

“To exhibit silently”: What Clement of Alexandria leaves unsaid in his *Protreptikos*

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1. Introduction; 2. The Song of Salvation in the *Protreptikos*; 3. Strategies of Persuasion: Ridicule of Greek Religion; 4. The Argument from Hope of Reward; 5. The Argument from Fear of Divine Punishment; 6. Fear, Hope, and Love in Clement’s Other Works; 7. “To exhibit silently”: *Strom.* 1.1.14-15 and the *Protreptikos*; 8. “To reveal while concealing”: Hints of more advanced teaching in the *Protreptikos*; 9. Conclusion: The Many Voices of the Divine Logos

1. Introduction

As Leonardo Lugaresi has shown in illuminating detail, the theme of the *canto*, the Song of the divine Logos, dominates Clement of Alexandria’s appeal to potential Greek converts to the Christian gospel in his *Protreptikos*.¹ In this highly rhetorical work Clement provides an exuberant picture of the many-voiced (πολύφωνος) divine Song, which resounds in the harmony of the cosmos, in the human being, and especially in the holy Scriptures:

And this undefiled song — the pillar of the universe and the harmony of all things — extending from the center to the edges, and from the edges to the center, has brought all into harmony. His harmony is not like the music of Thrace, which resembles that of Jubal (Gen 4:21), but is instead in accord with the ancient purpose of God, zealously pursued by

1 Leonardo Lugaresi, “Canto del Logos, dramma soteriologico e conoscenza di fede in Clemente Alessandrino,” in R.Radice and A.Valvo (eds.), *Dal logos dei Greci e dei Romani al logos di Dio* (Milano, 2011), 243-276.

David. And He who was descended from David, and yet is before him, the Word of God, rejecting the lifeless instruments (τὰ ἄψυχα ὄργανα) of lyre and harp, instead bringing the cosmos into harmony, and in particular the microcosm that is man —soul and body — makes music to God on this many-voiced instrument (διὰ τοῦ πολυφώνου ὀργάνου). (*Prot* 1.5.2-3)²

The holy Scriptures, the primary place where the multi-voiced, harmonious divine Song can be heard, are at times loud and boisterous. “The loud trumpet,” Clement says, “collects the soldiers, and proclaims war. . . . The trumpet of Christ is the gospel. He has blown it, and we have heard (*Prot*. 11.116.2-3)³. In the *Protrepitkos* Clement quotes many booming voices from the “choir of the prophets”, that denounce idolatry and call for repentance⁴. He concludes the *Protrepitkos* with an invitation to his audience to join the “jubilant band” of prophets and angels in the song and dance of the divine Logos (*Prot*. 12.119.2; 120.2).

A recent study by Emmanuel Albano reminds us to pay attention to a quite different aspect of Clement’s writings, namely to listen for the silence. In the section on Clement in his *I silenzi delle Sacre Scritture. Limiti e possibilità di rivelazione del Logos negli scritti di Filone, Clemente e Origen*⁵ Albano’s primary interest is in what Clement has

2 Translations of passages from Clement’s works are my own. To highlight words Clement quotes from Scripture, I print them in italics. The *Protrepitkos* is cited from the edition of Claude Mondésert, *Clément d’Alexandrie, Le Protrepitique*. (Sources Chrétienues 2bis), 2 ed., Paris, 2004; the *Stromateis* and *Eclogae propheticae* are cited from the edition of Otto Stählin.

3 See also *Prot*. 8.81.1: “But already the Lord, in His surpassing pity, has inspired the song (μέλος) of salvation, sounding like a battle march.”

4 See especially *Protrepitkos* chapter 8 (#77-81). For the prophets as a “choir” see, e.g., 1.2.3; 1.8.2; 8.79.2. The choir, led by the Logos as choir-master (9.88.1) also includes the stars (4.65.1).

5 Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2014. Albano discusses Clement on pages 219-367.

to say about the silence of *Scripture*. But in a first chapter he also considers Clement’s own use of silence. Here Albano distinguishes two kinds of silence: 1) a silence that “does not speak” (*il silenzio che non dice*) — i.e. total omission of topics or words, and 2) a silence that conceals (*il silenzio che nasconde*) — that is diction that both conceals and reveals at the same time⁶.

My aim in this paper is to investigate a specific example of Clement’s use of silence — in other words: what an entity as elusive as silence might actually “sound” like in practice. I shall focus especially on Clement’s *Protreptikos*, which many, though not all, scholars regard as the first part of a trilogy which proceeds to the *Paidagogos* and the *Stromateis*.

The theme in the *Protreptikos* that has attracted the most interest is Clement’s vivid depiction of, and polemic against, Greco-Roman religion.⁷ What I want to highlight here is not what Clement has to say about Greek gods, statues, and mystery rites, but instead how he presents his own Christian religion and its Scriptures⁸. I will begin by outlining the main lines of the Christian message as Clement presents

6 In treating Clement’s own use of silence in chapter 1, Albano considers *Il silenzio che non dice* on pages 231-237 and *il silenzio che nasconde* on pages 223-231, with some concluding remarks on pages 347-351 of the concluding chapter 5.

7 For an illuminating analysis of the structure of Clement’s polemic against Greek religion, poetry, and drama and its classical background, see Thomas Halton, “Clement’s Lyre: A Broken String, a New Song,” in *The Second Century* 3 (1983), 177-199.

8 In “Apologetic and Protreptic Discourse in Clement of Alexandria” in *L’apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l’époque prétrinitaire*, (ed. A. Wlosok; Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique 51), Genève, 2005, 69-93, at 75, Annewies van den Hoek points out: “Not only did Clement communicate his thoughts to his audience in a cultivated fashion, presumably pleasing to his audience, but in a reciprocal movement, he also expressed his own thoughts and beliefs more richly through this Classical material. The apologetic discourse and its inherent polemics against idolatry, sacrifice, and oracles thus supported the position of the author himself.”

it in the *Protreptikos* (part 2), and then I will look at three rhetorical strategies he employs to persuade his audience to heed the Song of the Logos and join in the Christian dance (parts 3-5). In part 6 I will then try to imagine what Clement is *not* saying in the *Protreptikos*, by pointing out some significant differences between how he summarizes the Scriptural message in this work and what he says elsewhere, especially in his most important extant writing, the *Stromateis*. In parts 7 & 8, I will reflect on Clement's use of silence, and how it can be "heard" in the *Protreptikos*, in passages where he reveals and conceals at the same time. The essay will conclude in section 9 with a look at Clement's belief that the divine Logos sings in "many voices" and "many modes" and how this affects both his reading of Scripture and his approach to teaching.

2. The Song of Salvation in the *Protreptikos*

In his *Protreptikos* Clement presents in a simple and straightforward way the teaching he finds in the Christian Scriptures. This work is an energetic call to the "Greeks" to desert their ancestral religion and accept the salvation proclaimed in the New Song of Jesus Christ, the divine Logos. The arrival on earth of this consummate Singer, Clement claims, is a dramatic and decisive development in the history of the world: in his incarnation, death, and teaching the divine Word has brought a message of salvation for all people. While his Song, as conveyed in the New Testament, is dramatically new, intimations of it have been heard through the ages, dimly in the words of Greek philosophers and poets, and more loudly and clearly in the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Clement discusses the specific content of this new Scriptural Song primarily in *Protreptikos* chapters 1 and 8-12, where he focuses especially on three themes. First, the God described in the Christian Scriptures is the good and benevolent creator who has ultimate control over all the forces in our world and all human beings. Secondly, human beings are created in the image of God and destined to have fellow-

ship with God: “The Lord made man as a beautiful breathing musical instrument, after His own image” (*Prot.* 1.5.4)⁹. But because of human sin, especially the fashioning of false images (the Greek gods), the divine image in human beings has become defaced (*Prot.* 10.98.1-3).

