

Looking to God for Healing: A Rereading of the *Second Letter of Clement* in the Light of Hellenistic Psychagogy*

Tim Gaden

Abstract: Recent efforts at reading Paul and other New Testament writers from the perspective of Hellenistic rhetoric and philosophy have proved a fruitful way of uncovering new perspectives in Pauline scholarship. The same tools are equally applicable to other early Christian texts. Viewing the *Second Letter of Clement* as a modified form of psychagogic discourse reveals (among other things) a sophisticated rhetorical attempt to draw its audience into an awareness of the fullness of their salvation in the face of weakening eschatological expectation.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, the German New Testament scholar Johannes Weiss recommended that “students of the New Testament should know Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, Lucian, Musonius, Marcus Aurelius and Cicero intimately, and pursue the study of the New Testament with Hans von Arnim’s collection of Stoic texts at their elbows”.¹ Times and fashions change, of course, and one might now wish to add Epicurus and Philodemus to this list, but at the end of the twentieth century Weiss’ injunction appears remarkably prophetic. An increasing stream of scholarly work has uncovered fresh insights into New Testament texts by placing them in the context of Hellenistic rhetoric, philosophy and culture. Paul has been a major focus for this approach,² but it is not limited to him.³

* The resources and stimulating environment provided to the author as an honorary research associate by the Philosophy Department, Monash University, have greatly assisted the completion of this article.

1. Johannes Weiss, *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1908) 4, 11, 55 as cited in Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) 3.

2. Malherbe’s book, cited above, was a modern fore-runner in this school. See also his “Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament”, ANRW II.26.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) 267-333. Other more recent works include Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) and *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark,

An increasing amount of attention has been focussed on the use Paul makes of popular Graeco-Roman traditions of psychagogy (or “guiding the soul”), a key feature of Hellenistic philosophical schools. The psychagoge understands that the purpose of philosophy is not to appear clever, or debate metaphysical niceties, but to treat human misery and perplexities. So Epicurus writes: “Empty is that philosopher’s argument by which no human suffering is therapeutically treated. For just as there is no use in a medical art that does not cast out sickness of bodies, so too there is no use in philosophy, unless it casts out the suffering of the soul.”⁴ To further this end, Hellenistic philosophers developed a series of “spiritual exercises”, rhetorical modes of address and techniques of mentoring, persuasion and supervision for their pupils, all with the intention of ensuring that their medicine was properly taken.⁵

Malherbe, Given and Glad have studied Paul’s indebtedness to this popular tradition at length, in the process enriching our appreciation of Paul’s ability skillfully to negotiate this common, pre-existing cultural tradition to his advantage in the service of proclaiming the Gospel.⁶ This paper is an attempt to apply the same interpretative tools to the *Second Epistle of Clement*, a second century work, part of the collection conventionally known as the Apostolic Fathers. It begins with a brief survey of previous scholarship which demonstrates the low esteem in which the work has been held. The main argument of the paper is then presented: a close reading of the text, which attends to its debt to Hellenistic traditions of psychagogy and *paideia*, demonstrates that the

2000), Mark Given, *Paul’s True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome* (New York: Trinity Press International, 2001), Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the (1992) Heidelberg Conference* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

3. Richard Burridge, for example, has explored the links between the gospels and Graeco-Roman biography, concluding that the genre of biography has important hermeneutic implications for New Testament Christology and for source criticism of the gospels (*What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* [SNTSMS 70; Cambridge: CUP, 1995] esp. 255-259).

4. Epicurus, as quoted by Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam* 31. English translation from Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 13.

5. “Spiritual Exercises” is the term for this preferred in Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), an influential treatment of the theme. Philosophers in the Anglo-American tradition are more nervous about the word “spiritual” and often prefer to speak of “emotional exercises” (see Richard Sorabji’s 1997 Gifford Lectures, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) and the studies by Martha Nussbaum and Julia Annas referred to in footnote 35).

6. Of course, Paul probably did not regard himself as a psychagoge, but that is not the point of the research. As Glad puts it, “it is not important that we be able to classify Paul as a ‘psychagoge’ but rather that we recognise his participation in a widespread ‘psychagogic’ activity” (C. Glad, “The Significance of Hellenistic Psychagogy for our Understanding of Paul” in G. A. Jónsson and E. Sigurbjörnsson et al (eds.), *The New Testament in its Hellenistic Context* [Reykjavík: Guðfræðistofnun, Skálholtsútgáfan, 1996] 60).

letter is a sophisticated rhetorical attempt to provide much needed medicine for its audience, to draw them into a renewed awareness of their salvation by pointing them again to God, who is the one true therapist and healer of souls. In conclusion some remarks on the epistemology and theory of virtue in *2 Clement* are offered as indications of its distinctiveness from Hellenistic Judaism and Hellenistic ethical theory.

THE SECOND LETTER OF CLEMENT

In fact, the so-called "Second Letter of Clement" is neither by Clement nor a letter. It is the earliest extant work by an anonymous second century author that was attached to Clement of Rome's name at an early stage in the church's history. Given the difficulties in dating anonymous works, the most cautious modern estimates place it between 110-150 CE.⁷ Little can be determined with certainty about its intended audience.⁸

This lack of specific knowledge about the author, dating and audience of the epistle is all the more frustrating because of its status as perhaps the earliest known piece of extra-canonical Christian homiletics. It offers us a glimpse into the otherwise shadowy world of liturgical and spiritual experience in the early second century.

Twentieth century evaluations of the epistle have not been favourable. Lawson suggests that to move from the work of *1 Clement* and Ignatius to that of *2 Clement* and the other Apostolic Fathers is to enter a world which "moves at a disappointingly commonplace level" and which "caters for the lower levels of spiritual life".⁹ His only positive remark damns the text with very faint praise: Works like *2 Clement* have a certain place, he admits, for "if Christianity is to be truly

7. Simon Tugwell sets the parameters well: "Militating against too early a date is the fact that the New Testament is referred to as 'scripture' (2.4); but the lack of any reference to Gnosticism in a document so concerned about false doctrine suggests that *2 Clement* cannot be dated too far into the second century" (*The Apostolic Fathers* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989] 147, fn. 3). This matches J. B. Lightfoot's assessment of 120-140 CE well (*The Apostolic Fathers* [London: McMillan, 1912] 41). Likewise, the most recent introduction to the Apostolic Fathers reviews the arguments for dating and endorses Lightfoot's suggestion (Clayton Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* [Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996] 121-2).

