1 (GCS 12:127), where Clement calls man "religious animal" (φιλόθεον ζῷον).

43. Cf. *Prot.* 2.25.3 (GCS 12:18–19): Ἦν δὲ τις ἔμφυτος ἀρχαία πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀνθρώποις κοινωνία, ἀγνοία μὲν ἔσκοτισμένη, ἄφρων δὲ που διεκθρόσκουσα τοῦ σκότους καὶ ἀναλάμπουσα κτλ.

44. *Prot.* 1.3.1, 2.25.4 (GCS 12:4–5, 19).

cal story of the first man Clement interprets Adam as a “child of God” (παῖδιον τοῦ θεοῦ) who “freely played in Paradise,” before he was seduced by desires and subdued by pleasure.⁴⁵ Interestingly, Clement explains this surrender as an act of “disobedience” to God, by means of which “the

45. *Prot.* 11.111.1 (GCS 12:78); cf. *Paed.* 1.13.101.3 (GCS 12:151), where it is stated that in consequence of his disobedience the first man “became like beasts” (cf. Ps 48.13, 21). The concept of Adam as a child is already known to Theophilus and Irenaeus; cf. Carole Harrison, “The Childhood of Man in Early Christian Writers (Theophilus, Irenaeus, Clement),” *Augustinianum* 32 (1992): 61–76. For Irenaeus, see Steenberg, “Children in Paradise: Adam and Eve as ‘Infants’ in Irenaeus of Lyons,” *J ECS* 12 (2004): 1–22. According to Clement, the biblical serpent that “deceived Eve” (cf. 2 Cor 11.3) “now carries other people off to death as well,” his activity being linked to idolatrous practices (*Prot.* 7.4–6 [GCS 12:8]). In *Prot.* 11.111.1 (GCS 12:78) Clement says that the serpent is “an allegory of pleasure, as it creeps upon the belly, an earthly evil, turning towards matter”; hence Clement’s remark in *Paed.* 1.8.68.1 (GCS 12:130) that the serpent is “implanted” in us (ὄφις ἐμφύς); cf. *Q. d. s.* 15.3 (GCS 17:169), about the “implanted (ἐμφύτος) matter of evil,” and *Paed.* 3.12.93.3 (GCS 12:287), where Clement (quoting Menander) says that “it is common and implanted in everyone to sin” (τὸ . . . ἐξαρτάνειν ἅπανιν ἔμφυτον καὶ κοινόν). For the sin of the first man, see *Str.* 2.19.98.4, 3.14.94.3, 3.17.103.1 (GCS 52:167, 239, 243); frag. 24 (GCS 17:208); also *Prot.* 2.12.2 (GCS 12:11); *Str.* 3.9.65.1 (GCS 52:225), about the role of Eve as a mediator. Clement rejects the encratic idea that sinfulness is an attribute of the sexual impulse (cf. *Str.* 3.17.102.4 [GCS 52:243]) and suggests that Adam might have sinned by yielding to sexual desire before the “appropriate time” of marriage (*Str.* 3.14.94.3, 3.17.103.1 [GCS 52:239, 243]); cf. Theodor Rütger, *Die Lehre von der Erbsünde bei Clemens von Alexandrien* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1922), 38–43. Clement does not discuss the question how Adam’s sin is transmitted to his posterity. As Bierbaum, “Geschichte,” 256 n. 79, observes, there is an inherent paradox in Clement’s thought: on the one hand he teaches that all human beings, except for the incarnate Logos, are sinful (cf. *Paed.* 1.2.4.2, 3.12.93.3 [GCS 12:91, 287]), on the other hand he insists that sinning consists in activity, not in essence (*Str.* 4.13.93.3 [GCS 52:289]: ἀμέλει τὸ ἀμαρτάνειν <ἐν> ἐνεργείᾳ κείται, οὐκ οὐσία). In *Str.* 3.16.100.5 (GCS 52:242) Clement questions the idea that a newborn baby “that has not done anything yet” may have already fallen under Adam’s curse (πῶς ὑπὸ τὴν τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὑποπέτωκεν ἄρᾶν τὸ μηδὲν ἐνεργήσαν;); he explains Job 14.4 LXX (“None is clean from the filth, even if his life is but one day”), a verse probably used by his encratic opponents (cf. *Str.* 3.16.100.4 [GCS 52:242]; cf. *Str.* 4.11.83.1 [GCS 52:284–85]), as an expression of Job’s humility (*Str.* 4.17.106.3 [GCS 52:295]; cf. 1 Clem 17.4; Rütger, *Lehre*, 74 and n. 3); finally, in *Str.* 3.16.100.7 (GCS 52:242) we read that David’s phrase “my mother conceived me in sin” (Ps 50.7) does not mean that David himself was “in sin.” Rütger, *Lehre*, 76, is probably correct when he suggests that the idea of hereditary sin would appear heretical to Clement. Nevertheless, according to Clement, we are born with certain impulses “due to which we do not recognize God” (τὰς πρώτας ἐκ γενέσεως ὁρμάς, καθ’ ἃς θεὸν οὐ γινώσκουμεν); they include, above all, “greed” whose “works” (τὰ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἔργα)—avarice, rivalry, love of fame, womanizing, pederasty, dainty living, profligacy, etc.—have been “abolished” by the Savior (*Str.* 3.16.101.2, 3.9.63.3 [GCS 52:242, 225]); also *Str.* 6.7.56.2 (GCS 52:460),

boy became a man” (ὁ παῖς ἀνδριζόμενος ἀπειθεία).⁴⁶ Afterwards, since God “bent down” (κέκλιται) and let himself be “bound in flesh” in order to liberate man from the bonds of sin, man has had a possibility to gain a “greater prize for his obedience” (μεῖζον ὑπακοῆς ἄθλον) than the Paradise from which he fell, namely to reach the heavens.⁴⁷ Clement does not explain why Christian education promises more than a return to the freedom of the first man, but this difference is presumably due to the intermediate phase of “becoming a man” after which the relation to God can only be renewed on the basis of choice.⁴⁸

CHOICE AND WILL

Aristotelian ethics distinguishes between the rational choice (προαίρεσις) and the will (βούλησις) in the sense that the will relates to goals, whereas the rational choice to the means in our power.⁴⁹ Clement does not make such a distinction between the two terms and he even typically uses the

where Clement identifies the cause of all sins as “selfishness” (φιλαυτία); cf. Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 143. Rüter, *Lehre*, 76–79, thinks that these inborn impulses were reinforced by the first sin (cf. *Lehre*, 78, 86); however, as Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 140–41, notes, this explanation is not well founded. We may add that for Clement Adam certainly represents an example of “ignorance and weakness” (ἄγνοια καὶ ἀσθένεια), identified as the origins of sin in *Str.* 7.16.101.6 (GCS 17:71), or of disobedience (cf. e.g. *Paed.* 1.13.101.1 [GCS 12:150]), whose importance in Clement’s interpretation of Adam’s sin is emphasized by Völker (see the next note). Clement even indicates that there is a causal connection between this example and the pitiful condition of humankind (cf. esp. *Str.* 3.9.65.1, 3.14.94.3 [GCS 52:225, 239]; frag. 24 [GCS 17:208]). Apparently, however, it did not occur to Clement to elaborate a theory that would explain the link between the biblical story and the human condition in a scientific manner. For the causes and consequences of Adam’s fall, see also John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 143–48.

46. For disobedience as the first cause of sin, see Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 133–35, with references.

47. *Prot.* 11.111.2–3 (GCS 12:78–79).