Third, the great good news is that the divine Logos has come to restore the defaced image and bring human beings back to God. In chapter 12 of the *Protreptikos* Clement declares in the voice of Christ:

For this is what I am ... this is the concord, this is the harmony of the Father. This is the Son, this is Christ, this is the Word of God ... O all you images (εἰκόνες) not all of whom resemble the model, I desire to correct you with an eye on the archetype (τὸ ἀρχέτυπον), that you may be made similar to me. (*Prot.* 12.120.4)

It is the Christian, Clement asserts, who is now truly “God’s image and also his likeness (Gen 1:26), having become righteous and holy and wise by Jesus Christ, and so far already like God” (*Prot.* 12.122.4). The Song of the Logos, reverberating through Clement’s teaching, invites all to join this happy band.

3. Strategies of Persuasion: Ridicule of Greek Religion

To persuade the Greeks to abandon ancestral custom and become Christians Clement employs three rhetorical strategies. The first, developed in great detail in chapters 2-7¹⁰, is a vigorous demonstration of the inferiority and futility of Greco-Roman religion. Clement castigates the immorality of its supposed gods, the falsity of its divine images, and the immoral character of its rites. He pulls out all the stops in order to ridicule pagan beliefs and practice, coupling this derision with repeated passionate pleas to abandon such great folly¹¹. An

9 See also *Prot.* 12.120.4 and 12.121.1.

10 In chapters 6-7 Clement admits that certain Greek philosophers, and to a lesser extent Greek poets, had some understanding of the nature of the one true God.

11 In “Der *Protreptikos* des Clemens und des Galens,” in *Studia Patristica* 31

example is the highly rhetorical plea, full of classical allusions, with which he concludes the work:

Let us then avoid custom (συνήθειαν) as we would a rocky headland, or the dangerous Charybdis, or the sirens of myth. It strangles a man, diverts him from truth, leads him away from life; it is a trap, a pit, a seawash, a mischievous winnowing fan. Keep the ship away from that smoke and billow. ... Sail past the siren song; it produces death. ... Bound to the wood of the cross, you shall be freed from all destruction: the Word of God will guide your ship, and the Holy Spirit will cause you to anchor in the harbor that is heaven. ... Come, O madman! Do not lean on the thyrsus, or be crowned with ivy; throw away the bacchic headdress, throw away the fawn-skin; regain your right mind. I will show you the Word, and the mysteries of the Word, using images from your own stories. (Prot. 12.118.1, 4; 119.1).

4. The Argument from Hope of Reward

Clement's second rhetorical strategy is to encourage hope of reward. Time and again he holds out salvation as the reward for conversion, for example:

Believe, and receive salvation as your reward. *Seek God and you soul shall live* (Psa 68:33). He who seeks God concerns himself with his own salvation. (Prot.10.106.5).

(2001), 445-448, at 448, Ulrich Neymeyr calls attention to the aggressive and at times sarcastic tone of Clement's work. He finds that Clement's *Protreptikos* is much more polemical, in both the style and structure of the argument, than that of his near-contemporary Galen, who champions the study of medicine in contrast to the professional study of athletics. To Davide Dainese, in "Il *Protreptico ai Greci* di Clemente Alessandrino. Una Proposta di Contestualizzazione," in *Adamantius* 16 (2010), 256-285, esp. 257 and 259, the particularly fiery and harsh nature of Clement's polemic in the *Protreptikos* suggests that it was composed during a time when Christians in Alexandria were persecuted, specifically the persecution of Septimus Severus in 202.

Beyond assurance of salvation in the present life, Clement emphasizes Christ’s promise of future reward. The reward mentioned most often — from the first chapter to the last — is the promise of ascent to God in heaven. In chapter 1, for example, Clement contrasts the Song of the divine Word with that of famous Greek minstrels, whose songs encouraged worship of pagan idols:

But my Singer is not at all like these — far from it. He has come to destroy our bitter slavery to tyrannical demons. But as he is bringing us back under the mild and benevolent yoke of piety, he summons to heaven those who are cast down on the earth. (*Prot.* 1.3.2)

And, in the work’s final chapter (a text cited above), heaven is presented as the safe harbor:

The Word of God will be your pilot and the Holy Spirit will cause you to anchor in the harbor that is heaven. (*Prot.* 12.118.4)

In another passage Clement combines words from several gospel texts to portray this promised reward:

How, then, am I to ascend to heaven, [Scripture] says (cf. John 14:1-5)? The Lord is *the way* (John 14:6); a narrow way (cf. Matt 7:13) but one that *comes from heaven* (cf. John 3:13). In truth, it is *narrow*, but it leads back to heaven, *narrow* and despised on earth, but *broad* (cf. Matt 7:13), and adored in heaven. (*Prot.* 10.100.1)

Clement speaks of this hoped for heavenly reward in various ways, usually in words taken from Scripture: “immortality” (ἀφθαρσία; Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 15:42-54)¹², “eternal life” (John 3:15)¹³ and, most often,

12 “Immortality” (ἀφθαρσία) is promised in *Prot.* 9.86.2; 10.106.2; 11.114.4. and 12.120.2-3. In *Prot.* 10.106.2 Clement refers to the “medicine of immortality” (τὸ φάρμακον τῆς ἀθανασίας).

13 See *Prot.* 1.9.3; 11.114.2. Apparently Clement has in mind verses from the Gospel of John that speak of ζωὴ αἰώνιος (e.g. John 3:15, 16, 36; 17:2-3), although as Iliari Ramelli points out, in “Stromateis VII and Clement’s Hints at the Theory of *Apokatastasis*,” in *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis. Proceedings of the*

“the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt 4:17 and often in Matthew):

God’s chosen instrument loves mankind. The Lord pities, teaches, exhorts, admonishes, saves, protects, and promises us the *kingdom of the heavens* (Matt 4:17) as abundant reward for our schooling. And the only benefit he reaps from these labors, is this: that we are saved. (*Prot.* 1.6.2)¹⁴.

5. The Argument from Fear of Divine Punishment

Even more prominent is the third strategy of persuasion: the argument from fear of divine judgment. The following is one of many examples of Clement’s use of this strategy:

Mortals, you have God’s promise of grace. And you have heard, on the other hand, the threats of punishment. It is by these that the Lord saves, training men by fear and by grace. Why do we delay? Why do we not avoid punishment? ... *Behold*, Scripture says, *I have set before you death and life* (Deut 30:15). The Lord tries you, so that you will choose life. Like a father, he counsels you to obey God. ... *If you refuse and are not willing, the sword and the fire shall devour you ... for the mouth of the Lord has spoken this* (Isai 1:19; *Prot.* 10.95.1-2)

To a reader who knows Clement primarily from his *Stromateis*, such forthright promotion of fear as a motivation for worshipping the Christian God can be startling. But appeals based on fear figure prominently in the *Protreptikos*, beginning in chapter 1 and emphasized especially in chapters 8-10.

To promote fear of divine judgment Clement uses examples from Scripture, especially the Old Testament. In the passage from chapter

Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria (Olomouc, October 21-23, 2010) (Matyas Havrda, Vit Husek, and Jana Platova, eds.), Leiden, 2012, 239-257, Clement uses a different Greek word s for “eternal” (αἰδιος).