8. The most common solution suggests that it was intended for the congregation at Corinth (other suggestions include Alexandria and Rome), but Baasland rightly concludes this solution is nothing more than a "scholarly Verlegenslösung" (E. Baasland, "2. Klemensbrief und frühchristliche Rhetorik", *ANRW* 27.1 [1992] 92).

9. J. Lawson, *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1961) 180, 181. R. M. Grant and H. H. Graham also remark on the unexceptional nature of the letter: "The importance of this work lies in its reflection of rather ordinary Christian (essentially Jewish Christian) life and thought in the early second century" (*The Apostolic Fathers: 1 and 2 Clement* [New York: Nelson, 1965] 110).

'catholic' it has to cater for the lower levels of the spiritual life as well as the higher".¹⁰

Neither Bultmann nor Torrance is more positive in their assessment. Bultmann regards the epistle as "no less a legalistic one" than the other writings of the Apostolic Fathers, "differing from theirs only in the fact that its legalism (as in II Peter and Jude) is less shaped by the synagogue tradition and is more strongly influenced by certain Hellenistic tendencies of asceticism and flight from the world".¹¹ It falls away from the purity of the gospel, relapsing into a legalism and moralism that owes more Hellenism than Christianity. As a result he suggests that while "love (ajgavph) is also regarded as a virtue, yet for II Clem. the characteristic virtue is ejkpravteia (self-control, abstinence, continence), which even goes to the extent of sexual abstinence".¹²

Torrance likewise views 2 *Clement* as a seriously deficient statement of the good news. It is characterised by an even "more blatant moralism" than he finds in 1 *Clement*. His judgement is worth citing at some length as it gives an indication of the depth of his contempt for the work:

The idea of merit, which is the central thought in all pagan conceptions of salvation, is for him quite apodeictic, and the most distinctive features of the Christian faith (with the exception of a strong emphasis on the deity of Christ) are wanting. He is lacking in insight and moral vigour, somewhat "confused in thought and slipshod in expression".... His purpose is through and through activist, and where theological interests are broached it is because they have a particular application to the Christian life in its struggle with the world and sin. He is not really concerned with the great act of salvation in Christ – how much he knows of that is not certain – but rather with human response to salvation.¹³

He concludes his review of the epistle with the opinion that it is "the least evangelic of all the writings of the so-called Apostolic Fathers".¹⁴

More positive evaluations of the epistle followed when scholars sought to contextualise it, and to understand the theology of 2 *Clement* as an occasional or "tactical" piece directed against specific opponents rather than as a systematic treatise.

Attempts to locate these opponents within the spectrum of early Christianity, however, have led to diverse results. Lightfoot had

10. Lawson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 181.

11. R. Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament, Vol II* (London: SCM Press, 1955) 171.

12. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 170. Bultmann's running textual references have been omitted.

13. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace*, 126-7.

14. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace*, 132.

considered them to be Ebionites, against whom the author advocates the high Christology of the letter's opening line.¹⁵ Others have seen them as proto-Gnostics,¹⁶ or as fully developed Gnostics, perhaps Valentinian.¹⁷ Donfried, noting the tactical nature of the text, writes in the sermon's defence: "Whereas his opponents have moved too far in the direction of the present nature of salvation, our author had overstressed the futurity of salvation.... It might well be that 2 Clement felt that only such an extreme moralism would bring his opponents to their senses".¹⁸ He nevertheless concludes that the general tone of the letter is that of "a new Christian morality...which in essence is little different from that which was practiced in Hellenistic Judaism".¹⁹

Whilst a more direct focus on the epistle's opponents is an attractive strategy, unfortunately the textual evidence shows only a tenuous connection with Gnosticism (emphasis on the flesh in 8:6 and 9:1-5, the ethical advice in 12:2-6), and does not justify the consideration of this homily as an anti-gnostic polemic.²⁰ The textual evidence can only support the weaker conclusion that the false teachers to which the author refers (9:1, 10:5) are exploiting a radical dissociation of body and soul, a tendency not restricted to Gnosticism.

Despite the inability of the text to provide specific dialogue partners, the insight of more recent commentators is sound: the epistle is directed against a particular problem, and is to be judged in that light. The most recent commentary by Lindemann, for example, has taken a milder tone, stressing the contextual and provisional nature of the work as sermon, and urging that the Christological and soteriological statements of the first three chapters should be weighted as heavily in interpretation as the following exhortatory material.²¹

Lindemann's approach also has the advantage of focussing on the occasional nature of text itself, rather than judging its worth by comparison to a particular understanding of Paul. Bultmann and Torrance started from a very "Lutheran" view of Paul that heavily distinguished the act of salvation from the human response and in

15. *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I.2, (Reprint of 1890 Ed: Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1981) 211.

16. K. Donfried, *The Setting of Second Clement in Early Christianity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) 112.

17. So R. Warns suggests in his unpublished dissertation, "Untersuchungen zum 2. Clemens-brief", University of Marburg (1985). Baasland gives a summary of its content in his article, "2 Klemensbrief".

18. K. Donfried, "The Theology of Second Clement", *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973), 487-501, see 498.

19. Donfried, "The Theology of Second Clement", 498.

20. Tugwell notes the absence of any distinctive gnostic elements which might aid this hypothesis, and suggests instead a background for the author's opponents in the Hellenistic mystery religions (*The Apostolic Fathers*, 143-4).

21. A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, (HNT 17; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Siebeck), 1992) 195-6.

which “salvation by faith alone” played an over-arching role. The hegemony of Paul, who is regarded as “a solitary theological genius whose ideas were misunderstood or ignored by his contemporaries and successors, because he so radically transcended his own spiritual milieu”,²² is clearly foundational to their approach. This view of Paul is now the subject of sustained criticism.²³ Although the debate is still unresolved, one immediate benefit for students of early Christianity is the emergence of more nuanced models of the participational and dialectical interplay between God’s act, narrative and the Christian community’s response. These models, which are not dependant on taking one side or another in the “New Paul” debate, allow the texts, especially later texts, new freedom to speak for themselves, as the old straight-jacket of “Justification by faith” vs. “early Catholicism” is overcome.²⁴ Instead of focussing on a particular doctrinal point, they encompass a broad examination of texts, symbols and communal practices, something Clifford Geertz calls “thick description”.²⁵ Gerd Theissen advocates just such a “thick description” when he suggests that early Christianity is best understood as a “semiotic cathedral” constructed out of “narrative, ritual and ethical materials, a world of signs and a world in which to live”, and in which “orthodoxy” is constituted by basic axioms and motifs that form the grammar of the new Christian sign language.²⁶ A close examination of the argument presented in 2 Clement reveals a complex interplay of these narrative, ritual and ethical materials, and an interplay of “God’s story in Christ”

22. Richard Hays, *The Faith of Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (SBLDS 56; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 254.

