Medicinal Baptism:
Discipline and Punish(ment) & Care of the (Christian) Self in Clement of Alexandria’s Paedagogus

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Abstract

The following essay was submitted in partial completion of ANTH 615: Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity, taught by Dr. James Faubion in Spring 2015. I argue that Clement of Alexandria’s use of medical metaphors in his description of baptism and salvation maps perfectly onto the tripartite conception of Greco-Roman therapeutics. Furthermore, I contend that his moral and ethical prescriptions in books two and three of the Paedagogus encompass the third aspect of this therapeutic method (dietetics), thus prescribing the means by which baptized (i.e., saved) Christians can maintain their “health,” both spiritually and bodily. I bring the work of Michel Foucault into my conversation of books two and three in order to help elucidate the prescribed discipline and care of the newly minted Christian self.

Keywords: Early Christianity, Clement of Alexandria, Ancient Medicine, Baptism, Conversion, Michel Foucault

INTRODUCTION

Past studies of Clement Alexandria’s writings have noted his extensive use of medical language, but unfortunately have failed to provide a fuller context of the conventions of Greco-Roman medicine at the time in which he wrote (late second-century CE). Merely referring to a few parallels in ancient medical texts is not enough to establish the context necessary to understand what Clement may have imagined when writing to his Christian audience. Furthermore, the
lack of a more fleshed out medical context has the deleterious effect of preventing scholars from better understanding how Clement's prescriptive regimen, or “care of the self,” functions within his overall conception of salvation.

I present a general overview of contemporary medical theory in the Roman Empire, with special attention to the famous physician and contemporary of Clement, Galen of Pergamum and his therapeutic method. Next, I will demonstrate how Clement's appropriation of medical discourse in his conception of Christian salvation fits within this medical framework, and suggest how he uses it both in his description of baptism as medicine and presentation of a series of moral regulations for a divinely healthy (i.e., post-baptismal) Christian lifestyle. We will see that Clement understands the attainment of salvation as a three-part, therapeutic process. This process entails, first, ‘surgery’ (confession and acknowledgement) to root out the source of the ‘illness’ (that is, the passions of the soul); Second, ‘healing drugs’ (i.e., baptism) to purge any residual infection (i.e., sins); and Third, dietetics to maintain the new Christian's bodily and spiritual health.

I argue that the reason Clement urges his Christians to adopt and follow this prescribed lifestyle is because they have been spiritually healed and adopted as sons of God through their baptism. Essentially, this lifestyle is the ‘next step’ for Christians after they have undergone baptism. Such a regimen functions in part to safeguard the newly acquired divine status for both the body and soul. I use key elements of Foucault's *Discipline & Punish* and *The Care of the Self* to aid in my examination of Clement's dietetics as a discipline for “perfected” Christians,

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1 Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd
who are simultaneously saved and under constant surveillance by both divine and human agents.²

**GRECO-ROMAN MEDICINE**

Greco-Roman medicine, of course is not one single entity. Rather, it is a useful catch-all for discussing the sundry methods and theories ancient medical writers described and practiced. Nevertheless, much of our knowledge regarding ancient therapeutics comes from Galen of Pergamum, whose surviving writings number in the thousands of pages. No study of medicine in antiquity (let alone in the second-century CE!) can afford to dismiss his copious writings, his comments regarding the practices of others, and his immediate and wide-ranging influence upon medical thought.

Galen was born in 129 to a wealthy pagan family at Pergamum. We cannot be sure when he died, but most scholars think it very likely that he was alive at the turn of the third century.³ In 145, at the age of 16, he began his study of medicine. After the death of his father three years later, he travelled to Smyrna, Corinth, and Ephesos before arriving in Alexandria where he spent four to six years engrossed in the study of anatomy and dissection. After returning home in 157,

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² I would like to note that my main contribution in this project is showing that Clement of Alexandria’s medicinal model for baptism and salvation maps perfectly onto the tripartite conception of Greco-Roman therapeutics. Furthermore, I contend that his moral and ethical prescriptions in books two and three of the *Paedagogus* encompass the dietetic aspect of this therapeutic method, thus prescribing the means by which baptized (i.e., saved) Christians can maintain their ‘health’. Thus far, no one to my knowledge has stated or demonstrated this point in the secondary literature.

he eventually became the Imperial physician to Marcus Aurelius in Rome. His renown was wide; wealthy sufferers sought his advice and wrote to him from all over the empire. Scholars have found copies of his writings in Upper Egypt and Morocco dating to within a generation after his death, thus proving Galen was not exaggerating his popularity and influence on his contemporaries. Around 210, Christian followers of Theodotus the Shoemaker in Rome held Galen in high esteem, and supposedly adapted their own beliefs in order to comport with Galen’s theories. It is very likely that even Clement himself was familiar with at least one of his writings.

Interestingly, Galen says relatively little about bathing or washing. As the eminent historian of ancient medicine, Vivian Nutton, points out, “As part of the therapeutic process, Galen does occasionally recommend bathing, especially in mineral springs at the Aquae Albulae near Rome, but he is very cautious about its effects. Too much bathing renders the flesh soft, white, and flabby, and produces the sort of diseases that are found in women. Moderation is ... his watchword.”