14 Other references to the “kingdom of the heavens” include *Prot.* 9.87.3, where Clement quotes a word of Jesus from Matt 4:17, and 9.82.4; 10.99.4; 11.116.1-2.

to just cited he quotes from Deut 30:15. In chapter 1 he adduces examples of divine judgment from Exodus:

[Let] us run to the Lord, the Saviour, the Lord who now and always exhorts us to be saved, as He did by signs and wonders in Egypt (Exod 7:3; 3:2) and in the desert, both through the bush (Exod 3:2) and the cloud (Exod 13:21;14:24), which, by the grace of divine love, followed the Hebrews like a servant. By the fear which these inspired He exhorted those whose hearts were hardened. ... Sometimes [the Lord] rebukes, and sometimes He threatens. To some he chants a dirge, to others He sings. In like manner a good doctor treats some of his patients with poultises, some by applying pressure, some with infusions of water. One he treats with the knife, another with cautery, another by amputation, if it is at all possible to heal the patient as a whole or in part (*Prot.* 1.8.1)

Here Clement understands the burning bush seen by Moses and the cloud that accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness as designed to awaken the fear of God. In the continuation of this passage in *Prot.*1.8.3 Clement articulates a theme that will be heard repeatedly in the *Protreptikos*: that the salvific Song of the divine Logos has “many voices” (πολυφωνός) and “many modes” (πολύτροπος)¹⁵.

The promotion of fear as a strategy to bring about conversion is especially pronounced in chapters 8-9. Clement begins chapter 8 with the assertion that “The divine Scriptures and wise rules for life form the short paths to salvation (γραφὰὶ δὲ αἱ θεῖαι καὶ πολιτεῖαι σώφρονες σύντομοι σωτηρίας ὁδοί)” (*Prot.* 8.77.1)¹⁶. He proceeds to quote verses from the prophets¹⁷ to demonstrate that, as all-powerful, awe-in-

15 For discussion of this theme, see Part 9 below.

16 Albano, in a discussion of this text in *I silenzi*, chapter 4: “La sacra Scrittura come ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΣ dei misteri divini (pages 339-345, at 344-35), argues that according to Clement the sacred text cannot contain the entire riches of *gnosis*: “Esso, proprio come la fede, non può contenere tutta la ricchezza della *gnosis*.”

17 It is interesting that in *Prot.* 8.77.2 Clement begins this section with a text from *Sibylline Oracles* 3 (Preface ll. 28-35), which he presents as among the “prophets”.

spiriting creator, the biblical God has ultimate control over the whole world and all of humanity:

Jeremiah the all wise prophet ... portrays God for us: *I am, he says, a God who is near and not far away. If a person does something in secret, will I not see it? Do I not fill the heavens and the earth, says the Lord* (Jer 23:23-24)? And again [the Holy Spirit] speaks through Isaiah: *Who will measure the heaven in the span of the hand or the whole earth with a hand* (Isa 40:12). Behold the magnificence of God, and be filled with amazement. Let us worship Him of whom the prophet says, *Before your face the mountains shall melt, as wax melts before the fire!* (Isai 64:1-2). This, the prophet says, is the God *whose throne is heaven, and His footstool the earth* (Isa 66:1). And *if He open heaven, you will be seized with trembling* (Isa 66:1). (Prot 8.78.2-3)

After this Clement presents a loud chorus of prophetic voices that predict God's judgment on idolaters, including the following:

Now do you want to hear as well what this prophet says about idolators? *And they shall be spread before the sun and their carcasses shall be food for the birds of heaven and the wild beasts of the earth; and they shall rot under the sun and the moon, which they have loved and served; and their city shall be burned down* (cf. Jer 8:2; 41:20; 4:26)¹⁸. He says further that (along with these) the elements and the cosmos will be destroyed. *The earth, he says, shall grow old, and the heaven shall pass away; but the word of the Lord endures forever* (Isa 51:6; 40:8). (Prot. 8.78.3-4).

This bleak scenario is followed by a proclamation of divine judgment from Deut 32:39: *Behold, behold, that I Am, and there is no other God beside Me. I will kill, and I will make to live; I will strike, and I will heal; and there is none who shall deliver out of My hands* (Prot. 8.79.1). Then he appeals to "the whole prophetic choir" and quotes from Amos¹⁹ and Isaiah a frightening array of oracles that describe

18 Clement here attributes verses from Jeremiah to Isaiah.

19 In this context Clement quotes from Amos 4:13; Isa 45:19-20, 21-23; 40:18-19; 10:10-11, 14. G. W. Butterworth, in his edition: *Clement of Alexandria, The*

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in graphic terms the divine judgment on idolaters, concluding with Isa 10:14: “Once more he says, *The Lord will shake the cities that are inhabited, and grasp the world in His hand like a nest (Prot.8.79.2-6)*”.

In the next paragraphs Clement uses words from Proverbs, Jeremiah, and Deuteronomy to describe the alternative to destruction: it is to embrace Wisdom — that is the divine Logos — and worship the Lord God of Israel²⁰. This is the way to escape divine anger as David the Psalmist declares:

Embrace understanding, you mortals, as the blessed psalmist David says: *Lay hold of the lesson, lest the Lord become angry and you perish from the way of righteousness, when His wrath is suddenly kindled (Psa 2:12)*. (Prot. 8.80.5)

After a quotation of Paul’s denunciation of Greek idolatry in Rom 1:21-25 chapter 8 concludes with an even more radical oracle that predicts God’s judgment on the whole cosmos:

Here again the prophet speaking: *The sun will be eclipsed, and the heaven be darkened; but the Almighty will shine forever. And the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and the heavens, stretched out and made taut, will be rolled up like parchment* — for these are the prophetic expressions — *and the earth will flee from the face of the Lord (Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7)*²¹. (Prot. 8.81.4)

Clement continues this fear-inducing strategy in chapters 9 and 10. At the beginning of 9 he emphasizes the abundance of Scriptural

Exhortation to the Greeks & The Rich Man’s Salvation (Loeb Classical Library), London, 1919, 177, n. h, points out that Clement wrongly attributes Amos 4:13 to Hosea.

20 In *Prot.* 8.80.1-4 Clement quotes Prov 8:22; 2:6, 9, 11; Jer 10:12; and Deut 6:4, 13.

21 Mondésert, *Le Protreptique*, 148 n. 1, calls this text “a pot-pourris de texts scripturaires” and points to the following possible sources: Isai 13:10; Ezek 32:7; Matt 24:29; Isa 34:4; Psa 103:2; Joel 2:10. He mentions also the suggestion of Stählin *ad loc* that Clement has taken the whole passage from the *Apocalypse of Peter*. In paragraph 81 Clement also quotes Gen 1:1 and Psa 4:2.

references to divine punishment: “I could adduce ten thousand Scriptures of which *not one tittle shall pass away* (Matt 5:18) without being fulfilled” (*Prot.* 9.82.1). This is followed by citations from Isaiah, Proverbs and Hebrews²². Applying these texts to his audience, Clement pleads with his hearers to imitate Moses in his fear of God:

Now given that Moses confesses that he was filled with *fear and trembling* (Heb 12:21; Deut 9:19) when he heard the word [of God], are you not afraid when you hear the voice of the divine Word? Are you not anxious? Are you not made fearful and eager to seek instruction — that is, for salvation — dreading wrath, loving grace, eagerly pursuing hope so as to escape judgment? (*Prot.* 9.82.2-3)

Urgent exhortations continue in chapter 10.

6. Fear, Hope, and Love in Clement’s Other Works

I have quoted a large number of passages from the *Protreptikos* to make clear how unabashedly this work advocates fear of divine judgment and punishment, along with hope of reward, as motivations for accepting the Christian faith. Numerous discussions of fear in Clement’s other works indicate that he has more to say on this subject, and that his view is more complex.

