

THE DEIFICATION OF MAN IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

I

THE possibility of man being deified, or becoming a god, is asserted by many Christian Fathers from the middle of the second century onwards, but by none more frequently or unreservedly than by Clement of Alexandria. In the following pages all the passages of Clement which bear upon this subject will be examined, and an attempt made (i) to fix his meaning with certainty; and (ii) to trace his thought to its origins.

II

Deification, according to Clement, is a process that begins on earth. It is made possible by the fact that man contains within himself a spark of the divine nature, and is therefore in the highest part of his being akin to God. God is Mind (*ὁ νοῦς*),¹ 'and the image of Mind is seen in man alone; so that the good man is, so far as his soul goes, in the form and likeness of God, while God in His turn is in the form of man: for the form of each is Mind.'² Elsewhere the common element is said to be reason, or the Word, present with God in the character of the Son and with man in the character of the Saviour.³ This union of man with God is fostered and developed by the practice of virtue and by progress in knowledge. Each advance in virtue is a step towards the divine life. Here it must be remembered that Clement's idea of the divine life is negative rather than positive; for he thinks of it

¹ See i 71²⁵ (78), where the Word is called 'a true Son of the Mind' (*υἱὸς τοῦ νοῦ γνήσιος*). Also ii 331¹⁰ (648) *ὁ . . . λόγος, πατὴρ δὲ τούτου ὁ νοῦς*. And ii 320¹⁹ (638), where Schwartz's conjecture is rendered almost a certainty by the two parallels here adduced. See again ii 317¹¹ (634). The references in this paper are to volume, page, and line in Stählin's edition of Clement. The bracketed figures indicate Potter's pages.

² ii 468⁵⁻⁷ (776) *ὁ τοῦ νοῦ εἰκονισμὸς ὁρᾶται ἐν μόνῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ᾧ καὶ θεοειδὴς καὶ θεοεικέλος ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὃ τε αὐτὸς θεὸς ἀνθρωποειδής· τὸ γὰρ εἶδος ἐκάστου ὁ νοῦς*.

³ i 236²²-237¹ (251) *μεσίτης γὰρ ὁ λόγος ὁ κοινὸς ἀμφοῖν, Θεοῦ μὲν υἱός, σωτὴρ δὲ ἀνθρώπων*.

chiefly as an absence of all human activities and corporeal limitations.¹ God is without needs (*ἀνενδεής*) and without feelings or passions (*ἀπαθής*).² Consequently we find the 'gods' of Psalm lxxxi 6 interpreted to mean those who throw off as far as possible all that is merely human (*πᾶν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*).³ Virtue is thus regarded as a divesting process, an approach to the passionless life of God, rather than as an unceasing activity for good.⁴ Since God and man are alike Mind, God in His entire being and man in his innermost essence, it follows that man has only to set aside, as far as possible,⁵ the temporary encumbrance of body and senses to become something very much like what God is. Again, a marked characteristic of the divine life is unity,⁶ and unity is acquired by man when he attains to the condition of *ἀπάθεια*, i. e. when he is no longer disturbed and divided by warring passions. So from this point of view also man is said to become deified even on earth.⁷ Sometimes Clement speaks of this life as being a preparation for the god-like life to come. Christians 'practise here on earth the heavenly way of life by which we are deified'.⁸ Or again, the soul, becoming virtuous in thought, word, and deed through the Lord's power, practises being a god.⁹ Deification also follows upon discipleship; as Ischomachus makes his pupils farmers, Demosthenes orators, Aristotle scientists,

¹ iii 6¹ (831) *μηδαμὴ περιεχόμενος* ('free from all limitations'—Dr Mayor's translation). See also ii 374⁷⁻¹⁰ (689), where Clement says that by abstracting length, breadth, depth, and position, you arrive at a conception of unity. If you then take away all that pertains to bodies or to things called bodiless, you can reach some sort of conception of God, learning, however, not what He is, but what He is not.

² We must not take these expressions too literally, or God would be reduced to a mere idea. The truth is, Clement has failed to combine the various elements of his thought.

³ ii 181⁸⁻¹⁰ (494). Explaining Ps. lxxxi 6 (Sept.). 'I said, ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest', Clement says, *τίσι λέγει ὁ κύριος; τοῖς παραιτουμένοις ὡς οἷόν τε πᾶν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*.

⁴ iii 10²²⁻²⁵ (836) *ἐξομοιούμενος θεῷ ὁ γνωστικός, τῷ φύσει τὸ ἀπαθὲς κεκτημένην τὸ ἐξ ἀσκήσεως εἰς ἀπάθειαν συννεσταλμένον ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα ἐξομαῶν*. Good works (*τὰ ἔργα τὰ ἀσκήσια*) are mentioned in i 68²⁵⁻²⁸ (75). See also ii 484²⁷ (792), 'What is the use of a good that does not do good?' Still, Clement's general thought tends towards a repression, rather than a judicious use, of our full human nature. One who followed out his principles to their logical extreme would be more likely to become a contemplative hermit than, let us say, a missionary to lepers.