As an aside, it is perhaps best to mention here that Clement, too, acknowledges the health benefits of bathing while also prescribing caution and moderation. In Book 3 of the

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4 Nutton, Medicine, 223-24.
5 They wrote “from Spain, Gaul, Asia Minor, Thrace, and elsewhere” (Nutton, Medicine, 235).
6 Nutton, Medicine, 235.
7 These Christians were later considered ‘heretical’, see Eusebius Hist. eccl. 5.28.13-14.
8 See Matyáš Havrd’s persuasive argument in “Galenus Christianus? The Doctrine of Demonstration in Stromata VIII and the Question of its Source.” VC 65 (2011) 343-375.
9 Nutton, Medicine, 248; See Galen, 10.536; 11.393. Cf. Clement’s emphasis on moderation in bathing: “But due proportion, which on all occasions we call as our helper in life, suffices for us” (Paed. 3.9; ANF 2.283).
Pedagogue, he says that there are four primary reasons for using the baths: for cleanliness, for heat, for health, and for pleasure. Christians, however, should be circumspect when using the baths. In fact, they are “to be taken by women for cleanliness and health, by men for health alone” (*Paed. 3.9; ANF 2.282*). According to Clement, continued use of baths “impairs strength and relaxes the physical energies, and often induces debility and fainting” (*Paed. 3.9; ANF 2.282*). Such things are not befitting the virtuous and manly, hence his further restriction for men to use the baths only for health reasons.10

### Galen and His Therapeutic Method

Galen accepted Plato’s notion of the tripartite soul (though he refused to take a stand on what its exact nature is), and he was adamant about the reciprocal relationship between the soul and the body; that “physical changes in the body could alter one’s soul and vice versa.”11 According to Galen, this connection between the soul (or mind) and the body was “universally accepted,” regardless of how physicians and philosophers conceived of the soul’s “nature.”12 It is with Galen that we see a shift in the role of the physician from one who merely points out “the consequences that might ensue form the passions and errors of the soul” to one who “could now offer medical advice that would remove or mitigate them and restore moral as well as physical well-being.”13 In fact, he seems to be well-

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10 Clement does not explain how men should attain cleanliness by means other than use of the baths. Perhaps other means were common and thus left unstated because of these methods being shared, common knowledge. Perhaps Clement simply neglected to expound upon this teaching.


acquainted in both the medical and philosophical social circles of his day. Galen “reshaped the Hippocratic triangle of doctor, patient, and illness to ensure the doctor’s dominance by using the method of prognosis to his advantage in establishing this power relationship.” Over all, Galen made the physician’s position one of absolute superiority, and demanded complete obedience from his patients.

According to Galen, the body itself provides an “indication” (ἔνδειξις) of what truly ails it, as well as what therapy to prescribe. Once the body indicates the correct mode of treatment, Galen can announce a diagnosis (i.e., the cause and type of illness besetting the patient), provide a prognosis (i.e., forecast for how the illness will play out), and ensure that with the proper course of treatment he will restore the patient’s health to its original, balanced state. Nutton puts the matter this way:

One need not have to worry ... because an ‘accurate’ and ‘certain’ prognosis (two favourite words of Galen’s) would have already revealed what would happen and the doctor would have taken account of that in his initial prescription. By following the method of prognosis carefully one could not fail—or, if one did, the fault did not lie with the physician. Sometimes the patient disobeyed orders or failed, even on occasions deliberately, to tell the truth in consultation with the doctor.

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14 “The faculties of the soul depend on the mixtures of the body. The truth of this proposition is something I have confirmed on more than one occasion; nor does it rest purely on my own experience, however substantial. In fact, I first learned it from my teachers, and subsequently by communing with the greatest of philosophers. It has been consistently found, not only to be the case, but also to be of practical value for those whose desire is to improve the condition of their soul” Galen, The Soul’s Dependence on the Body, 767 (Singer, Selected Works, 150; emphasis mine).
15 Nutton, Medicine, 243.
16 Galen, On Prognosis 14. 599-673; On Examining the Physician 4. 4-5.
18 Clement also subscribes to the idea that the body indicates the disease: “For through the body itself the lewdness of desire shines clearly (καταφαίνω) ... Disease ... is known from the outward appearance (τὸ νοσοῦν δὲ ἄµφοτὲν ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως γνωρίζεται).” Paed. 1.6. Translation mine.
19 Galen, 18B. 1-42; cf. Nutton, Medicine, 244.
20 Nutton, Medicine, 244; emphasis mine.
This dual emphasis on the physician's dominant status over the patient and that the prognosis is assured, and therefore the prescribed treatment will succeed as long as the patient obeys the prescription, is very similar to the practical rules set forth by Clement for the baptized Christian. By this I mean Christians have repented of their sinful state (i.e., the diagnosis of diseased soul and imperfection); the prescribed treatment calls for baptism (in order to be healed/perfected), and heeding the moral regulations that Clement outlines (a regimen for the preservation of one's health and perfection). Should the Christian fail to follow this prescribed course of action, the health of his or her soul and body will deteriorate because of the passions and their sins. The fault will lie not with the divine physician, but with the patient.