In both the *Paidagogos* and *Stromateis* Clement discusses fear as a religious motivation in response to unnamed opponents who had raised questions about Old Testament judgment texts, perhaps some of the same texts he had himself quoted with enthusiasm in the *Protreptikos*. Now he wrestles with how to interpret these references to divine punishment and seeks to clarify the role of the fear of God in Scripture and in the Christian life. In *Paidagogos* book I, chapters 7-8, Clement responds to anonymous opponents who had raised questions about the divine punishments described in the Old Testament:

22 In *Prot.* 9.82.1-3 Clement quotes from Isa 1:20; Prov 3:11 and Heb 12:21 (= Deut 9:19).

At this stage some rise up saying that the Lord, by reason of the *rod*, and *threats*, and the *fear*, is not good; thus misapprehending, as it seems, the Scripture which says, *And he that fears the Lord will turn to his heart* (Sir 21:6). And most of all, they are oblivious of His love in that for us He became man (cf. John 3:16). (*Paid* 1.8.62.1)

Clement's response to these opponents reiterates the argument about the instructive value of fear of divine punishment made already in the *Protreptikos*²³, but now Clement adds a reminder of the supreme act of divine love revealed in the incarnation.

In this context Clement formulates a general hermeneutic of Scripture to explain the difference in emphasis between Old Testament and New: it is the wise plan of the divine Logos, he argues, to first train humans to serve God through *fear* until they are ready for the higher knowledge that God is to be sought purely out of *love*:

Who, then, would train us in a more loving fashion than He? Formerly the ancient people had an old covenant, and the law disciplined the people with fear ... but to the fresh and new people there has been given a new covenant, and the Word has appeared and fear is turned to love. ... For this same Instructor said at that time, *You shall fear the Lord God* (Deut 6:2). But to us He has addressed the exhortation, *You shall love the Lord your God* (Matt 22:37) (*Paid* 1.7.59.1)

As we shall see, Clement sees a similar dynamic at work in the experience of the individual Christian.

Clement returns to the subject of fear in *Stromateis*, book 1, chapters 7-8. “Those who criticize fear,” he writes, “denigrate the Law; and if the Law, they clearly also denigrate the God who gave the Law”

23 See *Paid*. 1.7.61.1 where Clement, citing Deut 18:15-19 and Isa 11:1-4 as prophecies of Christ, says: “Wherefore prophecy equips Him with a rod, a rod of discipline, of rule, of authority; so that those whom the persuasive word does not heal, the threats may heal. And those whom the threats do not heal, the rod may heal; and those whom the rod does not heal, the fire may devour. There shall come forth, it is said, a rod out of the root of Jesse (Isa 11:1).”

(*Strom.* 2.7.32.1). Here he is defending the Old Testament against Christian “sectarians” such as Marcion and followers of Valentinus. But in this passage he also argues on a second front, addressing the ideas of unnamed Greek philosophers, whom he quotes as saying that “fear is an irrational avoidance and a passion”— a definition Von Arnim attributes to the Stoic Chrysippus²⁴. Echoing his earlier theory of a comprehensive, progressive divine pedagogy — according to which God instructs through fear in the Old Testament but through love in the New — Clement uphold the pedagogical value of fear by citing two of his favorite Biblical texts, Gal 3:24: *The Law was our instructor* (παιδαγωγός) *until Christ came* and Prov 1:7: *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* ²⁵:

But since God deemed it advantageous that from the Law and the prophets humanity should receive preparatory teaching from the Lord, the *fear of the Lord* was called *the beginning of wisdom* (Prov 1:7), being given by the Lord, through Moses, to the disobedient and hard of heart. For those whom reason convinces not, fear tames. (*Strom.* 2.7.33.2)

These sections of the *Paidagogos* and the *Stromateis* indicate that the question of fear as a religious motivation was a complicated and pressing one for Clement. Other references to fear, in passages where Clement describes the perfect Christian, whom he calls “the Gnostic”, offer an even starker contrast to his vigorous promotion of fear in the *Protreptikos*. Here, far from advocating fear of punishment and hope of reward as motivations for turning to God, Clement disparages them. For example, in a description of the Gnostic in *Stromateis* book 4, he has this to say about proper motivation for performing virtuous deeds:

24 Ioannes Von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Stuttgart, 1968, vol. 3: 27, prints this text as Chrysippus, fr. mor. 114.

25 Clement also refers to Prov. 1:7 in *Paid.* 1.9.77.1; *Strom.* 2.7.33.4, 35.5; 2.8.37.6, 38.2 and 7.11.70.1. See also the reference to a similar verse in Prov 22:3-4 in *Strom.* 1.1.27.172.3.

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And [the Gnostic’s] work is not the avoidance of evil deeds ... nor is it doing the good either out of fear ... nor yet because of hope for a promised reward Instead, doing good deeds because of love, and because of the good itself, is the choice of the Gnostic. (*Strom.* 4.22.135.1-4)²⁶

Clement also champions love over fear in his *Eklogai Prophetikai*, here with help from Paul and the Gospel of Matthew:

A person who has advanced from faith and fear to *gnosis* can say *Lord, Lord* (Matt 7:21), but not as a slave would say this. He has learned to say *Our Father* (Matt 6:9) because he has liberated his *spirit from slavery to fear* and has advanced to *sonship* (Rom 8:15). He now venerates from love the one whom he previously feared. For it is no longer from fear that he abstains from things that should be avoided; rather he holds to the commandments through love. *The Spirit himself bears witness*, [Paul] says, when we say *Abba, Father* (Rom 8:16). (*Ecl. pr.* 19.1-2)

This passage illustrates a point of great importance for Clement’s theology: that the contrast between fear and love is not only a question of proper motivation for virtuous action. It also serves to describe the quality of a person’s relationship with God, the most important subject of all. “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16), and he can be truly known only by love, by one who becomes like him (*Strom.* 5.1.13.1-2).

7. “To exhibit silently”: *Strom.* 1.1.14-15 and the *Protreptikos*

I have made this detour into Clement’s other works in hopes of forming some idea of what Clement leaves unsaid in his *Protreptikos*, particularly in relation to the role of fear in Scripture and in the Christian life. I want now to return to the *Protreptikos* and the theme of silence.

Emmanuel Albano, in his first chapter of his book on Clement, explores how Clement makes use of silence in his own teaching²⁷.

²⁶ See also the similar passage in *Strom.* 4.18.111-114.

²⁷ *I silenzi*, 223-238.

His point of departure is a well-known passage in *Strom.* 1.1.14-15 in which Clement explains his approach in composing this work²⁸. This reads in part:

In rekindling [my fading memories] by means of these notes (ὕπομνήμασι) some things I deliberately omit, making an informed selection, because I am afraid to write things I have refrained from speaking, not that I grudgingly withhold anything — for this is forbidden — but in fact because I fear for my readers, that they might somehow slip and fall and that I will be convicted (in the proverbial phrase) of handing a sword to a child. ... There are some points on which my work will speak allusively (ἔστι δὲ ἃ καὶ αἰνίξεταί μοι γραφή); while it will stop to discuss certain topics, others it will only mention. It will attempt to speak imperceptibly, to reveal while concealing, and to exhibit silently (πειράσεται δὲ καὶ λανθάνουσα εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπικρυπτομένη ἐκφῆναι καὶ δεῖξαι σιωπῶσα.) (*Strom.* 1.1.14.3-15.1)

As Professor Albano has noted: Clement here distinguishes two types of silence: 1) a silence of omission (*Il silenzio che non dice*; and 2) a silence that conceals and reveals at the same time (*il silenzio del disvelamento*). My argument in this paper is that the pedagogical strategy Clement makes explicit in *Stromateis* 1 is already evident in his *Protreptikos* — if to a lesser extent. Although this work is written in a very different genre and contains no statements about concealment or secret traditions such as are found in the *Stromateis*²⁹, Clement clearly omits important features of his understanding of the Christian message, as we have seen in the case of his vigorous and unqualified promotion of fear and hope as motivations for becoming

28 *Ibid.*, 223-231.