48. Cf. *Prot.* 10.99.4 (GCS 12:72): Τίτι λαλήσει κύριος «ὅμων ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν»; Ὑμῶν ἐστιν, ἐὰν θελήσητε, τῶν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὴν προαίρεσιν ἐσχηκότων. According to *Str.* 6.12.96.1–2 (GCS 52:480), God created humankind imperfect because “he wants us to be saved by our own initiative” (ἡμᾶς δὲ ἐξ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν βούλεται σῶζεσθαι). Clement’s interpretative framework has clear parallels in Irenaeus; cf. Lloyd G. Patterson, “The Divine Became Human: Irenaeus Themes in Clement of Alexandria,” *SP* 31 (1997): 497–516, esp. 501–3, 507–8.

49. Cf. e.g. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1111b26–30, 1113a12–15, 1113b3–4 (Bywater).

word προαίρεσις to describe the act of the will related to a goal.⁵⁰ In his view, Christian education exhorts us to make such goals as salvation or eternal life the objects of our will: in the *Protrepticus* Clement speaks, in this connection, about “heavenly and truly divine desire” (οὐράνιος καὶ θεῖος ὄντως ἔρωσ) that “comes to men . . . whenever somewhere in the soul the spark of true beauty, kindled by the divine Logos, is able to shine out.” He describes this movement of the soul as an act of the will (τὸ βουληθῆναι) or as a choice (προαίρεσις) which, if “sincere” (γνησίως), is accompanied by salvation and life.⁵¹ Elsewhere he says that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who “wish” it (ἐὰν θελήσητε), that is to “those who have their choice set upon God” (τῶν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὴν προαίρεσιν ἐσχηκότων).⁵² The exhortation of the Logos, as presented in the *Protrepticus*, is an attempt to instigate this wish and choice.⁵³ As Clement explains in the second book of *Stromata*, the willingness to be persuaded, to wish the thing that the Logos exhorts us to wish, is “in our power” (ἐφ’ ἡμῖν τὸ πείθεσθαι τε καὶ μή).⁵⁴ It presumably means that “wishing” itself is in our power.⁵⁵ On the other hand, it does not mean (and here Clement diverts somewhat from his high-flown rhetoric of the *Protrepticus*) that what we wish is also immediately realized: “Some people are immediately able to do what they wish, because they have grown strong enough for that and have purified themselves by discipline. Others are not yet able, but they already have the will (τὸ βούλεσθαι ἤδη ἔχουσιν). For the will is the task of the soul, but action cannot dispense with body.”⁵⁶ To “have the will” certainly means to wish the same thing that is also the goal of divine exhortation. As we have seen, this wish is “in our power,” although Clement admits that for some people it is less easy to make the right choice than for others.⁵⁷ Unfortunately he does not explore the reasons for these individual differences.

50. Cf. e.g. *Prot.* 10.99.4, 10.105.1, 11.117.2 (GCS 12:72, 75, 82); *Str.* 2.2.9.3, 2.5.26.5, 4.4.14.1, 4.6.38.2–4, 5.1.7.1 (GCS 52:117, 127, 254, 265, 329); *Str.* 7.3.16.3, 7.12.74.2 (GCS 17:12, 53).

51. *Prot.* 11.117.2 (GCS 12:82).

52. *Prot.* 10.99.4 (GCS 12:72; trans. Butterworth 217, modified); cf. also *Prot.* 10.105.1 (GCS 12:75).

53. Cf. *Prot.* 11.117.2–3 (GCS 12:82). Cf. also *Paed.* 1.1.1.3 (GCS 12:90): προτρεπτική γὰρ ἡ πᾶσα θεοσέβεια, ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ὄρεξιν ἐγγενῶσα τῷ συγγενεῖ λογισμῷ. For the concept of ὄρεξις, see n. 12 above.

54. *Str.* 2.6.26.3 (GCS 52:127); cf. also *Str.* 7.3.16.2 (GCS 17:12): ὅτι τὸ πιστεῦν τε καὶ πείθεσθαι ἐφ’ ἡμῖν. Cf. Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 117 and n. 4, with references.

55. Cf. *Str.* 7.16.101.6 (GCS 17:71).

56. *Str.* 2.6.26.4 (GCS 52:127).

57. *Str.* 2.6.26.5 (GCS 52:127).

In an interesting passage of the second book of *Stromata* Clement elaborates the relation between the will (τὸ βούλεσθαι) and the rational abilities of the soul (αἰ λογικαὶ δυνάμεις). We have seen that the fundamental “choice” set upon God, or the “wish” focused on the goal of divine exhortation, corresponds to a faculty of the ruling part of the soul (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν).⁵⁸ In the second book of *Stromata* Clement indicates that the will plays a dominant role among the faculties of the ruling part. His starting point is a Stoic definition of knowledge as a “cognitive state” which gives rise to a “grasp” (κατάληψις) that “cannot be changed by an argument” (ἀμετάπτωτος ὑπὸ λόγου). But ignorance can be changed by an argument, and “the change as well as the discipline based on the argument is in our power.”⁵⁹ Now, according to Clement, the will instigated by the teaching of the Logos is based on “the argument” (*logos par excellence*),⁶⁰ and it is therefore superior to the rational faculties of the soul.⁶¹ In this sense the rational faculties are subordinated to the will and can be changed by it.⁶²

58. *Str.* 6.16.135.4 (GCS 52:500).

59. *Str.* 2.17.76.1 (GCS 52:152–53). *Str.* 2.17.76.2–3 is a short digression in which Clement presents various definitions of knowledge; in *Str.* 2.17.77.1 Clement takes up the definition of knowledge as a state that cannot be changed by an argument.

60. Cf. *Str.* 2.2.9.4 (GCS 52:117–18): τὴν γοῦν ἐπιστήμην ὀρίζονται φιλοσόφων παῖδες ἕξιν ἀμετάπτωτον ὑπὸ λόγου. ἔστιν οὖν ἄλλη τις τοιαύτη κατάστασις ἀληθῆς θεοσεβείας αὐτῆς, ἧς μόνος διδάσκαλος ὁ λόγος; οὐκ ἔγωγε οἶμαι.

61. *Str.* 2.17.77.5 (GCS 52:153): προηγῆται τοίνυν πάντων τὸ βούλεσθαι· αἱ γὰρ λογικαὶ δυνάμεις τοῦ βούλεσθαι διάκονοι πεφύκασιν. We may doubt whether this passage “allows us to gauge [Clement’s] emphasis on intellectualism,” as Karavites, *Evil*, 127, contends, since according to Clement, volition originates in the Logos, identified as the divine intellect (see also Clement’s frag. 40 quoted in the next footnote). Nevertheless it is true that in Clement’s psychology volition does play a decisive role; cf. Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 117, who speaks, in this connection, about “the primacy of the will” (“der Primat des Willens”).