Although the human physician commands greater authority in the second-century than in previous times, Clement reminds his Christian audience that the divine physician (i.e., Jesus, the Pedagogue) is superior, and thus prescribes a superior medicine and regimen.

Our Instructor, the Word, therefore cures the unnatural passions of the soul by means of exhortations. For with the highest propriety the help of bodily diseases is called the healing art—an art acquired by human skill. But the paternal Word is the only Paeonian physician of human infirmities, and the holy charmer of the sick soul.

(Paed. 1.2; ANF 2.210)

Later on, Clement again compares the human physician with the divine Instructor:

The sick are vexed at a physician, who gives no advice bearing on their restoration to health. But how shall we not acknowledge the highest gratitude to the divine Instructor, who is not silent, who omits not those threatenings that point towards desctruction, but discloses them; and who indoctrinates in those counsels which result in the true way of living?

(Paed. 1.8; ANF 2.235)

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Now that we have an idea of the physician’s role and authority in the healing process, we now turn to the various means of affecting salubrious change in the diseased body.

**Pharmacology, Medicants, and Drugs**

How exactly does a patient regain their health? Generally speaking, ancient therapeutics includes three methods: dietetics, pharmacology, and surgery—the latter also including cautery. We shall see shortly that Clement also repeats these same three principles in *Paed.* 1.8, but for now we will focus on the last two—pharmacology and surgery.

Between pharmacology and surgery, the former is almost always the preferred method, and for obvious reasons. The Greek word φάρµκαν goes back to Mycenean Linear B, and essentially denotes any “drug,” whether salubrious or deadly. In the Homeric epics on through to the time of Galen and Clement, φάρµκαν typically appears with an adjective to describe what kind of drug it is, whether “deadly” or “soothing.”

Clement, in his *Pedagogue*, refers to baptism as the “Paeonian drug.” “Paeonian” is an interesting word in this passage. It is often translated merely as “healing,” as Norman Russell does in

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23 Pharmacology does not have the inherent risk of infection of acute blood loss, and unlike surgery, it helps “to stimulate the body’s self-healing processes to restore its original balance – a holistic view of the human organism to which Galen was especially disposed,” (Vogt, “Drugs,” 304). Galen, although skilled as a surgeon and learned in human anatomy, championed therapeutic methods centered on drugs and diet (*On Examining the Physician* 10.1).


The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Fathers.\textsuperscript{26} However that may be, the word has other meanings. It is a common title associated with the gods Apollo\textsuperscript{27} and Asclepius,\textsuperscript{28} both gods well known for their healing abilities. What is more, Paeon/Paean is also the name of the physician of the Olympian gods in both the \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}. In the \textit{Iliad}, for example, Paeon heals Ares after Diomedes wounded his thigh in combat.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, whenever φάρµακον appears in Homer, it is mostly about drug that is \textit{applied outwardly},\textsuperscript{30} like an ointment or topical solution, and not ingested in solid or liquid form, as is generally the case with Galen’s lengthy catalogue of drugs.

“Theriac,” one of Galen’s most popular drugs, was included in a larger group of what he called “antidotes,” and was commonly used a kind of panacea to treat various sorts of illnesses.\textsuperscript{31} In fact, this medicine primarily consisted of three ingredients: water, wine, and honey.\textsuperscript{32} Interestingly, this “mixture” combines three of the four key “liquid foods” important to Clement in the \textit{Pedagogue}.\textsuperscript{33}

Additionally, Galen is well known for popularising the theory of the humours. The first five books of \textit{On the Powers of Simple Drugs} outline his understanding of humoral theory in relation to

\textsuperscript{26} Norman Russell, \textit{The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 138.

\textsuperscript{27} E.g., Aeschylus, \textit{Agamemnon} 512: “Here all goes well, we must take counsel that so it may long endure; but if ever a healing remedy (φαρµάκων παυωνίων) is necessary, we will endeavor to avert the mischief of the malady by kind appliance of cautery or the knife” (trans. LCL, modified).

\textsuperscript{28} Aristophanes, \textit{Plutus} 636; the word is also used as an epithet for other gods such as Athene (Pausanias, \textit{Description of Greece} 1.2.5; Plutarch, \textit{Vita dec} 7), as well as Zeus of Rhodes, Dionysus, and Pan.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Iliad} 5.899; he also helped heal Hades from an arrow wound (\textit{Iliad} 5.393).

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Iliad} 4.191, 218; 5.401, 900; cf. \textit{Odyssey} 10.392.

\textsuperscript{31} Vogt, “Drugs,” 312.