29 For example, in *Strom.* 1.1.13.1-2, 14.2.3; 4.2.4; 5.19.3-20.1; 5.9.56.1-10.60.1-66.4; 7.9.53.1-6. In the *Protreptikos* Clement does make one reference to silence in Scripture in *Prot* 1.10.1, where he interprets the dumbness of John the Baptist's father Zechariah in Luke 1:20 by saying that divine Logos will "break the silence of the prophetic secrets".

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Christians — a point he significantly qualifies in the *Stromateis* and *Eklogai propheticae*.

Though worthy of note, this omission is not surprising, considering what Clement says about how the divine Logos has devised a complex system of progressive education, in which he is to be imitated by the Christian master such as Clement himself³⁰. In what is at least in part a self-description, Clement presents the Gnostic teacher as an “image” of the divine Logos, who imitates the divine plan (οἰκονομία) of salvific education:

The Gnostic, who considers the benefit done to his neighbor as his own salvation, would rightly be called a living image (ἄγαλμα ἔμψυχον) of the Lord, not because of the character of his physical form but because he symbolizes the Lord’s power and because of the similarity of what he proclaims. (*Strom.* 7.9.52.3)

One way the Gnostic master copies the pedagogy of the divine Logos is by carefully arranging the order of his curriculum. The Logos provided a model for this when he gave the books of the Old Testament, and also Greek philosophy, as preparation for the gospel (*Strom.* 1.5.28.1-3). Similarly, a Gnostic teacher such as Clement must adapt his lessons according to the readiness of each student, following the Logos who “educates the Gnostic by mysteries, the believer by good hopes and the hard of heart by corrective discipline” (*Strom.* 7.2.6.1). Clement speaks often of the believer’s need for gradual progress (προκοπή). A major theme in the *Stromateis* is that Christians must move from πίστις to γνῶσις, from elementary lessons to a deeper and more philosophical understanding of the Scriptures (*Strom.* 5.4.26.1-5; 5.10.61.2; 7.10.55.1-6).

30 For a fuller discussion of Clement’s views on divine and human pedagogy, see my article, “Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria,” in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 3-25. See also Albano, “Rivelare e tacere, Parte I” and *Ibid.*, “Parte II: Le mediazioni della rivelazione,” in *Augustinianum* 56 (2016), 301-330.

This pedagogical theory goes a long way, I think, to explain how Clement can make such vigorous use of the arguments from fear of punishment and hope of reward in the *Protreptikos*, only to argue in the *Stromateis* and *Eklogai Prophetikai* that these are inferior motivations that must give way to a pure, disinterested love for God. Further, regarding Clement's silence on this point in the *Protreptikos* it is also worth remembering a passage in the *Stromateis* in which he goes so far as to say that the Gnostic teacher, out of loving concern for the development of each student, might even be called on to lie:

Whatever [the Gnostic] has in mind, that is also on his tongue — to those who by virtue of their assent are worthy to hear it For he thinks what is true and also speaks it, except, on occasion, in a medicinal way, as a doctor does to those who are sick, he will lie or speak an untruth ... for the deliverance of those who are ill. (*Strom.* 7.9.53.1-2).

In addition to the silence of omission, Prof. Albano identifies a second type of silence mentioned by Clement in *Strom.* 1.1.14-15: using language that reveals and conceals at the same time. Clement says he will “speak imperceptibly, reveal while concealing, and exhibit silently” (πειράσεται δὲ καὶ λανθάνουσα εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπικρυπτομένη ἐκφῆναι καὶ δεῖξαι σιωπῶσα). One interpretation of what he means by this is that it refers to dropping hints of more advanced teaching, in order to prepare for what follows and encourage the more perceptive reader to seek further. Clement speaks explicitly of dropping such “hints” or “seeds of truth” at the beginning of *Stromateis* 4:

Let these notes (τὰ ὑπομνήματα) of ours ... be of varied character — and as the name itself indicates, patched together — moving constantly from one thing to another, and, as regards the sequence of words, hinting at one thing and demonstrating another (ἕτερον μὲν τι κατὰ τὸν εἰρμὸν μηνύοντα, ἐνδεικνύμενα δὲ ἄλλο τι). “For those who seek after gold,” says Heraclitus, “dig much earth and find little gold.” But those who belong to the truly golden race, in mining for what is akin to them, will find the much in little. (*Strom.* 4.2.4.1-2)

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Clement says something similar at the beginning of *Stromateis* book 6, noting that in this book the variegated grains of truth will be sown scatter-shot, like seeds in a meadow, and that they are intended to serve as “kindling sparks” (ζώπυρα) for those who are capable of pursuing *gnosis* (*Strom.* 6.1.2.1-2).

I think Clement is already doing something like this in the *Protreptikos*. Alongside the simple and straightforward presentation of the basic points of Christian faith — the promise of salvation in heaven and the urgency of turning to God in hope and fear — Clement scatters hints of his more advanced teaching — too many for me to enumerate in this brief essay. In the next section I shall focus on brief anticipations of three related themes, comparing what Clement says in the *Protreptikos* with his fuller treatment of these themes in the *Stromateis*.

8. “To reveal while concealing”: Hints of more advanced teaching in the *Protreptikos*

For note well that when the topic is the life that never ever comes to an end, our very words are unwilling to stop giving initiation into the mysteries. (*Prot* 12.123.2).

Thus Clement closes the *Protreptikos*, by indicating that he has more to say. While this may be merely a flowery way of bringing his work to a close, it can also be understood as a hint that encourages his audience to press on to the higher teaching to follow. In the prologue to Clement’s *Paidagogos*, which in the manuscripts follows directly after the *Protreptikos*³¹, Clement distinguishes three phases of the teaching of the divine Logos:

Just as those who have diseases of the body need a doctor, in the same way those whose souls are weak need a trainer (παιδαγωγού) to heal

31 On the manuscript tradition of these two works see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Le Pédagogue, Livre 1*, Paris, 1960, 92-93.

our passions, and then to bring us to the teacher's house, making the soul pure and able to receive the revelation of the Logos. The Logos in his great love for human beings is eager to perfect us through a salvific progression. Thus he employs an excellent plan for effective instruction, first exhorting (προτρέπων), then training (παιδαγωγῶν), and finally teaching (ἐκδιδάσκων) (*Paid.* I.I.3.3)

The titles Clement gives to his *Protreptikos* and *Paidagogos*, as well as several passages in the *Stromateis*, indicate that he structures his own teaching according to his understanding of the gradual pedagogy of the divine Logos.³² The first stage of Clement's instruction, represented in the *Protreptikos*, consists in exhortation to come to faith in Jesus Christ and accept his gift of salvation. "Salvation", a word repeated again and again in this work, refers primarily to release from sin and the passions and ascent to heavenly reward³³. On occasion, however, Clement mentions knowledge (γνώσις), especially the knowledge of God, as the goal of the Christian. In *Prot.* 10.100.2-3, for example, he frames his call to conversion as an invitation to know God:

[Man] as man is naturally suited to have close fellowship with God (οἰκείως ἔχειν πρὸς θεόν). Just as we do not compel a horse to plow or a bull to hunt but direct each type of beast to the task that corresponds to its nature, so we invite the human being, who is clearly naturally suited for contemplation of heaven — a truly "heavenly plant" (*Tim.* 90a) — to come to the knowledge of God (τὴν γνώσιν τοῦ θεοῦ). Having grasped what is proper, special, and unique to man, in contrast to the other animals, we counsel him to equip himself with provisions sufficient for eternity, namely piety (θεοσέβειαν).

