

EARLY ORTHODOXY: THE SCRIPTURES IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Abstract

This article establishes the role and view of Scripture in Clement of Alexandria's literary legacy. It argues that his writings reflect a belief in the verbal divine inspiration of holy Writ that extended to words and even syllables. In Clement's view the Scriptures served as an educational tool in the hand of God to teach people his ways. The Holy Spirit is considered the author of Scripture, who wrote the Bible for this purpose and continues to apply its truths to the hearts and minds of men and women. Clement refers to most of the books of the later canon of the Bible as authoritative or specifically as Scripture.

1 INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM STATEMENT

What was the role and view of the Scriptures in early Alexandrine Christianity? The Bible doesn't have much to say about the ancient Greek city of Alexandria, which was founded by Alexander the Great around 331 BC. The only references are in Acts (6:9; 18:24; 27:6; 28:11). Clement is the first major Christian author who operated in this second city of the Roman Empire. Did Clement have an understanding of a Bible containing authoritative Scriptures, and did he appeal to those with his readers? Or should religious authority and divine guidance be a fluent matter that was determined by the religious community as it sensed itself inspired by the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth? Was the historical Jesus established by the experience and interaction of the community, or did it receive authoritative tradition from the outside. Was divine intervention and speech recognized as phenomenon? If so, what may be said about the reception of Moses, the prophets and the apostolic writings in second century Egypt? May one already speak about a high view of the Scriptures as vehicles of God's truth and revelation with Clement of Alexandria?

For this purpose, statements in Clement's main works *Stromateis*, *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* will be examined. For many centuries the viewpoint has been maintained that the *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Stromata* were a trilogy leading one to faith (cf. Drobner 2007:134). Whether Clement possibly wrote another trilogy that is now lost, or intended these books as such, is less relevant to the purpose of this article, but

the general estimation right down the centuries certainly reflects that *Stromateis*, *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* are usually considered Clement's best works and representative of the great Alexandrine Church leader. These books are usually dated towards the end of the second century (cf. Heine 2004:118, Moreschini 2005:253). Probably the only positive date from Clement's life is that he wrote part of the *Stromateis* (1.21.144.1-5) during the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 193-211). From Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.11, 6.14.8-10) comes the information that Clement fled Alexandria early in the third century to escape a persecution instigated by this emperor (cf. Grant 1986:178). On the whole, scholars have supposed that Clement wrote most of his books in Alexandria, which consequently must have been before he fled the city and died in exile, supposedly in Cappadocia.

2 STROMATEIS

Not all of Clement's writings form a useful basis to establish his views on divine writ. Some, like "The rich man who can be saved" have a weak manuscript tradition or don't have one at all. Other books, like his "Extracts from Theodotus," and to some extent his "Prophetic selections" as well, could be argued to be essentially the work of other authors which Clement preserved for his own use (cf. Altaner & Stuiber 1974:194). This might well be true for his *Stromateis*, ("strings of thought," "miscellanies," or "patchwork") as well. Heine (2005:118) characterizes as follows: "the *Stromateis* gives the impression of a rambling series of jottings" (cf. Chadwick 1954:17). However, Clement foresaw that his readers might come to such assessments:

"As far as this work is concerned, it is not a book to impress, but basically things I wanted to preserve for myself, as a treasure in old age collected as aid for my memory" (Strom.1.11.1,2).¹

¹ Migne, *Stromateis* 1.1.11.1-2: "Ἦδη δὲ οὐ γραφή εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τετεχνασμένη ἦδε ἡ πραγματεία, ἀλλὰ μοι ὑπομνήματα εἰς γῆρας θησαυρίζεται, λήθης φάρμακον, εἶδωλον ἀτεχνῶς καὶ σκιαγραφία τῶν ἐναργῶν καὶ ἐμψύχων ἐκείνων, ὧν κατηξιώθην ἐπακοῦσαι, λόγων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν μακαρίων καὶ τῶ ὄντι ἀξιολόγων.

Still, it could be argued that as Clement obviously esteemed his sources very highly – in the introduction he speaks about “blessed men of renown” – that their views would be basically identical with that of the second century church leader.