⁵ Clement always inserts his *κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν*, or some equivalent. The body must be used while on earth.

⁶ God is often called by the Pythagorean term *μονάς*, e.g. i 65³⁰⁻³¹ (72) *τὴν ἀγαθὴν μονάδα*.

⁷ ii 315²⁵⁻²⁸ (633) *εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀπάθειαν θεούμενος ἄνθρωπος ἀχράντως μοναδικῶς γίνεται*. ii 181⁵⁻⁸ (494) *τίνας τούτους* (i. e. the 'gods' of Ps. lxxxi 6); *τοὺς ἡδονῆς κρείττοντας, τοὺς τῶν παθῶν διαφέροντας*.

⁸ i 149⁴⁻⁵ (156) *ἐνθὲνδε ἤδη τὴν ἐπουράνιον μελετῶντες πολιτεῖαν, καθ' ἣν ἐκθεούμεθα*.

⁹ ii 488²⁰⁻²⁷ (797) *οὕτως δυνάμιν λαβοῦσα κυριακὴν ἢ ψυχὴ μελετᾷ εἶναι θεός*.

Plato philosophers, and so forth, in the same way the Lord makes those who learn from Him and obey Him gods while still in the flesh.¹ The disciple will strive to become passionless like his teacher.²

The second means of reaching the condition of deification is by knowledge; for Clement is in full accord with the Socratic doctrine that knowledge is equivalent to virtue and ignorance to vice.³ Man, he says, is deified by 'heavenly teaching'.⁴ The perfect Christian (i. e. the gnostic) will know 'what is fitting both in theory and in life, as to how one should live who will some day become a god, and is even now being made like to God'.⁵ In explaining the fifth commandment, Clement says that our 'Father' means God; so 'the commandment speaks of those who know God as sons and gods'.⁶ This 'knowledge' is not a mere intellectual knowledge, in which the knower stands outside and indifferent to the thing known. It is the gradual realization of the bond that exists between God and man. It leads therefore to a union of love wherein God is related to man as friend to friend; and such a relationship may possibly bring a man into the angelic state (*ισάγγελος*) here on earth.⁷ The true life is, in fact, a continual ascent, just as its opposite is a descent. Those who reject the Church tradition and rush into heretical opinions are, like Circe's victims, changed into beasts, because they have lost the power to become 'men of God'; but when one returns, hears the Scriptures, and attends to the truth, it is 'as if a god is produced out of a man'.⁸ The highest stage of the ascent through knowledge is contemplation, or the vision of God,⁹ and he

¹ iii 71¹⁴⁻²¹ (894) ὡς δὲ ἐὰν πρόσσχω τις Ἰσχομάχῃ, γεωργὸν αὐτὸν ποιήσει, καὶ . . . καὶ Ἀριστοτέλει φυσικόν, καὶ φιλόσοφον Πλάτωνα, οὕτως ὁ τῷ κυρίῳ πειθόμενος καὶ τῇ βοθείᾳ δι' αὐτοῦ κατακολουθήσας προφητεία τελῶς ἐκτελεῖται κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ διδασκάλου ἐν σαρκὶ περιπολῶν θεός.

² ii 468³⁻⁴ (776) ἐξομοιοῦσθαι βιάζεται τῷ διδασκάλῳ εἰς ἀπάθειαν.

³ ii 488²⁷⁻²⁸ (797) ἡ ψυχὴ . . . κακὸν μὲν οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν ἀγνοίας εἶναι νομίζουσα καὶ τῆς μὴ κατὰ τὸν ὁρθὸν λόγον ἐνεργείας. i 72³⁻⁴ (79) νομίμων δὲ ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἀπατηλῶν ὑποκρίσεων ἀγνοια αἰτία. In iii 71²¹⁻²⁸ (894) Clement admits that sin is due to 'weakness' as well as to ignorance: σχεδὸν δύο εἰσὶν ἀρχαὶ πάσης ἀμαρτίας, ἀγνοια καὶ ἀσθένεια.

⁴ i 81¹ (88-89) οὐρανίῳ διδασκαλίᾳ θεοποιῶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

⁵ iii 51¹⁻² (830) οὗτος δ' ἂν εἴη ὁ εἰδὼς τὸ πρῆπον καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην καὶ κατὰ τὸν βίον, ὅπως βιωτέον τῷ ἱσομένῳ καὶ δι' ἐξομοιουμένης θεῷ.

⁶ ii 507¹⁻² (816) πατέρα δὲ καὶ κύριον τὸν θεὸν λέγει σαφῶς (i. e. the fifth commandment). Ἰδὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐπιγινώσκτας αὐτὸν υἱοὺς ἀναγορεύει καὶ θεούς.

⁷ iii 42⁸⁻¹¹ (866) ἡ μεταβολὴ . . . ἡ ἐκ πίστεως εἰς γνῶσιν· ἡ δὲ, εἰς ἀγάπην περαιουμένη, ἐνθάνει ἥδη φίλον φίλον τὸ γιγνώσκον τῷ γιγνώσκομένῳ παρίστησιν. καὶ τάχα ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐνθάνει ἥδη προλαβὼν ἔχει τὸ "ισάγγελος" εἶναι. See also iii 60⁶⁻⁸ (883).