23. The critique of the “Lutheran Paul” has often centred around the much debated question of the meaning of *pivsti- Cristou* but its origins and implications are much wider than this question alone. Morna Hooker, “*PISTIS CRISTOU*”, *NTS* 35 (1989), 321-2 and Richard Hays, “*PISTIS* and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake”, *JBL Seminar Papers* 1991 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991) 714-29, provide excellent summaries of the wider theological matters at stake in the debate. J. D. G. Dunn provides a rejoinder to these claims in his paper in the same volume (730-744).

24. Rowan Williams, “Does it make sense to speak of pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?” in Rowan Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989) 1-23, speaks of a proto-orthodoxy richly constituted by the complex interaction of “gospel and canon, sacrament, succession, communion, debate and exchange, with all the ambiguities involved in the life of historical and visible social realities, the problems of power and guilt and forgetfulness” (p. 17).

25. This phrase, now almost a commonplace, was borrowed from Gilbert Ryle by Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) esp. 3-30. He suggests that “as interworked systems of construable signs... culture is not a power to which social events, behaviours, intuitions or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is thickly – described” (p. 14). These descriptions may sometimes be “fuzzy”, but as Geertz comments: “Nothing has done more, I think, to discredit cultural analysis than the construction of impeccable depictions of formal order in whose actual existence nobody can quite believe.” (p. 18).

26. Gerd Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1999) 286-91.

and the "story of the community" which precludes the sharp distinction Bultmann and Torrance wish to draw between God's act and the human response. In his appeal, the author makes good use of these connections to further his psychagogic aims.

This same complex interaction also goes some way towards resolving the differing assessments of the letter's enemies and the author's argument. Lightfoot's suggestion of a high Christology used to combat Ebionites was unable to explain the ethical stress of the letter. Later attempts to source the enemies in groups with a low estimation of the flesh which calls forth a "legalistic", ethical response from the author, were unable to account for the high Christology which marks the author's opening statement. Once the nature of the author's theology is grasped as a "semiotic cathedral", it is easier to perceive that a high Christology and ethical admonition are two sides of the same coin. The author's commitment to a story of God's rescue of the community entails both a high estimation of Christ's role in the narrative, and a stress on the importance of the correct ethical response which participation in that narrative requires. By refusing to adopt the same commitment, the opponents demonstrate their need to be reminded of both.

Finally, the author of 2 *Clement* is unfairly judged if regarded as a commonplace and unsophisticated thinker, presenting a version of the Christian gospel which is hard to distinguish from the thought of a Hellenised Jew. Not only does Christ figure prominently in the letter's argument, but he is introduced into the author's appeals by the competent and sophisticated use of Hellenistic rhetoric. Further, a close reading of the text reveals substantive differences between the theory of virtue which the author commends and the Hellenistic theories of virtue upon which he draws. Bultmann and Torrance have too hastily concluded that the letter is determined by Hellenistic moralism. In fact, the author modifies the traditions he adopts, and this presents a vision of the good news which is neither withdrawn from, nor determined by, the intellectual culture which surrounds him.

AN EXHORTATION ON SALVATION

Whether or not the text is to be understood as an early Christian sermon,²⁷ the author himself describes it as an "hortatory address" or "advice" (sumbouliva 15:1) or an "appeal" (e[nteuxi" 19:1). In Aristotle's

27. Eusebius describes it as a "letter" (επιστολήν – *Hist. eccl.* III.38.4) as does Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 15.3). The author seems to imply that it is to be read in the context of a worship service ("I am reading you an exhortation (ε[nteuxi") to pay attention to that which is written, so that you may save yourselves and the one who is a reader among you" 19:1). Others have sought to understand it as a "homily" in the strict sense, as an exegesis of scripture (Einar Molland, "Clemensbriefe", *RGK* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Siebeck, 1957) 1.1836-38).

classic threefold schema, this is of the “deliberative genre” (gevno” sumbouleutikovn, *Rhet* 1358a), in which people speaking both privately and in public are engaged in exhortation and admonition. An e[nteuxi” is an “address to the many” (as Aristotle defines it in *Rhet* 1355a.29), although in the context of the early church its usage encompassed “general prayer” (Herm. *Man* 5.1.6), “prayer of thanksgiving” (1 Tim 4:5) and, most usefully here, “appeal” (1 *Clem* 63:2, Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol* 1.1.7). These two terms point towards the practical thrust of the work, which will be an exhortation to the amendment of life and, in keeping with Aristotle’s view of the deliberative as concerning the future, will end with an extended consideration of the last days. The topic of the exhortation, as the author takes pains to stress at the beginning and towards the end of the text, is “salvation” (1:1, 17:5). This soteriological concern not only physically brackets the text, but determines the nature of the entire work.²⁸

The text is occasioned by the author’s concern to combat the work of false teachers in the congregation (10:5). As we have already seen, their exact affiliation cannot be determined, but evidence within the text makes it plain that they held a low estimation of the flesh.²⁹ In order to refute their denigration of the body, he begins his attack by first presenting the new reality which God has achieved for the community in Christ (1-3). From the fact that “God has called them into being from nothingness” all else proceeds. Once upon a time their minds were blinded, and the activity of their whole lives was death (1:6). But in Christ the community has experienced salvation, and has now had its sight restored so it is able both to perceive and to do what God enjoins. Having established this privileged communal, soteriological experience, the author then develops his appeal, drawing on the Hellenistic tradition of psychagogy, and presenting a theory of virtue which does justice to the totality of the human person, as both flesh and spirit, and which sustains the congregation as it looks forward to Christ’s return. We begin by examining the opening chapters of the epistle in some detail, for they reveal the main outline of the struggle between the author and the false teachers.

28. “Der 2.Klem. ist somit eine sehr eigenartige symbuleutische Rede.... Sie ist eine interne eindringliche Ansprache (e[vnteuxi”) mit protreptischen Einschlägen, die das Selbstverständnis der Gemeinde stärken soll. In 1,2 und 17,5 – also am Anfang und Ende – wird sie als eine Ansprache peri; th” swthriva” deutlich”. (E. Baasland, “2. Klemensbrief”, 125-6). I am persuaded by Baasland’s rhetorical study of the epistle that chapters 19-20 form the *peroratio* and are thus an integral part of the work, and not a later addition (*contra* Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 255-6).