Right from the start it is clear where Clement is headed. His readers should not be autodidacts but ‘*theodidacts*’. Or as Osborn puts it (1994:11):

“We are taught by God, instructed by the son of God in the truly 'sacred letters which are the scriptures'.” (Str. 1.20.98.4.)²

The *Stromateis* are quite fascinating for the Bible scholar, not in the least because they indicate the existence of an authoritative body of New Testament or apostolic writings:

“The literature of the Scriptures of the Lord is absolutely essential to prove what is said, particularly when those who listen have had a Greek education” (Strom.6.91.5).³

The idea that these Scriptures are proof in itself, indicates a role of authoritative divine revelation that is presented in these writings. The reference to the ability to understand Greek, supposes Scriptures in this language, combined with the expression “Scriptures of the Lord,” would bring the Gospels to mind. More than a century ago, Kutter (1897:152) already established that the tradition of the Lord should be identified with the Scriptures: “es ist daher unstatthaft, Überlieferung und Schrift zu trennen.” Of course, it is possible that the expression represents a very Christological view of the Septuagint (cf. John 5:39), which should not be regarded as unnatural for Clement in the light of other statements he makes about the presence and activity of Jesus in Moses and the Prophets. But what Strom.6 seems to indicate, at face value, is the existence and necessity of Holy Scriptures in the Greek language to establish faith contents and doctrines for the early Church.

² Migne, *Stromateis* 1.20.98.4: θεοδίδακτοι γὰρ ἡμεῖς, ἱερά ὄντως γράμματα παρὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ παιδευόμενοι.

³ Migne, *Stromateis* 6.11.91.5: ἢ τε τῶν γραφῶν τῶν κυριακῶν ἀνάγνωσις εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τῶν λεγομένων ἀναγκαία, καὶ μάλιστα, ἐὰν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀνά.

The seventh book of *Stromateis* is fortunately more specific. It defines the nature of the Scriptures, speaks about a canon of truth, divine writings that call for obedience now. It also gives greater detail about this holy writ that more or less covers the period of Old and New Testament by a division of Prophets, Gospel and Apostles that is very much in line with the Bible as the Church recognizes it nearly two thousand years after Clement of Alexandria. Osborne (1989:53) confirms this: “The Lord gives, through the prophets, gospel and apostles, in different ways and at different times, all truth from beginning to end. If a more ultimate source be sought, then we should be caught in infinite regress. The only first principle is the voice of the Lord and from this all else is tested and proved.”

Strom. 7.94-96:

“Like the Virgin Mary the Scriptures of the Lord give birth to the truth and likewise stay virgins, cloaked by the mysteries of the truth.”⁴

“Really people who took up most worthy causes, without possessing the standard of truth, received from the truth, must be shaken terribly. Someone who diverts from the right way is usually uncertain where to go. This is really a consequence of their inability to distinguish between true and false as they never developed discernment. If they had, they would have listened to the divine Writings.”⁵

“As basis for our teaching we have the Lord, who spoke through the Prophets, as well as through the Gospel and through the blessed Apostles, from the

⁴ Migne, *Stromateis* 7.16.94.1,2: τοιαῦται δ' ἡμῖν αἱ κυριακαὶ γραφαί, τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀποτίκτουσαι καὶ μένουσαι παρθένοι μετὰ τῆς ἐπικρύψεως τῶν τῆς ἀληθείας μυστηρίων. The reference to Mary comes from the previous verse, 7.16.93.7 Ἀλλ', ὡς ἔοικεν, τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ μέχρι νῦν δοκεῖ ἡ Μαριάμ λεχῶ εἶναι διὰ τὴν τοῦ παιδίου γέννησιν, οὐκ οὔσα λεχῶ (καὶ γὰρ μετὰ τὸ τεκεῖν αὐτὴν μαιωθεῖσάν φασι τινες παρθένον εὐρεθῆναι).

⁵ Migne, *Stromateis* 7.16.94.6: ἀληθείας. οἱ τοιοῦτοι δέ, ἅτε ἀποπεσόντες τῆς ὀρθῆς ὁδοῦ, κὰν τοῖς πλείστοις τῶν κατὰ μέρος σφάλλονται εἰκότως, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἀληθῶν καὶ ψευδῶν κριτήριον συγγεγυμνασμένον ἀκριβῶς τὰ δέοντα αἰρεῖσθαι. εἰ γὰρ ἐκέκτηντο, ταῖς θείαις ἐπειθόντο ἂν γραφαῖς. Cf. Klibengajtis 2004:331.

beginning till the end, in many ways and several occasions, as our guide to wisdom.”⁶

“In this way we become convinced by way of evidence, because as we put faith in them, we give proof from the Scriptures about the Scriptures. Even if heretics have the courage to use the prophetic Writings, they don’t use all of them, or don’t teach everything they say, or don’t regard the context and connection that the Prophecy suggests.”⁷

These quotes suggest a vital role of the Scriptures in Christian life. Clement combines this with “truth,” of which he had a very straightforward concept. Ferguson (1976:63) sums up: “Truth is of divine origin, revealed by the Logos, expressed in the scriptures, handed down in the traditions of the church.” According to Clement it is the Scriptures that give birth to God’s truth in a believer’s life. Genuine religious experience has a divine initiative. It starts with the Word of the Lord. This primacy of the Word, perhaps versus ceremony and initiations, is important to Clement. The church father also presents the “divine writings” in a context that identifies them as the standard or canon of truth, against which right and wrong are measured. This already comes very close to what would become the orthodox understanding of Scripture. Clement doesn’t issue a call to listen to the leadership of the Church, or to one’s inner voice, but to adhere to the divine writings that were read in church meetings or were also otherwise available to his readers. “Clement is a scriptural theologian. Only the Scripture is capable of giving real certainty,” confirms Von Kampenhausen (1969:202).