⁸ iii 67¹⁵⁻¹⁶ (890) οἷον ἐξ ἀνθρώπου θεὸς ἀποτελεῖται.

⁹ iii 49¹⁵⁻¹⁶ (873) τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐποπτείαν, ἣν κορυφαιοτάτην προκοπὴν ἡ γνωστικὴ ψυχὴ λαμβάνει.

who contemplates the unseen God is said to 'live as a god among men'.¹

III

So far we have considered deification as applied by Clement to man upon earth. What his hyperbolic language means is simply this, that the divine element in man is gradually brought into closer and more conscious union with God from whom in the beginning it came. This element is by nature purely spiritual, i.e. opposed to matter. It can only reach its full development, therefore, when by the practice of virtue it is freed from material associations, from the needs and affections of sense; and when at the same time it is used for its proper purpose, viz. the contemplation of ideas or, in other words, the vision of God.² One in whom this development takes place is lifted far above the level of ordinary men, since he has parted with most of what is merely human in his nature. So great is the difference, that Clement feels no hesitation in calling him no longer a man, but a god.

There are, however, a number of passages which speak of deification as occurring after death. These deserve separate consideration. First of all we notice a passage that stands in an intermediate position, inasmuch as it describes the stages in the process of deification, stretching over from this life into the next. These stages are: (i) Baptism, (ii) enlightenment, (iii) sonship, (iv) perfection, (v) immortality. Clement illustrates the final result of this development by a reference to Ps. lxxxi 6 (Sept.) 'I said, ye are gods', &c.³; that is to say, he asserts that men become gods when to the gnostic perfection attained on earth there is added that immortality which can be fully possessed only after death. Perfection and immortality are of course two prominent characteristics of God, and when man attains them he becomes like God. Accordingly Clement applies the term 'god' to angels and spirits of the blest, who are conceived of as dwelling above in the 'super-celestial place'.⁴ Here are the 'blessed abodes of the

¹ ii 317¹¹⁻¹² (634) τὸν οὖν ἀόρατον θεοῦ θεωρητικὸν θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ζῶντα εἴρηκεν (i.e. Plato—but Clement fully accepts the thought).

² ii 317¹⁰⁻¹² (634) εἰκότως οὖν καὶ Πλάτων τὸν τῶν ἰδεῶν θεωρητικὸν θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ζῆσεσθαι φησὶ· νοῦς δὲ χώρα ἰδεῶν, νοῦς δὲ ὁ θεός. And, a few lines further on, ii 317¹⁵⁻¹⁹ (634-635) ὅταν γὰρ ψυχὴ γενέσθῃς ὑπερκαθάρσας καθ' αὐτὴν τε ἢ καὶ ὁμολῇ τοῖς εἰδεσιν, οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν τῷ Θεαυτήτῳ "κορυφαῖος", οἷον ἄγγελος ἤδη γενόμενος σὺν Χριστῷ ἔσται, θεωρητικὸς ὢν, δεῖ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ θεοῦ σκοπῶν. For Clement's conception of God who is the object of contemplation see ii 374⁸⁻¹⁵ (689), a summary of which passage is given on p. 158 note 1 *supra*.

³ i 105²⁰⁻²² (113) βαπτιζόμενοι φωτιζόμεθα, φωτιζόμενοι υιοποιούμεθα, υιοποιούμενοι τελειούμεθα, τελειούμενοι ἀπαθανατιζόμεθα. "ἐγώ", φησὶν, "εἶπα, θεοὶ ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἱερέων πάντες."

⁴ ii 42¹⁸ (355) τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον.

gods',¹ whence the great company of 'angels and gods' look down upon the Christian athlete as, while yet upon earth, he struggles in the spiritual conflict.² One day, when the lusts of the flesh have left him, he too will ascend to that heavenly sphere and be immortalized with the divine beings.³ Of this life the gnostic training gives a foretaste, since it teaches us 'the nature of the life we shall hereafter live with gods (μετὰ θεῶν), according to the will of God (κατὰ τὸν θεόν)'.⁴ To those who reach this stage, Clement goes on to say, 'the name of gods is given, for they will be enthroned along with the other gods, who are set first in order under the Saviour'.⁵

This last remark will shew how careful Clement is to distinguish between the most exalted of men or angels and Christ. 'The whole army of angels and gods has been subjected to the Word.'⁶ The prophets are called 'children of God', but Christ is the 'true Son'.⁷ The title 'god' is therefore never applied by him to angels or men in the same sense as to Christ. In a like manner he guards against any confusion of the human and divine natures which might be imagined to arise from the presence of the Holy Spirit in man; for he asserts expressly that 'it is not as a portion of God that the Spirit is in each one of us'.⁸

IV

Before we consider the sources of Clement's teaching as here outlined, it will be useful to notice certain similar expressions which occur in other Christian writings of earlier or contemporary date. The

¹ iii 10⁸⁻⁹ (835) αἱ μακάριοι θεῶν οἰκήσεις.

