Indeed, the heavenly and truly divine eros comes to people in this way. What am I exhorting you to do? I urge you to be saved. Christ wants this, in one word, he freely grants you life.

This selection from Clement of Alexandria’s Protrepticus indicates the intent of this greatest protreptic work of second-century Christianity, a work still relevant for evangelization as witnessed by the first paragraph of the 2013 papal encyclical Lumen Fidei. Clement exhorts the nations to accept salvation.

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2 Scholars debate much about Clement, but most prefer a date still in the late second century for the Protrepticus. Elizabeth A. Clark summarizes the opinions “Bardenhewer held that the Protrepticus was written between 195-99, Zahn, before 199, Harnack, in the 180’s, Überweg, after 195 André Mehat, about 195.” See her Clement’s Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria’s Refutation of Gnosticism, Texts and Studies in Religion (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1977), 93-94. Subsequent scholarship has not moved the date later. Although Clement’s protreptic has some similarities with the extant fragments of Aristotle’s Protrepticus, Clark has a more particular interest, as her book’s subtitle indicates.
tion, the freely given life of Christ, offered out of divine love. While scholars have had an increasing interest in Clement, especially in identifying his philosophical sources and his engagement with Gnosticism, his protreptic key of persuasion in love through Christ has not been sufficiently appreciated. The *Protreptikos* sings of true love in a world of false loves. Love is its nearly constant subject matter, as it uses the term *philia* at least seventy-nine times in various grammatical forms, *erōs* at least thirty-four times in various grammatical forms, and *agapē* at least seventeen times in various grammatical forms. Yet, Clement's understanding of love has been obscured, such as by a polemic against the use of *erōs* as authentically Christian.

The following study exposes the protreptic aspect of love in the *Protreptikos*. It first considers the *Protreptikos* within the scholarly controversy of identifying apologetics and *protreptics* in ancient literature, and next situates Clement's song of persuasion against the backdrop in the Roman Empire of the false desires and disordered loves which conform people to be like their immoral gods. From this more general attention, it focuses

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4 While the content of the song will be discussed, Clement's musical style can be immediately noted. Werner Jaeger advises the reader "read, for example, the first sentences of Clement's *Protrepticus* they have to be chanted, as was done by the New Sophists of this age, who used certain patterns of rhythmic prose" (132, n 27). For Jaeger, this musical quality of Clement's writing seems to be a fault today "his prose is often close to poetry, and its rhythm, which imitates musical measures, is not always pleasant to the modern ear" (60). See his *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961). For a detailed rhetorical study of Clement's style, which serves his protreptic purpose well, see H. Steneker, *ΠΕΙΘΟΤΣ ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΙΑ Observations sur la Fonction du Style dans le Protreptique de Clement d'Alexandrie*, Graecitas Christianorum Primaeva (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V., 1967). For an analysis of Clement and music, see Charles H. Cosgrove, "Clement of Alexandria and Early Christian Music," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2006) 255–82.

5 Searches done through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

on Christ as the New Song, the Bridegroom who pours out God's love on the whole world, deifying people in that love. Following this, it offers an analysis of the text's final chapter and then a consideration of the key term of *philanthrōpia*, a term too little appreciated in Anders Nygren's classic *Agape and Eros*, before drawing its conclusion.

By studying the protreptics of love, we find that Clement sets Christian salvation as the surpassingly beautiful goal given by God who through the Logos shows his love for creation. *Philanthrōpia* moves the audience to choose between what is least desirable and what is most desirable, judgment and grace—a form of the ancient decision between two ways. Clement offers himself as the exemplar: "As for me, I do not consider it a matter to doubt which of these is better. No, it is not permitted to compare life with destruction." This model can still teach about the persuasiveness of love for salvation today.

**PROTREPTIKOS WITHIN PROTREPTIC LITERATURE—RE-CONTEXTUALIZING CLEMENT'S SONG OF LOVE**

Claude Mondésert, S.J., introduces his edition of the *Protreptikos* with this description of its author: "Among the 'Greek Fathers,' Clement is without contest one of the most alluring [séduisants]." This description is quite appropriate for the author of a work whose genre, the *logos protreptikos*, offers an exhortation in persuasion to attract an audience. Before looking in detail at Clement's work, it would be beneficial to situate Clement in the second-century context and assess how he continues and transforms an intellectual engagement of Christians with the other peoples of the Roman Empire.

It is customary to group the Christian writers after the "apostolic fathers" as the "apologists." With this term, some historians neatly group together a collection of quite different authors and their texts. By doing so, they identify the second half of the second century as a time for accused Christians to defend their actions before imperial officials. A Eusebian interpretation of martyrdom can then accompany apologetics as the other side of the same coin. Martyrdom and apology both show that Chris-

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8 Prot 12.123.2

9 Mondésert, *Le Protreptique*, 5 He goes on to bemoan that Clement is not well known

10 By Eusebian interpretation, I mean that martyrdom serves the interest of political theology—the Christian faith's confrontation of a non-Christian Empire. Note especially the
tians are on the defensive. Although this interpretation of history still has great currency, Christians in the second century used the distinctive protreptikos with more frequency (and perhaps more success) than has been appreciated. Recent scholarship has reopened the questions of what apologetic and protreptic discourses preserved from early Christianity were meant to do. The following argues, in conversation with opposing and complementary scholarship, that Clement should be situated within the protreptic context.

