

Running head:

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: THEOLOGICAL DISTINGTIVES IN  
EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE

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By

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**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: BACKGROUND**

Titus Flavius Clemens was born circa 140 A.D., likely in Athens or Alexandria<sup>1</sup> and undertook a philosophical education in the vein of the Aristotelian philosophers of his generation.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Clement wandered about the known world seeking out a teacher. His pursuit of a philosophical mentor took him from Athens to Italy; from Syria to Palestine. He found just what he was searching for in northern Egypt in the city of Alexandria. He found Pantaenus, the 'Sicilian bee'<sup>3</sup> there and began his philosophical career.<sup>4</sup> Alexandria was a place unparalleled to pursue any scientific or religious endeavor under heaven, and this certainly played heavily into Clement landing in this illustrious location. Clement is identified

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<sup>1</sup> John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Twayne, 1974), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ashwin-Siejkowski and Piotr, *Clement of Alexandria: A Project of Christian Perfection* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History Volume One From Paul to the Age of Constantine*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005), 250.

<sup>4</sup> Everett Procter, *Christian Controversy in Alexandria: Clement's Polemic Against the Basilideans and Valentinians* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1995), 3.

with the founding or co-founding<sup>5</sup> of a catechetical school of Christian education and philosophy.<sup>6</sup> He was forced to flee the city during the persecution of Septimius Severus in A.D. 202 and apparently, he died outside of Alexandria around A.D. 211-216.<sup>7</sup> The exact nature of the school is indistinct, but we can be confident a school of thought was unfolding in a uniquely Clementine mold.<sup>8</sup>

The five extant works of Clement of Alexandria are

1. *Protreptikos* (Exhortation to the Heathen/Greek)
2. *Paidagogos* (Instructor)
3. *Stromata* (Miscellanies)
4. Who Is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?
5. Excerpts from Theodotus

The first three are referred to as *The Great Trilogy*.<sup>9</sup> These are considered a compendium of Clement, describing the

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<sup>5</sup> Annewies Van Den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School Of Early Christian Alexandria And Its Philonic Heritage," *Harvard Theological Review* 90, no. 1 (1997, January 01): 61.

<sup>6</sup> Moreschini & Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*, 250.

<sup>7</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought: Volume 1 From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 190. Gonzalez seems to suggest that he died in either Cappadocia or Antioch. Generally speaking, other scholars agree with this assumption.

<sup>8</sup> Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007), 132.

<sup>9</sup> Clement Of Alexandria, *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations of Clement and Origen*, the Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition, ed. Henry Chadwick (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 17.

function of the Word in three stages. This would be the Word as Exhorter, Instructor and Teacher.

As Exhorter, the Word invites us to abandon paganism and follow the way of salvation, as Instructor the Word endeavors to lead disciples, as ancient slaves led children, to higher standards of behavior and in particular to liberty from the slavery of passions.<sup>10</sup> These works are

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<sup>10</sup> Gonzalez, 191. In the final analysis of the so-called trilogy, it seems to have come short and becomes a 'bi-logy' with an extensive epilogue of various notes. This epilogue was not called *Didaskalos*, as Clement intended, but ended up with the name *Stromata* (miscellanies), likely because of its apparent lack of coherence. Why was the trilogy cut short? There are no definitive explanations, but there are some hypotheses. Interestingly, it is in this miscellany that some of Clements most prodigious ideas are clearly stated. Clement is free to "expound the highest aspects of his doctrine." (Gonzalez, 192) This leads me to believe that this 'miscellany' of ideas was not an incomplete work or a project beyond Clements intellectual capacities, but an intentional, higher form of education for the advanced student of the Gospel and philosophy. (Roberts, Louis. "The literary form of the Stromateis." *Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1, no. 4 (December 1, 1981): 211-222.)