Loosely quoting from Hebrew 1:1, Clement expresses the view that Jesus spoke: through the prophets of the Old Testament, through the Gospel and through the Apostles. With these categories he basically covers all of Scripture. New Testament

⁶ Migne, *Stromateis* 7.16.95.3,4: ἔχομεν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας, τὸν κύριον διὰ τε τῶν προφητῶν διὰ τε τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ διὰ τῶν μακαρίων ἀποστόλων πολυτρόπως καὶ πολυμερῶς ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος ἠγοῦμεν τῆς γνώσεως.

⁷ Migne, *Stromateis* 7.16.96.1-3: οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀπ’ αὐτῶν περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν τελείως ἀποδεικνύντες, ἐκ πίστεως πειθόμεθα ἀποδεικτικῶς, κἂν τολμήσωσι προφητικαῖς χρῆσασθαι γραφαῖς καὶ οἱ τὰς αἰρέσεις μετιόντες, πρῶτον μὲν οὐ πάσαις, ἔπειτα οὐ τελείαις, οὐδὲ ὡς τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ ὕφος τῆς προφητείας ὑπαγορεύει, ἀλλ’ ἐκλεγόμενοι τὰ ἀμφιβόλως εἰρημένα εἰς τὰς ἰδίας μετὰ γουσι δόξας, ὀλίγας σποράδην ἀπανθίζόμενοι φωνάς, οὐ τὸ σημαίνον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν σκοποῦντες, ἀλλ’ αὐτῇ ψιλῇ ἀπο χρώμενοι τῇ λέξει.

books are treated authoritatively as well and used for proof (cf. Mees 1970:169). For Clement, Scripture is not a mere book that has authority in the religious community. It is the voice of God. The essential element, the qualifying factor that makes writings Scripture, is that God is behind the words. The Lord spoke through the prophets of the Old Testament, through the Gospel and through the Apostles. This is Clement's ultimate reason to ascribe authority to these books and present them as the standard of truth. Clement's view that the apostle Paul wrote Hebrews fits well in this general context: "He says that the Epistle to the Hebrews is the work of Paul, and that it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew language. Luke however, translated it carefully to make it available for the Greeks and for this reason the same style of expression is found in this epistle and in the Acts."⁸

3 *PROTREPTICUS*

One of Clement's other main works is his "Exhortation to the Greeks," the *Protrepticus*. The 'protreptic,' or admonition, was a genre which introduction is ascribed to Aristotle (Moreschini 2005:252). It urged students to embrace a particular concept or discipline. Clement used it to exhort the Greeks to embrace Christianity. That he exhorted the Greeks should come as no surprise as Alexandria was a Greek city and perhaps the most important see of Greek culture in the Roman Empire at the time.

In this exhortation Clement contrasts the songs of pagan mythology that spread error with the new song of the Word, the Logos, the bringer of light and truth. Timothy (1973:60): "The way of truth is one, which from every side, like a perennial river, receives tributary streams. Falsehood has innumerable bypaths by comparison, the Greek philosophical and other sects having disrupted this unity each boasting as the truth the portion of truth that has fallen to its lot." Clement's Logos was quite distinct from Greek philosophy in that it had a very different basis: "Denn der Logos den die Stoa kante, war noch nicht der göttliche, und der vollkommene Wandel des Menschen lässt sich nicht auf menschliches Wissen gründen, sondern nur auf Offenbarung Gottes" (Polenz 1943:177). In his *Protrepticus*, Clement proceeds to attack the

⁸ Migne, Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.14.2: καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους δὲ ἐπιστολὴν Παύλου μὲν εἶναι φησιν, γεγράφθαι δὲ Ἑβραίοις Ἑβραϊκῆ φωνῇ, Λουκᾶν δὲ φιλοτίμως αὐτὴν μεθερμηνεύσαντα ἐκδοῦναι τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν, ὅθεν τὸν αὐτὸν χρῶτα εὐρίσκεσθαι κατὰ τὴν ἐρμηνείαν αὐτῆς τε τῆς ἐπιστολῆς καὶ τῶν Πράξεων.