Annewies van den Hoek studies both the apologetic and the protreptic in an essay devoted to Clement. Her interesting study displays the importance of recovering the protreptic, and it also demonstrates some hazards of such a project. She writes, "'apologetic' seems more to refer to themes and subject matter while 'protreptic' is more connected with a style, a manner of address and a mode of discourse with a strong ethical component." Applying this to Clement, she says, "At the risk of oversimplification, it could be said that the message is apologetic but the package is largely protreptic." When questioned by Antonie Wlosok about precisely this point, van den Hoek replied, "You are right in pointing out that the distinction between content and form does not solve the question and is ultimately not satisfactory. The basic problem for me is that 'apologetic' is modern and 'protreptic' is ancient, and that we probably should not use these terms in such close proximity. I was, however, 'commissioned' to speak about these two aspects and tried to find out what they might mean for the reader of Clement." The following seeks to make a stronger argument about the protreptic's distinctiveness, precisely within the ancient terms of that mode of discourse.

One ancient source not referenced by van den Hoek is the Rhetoric to Alexander, attributed to Aristotle, but perhaps written by Anaximenes. A particularly important review study is Annewies van den Hoek, "Apologetic and Protreptic Discourse in Clement of Alexandria," with following discussion by conference participants in L'Apologétique Chrétienne Greco-Latine a l'Époque Prénicéenne, vol. 51 of Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, September 13–17, 2004, conference (Foundation Hardt Geneva, 2005), 69–102. For a work not sensitive to the protreptics question and which focuses more on Clement's Paedagogos and Strömata, see Johannes Bernard, Die apologetische Methode bei Klemens von Alexandrien. Apologetik als Entfaltung der Theologie, Erfurter Theologische Studien, vol. 21 (Leipzig St Benno-Verlag, 1968)
The text lists seven species of public speech: exhortation (protreptics) and dissuasion; eulogy and vituperation; accusation and defense (apologetics); and investigation. This helpfully shows how protreptics and apologetics are, for its author, two things of the same status, but with different functions in the kinds of speech. Apologetic discourse, which is under forensic practice, is "the refutation of errors and offences of which a man is accused or suspected." There are furthermore three methods for apologetics: to prove that he did none of the things charged; if forced to admit that he did them, that he did them because it was lawful, just, noble, and to the public advantage; or if he is forced to admit guilt and cannot give good reasons for the trespass, that little error resulted from the fact. Protreptic discourse, on the other hand, is "an attempt to urge people to some line of speech or action." The speaker "must prove that the courses to which he exhorts are just, lawful, expedient, honorable, pleasant, and easily practicable." The Rhetoric to Alexander then goes on to describe what each of those desired characteristics means.

In this way distinct from apologetics, protreptic discourse exhorts to persuade an audience not simply to buy a product or to adopt a new habit, but to accept a new way of life. Whereas the apologetic primarily defends, the protreptic primarily goes on the offensive, so to speak. Numerous non-Christian protreptic texts can be listed, including Plato's Phaedo and Euthydemus, Aristotle's Protreptikos, Epicurus' Letter to Menoeceus, Cicero's Hortensius, Seneca's Ep. 90, Lucian's parody of protreptics in Sale of the Ways-of-Life, and the Neoplatonic Protreptikos of Iamblichus. It is not surprising that Christianity adopted the genre for its missionary purpose, particularly as early Christians understood themselves as offering a competing philosophy or way of life. Some scholars have identified the protreptic in such books of the New Testament as John and Romans.


16 Rhetoric to Alexander IV (1426b)
17 Rhetoric to Alexander IV (1427a)
18 Rhetoric to Alexander IV (1421b)
19 Rhetoric to Alexander IV (1421b)

20 Cf Pierre Hadot, Philosophy as a Way of Life Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault, ed. with an introduction by Arnold I Davidson, trans Michael Chase (Malden, MA Blackwell, 1995)

21 For an engaging discussion, see Mark D Jordan, "Ancient Philosopheric Protreptic." While noting the variety of examples, Jordan concludes, that the philosophical protreptics "agree in wanting the hearer's whole self for an ongoing pedagogy" (332–33)

22 Cf Charles Chaney, "The Apostolate of the Church in the Second Century," Missiology 5 (1977) 427–41 Chaney writes, "This tract reads like a long evangelistic hymn. Clement offers appeals of such fervor that he must be classified as one of the great evangelists of the Church." (438–39)

23 For John (and Origen's interpretation of him), see Cook, "The Protreptic Power of Early Christian Language From John to Augustine." For Romans, see David E Aune, "Ro-
One should consider that the imperial court might never have heard the second-century "apologies" which were addressed to it. Besides serving the internal needs of the Church, the "apology" was intended for another purpose extra ecclesiam. Helmut Koester writes, "The apologists were not primarily interested in the defense of Christianity against accusation that had been raised by the pagan world and by the Roman state—although this motive plays a considerable role. The primary model of apologetic works was instead the Greek protrepticus, that is, a literary genre designed as an invitation to a philosophical way of life, directed to all those who were willing to engage in the search for the true philosophy and make it the rule for their life and conduct."²⁴ As David Aune notes, Koester rightly observes here the importance of the protreptic as a model, but unhelpfully extends "apologetic literature" to include what is more properly protreptic.²⁵

