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# Ethical Individualism in Clement of Alexandria

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It has been noted that Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150—215 A.D.) diverges sharply from primitive Christianity in important respects, such as his views on eschatology and the significance of the Law.<sup>1</sup> It is my contention that Clement also diverges from almost the entire previous Christian tradition as far as we know it in the matter of ethics, in that he places individual perfection above communal concerns such as love and justice. Of course it is not possible to make a rigid distinction between these two aspects of ethics; there is a certain dialectic between them. (Furthermore, love of God is also an aspect of ethics.) For example, Clement himself says that the Gnostic, his ideal Christian, being temperate himself—basically an individual quality—is to make others temperate also—a communal act.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is often possible to discern on which of these two aspects of ethics the main emphasis lies in a particular ethical system or viewpoint,<sup>3</sup> and I shall

attempt below to elucidate Clement's emphasis. I will also attempt a brief survey of the probable sources of his views, touching only on the most important evidence as an indication of the type of research which could be done in this area. While the individual vs. community scheme is only one way to approach the question of ethics, it is, as I hope to show, fruitful and one which, to my knowledge, has not been pursued systematically and thoroughly in the study of Clement's ethics or early Christian ethics generally.<sup>4</sup>

In considering first the more or less individual-oriented aspect of Clement's ethics, we turn to the definitions he gives of some of his most frequent ethical terms. Human virtue (ἀρετή) he defines as consisting of justice (δικαιοσύνη), self-control

often overlooked, as, for example, in the sweeping statement that there is no essential difference between the nature (excluding motivation) of religious and philosophical ethics. Henry Hazlitt, "Agnosticism and Morality," *New Individualist Review*, IV (Spring 1966), 19—23.

<sup>1</sup> For example, as pointed out in Fritz Buri, *Clemens Alexandrinus und der paulinische Freiheitsbegriff* (Zurich: M. Niehans, 1939).

<sup>2</sup> *Strom.* II. 96. 4.

<sup>3</sup> For example, we have an obvious contrast between the Stoic Epictetus, who places the *summum bonum* in the proper use of the impressions, something which happens in the inner man and finds its true goal in a certain inner state, and St. Paul, who teaches that love is the fulfilling of the Law. But these distinctions are

<sup>4</sup> For example, R. B. Tollinton in his *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1914), notes that in Clement "the ascetic virtues predominate over the more positive ideas of duty, service, activity, and love" (I, 266), but he doesn't develop this insight systematically. The same is true of the most recent study of Clement's ethics, Oliver Prunet, *La Morale de Clément d'Alexandrie et le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Press Universitaires de France, 1966).

(σωφροσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), and piety (εὐσέβεια).<sup>5</sup> The first, justice, is by its very nature communal, and we shall define and discuss it later. Piety is specifically said by Clement to be directed toward God and is not primarily communal.<sup>6</sup> The third, courage, is mainly a matter of individual accomplishment. It takes the forms of endurance (καρτερία), greatness of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη), greatness of soul (μεγαλοψυχία), generosity (ἐλευθεριότης), and nobility (μεγαλοπρέπεια),<sup>7</sup> and the focus of all these is a personal orientation which is admirable to others but doesn't need others for completion; only ἐλευθεριότης is a possible exception. Courage makes it possible for the individual who has it to be immune to the blame and flattery of others.<sup>8</sup> Self-control (σωφροσύνη), together with continence (ἐγκράτεια) (these seem almost identical) are the means by which the reason (λογισμός), the ordering power (τὸ τακτικόν), masters the passions (πάθη) of the soul.<sup>9</sup> Passion (πάθος) is defined as an excessive appetite (πλεονάζουσα ὁρμή) exceeding the measure of reason (ὑπερτείνουσα τὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον μέτρα).<sup>10</sup> Here the emphasis is clearly on a disorder within the individual, and the corresponding virtues therefore, self-control and continence, are also primarily individual in character. Of continence, which is defined as abstinence from things for which the soul has an evil desire (κακῶς ἐπιθυμεῖ) because it is not satisfied with

the necessities of life, and applies to the tongue and the use of money as well as to sex,<sup>11</sup> Clement explicitly says that it is "a virtue of the soul which is not manifest to others, but is in secret."<sup>12</sup> Hence we may say of Clement's four forms of virtue that the individual-oriented type have at least the numerical preponderance.

Clement's emphasis on the individual side of ethics can further be seen in the ascetic fervor with which he insists on self-control. Clement conceives of Christ as totally without passion (ἀπαξιαπλῶς ἀπαθής), never experiencing either pleasure (ἡδονή) or grief (λύπη)<sup>13</sup> and of the apostles as also entirely free from all desire and all passions, even joy, after the resurrection.<sup>14</sup> In accordance with this conception, Clement's understanding agrees with that of the Greek philosophers, who, he says, teach that we should not be subservient to desire, and demands that the Gnostic, or the ideal Christian, experience no desire whatever.<sup>15</sup> The Gnostic is to have reached such a state of passionlessness, or apathy (ἀπάθεια), that he can no longer really be called continent (ἐγκρατής), since there is no longer any desire left to control.<sup>16</sup> Apathy, not moderation of the passions (μετριοπάθεια),

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., III. 4. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., III. 48. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., VI. 71. 2. This does not mean that Christ did not really suffer physically (see *ibid.*, I. 145. 4-5), but only that His inner being was free from the disturbances of the passions. H. D. Pire, "Sur l'emploi des termes Apatheia et Eleos dans les oeuvres de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, XXVII (July 1938), 428.

<sup>14</sup> *Strom.* VI. 71. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., III. 57. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., IV. 138. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Paed.* II. 121. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Strom.* I. 159. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., VII. 18. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., I. 159. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., II. 59. 6.

is the goal.<sup>17</sup> The enjoyment of bodily beauty must be spiritualized in Platonic fashion, in such a way that the observer does not think the flesh is beautiful, but admires rather the spirit, the body being an image by which he transports himself to the artist, and the true beauty.<sup>18</sup> But here we notice a moderating influence at work. If the bodily image serves as a spur to something higher, it cannot be entirely evil, nor can the sublimated desire be entirely separated from the physical desire. Clement himself seems to draw these conclusions. "Care for the body is exercised for the sake of the soul," he says.<sup>19</sup> He also admits, contrary to the statements above, that some feeling of pleasure is unavoidable, as in eating and sexual intercourse, although if we could do these things without pleasure, we would be obliged to do so.<sup>20</sup> This opens the door to the view that the passions must be moderated, not extirpated, and Clement does speak in this vein. Although we must not be passionately attached to the created world, he says, we may use it with a sense of gratitude.<sup>21</sup> In

addition to the demand for the annihilation of the passions, he can speak of curbing the impulses,<sup>22</sup> governing the passions (βασιλεύων τῶν πάθων),<sup>23</sup> and being content with "those desires which are measured according to nature alone."<sup>24</sup> In fact, Clement can even speak of a good (ἀστεῖος καὶ καθαρὸς) kind of desire.<sup>25</sup> It is doubtful whether we can entirely reconcile these divergent attitudes toward the passions. It has been asserted by Wilhelm Wagner that Clement expects the believer, or less advanced Christian, only to moderate the passions, so as to fulfill the Cynic ideal of reducing the desires to the minimum.<sup>26</sup> Much of his evidence is from the *Paedagogus*, where there is certainly much of the Cynic spirit, and the *Paedagogus* is presumably directed at the less mature Christian, since explicit descriptions of the Gnostic occur only in the *Stromata*. Furthermore, as Voelker points out, Clement does speak of the Christian advancing from moderating the passions to complete apathy.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, however, Clement seems to speak of moderating as well as extirpating the passions in his description of the Gnostic in the seventh