² iii 14²⁶⁻²⁸ (839) θεαταὶ δὲ ἀγγελοὶ καὶ θεοί, καὶ τὸ παγκράτιον τὸ πάμμαχον "οὐ πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα", ἀλλὰ τὰς διὰ σαρκῶν ἐνεργούσας "πνευματικὰς ἐξουσίας" ἐμπαθῶν παθῶν.

³ i 120²⁰⁻²¹ (128) τῆς πίστεως ἡ κοινωνία . . . τοῖς θείοις ἀπαθανατίζουσα (τὸν ἀνθρώπον).

⁴ iii 41¹⁶⁻¹⁷ (865) προδιδάσκουσα τὴν ἐσομένην ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸν θεὸν μετὰ θεῶν βίαν.

⁵ iii 41²³⁻²⁵ (865) καὶ θεοὶ τὴν προσηγορίαν ἐκλήνται, σύνθρονοι τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν, τῶν ὑπὸ τῷ σωτῆρι πρώτων τεταγμένων, γενησόμενοι. Compare Milton *Comus* 9-11:

'the crown that Virtue gives,

After this mortal change, to her true servants,

Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats'.

⁶ iii 6³⁻⁴ (831) τούτῳ (τῷ λόγῳ τῷ πατρικῷ) πᾶσα ὑποτέτακται στρατιὰ ἀγγέλων τε καὶ θεῶν.

⁷ ii 382⁷⁻⁹ (697) τοὺς εἰς προφητείαν κεχρισμένους, τοὺς μὲν πᾶσας θεοῦ ἀνηγορευμένους τὸν δὲ κύριον υἱὸν ὄντα γνήσιον.

⁸ ii 384¹⁰⁻¹¹ (699) ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥς μέρος θεοῦ ἐν ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα. This statement may be intended primarily to deny that the Holy Spirit is a material body, able to be distributed in portions to many people. (See Origen *Contra Celsum* vi 70; *De Principiis* i 1. 3.) The above argument would not be invalidated if this were the case. On the contrary, it would be strengthened, since the Spirit's presence would tend to dwindle into a vague power or influence.

deification of man is mentioned by Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus. Speaking of Ganymede and other characters of Greek mythology who were taken up to heaven, Justin contrasts the Christian belief that 'only those are immortalized who live near to God in holiness and virtue'.¹ Again, the Word 'by his instruction makes mortals immortal, makes men gods'.² Theophilus of Antioch discusses whether God made man by nature mortal or immortal. Not immortal, he says, for in that case 'God would have made him a god'. Man was, in fact, made neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of either state, so that if he kept the commandments of God he should receive immortality as a reward and should become a god.³ Irenaeus and Hippolytus write in the same way; the Christian is at length 'to become a god', or in other words to be 'begotten unto immortality'.⁴ It is plain that neither of these writers understands 'deification' to be anything but another and rather more forcible expression for the immortalizing of Christians after death. We have already shewn that this is substantially what Clement means by it. The only difference is, perhaps, that Clement lays stress upon the earthly preparation for immortality as being itself the first stage in the process of deification. This, however, is a natural consequence of his division of Christians into 'simple believers' and 'gnostics', a distinction unknown to his predecessors at any rate outside Alexandria. The 'gnostic', by detachment from the things of sense, coupled with unceasing contemplation, gains for himself while still on earth the essentials of the divine life, in a manner not possible to ordinary men. Allowing for this difference, we may say that Clement's thought on the subject of deification does not go beyond that of most second and early third century Greek Christian writers.

V

We can now ask, 'What was the influence that led the earliest Greek Fathers, and Clement in particular, to use language expressing deifica-

¹ Justin Martyr *Apol.* i 21 ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι δὲ ἡμεῖς μόνους δεδογάμεθα τοὺς ὁσῶς καὶ ἑναρέτως ἔγγυς θεῷ βιούντας.

² Justin Martyr *Oratio ad Graecos* 5 ποιεῖ τοὺς θνητοὺς ἀθανάτους, τοὺς βροτοὺς θεούς.

³ Theophilus *ad Autolycum* ii 27 εἰ γὰρ ἀθάνατον αὐτὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐπεποιήκει, θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐπεποιήκει. Again: οὐτε οὖν ἀθάνατον αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν, οὐτε μὴν θνητόν, ἀλλὰ . . . δεκτικὸν ἀμφοτέρων ἵνα . . . τηρήσας τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ μισθὸν κομίσσεται παρ' αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀθανασία, καὶ γένηται θεός.