Indeed, the second half of the second century and the beginning of the third can be more appropriately termed the age of protreptics rather than the era of apologetics. Keeping in mind Koester’s remarks concerning many so-called apologies, we see that Justin's Dialogue with Trypho should most certainly be recognized as an extended protreptic. Its first nine chapters situate the debates of biblical interpretation under the aspect of conversion, and Justin concludes his dialogue with a prayer that Trypho and friends may one day believe that Jesus is the Christ of God.²⁶ Theophilus’ work To Autolycus, Pseudo-Justin’s Exhortation to the Greeks, Tatian’s Oration to the Greeks, the Letter to Diognetus, and Minucius Felix’s Octavius can also be recognized as protreptic.²⁷ Furthermore, some early martyrdom accounts also perform a protreptic function, in moving a non-Christian audience to

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²⁵ Aune, "Romans as a Logos Protreptikos," 112, n 67
the true philosophy of Christ. If this greater protreptic concern of early Christian writing were to be admitted, one might also point to Clement of Alexandria as its outstanding example. This writing, then, would not seem odd for its time or merely propaedeutic to Clement's real intellectual agenda, developed in the Paedagogos and especially the Stromateis. Rather, we would see that Clement not only mastered this literary genre, but also built upon this work within his own paidea toward Christian perfection in Alexandria. Thus from the viewpoint of scholarship on the "apologists," the Protreptikos can redirect our attention to the protreptic force of many second-century/early third-century Christian texts. From the viewpoint of scholarship on Clement, the Protreptikos has more to offer than has been studied for understanding the purpose of Clement's presentation of Christian paidea or apologetics. It is the supreme second-century literary work on how love moves people to accept Christ.

28 Justin himself gives the witness of the martyrs as a motivation for his conversion in *Apol* 12. The power manifested in their martyrdoms for persuading others to accept the Gospel should not be dismissed. With this example of Justin (and later Origen), perhaps Ramsay MacMullen's comment should be inclusive, rather than exclusive "We are also familiar with the view that martyrs made converts, but with this, we take leave of the élite and enter among the masses, who supply our second type of convert." See his "Two Types of Conversion to Early Christianity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983) 174–92, especially 184. This protreptic use of martyrdom actualizes Tertullian's famous dictum, "The blood of Christians is seed." See *Apol* 50 3.

29 Robert Grant typifies scholarship's ambivalence about assessing Clement Grant writes, "Clement must be viewed not as an apologist but as an independent literary figure. The age of the second-century apologists had come to an end." A few pages later, he continues, "Clement himself was undoubtedly the most significant Alexandrian apologist, at least among Christians, for he wrote the important Exhortation." See his *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988), 175 and 179. (In defining his terms, Grant says an apologist's "primary goal is to interpret his own culture—religious, philosophical, or artistic, as the case may be—to the broader group." [9]) Cf Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 57. "Clement, his [Origen's] predecessor, is still close to the Apologists and can be called the last and most important of that group." H. Steneker rightly says, "En effet, le but de Clément est positif, c'est-à-dire plus missionnaire qu'apologétique." See his ΠΕΙΘΟΤΣ ΔΕΙΜΙΟΥΡΕΙΑ Observations sur la Fonction du Style dans le Protreptique de Clément d'Alexandrie, 2.

30 The assertion that Clement's Protreptikos serves as an appeal to the nations to accept Christ has recently been challenged. Following Wayne Meeks, Diana M. Swancutt thinks that Clement's Protreptikos targeted believers, and has only an imagined audience of non-believers. See her "Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis Troubling the Dichotomy," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pederson (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 113–53, especially 149–51. While Clement's work obviously has benefit for those who already believe, I think the protreptic element is real for outsiders and those who straddle neat divisions of inside and outside. The first-person plural exhortations in the twelfth chapter, pace Swancutt, culminates Clement's argument for a final appeal to flee from Greek customs, and it need not be read as having an audience of only insiders. Peter Brown writes, "Late antique persons, of every class and level of culture, lived in many conflicting 'thought-worlds.' Potentially exclusive explanatory systems coexisted in their..."
THE BACKGROUND OF DISORDERED DESIRES AND LOVES AMONG THE GODS IN PAGAN DEIFICATION

One of the most well known aspects of Clement’s *Protreptikos* is his abundant use of citations from the Greek world.\(^{31}\) Why does he do this? Logoi *protreptikoi* characteristically include elements of dissuasion or censure designed to free the audience from false beliefs and practices.\(^{32}\) Yet, that is not a sufficient explanation here. In his Christian adaptation, Clement depicts in sometimes lurid detail the false desires and disordered loves present in mythology in order to situate his own presentation of desire and love. It is not simply that the pantheon is false, but the world of the gods demonstrates false love and makes their devotees imitate them in disordered sensuality. Clement speaks of this pagan assimilation to the gods as a sort of pagan deification of humans and inanimate objects.\(^{33}\) This prepares for Clement’s alternative of Christ as the authentic lover whose love enables humans to imitate the true God, precisely in their baptismal experience, in a cosmos already filled with light.\(^{34}\)

Clement begins his protreptic with a contrast in songs and the transformations that they effect.\(^{35}\) He recounts the myths of songs that were said to be wondrously transformative upon their world. Arion lured fish with his lyre; Amphion built the walls of Thebes through his musical skill. A Thracian wizard, Orpheus, tamed wild beasts by his songs and transplanted trees through his music. Eunomos played a funeral song for the dead serpent of Delphi. When a string breaks on his lyre, Eunomos takes his cue from a grasshopper, which settled upon the lyre and sang.\(^{36}\) The minds “See Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69