62. Cf. Clement’s discussion of the relation between the will and the possible in *Str.* 2.17.77.2–5 (GCS 52:153); cf. also *Str.* 2.6.26.4 (GCS 52: 127) and above p. 33. For Clement’s concept of the will as an autonomous movement, see his frag. 40 (GCS 17:220) preserved by Maximus Confessor and ascribed to Clement’s treatise *On Providence*. In this fragment Clement defines the will (θέλησις) as “a natural free movement of a sovereign mind” (φυσικὴ αὐτοκράτορος νοῦ ἀτεξουσίος κίνησις), or as “a mind that moves in respect to something by its own choice” (νοῦς περὶ τι αὐθαρέτως κινούμενος). As far as “freedom” (ἀτεξουσιότης) is concerned, Clement defines it as “a mind that moves according to its nature or a sovereign intellectual movement of the soul (νοερὰ τῆς ψυχῆς κίνησις αὐτοκρατίς).” Cf. Karavites, *Evil*, 117 and n. 27. For the autonomy of the will in Clement see the references collected by Michael Müller, “Freiheit. Über Autonomie und Gnade von Paulus bis Clemens von Alexandrien,” *ZNW* 25 (1926): 218–20; according to Müller, “Clemens formuliert mit neuer, bisher unerhörter Schärfe den alten Sinn der Willensfreiheit” (218). For the relation between volition and reason in Clement’s thought, see Rainer Hoffmann,

THE GOAL OF THE WILL: ASSIMILATION TO GOD

In the sixth book of *Stromata* Clement says that “the choice of good men mostly corresponds to the will of God.”⁶³ Clement mentions God’s will (called, without any discernable distinction, βούλησις, βούλημα, θέλημα, προαίρεσις, or βουλή) typically in connection with the creation of the world and especially with the economy of salvation. Thus he says in the *Protrep-ticus*: “How great is the power of God! His mere will is creation. . . . By a bare wish his work is done, and the world’s existence follows upon a single act of his will (τῷ μόνον ἐθέλησαι αὐτὸν ἔπεται τὸ γεγενῆσθαι).”⁶⁴ Elsewhere he describes the world as his will become a deed.⁶⁵ All human beings are also the work of the one (i.e. divine) will (ἐνὸς θελήματος ἔργον),⁶⁶ but in this case the work does not fully correspond to the aim of the Creator. What God wished to do when he created man is expressed by the phrase “let us make humankind according to our image and likeness” (Gen 1.26). With the exception of Christ who “has become fully that what God said” (γέγονεν . . . τοῦτο πλήρης, ὅπερ εἶρηκεν ὁ θεός), no human being corresponds to this definition: “As for the rest of humankind, we conceive them as being merely according to the image (κατὰ μόνην . . . τὴν εἰκόνα),” says Clement in the *Paedagogus* and further exhorts his readers: “But we, who are the children of the good Father, fostered by the good educator, let us fulfill the will of the Father (πληρώσωμεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς), let us listen to the Logos and let us receive the impression (ἀναμαξώμεθα) of the truly saving life of our Savior.”⁶⁷ Since the paradigm to which the followers of

Geschichte und Praxis. Ihre prinzipielle Begründung durch Klement von Alexandrien (München: Wilhem Fink Verlag, 1979), 92–99.

63. *Str.* 6.17.157.3 (GCS 52:512): αὐτίκα τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλήσει μάλιστα ἢ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν προαίρεσις ὑπακούει.

64. *Protr.* 4.63.3 (GCS 12:48; trans. Butterworth 143).

65. *Paed.* 1.6.27.2 (GCS 12:106): . . . τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἔργον ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦτο κόσμος ὀνομάζεται κτλ.

66. Cf. *Str.* 3.14.95.1 (GCS 52:239), 7.13.81.2 (GCS 17:58).

67. *Paed.* 1.12.98.3 (GCS 12:149); cf. *Str.* 6.15.115.1 (GCS 52:489): “The gnostic receives the impression of a close likeness [of God], the mind of the Teacher (τὴν προσεχστέραν ἀναμάσσειται ὁμοιότητα, τὴν διάνοιαν τὴν τοῦ διδασκάλου) . . .” See also Clement’s prayer in *Paed.* 3.12.101.1 (GCS 12:291): “Grant us who follow your commandments to fulfil the likeness of the image (τὸ ὁμοίωμα πληρῶσαι τῆς εἰκόνας).” These passages are probably based on an exegesis of the creation “according to the image and the likeness” of God (Gen 1.26) mentioned by Clement in *Str.* 2.22.131.6 (GCS 12:185): “Accordingly, some of our authors explain that humankind received the creation ‘according to the image’ immediately as it came into being, whereas the creation ‘according to the likeness’ will be received only later, when human beings reach perfection.” Speaking of “some authors,” Clement possibly refers to Irenaeus

the Logos are supposed to be assimilated is God, to fulfil this call in which the primordial aim of the Creator is expressed would mean nothing less than becoming divine. And this is in fact how Clement defines the goal of divine exhortation: “Let us already start here to practice the heavenly way of life by which we are deified (καθ’ ἣν ἐκθεοῦμεθα).”⁶⁸ Similarly in the *Protrepticus* (in the context of an outline of the pedagogy of the Logos in the history of salvation) Clement says that “the Logos of God has become man, in order that such as you may learn from man how it is even possible for man to become a god (πῆ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται θεός).”⁶⁹ In the final chapter he links this audacious promise with the motif of the divine

of Lyon; cf. esp. *Haer.* 5.6.1 (SC 153:76), 5.16.2 (SC 153:216); Patterson, “Divine Became Human,” 505–7. For Irenaeus’s employ of the distinction between image and likeness, see the careful study of Jacques Fantino, *L’homme image de Dieu chez saint Irénée de Lyon* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985). For Clement, see Augustinus Mayer, *Das Gottesbild im Menschen nach Clemens von Alexandrien* (Roma: Herder, 1942), 5–46.

68. *Paed.* 1.12.98.3 (GCS 12:149).

69. *Prot.* 1.8.4 (GCS 12:9; trans. Butterworth 23, modified). For the Irenaean background of this formulation, see Patterson, “Divine Became Human,” 500–501, and esp. *Iren. Haer.* 3.19.1 (SC 211:375). See also *Clem. Prot.* 11.114.4 (GCS 12:80–81; trans. Butterworth 245, modified): The Logos is “granting to us (χαριζόμενος ἡμῖν) the Father’s truly great, divine, and inalienable heritage, making human beings divine (θεοποιῶν) by heavenly doctrine.” See further *Paed.* 3.1.1.5 (GCS 12:236); *Str.* 4.23.149.8, 4.25.155.2, 6.14.113.3 (GCS 52:314, 317, 488); *Str.* 7.1.3.6, 7.56.10.3–6, 7.16.95.2, 7.16.101.4 (GCS 17:5, 41, 67, 71). For Clement’s concept of deification, see G. W. Butterworth, “The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria,” *JTS* 17 (1916): 157–69; Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 602–9 (who summarizes earlier discussion about the question how far this motif is grounded in the biblical tradition); van den Hoek, “‘I Said, You are Gods . . .’ The Significance of Psalm 82 for Some Early Christian Authors,” in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. L. V. Rutgers, P. W. van der Horst, H. W. Havelaar, and L. Teugels (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 203–19, esp. 213–18; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 121–40. Dietmar Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983), 292–97, analyzes the concept of deification against the background of Clement’s Platonic sources while pointing out that it is strictly speaking non-Platonic. Recently Bogdan Bucur has proposed an interpretation of the concept based on a careful reconstruction of Clement’s angelology; see his *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 42–51. For the idea of deification in early Christian literature, see Martin George, “Vergöttlichung des Menschen. Von der platonischen Philosophie zur Soteriologie der griechischen Kirchenväter,” in *Die Weltlichkeit des Glaubens in der alten Kirche. FS U. Wickert*, ed. D. Wyrwa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 115–55; Russell, *Doctrine of Deification, passim*; Carl Mosser, “The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification,” *JTS* n. s. 56 (2005): 30–74.

image and the divine will when he lets the Logos speak to “so many of humankind as are governed by reason” as follows:

. . . the whole race of humankind I call, I who was their Creator by the Father’s will. Come to me . . . and do not surpass the irrational creatures in reason only, for to you alone of all mortal beings I offer the fruit of immortality. I wish, yea, I wish to impart to you even this gracious favor (ἐθέλω καὶ ταύτης ὑμῖν μεταδοῦναι τῆς χάριτος), supplying in its fullness the gift of imperishability. And I freely give you divine reason, the knowledge of God; I give you myself in perfection. For this is myself, this is God’s wish . . . this is the Son, this is Christ, this is the Logos of God, the arm of the Lord, the might of the universe, the Father’s will. O ye who of old were images, but do not all resemble your model: I wish to correct you according to the archetype, so that you may also become similar to me (διορθώσασθαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον βούλομαι, ἵνα μοι καὶ ὅμοιοι γένησθε).⁷⁰

It is “God’s wish” that those who of old were his *images* ought to become *similar*.⁷¹ The archetype according to which the humankind is to be “corrected” is obviously the Logos himself.⁷²

Clement describes the goal of the creation of humankind with various terms of religious and philosophical origin that, on the one hand, put Clement’s ideas into the context of contemporary philosophical ethic and, on the other, show features of Clement’s thought that may be regarded as specifically Christian. The concept of “becoming like God” (ὁμοίωσις θεῶ) links the above mentioned exegesis of Gen 1.26 with the ethical demand of the Platonic philosophy,⁷³ enriched, in a typically “syncretistic” manner, with Peripatetic and Stoic elements.⁷⁴ However, according to Clement, the

70. *Prot.* 12.120.3–4 (GCS 12:84–85; trans. Butterworth 257–59, modified).

71. Cf. Mayer, *Gottesbild*, 14.

72. For Logos as archetype cf. *Prot.* 10.98.4 (GCS 12:71); *Str.* 5.14.94.5, 6.9.72.2 (GCS 52:388, 468).

73. Cf. *Str.* 2.22.131.5–6, 132.4, 133.3 (GCS 52:185–86), where Clement quotes the main Platonic sources of the idea of “becoming like God” (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b1–3; *Leges* 716c6–d4).

74. For Clement’s concept of ὁμοίωσις against the background of contemporary philosophical ethics, see Hubert Merki, *ΟΜΟΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩ. Von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zu Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Freiburg: Paulus-Verlag, 1952), 45–60; Salvatore R. C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 106–17; Osborn, *Clement*, 236–42 (with a special focus on the concept of ἀπάθεια); Laura Rizzerio, “L’éthique de Clément et les philosophies grecques,” *SP* 41 (2006): 231–46; George H. van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*, WUNT 232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 171–74, 177–81. For Aristotelian motifs, see Clark, *Clement’s Use of Aristotle*, 27–44.

demand is originally biblical. As he explains, Plato's phrase "coincides" with Deut 13.5: "The Lord your God you shall follow." Clement adds that "the Law describes assimilation as compliance" (τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἐξομοίωσιν ὁ νόμος ἀκολουθίαν ὀνομάζει).⁷⁵ As far as "assimilation" itself is concerned, Clement finds the concept expressed in Luke 6.36 ("Be merciful just as your Father is merciful"),⁷⁶ and also in 1 Cor 11.1 ("Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ").⁷⁷ Clement's interpretation of Deut 13.5 is prefigured in Philo of Alexandria according to whom this verse expresses the goal of human life, namely "to follow God" (τὸ ἔπεσθαι θεῷ).⁷⁸ Clement (referring to Luke 6.36) adds that such "compliance" (ἀκολουθία) as that of which Moses speaks "assimilates man [to God] as much as possible."⁷⁹

The question of why compliance with God assimilates human beings to God is answered by Clement's concept of the history of religion as a pedagogical process in the course of which the divine Logos addresses human beings with its demands in order to bring them to the fulfillment of the aim to create humankind "according to the image and likeness" of God. To the extent that human beings comply with this call they are becoming like God. It is probably in this sense that Clement writes in the *Protrepticus* that "piety assimilates human beings to God as much as possible" and in the closing paragraph of the *Paedagogus*, "grant us who follow your commandments to fulfil the likeness of the image."⁸⁰ However, the Christian

75. *Str.* 2.19.100.3–4 (GCS 52:167–68). Cf. *Str.* 5.14.94.6 (GCS 52:388).

76. *Str.* 2.19.100.4 (GCS 52:168); cf. *Str.* 4.14.95.1 (GCS 52:290).

77. *Str.* 2.22.136.5 (GCS 52:188); cf. also *Str.* 6.12.104.2 (GCS 52:484), with a reference to Matt 5.48 (NRSV): "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Cf. *Str.* 7.14.88.4 (GCS 17:63).

78. Philo of Alexandria, *De migratione Abrahami* 131 (ed. and trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo IV*, LCL 261 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932]); it is probably an allusion to the Stoic maxim "to live in compliance with nature" (ἀκολουθῶς τῇ φύσει ζῆν), mentioned by Philo a few lines earlier in the context of an exegesis of Gen 12.4. Cf. also Clem. *Str.* 2.19.101.1 (GCS 52:168).

79. *Str.* 2.19.100.4 (GCS 52:168). Philo uses the Platonic formula on one occasion only (*De fuga* 63), namely in the context of a rather extensive quotation from Plato's *Theaetetus*. For Philo's concept of ὁμοίωσις, see David Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 341–43; van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology*, 181–99. For the difference between Philo and Clement, see Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 75–76.

80. *Prot.* 9.86.2 (GCS 12:64–65): Θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐξομοιοῦσα τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰλληλον ἐπιγράφεται διδάσκαλον θεὸν τὸν καὶ μόνον ἀπεικάσαι κατ' ἄξιαν δυνάμενον ἄνθρωπον θεῷ. *Paed.* 3.12.101.1 (GCS 12:291): Δὸς δὲ ἡμῖν τοῖς σοῖς ἐπομένους παραγγέλμασιν τὸ ὁμοίωμα πληρῶσαι τῆς εἰκόνος κτλ. See also *Str.* 3.5.42.5

perspective allows Clement to present the “assimilation” itself as a goal of human effort. Thus we read in the *Protrepticus* that human beings “will not be able to imitate God except by serving him holily, *nor yet to serve and worship except by imitating him.*”⁸¹ The latter is possible because God has become a “fellow-citizen with human beings”: “O sacred and blessed power, through which God becomes a fellow citizen with human beings! It is then better and more profitable [for everyone] to become at the same time both imitator and servant of the highest of all beings.”⁸² It is in this connection that Clement speaks about “the heavenly and truly divine desire” (ἔρωσ) ignited in the soul by the Logos, a desire further described as the “will” (τὸ βουληθῆναι) and a “choice” (προαίρεσις).⁸³ God as a “fellow-citizen” (that is, the Logos become flesh) ignites in human beings the wish to follow him in a specific manner, namely by imitating him.⁸⁴

LIMITS OF HUMAN EFFORT

In the second book of *Stromata* Clement defines the goal of life according to the Christians as follows:

(GCS 52:215). For the connection between ἀκολουθία and ὁμοίωσις, see further *Str.* 7.16.101.4 (GCS 17:71). For the difference between the two kinds of education, see *Str.* 6.17.160.4–161.5 (GCS 52:514–15).

81. *Prot.* 11.117.1 (GCS 12:82): οὐ γὰρ μιμῆσθαι τις δυνήσεται τὸν θεὸν ἢ δι’ ὧν ὁσίας θεραπεύσει οὐδ’ αὖ θεραπεύειν καὶ σέβειν ἢ μιμούμενος. The idea that service to God assimilates one to God is paralleled in Irenaeus, according to whom the service to God and compliance with him provides human beings with life, incorruptibility and glory, the “glory” being understood as participation in the glory of God (cf. *Haer.* 4.14.1 [SC 100:538–40, 542]), which, in turn, amounts to becoming like God in Irenaeus’s theology (e.g., *Haer.* 4.38.3 [SC 100:955–57]).