⁴ Irenaeus iv 38. 4 'non ab initio dii facti sumus, sed primo quidem homines, tunc demum dii'. Hippolytus *Philosophumena* x 34 (Cruice) γέγονας γὰρ θεός . . . ὅτι ἰθεοποιήθης, ἀθάνατος γεννηθεῖς. Also the closing words of the book: οὐ γὰρ πτωχεύει θεὸς καὶ σὲ θεὸν ποιήσας εἰς δόξαν αὐτοῦ.

tion, when all they had in mind was the simple Christian doctrine of the future life?' Certainly it was not the Scriptures. There is nothing in either the Old or the New Testament which by itself could even faintly suggest that man might practise being a god in this world and actually become one in the next. In the Old Testament the bare question of a future life is scarcely raised at all.¹ Later on, in the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic literature, it is brought into prominence in connexion with the kindred doctrines of a Resurrection and World-judgement. But no Jewish writer, whether Palestinian or Hellenistic, was likely to obscure his firm belief in the unity of God by applying to men the terminology of deification. As for the New Testament, we can imagine how vigorously such language would have been repudiated by, let us say, St Paul, in whose eyes 'gods many and lords many' could never have seemed anything but the distinctive mark of false religion. A Scriptural origin being therefore out of the question, we must turn to Greek thought as the influence responsible for this element in Clement's theology. It is no exaggeration to say that Clement views every Christian doctrine through the medium of Greek ideas and a Greek temperament. In the case in hand the medium has exercised a plainly discernible effect upon the doctrine, as will be seen from the following considerations.

(i) Greek philosophy, depending largely upon Plato, tended to regard the future life of the virtuous man as an ascent of his spiritual nature, after death, towards the divine.² This is opposed to the purely Christian view, as taught in the New Testament; for there the new life is essentially a 'resurrection life', i.e. one which follows upon a divine intervention and judgement. The New Testament doctrine has kinship with Jewish Apocalyptic, but shews little, if any, trace of Greek influence. In Clement, however, the Greek idea of gradual ascent is dominant.³ The root difference between these two conceptions may be thus stated. The one postulates a common judgement, equally necessary for all, because all have sinned. This is followed, in those who believe on Christ, by exaltation to an eternal life with God. The stress being laid upon God's goodness and Christ's redemption,

¹ Certain aspirations after immortality find expression in the later Psalms: Cf. Ps. xvi 10, xlix 15. . . Dan. xii 2-3 belongs of course to the Apocalyptic writings.

² See Plato *Phaedo* 80 D-81 D.

³ He speaks, for instance, of the various dwelling-places that are allotted to believers in accordance with their deserts. See ii 264¹²⁻¹³ (579) *ἐσὶ γὰρ παρὰ κυρίῳ καὶ μισθοὶ καὶ μοναὶ πλείονες κατὰ ἀναλογίαν βίων*. Also ii 489⁶ (797) *αὶ μοναὶ ποικίλαι κατ' ἀξίαν τῶν πιστευσάντων*. Clement's constant use of the phrase *ὁμολώσις θεῷ*, 'assimilation to God' (from Plato, cf. *Theaetetus* 176 B) also shews his belief that man's progress is throughout a gradual one. For example see i 64²¹ (71), and everywhere.

there is little room left for inequalities among believing men. The other view represents the future life as beginning immediately after death,¹ without any judgement other than what may be called a self-acting one. If a man has in this life despised all bodily things and devoted himself to contemplation, death is a manifest gain, for it rids him of a useless encumbrance. But such men are rare; and therefore wide differences appear, a few choice spirits ascending at once to high places, while the majority keep close to the earth they have loved. In this scheme God is hardly needed at all, except as an object of contemplation. Clement's extant works prove that his mind dwelt naturally in this Greek atmosphere; for he rarely mentions either the Resurrection or the Judgement (in their objective Christian forms) or the Second Advent,² whereas the spiritual 'life after death' meets us, one might almost say, on every page. It was this which allowed the higher souls, such as those of gnostics and martyrs,³ to ascend at once into the very presence of God, an exaltation so great that it seemed to warrant their being called divine, or even gods.⁴

(ii) A second influence is to be found in the idea of the universe as a series of spheres circling above the earth. We do not begin to understand the thought of the ancient world in regard to such matters as the conception of a future life until we put away all modern notions of astronomy. It would seem that Clement accepted the current theory of seven heavens rising one above the other, followed by the fixed sphere which bordered on the 'intellectual world' (κόσμος νοητός).⁵

¹ μετὰ τὴν ἐνθὲνδε ἀπαλλαγὴν, or ἀποδημίαν, as Clement often says. See i 67⁷⁻⁸ (74), i 107¹⁹⁻²⁰ (115), i 112⁷ (120), ii 409⁹ (722), and elsewhere.

² The Resurrection in a spiritual sense is mentioned several times. See i 61¹⁹ (68) αὕτη πρώτη τοῦ παραπτώματος ἀνάστασις (cf. Rev. xx 5): iii 54¹⁷⁻²⁰ (877) οὗτος ἐντολήν τὴν κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον διαπραξάμενος κυριακὴν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ποιεῖ, ὅταν ἀποβάλλῃ φαῦλον νόημα καὶ γνωστικὸν προσλάβῃ, τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἀνάστασιν δοξάζων. Clement twice promises a treatise on the Resurrection—i 118²⁻³ (125) and i 219²⁸ (232)—but apparently he never wrote it. He makes three casual allusions to the Second Advent: iii 152²¹ (1002), iii 213²⁰ (1010), and iii 223¹⁹⁻²⁰ ('Address to the Newly Baptized', not found in Potter).