32 Aune, “Romans as a Logos Protreptikos,” 96 Aune gives Lucian, *Nigrinus* 4, as an example

33 Clement’s treatment of Christian deification, though, cannot be explained simply as his response to pagan myths of becoming divine. For a fascinating study, see Carl Mosser, “The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents and the Origin of Christian Deification,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 56 (2005) 30–74

34 Arkadi Choufrine argues that Clement’s emphasis on baptism is precisely a distinguishing mark in the development of Christian deification, something not encountered in Irenaeus. See Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria’s Appropriation of His Background*, Patristic Studies vol. 5 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), especially 161


36 These examples are taken from Prot 1111–3
Greek festivals were filled with songs, such as the debased Bacchic rites, and the pagan errors were celebrated in hymns. Clement, on the other hand, will show how different is his heavenly minstrel, the one truly effective in transforming others.

The transformations offered by the myths are utterly debased in their disordered love, with Zeus as Clement’s prime example. He says that the mysteries of Demeter commemorate Zeus’s sexual relations with her, Zeus’s own mother. He continues with first-person reactions from his listeners about their involvements in the Demeter cult, such as “I went down to the bridal chamber.” Clement continues with Zeus’s further debauchery, and thus by implication the immorality of the worshippers. Zeus has intercourse with the fruit of his relationship with Demeter, Persephone. He ravishes his daughter under the form of a serpent, which for Clement reveals what he really was. In imitation, worshippers have a serpent drawn over their breast. Later, Clement continues with the licentiousness of Zeus, such as in his abduction of Ganymede. In all of these pagan mysteries, things and people are falsely divinized—partaking in the unreality of the gods.

In the Protreptikos, Clement uses multiple words to speak of pagan deification. Seven times he uses ektheiazō, four times theizō, twice theopoieō, and once each of ektheoō, theopoios, and apotheoō. Norman Russell writes that Clement’s favorite word for this pagan process, ektheiazō, means “‘to treat as divine’ or ‘to ascribe divinity to’ without any implication of personal commitment.” While this has some truth, Clement in other ways emphasizes the personal commitment that leads the adherents of the pagan mysteries to imitate the immoral, and especially lascivious, pantheon. For example, Clement repeatedly links the mysteries of pagan cults with orgies, and traces the etymologies of the two words together. The worshippers then imitate the gods they celebrate through lust. Clement adduces Cinyras of Cyprus, who transferred the orgies of Aphrodite from day to night, deifying a prostitute. Cinyras recognized that the

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37 Clement offers criticisms of the mystery cults through much of the work, but especially the first four chapters. For descriptions of Zeus, see especially Prot 2.

38 Prot 2.15.3


40 Prot 1.3.1, 2.26.1, 2.31.1, 4.63.5, 5.64.1, 5.64.3, 10.102.3

41 Prot 1.2.1, 2.13.4, 4.49.1, 4.51.3

42 Prot 2.26.3, 3.44.24

43 Prot 2.26.5, 4.51.6, 10.96.4

44 Russell, Doctrine of Deification, 122.

45 For the attempted etymologies, see Prot 2.13.1–5.

46 Prot 2.13.4
prostitute is like Aphrodite precisely because of the personal commitment of both Cinyras and the prostitute to their lustful acts. Likewise, Clement speaks of the cult that grew from Emperor Hadrian’s favorite love, the boy Antinous, who drowned in the Nile. The pederast imitated Zeus’s consecration of Ganymede, and made Antinous a god. Likewise, Clement speaks of the cult that grew from Emperor Hadrian’s favorite love, the boy Antinous, who drowned in the Nile. The pederast imitated Zeus’s consecration of Ganymede, and made Antinous a god. Clement censures pagan artwork not only because it depicts the lustfulness of the gods, but because through this depiction it encourages sexual immorality. Some have fallen into lust for statues, and Clement relates stories told about men having intercourse with statues of Aphrodite. Even people’s homes have the image of a naked Aphrodite near their beds, with the residents imitating her adultery in their own unlawful embraces. For another example, he writes of rings being engraved with Leda and Zeus in the form of a pleasure-seeking bird. Clement summarily states, “These are the models of your hedonism; these are the divine stories of hubris; these are the lessons of the gods, fellow fornicators, for you.” In a maxim from Demosthenes, Clement reveals the importance of desire in one’s mind: “For what one desires, that one also imagines.” Clement even selects a story from Genesis that parallels the transformation of the Greek myths. Lot’s wife was turned to stone because she longed for Sodom, whose inhabitants were godless and turned to impiety with hardened hearts. His point is that idols of stone are only stone. Worshippers become what they desire and love.

