

= Clement of Alexandria =

Titus Flavius Clemens ( Greek : ?????? ? ????????????? ; c . 150 ? c . 215 ) , known as Clement of Alexandria to distinguish him from the earlier Clement of Rome , was a Christian theologian who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria . A convert to Christianity , he was an educated man who was familiar with classical Greek philosophy and literature . As his three major works demonstrate , Clement was influenced by Hellenistic philosophy to a greater extent than any other Christian thinker of his time , and in particular by Plato and the Stoics . His secret works , which exist only in fragments , suggest that he was also familiar with pre @-@ Christian Jewish esotericism and Gnosticism . In one of his works he argued that Greek philosophy had its origin among non @-@ Greeks , claiming that both Plato and Pythagoras were taught by Egyptian scholars . Among his pupils were Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem .

Clement is regarded as a Church Father , like Origen . He is venerated as a saint in Coptic Christianity , Ethiopian Christianity and Anglicanism . He was previously revered in the Roman Catholic Church , but his name was removed from the Roman Martyrology in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V on the advice of Baronius .

= = Biography = =

Neither Clement 's birthdate or birthplace is known with any degree of certainty . It is conjectured that he was born in around 150 . According to Epiphanius Scholasticus , he was born in Athens , but there is also a tradition of an Alexandrian birth .

His parents were pagans , and Clement was a convert to Christianity . In the Protrepticus he displays an extensive knowledge of Greek mythology and mystery religions , which could only have arisen from the practice of his family 's religion .

Having rejected paganism as a young man due to its perceived moral corruption , he travelled in Greece , Asia Minor , Palestine and Egypt . Clement 's journeys were primarily a religious undertaking . In Greece , he encountered an Ionian theologian , who has been identified as Athenagoras of Athens ; while in the east , he was taught by an Assyrian , sometimes identified with Tatian , and a Jew , who was possibly Theophilus of Caesarea .

In around 180 , Clement reached Alexandria , where he met Pantaenus , who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria . Eusebius suggests that Pantaenus was the head of the school , but it is controversial whether the institutions of the school were formalized in this way before the time of Origen . Clement studied under Pantaenus , and was ordained to the priesthood by Pope Julian before 189 . Otherwise , virtually nothing is known of Clement 's life in Alexandria . He may have been married , a conjecture supported by his writings .

During the Severian persecutions of 202 ? 203 , Clement left Alexandria . In 211 , Alexander of Jerusalem wrote a letter commending him to the Church of Antioch , which may imply that Clement was living in Cappadocia or Jerusalem at that time . The date and location of his death are unknown .

= = Theological works = =

= = = Trilogy = = =

Three of Clement 's major works have survived in full , and they are collectively referred to as the trilogy :

the Protrepticus ( Exhortation ) ? written c . 195 .

the Paedagogus ( Tutor ) ? written c . 198 .

the Stromata ( Miscellanies ) ? written c . 198 ? c . 203 .

= = = Protrepticus = = =

The *Protrepticus* is , as its title suggests , an exhortation to the pagans of Greece to adopt Christianity , and within it Clement demonstrates his extensive knowledge of pagan mythology and theology . It is chiefly important due to Clement 's exposition of religion as an anthropological phenomenon . After a short philosophical discussion , it opens with a history of Greek religion in seven stages . Clement suggests that at first , men mistakenly believed the Sun , the Moon and other heavenly bodies to be gods . The next development was the worship of the products of agriculture , from which he contends the cults of Demeter and Dionysus arose . Man then paid reverence to revenge , and deified human feelings of love and fear , among others . In the following stage , the poets Hesiod and Homer attempt to enumerate the Gods ; Hesiod 's *Theogony* giving the number of twelve . Finally , men proclaimed other men , such as Asclepius and Heracles , deities . Discussing idolatry , Clement contends that the objects of primitive religion were unshaped wood and stone , and idols thus arose when such natural items were carved . Following Plato , Clement is critical of all forms of visual art , suggesting that artworks are but illusions and " deadly toys " .

Clement criticizes Greek paganism in the *Protrepticus* on the basis that its deities are both false and poor moral examples , and he attacks the mystery religions for their obscurantism and trivial rituals . In particular , the worshippers of Dionysus are ridiculed for their ritual use of children 's toys . He suggests at some points that the pagan deities are based on humans , but at others that they are misanthropic demons , and he cites several classical sources in support of this second hypothesis . Clement , like many pre -@-@ Nicene fathers , writes favourably about Euhemerus and other rationalist philosophers , on the grounds that they at least saw the flaws in paganism . However , his greatest praise is reserved for Plato , whose apophatic views of God prefigure Christianity .