32 In *Strom.* 7.9.52.1-3, for example. Clement asserts that the Gnostic teacher models his instruction on that of the divine Logos. For fuller discussion of this point, see Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," esp. 5-7.

33 On promise of heavenly reward see section 4 above; on release from sins, see *Prot.* 9.82.6; 10.99.4; 11.111.1-2; 11.112.4-5; on deliverance from the passions see 10.89.2; 11.115.2.

Several other brief references to “knowledge of God” associate it with worshipping God (*Prot.* 8.81.2; 11.114.1), knowing God’s “ways” (9.85.1), and receiving forgiveness (11.114.5). In the text just quoted from *Prot.* 10.100.3 knowing God is linked to “piety” (θεοσέβεια). Similarly, another passage in the *Protreptikos* defines the “knowledge of the truth” (ἐπίγνωσις τῆς ἀληθείας) — a phrase Clement takes from 1 Timothy — as “piety”:

But the Lord, in His love for human beings, invites all to the *knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim 2:4) by sending the Paraclete (John 16:13). What, then, is this knowledge? Piety (θεοσέβεια). And according to Paul, *piety is profitable in all ways, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come* (1 Tim 4:8). (*Prot.* 9.85.3)

These fleeting references to γνῶσις θεοῦ can be read as hints about teaching Clement will explain later on; they suggest that there is more to salvation than ascent to heaven and escape from punishment. In the *Protreptikos* “knowledge of God” refers primarily to “piety”, that is recognizing and coming to worship the one true God who has revealed himself in the Christian Scriptures³⁴. But Clement keeps silent about further meaning concealed in this phrase, which he will reveal in the *Stromateis*.

In numerous passages scattered through books 4-7 of the *Stromateis* γνῶσις θεοῦ refers to deeper knowledge of, and fellowship with, this God. As “the most important thing” (*Strom.* 7.7.47.3)³⁵, it is the ultimate goal of human life, realized only by the perfect Christian, “the Gnostic”. In an interpretation of 1 Cor 3:1-3, where Paul contrasts “milk” and “solid food”, Clement distinguishes γνῶσις from faith,

34 See, e.g., *Prot.* 10.110.2-3 and 9.85.3, quoted earlier in this section, and *Prot.* 8.81.2 and 11.114.1.

35 Μέγιστον ἄρα ἡ γνῶσις τοῦ θεοῦ. The word γνῶσις, which can have a broader meaning, often stands for γνῶσις τοῦ θεοῦ, since Clement views this as its culmination.

upon which it is built as a superstructure (1 Cor 3:10), and explicates its meaning as “knowledge of the divine power and essence” and as “contemplative vision”:

If therefore *milk* is said by the apostle to be the nourishment of *babes*, while *solid food* that of the perfect (τῶν τελείων; 1 Cor 2.6), then milk is to be understood as catechetical teaching, since it is the first food of the soul, and solid food as the contemplative vision (ἡ ἐποπτικὴ θεωρία)³⁶. For this is the flesh and blood of the Logos (John 6:53), that is a sure grasp of the divine power and essence (κατάληψις τῆς θείας δυνάμεως καὶ οὐσίας). ... For knowledge (γνῶσις) of the divine essence is the meat and drink of the divine Word. (*Strom.* 5.10.66.2-3)³⁷

In *Stromateis* 7.10.55-57 “knowledge of divine things” is described as both the means to, and the result of human perfection:

For in a word, knowledge (γνῶσις) is a perfecting of the human being as human being, whose character, manner of life, and reason are brought to completion through understanding of divine things (διὰ τῆς τῶν θείων ἐπιστήμης). (*Strom.* 7.10.55.1)

To arrive at γνῶσις in this sense requires a long and exacting process of moral and spiritual discipline and intellectual investigation, with the assistance of divine grace:

And it is from this source that knowledge (γνῶσις) is at last entrusted to those fit for it and judged worthy, because much preparation and preliminary training is needed in order to hear what is said, put one’s life in order, and make deliberate progress to a level beyond the righteousness according to the law (Matt 5:20). (*Strom.* 7.10.56.2)

36 Alain Le Boulluc, *Clément d’Alexandrie, Stromate V*, vol. 1, Paris, 1981, 135, translates ἡ ἐποπτικὴ θεωρία “la contemplation de la vision initiatique”.

37 The contrast of “faith” and “gnosis” is fundamental to the *Stromateis*. See, e.g., *Strom.* 5.1.1.1-5; 5.1.5.2; 5.4.26.1-5; 7.3.20.2; 7.7.46.2-3; 7.10.55.1-7; 7.10.57.3-4. See also *Strom.* 7.3.20.2 and 5.10.60.1-62.4, where to show that Paul speaks of a special γνῶσις not imparted to all believers, Clement quotes Col 1:9-11, 25-27; 2:2-3; 4:2-4 and Heb 5:12-6:12.

Clement goes on to describe the final destiny of the perfected Christian in terms that go well beyond the general promise of ascent to heaven that is the reward most often held out in the *Protreptikos*:

This knowledge leads us to the final goal that is perfect and has no end, providing a preview of the life willed by God that we will lead with the gods ... Then when [the perfected ones] have become *pure in heart* (Matt 5:8), by being near to the Lord, they attain the final restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) in everlasting contemplation (τῆ θεωρίᾳ τῆ ἀιδίῳ). And they have been given the name “gods” (Psa 81:6)³⁸, being enthroned together with the other “gods”, who were first given their places under the Savior. ... Thus knowledge easily conveys the soul to the divine and holy state that is akin to it (τὸ συγγενές) and by its own light conveys a person through the mystical stages of advancement (τὰς προκοπὰς τὰς μυστικάς) until it restores him to the crowning place of rest, having taught the *pure in heart* (Matt 5:8) to behold God *face to face* (1 Cor 13:12), with knowledge and full comprehension (ἐπιστημονικῶς καὶ καταληπτικῶς τὸν θεὸν ἐποπτεύειν). (*Strom.* 7.10.56.3-57.1)

In this text Clement describes the eschatological vision of God (τῆ θεωρίᾳ τῆ ἀιδίῳ) in words taken from Scripture, alluding to two New Testament verses of which he is particularly fond, Matt 5:8 and 1 Cor 13:12. Earlier in *Stromateis* book 7 he quotes these two verses:

The apostle writes in a spiritual sense about the knowledge of God: *For now we see as through a glass, but then face to face* (1 Cor 13:12). For the vision of the truth is granted only to a few. ... The words of Moses have the same meaning: *No man shall see My face, and live* (Exod 33:20). For it is evident that no one can comprehend God clearly (καταλάβεσθαι) during his life [on earth]. *But the pure in heart shall see God* (Matt 5:8), when they reach the final perfection. (*Strom.* 7.1.7.5-7)

38 Psalm 81:6 (LXX) = Psalm 82:6 (NRSV). According to Alain Le Boulluec, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Stromate VII*, Paris, 1997, 185, n. 7, the term “gods” in this verse refers to angels; for comparison, he cites several early Christian texts that speak of angels or an angelic hierarchy: Matt 19:28; Col 1:16; Eph 2:6; Rev 4:4; 11:16; 20:4, as well as Clement's *Exc Th* 11-12.