mystery religions, the pagan temple services, astrology and mythology. In the first chapter of the *Protrepticus*, one finds a similar reference to Hebrews 1:1. As was already found in the *Stromateis*, Clement shows himself a firm believer that God is the ultimate author of the Scriptures, who used the prophets to communicate with this world. *Protrepticus* 1.8.3-4:

“As he has many voices and ways to attend to the salvation of men, the Saviour admonishes when he threatens, converts with noise, takes care with weeping, encourages as he sings the Psalms, speaks through a burning bush,⁹ because those involved had a need for signs and wonders. He also frightened people with fire, when he lightened the column of fire, which is fearful and an evidence of grace at the same time. When you are obedient, there shall be light, but if not, the fire awaits. Whereas the body is of greater value than a column or bush, the Prophets take up the word thereafter, while it is the Lord himself who speaks through Isaiah, it is he who speaks through Elijah, himself who speaks through the mouth of the Prophets.

4. But you, if you don't believe the prophets, but if you suppose that both these men as well as the fire are a myth, then the Lord himself will speak to you, he 'who, while he was in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Inclined to be merciful God put aside his own interests, because he longed to save mankind. And even now the Word speaks clearly to you, while he puts unbelief to shame.”¹⁰

It is a recurring thought in the *Protrepticus* that God speaks through (διὰ) or through the mouth (ἐν στόματι) of people who are also qualified as his spokespersons (e.g. προφητῶν αὐτός). In this passage Clement brings John 1:1 to mind, by introducing the Word as active personified noun (ὁ λόγος λαλεῖ), representing God himself, who

⁹ Ex 13:21

¹⁰ Migne, *Protrepticus* 1.8.3-4: Πολύφωνός γε ὁ σωτὴρ καὶ πολὺτροπος εἰς ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν· ἀπειλῶν νοθετεῖ, λοιδορούμενος ἐπιστρέφει, θρηγῶν ἐλεεῖ, ψάλλων παρακαλεῖ, διὰ βάτου λαλεῖ (σημείων ἐκείνοι καὶ τεράτων ἐχρηζόν) καὶ τῷ πυρὶ δεδίττεται τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἀνάπτων ἐκ κίονος τὴν φλόγα, δεῖγμα ὁμοῦ χάριτος καὶ φόβου· ἐὰν ὑπακούσης, τὸ φῶς, ἐὰν παρακούσης, τὸ πῦρ. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ κίονος καὶ βάτου ἢ σὰρξ τιμιωτέρα, προφητῆται μετ' ἐκεῖνα φθέγγονται, αὐτὸς ἐν Ἡσαΐα ὁ κύριος λαλῶν, αὐτὸς ἐν Ἡλίᾳ, ἐν στόματι προφητῶν αὐτός· σὺ δὲ ἀλλ' εἰ προφήταις μὴ πιστεύεις, μῦθον δ' ὑπολαμβάνεις καὶ τοὺς ἀνδράς καὶ τὸ πῦρ, αὐτὸς σοὶ λαλήσει ὁ κύριος, "ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἠγάγησάτο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ· ἐκένωσεν δὲ ἑαυτόν" ὁ φιλοικτίρμων θεός, σῶσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον γλιχόμενος· καὶ αὐτὸς ἤδη σοὶ ἐναργῶς ὁ λόγος λαλεῖ, δυσωπῶν τὴν ἀπιστίαν.

presently continues to addresses even Clement’s readers through the Scriptures. Clement doesn’t have time for those who don’t put faith in the words of the Prophets. He criticizes philosophers who refer both the Prophets and the phenomenon of the column of fire that guided the Israelites in the days of the exodus to the realm of myths. He uses strong language and warns that God himself will address men who hold such views. In this way he adheres to the prophets and the miraculous in Scripture as historic phenomena and encourages his reader to do likewise. This passage also shows that a mythological interpretation of Moses and the Prophets is not a new phenomenon that was introduced by the Enlightenment, but is essentially as old as the early Church. Clement, and other early leaders of the Church like Irenaeus, just didn’t agree with this mythological approach. They favoured an exegesis that incorporated signs and wonders like a historic virgin conception, a column of fire to guide by night, and a God who literally spoke through the mouth of Prophets and Apostles. It is important to realize that the rejection of the mythological approach by the early Church was not a result of ignorance and lack of ability for advanced considerations. There was a conscious choice in favour of a God who literally intervenes in human history through words and actions, ultimately by entering creation through his Son.