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., VI. 24. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., IV. 116. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., IV. 22. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., II. 118. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., III. 95. 3. Wilhelm Wagner, *Der Christ und die Welt nach Clemens von Alexandrien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), chap. 1, shows at length that Clement on the one hand has a positive orientation to the world. It is permitted, at least to the believer, or less perfect Christian, as opposed to the Gnostic, to partake of everything lawful, p. 21. Even luxury is in principle permitted, p. 24 (*Paed.* II. 121. 1). But Wagner then proceeds to show how Clement vacillates between this view and a highly ascetic, world-renouncing position. Compare also Clement's vacillating views on the goodness of marriage in *Strom.* III. The same duality is evident in the question of extirpating as opposed to moderating the passions.

<sup>22</sup> *Paed.* III. 53. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Strom.* II. 97. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., II. 109. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., III. 103. 4; he is expounding Prov. 13:12, where the term "good desire" (ἐπιθυμία ἀγαθή) occurs.

<sup>26</sup> Wagner, pp. 30, 53. He points to the frequent use in the *Paedagogus* of such terms as καλινεῖν (to bridle) and καταπραΰνειν (to tame) with reference to the passions.

<sup>27</sup> Walther Voelker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1952), pp. 490—91, referring to *Strom.* VI. 105. 1: "He who therefore first moderates his passions and practises so as to attain apathy" (Ὁ τοίνυν μετριοπαθήσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ εἰς ἀπάθειαν μελετήσας).

book of the *Stromata*.<sup>28</sup> But in general the central goal for the Christian is full apathy, or passionlessness.<sup>29</sup>

Next we must ask: How important in Clement's total writings are his strictures against the passions? There is considerable evidence for believing that these strictures occupy a central place in Clement's ethical thought. First of all, he often seems to correlate and even identify passions and sins.<sup>30</sup> Consider such passages as the following: "The Logos . . . at the same time heals the passions and cleanses sins."<sup>31</sup> "He [the Logos] is wholly free from human passions; wherefore He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless."<sup>32</sup> "Everything that is contrary to right reason is sin. Accordingly, therefore, the philosophers think it fit to define the generic passions thus . . ."<sup>33</sup> One is inclined to conclude that passions are almost equivalent to sins for Clement or are at least a very major factor in the totality of what might be termed sin.

On the more positive side, Clement is even more specific. He states that the good differs especially (μάλιστα) from the bad in inclinations (αἰρέσεις) and good de-

sires (ἀστείας ἐπιθυμίας).<sup>34</sup> One could perhaps interpret these good inclinations and desires as constituting the bases for interpersonal acts. But against this it is to be noted that this statement is immediately followed by the assertion that all depravity (πᾶσα . . . μοχθηρία ψυχῆς) is accompanied by lack of restraint (ἀκράσια) (no other specific vice is mentioned), which would imply that the essence of the goodness of the good inclinations and desires lies in the presence of restraint.<sup>35</sup> We find much of the same line of thinking when we observe more specifically the goals of Clement's ethics. For the attainment of the virtues, continence (ἐγκράτεια) is the foundation; it is for this especially that the divine Law trains man.<sup>36</sup> Voelker refers to continence in Clement as the "besonders kennzeichnende Eigenschaft des Gnostikers."<sup>37</sup> Peace and freedom are achieved only by ceaseless and unyielding struggles with our passions.<sup>38</sup> Even more forcible: "To fall under and to give way to passions is the ultimate (ἐσχάτη) slavery; just as to control them is the only freedom."<sup>39</sup> Rooting out the passions is, in fact, a matter of life and death: "He who has not formed the wish to extirpate (ἐκκόψαι) the passion of the soul, has killed himself."<sup>40</sup> The goal of losing one's life so as to gain it is achieved by separating ("for this is what the cross means") one's soul from the delight and pleasure

<sup>28</sup> *Strom.* VII. 70. 4; VII. 64. 5. In the latter passage he speaks of the Gnostic as resisting fears (κατεξανίσταται . . . φόβων) as if this passion still existed within him.

<sup>29</sup> See Voelker, p. 187.

<sup>30</sup> That passions concern lack of self-control is apparent, in addition to the above cited evidence (see note 10), from the fact that they are said to include desire (ἐπιθυμία), fear (φόβος), and pleasure (ἡδονή), *Paed.* I. 101. 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> *Paed.* I. 51. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 4. 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 101. 1-2; see also *Protr.* 115. 2, and Voelker, p. 182.

<sup>34</sup> *Strom.* V. 86. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 105. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Voelker, p. 474.

<sup>38</sup> *Strom.* II. 120. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 144. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 72. 4.

in this life.<sup>41</sup> Becoming like God, a major goal in Clement and the Platonic tradition generally, is attained by continence, through which our nature disciplines itself to the need of little; the less we need the more we are like God, who needs nothing.<sup>42</sup> To become free from passion is better than good (καλοῦ . . . ἄμεινον), says Clement with characteristic extravagance.<sup>43</sup> The truly (τῷ ὄντι) good man is defined as he who is entirely rid of the passions (ἔξω τῶν πάθων).<sup>44</sup> Perfection, the goal of all ethical striving, is described almost entirely in terms of individual ethical behavior. "One is perfected as devout (εὐλαβής) and as patient and as continent (ἐγκρατής) and as a worker and as a martyr and as a Gnostic."<sup>45</sup> It is also interesting to note what Clement does *not* say when dealing with certain matters. For example, he hopes that merely verbal strife will end, but not because this disturbs the unity of the church or is inconsistent with a loving spirit, as St. Paul argues in 1 Corinthians. The reason is rather that our goal is (individual) equanimity (τέλος ἡμῶν ἡ ἀταραξία).<sup>46</sup> Simply stated, "the greatest gift of God is self-control (σωφροσύνη)."<sup>47</sup> As the fall of man in paradise was due to the fact that he fell victim to

pleasure (ἡδονή) and was led astray by lusts (ἐπιθυμίας),<sup>48</sup> and as today men disobey the commandments because they are lovers of pleasure<sup>49</sup> and refuse to believe in God because they cannot bear self-control,<sup>50</sup> so also the essence of salvation must lie in the reversal of these conditions: the attainment of self-control.