29. From the author’s emphasis on self-control (ejgkravteia), and from the characterisation of the enemies as people who engage in behaviour contrary to the commandments, it is reasonable to infer that the author’s opponents drew certain libertarian conclusions from this neglect of the body. So Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 117.

The author opens the epistle with a depiction of the state of believers before they were rescued by God. Their minds (*diavnoiai*) were blinded (1:6) and they were in "great deception" (1:8), worshiping idols made by human hands. From that state, Christ rescued them, restoring their misted sight and laying aside the cloud that surrounded them. As a result of Christ's action they have come to know the Father of truth. Their knowledge (*gnw'si*) of the Father is defined as "refusing to deny him through whom we came to know the Father" (3:1), and that refusal to deny is further clarified as "doing what he says and not disobeying his commandments", honouring him "not with lips only, but with the whole person, in heart and mind" (3:4). True knowledge is thus understood as behaviour appropriate to a person who is aware of standing in a dependant relationship upon God and seeks such a relationship within the framework of the behaviour enjoined by the commandments.

The role of the commandments as practices that are essential to a firm grasp of the truth is reinforced, negatively, by the author's characterisation of his enemies, the false teachers, as those who indulge in adultery, slander and jealousy, who are avaricious, and who fear men rather than God (4:3). They are those who find no peace, for "they give way to human fears and prefer the pleasures here to what is promised for the future. They do not know what great torments the pleasures of the present bring, and what delight the promise of the future" (10:3-4).

The false teachers are not only deficient in their behaviour; they are prey to significant doctrinal misunderstandings, based on a lack of true knowledge. They deny that the flesh is either judged or raised (9:1). To make matters worse, these enemies of the truth are teaching their evil to innocent souls (10:5). His rejoinder to them calls them back to his great opening statement on the nature of the salvation, reminding them that it was in the flesh that they received salvation and in which their sight was restored (9:2-5), and that the flesh receives its worth from its place in God's story of salvation.

The strong presence of soteriological and epistemic themes in this opening section is significant, and may provide some insight into the false teaching the author seeks to combat. He is at pains to remind the congregation of the priority of God's action in Christ as the foundation of all the blessings they presently enjoy. Christ had compassion on them because he saw they were in "such deception and destruction" and knew they "had no hope of salvation unless it came from him" (1:7-8). Unfolding the meaning of this gracious act in the rest of the letter, as Lindemann suggests, is not a *de facto* relapse into moralism, but represents an authentic Pauline attempt to found the imperative on the indicative, or to develop paraenesis as the exegesis of that saving narrative. Further, it suggests that the thought of the author's opponents is marked by the attempt to ground their teaching outside

the sphere of the community defined and sustained by the practices and virtues which the author has identified as central. This becomes clear in the author's definition of the kind of knowledge which results from their transition from destruction to salvation.

Given the tactical nature of the work, the presence of epistemic themes in this opening section is significant, and may provide some insight into the false teaching the author seeks to combat. First, he is at pains to remind the congregation of the priority of God's action in Christ as the foundation of all the blessings they presently enjoy. Christ had compassion on them because he saw they were in "such deception and destruction" and knew they "had no hope of salvation unless it came from him" (1:7-8). In defining their knowledge of the Father as "doing what he says and not disobeying his commandments" (3:4), the author presents a view of the behaviour of the truly righteous faithful person which transcends an easy division into knowledge and virtue as distinct categories, and in which knowing the Father is equated with the virtue of obeying the commandments.

Like the author of *1 Clement*, the author of the second letter often characterises the state of his opponents as one of double-mindedness (*diyuciva*, 11:2, 19:2; see 11:5). In view of the strong stress which the author places upon the fusion of ethics and correct perception, it is tempting to understand this double-mindedness as the failure to fuse these two things. And in fact, the texts themselves are suggestive of such an interpretation. Double-mindedness, paired in the heart with unbelief, leads people to do wrong without knowing it (19:2). Elsewhere double-mindedness is equated with those who doubt God's promises, and refuse to remain steadfast in hope for the things of God's kingdom which cannot be seen (11:2-5): they are therefore by implication, unlike the faithful, "wretched" and deficient in their practice.

In order to move the community out of the disjuncture between the reality of their story as a "lost-redeemed" people and their current behaviour, the author draws upon two of the best known metaphors for philosophical activity in the Hellenistic world: the philosopher as doctor/therapist and the philosopher as athlete. The importance of the presence of these metaphors has not always been adequately appreciated by scholars. Lawson, as we have seen, is convinced that "the intellectual task of conquering for Christ the culture and learning of the day had hardly swum into the ken".³⁰ Graham seconds his opinion, considering the author to be "no theologian" and the work "the reflection of rather ordinary Christian (essentially Jewish Christian) life and thought".³¹ The author, however, is well aware of some aspects of

30. Lawson, *Apostolic Fathers*, 179-80.

31. Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 110.

the intellectual life around him, and capable of adapting them to his own exposition of what the faithful person should be.

The first obvious indication of strong involvement with the surrounding culture is the author's familiarity with the tools of Hellenistic rhetoric, which has already surfaced in the determination of the text's genre. The first two chapters alone show evidence of a number of rhetorical figures,³² and a preference for polyptoton and alliteration, which indicate the consciously oral nature of the work.³³

The presence of this rhetorical material is interesting in itself. Many examinations of the relationship between Christianity and Hellenistic thought have focussed exclusively on the *philosophical* connections,³⁴ producing only a partial view of the dialogue. Marrou, commenting on the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric in Hellenistic education, notes that it is rhetoric and not philosophy which "left a profound impression on all manifestations of the Hellenistic Spirit":

On the level of history Plato had been defeated: posterity had not accepted his educational ideas. The victor, generally speaking, was Isocrates, and Isocrates became the educator first of Greece and then of the whole world.... Rhetoric is the specific object of Greek education and the highest Greek culture.³⁵

In the case of 2 *Clement* its presence serves to remind us that a low level of philosophical vocabulary is not an indicator of a disregard or unfamiliarity with Hellenistic culture. Indeed as we shall see, the author is familiar enough with at least two strands of that culture, psychagogy and the *paideia* tradition, to modify them to his own ends.