³ ii 254²⁷⁻²⁵⁵ (570) εὐθαρσέσας τοίνυν πρὸς φίλον τὸν κύριον, ὑπὲρ οὗ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκὼν ἐπιδίδωκεν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, ὡς οἱ δικασταὶ προσεδόκησαν, ἔρχεται, "φίλε κασίγνητε" ποιητικῶς ἀκούσας πρὸς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν διὰ τὴν τοῦ βίου δμοιότητα.

⁴ In this paragraph it is not maintained that the two views of the future life are irreconcilable; but only that Clement leans, both in thought and in expression, almost entirely towards the Greek view. The contrast between these two is presented from another point of view in R. H. Charles's *Eschatology* pp. 80 (note) and 155 sq.

⁵ ii 315²⁰⁻²¹ (636) ἐπὶ οὐρανοί, οὗς τινες ἀριθμοῦσι κατ' ἐπανάβασιν. Also the lines following these: ii 318²¹⁻³¹⁹ (636) ἡ ἀπλανὴς χώρα ἡ πλησιάζουσα τῷ νοητῷ κόσμῳ. See, too, ii 377¹⁹⁻²⁰ (692), an Apocalyptic quotation; and ii 503⁸⁻⁹ (811-812) μετὰ τῶν ἐπὶ πλανωμένων τὴν ἀπλανὴ συγκαταριθμοῦντες σφαίραν.

These heavens varied in degree of grossness according to their distance from the earth; but not even the highest of them was what we should call incorporeal. The soul of man was thought of as rising in a spatial sense through these spheres,¹ until it reached the abode (*μονή*) for which it was fitted. We cannot set down any consistent account of Clement's opinions on this subject,² nor is it necessary for the present purpose. The general outlines of the system are enough to prove how naturally titles of divinity would attach themselves to souls who had reached the highest possible heaven, when that heaven is believed to be spatially above us. Much of the majesty of God to a child's mind is due to the fact that He dwells 'above the bright blue sky': and the decay of this belief accounts to some extent for the confusion in which the average man finds himself to-day with regard to the existence of God; he has ceased to look for Him in the sky,³ and has not yet discovered where else to turn his eyes.

The belief in a series of heavens is not of course exclusively Greek. It is found also among the Jews, and clear signs of it appear in the New Testament. St Paul speaks of 'the heavenly places',⁴ and he himself was caught up into the 'third heaven'.⁵ Christ the great high priest has 'passed through the heavens', and is now made 'higher than the heavens', according to the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁶ But the New Testament, while accepting this belief (for no other was open to that age), does not use it to explain the exaltation of saints after death.⁷ Clement's thought must therefore be held to come ultimately from Greek and not from purely Christian sources.⁸

¹ Just as daemons, who, according to Clement, are foul and earth-loving spirits, cannot ascend at all, but remain fixed to earth. See i 45²⁵⁻³⁰ (49) and Plato *Phaedo* 81 c d.

² Origen is more explicit. The 'heaven' of God's people is either in the 'fixed sphere', or above it; it is not incorporeal (*mundum incorporeum*), only invisible to us; nor is it a world of 'pure ideas', as the Greeks thought (*imagines quasdam, quas Graeci Ideas nominant*), but in its way substantial: *De Principiis* ii 3. 6-7. There are also super-celestial abodes, in which dwell higher beings still; *De Principiis* ii 9. 3.

³ For old-world ideas, in which Clement heartily concurs, see i 561⁻³ (53) *τόνδε* (*τὸν οὐρανὸν*) *ἡγοῦ θεόν*, from Euripides; and a quotation of similar import from Democritus in i 521¹⁷⁻²⁰ (59).

⁴ Eph. i 20 and elsewhere, *τὰ ἐπουράνια*.

⁵ 2 Cor. xii 2.

⁶ Heb. iv 14; vii 26.

⁷ In 1 Thess. iv 17, for instance, where a progress through the air is spoken of, this is mentioned in connexion with the Second Advent and the General Resurrection, just those doctrines which Greek thought was inclined to leave out of sight.

⁸ The ideas of deification current in Orphic and Pythagorean circles, or those connected with the Stoic theory of the divine immanence cannot be regarded as

VI

Clement was in no way conscious that his ideas were not quite on a line with the Scriptures taken in their original meaning. He lived in a Greek world, among people who, whether themselves Greek or Jewish or Christian by birth and religion, breathed Greek ideas as inevitably as they breathed the common air. When Clement examined the Scriptures he had no eyes to see them as they really were, but only as they appeared through this peculiar mental atmosphere. Under such circumstances he could find in them support and authority for ways of thinking which had their true source elsewhere. In regard to the deification of man there are two Scriptural passages which furnished him with proof for his statements: Ps. lxxxi 6 (Sept.)¹ and St Luke xx 36 (particularly the expression *ισάγγελος*). The first of these passages derives special importance from the fact that it is appealed to in St John x 34-35 as bearing some sort of witness to the truth of Christ's divinity. The original sense is difficult to determine. Probably the passage does not refer to princes or judges of Israel, but to subordinate deities or angels who ruled over heathen nations under the chief sovereignty of Jahweh.² In St John x 34, however, it seems to be interpreted as applying to princes: 'those to whom the word of God came'. Clement does not mention this New Testament use of the passage, nor does he attempt to investigate its context or literal meaning. He takes the words as a simple prophecy of what Christians may become both now and hereafter.³