It is also relevant in this context to consider what evidence exists to show that Clement's Gnostic is essentially independent and self-sufficient. Any fully communal ethic would necessarily imply much mutual give and take within the community. As we shall see, the Gnostic is expected to give a great deal to others. But he does not need the help of others. It seems that the Gnostic needs only God, and that the blessings of God, for him, are not channeled through others but come directly. Even from God he needs only a continuation of the status quo. Through divine grace and knowledge he is already sufficient to himself (ικανὸς ὢν ἥδη ἑαυτῷ). He is not lacking in the good things that are proper to him, having his resources in himself and being independent of others (ἀνεδείξ . . . τῶν ἄλλων), says Clement explicitly.<sup>51</sup> It is Christ's will that the Gnostic no longer need even the help given through the angels, "but being made worthy, should receive it from himself by means of his obedience."<sup>52</sup> Such a person hardly needs the help of other people. He is essentially independent, and his self-control makes him so.<sup>53</sup> One gets much the same impression

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., II. 108. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., II. 81. 1. See also *ibid.*, VII. 64. 5. In *ibid.*, II. 97. 1, doing good and generosity are also mentioned as qualities by which man becomes like God (since God as one who loves man, φιλόανθρωπος, is a favorite designation in Clement and is often applied to Christ as well), but self-control and endurance are listed first.

<sup>43</sup> *Strom.* IV. 147. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., VII. 65. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., IV. 130. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Paed.* II. 58. 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Strom.* II. 126. 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Protr.* 111. 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> *Strom.* III. 94. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Protr.* 61. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Strom.* VII. 44. 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., VII. 81. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., VII. 67. 8.

when considering more generally the extended descriptions of Gnostic virtue in Clement, especially in *Strom.* VI. 71. 1 to 83. 3 and *ibid.* VII. 59. 7—88. 3. The Gnostic's dominating relationship is with God. He is constantly hastening away from the things of this world to an ever more direct and immediate relationship to God. (We shall return to this when we treat the Gnostic's love to God and its importance in Clement's ethical scheme.) The contrast with primitive Christian eschatology, such as we find it in Paul, is striking when we consider how much Clement's Gnostic has "arrived." Fritz Buri has pointed out in his comparative study of Paul and Clement how the cosmic Pauline eschatology has in Clement faded into an individual freedom from the world.<sup>54</sup> But we are almost inclined to call Gnostic perfection in Clement a kind of realized individual eschatology. The Gnostic "is already, through love [to God] in the midst of those things in which he is destined to be"; he cannot desire anything, since he already has that which is to be desired.<sup>55</sup> The future is already present for him.<sup>56</sup> If this is so, how can he receive anything from others? Even his relationship to God leaves little to be desired. Realized eschatology is of course familiar to us from the Johannine literature. But this eschatological existence is lived in close community with "the brethren"; there is no hint of an ideal of an individual who has reached this state and passed beyond his fellow Christians. In Acts 7:55-60, the closing scene of Stephen's martyrdom, we seem to have an in-

dividual eschatological experience when Stephen sees the Son of Man standing (to receive Stephen?) at the right hand of God. But this is not a case of individual eschatology in the sense of a state achieved before death. Clement's Gnostic definitely appears to be quite beyond Luke or John in the extent of his individualism and self-sufficiency.

We may therefore say that no matter how much the Gnostic may love and do good to others, the communal relations in which he is involved are all curiously one-sided. Clement envisions an ideal church in which all the members need each other less and less as they increase in spiritual excellence.<sup>57</sup> This lack of receptivity on the part of the Gnostics would in turn tend to incline other less mature future Gnostics to practise individual rather than communal virtues. This tendency would increase as the number of full Gnostics in any given church increased. Considered from any perspective, the Gnostic's independence of others works against the solidarity of the community and community-oriented ethics and tends to put increased emphasis on an individual ethic.

On the other hand, however, Clement's Gnostic is not lacking in the social virtues. In considering these, we shall attempt to determine how great a role they play in the total scheme. The two major terms to be considered are love (*ἀγάπη*) and justice (*δικαιοσύνη*). The former is defined briefly as fellowship in life (*κοινωνία βίου*), or the intensity of friendship

<sup>54</sup> Buri, *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> *Strom.* VI. 73. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, VI. 77. 1.

<sup>57</sup> It is relevant to speak of the church here because all Christians, according to Clement, can become Gnostics; knowledge (*γνώσις*) is nothing more than simple Christian faith fully developed.

(ἐκτεῖνα φιλίας) and of affection (φιλοστοργίας), with right reason, in the enjoyment of associates (ἐταῖροι).<sup>58</sup> Akin to it is hospitality (φιλοξενία).<sup>59</sup> It can manifest itself in a number of ways, among which are mildness (πραότης), kindness (χρηστότης), forbearance (ὑπομονή), freedom from jealousy (ἄζηλία);<sup>60</sup> all this reminds us strongly of 1 Corinthians 13. In its train follow humanity (φιланθρωπία) and natural affection (φιλοστοργία), which is manifested in the love of friends or domestics.<sup>61</sup> Justice is defined once by Clement as "the harmony (συμφωνία) of the parts of the soul."<sup>62</sup> Much more commonly, however, he thinks along the lines of the Stoic definition he gives the term: "the virtue which apportiones to each one his due (κατ' ἀξίαν ἐκάστω . . . ἀπονεμητική)." <sup>63</sup> But he seems to go beyond this definition as well, and gives the term a warmth and outgoing spirit which it did not have in Stoicism. The first fruit of the Gnostic's justice, as Clement conceives it, is that he loves to be with those of a kindred spirit (ὁμόφυλοι) and to commune with them, both on earth and in heaven.<sup>64</sup> Clement elaborates by saying that for this reason also the Gnostic is ready to impart

to others all that he has.<sup>65</sup> In essence he here virtually identifies justice with love for others, as Voelker points out.<sup>66</sup> In short, love and justice are in Clement the other-directed virtues par excellence.

Clement's strong Biblical orientation appears here. He knows the statement that the commandments are comprehended in love of God and love of neighbor.<sup>67</sup> He quotes Isaiah 1:16-18; 58:6-7 on social justice,<sup>68</sup> Luke 17:3-4 on forgiving one's brother seven times a day,<sup>69</sup> and is aware of the command to love one's enemies.<sup>70</sup> He also quotes Col. 3:12-15 and Rom. 13:10 on the supremacy of love in the Christian life.<sup>71</sup> But the real question is to what extent this Biblical spirit pervades the rest of his writings.

How outgoing is the Gnostic? Certainly we cannot deny that the communal virtues play a large part in Clement's thought as a whole. He refers to justice as the supreme, all-perfect virtue (τῆς τε ἐπὶ πᾶσι παντελοῦς ἀρετῆς δικαιοσύνης).<sup>72</sup> Beneficence towards men (ἥ εἰς ἀνθρώπους εὐεργεσία) is called the most precious of possessions (κτῆμα τιμαλφέστατον).<sup>73</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., VII. 19. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Voelker, p. 465.