32. For example, chiasmus (ga:r fronei'n hJma" mikra; peri; aujtu', mikra; kai; eJlpivzomen labei'n, 1:2), polysyndeton and climax (peri; jJhsou' Cristou', wJ" peri; Qeou', wJ" peri; kritou' zwvntwn kai nekrw'n, 1:1 cf. 1:3, 2:1-3) and anaphora (o{ de; ei{pen 2:2,3). Baasland, "2. Klemensbriefe" provides a more complete list of rhetorical figures and tropes on pp. 117-122.

33. Polyptoton (e[gnwmen, gnw'si", e[gnwmen, 3:1; ajgw'na...ajgwniswvmeqa, 7:3; sumbouliwan... sumbouleuvsanta, 15:1) and alliteration (e[stai, ejavn mh; euJreqw'men e[rga e[xonte", 6:9) are common. Some commentators have suggested the absence of more literary figures like Zeugmata or Ellipses, prove that 2 *Clement* has no contact with classical rhetoric, e.g. P. Vielhauer who writes, "Die antike Kunstrede kommt selbstverständlich nicht in Frage, dazu ist 2. Klem zu unliterarisch" (*Geschichte der urchristliche Literatur*, 740). The presence of figures more appropriate to oral delivery are no indication of a lack of rhetorical acquaintance. On the contrary, Hellenistic philosophers prized simplicity of speech. For example, Plutarch (*On Stoic Contradictions*, 1047A-B) notes Chrysippus' view on rhetoric, "I think that one should cultivate not just a frank and unaffected order [of speech]....but we should also ignore various kinds of unclarity, ellipses, and – in heaven's name – solecisms, of which numerous others would be ashamed." (D. Sedley and A. Long (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Vol 1 [Cambridge: CUP, 1987] 37H).

34. For example, E. F. Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy* does not mention rhetoric at all. Other studies, Lawson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, and Tugwell, *The Apostolic Fathers*, likewise accord little or no importance to the rhetoric of these writers.

35. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956) 268.

The writer is not only familiar with rhetorical figures per se, but also with one of the purposes to which this rhetoric is applied in the Hellenistic world. In shaping his appeal to the congregation, he draws on the traditions of “psychagogy”, which as Malherbe defines it, is “the constant attention philosophers devoted to their followers’ intellectual, spiritual and moral growth”.³⁶ Sometimes called by Hellenistic philosophers simply the “art of living” (hJ peri; to;n bivon tevnh) it was a dominant model for the philosopher’s activity. A recent study of Paul’s psychagogical activity provides a more extended definition of it as the

mature person’s leading of neophytes in an attempt to bring about moral reformation by shaping the neophyte’s view of himself and of the world. Such a reshaping demands in many cases a radical reorientation through social, intellectual and moral transformation.³⁷

This type of discourse is best represented by the speech on the subject by the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon, preserved by his student Philodemus. By the first century CE, however, the elements of this style were widely used and can be found in the works of Epictetus, Seneca, Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom, and slightly later in Clement of Alexandria’s *Paedagogus*.³⁸

The epistle shares a number of important features of this genre. It is a commonplace of psychagogical discourse that the well-ordered person’s deeds must match their words. Plutarch mocks the pretensions of a psychagogue who would lecture others but was not able to act in accordance with teaching himself: he is like a “healer of others with sores erupting all over his own body”.³⁹ Negatively, this is exactly the situation with the false teachers whom the author confronts. They are bound in chains of adultery, slander and jealousy, they are avaricious,

36. A. Malherbe, “Hellenistic Moralists”, 301. Extended treatments of this theme in Hellenistic Philosophy can be found in Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) and Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: OUP, 1993). Michel Foucault provides a stimulating and idiosyncratic treatment of the same material in his *Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality* (New York: Random House, 1986), esp. 39-68.

37. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 2.

38. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.22.18, *Ench.* 29; Seneca, *Ep.* 6.5, 11.8-10, 25.5 and 52.3, 94.50-52 for indications of the importance of Epicurus for Seneca; Plutarch, *Virt. prof., Rect. rat. aud., Adul. amic.*; Dio Chrysostom, *De invidia (Or. 78)*, 38; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.*, I passim. M. Nussbaum, “Therapeutic Arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle” in M. Schofield and G. Striker (eds.), *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986) 52, provides a number of earlier, classical citations; and a similarly valuable summary of the tradition can be found in I. Hadot, “Die Seelenleitung der hellenistischen Philosophenschulen mit einem oberblick über die Entwicklung der stoischen Philosophie”, Chapter 3 of his *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969) 39-78.

39. *Adul. amic.*, 71F-72A. Glad provides a large number of other examples in his discussion of this trope (*Paul and Philodemus*, 20-23).

and they fear men rather than God (4:3). Positively, it is the motif behind the insistence that the deeds of the community match their words. He knows that Christians are open to the same charge of being ineffectual healers in their witness to the world: "When [the Gentiles] hear from our lips the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness. But then when they observe that our actions are unworthy of the words we utter, they turn to blasphemy, saying that it is a myth and a deception" (13:3). Therefore he urges, "let us then not merely call him Lord for that will not save us...let us confess him in our deeds" (4:1-3).

The author uses himself as an example of someone "who pursues righteousness", but not very expertly, as a result of fearing the judgement to come (18:2). Seneca, the Roman Stoic, is particularly fond of the use of examples in psychagogy. He illustrates their two-fold purpose:

Let us choose...from among the living, not men who pour forth words with the greatest glibness, turning out commonplaces..., but men who teach us by their lives, men who tell us what we ought to do (*quid faciendum sit*) and then prove it by their practice, who show us what we should avoid (*quid vitandum sit*) and then are never caught doing that which they have ordered us to avoid. (*Ep* 52.3)

Seneca's claim, that "the way is long if one follows precepts (*praecepta*), but short and helpful if one follows examples (*exempla*)" (*Ep* 6.5f), is a dictum he honours by making use of his own experience.