having materially influenced Clement, on account of their essentially pantheistic character. Clement certainly never believed that the spirit of any man became merged in the Deity. Indeed, so strongly is he averse from this doctrine, that he vigorously denies the identity of human and divine virtue, which the Stoics taught. See iii 63¹⁰⁻¹¹ (886); also his complete denial of pantheistic ideas in ii 384¹⁻¹⁷ (698-699). Another possible influence that may be held to account in some measure for Clement's phraseology is the elasticity of the term *θεός*. See a valuable note by Harnack, *Hist. Dogma*, Eng. trans., i p. 119. But in genuinely Christian thought, if the New Testament is any standard, *θεός* was rigid enough, except when used in a depreciatory sense. The loose uses of *θεός* to which Harnack refers spring either from popular polytheism or from the pantheism of the educated world, to both of which Clement was irreconcilably opposed.

¹ *ἔγω εἶπα, θεοὶ ἔστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες*. The first verse of the Psalm is also quoted in ii 181⁸ (494), *ὁ θεὸς ἔστη ἐν συναγωγῇ θεῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ θεῶν διακρίνει*.

² The Psalm seems to be a complaint about the oppression of Israel by the heathen; hence the last verse, *ὃ (i.e. Jahweh) κατακληρονομήσεις ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*. See *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, extra volume p. 724b; and, for the other view of *οἱ θεοί*, vol. iv p. 570b.

³ See i 86¹⁷⁻¹⁸ (94), where the words are attributed to 'the prophet'. Other quotations of this passage occur in i 105²² (113), ii 181⁸⁻⁹ (494), and ii 314²³⁻²⁴ (632). The last one runs thus: *τοῦτ' ἀδυνατὸν τῷ τρόπῳ τὸν γνωστικὸν ἦδη γενέσθαι θεόν*. "*ἔγω εἶπα· θεοὶ ἔστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου*."

The other passage (St Luke xx 36), or rather the single word *ισάγγελος* is quoted three times in the Seventh Book of the *Stromateis*, while the parallel from St Matthew xxii 30 is referred to in the Fourth Book. The Jewish and Christian doctrine of angels could without much difficulty be merged into the Greek idea of subsidiary gods; and this is what Clement does, for we find his thoughts travelling from Homer to Plato, and again from Plato to the New Testament, with no consciousness of a break in the connexion. It will help to make this plain if the passage from the Fourth Book is quoted in full.¹

'Plato says with reason that he who contemplates the ideas will live as a god among men. Now Mind is the place of ideas, and God is Mind. The man therefore who contemplates the unseen God is living as a god among men, according to Plato; and Socrates in the *Sophist* called the Eleatic stranger, who was a dialectician, a god, of the same kind as the gods who, "in the guise of strangers",² visit the cities of men'. . . . For when a soul has once risen above the sphere of generation, and exists by itself and in company with the ideas, like the *coryphaeus* in the *Theaetetus*,³ such an one, having now become "as an angel", will be with Christ, rapt in contemplation, ever observing the will of God. That is the real man who "alone is wise, while others flit as shadows".⁴

Here Clement lays his thought as bare as he can. It is fundamentally Greek, and the Scriptural reference is brought in to illustrate opinions already formed; though probably Clement would have felt and declared that the Scriptures were his sole authority.⁵

None the less we must admit that the two passages here mentioned, and more especially Ps. lxxxi, exercised in their way a powerful influence on Christian thought. Had they been absent from the Scriptures, Clement's allegorism was no doubt capable of finding others to support his views; and yet it is hard to think of anything that could have quite filled the place of the unmistakeable 'I said, ye are gods'. These words come to him instinctively whenever the perfection of man is in question; and the same is true of Origen. Though in order of thought they are not a prime authority, it is certain that they helped materially to keep alive the idea and language of deification.

¹ ii 317¹⁸⁻¹⁹ (634-635). The text of the important parts of this passage is given on p. 160 *supra* notes 1 and 2.

² Homer *Odyssey* xvii 485.

³ Stählin suspects a break in the text here.

⁴ Plato *Theaetetus* 173 c.

⁵ Homer *Odyssey* x 495.

⁶ The exact references to *ισάγγελος* are iii 42¹¹ (866), iii 56⁶ (879), and iii 60⁷ (883). There is another instance in ii 484²⁰ (792). These add nothing to what is said above.