<sup>60</sup> *Paed.* III. 88. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., III. 89. 2; III. 90. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., III. 91. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., III. 92. 3; *Strom.* IV. 95. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., IV. 66. 3; IV. 113. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., VII. 17. 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Paed.* II. 36. 2. It should be pointed out that since this passage occurs in the *Paedagogus* we may suspect that it does not represent Clement's thought on the full Gnostic perfection. As we shall later see, this perfection, which is the final goal of all Clement's ethics, is characterized more by love to God than love to the neighbor. This same point applies to the other passages cited from the *Paedagogus* which refer to love to the neighbor.

<sup>58</sup> *Strom.* II. 41. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., II. 41. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., II. 87. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., II. 41. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., IV. 163. 4. This definition, which is Platonic, is also implied, as Voelker has pointed out, p. 467, in *Strom.* IV. 161. 2-3, where Clement defines δικαιοσύνη as peace (εἰρήνη) or the inner tranquility of the Gnostic.

<sup>63</sup> *Paed.* I. 64. 1. See H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (4 vols.; Leipzig: In Aedibus B. G. Tuebneri, 1921-24), III, 266.

<sup>64</sup> *Strom.* VII. 18. 3.



Once he states that faith, repentance, patience, practice, and learning all terminate in love (συμπεραιούται εἰς ἀγάπην), but this may apply to love to God rather than love to the fellowman.<sup>74</sup> He refers to neighbors as those "whom we ought to love above everything."<sup>75</sup> One of the most appealing applications of these principles is Clement's remarks on marriage and family. He speaks of helping one another as one of the chief purposes of marriage,<sup>76</sup> and can give as his reason for admiring the married state the fact that it offers the opportunity to share another's suffering and "bear one another's burdens."<sup>77</sup> The two or three gathered together in Christ's name are interpreted as husband, wife, and child by an unexpected turn in Clement's exegesis.<sup>78</sup> Marriage and family life are also regarded as a kind of test to see whether or not the Gnostic shows himself inseparable from the love of God even with these duties.<sup>79</sup> The Gnostic, it would seem, must even under certain circumstances forego his perfect equanimity; he is to esteem the other's grief as his own.<sup>80</sup> Likewise he is

to pray that he may be reckoned as sharing in the sins of his brethren.<sup>81</sup>

Implicit in Clement's thinking on love of others is the imitation of the Logos, Christ. As He is a lover of humanity (φιλόανθρωπος), so the Gnostic shows his love of humanity by sharing in the education of humanity, which, as Clement loves to say, is a prime concern of the Logos, who has always exhorted, admonished, rebuked, and educated all men.

Alongside the common early Christian virtues of mildness, gentleness, forbearance,<sup>82</sup> generosity,<sup>83</sup> strong reaction against the exposure of children,<sup>84</sup> honesty in business,<sup>85</sup> and praying with his fellow Christians,<sup>86</sup> Clement introduces an interpretation of martyrdom which seems somewhat unusual for him. Far from being only an individual act, martyrdom is to be endured for the good of the whole church.<sup>87</sup> Other Christians are strengthened in their faith by the spectacle of the martyr's endurance.<sup>88</sup> It is very significant that we have here an example of a good deed, endurance, which must be considered a part of both the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of Clement's ethics. There are also other examples of this, and it is evident that we cannot carry through any neat division of virtues into personal and communal. Furthermore, all the virtues are related; who-

inner act by which we desire to help our neighbor.

<sup>74</sup> *Strom.* II. 45. 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 105. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 143. 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 4. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 68. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 70. 7. Here love to God seems to be the uppermost consideration.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 78. 1. This would come very close to Paul's exhortation to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). But as Pire, pp. 430—31, has pointed out, Clement, although he uses the Scriptural term for mercy (ἔλεος), which the Stoics avoid as denoting passion (inadmissible for the sage), is in profound basic agreement with the Stoics in making it clear that ἔλεος is not an inner passion or disturbance in response to the grief of another; this is unworthy also of the Gnostic. It is rather only the

<sup>81</sup> *Strom.* VII. 80. 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 45. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Paed.* III. 35. 5.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 30. 2. See *Letter to Diognetus* 5. 6; Athenagoras, *Apology* 35.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 78. 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Strom.* VII. 49. 3.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 111. 1; IV. 75. 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 74. 3-4.

ever has one has them all.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, it is apparent from the evidence as a whole that certain virtues are basically individualistic whereas others are basically communal.

In attempting to draw some conclusions from what we have said of Clement, it should be stated at the outset that it is inadmissible to ignore the fundamental importance of the specifically Christian orientation which, granted his presuppositions, underlies his ethics and, in fact, all his thought. First of all he assumes that all that is good, especially ethically good, in any culture is a result of the workings of the Logos, Christ.<sup>90</sup> Therefore there can be no fundamental cleavage between Christian and philosophical ethics (excluding Epicureanism).<sup>91</sup> Clement would not admit that any element in his ethics or in his theology as a whole is not inspired by the Logos, the divine Pedagog, who has always and everywhere exhorted men to salvation, but who has now been decisively manifested in the incarnation of Christ. This new appearing of the Logos, which Clement celebrates so eloquently as the New Song in the *Protrepticus*, supplies the energy and enthusiasm for the accomplishment of any ethical goal, whatever its nature, level of maturity, or origin—whether it be oriented toward the individual or the community. Thus Clement's ethics has its unifying principle. Even the second and third books of the *Paedagogus*, with all their heavy borrowings from contemporary philosophy, are fundamentally Christian in the sense that they are set in the context of and inspired by that aspect of Clement's

teaching where he is most radically Christian: his doctrine of baptism.<sup>92</sup> When speaking of baptism Clement stands, it is true, in sharpest tension with his more frequent, Hellenistic conception of the gradual development of individuals toward Gnostic perfection under the tutelage of the divine Pedagog, the Logos. But the fundamental importance of baptism for Clement's total system can scarcely be denied, especially when we consider a closely related concept that reappears constantly in the first book of the *Paedagogus*, that of the Christian, regardless of age, as a newborn, innocent child, not in the sense of being naive, but as being utterly open and receptive to the loving pedagogy of the Logos, and above all as being the object of a new and fresh outpouring of the divine solicitude for man in the appearance of the Logos on earth. The worldwide movement inaugurated by this appearance has banished age and futility in all who are a part of it. As Friedrich Quatember has perceptively pointed out, childhood and the childlike spirit have become for Clement "die Ahnung einer neuen reineren Welt."<sup>93</sup> The new revelation, by which "the universe has already become, so to speak, an ocean of blessings (ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν τὰ πάντα ἤδη πέλαγος γέγονεν ἀγαθῶν),"<sup>94</sup> is in the

<sup>92</sup> Clement's thought here has all the force of the primitive Christian conception of radical renewal in baptism. Compare his enthusiastic outburst in *Paed.* I. 26. 1: "Being baptized, we are enlightened; enlightened, we are made sons; made sons, we are perfected; perfected, we are made immortal." Here we come close to an individual realized eschatology already in baptism, not in the last stages of Gnostic perfection, as in *Strom.* VI and VII.