CHRIST THE LOGOS PROTREPTIKOS AS THE NEW SONG FOR HUMAN DEIFICATION

At the beginning of the Paedagogos, Clement transitions into the new work with reference to the previous work as an indestructible corner stone of the temple of God. He writes that this corner stone is the beautiful persuasion (protropē kalē), or the desire for eternal life through obedience to it grounded in the mind. In Clement’s three-fold schema of rhetoric which

47 Prot 4 49 1
48 Prot 4 57 3
49 Prot 4 61 1
50 Demosthenes, Olynthiacs 3 19 in Prot 4 61 1
51 Prot 10 103 4
52 Prot 10 104 1
53 Paed 1 1 1 1 For the text of Paedagogos, I am using the critical edition of Clementis Alexandrinus Paedagogus, ed M Marcovich, assisted by J C M van Winden, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 61 (Brill Leiden and Boston, 2002) This text differs from the Stahlin 2nd edition (Leipzig, 1936), the first thirteen chapters are reproduced with only slight
applies protreptikos to habits, counsel for deeds, and consolation for passions, he reviews how these three are all the self-same Logos. When the Logos calls people to salvation, he takes the name Protreptikos. Therefore, Clement’s own text in the classical tradition of a logos protreptikos serves his Christology. Christ himself is the true Logos Protreptikos, the word of loving persuasion from God to win hearers through an implantation of desire in their hearts. Examining Clement’s protreptic rhetoric, we see a subtly crafted presentation of Christ. 

Clement affirms that Christ is both human and God, who died on the cross and rose from the dead. It would be misleading to characterize Clement’s presentation in the Protreptikos as recommending that one should imitate “some disembodied divine apatheia.” However, his concern is not to present a handbook of Christology according to modern standards of dogmatics or a summary of the Gospel in biblical theology. It is rather a protreptic, and Clement lets the incarnate Logos sing his love song to allure the nations to the light of baptismal life. For, according to Clement, the only thing the loving God desires is to save.

Clement can speak of transformation for salvation because he has situated his presentation of Christ against the pagan stories of powerful songs, and in fact quotes Homer to support his argument. He says, “This is the new song, the Levitical song, ‘Soother of grief and wrath, that bids all evils be forgotten.’ It is sweet and true medicine of persuasion blended with this song.” Unlike the pagan minstrels that deceive, Christ can be

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54 Clement’s Christology has not been well served in scholarship. For example, Alois Grillmeier, S.J., relies heavily upon S.R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), calling it a masterly investigation of the pre-understanding of the Christology of Clement. Lilla offers the extreme position of arguing for Clement’s Hellenization of Christianity. Lilla even goes so far as to conclude that Clement’s Christian element was derived from Christian Gnosticism. See especially Lilla, 227–34. To his credit, Grillmeier concludes, “His whole christology is not to be identified with a number of speculations influenced by Gnosticism and philosophy” (138).


56 Pace Michael Heintz, “Mithētēs Theou,” 118. Heintz also says, “what Clement ultimately emphasizes is not (as in the Epistle to Diognetus) the work of the Son but rather the human capacity for a godlike apatheia” (114, n. 38). Heintz is extrapolating from Quis dives salvetur 7, but the text more comparable to Diognetus is the Protreptikos, which I show offers a profound meditation on the work of the incarnate Logos. Heintz’s study on the Epistle to Diognetus is otherwise to be highly recommended. Russell makes a nice distinction concerning the embodied Logos and apatheia, commenting on Strom 6.9.71, “For Clement freedom from passion, apatheia, is primarily a divine attribute. Only Christ, as the incarnate divine Logos, is ‘absolutely without passion’” (Russell, *Doctrine of Deification*, 135).

57 For a 742-page dissertation on salvation, see Alfredo Brontesi, *La Soteteria in Clemente Alessandro* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1972).

58 Quoting *Odysseus* 4.221 in Prot 1 2 4.
truly effective in transformation. He is the only one who ever tamed the wildest of beasts, the human, from bestial desires. Indeed, he tamed birds, that is flighty humans; reptiles, the crafty; lions, the passionate; swine, the hedonistic; and wolves, the rapacious.\textsuperscript{59} Clement then gives an influential exegesis of the passage: “For God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”\textsuperscript{60} He comments that humans without understanding are stones and wood. Or rather, they are more senseless than stones. The Gentiles who used to believe in stones, whose hearts were hardened against the truth, now have the seed of virtue. Clement continues, teaching that through repentance the “offspring of vipers” becomes a human being of God. Wolves too, who were in sheepskins, are transformed.\textsuperscript{61}

Clement introduces the incarnation of the Lord in the first chapter as God’s response to those who do not believe the material signs of the burning bush and pillar, and who distrust the Lord’s speaking through Isaiah, Elijah, and the prophets. He says the Lord himself will speak to you, citing Phil 2:6-7. After quoting “but emptied himself,” he comments, “the compassionate (\textit{philoiakurmon}) God, eager to save humanity.”\textsuperscript{62} Clement impresses upon his audience the radical act of compassion. He continues in a way that shows the transformation that the incarnation effects: “Yes, I say, the Word of God has become a human, so that even you may learn from a human how it is possible for a human to become a god.”\textsuperscript{63} Norman Russell notes that this passage of learning should be read as a reference to learning Christ by the deifying power of Scripture.\textsuperscript{64} While scriptural reading admittedly holds great importance, Clement’s persuasion has as its goal that people be initiated in the mysteries of baptismal life.\textsuperscript{65} By that light, people will “learn from a human how it is possible for a human to become a god.”

In a fascinating scriptural exegesis, Clement next comments upon texts concerning John the Baptist, who “wholly becomes a protreptic voice.”\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{59} Prot 1 4 1 Cf Frederick H Brigham, Jr, “The Concept of New Song in Clement of Alexandria’s Exhortation to the Greeks,” Classical Folia 16 (1962) 9–13 Brigham finds no pagan or biblical source that records this concept precisely as Clement has it, but notes that the literary expression of the concept has an immediate source in Psalm 32, while Isaiah 42 and Revelation 5 and 14 are the closest conceptual sources. Thomas Merton must have been impressed by this interpretation of Matt 3:9/Luke 3:8.