The figure of Orpheus is prominent throughout the narrative , and Clement contrasts his song , representing pagan superstition , with the divine Logos of Christ . According to Clement , through conversion to Christianity alone can man fully participate in the Logos , which is universal truth .

= = = = *Paedagogus* = = = =

This work 's title , translatable as " tutor " , refers to Christ as the teacher of all mankind , and it features an extended metaphor of Christians as children . It is not simply instructional : the author intends to show how the Christian should respond to the Love of God authentically . Clement , following Plato ( *Republic* 4 : 441 ) , divides life into three elements : character , actions and passions . The first having been dealt with in the *Protrepticus* , he devotes the *Paedagogus* to reflections on Christ 's role in teaching us to act morally and to control our passions . Despite its explicitly Christian nature , Clement 's work draws on Stoic philosophy and pagan literature ; Homer alone is cited over sixty times in the work .

Although Christ , like man , is made in the image of God , he alone shares the likeness of God the Father . Christ is both sinless and apathetic , and thus by striving to imitate Christ , man can achieve salvation . To Clement , sin is involuntary , and thus irrational [ ?????? ] , removed only through the wisdom of the Logos . God 's guidance of us away from sin is thus a manifestation of God 's universal love for mankind . The word play on ????? and ????? is characteristic of Clement 's writing , and may be rooted in the Epicurean belief that relationships between words are deeply reflective of relationships between the objects they signify .

Clement argues for the equality of sexes , on the grounds that salvation is extended to all of mankind equally . Unusually , he suggests that Christ is neither male or female , and that God the Father has both male and female aspects : the eucharist is described as milk from the breast ( Christ ) of the Father . He is supportive of women playing an active role in the leadership of the church , and provides a list of women he considers inspirational , which includes both Biblical and Classical Greek figures . It has been suggested that Clement 's progressive views on gender as set out in the *Paedagogus* were influenced by Gnosticism . However , later in the work , he argues against the Gnostics that faith , not esoteric knowledge [ ?????? ] , is required for salvation . According to Clement , it is through faith in Christ that we are enlightened and come to know God .

In the second book , Clement provides practical rules on living a Christian life . He argues against

overindulgence in food and in favour of good table manners . While prohibiting drunkenness , he promotes the drinking of alcohol in moderation following 1 Timothy 5 : 23 . Clement argues for a simple way of life in accordance with the innate simplicity of Christian monotheism . He condemns elaborate and expensive furnishings and clothing , and argues against overly passionate music and perfumes . But Clement does not believe in the abandoning of worldly pleasures and argues that the Christian should be able to express his joy in God 's creation through gaiety and partying . He opposes the wearing of garlands , because the picking of the flowers ultimately kills a beautiful creation of God , and the garland resembles the crown of thorns . Clement treats sex at some length . He argues that both promiscuity and sexual abstinence are unnatural , and that the main goal of human sexuality is procreation . Homosexuality , prostitution , concubinage , adultery and coitus with pregnant women should all be avoided as they will not act towards the generation of legitimate offspring .

The third book continues along a similar vein , condemning cosmetics on the grounds that it is our souls , not our bodies , that we should seek to beautify . Clement also opposes the dyeing of men 's hair and male depilation as effeminacy . He advises choosing one 's company carefully , to avoid being corrupted by immoral people , and while arguing that material wealth is no sin in itself , it is too likely to distract one from the infinitely more important spiritual wealth which is found in Christ . The work finishes with selections of scripture supporting Clement 's argument , and following a prayer , the lyrics of a hymn .

= = = = Stromata = = = =

The contents of the Stromata , as its title suggests , are miscellaneous . Its place in the trilogy is disputed ? Clement initially intended to write the Didasculus , a work which would complement the practical guidance of the Paedagogus with a more intellectual schooling in theology . The Stromata is less systematic and ordered than Clement 's other works , and it has been theorized by André Méhat that it was intended for a limited , esoteric readership . Although Eusebius wrote of eight books of the work , only seven undoubtably survive . Photius , writing in the 9th century , found various text appended to manuscripts of the seven canonical books , which lead Daniel Heinsius to suggest that the original eighth book is lost , and he identified the text purported to be from the eighth book as fragments of the Hypopoteses .

The first book starts on the topic of Greek philosophy . Consistent with his other writing , Clement affirms that philosophy had a propaedeutic role for the Greek , similar to the function of the law for the Jews . He then embarks on a discussion of the origins of Greek culture and technology , arguing that most of the important figures in the Greek world were foreigners , and ( erroneously ) that Jewish culture was the most significant influence on Greece . In an attempt to demonstrate the primacy of Moses , Clement gives an extended chronology of the world , wherein he dates the birth of Christ to 25 April or May , 4 @-@ 2 B.C. , and the creation of the world to 5592 B.C. The book ends with a discussion on the origin of languages and the possibility of a Jewish influence on Plato .