\textsuperscript{33} These are milk, water, wine, and honey; \textit{Paed.} 1.6; \textit{ANF} 2.222.
pharmacology—a theory that Clement subscribed to as well.\textsuperscript{34} Much of the theory consists of re-
establishing and maintaining humoral balance throughout seasonal changes (both for temperature
and rotation of available foods) and the process of aging. Galen suggests that if an extreme imbalance
occurs in a patient, an equally extreme remedy is necessary.

\begin{quote}
[W]e will require medicines proportioned to the extent of the imbalance. If, for example, a
body deviates from the norm by a figure of ten to the hot and by a figure of seven to the dry,
then the healthful cause must be ten to the cold and seven to the moist.
\textit{(Galen, \textit{Art of Medicine} 1.383)}\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

For Clement, extreme remedies such as metaphorical surgery or divine medicine will be necessary to
heal the extreme case of the diseased Christian soul and remove the accrual of sin from one’s former
life, ailments that require stronger remedies than any earthly medicine.

\textbf{Maintaining Health: Dietetics}

Dietetics, according to Galen scholar Sabine Vogt, is “regarded as a non-invasive method of preserving
health rather than curing disease, and is thus applied prophylactically, or only in mild cases of disease,
while pharmacology and, especially, surgery are regarded as rather drastic ‘intrusions’ ... chosen in
order to counteract the noxious impact of an illness or wound.”\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, as Vivian Nutton
explains, “Diet, for Galen, was more than just food and drink, and encompassed one’s whole lifestyle,
including \textit{exercise, sleep, and the environment}.”\textsuperscript{37} Dietetics (\textit{Δίαιτας}), in general, means a “way of living”

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} e.g., \textit{Paed}. 2.2 in \textit{ANF} 2.243.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Singer, \textit{Selected Works}, 382.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Vogt, “Drugs,” 304, citing Galen \textit{On the Preservation of Health} and \textit{On the Properties of
Foodstuffs}.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Nutton, \textit{Medicine}, 246; emphasis mine.
\end{itemize}
or “mode of life.”

Additionally, there is a specific medical usage for the word, that is, a “prescribed manner of life” or “regimen.”

Diet was one of, if not the most important factor in determining whether one's natural state of health persisted or fell away into the unnatural state of illness. “If eating the wrong sort of food produced illness, it was also true that health could be maintained, and often restored, by an appropriate eating plan.”

Furthermore, physical exercise was an important part of ancient dietetics. Galen is a strong advocate for a regular, physically active lifestyle, and recommends the use of a small medicine ball for toning the body. Galen, citing the Hippocratic corpus, states that

So gymnastics is a part of the healthy art; and Hippocrates has given us adequate instruction on both. He has given a full and accurate account of the knowledge one must have of air, places, waters, winds, and seasons, and also of food, drink, and daily practices. And these are the elements of which regimen consists. Similarly, Hippocrates has thoroughly considered the correct time of application, amount, and nature, not only of exercise but also of massage. (Galen, To Thrasybulus 35)

Next, he states that Plato employs the term 'gymnastics' rather than 'healthiness'. The reasons for this would be that gymnastics is the activity par excellence of the healthy (it is not employed by the sick at all), and that he considered this part alone to require a supervisor. A body which is in perfect health, provided that it follows its natural appetites, will make no error with regard to food, either in the sense of the nature of food chosen or in the sense of the correct time to take it. It will emerge quite clearly from what follows, however, that Plato regarded the 'gymnastics' which is a part of the

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38 See LSJ entry on Δίαιτας.
39 Hippocrates, Vict. 1.1; Plato Rep. 404a. Especially concerning diet: Hippocrates, On Fractures 36; Galen, To Thrasybulus 35.
40 See Galen’s The Thinning Diet.
41 Nutton, Medicine, 247.
42 Galen, The Exercise with the Small Ball.
43 Singer, Selected Works, 85; emphasis mine.
art concerned with the body as different from the 'gymnastics' which enjoys popularity these days.

(Galen, *To Thrasybulus* 35)\(^{44}\)

From these passages, it would seem that only a body in perfect health is able to function properly and make correct choices regarding food. It stands to reason that the diseased body, therefore, is incapable of proper functioning and clear thinking. Moreover, the healthy body is ostensibly able—in a sense—to take care of itself in order to maintain that state of health, apart from the treatment of drugs and/or surgery. This fits with what Galen says elsewhere regarding the patient’s role in the therapeutic process. That is, as an active agent in the *preservation* of health and *prevention* of disease.\(^{45}\) The role of dietetics as preventative medicine and the course of action taken after reinstating one’s health is crucial for getting at what I think to be the correct reading of Clement’s *Instructor*. And to that text we now turn.

THE *PAEDAGOGUS*

Clement of Alexandria’s *Paedagogus* is a treatise in three books, the first of which describes the function of the divine Logos (i.e., Christ\(^{46}\)) as the one who fulfils the role of a healer of sins and educator of Christians (cf. the Galenic, and to a lesser extent, Aristotelian idea of the ‘philosopher-doctor’). It is also in Book 1 that Clement describes the moment of baptism for his Christian audience, saying:

\(^{44}\) Singer, *Selected Works*, 85-86; emphasis mine.