Clement provides his readers with detailed information about the importance of holy writ for spiritual life, *Protrepticus* 8.77.1:

“Now is it time for us to continue with the prophetic Scriptures, for these oracles lay the foundation for the truth, by teaching us the fear of God in a very practical way. The divine Scriptures and their wise requirements are roads to salvation.”¹¹

Earlier, he connected the Scriptures with historical truth and preferred literal exegesis to a mythological one that only preserved kernels of historic truth. Here Clement considers the practical truth of Scripture for spiritual life in a pragmatic way. It is true and it works: Christians learn to serve God and are better off as a result.

¹¹ Migne, *Protrepticus* 8.77.1: “Ὡρα τοίνυν τῶν ἄλλων ἡμῖν τῇ τάξει προδιηνυσμένων ἐπὶ τὰς προφητικὰς ἰέναι γραφάς· καὶ γὰρ οἱ χρησιμοὶ τὰς εἰς τὴν θεοσέβειαν ἡμῖν ἀφορμὰς ἐναργέστατα προτείνοντες θεμελιοῦσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν· γραφαὶ δὲ αἱ θεῖαι καὶ πολιτεῖαι σώφρονες σύντομοι σωτηρίας ὁδοί.

For Clement, reading the Scriptures was like a personal encounter with God. Whether it was Moses, the Prophets or the Apostles, they disappear into the background. For Clement these were all vehicles and instruments used by the real author, the Holy Spirit. *Protrepticus* 8.82.1 offers a fine example:

“I could mention countless Scriptures to you, of which not one tiny bit shall pass without being fulfilled; because the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, has spoken these things.”¹²

For Clement the human author that may have been used to write Scripture down, is left unmentioned. He is almost irrelevant. What really matters to Clement is that one meets with God as a Person, the Holy Spirit, the mouth of the Lord. When dealing with Psalm 95 and speaking about the Israelites who tempted God in the wilderness, Clement remarks: “And if you want to know what this temptation was about, the Holy Spirit will tell you!”¹³ and Clement provides the answer with a quote from the same psalm.

In the *Protrepticus* it becomes clear that for Clement the Scriptures are not just religious books that continue to inspire. He meets with his Master and listens to his voice. The Scriptures, therefore, belong to the realm of God. They are holy and special. This even extends to the words that carry the voice of God. Clement cares to speak about “holy letters and syllables,” when he quotes from and deals with 2 Tim 3:14-15.

“Because truly holy are these letters who produce holiness and form after God’s likeness – the holy letters and syllables with which the Scriptures are put together — the same apostle calls these words in their grammatical construction (Liddell & Scott 1996:1724): ‘God-breathed, useful for teaching,

¹² Migne, *Protrepticus* 9.82.1: Καὶ μυρίας ἂν ἔχοιμί σοι γραφὰς παραφέρειν, ὧν οὐδὲ "κεραία παρελεύσεται μία", μὴ οὐχὶ ἐπιτελής γενομένη· "τὸ γὰρ στόμα κυρίου", τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, "ἐλάλησεν ταῦτα."

¹³ Migne, *Protrepticus* 9.84.4: Ἡ δὲ δοκιμασία τίς ἐστὶν εἰ θέλεις μαθεῖν, τὸ ἅγιόν σοι πνεῦμα ἐξηγήσεται· "καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου," φησί, "τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη· διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον· ἄει πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ· αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου, ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου·

for warning, for improvement, for education in righteousness, so that a man of God is well prepared for every good work.”¹⁴

As the letters and syllables are put in the service of God, they become holy in a priestly sense (ἱερὰ). They intermediate between God and man. Humankind is able to hear the voice of God because of these words in their grammatical construction, as every letter and syllable is used in his service. Their ultimate goal is to prepare God’s servants to make a difference on earth. This role of teaching and preparation is further developed in the *Paedagogus*.

4. PAEDAGOGUS

Clement distinguishes a development in revelation. God spoke through Moses, through David, through Isaiah (διὰ Ἡσαΐου) etc. The incidents and quotes are plentiful in Clement’s writings and the *Paedagogus* is no exception. Clement’s overall aim is to present God as the educator and guide of his people. Although some would argue that a pedagogue’s role was mainly attention to the child’s good behaviour while instruction was the teacher’s job, Clement’s divine *Paedagogus* is presented as both educator and guide (cf. Moreschini 2005:253-257). Quoting from the books of the Old and New Testament, Clement presents the Lord, the Spirit and the Word to edify and to guide. Although he doesn’t use the word, these Trinitarian lines are deeply imbedded.¹⁵ His view of Logos is considered orthodox.¹⁶ In this process God speaks

¹⁴ Migne, *Protrepticus* 9.87.1-2: Ταύτην ὁ ἀπόστολος τὴν διδασκαλίαν θεϊαν ὄντως ἐπιστάμενος "σὺ δέ, ὦ Τιμόθεε," φησίν, "ἀπὸ βρέφους ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσει εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ." Ἱερὰ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς τὰ ἱερο ποιοῦντα καὶ θεοποιοῦντα γράμματα, ἐξ ὧν γραμμάτων καὶ συλλαβῶν τῶν ἱερῶν τὰς συγκειμένας γραφάς, τὰ συντάγματα, ὁ αὐτὸς ἀκολούθως ἀπόστολος "θεοπνεύστους" καλεῖ, "ὠφελίμους οὐσας πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἔλεγχον, πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρητημένος."