<sup>93</sup> Friedrich Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandrien* (Wien: Verlag Herder, 1946), pp. 107—8.

<sup>94</sup> *Protr.* 110. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Strom.* II. 80. 2-3.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, II. 122. 1.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 127. 1.

first book of the *Paedagogus* applied to the individual, makes him a pupil of the Logos, and effects his constant regeneration. The vitality of the Christian life at all points of its development and in whatever form it may be expressed, is in the last analysis based on the new revelation of God in Christ, since there is no sharp break between the earliest and the final stage in the development of the Gnostic, but only a fully organic process with the same basic principles in operation at all levels. It is for this reason that any division between the Christian and the less Christian within his own system is unthinkable for Clement.

While taking full cognizance of Clement's own view of his ethics as thoroughly grounded in the activity of the Logos, it remains to look more closely at the most crucial term in early Christian ethics, love (ἀγάπη), and Clement's use of it. Saint Paul, when speaking of ἀγάπη, almost always means man's love to his fellowman, not his love to God. In Clement we find a different attitude: Love to God takes precedence over love to the neighbor and tends to obscure it. It soon becomes apparent, upon examining Clement's writings, that he is even more enthusiastic about love to God than love to the fellowman. More than once he says that faith is perfected by knowledge (γνῶσις), and knowledge by love, love being the final goal.<sup>95</sup> But it is quite evident from the context that love to God is meant, not love to man. Love is called "more holy and lordly than all knowledge (ἀγιωτάτη καὶ κυριωτάτη

πάσης ἐπιστήμης)," but this too is love for God.<sup>96</sup> This contrasts with 1 Corinthians 13, where love for the fellow Christian is exalted above knowledge. The same is true when Clement says that love is to be chosen for its own sake, not for the sake of anything else,<sup>97</sup> or when he refers to love simply as "perfect (τέλειος)." <sup>98</sup> Once in *Who Is the Rich Man Who Shall Be Saved?* he seems to diverge from this pattern when he refers to the second part of the dual commandment to love God and one's neighbor as being "in no way less important (οὐδέν τι μικρότερον)" than the first part.<sup>99</sup> But almost immediately thereafter he clearly states that love of our neighbor is secondary to love for God.<sup>100</sup> The same tendency is even more striking when Clement misinterprets New Testament passages referring to love of the neighbor to refer to love for God. "If I . . . have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3) becomes for Clement, in disregard for the context, a reference to "faithfulness to the Lord out of love."<sup>101</sup> Elsewhere "love which bears all things . . . and endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) is clearly applied to love for God.<sup>102</sup> In a rather jolting bit of exegesis Clement introduces Stoic apathy into the Sermon on the Mount, interpreting "the peacemakers" of Matt. 5:9 as those who have achieved inner tranquility;<sup>103</sup> here again an originally so-

<sup>95</sup> *Strom.* VII. 55. 7; VII. 57. 4. According to Voelker also, love to God in Clement is the supreme virtue, p. 94; it "immer im Zentrum seines Fühlens steht," p. 202, and must transcend love to the neighbor, pp. 482, 538—39.

<sup>96</sup> *Strom.* VII. 68. 1.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 67. 2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 102. 1; IV. 53. 1; IV. 100. 4; VI. 75. 1.

<sup>99</sup> *QDS* 28. 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. 1.

<sup>101</sup> *Strom.* IV. 112. 2-3.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 52. 3.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 40. 3.

cial virtue is transformed into a personal one.

It should be noted that love for God is not always accorded first place in Clement; in fact, once knowledge (γνῶσις) is spoken of as that by which love is perfected.<sup>104</sup> But this is not a serious inconsistency, since "knowledge" in Clement is generally a broad term denoting the sum total of the Gnostic virtues or a fully developed faith (πίστις); the very use of the term "Gnostic" for the ideal Christian implies this.<sup>105</sup>

Another seeming discrepancy which can be resolved quite easily is that between the supremacy of apathy and the supremacy of love for God as ethical goals. As we have pointed out, Clement often speaks of apathy as the chief goal of life, but there is no real contradiction since it is, as Nygren has excellently expressed it, "apathy to the lower world."<sup>106</sup> Stoic apathy is set in a broader, Platonic context. Self-control is not a goal in itself, but makes it possible to flee the material world so as to attain more uninterrupted communion with God—to become a friend of God.<sup>107</sup> And what more logical way could there be to become a friend of God than by attain-

ing apathy, since God Himself is the prime example of one free from all passion?<sup>108</sup>

But it is not our aim here to investigate thoroughly Clement's concept of the Gnostic's love for God. The crucial point for our purposes is that the chief goal of self-control is not communal in nature—it is not service to the fellowman. It is true that there is some evidence that it is, especially in the *Paedagogus*, as we have pointed out. But the dominant motif in those parts of Clement's writings dealing with Gnostic perfection, the real goal for him, is self-control for the sake of becoming closer to God, not for the sake of the neighbor. Furthermore, while it is true that Clement does not rigidly separate love for God and love for the neighbor (he explicitly says that one should love his neighbor because of his love for God),<sup>109</sup> it would be very misleading to suppose that the two commandments are so thoroughly merged in his mind that whenever he mentions love for God he automatically means love for the neighbor as well. This is simply not borne out by Clement's writings, long passages of which concentrate on an otherworldly love for God with little or no reference to the neighbor. Besides, as we have seen, Clement, along with Judaism and Jewish Christianity generally, distinguishes the two commandments.<sup>110</sup> And when he does merge them, as when he says that one should love "the Creator through the creatures,"<sup>111</sup> I strongly suspect that Nygren is right when he interprets such passages as a kind of denigration of love to the neighbor rather than its

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., II. 31. 1.

<sup>105</sup> E. F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), pp. 159—67. On the very intimate interconnections and interdependencies among faith, knowledge, and ethics in Clement, see also P. T. Camelot, *Foi et Gnose: Introduction a l'Étude de la Connaissance mystique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1945), especially pp. 30, 54.

<sup>106</sup> Anders Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1953), p. 364.

<sup>107</sup> Voelker, pp. 192, 195.

<sup>108</sup> *Strom.* II. 81. 1.

<sup>109</sup> *Strom.* IV. 75. 2.

<sup>110</sup> *QDS* 29. 1.

<sup>111</sup> *Strom.* VI. 71. 5.

exaltation; Clement, he says, "was bound to find love to the neighbor, in its simple concrete sense, far too earthbound."<sup>112</sup>

But Nygren's whole approach to Clement is also open to objection. According to him Clement's theology is based on the "Hellenistic *ordo salutis*."<sup>113</sup> First of all, "Platonic" would have been more accurate than "Hellenistic." The Stoics did not favor "Eros pieté," since there is no transcendent "ladder of love" to climb in Stoicism. But more important, Nygren tends to overlook the soteriological basis of Clement's entire thought. Clement would insist, as we have pointed out, that all his thought is inspired by the Logos. If man is to love God, it is because of the fact that the divine philanthropic Logos has first loved man in His gracious, worldwide, and unceasing pedagogy of the human race. The point is that even in his strong emphasis on love to God, Clement is in a real sense Christian as well as "Hellenistic," even though this emphasis tends strongly to obscure love to the neighbor and militate against a communal ethic.