82. *Prot.* 11.117.1 (GCS 12:82): Ὡ τῆς ἀγίας καὶ μακαρίας ταύτης δυνάμεως, δι’ ἧς ἀνθρώποις συμπολιτεύεται θεός. Λῶν οὖν καὶ ἄμεινον τῆς ἀρίστης τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας μιμητὴν ὁμοῦ καὶ θεραπευτὴν γενέσθαι.

83. *Prot.* 11.117.2 (GCS 12:82); see above p. 33.

84. Cf. *Q. d. s.* 21.7 (GCS 17:174, on Matt 19.21, and parallels: καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι): τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖν ὄντως τῷ σωτήρι, ἀναμαρτησίαν καὶ τελειότητα τὴν ἐκείνου μετερχόμενον καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ὡσπερ κάτοπτρον κοσμοῦντα καὶ ῥυθμίζοντα τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ πάντα διὰ πάντων ὁμοίως διατιθέντα. For the motif of *imitatio Christi* in Clement’s writings and its precedents in early Christian literature, see Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 585–97.

The task before us (ἡμῖν . . . πρόκειται)⁸⁵ is to reach the end without end (εἰς τέλος ἀτελεύτητον ἀφικέσθαι)⁸⁶ by means of obedience to the commandments, that is, to God, and by living faultlessly and rationally according to the commandments, with knowledge of the divine will (διὰ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ θελήματος γνώσεως). And our goal is to become like the right Logos as much as possible and to be restored through the Son into the perfect state of those who are adopted as sons (εἰς τὴν τελείαν υἰοθεσίαν διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀποκατάστασις), a state in which the Father is eternally glorified through the mighty High Priest who has deemed us worthy (καταξιώσαντος ἡμᾶς) to be called his brothers and joint heirs.⁸⁷

The interpretation of “assimilation” (ὁμοίωσις) as “the adoption as sons” (υἰοθεσία) is based on the religious understanding of “the true Logos” as the Son who imitates the Father in the manner of his “image and likeness.”⁸⁸ Later, at the end of a lengthy discussion about the goal of life, Clement quotes Paul’s command, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ,”⁸⁹ and interprets it in the sense of the “assimilation to God”: “You of me, I of Christ—it means be imitators of Christ who is an imitator of God.”⁹⁰ According to Clement, Paul thus expresses “the aim of faith” (σκοπὸν τῆς πίστεως), namely “to become like God,” which means “to become righteous

85. Literally “it lies before us,” namely as a task to be done or a prize to be won. Clement uses this expression on other occasions to describe the project of the will; cf. *Prot.* 10.96.3 (GCS 12:70): Οὐ γὰρ μικρὸν ἡμῖν τὸ ἄθλον ἀθανασία πρόκειται. *Prot.* 11.116.1 (GCS 12:81), about the will of God: Πρόκειται δὲ αἰεὶ τῷ θεῷ τὴν ἀνθρώπων ἀγέλην σῶζειν.

86. For the “end without end,” see also *Str.* 7.10.56.3 (GCS 17:41); the expression probably denotes the idea that the end point of the spiritual progress, namely the “eternal life” (see, e.g., *Prot.* 1.7.1, 3, 11.113.1, 12.120.3, 12.123.2 [GCS 12:7–8, 79, 85, 86]), has no end in time. Similarly, the phrase ἀναρχος ἀρχὴ in *Str.* 7.1.2.2 (GCS 12:4) probably indicates that the Son, the beginning of creation, has no beginning in time: [καὶ τιμητέον] τὴν ἄχρονον ἀναρχον ἀρχὴν . . . τὸν υἱόν. The idea of an infinite journey to God, as it is developed in later Christian tradition, is not explicitly formulated by Clement (despite Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria’s Appropriation of His Background* [New York: Peter Lang, 2002], esp. 178–91, whose intriguing attempt to prove the opposite is, in my view, finally unsuccessful).

87. *Str.* 2.22.134.1–2 (GCS 52:187). For “adoption as sons,” see Rom 8.15, 8.23, 9.4; Gal 4.5; Eph 1.5; for “brothers,” see Heb 2.11; for “joint heirs,” see Rom 8.17. For the concept of “restoration” (ἀποκατάστασις), see André Méhat, “‘Apocatastase’: Origène, Clément d’Alexandrie, Act. 3, 21,” *VC* 10 (1956): 196–214; Itter, *Esoteric Teaching*, 175–216; Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 42 and n. 156.

88. Cf. *Prot.* 10.98.4, 11.114.3; *Paed.* 1.11.97.2, 1.12.98.3 (GCS 12:71, 80, 147, 148–49); *Str.* 2.22.136.5, 5.6.38.7 (Col 1.15), 5.14.94.5, 6.9.72.2, 6.17.150.3, 7.3.16.1, 6 (GCS 52:188, 353, 388, 468, 509; GCS 17:12, 20–21).

89. 1 Cor 11.1.

90. *Str.* 2.22.136.5 (GCS 52:188).

and holy with knowledge as much as it is possible.”⁹¹ From this aim Clement further distinguishes the “goal” (τέλος) of Christian life, namely “the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) based on our faith in [God’s] promise.”⁹²

Clement’s distinction between the aim and the goal possibly indicates the difference between the project of human effort and its fulfillment that is not in our power. Clement makes this distinction in the fifth book of *Stromata* when he first says that “the perfection of the good” cannot be reached “without choice” (ἄνευ προαιρέσεως), but then remarks that “not everything depends on our resolve (ἐπὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τῆ ἡμετέρῃ): future events, for example, do not,” and adduces a paraphrase of Eph 2.5: “By grace we are saved.”⁹³ Clement is quick to emphasize that in order to reach the good we must exert “some effort” (σπουδὴν τινα).⁹⁴ However, the motif of grace indicates that the extent of what can be reached by human effort is limited. A similar idea is developed in another passage of the fifth book according to which the soul that strives to ascend to the good is elevated by grace. This elevation takes place when the soul has “leaped over the trench,” that is, when it has already done more than seemed possible.⁹⁵

The problem of human limits is also outlined in an interesting way in the second book of *Stromata*, in the context of Clement’s polemic against the idea ascribed to the “founders of heresies,” according to which God saves human beings on account of a genetic relationship.⁹⁶ Clement says that God invites human beings to the adoption as sons (υιοθεσία) because humankind is a product of the divine will.⁹⁷ We, too, approach this goal to the extent that we “wish” (βουλόμεθα) to be like the Lord (that is, the

91. *Str.* 2.22.136.6 (GCS 52:188); cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b. “The aim of faith” is perhaps an allusion to the metaphor of a contest in Phil 3.14: ἔν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθανόμενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος, κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Cf. Wyrwa, *Christliche Platonaneignung*, 188. For the virtues characterizing the “likeness” cf. e.g. *Str.* 2.19.97.1–2 (GCS 52:166) and references collected by Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 583–85.

92. *Str.* 2.22.136.6 (GCS 52:188).

93. *Str.* 5.1.7.1–2 (GCS 52:329), quoting Eph 2.5; for future events as an example of what is not in our power, see Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 32.1–2.

94. *Str.* 5.1.7.2 (GCS 52: 329.29–30), and also *Prot.* 12.122.2 (GCS 12: 86.6): “We must follow God with all our strength” (παντὶ σθένει ἔπεσθαι χρὴ τῷ θεῷ).