The second book is largely devoted to the respective roles of faith and philosophical argument . Clement contends that while both are important , the fear of God is foremost , because through faith one receives divine wisdom . To Clement , scripture is an innately true primitive philosophy which is complemented by human reason through the Logos . Faith is voluntary , and the decision to believe is a crucial fundamental step in becoming closer to God . It is never irrational , as it is founded on the knowledge of the truth of the Logos , but all knowledge proceeds from faith , as first principles are unprovable outside a systematic structure .

The third book covers asceticism . He discusses marriage , which is treated similarly in the Paedagogus . Clement rejects the Gnostic opposition to marriage , arguing that only men who are uninterested in women should remain celibate , and that sex is a positive good if performed within marriage for the purposes of procreation . However it has not always been so : the Fall occurred because Adam and Eve succumbed to their desire for each other , and copulated before the allotted time . He argues against the idea that Christians should reject their family for an ascetic life , which stems from Luke 14 : 25 ? 27 , contending that Jesus would not have contradicted the precept to "

Honour thy Father and thy Mother " ( Exodus 20 : 12 ) , one of the Ten Commandments . Clement concludes that asceticism will only be rewarded if the motivation is Christian in nature , and thus the asceticism of non @-@ Christians such as the gymnosophists is pointless .

Clement begins the fourth book with a belated explanation of the disorganized nature of the work , and gives a brief description of his aims for the remaining three or four books . The fourth book focuses on martyrdom . While all good Christians should be unafraid of death , Clement condemns those who actively seek out a martyr 's death , arguing that they do not have sufficient respect for God 's gift of life . He is ambivalent whether any believing Christian can become a martyr by virtue of the manner of their death , or whether martyrdom is reserved for those who have lived exceptional lives . Marcionites cannot become martyrs , because they do not believe in the divinity of God the Father ? their sufferings are in vain . There is then a digression to the subject of theological epistemology . According to Clement , there is no way of empirically testing the existence of God the Father , because the Logos has revelatory , not analysable meaning , although Christ was an object of the senses . God had no beginning , and is the universal first principle .

The fifth book returns to the subject of faith . Clement argues that truth , justice and goodness can be seen only by the mind , not the eye ; faith is a way of accessing the unseeable . He stresses that knowledge of God can only be achieved through faith once ones moral faults have been corrected . This parallels Clement 's earlier insistence that martyrdom can only be achieved by those who practice their faith in Christ through good deeds , not those who simply profess their faith . God transcends matter entirely , and thus the materialist cannot truly come to know God . Although Christ was God incarnate , it is our spiritual , not physical comprehension of him which is important .

In the beginning of the sixth book , Clement intends to demonstrate that the works of Greek poets were derived from the prophetic books of the Bible . In order to reinforce his position that the Greeks were inclined towards plagiarism , he cites numerous instances of such inappropriate appropriation by classical Greek writers , reported second @-@ hand from On Plagiarism , an anonymous 3rd century BC work sometimes ascribed to Aretades . Clement then digresses to the subject of sin and hell , arguing that Adam was not perfect when created , but given the potential to achieve perfection . He espouses broadly universalist doctrine , holding that Christ 's promise of salvation is available to all , even those condemned to hell .

The final extant book begins with a description of the nature of Christ , and that of the true Christian , who aims to be as similar as possible to both the Father and the Son . Clement then criticizes the simplistic anthropomorphism of most ancient religions , quoting Xenophanes ' famous description of African , Thracian and Egyptian deities . The Greek gods may also have had their origins in the personification of material objects : Ares representing iron , and Dionysus wine . Prayer , and the relationship between love and knowledge are then discussed . 1 Corinthians 13 : 8 seems to contradict the characterization of the true Christian as one who knows ; but to Clement knowledge vanishes only in that it is subsumed by the universal love expressed by the Christian in his reverence for his Creator . Following Socrates , he argues that vice arises from a state of ignorance , not from intention . The Christian is a " labourer in God 's vineyard " , responsible both for his own path to salvation and that of his neighbor . The work ends with an extended passage against the contemporary divisions and heresies within the church .

= = = Other works = = =

Besides the great trilogy , Clement 's only other extant work is the treatise Salvation for the rich , also known as Who is the Rich Man who is Saved ? . Having begun with a scathing criticism of the corrupting effects of money and misguided servile attitudes towards the wealthy , Clement discusses the implications of Mark 10 : 25 . The rich are either unconvinced by the promise of eternal life , or unaware of the conflict between the possession of material and spiritual wealth , and the good Christian has a duty to guide them towards a better life through the Gospel . Jesus ' words are not to be taken literally ? we should seek the supercelestial [ ????????????? ] meaning in which the true route to salvation is revealed . The holding of material wealth in itself is not a wrong , as long as it is used charitably , but men should be careful not to let their wealth dominate their spirit . It is more

important to give up sinful passions than external wealth . If the rich man is to be saved , all he must do is to follow the two commandments , and while material wealth is of no value to God , it can be used to alleviate the suffering of our neighbor .