It seems to be the hope of authors of such literary works to avoid the error of feeding "... the memory not the mind." (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* praef. 7) This quote from Macrobius gives us some evidence that this style of educational material was not uncommon in the ancient world and it would have been especially welcomed among the Greek thinkers of the day as an appropriate philosophical challenge that was not arranged in a sophomoric way. It is clear from his own word that Clement has a clear intention: Its purposes are pedagogical to stimulate an exercise worthy of an Olympic religious athlete.

In a meadow the flowers blooming variously, and in a park the plantations of fruit trees, are not separated according to their species from those of other kinds. If some, culling varieties, have composed learned collections, Meadows, and Helicons, and Honeycombs, and Robes; then, with the things which come to recollection by haphazard, and are expurgated neither in order nor expression, but purposely scattered, the form of the Miscellanies is promiscuously variegated like a meadow. And such being the case, my notes shall serve as kindling sparks; and in the case of him, who is fit for knowledge, if he chance to fall in with them, research made with exertion will turn out to his benefit and advantage. For it is right that labour should precede not only food but also, much more knowledge, in the case of those

the documents we have available for evaluating Clement's theology directly.

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that are advancing to the eternal and blessed salvation by the straight and narrow way, which is truly the Lord's. (Stromata VI.1)

If we critically evaluate Clement's own comments about his intended literary structure and compare this arrangement to other similar documents of its era, it seems reasonable to accept that Clement is not just rambling here, but had a strategy that could be seen as an appropriate end to his trilogy.

**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND CHRISTIAN PLATONISM**

Clement of Alexandria was the initiator of what is now called Christian Platonism.<sup>11</sup> Particularly, Middle Platonism<sup>12</sup> which was a syncretic mash of various Greek philosophical influences, primarily stoicism and the Aristotelian/peripatetic school. He united Greek philosophical traditions with Christian doctrine. While it is easy to critique Clement for this effort in retrospect, he really was an innovator in amalgamating philosophy and Christianity. There are mixed reviews on the result of this, but it was his effort to appropriate the Christian faith to his socio-historical milieu. In this regard, he was a disciple of Justin Martyr in the Christian tradition and Philo of Alexandria in the Alexandrian school of theology.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Pierce Casey, "Clement Of Alexandria And The Beginnings Of Christian Platonism," *Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 1 (1925, January 1): 39.

<sup>12</sup> Salvatore Romano Clemente Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 4.

<sup>13</sup> David T. Runia, "Clement Of Alexandria and The Philonic Doctrine Of The Divine Power(s)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58, (2004, January 01): 257.

Clement, while truly a 'Platonist', was following the Alexandrian religio-philosophical atmosphere. He was not a passive recipient of these ideas, but sought out the Alexandrian way as he travelled the world in search of a philosophical instructor and system. The force of his effort, along with Philo and other Alexandrian thinkers helped to establish this so-called school of thought.

H.A. Wolfson, upon evaluating a number of passages from the *Stromata*, makes the argument that Clement inherits his Platonic philosophy from Philo. Wolfson might call him a Philonic Platonist or a Christian Philonic Middle Platonist.<sup>14</sup> Eric Osborn argues, very effectively, that Clement had a steady commitment directly to pure Platonic doctrine. One of the more convincing arguments he espouses relates to sources cited by Clement. Osborn shows that he quoted Plato twice as much as he quoted Philo. Here he also talks about the fact that Clement believed in the philosophical system of the Greeks, Plato being its chief prophet.<sup>15</sup> According to Clement's conclusions, Plato and the Greeks could not be treated lightly because Platonic

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<sup>14</sup> Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers Volume 1 Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 266-270.

<sup>15</sup> *Stromata*, 5.5,14.

philosophy was to the Greeks what the law was to the Jews.<sup>16</sup> Now this was a step Philo, undoubtedly, was not willing to make.