95. *Str.* 5.13.83.1 (GCS 52: 381.17–20): “. . . when the free will in us (τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτεξούσιον) approaches the good, it jumps and ‘leaps over the trench’, as athletes say. But it is not without special grace that the soul is endowed with feathers and raised.” For the origin and meaning of the expression “to leap over the trench” cf. *Suda*, s.v. Ὑπερ τὰ ἔσκαμμένα.

96. Cf. *Str.* 2.16.74.1–17.77.6 (GCS 52:152–53).

97. Cf. *Str.* 2.16.75.2 (GCS 52:152).

Son). Since our nature is such that we are not the children of God, this wish transcends that which is possible for us. Nevertheless, basing ourselves on the will we may reach more than is possible naturally, namely we may be “called” the sons (υἱὸς προσηγορευῆσθαι).⁹⁸ The border-line between that which is “in our power” and that which is not is neatly expressed in the *Protrepticus*: “Two things are appropriate for the disciple of Christ: to show oneself worthy of the kingdom [of God] and to be acknowledged worthy of it.”⁹⁹

METAPHORS OF COOPERATION

We have seen that Clement’s concept of freedom in the sense of the autonomy of the will (αὐτεξουσιότης)¹⁰⁰ is developed within the framework of a pedagogical model of divine activity according to which God “exhorts” human beings, on the one hand, and “strengthens them by inspiration for the ensuing salvation (ἰσχὺν . . . ἐμπνεῖ),” on the other.¹⁰¹ Since, according to Clement, evil originates in human weakness (ἀσθενεία),¹⁰² God certainly provides a significant help when strengthening some people with inspiration. However, “weakness,” as Clement understands it, means that we do not wish to control our desires, just as “ignorance” (ἄγνοια) means that we do not wish to learn. But this wish is “in our power” (ἐφ’ ἡμῶν) and the same is therefore true of our weakness and ignorance.¹⁰³ If in the *Protrepticus* the Logos demands that we “abandon pleasures and careless ways, like a flower of the day, to the wind and fire” and “labor in wisdom for the harvest of self-control,” it only asks for something that, according to Clement, is in our power.¹⁰⁴ God offers his help only when this condition is

98. Cf. *Str.* 2.17.77.3–4 (GCS 52:153); cf. 2 *Clem* 1.4; for “natural children,” see *Str.* 2.16.74.4 (GCS 52:152).

99. *Prot.* 11.117.5 (GCS 12:83): πρέπει δὲ ἅμω τῷ Χριστοῦ γνωρίμω, καὶ βασιλείας ἄξιον φανῆναι καὶ βασιλείας κατηξιώσθαι.

100. Cf. Clement’s frag. 40, quoted in n. 62 above.

101. *Str.* 7.7.48.2 (GCS 17:36).

102. Cf. *Str.* 7.2.9.4, 7.3.16.2, 7.16.101.6 (GCS 17:8, 12, 71).

103. *Str.* 7.16.101.6 (GCS 17:71): ἅμω δὲ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν [scil. ἄγνοια καὶ ἀσθενεία], τῶν μῆτε ἐθελόντων μανθάνειν μῆτε αὐτῆς ἐπιθυμίας κρατεῖν. Those who are “bad by nature” are sinful because of badness they have “voluntarily chosen” (*Str.* 6.11.98.2 [GCS 52:481]): αὐτίκα ὁ μὲν κακὸς φύσει, ἀμαρτητικὸς διὰ κακίαν γενόμενος, φαῦλος καθέστηκεν, ἔχων ἦν ἐκὼν εἴλετο.

104. Cf. *Prot.* 11.117.5 (GCS 12:83; trans. Butterworth 251). Cf. *Str.* 7.7.48.7 (GCS 17:36): ταῦτ’ οὖν ἀπαιτεῖται παρ’ ἡμῶν, τὰ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν κτλ. Cf. also *Str.* 2.6.26.3 (GCS 52:127): τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν δὲ ἐκάστου ἀπαιτεῖ [scil. ὁ θεῖος λόγος].

met.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the fact that we are able to meet this condition, in other words that virtue is “most of all in our power” (πάντων μάλιστα ἐφ’ ἡμῖν), is, as Clement puts it, “a gift given by God which belongs to nobody else but us” (θεόδοτον γὰρ τὸ δῶρον καὶ οὐχ ὑποπίπτον ἄλλῳ τινί).¹⁰⁶ We have seen that this gift is associated with the rational element of the soul, and therefore it seems to be given to “so many of mankind as are governed by reason” (ὅσοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων λογικοί), as Clement addresses his audience in the *Protrepticus*.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned above, Clement does not explore the question why some people ignore the exhortation of the Logos whose addressees, in his view, are “all human beings.”¹⁰⁸

The autonomy of reason and consequently of the will is the main prerequisite of what Clement describes as the cooperation between human effort and divine grace. In the seventh book of *Stromata* we read that God provides salvation to those who cooperate with him (τοῖς συνεργοῦσι) towards the attainment of knowledge and good conduct, just as doctors provide health to those who cooperate towards being healed.¹⁰⁹ We have seen that God “helps” (συλλαμβανόμενος) those “who have become worthy” of his help “by themselves” (τοῖς ἀξίοις γενομένοις ἐξ ἑαυτῶν).¹¹⁰ Similarly elsewhere Clement says that God “voluntarily benefits those who turn [towards him] by themselves.”¹¹¹ God’s help may plausibly be interpreted as strengthening of the human resolve to fulfil the will of God. The metaphor of strengthening by divine inspiration mentioned above probably expresses the same thing. Similarly in *Quis dives salvetur* we read that one who strives to be free from passions “achieves nothing by himself” (καθ’

105. Cf. Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 122: “erst dann schenke uns Gott die Gnade.”

106. *Str.* 4.19.124.1–2 (GCS 52:303).

107. *Prot.* 12.120.2 (GCS 12:84).

108. Cf. *Prot.* 9.85.3 (GCS 12:64): Φιλάνθρωπος δὲ ὢν ὁ κύριος πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας παρακαλεῖ, ὁ τὸν παράκλητον ἀποστέλλων; also *Prot.* 10.110.3, 11.114.3; *Paed.* 1.9.88.3 (GCS 12:78, 80, 142); *Str.* 7.2.7.1 (GCS 17:6–7).

109. *Str.* 7.7.48.4 (SC 17:36): ὡς δὲ ὁ ἰατρὸς ὑγείαν παρέχεται τοῖς συνεργοῦσι πρὸς ὑγείαν, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τὴν αἰδίων σωτηρίαν τοῖς συνεργοῦσι πρὸς γνῶσιν τε καὶ εὐπραγίαν; also *Str.* 6.17.157.1 (GCS 52:512), on “human cooperation” with divine providence. In *Str.* 2.6.26.1 (GCS 52:126), Clement makes a comparison between the faith of those who listen to God’s word and a fertile soil that “cooperates” (συνεργεῖ) towards the fertility of the seed; in the same connection Clement also employs the metaphor of a ball game to illustrate the cooperation between the teacher and the pupil in the process of education (cf. Müller, *Freiheit*, 225; Osborn, *Clement*, 4–5); the metaphor is used in a similar manner by Plutarch, *De recta ratione audiendi* 45e8–11.

110. *Str.* 7.7.48.1–2 (GCS 17:36).

111. *Str.* 7.7.42.6 (GCS 17:32): οὐκουν ὁ θεὸς ἀνάγκη ἀγαθοποιεῖ, κατὰ προαίρεσιν δὲ εὖ ποιεῖ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπιστρέφοντας.