Other known works exist in fragments alone , including the four eschatological works in the secret tradition : Hypotyposes , Excerpta ex Theodoto , Eclogae Propheticae and the Adumbraetiones . These cover Clement 's celestial hierarchy , a complex schema in which the universe is headed by the Face of God , below which lie seven protocists , followed by archangels , angels and humans . According to Jean Daniélou , this schema is inherited from a Judaeo @-@ Christian esotericism , followed by the Apostles , which was only imparted orally to those Christians who could be trusted with such mysteries . The protocists are the first beings created by God , and act as priests to the archangels . Clement identifies them both as the " Eyes of the Lord " and with the Thrones . Clement characterizes the celestial forms as entirely different from anything earthly , although he argues that members of each order only seem incorporeal to those of lower orders . According to the Eclogae Propheticae , every thousand years every member of each order moves up a degree , and thus men can become angels . Even the protocists can be elevated , although their new position in the hierarchy is not clearly defined . The apparent contradiction between the fact that there can be only seven protocists but also a vast number of archangels to be promoted to their order is problematic . The commonest modern explanation is that the number seven is not meant to be taken literally , but has a principally numerological significance .

We know the titles of several lost works because of a list in Eusebius ' Ecclesiastical History , 6 @.@ 13 @.@ 1 @-@ 3 . They include the Outlines , in eight books , and Against Judaizers . Others are known only from mentions in Clement 's own writings , including On Marriage and On Prophecy , although few are attested by other writers and it is difficult to separate works which he intended to write from those which were actually completed .

The Mar Saba letter was attributed to Clement by Morton Smith , but there remains much debate today over whether it is an authentic letter from Clement , an ancient pseudepigraph or a modern forgery . If authentic , its main significance would be in its relating that the apostle Mark came to Alexandria from Rome and there wrote a more spiritual gospel , which he entrusted to the church in Alexandria on his death : if genuine , the letter pushes back the tradition related by Eusebius connecting Mark with Alexandria by a century .

= = Legacy = =

Eusebius is the first writer to provide an account of Clement 's life and works , in the Church History . There are two separate sections of the work dedicated to Clement ( 5 @.@ 11 and 6 @.@ 11 ) , the latter of which seems decidedly out of place , and Valesius argued that this was evidence that Eusebius never revised his work . Eusebius provides a list of Clement 's works , biographical information , and an extended quotation from the Stromata .

Photios I of Constantinople writes against Clement 's theology in the Bibliotheca , although he is appreciative of Clement 's learning and the literary merits of his work . In particular , he is highly critical of the Hypotyposes , a work of biblical exegesis of which only a few fragments have survived . Photius compared Clement 's treatise , which like his other works was highly syncretic , featuring ideas of Hellenistic , Jewish and Gnostic origin , unfavourably against the prevailing orthodoxy of the 9th century . Among the particular ideas Photius deemed heretical were :

His belief that matter and thought are eternal , and thus did not originate from God , contradicting the doctrine of Creatio ex nihilo .

His belief in cosmic cycles predating the creation of the world , following Heraclitus , which is extra @-@ Biblical in origin .

His belief that Christ , as Logos , was in some sense created , contrary to John 1 but following Philo .

His ambivalence towards docetism , the heretical doctrine that Christ 's earthly body was an illusion .

His belief that Eve was created from Adam 's sperm after he ejaculated during the night .

His belief that Genesis 6 : 2 implies that angels indulged in coitus with human women . In Orthodox Catholic theology , angels are considered sexless .

Down to the seventeenth century he was venerated as a saint in Catholicism . His name was to be found in the martyrologies , and his feast fell on the fourth of December . But when the Roman Martyrology was revised by Pope Clement VIII his name was dropped from the calendar on the advice of Cardinal Baronius . Benedict XIV maintained this decision of his predecessor on the grounds that Clement 's life was little known , that he had never obtained public cultus in the Church , and that some of his doctrines were , if not erroneous , at least suspect . Thus Clement is not revered as a saint in contemporary Roman Catholicism , nor is he considered a saint in much of Eastern Orthodox Christianity . Clement 's veneration is somewhat limited ; he is commemorated nonetheless in Anglicanism . As well , the Universal Catholic Church 's cathedral in Dallas is dedicated to him .

As one of the earliest of the Church fathers whose works have survived , he is the subject of a significant amount of recent academic work , mainly focusing on the relationship between his thought and non @-@ Christian philosophy and his influence on Origen .