\(^{45}\) See Galen’s lengthy works *On the Preservation of Health* and *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*.

\(^{46}\) Sometimes this harmonization is difficult to maintain; see Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*, trans. Matthew O’Connell (Peabody, Mass: Baker Academic, 2005), 255.
Being baptized we are illuminated [with instruction or spiritual light], being illuminated we are made sons, being made sons we are made perfect [or complete/mature], being made perfect we earn immortality. “I,” says he, “have said, you all are gods and all sons of the Highest.” And this work is called many things: grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing. Washing by which we are cleansed thoroughly of sins – but grace by which the penalties accruing with respect to sinful actions are remitted – and illumination by which that holy light – the saving (light) – is admitted to the highest level (of the mysteries), that is, by which we see the God clearly...

(Paed. 1. 6. 26. 1-2) 

Shortly thereafter, he says further that

our transgressions being taken away by one Paeonion drug: baptism in the Word. We are washed from our sins, and are no longer entangled with evil. This is the one grace of illumination, that our character is not the same as before our washing.

(Paed. 1.6.29.5-30.1)

This baptism in the Word is a “Paeonian drug” (Paed. 1.6.). The Instructor is the “only Paeonian physician” (Paed. 1.2). The diseased soul is one that is afflicted by the unnatural passions, an illness that necessitates a divine physician. Clement’s soteriology is replete with medical metaphors, particularly in his discussion of the role of baptism. Yet, it is curious that scholarly discussion of baptism in the Paedagogus primarily addresses it as a ritual action for consecrating new Christian converts, with little or no analysis of the medical metaphors in the overall conception of the rite in the process of Christian salvation.

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48 ἀφειμένοι τῶν πλημμελημάτων ἐνὶ παιωνίῳ φαρμάκῳ, λογικῷ βαπτίσματι. Πάντα μὲν ὁδὸν ἀπολουοῦμεθα τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, ὁµήκει τὸ ἐσμέν παρὰ πόδας κακοὶ. Μία χάρις οὐτῆς τοῦ φωτίσματος τὸ μη τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι τῷ πρὶν ἢ λούσασθαι τὸν τρόπον. Translation mine.
Harry Maier’s article, “Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self” offers much to ameliorate this neglect by building upon the Michel Foucault’s ideas in his Care of the Self. To be sure, Maier’s summary of Clement’s program is quite agreeable:

Clement’s church, like Epictetus’ classroom, is a place where sick people come for healing. If disease is the normal state in which humanity finds itself, then baptism begins the healing of passions which for Clement ... are the product of a self in disarray. This process of healing ideally ends in a cure from all passion (pathos) and desire (epithumia), in a perfect state of passionlessness (apatheia).

But while Maier acknowledges Clement’s use of medical metaphors and language in the Paedagogus, his focus is almost exclusively upon the Clement’s philosophical (read: ethical) connections with Greco-Roman culture. In doing so, the study of the “care of self” from a purely medical standpoint remains a desideratum. What is more, Maier states that “The Paedagogus describes the initial stages of medical care,” but spends most of his time citing passages from Clement’s later Stromateis (or Miscellanies), which is more of a compilation of notes regarding a number of topics, and certainly not written for the purposes of directly addressing Christians for purposes of instruction.

Furthermore, I think the emphasis on the philosophical context without equally supplying a “thick description” of the medical context deleteriously skews Maier’s analysis of Clement. He is no doubt correct when he says, “Clement is clear that the subject who reasons about and applies the code of commandments to the self is the new person who emerges from the waters of baptism and who,

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50 Harry O. Maier, “Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self,” JAAR 62:3 (1994), 719-45; see Maier’s direct reference to Foucault on page 721.
51 Maier, “Self,” 725.
52 See Maier, “Self,” 719-45, esp. 725. Maier states that it remains “necessary to depict it [the tradition of the care of the self] in broader strokes in order to establish a social and philosophical context for a more focussed [sic] portrait of the ways in which Clement adopts and inflects pagan paradigms of care of self” (“Self,” 721).
having received illumination, advances to control all immoderate impulses.” And he is also right to say that “Care of self has as its end the fruition of the seed planted and watered at baptism: ideally, contemplation of God in a perfect state of apatheia, but more usually the expression and preservation of the gift of salvation through the renunciation of the flesh.”

But what Maier fails to explain is how baptism functions as one of the first steps towards the care of the Christian self, which will be an ongoing process of discipline and punishment for the individual. What reason might Clement have for this particularly procedural arrangement? Why does he emphasize the regimen of the Christian life(style) after baptism, and not before? The reason, I believe, is in part that Clement is blending his church’s ritual procedure of inculcation, initiation, and praxis with the three elements of Greco-Roman therapeutics.

The Paedagogus, contrary to Maier, is not a mere description of “the initial stages of medical care,” but rather a comprehensive guidebook for the whole of Christian life. Put more accurately, it is the first book that outlines this initial medical care of the self/soul, while the remaining two books outline the prescribed discipline of the Christian life(style).