Like any secular psychagoge, he is aware that the audience will grumble at his criticisms, and be "displeased and indignant" (19:2). Lucian, for example, displays the same convention as he writes of his own instruction and conversion: "I was all confused. At first I felt hurt because he had criticised what was dearest to me (wealth and money and reputation) and I all but cried over their downfall" (*Nigr* 3-7). Dio Chrysostom draws attention to another characteristic feature of psychagogy, which 2 *Clement* shares, speaking of the various rhetorical modes of the philosopher who corrects people "partly by persuading and exhorting, partly by abusing and reproaching...admonishing them in groups every time he finds an opportunity, with gentle words at times, at others harsh" (*Invid* [*Or* 77/78] 37-45). Clement likewise moves frequently between comforting and challenging words; and he is concerned to elucidate the psychological state of his listeners, especially their passions (*ejpiqumiva*, 16:2, 19:2). Like most psychagogical writing it draws on other genres, notably paraenesis and symbuleutic exhortation.⁴⁰ Here it displays the usual alternation of what ought to be done

40. Berger warns against too strict a division of rhetorical genre, noting their mixture at least since the time of Isocrates. The reason for this mixture "is not only due to the fact that the individual elements of the different genres over-lapped, but also because the "macro-structure" of a text is constituted by genres of differing origin" ("Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament", *ANRW* 25.2 [1984], 1045).

and what ought to be avoided (e.g. 1:1), although the former element, the *quid faciendum sit*, is by far the most common in 2 *Clement*.

There are a number of significant differences as well that point towards the conscious transformation of these rhetorical forms by the author, and provide a way into the kinds of knowledge which he understands faithfulness to Christ to enjoin. First, scriptural quotations taken from the Old and the New Testaments and from Apocryphal literature have replaced the *gnw'mai* which are usual in Hellenistic psychagogy. The author, however, does not use them as a source of revelation from which to proceed to demonstrations. Rather they are used to bolster existing positions, and serve as reminders for the things the author has already said (19:1).⁴¹ As Baasland notes, scripture here performs an illustrative and supportive function, like Anaximenes' *gnwvmh e[ndoxo*".⁴²

More important is the frequency of the first person plural pronoun (80 occurrences) and verbal forms. Psychagogical discourse is normally held in the first person singular, with the teacher standing in a superior relationship to the pupils.⁴³ This reflects its predominant setting as a form of school instruction between a philosopher and his disciples. Whether it be a community of two, the master and the submissive pupil as Nussbaum argues is Epicurus' model, or the mutually corrective community of Aristotle, psychagogy is a social activity, grounded in a concrete communal setting.⁴⁴

The author of 2 *Clement* uses the community in a different way. Instead of presenting an exhortation in the form of an address by a superior to his followers, and casting himself in the role of the superior, the author presents a picture of the whole community standing in need of a word from God. He achieves this by adapting the language of psychagogy to "re-inscribe" God as "the therapeutic philosopher".

Malherbe has pointed out the importance in this tradition of seeking the right time for instruction, in particular the right time (*kairos*) for a particular mode of address, especially for "frankness" (*parrhsiva*). According to Aeschylus, "words are physicians' ailing wrath if salve is

41. Donfried notes a certain sophistication in the author's use of scriptural allusions. He resists any attempt to reduce the roles of scripture into competing categories of "proof" or "illustration", suggesting instead that the functions are combined in a way which allows the citations "not only to illustrate, but to support authoritatively that which is being said" (*The Setting of 2nd Clement*, 97).

42. Baasland, "2. Klemensbrief", 123.

43. So Baasland, "2. Klemensbrief", 106.

44. Nussbaum argues for a distinction between Aristotle and Epicurus on the place of community in their therapy. She suggests that the Epicurean psychagoge is much more dictatorial, lording it over the individual student, whereas Aristotle's therapy aims at "communal convergence" (*"Therapeutic Arguments"*, 63-65). See also Glad's insistence on the healthy communal nature of Epicurean psychagogy in *Paul and Philodemos*, 165-81.

not applied at the proper time (ejn kairw/").⁴⁵ Philo of Alexandria calls untimely bold speech (parrhsiva ajkaivro") the "product of a diseased mind and emotion",⁴⁶ and Musonius Rufus recommends that the philosopher should not rehearse a multitude of arguments, but deliver the proper one at the right time (kaivro").⁴⁷ The proper kairov", according to Plutarch, is when the philosopher sees himself called to check the headlong course of vice.⁴⁸ The author of *2 Clement*, having diagnosed the state of his listeners in terms similar to be as Plutarch describes it, does not speak of his own words as timely, but repeatedly urges the congregation to recognise that this is the kairov" in which to turn to God, to repent (8:2, 9:7, 16:1). Not only that, but this is the time for boldness (parrhsiva, 15:3), not in addressing the writer, but in addressing God, whom he calls the "Physician" or "Therapist" (oJ qerapeuvwn qeov", 9:8), and the "Father of Truth" (3:1). The comparison between God and secular therapeutic philosophers is heightened by the fact that addressing God in this way is to be "healed" and that in return God demands a "fee" (9:7).⁴⁹ Further it is not the role of the author to admonish the congregation, rather they are to "admonish each other" (17:2).⁵⁰

EPISTEMOLOGY AND VIRTUE

It is possible to draw from this analysis a number of conclusions about the epistemology and the theory of virtue in *2 Clement*. The story of the community's salvation from idol worship and a "life of death" (1:6) and incorporation into the Church provide a visible instance of the real eternal world, with which the author loves to contrast "the strange land of this world" (5:1). He is fond of presenting two choices to his audience, noting that they "have to renounce one to retain the other" (6:5): "this world of the flesh" or "the promise of Christ" (5:5), "God" or "Mammon" (6:1), "the meagre, short-lived and perishable" thing here, or "the good and the imperishable" there (6:6), "the pleasures of the

45. Cited in Ps-Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll.* 102B.

46. Philo, *Somm.*, 2.78-92.

47. Musonius Rufus, *Frag.* 1. See A. J. Malherbe, "In Season and Out of Season: 2 Timothy 4:2", pp. 137-45, in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 138-40 for a longer list of examples.

48. Plutarch writes, "Under what circumstances should a friend be forceful? When should he use the power that candour carries? Whenever he is presented with the opportunity to stem the tide of hedonism or anger or arrogance, or to curtail venality or restrain stupid thoughtlessness" (*Adul. amic.* 69E).

49. Justin Martyr gives a more disparaging account of the philosopher's fee in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, in which he turns away in disgust from a Peripatetic philosopher who refused to take him as a student unless the fee were settled first (2.3).