While Clement's sources are an important part of studying his theological contributions<sup>17</sup>, they do not explicitly define his theology. This is one of the problems with trying to trace down the roots of any religious or philosophical tradition. As Harold Bloom states, in *The Anxiety of Influence*, "...the profundities of poetic influence cannot be reduced to source study."<sup>18</sup> Clement's relationship with Philo was one of profound influence beyond the sources. Just as influence in other arenas does not spring simply from the sources, I would agree with Osborn that this relationship is much more complicated than can be appropriated through source evaluation. On the other hand, any serious student of Clement will miss a vast amount of understanding by ignoring his sources.

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<sup>16</sup> Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-105.

<sup>17</sup> Annewies Van Den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian reshaping of a Jewish model* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 1-4.

<sup>18</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.



### THE ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

Another one of Clement's monumental contributions to the history of Christian thought comes in his interpretation of the scriptures from an allegorical archetype. Clement answers the question, 'How are the scriptures to be interpreted?' decisively: They are to be interpreted allegorically.

For the Lord says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," declaring that hearing and understanding belong not to all. To the point David writes: "Dark water is in the clouds of the skies. At the gleam before Him the clouds passed, hail and coals of fire;" showing that the holy words are hidden. He intimates that transparent and resplendent to the Gnostics, like the innocuous hail, they are sent down from God; but that they are dark to the multitude, like extinguished coals out of the fire, which, unless kindled and set on fire, will not give forth fire or light.<sup>19</sup>

The scriptures are hidden in allegory for specific reasons.<sup>20</sup> One reason is so that we may become inquisitive and be constantly on the watch for the discovery of words

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<sup>19</sup> Clement Of Alexandria, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D 325 The Fathers of the Second Century- The Stromata*, Kindle Books, ed. Phillip Schaff, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009), Loc. 26765-86.

<sup>20</sup> Phillip V. Miller, "New Hearing For The Allegorical Method," *Perkins Journal* 29, no. 2 (1976, December 1): 29.

of salvation. Secondly, the allegorical understanding of scripture is not suitable for all to attain. It might cause the recipient harm. The truth is preserved for chosen men, selected to knowledge in consequence of their faith; ultimately the style of the Scripture is parabolic.<sup>21</sup>

While he held that the scriptures were revealed to the true gnostic in an allegorical sense this did not diminish the historical sense of the Scripture. How does he strike the balance between allegorical interpretation and the historical sense of Scripture? It is in his understanding of scripture in the layers of various senses.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Clement's Doctrine of Various Senses**

Clement believes that the realities of this world are symbols of eternal truths. He holds that things in this world are true, but have their utmost value as signs aiming to the world of ultimate reality. The literal and historical are still proper, but even the factual still has its greatest value when interpreted as signs or allegories

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<sup>21</sup> Stomata, 6. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Gonzalez, 195.

that show more profound truths in the universe.<sup>23</sup> All text has at least two meanings; literal and spiritual.<sup>24</sup>

The deeper, allegorical meanings of the scriptures are the location where Clement roots his theological position.<sup>25</sup> The primary meaning in every text cannot be treated as superfluous, but every Christian is to strive to uncover the allegorical sense. This is all according to the manifold love and wisdom of God. He shares the same scripture with both the ignorant and learned and finds the way to communicate to them, through the sacred writings, at their level.<sup>26</sup> There can be even more than one allegorical meaning and for the earnest Christian, there is much to be learned.

### **Clement's Basic Exegetical Principles**

The first exegetical principle is that allegorical interpretation must not discard the primary meaning of the text, except when this meaning is such that contradicts

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<sup>23</sup> Eric Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), 168.

<sup>24</sup> Stromata 1.26, 6.15, 7.16.

<sup>25</sup> John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised Edition (London: A & C Black, 1985), 74.