¹⁵ "Clement of Alexandria reveals a surprising grasp of theological concepts and their implications. The way in which he describes revelation in general reveals this. Von Kampenhausen (1969:202-203): "Thus it comes that, a generation before Origen, Clement appears as the first Christian theologian to grasp the full extent of the problem of hermeneutics. He does not imagine that it can be solved purely externally by appealing to particular exxlesiastical rulings or norms – a method which in fact simply destroys Scripture and denies it real influence. He is fully familiar with the inevitable circle in which all understanding of biblical truth, by its very nature, must move. The word of the Holy Spirit can be known only with the help of that Spirit; it is essential that we should have received the Church’s guideline’, the guideline of truth, or the truth itself, that is the Logos of God, who speaks to us in Scripture."

¹⁶ Edwards made a study of Clement and his doctrine of the Logos and concludes (2000:177): "The least tentative conclusion to be drawn from the present study is that Clement held no theory of two

and uses the mouths of his prophets and servants. They are but a vehicle, an instrument in divine service. Clement elaborates when he refers to King David. It was David who sung the Psalms, but for Clement it really was the Holy Spirit who used him as his instrument. He refers, but qualifies: “David, that is, the Spirit who used him.”¹⁷ According to Clement it really was the Holy Spirit who sung the Psalms.

“Because the Holy Spirit sung the psalmody: I shall see the heavens, the works of your fingers, also he who made the heavens, dwells in the heavens, and the heaven is his throne.”¹⁸

God’s plans, however, came all together in Jesus Christ. Old and New are part of the same plan, instigated by the same Word of God. It is the same mission of divine guidance, the pedagogue who educates his people.

“The Law is the older gracious gift that was given via Moses by the Word. For this reason the Scripture says: the Law was given through Moses - not really by Moses, but by the Word – through Moses as his servant. It served only for the time being, the everlasting grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Look at the warnings of Scripture!”¹⁹

The Lord is the true saviour and educator, who used his Word to that purpose, Paed.1.11.1: Ὅτι διὰ νόμου καὶ προφητῶν ὁ λόγος ἐπαιδαγωγῶγει (“because through the Law and the Prophets the Word edifies.”) Both Moses and the prophets served this pedagogic end, providing guidance to God’s children.

stages in the procession of the logos. Consequently we have no reason to quarrel with the evidence that he posited an eternal generation of the logos as a hypostasis distinct from God the Father.”

¹⁷ Migne, *Paedagogus* 1.9.87.3: Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Δαβὶδ, τουτέστι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ δι' αὐτοῦ, ἄμφω περιλαβὼν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ψάλλει θεοῦ· δικαιοσύνη καὶ κρίμα ἐτοιμασία τοῦ θρόνου σου·

¹⁸ Migne, *Paedagogus* 1.8.73.1: ὅτι ὄψομαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, ἔργα τῶν δακτύλων σου καὶ ὁ κτίσας τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς κατοικεῖ καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς θρόνος σου τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἔψαλλεν.

¹⁹ Migne, *Paedagogus* 1.7.60.1-2: Ὁ δὲ νόμος χάρις ἐστὶν παλαιὰ διὰ Μωσέως ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου δοθεῖσα. Διὸ καὶ φησιν ἡ γραφή· ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωσέως ἐδόθη, οὐχὶ ὑπὸ Μωσέως, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ λόγου, διὰ Μωσέως δὲ τοῦ θεράποντος αὐτοῦ· διὸ καὶ πρόσκαιρος ἐγένετο, ἡ δὲ αἰδῖος χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. Ὅρατε τὰς λέξεις τῆς γραφῆς.

“In the old days the Word educated through Moses, afterward also through the prophets, however Moses was a prophet also.”²⁰

The guidance and edification of people on earth is God’s idea: ἐστιν ὁ παιδαγωγὸς ὁ κύριος (“The Lord is the Pedagogue,” Paed. 1.8.62.2). According to Clement of Alexandria, God is the great edifier who equips people for his service.