50. It is interesting to note in this connection, that the Epicureans also spoke of admonishing one another. Philodemus refers to this as "reproof" (nouqetei'n), a verb *2 Clement* employs three times to describe the teaching the community is to render to each other (17:2, 3, 19:2).

present" or the "promises of the future" (10:4), "present enjoyments" or "Jesus' mercy" (16:2), "suffering in the world" or "the immortal harvest of the resurrection" (19:3), "the present life" or the life "which is to come" (20:2). This is not a simple dualism, however. Christ has broken through and "disclosed to us the truth and heavenly life" (20:5). Certainty of salvation, and thus knowledge, is to be found in conforming one's self to all that pertains to the world to come as it is embodied in the commandments (3:4, 4:5, 6:7, 8:4, etc), or the "oracles of God" (13:3), above all in matching words with action (3:4, 4:3, 13:2-4, 17:3). The author supports his claims by reference to the constancy of God, who pays "each one the wages due for their work" (11:6), and, by referring the congregation back to the story in the first chapters, to the "abundant kindness" (15:5), or "mercy" (3:1) they now enjoy.

The coherence of the author's view is obviously threatened by the matter he raises in the last chapter, that unrighteous people seem to prosper whilst the righteous suffer (20:1-4). This problem, already much discussed within the Old Testament,⁵¹ is met by an argument drawn from history – that none of the righteous have received their reward quickly (20:3) – and by the reminder that this present life is "the contest of the Living God", in which the congregation is being trained to meet the reward to come (20:2).

The author lays some of the blame for the community's misdeeds at the feet of unruly or unrecognised desires (*ejpiqumiva*, 16:2, 19:2). In two places in 2 *Clement*, the understanding of *ejpiqumiva* seems to show greater connection with more formal Greek philosophical usage than the anthropology of the Apostolic Fathers usually displays. At one point the author suggests, that "if we renounce present enjoyments and master our souls by not yielding to their evil desires we will share in Jesus' mercy" (16:2).

"Enjoyment" or "sensuousness" (*hJdupavqeia*, cf. 17:7) occurs only here in Christian literature before Clement of Alexandria, although it is attested in the LXX in 4 Macc 2:1-4.⁵² This term, and the negative evaluation of the soul in the passage, demonstrate closer affinity to Hellenistic understandings of the role of the passions, both Stoic⁵³ and

51. It is a common *topos* of Jewish piety, e.g. Job, Ps 73, Proverbs, and is also reflected in the New Testament, (Luke 6:24-5, Jas 5:1).

52. "Rationality (*diavnoia*) gave [Joseph] the upper hand over voluptuousness (*hJdupavqeia*); though a young man and at the peak of sexual appetite, he frustrated the goad of the passions by the force of reason (*logismov*"). And not only over voluptuousness is reason seen to possess mastery, but over all desires (*pa§sai ejpiqumivai*, 4 Macc 2:2b-4). Lampe attests *hJdupavqeia* first in Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 2.27), then in Methodius (*Symp.* 1.3) and Eusebius (*Dem. ev.* 3.4).

53. Cicero, for example, urges the importance of allowing reason to master impulse (*appetitum rationi obedientem praebeamus*) in order to establish the best stimulus for action (Fin. 1.132 in Sedley & Long, 53J). Stobaeus (2.86.17, Sedley & Long 53 Q), using the

Platonic,⁵⁴ than one might expect. The anthropology of 2 *Clement* is not consistent, however, and the absence of any indication about which part of the human person enjoys the victory over the soul, makes the suggestion of further parallels or precedents difficult.⁵⁵

A second passage is equally tantalising: “Sometimes, because of double-mindedness and the unbelief lodged in our hearts, we do what is wrong without knowing it, and our understanding is darkened by vain desires (ejskotivsmega th;n diavnoian uJpo; tw`n ejpikumiw`n tw`n mataivwn)” (19:2). There are strong New Testament and extra-canonical parallels here (Eph 4:8, Rom 1:21, see 1 *Clem* 36:2), but also connections with those Hellenistic thinkers who link the presence of desire in the heart with a weakening, or darkening, of understanding, especially perhaps with the Stoic conceptions of passion as a “fluttering of the soul”.⁵⁶ In the case of this author, however, that conclusion is not used to promote the necessity of exterminating the passions within the individual. Rather, in line with the principles which Paul and the other early Christian writers drew from the narrative, it is used to justify accepting the admonishment of those whose understanding is not so darkened (19:2). That is to say, the focus shifts again from the individualistic tendency of Hellenistic philosophy – what action is appropriate for the individual seeking to progress towards the life of virtue – to a communal emphasis on the dispositions appropriate to different individuals within the one community. This new focus is twice driven home in the chapter by expressions of the hope that this action will lead to the salvation of the whole community (19:1, 3). In passing, it is important to notice that the modifications which the author applies in his use of this Hellenistic vocabulary, demonstrate the unhelpfulness of simply placing the Apostolic Fathers within the orbit of “Hellenistic Judaism”. Rather, it is important to analyse the content of the narratives

Stoic term oJrmhv for “impulse” speaks of it as “a movement of the soul towards something” (th;n de; oJrmh;n ei`nai fora;n yuch` ejpiv ti).

54. Alcinous (*Epit.* 24.2-3), as part of his demonstration of the existence of two souls, rational and passible, speaks of the way in which “lust fights against reason” (ejpikumiva logismw/ macomevnh).

55. See here A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 247-8. Note however the reference in Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, X.33 in which he compares the use of the material presented to reason upon which it makes decisions in the soundest way, to the relationship between indulgence (trufhv) and sensuousness (uJdupavqeia). See also the suggestion below that 2 *Clement* may be more strongly influenced than other Apostolic Fathers by the psychagogical traditions upon which he draws.

56. For example, Stobaeus, “Everyone in a state of passion, turns aside from reason, but not like those who have been deceived in something or other, but in a special way. For when people have been deceived, for instance over atoms being first principles, they give up the judgement, once they have been taught that this is not true. But when people are in states of passion, even if they realise or are taught to realise that one should not feel distress or fear...they still do not generally give these up, but are brought by them to a position of being controlled by their tyranny” (2.90.5-6). The translation is taken from Sedley & Long, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 65A.

and virtues which the competing and distinct groups embraced by the category use to establish their particular self-definitions.⁵⁷

In order to combat these desires, *2 Clement*, like any good psychagogue competing in the crowded philosophical marketplace, recommends a course of therapy, which is nothing more than the fee the Physician demands: "the repentance of a sincere heart" (9:8). The nature of that therapy is spelt out elsewhere more completely as "the pursuit of virtue" (10:1).