<sup>26</sup> Gonzalez, 197. This nod to the ignorant here is a concession to the requirements of Christian love, but Clements esoteric approach to biblical interpretation puts the learned and brilliant student of the scripture in the position of favor.

what is already known of God's character and dignity.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, each text must be interpreted in the light of the rest of Scripture. This means, primarily that every text must be understood within its proper and immediate context.<sup>28</sup> Even this relatively conservative paradigm for interpretation would lead to extravagant readings, although there is an attempt here to keep the allegorical method in check under the authority of the scriptures.<sup>29</sup> This held value for the future Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, which was one of the chief problems facing the early church. This made it possible for the Christian to appropriate the teachings of the scriptures into a coherent vision of the faith in the New Testament era.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Clement Of Alexandria, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325 The Fathers of the Second Century- The Instructor*, ed. Phillip Schaff, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009), 9755-63.

<sup>28</sup> Stomata, 3.11.

<sup>29</sup> Osborn, Clement of Alexandria, 68-71,

<sup>30</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology Volume 2 The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1962), 3.

### CLEMENTS DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS

The doctrine of the Logos is the primary center of all of the surviving ideas of Clement of Alexandria. The Logos is the sun of Clements solar system. Quasten captures this centrality when he states that

Clement attempted to set up a theological system with the idea of the Logos as its beginning and basis. All his thinking and reasoning are dominated by this idea. Thus he stands on the same ground as St. Justin, the philosopher, but he has advanced far beyond him.<sup>31</sup>

Whether we believe it to be justified or not, Clement makes an extraordinarily daring move in appropriating Greek philosophy into a 'super-cultural' Christian view of the cosmos. It is a cosmology, seeking to explain the entirety of human history with the Logos as the central figure from beginning to end and this finds its apex in its manifestation in the flesh of the man Jesus Christ. The Logos is creator of the cosmos, the revealer of the God of the Old Testament as well as the agent behind the philosophy of the Greeks and then in the full revelation of Christ incarnate. Quasten says of Clements doctrine of the

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<sup>31</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 21.

Logos, that it is "... the highest principle for the religious explanation of the world."<sup>32</sup>

The Logos is ...teacher of the world and the lawgiver of mankind...saviour of the human race and the founder of a new life which begins with faith, proceeds to knowledge and contemplation and leads through love and charity to immortality and deification.<sup>33</sup>

The divine life has been made available to us through the embodied Logos. I think that Quastens conservative evaluation of the centrality of the Logos to Clements theological system is fair: His system fails to be 'Christian' in the sense that what the Gospel holds at its systematic center is God, while he holds the supreme idea of the Logos at the center.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 23.

**ALEXANDRIAN INFLUENCE ON CLEMENTS PHILOSOPHY**

Alexandria was established by Alexander the Great in around 332 B.C.E.<sup>35</sup> This city, founded with great expectations, quickly became one of the anchor poleis under Alexander's realm. It was chief among all Roman city-states as a place of unparalleled cultural activity.

From the time of Alexander's foundation of the city to beyond the Roman period it was the most important commercial city in the Mediterranean world. A marvelously cosmopolitan city... an array of magnificent buildings: the great lighthouse, the Pharos, two superb harbours to exploit its outstanding commercial potential and a series of canals linking Lake Mareotis, the temple of the Imperial Cult, the famous Museon—perhaps the major center of intellectual endeavour in antiquity but sadly destroyed in the 270s during civil conflict— and the Serapeum which in time became under the Romans the greatest center of pagan worship in all of Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

The Museon was an astounding ancient accomplishment.

Ferguson says that "It was a center of scholarship, scientific research and literary culture... containing a zoo, botanical garden, and library of three quarters of a

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<sup>35</sup> Gonzalez, 186.

<sup>36</sup> David Ivan Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 113.

million volumes."<sup>37</sup> It really is hard to fathom a center of culture and study so vast in the ancient world; a pattern for the coming days of the University.