\textsuperscript{60} Thomas Merton must have been impressed by this interpretation of Matt 3:9/Luke 3:8. After reading his Clement of Alexandria Selections from the Protreptikos (London Burns and Oates Ltd., 1962), one can better understand the scriptural epigraph for his conversion account in Seven-Storey Mountain.

\textsuperscript{61} Clement will return to this theme of animal and human in chapter 10.

\textsuperscript{62} Prot 1 8 4

\textsuperscript{63} Prot 1 8 4 This statement has great significance and can be compared with Irenaeus in early patristic formulations of deification.

\textsuperscript{64} Russell supports this statement with references from Prot 9:87:1 and 11:114:4. See his Doctrine of Deification, 125.

\textsuperscript{65} Russell himself speaks eloquently of baptism with respect to Clement’s understanding of deification elsewhere. See his Doctrine of Deification, 128–30 and 137–38.

\textsuperscript{66} Prot 1 9 1.
John’s bringing fruitfulness to the desert, since he is Isaiah’s “voice crying in the desert,” parallels the angel’s voice to his mother Elizabeth, making the barren woman fruitful. Clement extends his comment with the observation that the two forerunning voices of the Lord, that of the angel and that of John, foreshadow the manifestation of the Logos. This reality is now experienced. He writes, “The angel brought good news to us! John persuaded us to recognize the farmer and to see the husband! For he is one and the same, the husband of the barren and the farmer of the desert, he who tilled the barren and the desert with divine power. . . . On account of the Logos, both become mothers, one of fruits and the other of the faithful.”

The Logos thus is the Bridegroom; John and the angel lead “us” in protreptic fashion to the Bridegroom.

God’s desire for the spiritual fruitfulness of humanity transforms human desire. We can consider the contrast that Clement makes between the desire for creation and the desire for the Creator. He says, “Let no one of you worship the sun, but yearn for the maker of the sun. Likewise, no one of you should divinize the universe, but seek after the creator of the universe.” This desire for God will lead Clement’s audience to the therapeia of his ongoing paideia, perfecting even the passions so as to be like God.

Returning to music, Clement’s understanding of deification comes eloquently in his expression of the human being conformed through the instrument of the Logos. John Behr accurately notes, “The motif running through the Protreptikos is that of the harmony to which man is called, when, having been tuned by the Holy Spirit, he becomes an ‘instrument of many tones.’” In this deification, one becomes the divine music. Comparable with Irenaeus’s “the glory of God is the human living,” Clement states, “A beautiful hymn of God is an immortal human.”

Clement writes of this musical harmony that allows humans to sing as the Logos does: “And the union from many, when their dissonance and their dis-
person are taken up, becomes one divine harmony, following one chorus leader and teacher the Logos, not ceasing until the truth itself, 'Abba,' meaning 'Father!' God welcomes this true sound from his children, the firstfruits.' Later he similarly gives an exegesis of Psalm 22:22, already known by a Christological interpretation in Heb 2:12: "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters. In the midst of the church I will sing praise to you." Clement writes his comment as a prayer to Christ: "Sing praises and declare to me God your Father! Your declaration will save, and your hymn will instruct me. Until now I wandered from the living God, but since you, O Lord, have guided me by light, I find God through you and I receive the Father from you, becoming 'with you a joint heir,' since 'you were not ashamed of your brother.'"74

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**SAILING PAST THE SIREN SONGS OF HOMER FOR THE SONG OF CHRIST IN CHAPTER 12**

Through the metaphor of the Sirens' song that tempted Odysseus, to which Clement returns in the Strömata and which subsequent Christian authors use,75 the Protreptikos interprets the lusts of old Greek ways. Does this mean that the Sirens sing their pleasures in a way that is more lovely and desirable than the song of Christ? No. The custom that these Sirens represent strangles the human being. Rather than being protreptic, custom turns one away from the truth. Its song works death. On the other hand, "if you only will, you have conquered destruction, and bound to the wood [of the cross], you will be freed from all corruption. The Word of God will pilot you, and the Holy Spirit will blow you to the harbors of heaven."76 In describing the joys of heaven, Clement slips into the first person singular when referring to 1 Cor 2:9. These joys are "kept for me, 'which neither ear has heard nor has it entered into the heart of anyone.'"77 Clement here focuses on the ear, omitting the reference to what the eye has not seen, as he keeps to the metaphor of the song. Some lines later, he speaks of those initiated into the holy mysteries, the dramas of truth: "The righteous are the chorus, and their hymn is to the King of all. The virgins sing psalms; the angels give praise; the prophets speak, a sound of music rises."78 After speaking of how he has a vision of heaven and of God, in becoming holy by initiation, he turns again to the choice before