Another Pauline verse that Clement cites often as a fitting encapsulation of the amazingly rich reward that awaits the Gnostic is 1 Cor 2:9:

For the Gnostic has been prepared *what eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered in the heart of man* (1 Cor 2:9), but the [simple] believer, according to [Christ's] testimony, receives *a hundred times* what he has given up (Mark 10:29-30) — a promise that as it happens falls within human understanding. (*Strom.* 4.18.114.1).

In *Strom.* 5.6.40.1 Clement quotes Matt 5:8, 1 Cor 2:9 and 1 Cor 13:12, in an allegorical interpretation of the entry of the high priest into the “holy of holies” of the tabernacle in Leviticus 16:23-24, which Clement interprets as a description of Gnostic ascent:

[The high priest] is already *pure in his whole heart* (Matt 5:8), having perfected his conduct to the highest standard and advanced well beyond the [ordinary] priest and become truly sanctified in both speech and action. He has put on the brilliant and glorious garment (cf. Exod 28) and received the indescribable inheritance of that spiritual and perfect one — an inheritance *which eye has not seen nor ear heard, and which has not entered into the heart of man*; (1 Cor 2:9) — and become son and friend [of God]. [Then at last] he is fully enjoys inexhaustible contemplation *face to face* (1 Cor 13:12).

With these passages from the Stromateis in mind, let us return to the Protreptikos. Clement clearly has more to reveal about γνῶσις τοῦ θεοῦ than he imparts in this work. But in some passages he does “reveal while concealing”³⁹, when he provides brief hints of higher teaching while focusing primarily on elementary instruction. Although the main melody from the “many-voiced” song of the divine Logos that we hear in this work is a simple message of salvation as escape from divine punishment and ascent to unspecified heavenly reward, one can hear in this work dim reverberations of a subject Clements

39 To borrow a phrase from *Strom.* 1.1.15.1, quoted in section 7 above.

designates as “the most important”⁴⁰, namely the knowledge of God. But, as we have seen, after quick mentions Clement restores the veil when he explains this phrase primarily in terms of “piety”⁴¹. We hear nothing about “knowledge of the divine power and essence”⁴² or Gnostic ascent.

In addition to references to γνῶσις and γνῶσις θεοῦ, other hints in the *Protreptikos* of more advanced teaching are references to “seeing” God and even “becoming divine” — themes that, as we have seen, Clement explicates more fully in depictions of the final ascent of the Gnostic in the *Stromateis*. In *Prot.*10.100.2⁴³ Clement observes that “human beings are naturally constituted to have fellowship with God” (οἰκείως ἔχειν πρὸς θεόν), and in another passage, he refers to Gen 1:26, Psa 81:6 and Plato’s *Theatetus* 176b in arguing that the pious Christian has become “like God”:

We can now affirm that the Christian is the only one who is pious and rich and wise, and of noble birth, and thus God’s image, and also his likeness (Gen 1:26). And we declare and believe that having become “righteous and holy with wisdom” (*Theat.*176b) through Jesus Christ, the Christian has also become to the same degree already like God (ὅμοιον θεῷ). And indeed this gracious gift is already revealed by the prophet when he says *I have declared that you are gods* (θεοί) and you are all sons of the highest (Psa 81:6) (*Prot.* 122.4-123.1).

Clement here quotes the same verse from Psalm 81 to which he alludes later on in *Strom.* 7.10.56.5 (cited above) in a description of the divinization of the Gnostic, though here in the *Protreptikos* he makes the more modest claim that the Christian becomes “like God”. In chapter 1 of the *Protreptikos* he does mention the possibility of “be-

40 See *Strom.* 7.7.47.3, cited above.

41 See *Paid.* 9.85.3 and 10.100.3, discussed above.

42 A point he discusses in *Strom.* 5.10.66.2-3 quoted earlier in this section.

43 See also *Prot.* 11.117.1. Other passages speak of “receiving” God: *Prot.* 10.106.3; 11.113.4; 11.117.4; 11.119.2.

coming God”: “The Logos of God became man in order that you might learn from a man how a man might become God (θεός; *Prot.* 1.8.4.), and in a later passage he says that the “Son of Righteousness” [the Logos] “deifies man (θεοποιῶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον) by heavenly teaching (*Prot.* 11.111.4) ⁴⁴. But, he does not explain how one might “become divine”; he is silent about the arduous intellectual and moral effort required.

In the *Stromateis*, the divinization of the Gnostic is linked closely with eschatological vision of God “face to face”⁴⁵. In the *Protreptikos* Clement anticipates this theme in a small way, when he urges his audience to desire to “see God”⁴⁶. Describing this vision in terms borrowed from the mystery religions⁴⁷ he writes:

If you truly desire to see God, practice purifications worthy of him, not with laurel leaves or headbands entwined with wool and purple; rather having crowned yourself with righteousness and donned wreaths of self control, seek earnestly to find Christ. (*Prot.* 1.10.2)

But at this point, Clement’s interest is in the beginning stages of seeking God, viz. accepting Christ as the point of entry and practicing righteousness and self-control as preliminary purifications. In the continuation of this text he intimates that there is much more to know:

44 He makes a similar claim for Scripture (“holy letters”) in *Prot.* 9.87.1.

45 See, e.g., *Strom.* 7.10.56-57, cited above.

46 In *Prot.* 10.105.1 Clement accuses them of having no such desire.

47 Mondésert, *Protreptique*, 66, n. 5: “Dans ce dernier paragraphe, on aura remarqué que tout est vu, ou du moins décrit, dans le langage des mystères païens: καθαρσιῶν, ἀποκαλύπτει, ἐποπτεύεται.” For a detailed study of the use of terminology and images from the Greek mysteries in *Prot.* 2.12-23; 12.118-119.3 and *Strom.* 5.11.70.7-71.3, see Christoph Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, Berlin, 1987, 116-161, esp. 159-161. Riedweg argues that Clement takes this terminology primarily from Plato and Euripides’ *Bacchae*, not from first-hand experience of the mysteries, and that he resembles Plato closely in using this language to portray the soul’s education as three ascending stages with ἐποπτεία as the final goal.

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For *I am*, [Christ] says, *the door* (John 10:9) which we who desire to understand God must discover, that He may throw heaven’s gates wide open to us. . . . And I know well that He who opens the door hitherto shut, afterwards reveals what is within, and displays what we could not have known before, except by entering through Christ, through whom alone God is beheld (*Paid.* 1.10.2-3)

An exhortation near the end of the *Protreptikos* is similar, promising clear sailing to heaven, and the revelation there of further mysteries:

Sail on past the song; it works death. If only you consent, you have conquered perdition; bound to the wood [of the cross], you will be freed from all corruption. The Word of God will be your pilot, and the Holy Spirit will guide you into the harbor of the heavens. Then you will see (κατοπτρεύσεις) my God and be initiated into those holy mysteries, and enjoy the things hidden in heaven, *which are stored up for me, which neither ear has heard nor has it entered into the heart [of man]* (1 Cor 2:9) (*Prot.* 12.118.4)

The citation of 1 Cor 2:9, a verse featured in two of the passages from the *Stromateis* that describe the summit of the Gnostic ascent (*Strom.* 4.18.114.2 and 5.6.40.1 cited above), is a further anticipation of teaching that will be communicated more clearly in the next stage of Clement’s instruction.