Maier argues that “the application of laws and precepts to oneself is the means by which one participates in the healing of the self.” This statement is actually ambiguous. On one hand, we can take this statement to mean that the Christian self is being healed, but the application of laws and precepts is the only part of this healing process in which the Christian is an active agent. This

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55 These are the respective stages for catechumens, neophytes (i.e. the newly baptized), and practicing Christians.
56 Maier, “Self,” 728.
reasoning, therefore, implies that there are other parts of the healing process that are beyond the self as agent in the healing of the self. On the other hand, however, Maier could simply mean that the Christian self’s relation to oneself is merely through (or only through) the application of laws and precepts. What I am trying to get at here is that Maier leaves little room to the discussion of the role of divine agency in the healing of the Christian self. In short, he is only providing one side (or half) of the larger process of salvation. And to be fair, this is not the point of his essay. But what remains necessary is a analysis of how Clement’s application of the ‘care of self’ motif operates within the larger procedural framework of salvation, paying keen attention to the medical context in addition to the philosophical, in order to understand his understanding of Christian discipline. Maier argues that Clement’s “Gnostic apatheia represents ... a dynamic process.”\(^57\) I argue that Clement’s view of Christian salvation—in both its attainment and maintenance—is also a dynamic process.

A good example of Clement’s conception of Christian therapeutics can be found in \textit{Paed.} 1.8, which abounds in medical metaphors.

For many of the passions are medically cured (\(\Theta\varepsilon\tau\rho\alpha\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\tau\alpha\))\(^58\) by punishment, and orders of more rigorous precepts, and also by the instruction of some theoretical speculations. And refutation is like surgery of the passions of the soul, and the passions are a lesion of the truth, which one ought to expose [or refute] when cutting it open with a knife. Reproach is like the use of drugs (\(\Phi\alpha\rho\mu\alpha\kappa\varepsilon\iota\alpha\))\(^59\) unsettling the hardened things of the passions and the filthy things of life, of the act of sexual intercourse, purifying, and also smoothing away the overgrowths of the vanity, and rebuilding the human into the healthy and true [nature]. Admonition, then, is like a regimen (\(\delta\iota\alpha\iota\tau\alpha\)) of a diseased soul: an advisory of things which are necessary to take and

\(^{57}\) Maier, “Self,” 738.

\(^{58}\) Use of this verb meaning “treat medically” also occurs: Hp. VM9, Th. 2.47,51; X.Cyr. 3.2.12; Phld. Piet. 89; Hp. Aph. 6.38; Antipho 4.2.4; Isoc. 19.28; Pl. Lg. 684c; Arist. EN 1102a19; Phld. Ir.p.29; Philippid. 32; Men. 591; D.S. 4.41; Plu. Luc. 22; Phlp. in de An. 408.3; Luc. Ind. 6.

\(^{59}\) Especially purgatives: Hippocrates, \textit{Aph.} 1.24, 2.36; Galen 15.447.
a prohibitory of things which are not necessary to take. And all these things relate to salvation and everlasting health.

(Paed. 1.8.64.4-65.2.3)  

Recalling the earlier discussion about the therapeutic triad of surgery, medicines/drugs, and dietetics above, we see that the surgery of “refutation” (surgery being the most extreme and invasive of treatment) likened to opening (i.e., “cutting” to expose) the wound caused by the disease of the passions. Only after the ailment is located and exposed can it be treated and healed. Next comes the medicine of “reproach” that purifies the corrosive and calloused detritus of sin in the soul. And finally, there is the regimen of “admonition,” which outlines what is and is not permissible.

These concepts of refutation, reproach, and admonition serve as references to the steps taken toward the Christian life. After all, they are said to “relate to salvation and eternal health.” Refutation (ὁ ἐλέγχος) is generally meant as “a cross-examination or testing.” This testing, Clement says, opens and exposes the passions within the human being. This stage of cross-examination, on my reading, appears to be that which the catechumen undergoes before baptism into the Christian faith. They must acknowledge that they are slaves to their passions before further treatment may proceed. Furthermore, it is a trial period that ensures that one is indeed ready to advance to the next stage of their salvific journey. For not only are the catechumens to have their sins washed clean, they will also

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60 Θεραπεύεται δὲ πολλὰ τῶν παθῶν τιμωρία καὶ προστάξει αὐστηροτέρων παραγγελμάτων καὶ δή καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐνίων θεωρήματων διδασκαλίας. Ἐστι δὲ οἶονει χειρουργία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς παθῶν ὁ ἐλεγχός, ἀπόστασις δὲ τὰ πάθη τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀ χρή διελέγχειν διαιροῦντα τῇ τομῇ. Φαρμακεία δὲ έσοικεν ὁ νεωτισμὸς τὰ τετυλωμένα ἀναλών τῶν παθῶν καὶ τὰ ψυχῶν τῷ βίῳ, τὰς λαγνείας, ἀνακαθαίρων, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τὰς ὑπερστρέψεις τοῦ τύφου ἐξημαλλίζων, εἰς τὸν ὑγιή καὶ ἀληθινόν ἀνασκευάζων τὸν ἀνθρώπον. Ὅ νουθέτησις οὕν οἶονει διαίτης ἐστὶ νοσοῦσης ψυχῆς, ἀν χρή μεταλαμβάνειν συμβουλευτική καὶ ἀν χρή ἀπαγορευτική- τὰ δὲ πάντα εἰς σωτηρίαν καὶ αἵδειαν ύγείαν διατείνει. Translation mine.