The presence of *ajrethv*, a word attested only five times in the New Testament, and then only three of those times with the sense of "virtue" (Phil 4:8, twice in 2 Pet 1:5), signals a connection with the idea of the philosopher as athlete. The importance of this connection is further heightened by the use of vocabulary – *ajskev*, *gumnavzw*, and *ajqlevw*, 20:2,4 – drawn from the tradition of "aretic training".⁵⁸ As this exposition will make clear, the author of *2 Clement* is attempting to construct a vision of eschatological virtues, shaped by the narrative of Christ, that will make his hearers ready to face Christ's certain return (12:1).

It is often maintained that the true message of the Gospel is hostile to the tradition of *paideia*. Hans Jonas speaks for a number of scholars when he contends that the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love "are a denial of *arete*." The Christian virtues,

far from confirming selfhood in its autonomous worth presuppose man's radical inability to achieve his own perfection and include the acknowledgment of this insufficiency – that is to say, the self-negating position of humility – in their very meaning.⁵⁹

Torrance, who is generally hostile to the presence of Greek thought in the Apostolic Fathers, as we have seen, deplors, the "blatant moralism" of this letter and calls it the "least evangelic of the writings of the so-

57. M. Hengel nicely summarises contemporary scepticism about the usefulness of this term: "The term 'Hellenistic' as currently used no longer serves to make any meaningful differentiation in terms of the history of religions within the history of earliest Christianity". See *The "Hellenisation" of Judea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1989) 53. In this same period, scholars are increasingly aware of the importance of difference between the competing philosophical schools once thrown together under the banner of "eclecticism" or "Hellenistic philosophy". See J. Dillon and A. A. Long (eds), *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in Later Greek Philosophy* (San Francisco: University of California Press, 1988) esp. 1-13. It is of course more difficult to think of a convenient term to replace it.

58. See Epictetus (*Ench.* 29), who compares becoming a philosopher to training (*gumnavzesqai*) for the Olympic games (cf. *Diatr.* III.15.3). Philo (*Spec.* IV.101) calls Moses above all skilful in training (*gumnavzei*), who instilled *a[skhsi] ajreth* in his charges and describes Leah as the virtue of the rational part of the soul, who trains us (*gumnavzei*) (*Congr.* 27).

59. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (London: RKP, 1992) 227.

called Apostolic Fathers".⁶⁰ Vielhauer speaks of a "robust doctrine of salvation by works",⁶¹ and Donfried likewise considers it to have fallen away from the Gospel: "Instead of the obedience of faith nurtured by the Spirit, a *nova lex*, a new Christian morality appears which in essence is little different from that which is practised in Hellenised Judaism".⁶²

We observed in the previous section that the presence of Stoic material and elements of philosophical paraenesis have led some scholars to ignore the ways in which the author modified the content of that material to his own purpose. Here a similarly overdrawn juxtaposition⁶³ between the formal structure of the Hellenistic virtue tradition and New Testament soteriology has led to an undervaluing of the ways in which the author of *2 Clement* distinguished his thought from the culture which surrounded him. As we examine the arguments the author employs to support his position, we will again see that the *content* of the "moralism" is distinct from both the Greek and Jewish traditions.

The author expands his understanding of the virtues required by the community to remain "on the way" in a positive way as loving one another, cultivating self-control (ejkratei" ei\nai), kindness and mercy, and bearing each others' burdens, and negatively in refraining from adultery, slander and jealousy, and in not being avaricious (4:3). Self-sacrificial love (ajgavph) expressed in acts of mercy and almsgiving (16:4) is the primary norm.⁶⁴ The presence of this virtue at the pinnacle of the author's ethical schema is of crucial significance. Just as humility (not a popular Hellenistic virtue) serves in *1 Clement* to differentiate his thought from that of his surrounding culture, so ajgavph serves here to emphasise the distinctiveness of a life grounded on the narrative of Christ. It links the community back to the story of its founding, as a result of God's mercy on them (1:7). Christ, in showing them both mercy and compassion, is the definitive example of what love is (1:7). The practice of love within the community, manifested in the same Christ-like mercy and kindness towards one another, binds the community together (15:2), and assures their salvation (9:6). In all these ways it serves to underline the importance of the characteristic priority

60. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace*, 126, 132.

61. "Eine handfeste Werkgerechtigkeit", *Geschichte der urchristliche Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975) 742.

62. K. Donfried, "The Theology of Second Clement", 498.

63. For example, the contention that virtue in the Hellenistic tradition is a human effort distinct from God's grace has to be balanced with the idea that virtue itself is a gift from God. For example, Hierocles, a second century Stoic, maintains that "God is good, and has been naturally filled from the beginning with all virtues.... [H]e furnishes every good to all people who are willing to receive it." *On Duties*, 2.9.7 (Translation from A. J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 87). Paul, on the other hand, frequently refers to judgement by works, especially for those who do not make the correct moral response to God's offer of salvation (1 Cor 6:9, Gal 5:21).

64. Baasland, "2. Klemensbrief", 144.

of the community over the individual which marks the thought of Paul and *1 Clement*.

For the author of *2 Clement*, however, *ajgavph* plays a further role: it serves as a demonstration to the secular world of the power and truth of God's promises:

When [the Gentiles] hear from us that God says, "It is no credit to you if you love those who love you, but it is a credit to you if you love your enemies and those who hate you" [Luke 6:32, 35] – when they hear these words they marvel greatly at such extraordinary goodness. But when they see that we do not only not love those that hate us, but even do not love those that love us, they laugh us to scorn and the name is blasphemed (13:3-4).

Here the author's insistence on "doing the truth" within the community is turned outwards and named as that which draws them into line with the values and shape of Christ's story, and makes true their witness as a group to the outside world (13:3-4).⁶⁵

The presence of love, especially a love that takes its shape from the story of God's "agapaic" rescue of the community and urges like behaviour in return, marks the distinctiveness of the community to which the author belongs. On the one hand, it is clearly and irretrievably separated from Judaism by the central role that Christ plays in the letter's argument, and on the other hand, its ethical system focussed on love and mutual forgiveness presents a sharp break with the virtue traditions of Hellenistic philosophy. In each case, however, the primary reference point is neither the submissive individual, as in Epicurus' therapeutic scheme, nor the mutually critical community of Aristotle. It is the submissive community, whom the author urges to look to God for therapy, and to train in the commandments, so that "all with a common mind may be gathered into life" (17:3), and to fulfil its calling to be the "church of life" (13:4).