At this point it is perhaps relevant to note that our study so far poses certain methodological problems which are present to an unusual degree in any study of Clement. There is always a certain danger in marshalling as evidence individual passages from an author's writings as a whole, which we have done to a considerable extent, and this is particularly true in this most elusive of early Christian authors with all his intentional as well as unintentional obscurity.<sup>114</sup> Voelker, and especially Mon-

désert, have pointed out his extreme flexibility and often vagueness in the use of terminology.<sup>115</sup> Inconsistency in thought is also, as has been frequently noted, not at all unusual in a man so omnivorous in his intellectual tastes as Clement. There are, however, in Clement's works connected passages, too long to quote here, in which he sums up what he conceives to be the goal of ethics. We refer again to *Strom.* VI. 71. 1—83. 3 and *Strom.* VII. 59. 7 to 88. 3, in which the reader gets the same cumulative impression as in the other passages we have referred to: The Christian community definitely seems to sink into the background in Clement's ethics. The forefront is occupied by the goal of apathy, or passionlessness, and immediate communion of the individual with God.

The question of the sources of Clement's attitude arises at this point. Any question of the sources of Clement's thought is vexing considering the extremely wide range of his interests. Our aim is not to cite great numbers of parallel passages, which has often been done before, but to touch briefly only on those passages which seem most significantly to reflect major tendencies in ethical orientation.

It should first be noted that as far as our evidence goes Clement's ethical orientation is largely absent from non-Gnostic or anti-Gnostic Christian tradition up to

<sup>112</sup> Nygren, p. 367.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 362—63.

<sup>114</sup> *Strom.* I. 15. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Voelker, p. 19, has shown how Clement often defines a term for only one context and then forgets this definition the next time he uses the term. Therefore a single passage quoted as evidence is not always really representative of his thought as a whole. Claude Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), p. 88, takes as one example the extreme inconsistency in his use of *ἀντίτροποι*, which he uses with various meanings ranging from "to signify symbolically" to simply "to say."

his time.<sup>116</sup> The New Testament and the apostolic fathers present us basically with closely knit Jewish-Christian communities whose ethics generally reflects a strong communal emphasis. Anton Voegtle has given much of the evidence for the divergence of New Testament ethics from the more individualized Stoic ideal in his *Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*.<sup>117</sup> Even in the Pastoral Epistles, where the individual-centered virtue of self-control (σωφροσύνη) is much more common than elsewhere in the New Testament,<sup>118</sup> and where Stoic commonplaces concerning self-sufficiency are important,<sup>119</sup> love is explicitly said to be the goal (τέλος) of exhortation (1 Tim. 1:5). The apostolic fathers show the same basic pattern. In I Clement the plea for self-control is for order among the members of the community, not the inner harmony of the

individual. Ignatius regards as the three main virtues faith, love, and unity (Phil. 11. 2), especially the latter (nothing is better than oneness in the church, Poly. 1. 2). A similar communal emphasis is apparent in the catalog in the Didache 1. 1-5. On the other hand, the Shepherd of Hermas presents us with a case of a document which, although heavily Jewish-Christian in character, puts primary emphasis on an ascetic-oriented morality which is also quite individual-centered. Very striking in this regard are two lists of seven virtues which occur in Hermas. The two lists differ somewhat in detail, but both put faith (πίστις) and continence (ἐγκράτεια) first and love (ἀγάπη) last. The order in which the virtues are listed is not merely fortuitous. Immediately after the list in *Vis.* 3. 8. 3-4, they are connected systematically: Continence comes from faith (the source of the other virtues), single-mindedness (ἀπλότης) from continence, etc.

In the 2d century Greek apologists and Irenaeus, too, the dominant accent is usually, although not always, communal. This is clear in Aristides.<sup>120</sup> Justin Martyr shows a strong emphasis on self-control (σωφροσύνη),<sup>121</sup> but his stress on the more social qualities seems equally strong, if not stronger.<sup>122</sup> Athenagoras tends to

<sup>116</sup> I accept as a provisional definition of Gnosticism the statement agreed upon by the 1966 Messina conference on Gnostic origins. According to this statement Gnosticism, as opposed to gnosis, is a more or less Christian phenomenon of the 2d century A.D., characterized by "the idea of a divine spark in man, deriving from the divine realm, fallen into this world of fate, birth and death and needing to be awakened by the divine counterpart of the self in order to be finally reintegrated." Ugo Bianchi, ed., *Le Origini Dello Gnosticismo, Colloquio Di Messina 13-18 Aprile 1966* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. XXVI. This form of Gnosticism is to be sharply distinguished from Clement's Gnostic, or ideal Christian.

<sup>117</sup> Anton Voegtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament; exegetisch, religions- und formgeschichtlich untersucht* (Muenster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936), especially pp. 122, 144.

<sup>118</sup> Statistics in Burton Scott Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 233.

<sup>119</sup> As in 1 Tim. 6:6-10. See Easton, pp. 164-65.

<sup>120</sup> *Apol.* 14. 3; 15. 7-12.

<sup>121</sup> *I Apol.* 15. 1-8; 10. 1. He can even speak of the moral effects of conversion as "σωφρονίζεω, to practise self-control," *II Apol.* 2. 1-2.

<sup>122</sup> This is especially true in the *Dialog with Trypho*, which we have no reason to suppose is less typical of Justin's thought than the Apologies. See *Dial.* 27. 2; 96. 3; 133. 6. In *Dial.* 93. 2-3, all morality is divided into two branches: love of God and love of the neighbor. See also *I Apol.* 15. 9-17; 27. 1; 67. 1,6.

exalt self-control, especially chastity, above the other virtues, but Theophilus of Antioch is even more communally oriented in ethics than the other apologists. He delivers strong exhortations on social justice on the basis of Is. 1:16-17; 58:6; Jer. 6:16; Hos. 12:6; Zech. 7:9-10;<sup>123</sup> and sums up ethics as being devout, acting righteously, and doing good (*καλλοποιεῖν*), elaborating on the first by citing the First Commandment, on the second by the Fourth Commandment, and on the last by the Fifth to the Tenth Commandments.<sup>124</sup> The anonymous apology known as the Letter to Diognetus shows the same tendency. The author defines the imitation of God in entirely communal terms: taking up the burden of one's neighbor and ministering to those in need.<sup>125</sup> Although the chief purpose of Irenaeus is to refute the Gnostic heresy, some ethical motifs are apparent. He emphasizes the Christian's love toward God more than does St. Paul but less persistently than Clement of Alexandria.<sup>126</sup> His ethical statements are more consistently Biblical and communal than those of Clement, and consequently when like Theophilus of Antioch he sums up the Law in love of God and love of the

neighbor,<sup>127</sup> there is less to contradict this statement in the rest of his writings than is the case with Clement.