9. Conclusion: The Many Voices of the Divine Logos

Of the various hints in the *Protreptikos* that point the reader beyond the present work, a final one is particularly significant. This is Clement’s portrayal of the divine Logos as singing in “many voices” and “many modes”. We hear variations on this theme at several points where Clement describes the Lord’s assiduous and multifarious labors to bring human beings to salvation⁴⁸. The clearest articulation is found in *Prot.* 1.8.2-3:

48 For example in *Prot.* 1.6.1 quoted above; see also *Prot.* 9. 84.1 and 9.88.3.

The Saviour uses many voices (πολύφωνός), and many modes (πολύτροπος) for the salvation of human beings; by threatening He admonishes, by chastising He converts, by singing a dirge He shows pity, by plucking the harp He comforts. He speaks in the burning bush (Exod 3:2), since those people needed signs and wonders. He frightens men by the fire when He kindled the flame that issued from the pillar of cloud (Exod 13:21). This is a sign of both grace and fear: if you obey, it is the light that you behold; if you disobey, it is the fire. But since humanity is of greater value than pillar or bush, after these come the prophets giving utterance. For it is the Lord Himself who speaks through Isaiah and in Elijah — He speaks through the mouth of the prophets. (*Prot.1.8.3*)

Describing Christ's instruction as πολύφωνος, a term Plutarch uses of birds and also of Homer⁴⁹, Clement here continues the theme of the Logos as consummate Singer, superior to all the minstrels of Greece, that he had introduced in the opening paragraphs of the *Protreptikos* (*Prot 1.2.1-4*). The second adjective he uses to describe the divine song πολύτροπος ("having many modes or manners") is drawn from a New Testament verse to which Clement often refers, Hebrews 1:1, which reads:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors *in many and various ways* by the prophets (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις) but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

The author of Hebrews uses the adverb πολυτρόπως to refer to the many voices in Scripture, and this seems to be the primary reference for Clement as well, for whom Scripture now includes the books of the New Testament as well as the Old.⁵⁰ So, for example, in *Strom*.

49 See entry in Liddell Scott Jones.

50 G. Brambillasca, "Citations de l'Écriture Sainte et des auteurs classiques dans le Προτρεπτικός πρὸς Ἕλληνας de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Studia Patristica* 11 (1972) 8-12, at 9, counts approximately 300 references to Scripture and 290 references to classical literature in the *Protreptikos*.

7.16.94.5 he uses Heb 1:1 in an argument for the superiority of the “ecclesiastical tradition” of Scriptural interpretation to that of the “sects”:

For as the source (ἀρχὴν) of our teaching we have the Lord, who by the prophets, the Gospel and the blessed apostles guides us in knowledge (τῆς γνώσεως) from beginning to end, *in many and various ways*⁵¹.

In the very first paragraphs of the *Protreptikos* Clement introduces several voices from Scripture, mentioning “the holy prophetic choir” (*Prot.* 1.2.2) and king David and referring to verses in Exodus, Isaiah, Matthew, and the Pauline letters. When he describes the Song of the Logos as πολύφωνος and πολύτροπος he is not only celebrating the richness of biblical teaching; he is also referring to the individual voices within the complex harmony of the Scriptures. The divine Logos has inspired multiple distinct voices within the holy books, so designed as to address human beings at various stages of progress on the way to direct knowledge of God.

In the *Protreptikos* the voice of the prophets, especially their fear-inspiring oracles of judgment, predominate. But, Clement hints, the Logos has more to say – and so does Clement, the Christian teacher who imitates his master’s way of teaching. Other voices, especially those heard in Old Testament wisdom texts and in the Gospels and letters of Paul, will sound forth more clearly in later works, where, for example, Clement quotes verses such as Matt 5:8, 1 Cor 13:12 and 1 Cor 2:9 to describe the eschatological vision of God that is the final goal of Christian life: *What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him*

51 Other references to Heb 1:1 are found in *Paid.* 3.8.43.2; *Strom.* 1.3.27.1; 5.6.35.1; 6.7.58.2; 6.7.60.2; 6.10.81.5; 6.13.106.4; *Ecl. pr.* 23.1 and *Adumbr.* on 1 Pet 4:6. Clement can also employ the verse to defend Christian use of Greek philosophy, the best of which he understands as part of the variegated teaching of the Logos; see, e.g., *Strom.* 6.10.81.5.

(1 Cor 2:9).⁵² Here, too, he will highlight the Johannine and Pauline theme of God's love for humanity and humanity's reciprocal love for God⁵³, a message that drowns out the fear of God as the dominant melody Clement's audience is to hear:

The first step in salvation is teaching that employs fear, which leads us to avoid injustice. And the second is hope because of which we aim for what is best. But, as is fitting, it is love that brings perfection, which now instructs us in a way that involves knowledge. ... And the prize offered to those who strive after perfection is knowledge gained by reason (ἡ γνῶσις ἡ λογική), whose foundation is the holy triad *faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love* (1 Cor 13:13). (*Strom.* 4.7.53.1-54.1)

God is love (1 John 4:16), known to those who love, just as *God is faithful* (1 Cor 1:9), communicated to the faithful through teaching. And we must become like him (ἐξοικειοῦσθαι αὐτῷ) assisted by divine love so that we may contemplate "like by like" (*Tim.* 45c) attending closely to the *word of truth* (2 Tim 2:15) (*Strom.* 5.1.13.1-2)⁵⁴

52 For Clement's use of these verses see *Strom.* 7.10.56.3-57.1; 7.1.75-7; 4.18.114.1; 5.6.40.1, all cited above. Clement also highlights Matt 5:8 in an exposition of the Beatitudes in *Strom.* 4.6.25-41; for discussion of this chapter see my article, "Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa on the Beatitudes," in Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Beatitudes* (= Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*; Hubertus R. Drobner and Albert Viciano, eds.), Leiden, 2000, 311-329. Other allusions to Matt 5:8 include *Strom.* 2.11.50.2; 2.20.114.6 (in a quotation from Valentinus); 5.1.7.7 (cited above); 6.14.108.1; 7.3.13.2.

53 In *Strom.* 4.17.111-114, in a chapter dependent on *1 Clement*, Clement quotes several verses from Paul's "hymn to love" in 1 Corinthians 13, referring also to Rom 13:10: *Love is the fulfillment of the Law* (113.5), and quoting 1 John 4:8: *God is love* (113.4). For citations from 1 Corinthians 13 see also *Quis dives* 38.1-5, where Clement quotes 1 Cor 13:-4-8, 13 together with 1 Pet 4:8 and 1 John 4:18: *Perfect love casts out fear*.

54 On love for God see also *Strom.* 6.9.72.1 and 4.18.111-114. Albano points out how Clement closely links the biblical idea of love of God (e.g. 1 John 4:7-21) with the Platonic principle that "like is known by like"; see "Rivelare e Tacere: Note per una riflessione su scrittura e tradizione nel pensiero di Clement di

Alessandria. Parte 1: Il principio biblico-filosofico della rivelazione,” *Augustinianum* 56 (2016), 5-20. On p. 13, n. 22, Albano comments on *Strom.* 1.13.1-2: “E noi dobbiamo familiarizzarci ... con lui attraverso l’amore divino, proprio per contemplare il simile con il simile ... ascoltando la parola della verità senza inganni e con purità.” “Love and Reciprocity” is the subject of the penultimate chapter of Eric Osborn’s book *Clement of Alexandria*, Cambridge, 2005, 254-269. Osborn describes Clement’s view: “The gnostic is a lover of God joined in reciprocal relation to him ([*Strom.*] 7.1.3.6-4.2). Love leads to knowledge which leads to contemplation and grows in perfection (7.2.10.1-3).”