73. Prot. 9.88.3.
76. Prot. 12.118.4.
77. Prot. 12.118.4.
78. Prot. 12.119.2.
his audience: "If you wish, you too be initiated, and you will dance with angels around the unbegotten and imperishable and only true God, with the Logos of God joining the hymn with us." 79 Jesus himself, the great high priest, prays and calls all people to himself, beginning with another reference from Homer: "'Give ear, myriad tribes,' or rather, those reasonable among humans, both barbarians and Greeks. I call the whole human race, I who am the creator by the will of the Father. Come to me, so that you may be ordered by one God and one Logos of God." 80 Offering the fruit of immortality, Clement's Christ continues, "I desire, yes, I desire to impart to you this grace, supplying in fullness the benefit of incorruption." 81 Christ's impassioned appeal concludes with the Gospel, "Come to me all you who are labor and are burdened, and I will give you refreshment. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is chrēstos and my burden light." 82 This word, chrēstos, is usually translated as "easy" in this sentence, but its meanings include kind, good, loving, beneficent, benevolent, excellent, useful, and fine. Some early Christians seemed to love the pun on the name of Christ. 83 Clement picks it up near the end of the Protreptikos: "Chrēstos is the entire life of those who have come to know Christ." 84

Clement gives his conclusion with multiple first-person plural hortatory subjunctives: "Let us hasten, let us run, we people who are loved by God and likened to God as delights of the Logos. Let us hasten, let us run, let us take upon his yoke, let us receive incorruption, let us love Christ, the handsome charioteer of humans." 85 With a reference to the Matthean account of Christ's entrance to Jerusalem, Clement continues, "He led the foal with its older animal under yoke, and (now) having yoked together the team of the human race, he shapes his course for immortality, hastening toward God." 86

Citing a Greek proverb, "the goods of friends are common," Clement argues, "if the human is loved by God (since one is a friend of God through the mediation of the Logos), then all things belong to the human. Because all things of God are common to both friends, all things belong to God and to the human." 87 These "all things" are not simply a matter of ownership, but of accepting the characteristics of God. Clement asserts

79. Prot. 12.120.2.
80. Prot. 12.120.2-3; cf. Iliad 17.220.
81. Prot. 12.120.3.
83. Perhaps a non-Christian origin in Suetonius, Book 5, The Deified Claudius; among the early Christian uses, see Justin's 1 Apol. 4 and the subtle pun of Dial. 1.2.
85. Prot. 12.121.1.
87. Prot. 12.122.3.
that, through Christ, humans receive those qualities that Plato extolled in the *Theaetetus*, "righteous and holy with understanding." They are now like God. Clement quotes Psalm 82:6: "I said you are gods and all of you children of the Most High." Thus, Clement affirms deification in his conclusion with the psalm verse most frequently used to speak of it in second-century texts.

THE KEY TERM OF PHILANTHRÖPIA FOR THE LOGOS PROTREPTIKOS

From this consideration of deification, we can pause to highlight *philanthröpia* in Clement’s protreptic language of love for humanity. The importance of this term at this juncture in early Christianity should be better appreciated. In his lengthy and influential study of what he classified as Christian *agapē* and pagan Greek *erōs*, Anders Nygren neglects any textual discussion, beyond some footnotes, of *philanthröpia*, and does not adduce that term at all in his treatment of Clement. While *philanthröpia* becomes commonplace in Greek patristic writing, Clement gives greater prominence to this word than early Christians had previously. In his *Păedagogōgos*, the noun and its adjective occur, in Henri-Irénée Marrou’s assessment, ceaselessly. But how does Clement use it in this earlier work?

Although Clement’s dependence upon Philo should certainly not be overlooked, the most influential source for Clement’s use of *philanthröpia* is Titus 3:4–5. Summarizing the letter’s discussion of former sinful dispositions, such as serving many lusts and pleasures, Clement quotes, "But when the *chrēstostēs* and *philanthröpia* of God our Savior appeared, not from works of righteousness which we did, but according to his mercy he

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88 *Theaetetus* 176B quoted in Prot 12 122 4
89 See the excellent study of Carl Mosser, "The Earliest Patristic Interpretations"
90 For background, see Ulrich Luck’s entry in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 9 107–12
91 Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 349–68
92 As an example of subsequent use, Anders Nygren notes that Origen likes to use the word *philanthröpia* See Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 374, n 1
93 See his introduction and notes, with Marguerite Harl’s translation of *Le Pedagogue, Sources Chretiennes* 70 (Paris Cerf, 1960), 36 For an important treatment of this elsewhere in Clement’s corpus, see *Paed* 1 3 1 and all of chap 3, *Strom* 5 85 5, 7 81
94 For analysis of four citations, see J C M van Winden, "Quotations from Philo in Clement of Alexandria’s *Protrepticus*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 32 (1978) 208–13 For a general survey, see David T Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature A Survey*, Compendia Rerum Iudaeorum ad Novum Testamentum (Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1993), 132–56 Runia summarizes Volker’s position on this particular issue “Philo lacks the warmth and passion that is infused in the Christian’s expositions on love towards one’s fellow man (*philanthröpia*), faith, and the role of the Logos" (149)
saved us.”\(^95\) So influential is this literary context that one might call Clement’s *Protreptikos* an elaborated exegesis of this passage.\(^96\)

Concentrating on Clement’s use of *philanthrôpia* in the *Protreptikos*, we find an exuberance of divine love for the human race. Clement succinctly describes the *Logos*, “The instrument of God is *philanthrôpon*.\(^97\) The *Logos* does everything for humanity and has the only joy of saving people. That is the one delight of the *Logos*. Clement continues in simple, stark phrases: “You have then the promise; you have the *philanthrôpia*. Partake of the grace.”\(^98\)