Other contributing factors to Clement's vision of the Christian faith could be attributed to geographical factors. Egypt was seen as a mysterious land; a place where the thought life of the Mediterranean world converged, especially from the eastern world. The Jews in Alexandria were under the overarching influence of Philo. He had appropriated Greek philosophy in the Middle Platonic school and was interpreting the Law and the prophets allegorically well before Clement of Alexandria came along. There is no doubt that this had a profound influence on the way in which Clement interpreted the scriptures. As well, the Babylonian influence of astrology and the Persian influence of dualism were also feeding the syncretistic religio-philosophical milieu. Alexandria was a location set for individualism, cosmopolitanism and diverse doctrinal traditions, all of which were at play during Clement's gestation as a theologian. The atmosphere was primed for this 'Alexandrine' school of Christianity.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), 21.

<sup>38</sup> Gonzalez, 187.



**WHAT DOES ALEXANDRIA HAVE TO DO WITH WHEATON?**

What role does the Clementine brand of Christianity play for us today? How do we appropriate the Alexandrian school of Christianity to our circumstances in evangelicalism in the 21 Century? There are a variety of ways to claim Clement for today's Church. For one we should be advised by Clement regarding a way through tough theological questions. Another consideration for today could be a means to help us understand our place in relationship to cultural, political, philosophical and religious influences on the Church as a microcosm of society. What can Clement teach us about engaging culture in a Christian way? What are the limits on this dialogue between the Academy and Jerusalem? Clement would be one to cautiously push this relationship to its limits while trying to keep to a genuinely orthodox theological position. Another possible place of pedagogy between Clement and Wheaton is the meaning and purpose of tolerance for diversity in theological tasks. Finally, Clement is able to guide us in dialogue within our own traditions of

scripture interpretation. What do we hold regarding our exegetical boundaries interpreting the scriptures? How do our congregations read the scriptures? Are we either robbing the scriptures of their mystical sense by an overemphasis on reason or are we over allegorizing and reading scripture out of context to suit our own denominational traditions? There are many places to seek Clements advice, but these are a few that may be helpful for the evangelical reading of Clement of Alexandria.

Understanding the history and evolution of Christian thought holds a vital place in our future as a church. If we carefully observe Clement and the patristic era Christian thinkers we can avoid repeating mistakes previously made and where they were successful, we can model ourselves after them appropriately. Thank God that we did not have to face down the daunting task of appropriating the Christian faith in such a rugged era of theology! What a radically challenging situation to be in. This makes Clement open to a great amount of criticism, but also a great amount of admiration for the theological tasks he accomplished.

We may say that Clement opened the door for the ultimate corruption of the 'pure' Christian faith or we could alternatively say that he paved the way for

Christianity to be a religion for all times and all generations irrelevant of the culture or epoch. This would be a profound gift to all future generations of non-Jewish Christians who would have to fight to apprehend the Christian faith in the midst of socio-cultural attacks opposed to the new life in Jesus Christ.

Understanding Clement can help us comprehend our place in relationship to philosophy and socio-politically formative issues pressing our faith traditions for solutions to the problems being posed in real time. How will we appropriate our faith in the midst of deep, penetrating social and cultural issues which cannot simply be ignored? There are many important issues Christians must engage. The quality of the work that these theologians put forward during times of great duress gives a significant clue to the quality of the convictions they held. It is easy to dismiss the conclusions that Clement came to from the twenty-first century. But, before the conclusions of Nicea, what sort of profound conclusions might we have drawn? The incredible work combined with a profound genius created a basis for the Christian faith to be understood for all future generations. If not for the careful and innovative steps taken by Clement and his predecessors, would we have what we do in terms of clear Christian

traditions to base our life upon? This is a question of providence and I believe God would have provided other means. At the same time, we can be grateful that courageous Christians, like Clement, embraced the challenge of understanding Christianity in their situation. This is a prescription of courage for us today. What are the daunting theological tasks facing the Church? Are we prepared to wade into the deep waters with the defense of orthodoxy on our hearts? I pray so.