αὐτὸν . . . οὐδὲν ἀνέι), but “when the souls wish, God inspires them at the same time” (βουλομέναις . . . ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὁ θεὸς συνεπιπνεῖ).¹¹²

This synergy of human will and divine grace is well illustrated by the metaphor of a “pull” (ὀλκή). In the sixth book of *Stromata* Clement says: “For the Lord not only exhorts, but he extends his hand to those who have already taken the task in hand and pulls them up.”¹¹³ In the fifth book Clement notes that in order to reach “the perfection of the good” we need “the power with which the Father pulls us towards himself” (τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν ὀλκῆς).¹¹⁴ But in the fourth book he already made it clear that this “pull” must be deserved by effort on our part: “To be pulled by the Father means to become worthy of receiving the power of grace from God and of ascending [towards him] without hindrance.”¹¹⁵ Elsewhere Clement even uses a similar metaphor to illustrate the manner in which the human will relates to God: “Those who attract God by their gnostic way of life unawares bring themselves to God. For doing service to God is doing service to self.”¹¹⁶

112. *Q. d. s.* 21.1–2 (GCS 17:173). For “inspiration,” see *Str.* 5.13.88.2 (GCS 52:384): “Whereas Plato and his followers place the intellect, understood as effluence of the divine portion, into the soul, and the soul into the body, we say that the Holy Spirit additionally inspires those who have come to believe (τῷ πεπιστευκῶτι προσεπιπνεῖσθαι).” See also *Str.* 6.16.134.2 (GCS 52:500). Clement describes this inspiration as distribution of the divine will into human souls; cf. *Str.* 6.17.157.4 (GCS 52:513): ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ τῶν ἐναρέτων ἀνθρώπων ἐπίνοια κατὰ ἐπίνοιαν θεῖαν γίνονται, διατιθεμένης πῶς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ διαδιδόμενου τοῦ θεοῦ θελήματος εἰς τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχάς. Cf. Müller, *Freiheit*, 226–27.

113. *Str.* 6.6.50.7 (GCS 52:457): τοὺς μὲν γὰρ προτρέπει ὁ κύριος, τοῖς δὲ ἥδη ἐγχειρήσασι καὶ χεῖρα ὀρέγει καὶ ἀνέλκει.

114. *Str.* 5.1.7.1, 3 (GCS 52:329–30); cf. John 6.44 (NRSV, modified): “No one can come to me unless pulled by the Father who sent me.” For the metaphor of the pull, see Plato, *Respublica* 533d1–3; Philo of Alexandria, *De Abrahamo* 59; *De plantatione* 21.

115. *Str.* 4.22.138.4 (GCS 52:309): τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐλκυσθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ ἄξιον γενέσθαι τὴν δύναμιν τῆς χάριτος παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ λαβεῖν <καὶ> ἀκολούτως ἀναδραμεῖν.

116. *Str.* 4.23.152.2 (GCS 52:315): καθάπερ οὖν οἱ ἐν θαλάττῃ ἀπὸ ἀγκύρας τογούμενοι ἔλκουσι μὲν τὴν ἄγκυραν, οὐκ ἐκείνην δὲ ἐπισπῶνται, ἀλλ’ ἐαυτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν ἄγκυραν, οὕτως οἱ κατὰ τὸν γνωστικὸν βίον ἐπισπῶμενοι τὸν θεὸν ἐαυτοὺς ἐλαθον προσαγόμενοι πρὸς τὸν θεόν· θεὸν γὰρ ὁ θεραπεύων ἐαυτὸν θεραπεύει. See also Clement’s reflection in *Str.* 2.6.26.2 (GCS 52:126–27), according to which things attracted by a magnet are joint causes (συναίτια) of movement. For the metaphor of the pull, see further *Str.* 5.13.83.1 (GCS 52:381). For Clement’s “synergism,” see Müller, *Freiheit*, 224–27; Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 121–22, with references.

PROBLEM OF PREDESTINATION

Religious terms with which Clement describes the goal of divine pedagogy include the concept of “election.” In light of the importance of the question of predestination in later Christian theology of grace, we may ask in what sense Clement uses the term “election” and how he interprets the biblical passages that later served as the basis of the predestination doctrine. In the sixth book of *Stromata* Clement says that “it is not appropriate for a friend of God, whom God predestined before the foundation of the world to be reckoned among those most sublimely adopted as God’s sons (ὄν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἰς τὴν ἄκραν ἐγκαταλεγεῖναι υἰοθεσίαν), to succumb to pleasures or fears or to be busy all the time restraining one’s passions.”¹¹⁷ In this passage Clement employs the concept of predestination as formulated in Eph 1.4–5: “. . . he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) to be holy and blameless before him in love. He predestined us for adoption as his sons (προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν) through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will.”¹¹⁸ The concept of predestination is also found in the fourth book of *Stromata* where Clement quotes Rom 8.28–30, verses he alludes to on other occasions as well.¹¹⁹

A possible clue to Clement’s concept of “election” is found in the sixth book of *Stromata*, in the context of a discussion about the ethical goal of the Christian gnostic. Being “equal to angels” (ισάγγελος), the gnostic pursues perfection in the manner of the apostles, “who did not become apostles because they had been chosen, due to some excellent peculiarity of their nature, since Judas, too, was elected with them. Rather, the one who sees in advance even the end of things (πρὸς τοῦ και τὰ τέλη προορωμένου) elected them because they were able (οἳοί τε ἦσαν) to become apostles. At any rate, Matthias, who had not been elected with them, was appointed instead of Judas, since he made himself worthy of becoming an apostle.”¹²⁰ The point Clement makes in this passage is that election is not a cause of someone’s perfection (as the concept of the elected nature above all seems to suggest), but rather that election is to be reached by effort with which we “make ourselves worthy” of it. Consequently, in the fourth book of *Stromata* Clement says: “One who is firmly grounded in knowledge and

117. *Str.* 6.9.76.3 (GCS 52:469).

118. Cf. *Protr.* 1.6.4 (GCS 12:7); *Str.* 7.17.107.5 (GCS 17:76).

119. *Str.* 4.7.46.1 (GCS 52:269); cf. *Paed.* 3.3.20.5 (GCS 12:248); *Str.* 7.2.6.6, 7.7.37.5 (GCS 17:6, 29).

120. *Str.* 6.13.105.1–2 (GCS 52:484–85).

becomes like God as much as possible is already spiritual, and therefore elected (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐκλεκτός).¹²¹ And at the end of the fifth book we read that “the difference of the election is made by the soul’s choice and discipline, as long as they are worthy of it.”¹²² However, in these passages the concept of “election” seems to be used in a different sense than in the above mentioned quotation from Eph 1.4, where the text speaks about those elected “before the foundation of the world.” How does Clement understand the concept of predestination then?

Clement’s remark according to which God “sees in advance even the end of things” indicates the possibility that God in Clement’s view knows the outcome of our choice even “before the foundation of the world,” and those who make the right choice and reach the goal of perfection are “predestined” only in consequence of this previously known outcome.¹²³ This interpretation is supported by a passage in the seventh book of *Stromata* where Clement bases the idea of predestination on God’s “knowing before the foundation of the world that we would be just.”¹²⁴ Similarly in his interpretation of Jer 1.5 (“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you”) Clement says that this prophecy refers to “us who had been recognized by God even before the foundation of the world.”¹²⁵ Finally, in the fourth book of *Stromata* we read that the martyr in his suffering “displays himself and shows who

121. *Str.* 4.26.168.2 (GCS 52:323).