The unity in ministry comes out in the second book of the Pedagogue. Clement asserts that the Apostles were anointed with the same Holy Spirit that sung in the Psalms. It was through them, their feet, that the Lord reached the ends of the earth.

“Because the feet that were anointed with lovely smelling ointment point to the good rumour of the teaching that finds its way to the ends of the earth. Because ‘their voice travelled to the ends of the earth.’ And I probably do not express it too forcefully <if I say> that the anointed feet of the Lord are the Apostles, with the sweet smelling anointing of prophecy as they became partakers of the Holy Spirit. While they travelled all over the world and proclaimed the Gospel, they became allegories of the feet of the Lord, about whom the Spirit divines in advance through the Psalmist: ‘We may kneel at the place where his feet stood, that is, where the feet of his Apostles were seen through whom he preached to the ends of the earth.’”²¹

Like the first and second, the third book of *Paedagogus* also emphasizes this unity in authorship and overall purpose of divine guidance for human life. It is the same God and Lord who speaks in diverse ways.

“O deepness of riches and wisdom, says he.”²² As many treasures are stored by the one God, some are revealed through the Law, others through the Prophets,

²⁰ Migne, *Paedagogus* 1.11.96.3: Πάλαι μὲν οὖν διὰ Μωσέως ὁ λόγος ἐπαιδαγωγέει, ἔπειτα καὶ διὰ προφητῶν· προφήτης δὲ καὶ ὁ Μωσῆς.

²¹ Migne, *Paedagogus* 2.8.61.3-62.2: μύρω γὰρ εὐώδει ἀλειφόμενοι οἱ πόδες θεϊκῆν αἰνίττονται διδασκαλίαν ἐπὶ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς μετ’ εὐκλείας ὀδεύουσιν· ἐξῆλθεν γὰρ ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς. Καὶ εἰ μὴ φορτικὸς εἶναι δοκῶ, οἱ πόδες οἱ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ μεμυρισμένοι ἀπόστολοι εἰσιν προφητεία τῆς εὐωδίας τοῦ χρίσματος ἁγίου μεταλαμβάντες πνεύματος. Οἱ γοῦν περινοστήσαντες τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀπόστολοι καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κηρύξαντες πόδες ἀλληγοροῦνται κυρίου, περὶ ὧν καὶ διὰ τοῦ ψαλμῶδου προθεσπίζει τὸ πνεῦμα· Προσκυνήσωμεν εἰς τὸν τόπον, οὗ ἕστησαν οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, οὗ ἔφθασαν οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ οἱ ἀπόστολοι, δι’ ὧν κηρυσσόμενος ἐπὶ τὰ πέρατα ἦκεν τῆς γῆς.

²² Rom 11:33.

others come straight out of the mouth of God, again others from the sevenfold revered Spirit, however, just as the Lord, who is himself the Pedagogue is the one <who speaks> through all of these.”²³

The way that Clement quotes from Romans 1:33 in this context, shows that what would become known New Testament Scripture, is authoritatively referred to as God speaking. This is further confirmed when Clement more closely describes the role of the Holy Spirit as the author of divine writ. In his view, both the Law of Moses and the message of the New Testament are words of the same Comforter, the Paraclete. The words are united in authorship. Word and Spirit spoke, using the mouth of Moses or the mouth of the Apostles.

“As such the Laws of the Word, the Words from the Paraclete are not written in stone table by the hand of the Lord, but carefully written in the hearts of people who are not receptive to destruction only. For this reason the tables of those with hardened heart are scattered, so that the things of under-aged faith would be impressed in weak consciences. Both kinds of Law served the Word to teach humankind, either through Moses, or through the Apostles.”²⁴

Clement follows this up with a long list of quotes from Ephesians, Galatians, Colossians and other books from the New Testament. It is with an understatement that he starts of *Paedagogus* 3.97.1:

“These few from many, for the sake of example from them, the Pedagogue, as he made his way through the Divine Scriptures sets forth to pupils, through these, to put it briefly, to cut out evils and restrict wickedness. In the holy

²³ Migne, *Paedagogus* 3.12.87.4-88.1 ὁ βάθος φησὶ πλούτου καὶ σοφίας. Θεσαυροὶ δὲ ὑφ' ἐνός πολλοὶ χορηγούμενοι θεοῦ, οἱ μὲν διὰ τοῦ νόμου, οἱ δὲ διὰ προφητῶν ἀποκαλύπτονται, οἱ δὲ τῷ θεῷ στόματι, ἄλλος δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος τῆ ἐπτάδι ἐπάδων· εἷς δὲ ὢν ὁ κύριος διὰ πάντων τούτων ὁ αὐτός ἐστιν παιδαγωγός.