In general, it seems probable that Clement's overall ethical emphasis with regard to individual and community is not dependent on what we know of the main lines of the non-Gnostic Christian tradition prior to his time, even though we have definite evidence that he knew, in addition to the Bible, some of the apostolic fathers.<sup>128</sup>

This leaves, however, the area of Gnostic Christianity prior to Clement and the possibility that it might have colored his ethics. It is not easy to characterize Gnostic ethics, since Gnostics were generally more interested in speculation and their own brand of soteriology than what is generally termed ethics. Nevertheless it seems safe to say that although there are passages in Gnostic writings which emphasize such communal concerns as love and almsgiving,<sup>129</sup> the overwhelming impression received from these works is that the central ethical and soteriological task of the Gnostic is to free his essential self from the world through secret gnosis. His main duty is not to mankind but to this essential

<sup>123</sup> *Ad Autol.* 2. 12.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-9. Furthermore, Theodor Ruetter in his *Die sittliche Forderung der Apatheia in den beiden ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten und bei Klemens von Alexandrien* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1949), p. 46, has noted that the largely individual ethical goal of ἀπάθεια, or passionlessness, which is found in Justin and Athenagoras, is absent in Theophilus.

<sup>125</sup> *Letter to Diognetus* 10. 6.

<sup>126</sup> In *Adv. haer.* IV 22. 2, and in *Epideixis* 87 he applies New Testament passages which definitely refer to love toward the fellowman to love toward God. Clement did much the same thing.

<sup>127</sup> *Epideixis* 95.

<sup>128</sup> He mentions I Clement in *Strom.* IV. 110. 2, the Didache in *Strom.* IV. 105. 1, and the Shepherd of Hermas in *Strom.* I. 181. 1.

<sup>129</sup> For example, Gospel of Thomas, Saying 26; Gospel of Philipp 110. 6; 125. 20-35; and Gospel of Truth 32. 35-33. 32, in R. M. Grant, ed., *Gnosticism: A Source Book of Heretical Writings from the Early Christian Period* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 155. See also *Pistis Sophia* 104-5, 141, and R. M. Grant, "Review of *Gnosis und spaetantiker Geist*, by Hans Jonas," *Journal of Theological Studies*, VII (1956), 308-13, where he notes the Carpocratian work *On Justice*.

self, and it is not uncharacteristic when the Gospel of Thomas, in quoting Tobit 4:15 ("What you hate, do not do to another."), omits the last two words.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, in the Acts of John (3d century or earlier),<sup>131</sup> which shows definite Gnostic traits,<sup>132</sup> the central ethical emphasis is celibacy and personal purity.<sup>133</sup> The Acts of Thomas, which probably reflect 3d-century Syrian Gnosticism,<sup>134</sup> reveal a strong individual ascetic preoccupation: approximately the last half of the document is devoted to the story of how John induced a certain woman to refuse sexual intercourse with her husband. In addition, we have evidence that the Naasene Gnostics<sup>135</sup> and Gnostics such as Saturninus<sup>136</sup> and Tatian<sup>137</sup> condemned all sex relations, although the Valentinian Gnostics approved of marriage.<sup>138</sup>

It is possible that Clement was influenced toward an individual-centered ascetic morality by the Gnostics. This is not to say that he approves of the central Gnostic aim of the flight of the inner man from

the world, rather than his moral transformation; he condemns this idea as salvation by nature.<sup>139</sup> But despite this very basic disagreement, Clement displays a wide acquaintance with Gnostic authors and sometimes agrees with them on certain points. For example, he quotes (with no indication of disapproval) Valentinus' quasi-docetic concept of the body of Christ, whose digestive system was supposed to have been unlike that of other humans.<sup>140</sup> In Book III of the *Stromata* Clement formulates his view of marriage in the context of a sort of commentary on the views of the Gnostics — both the hard-core ascetics and the libertines. Since he definitely ends up more on the side of the former than the latter,<sup>141</sup> it is possible that he was to some extent influenced on the question of marriage in an ascetic direction by the ascetic Gnostics. At least we may say that ascetic Gnosticism was part of the total intellectual and moral background of his ascetic view of marriage, which is part of his ethical individualism. But regardless of the precise extent of Gnostic influence on Clement, his view of marriage is most probably to be traced back ultimately to Jewish and Jewish-Christian asceticism. One looks in vain in Hellenistic philosophy for any great preoccupation with celibacy or the need for rigorous sexual control; rather the aim is personal freedom through a comprehensive

<sup>130</sup> R. M. Grant, ed., *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1960), p. 78.

<sup>131</sup> It is first attested by Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* III. 25. 6.

<sup>132</sup> Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *Edgar Hennecke: New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. II*, English trans. ed. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 211—14.

<sup>133</sup> Acts of John 63, 107, 113.

<sup>134</sup> Schneemelcher, II, 440.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Grant, ed., *Gnosticism: A Source Book* . . . , p. 111.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>137</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* III. 12. 86. On Tatian's eventual development into Gnosticism see Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae propheticae* 38. 1.

<sup>138</sup> *Strom.* III. 1. 1.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 3. 2-3.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 27. 1-2.

<sup>141</sup> Clement was quite ascetic in his view of marriage. He believed that in marriage intercourse should be practised with self-control and only for the purpose of begetting children (*Strom.* III. 71. 4). After intercourse one should regard one's wife as a sister (*Strom.* VI. 100. 3).



inner detachment from all external things.<sup>142</sup> In Jewish and Jewish-Christian asceticism, on the other hand, the emphasis on celibacy and rigorous self-control in marriage is much more pointed and intense. While it is doubtful that Judaism as a whole could be called ascetic at this time, it is now recognized that strong ascetic tendencies were present in at least some segments of Judaism and Jewish Christianity. We see these tendencies not only in the Qumran literature and the New Testament, but also in the Shepherd of Hermas, an excellent example of 2d-century Jewish Christianity.<sup>143</sup> And Arthur Vööbus has shown that early Syriac Christianity, which had a Jewish-Christian background, was strongly ascetic and included the exaltation of celibacy.<sup>144</sup> In general it seems that Daniélou has good reason for saying that Clement's ascetic view of marriage is not of Greek derivation but passed from early Jewish Christianity into his thought.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>142</sup> This is also the general conclusion of E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), pp. 30—35. The chief example of pagan celibacy he notes is Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.

<sup>143</sup> In *Vis.* 2. 2. 3 Hermas is told that his wife is henceforth to be a sister to him. In *Sim.* 9. 11. 3,7 there is a kind of "spiritual marriage" between Hermas and the 12 maidens who personify the virtues; he sleeps with them as a brother, not as a husband. The strongly Jewish character of the Shepherd of Hermas is evident from the fact that Daniélou uses it more than any other single document in reconstructing the theology of Jewish Christianity. *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, tr. and ed. John A. Baker (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1964), textual indices.