VII

Two other points may be mentioned. The language of deification must have had, one would think, great disadvantages at a time when the Church was struggling to secure her position in a world dominated by polytheism. To simple men, who pay more regard to words than to the meaning which may be hidden behind them, it might well have seemed that Clement, and some of the Apologists who preceded him, were in danger of giving away the Christian case by their loose employment of *θεός* and cognate terms, in the current Greek fashion, to designate immortalized men. Plainly, however, this view of things never affected Clement; for, as we have seen, he calls men 'gods' without any reserve or hesitation. This mode of speech was, moreover, continued long after his day, as the writings of subsequent Greek Fathers testify.¹ But we do notice, I think, in Origen, a tendency to be more restrained and careful than Clement is in the use of such terms. It is true that the *loci classici* of Ps. lxxxi 6 and St Luke xx 36 mean practically the same for him as they do for Clement. He admits, for instance, on the strength of Ps. lxxxi 1, that the angelic powers are called 'gods';² but when, in another place, he interprets the same verse of human judges 'who, on account of the superhuman purity of their character, were said to be gods', he adds the qualification, 'in accordance with an ancient Jewish mode of speech'.³ Angels, again, because of their divine nature, are sometimes called 'gods' in the Scriptures; but not, Origen hastens to say, in order that we may worship them in place of God.⁴ When speaking of men made perfect he uses such expressions as the following: 'equal to the angels';⁵ 'taken up into the order of angels' to behold the 'holy and blessed life';⁶ placed 'in the assembly of righteous and blessed beings'.⁷ With Clement the last of these phrases would in all likelihood have read, 'the assembly of angels and gods'.⁸ In his commentary on St John, Origen has occasion to notice the phrase 'every man is a liar'. 'So', he continues, 'every man must be said not to stand in the truth. For if anyone is no longer a liar, and does stand in the truth, such an one

¹ Harnack says that 'after Theophilus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Origen, it is found in all the Fathers of the ancient Church'. *Hist. Dogma*, Eng. trans., iii p. 164 note.

² Origen *Contra Celsum* viii 3-4; also iv 29.

³ *Contra Celsum* iv 31 ἐλέγοντο εἶναι θεοὶ πατρίῳ τινὶ Ἰουδαίων ἔθει.

⁴ *Contra Celsum* v 4; also v 5.

⁵ *De Principiis* iv 1. 29 (iv 4. 2); also *Contra Celsum* iv 29.

⁶ *De Principiis* i 8. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.* i 3. 8.

⁸ *Contra Celsum* vi 61.

⁹ Compare Clement iii 63-4 (831) στρατιὰ ἀγγέλων τε καὶ θεῶν: iii 14²⁴ (839) ἀγγελοὶ καὶ θεοὶ; and iii 41¹⁶⁻¹⁷ (865).

is not a man ; so that to him and to his like God can say, " I said, ye are gods ".¹ Even here Origen is careful to leave the words to God. The difference between Clement and Origen on this point is not great ; but these passages give at the least some reason for thinking that Origen hesitated to reproduce his master's expressions in their more unguarded forms.

Secondly, the whole argument of this paper shews that, wherever in Clement the word *θεός* occurs in reference to man (exclusive of Christ), the true English equivalent is not 'God', nor 'god', but 'a god'. In the plural of course there is no difficulty. The *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, which contains the only translation into English of Clement's complete works, frequently mars the sense by rendering *θεός* as 'God'.² In every case 'a god' will give as nearly as possible the meaning that Clement intended ; i. e. one of a number of spiritualized and exalted beings, endowed with immortality, free from bodily passions, and devoted solely to the contemplation of God. Such a sentence as the following may perhaps seem at first sight not to fit in with this rule : *ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος γινόμενος, ἵνα δὴ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῇ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται θεός*, 'the Word of God became man, in order that from man even you may learn in what possible way man may become a god.'³ Any difficulty that is felt here comes from the fact that *ἄνθρωπος* and *θεός* are set over against each other ; and as we are accustomed to say 'God became man', it appears right to preserve the balance by adding 'man may become God'. It is very doubtful, however, whether Clement's own thought (as contrasted with later theology) would not be better represented by the insertion of the indefinite article before both nouns. But even if *ὁ λόγος . . . ἄνθρωπος γινόμενος* means to him 'the Word became man',⁴ *παρὰ ἀνθρώπου* must almost certainly mean 'from a man'. There is then no exception to the rule here laid down, any deviation from which is likely to result in an obscuring, if not a serious misrepresentation, of Clement's thought.

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¹ Origen *Comm. on St John* xx 27 (xx 241-242). Other references to this subject in Origen are : *Comm. on St John* xx 29 (xx 266) ; *Homilies on Jeremiah* xv 6 ; also a quotation from him in Pamphilus *Apol. pro Orig.* 5.

² See *Ante-Nicene Library*, 'Clement of Alexandria', i 24, i 274, ii 209, ii 370, ii 408 ('divine', which avoids the difficulty, but is not a correct translation), ii 477 ('a God', which seems to be unmeaning). Dr Mayor's translation of *Stromateis* vii gives 'a god' except in one instance (p. 7 of Hort and Mayor's edition), where 'god' stands without the article.

³ i 9^a-11 (8).

⁴ Clement uses the phrase *ὁ λόγος σὰρξ γινόμενος*. i 95³⁰ (103).