²⁴ Migne, *Paedagogus* 3.12.94.1-2: Τοιοῦδε μὲν οἱ λογικοὶ νόμοι, οἱ παρακλητικοὶ λόγοι οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶ λιθίναις δακτύλῳ γεγραμμένοι κυρίου, ἀλλ' ἐν καρδίαις ἀνθρώπων ἐναπογεγραμμένοι ταῖς μόνον φθορὰν οὐκ ἐπιδεχομέναις. Διὰ τοῦτο τοὶ κατεάγασιν αἱ πλάκες τῶν σκληροκαρδίων, ἵν' αἱ πίστεις τῶν νηπίων ἐν μαλθακαῖς τυπωθῶσιν διανοίαις. Ἄμφω δὲ τῷ νόμῳ διηκόνουν τῷ λόγῳ εἰς παιδαγωγίαν τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ὁ μὲν διὰ Μωυσέως, ὁ δὲ δι' ἀποστόλων.

scrolls myriads to instruct specific persons have been written, some concerning elders, or overseers and deacons, others about widows.”²⁵

From these references to the pastoral letters, Timothy in particular, it is clear that Clement considered these books from the New Testament as holy Writ, just as much as Moses and the Prophets. Or in his more specific words in chapter three of the *Pedagogue*: “Divine Scriptures” and “holy scrolls” or even: “Bible books”.

CONCLUSION

According to Clement of Alexandria, God speaks and uses men and their writings to make his Word accessible to humankind. *Stromateis*, *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* are not so much interested in Scripture as a phenomenon, but emphasize the divine author that it represents. Scripture is a vehicle of the “voice of God” and his truth (cf. Osborn 1989:53). Clement feels “bound to the authority of scripture as inspired revelation by which alone he has certitude concerning God’s will and purpose” (Chadwick 1985:64). Although the scope of this article does not allow for greater detail, Clement’s knowledge, both of Scripture and Greek literature, was phenomenal: “Er war nicht nur mit der Hl. Schrift und fast mit der gesamten vor ihm liegenden christlichen Literatur vertraut, sondern besass auch, wie die aus mehr als 360 verschiedenen profanen Schriftstellern entnommenen Zitate beweisen, eine ausgebreitete, auf selbständigen Studium beruhende Kenntniss der griechischen philosophischen und klassischen Literatur” (Altaner & Stuiber 1978:191).

Although Clement focuses on the author, this does not weaken his view of Scripture, but rather strengthens it. Men, their grammar, the letters and syllable they write, are taken into divine service. The Holy Spirit used their mouth to speak. The letters and syllables become holy as they are taken up in divine service. The communication is God’s, the vehicles of grammar and words his holy writ. Clement proved to have an

²⁵ Migne, *Paedagogus* 3.12.97.1: Ὀλίγα ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν δείγματος χάριν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν διεξελθὼν τῶν θείων γραφῶν ὁ παιδαγωγὸς τοῖς αὐτοῦ παρατίθεται παισίν, δι’ ὧν, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, ἄρδην ἐκκόπτεται κακία καὶ περιγράφεται ἀδικία. Μυρίαί δὲ ὅσαι ὑποθῆκαι εἰς πρόσωπα ἐκλεκτὰ διατείνουσαι ἐγγεγράφαι ταῖς βίβλοις ταῖς ἀγίας, αἱ μὲν πρεσβυτέροις, αἱ δὲ ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις, ἄλλαι χήραις, περὶ ὧν ἄλλος ἂν εἶη λέγειν καιρός.

understanding of a Bible containing authoritative Scriptures, and used this to appeal to his readers.

Religious authority and divine guidance showed far from a fluent matter, as the religious community, either in past or present, played no role in the process of divine revelation.

Stromateis, *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* are unanimous in their evidence for the view that the historical Jesus and Mosaic theology were not established by the experience and interaction of a religious community, but present realities and historic accounts. Mosaic theology was authoritatively revealed by God to Moses from the outside. All three books recognize divine intervention and speech as phenomenon. Osborn (1994:11) puts it concisely: “For Clement the divine oracles are alive.” Clement even contrasts this process of direct revelation in a context of historical truth with the Greek concepts of mythology that transmit spiritual truths and ideas with historic kernels of truth, rejecting the latter in favour of the first.

Generally, Clement recognized Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles as holy writ. Kutter (1897:105): “Schriften dagegen, die ausserhalb der Offenbarungszeit stehen, charakterisieren sich eben dadurch als Schriften zweiten Grades, mögen sie noch so sehr Offenbarungstoff gleichsam in sich tragen.” Clement is indicative of an early orthodoxy with a very high view of the Scriptures in written format as vehicles of God’s truth and revelation.

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