<sup>144</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* (Louvain: Van den Bempt, 1958), pp. 8, 14.

<sup>145</sup> Daniélou, p. 374.

It remains to consider the influence of Stoicism on Clement's ethics. Stoicism is of paramount importance in this regard because, as Henry Chadwick has remarked, the philosophy which was generally taken for granted by educated pagans in the first and second centuries A.D. was mainly a blend of Stoic ethics and Platonic metaphysics.<sup>146</sup> Clement's debt to Stoicism has long been recognized. Wendland's demonstration of Clement's dependence on the first century A.D. Stoic Musonius Rufus or something similar to his work,<sup>147</sup> or even a glance at the index of Staehlin's edition of Clement leaves little doubt on this point. And despite serious disagreements with the Stoics,<sup>148</sup> Clement explicitly says that he admires the Stoic ethical principle that the virtue of the inner man is not affected by such external things as disease or health—that such things are indifferent.<sup>149</sup> The numerous parallels between Clement's ethics and Stoic ethics

<sup>146</sup> Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> Paulus Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonianae de Musonio Stoico Clementis Alexandrini Aliorumque Auctore* (Berolini: apud Mayerum et Muellerum, 1886), pp. 24—32, where he adduces many very close parallels between Clement and Musonius. He concludes that much of *Paed.* II. and III. comes directly from Musonius, pp. 31—32. However, Johannes Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1933), pp. 32 to 33, argues that the material which Wendland brings forward is not extensive enough to substantiate the latter's conclusions; he finds Wendland's attempt too "scharfsinnig," but concedes that in the *Paedagogus* Clement was to a great extent dependent on Stoic ethics.

<sup>148</sup> His most serious objections center largely on the fact that the Stoics do not recognize God's transcendence above the material world. *Strom.* I. 51. 1; *Protr.* 66. 3.

<sup>149</sup> *Strom.* IV. 19. 1.

have been set forth in detail in several excellent, fairly recent works,<sup>150</sup> and I shall not attempt to repeat them here. The point is that a persistent individualism, manifested chiefly in the demand for a general individual ἀπάθεια runs like a thread through both Stoic and Clement's ethics and outweighs any stress on social virtues. The four main Stoic virtues themselves indicate this: of prudence, courage, self-control, and justice, only one is specifically oriented toward others, which is, as we have seen, exactly the same percentage as in Clement's four cardinal virtues: piety, courage, self-control, and justice. Likewise, in von Arnim's exhaustive collection of fragments relating to the old Stoa, Chrysippus' detailed depiction of the sage makes him primarily an individual rather than a social being. Only three of the twelve main sections can be construed as relating him to his fellowman, whereas the remaining nine extol, as usual, his wisdom, freedom, austerity, and so on.<sup>151</sup> The ethical individualism of the old Stoa is, of course, precisely what we would expect in the early Hellenistic period, a period which, as scholars universally acknowledge,

stressed the welfare of the individual rather than of the city-state or other community.<sup>152</sup> What is not always acknowledged is that Stoicism under the early empire is also based on the early masters. Epictetus, for example, once speaks of his task as a teacher of philosophy thus: "I beseech you to learn from Chrysippus . . ." <sup>153</sup> Philo also testifies that most of the technical instruction among the Stoics of this period (early first century A.D.) was scholastic and based largely on the founders of the school.<sup>154</sup>

It therefore seems reasonable to infer that Stoicism was the major source in Clement's emphasis on the importance of individual ἀπάθεια and his relative neglect of the community in ethics. His particular orientation diverges sharply from the non-Gnostic Christian tradition, and his ideal Christian, with his ambiguous orientation of both acceptance and rejection of the good things of the world, is certainly far closer to the Stoic sage than to the Gnostic and his essentially anti-cosmos position. But the church up to Clement's time, needless to say, had also given considerable attention to the more individual sphere of ethics, and its teaching is therefore not entirely incompatible with Stoic individualism. Since Clement considered himself first a Christian and only secondarily a

<sup>150</sup> Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l'Église de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris Éditions du Seuil, 1957); Max Pohlenz, "Klemens von Alexandria und sein hellenisches Christentum," *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Göttingen: Philologisch-Historische Klasse*, 1943, pp. 103 to 180 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943); Voelker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*. Of these three works, Voelker emphasizes the Stoic influence much less than the other two. But even he notes that a spirit of aloofness and pride in Clement's Gnostic reminds us strongly of the Stoic sage, p. 241.

<sup>151</sup> *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, III, 146 to 164.

<sup>152</sup> Paul Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912) is still a classic statement on this point, especially pp. 45—50.

<sup>153</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* I. 10. 10.

<sup>154</sup> Émile Bréhier, *The History of Philosophy*, Vol. II: *The Hellenistic and Roman Age*, trans. Wade Baskin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 153.

philosopher, this individual-oriented element in the Christian tradition undoubtedly served as a kind of bridge over which Clement could cross to admire, ponder upon, and adopt many features of the proud Stoic sage and his unassailable fortress of inner ἀπάθεια. But why did Clement appropriate so much spirit of the lonely Stoic that his own Christian community, and indeed the human community, falls into the background in precisely his foremost area of concern—ethics? To explain through what channels he did it is not to explain precisely why he did it. We may say that Clement's ideal of ἀπάθεια is set in a metaphysical context: it is to lead to perfect communion with God—already in this life. The Middle Platonic quest for the vision of God was strong in educated circles at this period, and very soon the even more transcendent and otherworldly atmosphere of Neoplatonism was to become dominant, arising in Clement's own city of Alexandria. To attain the goal one had to become free from the things of this world, and especially from the disturbances of passion. In this quest Clement had found the perfect Guide and Master in Christ, who, he was certain, intended that he and all Christians should partake—not in a cosmic, eschatological salvation in which the church as a body would be saved and the earth be renewed—but in precisely that individual vision of and assimilation

to the changeless God which the yearnings of his age demanded.

In conclusion, we might note briefly the limitations and main results of this study. We have not dwelled on what is theologically the cardinal feature of Christian ethics in contrast to all other types of ethics, that is, that it grows out of and is inseparable from the Christ event. Starting with the orientation of ethics itself, in this case Clement's ethics in his cultural milieu, and leaving aside the question of basic motivation, we see that not all Christian thinkers necessarily follow St. Paul in making love of the neighbor the fulfilling of the Law. This is hardly startling; the same thing could be said of many other individuals in the church's history, especially, perhaps, ascetics and contemplatives. And when we say that individual self-perfection is basically the *summum bonum* in Clement, we are, perhaps, dealing with what is basically only one Christian's views around the year A.D. 200; it would be surprising if none of Clement's Christian contemporaries agreed with him, but we are not suggesting that the whole church of this time did. What is significant is that the dominant non-Christian humanistic ethics of the day (Stoicism) and Gnosticism had the same basic individualistic ethic and did much to influence at least one prominent Christian thinker in this direction.

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