In chapter 2, Clement gives an exegesis of Eph 2:3–5, “For we too were once children of wrath, like the rest. But God, who is rich in mercy, on account of his great love with which he loved us, has brought us, when we were dead in our transgressions, to life in Christ.”\(^99\) Clement interprets this to mean that when one is buried with Christ, then one is exalted together with him. Therefore, Clement affirms, in this baptismal imagery, “Indeed, we, who were once children of lawlessness, through the *philanthrôpia* of the *Logos* have now become children of God.”\(^100\)

At the beginning of chapter 9, Clement exclaims, “O surpassing *philanthrôpia!* Not as a teacher to students nor as a lord to servants, nor as a God to human beings, but ‘as a gentle father,’ he instructs his children.”\(^101\) In this chapter Clement expounds the universality of God’s love for the human race. Commenting on 1 Tim 2:4, Clement writes, “But the Lord, being *philanthrôpos*, exhorts all people to ‘knowledge of the truth.’”\(^102\) Clement furthermore shows the recalcitrance of the human race. In contrasting God’s love with human sinfulness, Clement observes: “Now the more *philanthrôpia* God shows, the more some are impious.”\(^103\) This double emphasis on the superabundance of *philanthrôpia* and human wickedness continues in chapter 10, where he refers to God’s *philanthrôpia* as “ineffable,” yet acknowledges God’s hatred for sin. Therefore, Clement states, *philanthrôpia* benefits upon repentance.\(^104\) Moreover, Clement again accentuates the parental imagery of tender love elsewhere in chapter 10: “For God cares for a person with great *philanthrôpia*, like a mother bird when her little one falls from the nest, she flies to it.”\(^105\)

\(^{95}\) Titus 3:4–5 m Prot 1:4–4 Cf Titus 2:11  
\(^{96}\) I mention this influence because of the prominence of this quotation in chapter 1 and its signaling of the main theme of the work. Incidentally, Clement also bore the name of Titus, Titus Flavius Clemens  
\(^{97}\) Prot 1:6:2  
\(^{98}\) Prot 1:6:3  
\(^{99}\) Given in Prot 2:27:2  
\(^{100}\) Prot 2:27:3  
\(^{101}\) Clement quotes the Odyssey 2:47 in Prot 9:8:2  
\(^{102}\) Prot 9:8:5  
\(^{103}\) Prot 9:8:3  
\(^{104}\) Prot 10:10:4  
\(^{105}\) Prot 10:9:1:3
On the other hand, the gods do not have *philanthrôpia*. Clement says that Phoebus Apollo is not *philanthrôpos*, but *philodôros* (loving gifts), citing the story of Apollo’s betrayal of Croesus.106 Because of Apollo, the king was led to the funeral pyre. Clement comments that this is how the gods love—they lead humans to the fire. However, he appeals to the reader who is invoked as one with more *philanthrôpia* to take pity on the one upon the pyre.

Clement saves the final mention of the word for the last paragraph of the text. Here, he speaks about how the words themselves are unwilling to cease speaking of the mysteries of life. And so, he who has richly experienced God’s love for the human race says, “If I even have run on too long because of *philanthrôpia*, pouring out what I have received from God, still I encourage you toward the greatest of good things, salvation.”107 Clement thus becomes an instrument of *philanthrôpia*, like the *Logos*.

**CONCLUSION**

Christ as the *Logos Protreptikos* plays the true love song of God for the human race, and Clement sings his *logos proptreptikos* in return. The author offers himself as the model of one who turned to the Lord—without giving a full autobiographical account. Filled with a light that is sweeter than the life of earth, Clement sings out in a voice of praise, “Hail, O Light!”108 The song recognizes the dawn of eternal life, when all things become sleepless light.109 Reviewing his work in the *Protreptikos* at the beginning of the *Paedagôgos*, the author finds that under the spell, “we brighten up exceedingly when surrendering our old opinions, and we become young again for salvation, joining the prophet in singing: ‘How good God is to Israel, to those who are upright in heart (Psalm 72/73:1)’.110 Put simply, in the *Paedagôgos* we see that Clement’s protreptic worked. It persuaded people to receive the Christian faith and enter further formation, the subsequent literary and social context of the *Protreptikos*.

Therefore, this investigation into Clement’s protreptic of love suggests a reevaluation of the text. The *Protreptikos* must be read not only as a pro-paedeutic to Clement’s further *paideia* but within the protreptic genre of non-Christian and Christian texts. Indeed, I suggest that the late second

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106 Prot 343 3–4
107 Prot 12123 2
108 Prot 11114 1 Clement’s hymn, after the *Paedagôgos*, extends this
109 Cf Prot 11114 2–3 Clement loves the image of light to describe the *Logos* and the salvation offered through the *Logos* For an interpretation of Clement’s light imagery, see Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis*, 77–158
110 Paed 1 11 The whole psalm should be read for greater insight into its appropriateness for Clement intoning it
century was more an age of protreptics than of apologetics for Christians. With such a recognition, Clement’s text can be better appreciated both for its commonality in the concern for conversion as well as its unparalleled exposition. While using elaborate detail, his technique of persuasion is rather simple. He emphasizes the background of false deification for a particular purpose. The myths and mystery cults, in depicting the gods’ disordered desires, corrupt and lead to death. On the other hand, God reveals through his Logos a passionate love for the human race in the offer of salvation. Clement, having already been transformed into an instrument of divine love, now persuades others, perhaps even readers in the twenty-first century, to be changed by the love of Christ, the Logos Protreptikos.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ I am grateful for the assistance of Robin Darling Young, John Baptist Ku, O.P., and for the anonymous feedback in the review process.
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