122. *Str.* 5.14.141.3 (GCS 52:421): τὴν διαφορὰν τῆς ἐκλογῆς ἀξία γενομένη ψυχῆς αἵρεσις τε καὶ συνάσκησις πεποιήκεν. Cf. *Str.* 7.2.7.1 (GCS 17:6–7): Οὐτ’ οὖν φθονοίη ποτ’ ἂν τισιν ὁ πάντας μὲν ἐπ’ ἴσης κεκληκώς, ἐξαιρέτους δὲ τοῖς ἐξαιρέτως πεπιστευκόσιν ἀπονείμας τιμάς. The passages are noted by Müller, *Freiheit*, 222.

123. Cf. Müller, *Freiheit*, 222; Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 123–24; Angelo Zeoli, “Libero arbitrio, grazia e predestinazione nel pensiero di Clemente Alessandrino,” *Humanitas* 9 (1954): 854. In *Str.* 6.13.105.1–2 (GCS 52:485) the word “election” is used in a different sense, since according to this passage God also “chose” Judas, but did not choose Matthias. Cf. Erich Fascher, “Erwählung,” *RAC* 6:423–24.

124. *Str.* 7.17.107.5 (GCS 17:76): οὓς προώρισεν ὁ θεός, δικαίους ἐσομένους πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ἐγνωκώς. Cf. Müller, *Freiheit*, 222; Völker, *Wahre Gnostiker*, 123 n. 3; Zeoli, “Libero arbitrio,” 854. This solution of the problem of predestination, later systematically elaborated by Origen, was probably already known to Justin (*1 apol.* 45.1 [ed. M. Marcovich, *Apologiae pro Christianis* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005], 96) and Irenaeus (esp. *Haer.* 4.29.2 [SC 100:768]); cf. Donato Ogliaari, *Gratia et Certamen: The Relationship Between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 306–7; for Irenaeus, see Rolf Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret: Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk der Irenäus von Lyon* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 477–83.

125. *Paed.* 1.7.59.3 (GCS 12:125): Ταῦτα δύναται πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ προφητεία αἰνίττεσθαι τοὺς πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἰς πίστιν ἐγνωσμένους θεῶ.

he is” (ἐαυτὸν ἐπιδειῖξαι ὅς ἐστι), not only to his persecutor, but also to his Lord, namely “by love, by which he displayed himself to the Lord who knew the choice of the future martyr even before his birth (καὶ πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως τὴν προαίρεσιν τοῦ μαρτυρήσοντος εἶδοι).”¹²⁶

CONCLUSION

The foregoing investigation may be summarized as follows. In response to his heterodox opponents, Clement elaborates the model of “pedagogical” cooperation between the will of God and human effort towards the fulfillment of the goal of divine activity in the history of salvation. According to Clement, this goal is expressed in the biblical phrase “let us make humankind according to our image and likeness” (Gen 1.26); it is fulfilled in the divine Logos and, consequently, in the life of Jesus as the Logos become flesh.¹²⁷ Humankind is disposed by nature to reach this goal, but this disposition is beclouded by ignorance, greed, selfishness, disobedience, and similar causes of human sinfulness, illustrated by the biblical story of Adam’s fall.¹²⁸ It is because of this weakness that humankind needs the divine education which takes on different forms in the history of salvation and culminates in the incarnation of the Logos in which the goal of human nature becomes manifest.¹²⁹ As far as education through the Mosaic Law is concerned, Clement understands it as an expression of the same divine kindness, but distinguishes between voluntary obedience and obedience enforced by the fear of divine punishment, identifying the enforced obedience with Jewish religiosity and describing the Jews as “prisoners” of the Law in this sense.¹³⁰ Over against “the Law aligned with hatred” Clement sets the “the Logos aligned with choice” which educates humankind (also by means of biblical commandments) on the basis of voluntary assent. This possibility of choice is revealed to human beings in the “saving drama” of the Logos become flesh,¹³¹ that is, in the story of Jesus, since in this story it is shown what the goal of divine education is:

126. *Str.* 4.4.14.1 (GCS 52:254); see also *Str.* 2.6.26.3 (GCS 52:127): ὁ θεῖος λόγος κέκραγεν πάντας συλλήβδην καλῶν, εἰδὼς μὲν καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς μὴ πεισθησομένους, ὅμως δ’ οὖν . . . ὡς μὴ ἔχριν ἄγνοιαν προφασίσασθαί τινας, δικαίαν τὴν κλήσιν πεποιήται, τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν δὲ ἐκάστου ἁπαιτεῖ.

127. Cf. *Paed.* 1.12.98.3 (GCS 12:149).

128. Cf. above p. 30–31, and n. 45.

129. Cf. *Prot.* 1.8.1–4 (GCS 12:8–9); for the weakness of the human soul, see *Str.* 5.1.7.8 (GCS 52:330), 7.16.101.6 (GCS 17:71).

130. Cf. *Paed.* 1.6.30.3–31.1 (GCS 12:108); Gal 3.23–25.

131. Cf. *Prot.* 11.110.2 (GCS 12:78).

for human beings to “fulfil the likeness of the image,” to be “corrected,” to “become like God,” to “become gods,” to “be adopted as sons,” to reach “immortality,” in one word: to become what the Son is.¹³² God reveals to human beings his wish to impart to them “a gracious favor” that is even “a greater prize” than paradise in which the first man “played with childlike freedom.”¹³³ By this revelation he exhorts humankind to try to win the “prize.” In this perspective, the weakness and ignorance of the human soul (and subsequent sinfulness of human action) appear to be obstacles that can only be removed on the basis of a decision to obey the exhortation and to “cooperate” with God in one’s education, just as a patient who wants to be healed cooperates with a doctor.¹³⁴

Clement describes human response to the exhortation of God as “divine transformation” (θεία μεταβολή) and calls faith itself “something divine” (θεϊόν τι),¹³⁵ probably because faith is the beginning of cooperation with God’s will, and also because faith is “in our power,” it is an act of free choice, and the freedom of choice, according to Clement, is “a gift given by God.”¹³⁶ Although the goal of divine exhortation transcends everything human beings are able to reach,¹³⁷ we are in a position to adjust our present possibilities to this goal as much as we wish. By doing so, we become worthy of God’s help, that is, of support by which our will is further strengthened, so that by means of discipline and education based on the teaching of the divine Logos we may “build and create ourselves” according to God’s image.¹³⁸

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132. Cf. above p. 35–39.

133. Cf. *Prot.* 11.111.1–3 (GCS 12:78–79). For God’s “graciousness,” see *Prot.* 12.120.3, 123.1 (GCS 12:84–86).

134. Cf. *Str.* 7.16.101.6, 7.7.48.4 (GCS 17:71, 36). We may add that according to Clement the first step on this journey is faith which, apart from fear and hope, is associated with “repentance” (μετάνοια). Repentance opens the possibility of “remission” (ἄφεσις) from sins committed in the course of previous life (*Str.* 2.2.11.2, 2.6.31.1, 2.12.55.6–13.56.1 [GCS 52:118, 129, 143]). Clement makes a distinction between the “remission” (probably specifically linked with baptism; cf. *Paed.* 1.6.28.1 [GCS 12:106]; *Str.* 2.2.11.2, 2.13.56.1, 2.20.117.2–3 [GCS 52:118, 143, 176]) and “forgiveness” (συγγνώμη); the latter is not reached by “remission,” but by “healing” (*Str.* 2.15.70.3 [GCS 52:150]), that is, by the process in which the causes of sinful action are removed. See also *Str.* 5.3.16.7 (GCS 52: 336).

135. *Str.* 2.6.30.2, 31.1 (GCS 52:129).

136. *Str.* 4.19.124.2 (GCS 52:303).

137. Cf. *Str.* 2.17.77.3 (GCS 52:153).

138. Cf. *Str.* 7.3.13.3 (GCS 17:10).