Clement contributes to a history of genuine tolerance in a diverse religio-philosophical world. Clement the cosmopolitan, in caricature, holds a great allure for the postmodern philosopher: Clement was not tolerant in the postmodern sense. He was tolerant of any source that could possess even a granule of truth. He believed that granule, no matter where it came from, to be from God. Because he held this view on truth, he was constantly on the lookout for it in a great diversity of sources. His citations of ancient sources are vast: 1002 OT citations, 1608 citations from the NT, 152 citations from Christian literature outside the canon and 966 citations from among the Greek philosophers shows his openness to various sources.<sup>39</sup> He

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<sup>39</sup> Annewies Van Den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 2.

apparently cited over 300<sup>40</sup> different authors in his works! This was a true bibliophile if ever one existed. The thing I appreciate about his use of these sources is that he interacted with them critically. He was not an unyielding syncretist. He took in the granules of truth and removed the bones of heresy. While his methods are far from what we would consider to be conservative today, it is a repeatable method of interacting with various doctrinal traditions in a tolerant and yet critical manner. This is a model of tolerance that theologians today can grasp for and follow.<sup>41</sup>

Comprehension of the allegorical methods of interpretation employed by Clement of Alexandria can help us today as we seek to completely embrace the message scripture has to offer its readers. While there is an inherent danger of eisegesis when approaching the scriptures in this way, caution should be used judiciously. At the same time, we should not be so cautious as to exclude powerful and properly biblical messages from our understanding of God's communication to us. There are deeper, symbolic and mysterious aspects to the *Book* we base our beliefs upon. If we reason away these aspects of our

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<sup>40</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Osborn, 2.

<sup>41</sup> A.J. Conyers, "Rescuing Tolerance," *First Things* no. 115 (2001, August 1): 45-46.

faith, we will miss some of the most poignant messages available to us. Fear should not be the driver of our interpretation, but faith.

Because of my highly rationalistic training, this particular reading of scripture leaves me with an uneasy feeling. I believe Clement provides some exegetical boundaries which can help us find a way forward into some of the wonderful mysteries offered to us in the Bible.<sup>42</sup> It is a way to hold to the value of our rationalistic evaluation of the scriptures while not abandoning some deeper, allegorical understandings that could potentially expand our faith in new and fresh ways as we are guided along by the Holy Spirit.

While I have offered a mostly sympathetic reading of Clement, I have not read him uncritically. I am looking for common ground with him so that we can chart a way forward with our ancient brethren. I do believe this is the way Clement would likely read our thoughts. I *am* concerned about an idealized, uncritical reading of the fathers, but I am more concerned about not reading them at all. The fear of being negatively affected theologically by this author is mostly unwarranted. I think about how uncritically most

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<sup>42</sup> Phillip V. Miller, "New Hearing For The Allegorical Method," *Perkins Journal* 29, no. 2 (1976, December 1): 33-34.

Christians will read "Christian" literature today. If we are going to consume Rick Warren, N.T. Wright, Rob Bell and Joel Osteen can't we include a little Clement in our literary diet? It is my hope that we can consume the works of ancient writers like Clement with the same spirit he might interact with our writings, open and tolerant yet always gleaning for the granules of truth available to every hungry soul.

Clement has had a profound impact on the historical development of Christian thought. He engaged in the pioneering effort to integrate Christian theology with the profound truths of the philosophical traditions of his day. Today what we would call this Christian Platonism, but for the undiscerning it may just be called simply Christianity.

He has left us with the legacy of the allegorical interpretation of scripture from the Christian vantage point. This opened the door for a historical evaluation of the teachings of the Old Testament and a way forward for the Gentile Christian world to engage the important teachings found there.

His continuation and expansion on the doctrine of the Logos plays an important role in the future understanding of Christology. He also left us with his pupil Origen, who is one of the most important figures in the history of

Christian thought. These contributions, as well as many others, leave us hungering for a greater appreciation of Clements lasting influences. It lays the ground for a lifetime studying his impact on our Christian faith.



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**APPENDIX A**

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