61 See entry in LSJ.
need to be worthy of being adopted as a son of God and receiving immortality, as these are also benefits bestowed upon the baptized (Paed. 1.6.26.1-2).

The second stage, that of reproach (ὁ ὀνειδίσμως). This “medicine” purifies and rebuilds “the human into the healthy and true [nature]” (Paed. 1.8.64). Baptism, if we recall, is described as a “healing medicine/drug (φάρμακον)” in Paed. 1.6.29.5-30.1 (cf. 1.6.26.1-2). It appears to me that the medicine of reproach is equated with that of baptism, which rebukes the build up of sins by eliminating them from the baptizand’s soul, thus “purifying and rebuilding the human into the healthy and true [nature].” This rebuilding, we will recall, is the purpose of medicines/drugs in Greco-Roman therapeutics. Now that the human has been returned to his natural healthy state, the next step is to work towards the maintenance of that health in order to prevent any future imbalance that may lead to illness through dietetics.

Admonition (ἡ νουθέτησις) is the set of things that are prescribed and proscribed to take. Clement explicitly likens admonition to a regimen or dietetic practice of diseased souls, thus completing our therapeutic triad. This step refers to the new life(style) of Clement’s Christian after baptism. I should hasten to add that “admonition” is mentioned one other time in the Paedagogus, where it heads a list of twelve parts that constitute the “mode of [the Lord’s] loving discipline” (Paed. 1.9.76.1.1 81.2.8).62 Clement sums up this loving discipline as a “technology” or “system” (τεχνολογία) of fear that is “the source of salvation” (σωτηρίας ἐστὶ πηγή) (Paed. 1.9.81.3.1).

62 This list includes admonition, upbraiding, complaint, invective, reproof, bringing one to one’s senses, visitation (as severe rebuke), denunciation, accusation, bewailing one’s fate, objurgation, and indignation.

63 It is worth noting that the noun ἡ πηγή is closely associated with “running water” or “streams,” and perhaps is suggestive of the salvific power of Christian baptism. See entry in LSJ.
In short, my arguments can be represented visually with the following table (Table 1):

(Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Ways of being “medically cured”(Θεραπεύεται):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. “Punishment” (τιµωρία)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. “Orders of more rigorous precepts” (προστάξει αὐστηροτέρων παραγγελμάτων)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. “The instruction of some theoretical speculations” (τῆς ἐνίων θεωρημάτων διδασκαλίας).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Repentance (Step 1):</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Refutation” (ὁ ἐλεγχος) is “like surgery of the passions of the soul” (σίωνει χειρουργία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς παθῶν). The passions are referred to as “a lesion of the truth, which one ought to refute (or expose) when cutting it open with a knife” (ἀπόστασις ... τῆς ἀληθείας, ἤ χρή διελέγχειν διαιροῦντα τῇ τομῇ).</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>3. Baptism (Step 2):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Reproach” (ὁ ὄνειδισμός) is likened to “the use of drugs” (Φαρμακεία) that “purify the unsettled things the hardened things of the passions and the filthy things of the life, of the act of sexual intercourse” (τὰ τετυλωμένα ἀναλύων τῶν παθῶν καὶ τά ῥυπαρά τοῦ βίου, τὰς λαγνείας, ἀνακαθαίρων, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τὰς ὑπερσαρκώσεις τοῦ τόφου ἐξομαλίζων, εἰς τὸν ὑγίη καὶ ἀληθινὸν ἀνασκευάζων τὸν ἀνθρώπων).</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. Regimen/Dietetics (Step 3):</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admonition, then, is like a “regimen” (δίαιτά) of a diseased soul: an advisory of things which are necessary to take and a prohibitory of things which are not necessary to take.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Summary:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And all these things relate to salvation and everlasting health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discipline and Punishment**

Michel Foucault argues in his extraordinary work *Discipline & Punish* that the spectacle of torture and execution as punishments faded away, while a new view of punishment arose that intended to correct or improve the criminal. This new type of punishment did not touch the body. Instead, punishment targeted the soul. Parallels to this new mostly non-corporeal punishment are present in Clement's
Paedagogus. He explains the role of punishment as a corrective for Christians on several occasions. In one instance, he writes that

prophesy invests [the Lord] with a rod, a rod of discipline, of rule, of authority; that those whom the persuasive word heals not, the threatening may heal; and those whom the threatening heals not, the rod may heal; and whom the rod heals not, the fire may devour. (Paed. 1.8; ANF 2.224, trans. slightly modified)

The mention of the rod that may heal is not a reference to a physical rod used for whipping or beating.

As Clement states immediately after, quoting Isaiah 11.1-3, “There shall come forth ... a rod out of the root of Jesse.” This rod is taken to be Christ, the Pedagogue, who is the final messenger of healing salvation. Therefore, those who fail to heed his call, are destined to be devoured by the fires of hell.64

Foucault understands the principal aim of the modern penal process to be a reformation of the soul, not the punishment of the body. In a similar manner, Clement sees the Christian life(style) as one in which the purified soul is kept unsullied through a series of disciplines that seek to master the passions. He tells us that “The Pedagogue being practical, not theoretical, His aim is thus to improve the soul (not to teach) and to train it up to a virtuous (not to an intellectual) life” (Paed. 1.1 ANF 2.209).

In another instance of punishments that do not afflic the body, but correct the soul, Clement tells us

With all his power, therefore, the Instructor of humanity, the Divine Word, using all the resources, devotes himself to the saving of the children, admonishing, upbraiding, blaming, chiding, reproving, threatening, healing, promising, favouring; and as it were, by many reins, curbing the irrational impulses of humanity. To speak briefly, therefore, the Lord acts towards us as we do towards our children. “Have you children? Correct them,” is the exhortation of the book of Wisdom, “and bend them from their youth. Have you daughters? Attend to their body and let not your face brighten towards them,”—although we love our children exceedingly, both sons and daughters, above aught else whatever. For those who speak with a man merely to

64 The punishment of hellfire acts like the system of retributive torture and execution that Foucault describes as payment for a wrong done to the Monarch (a monarch who, in this case, is God.)
please him, have little love for him, seeing they do not pan him; while those that speak for his good, though they inflect pain for the time, do him good for ever after. It is not immediate pleasure, but future enjoyment, that the Lord has in view. (Paed. 1.9; ANF 2.228, emphasis mine.)

Furthermore, Clement describes these punishments as various “medicines” (φάρµακα) when he lists the twelve parts that make up the Lord’s mode of loving discipline (Paed. 1.9.76.1.1-81.2.8). Shortly thereafter, Clement further makes clear that these medicines and punishments are for the correction of the soul. “For reproof and rebuke, as the original term also implies, are the stripes of the soul, chastising sins, preventing death, and leading those carried away to licentiousness to self-control” (Paed. 1.9; ANF 2.230, modified). And just so everything is crystal clear regarding the function of punishment, Clement provides two pithy summations, the first being “obedience leads to salvation; disobedience leads to correction” (Paed. 1.2; ANF 2.210). And the other: “To be chastised of the Lord, and instructed, is deliverance from death” (Paed. 1.7; ANF 2.224).

*Let us now proceed to consider the mode of His loving discipline, with the aid of the prophetic testimony. Admonition, then, is the censure of loving care, and produces understanding. [provides several scriptural examples] ... Upbraiding, is censure on account of what is base, conciliating to what is noble. [provides several scriptural examples] ... Complaint is censure of those who are regarded as despising or neglecting. [scriptural examples] ... Invective [or rebuke] is a reproachful upbraiding, or chiding censure. [scriptural examples]. He [the Instructor] uses the very bitter mordant of fear in each case repressing the people, and at the same time turning them to salvation. ... Reproof is the bringing forward of sin, laying it before one. This form of instruction He employs as the highest degree necessary, by reason of the feebleness of the faith of many. [...] And He uses the bitter and biting language of reproof in His consolations by Solomon, tacitly alluding to the love for children that characterizes His instruction: “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when you are rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives,” [Prov. 3.11,12] “For a man who is a sinner escapes reproof” [Ecclus. 23.21]. Consequently, therefore, the Scripture says, “Let the righteous reprove and correct me” ... Bringing one to his senses is censure, which makes a man think. ... Visitation is severe rebuke ... Denunciation is vehement speech. And He employs denunciation as medicine. ... Accusation is censure of wrong-doers. ... Bewailing one's fate is latent censure, and by artful aid ministers salvation as under a veil. ... Objurgation is objurgatory censure. ... Indignation is a rightful upbraiding; or upbraiding on account of ways exalted above what is right ...” (Paed. 1.9.76.1.1-81.2.8; ANF 2.228-30, trans. modified).
Much like how the doctors, psychiatrists, and other professions of the human sciences generate knowledge used to establish the norms by which to judge people, Clement creates a synthesis of Christian religion and Greco-Roman medicine as the “technologies of power” in order to establish his own set of norms by which people will be judged (in both life and death). Greco-Roman medicine, as we have seen, incorporates various models for and understandings of the human being—both in a balanced and natural state (i.e., healthy) and otherwise (i.e., various causes of illness or disease). We have already noted earlier how Galen used his role of physician as a position of power over that of the patient (subject). And with the divine Christ already in a privileged position of cosmic power and authority, his position is made even greater while appropriating the role of a divine physician.

In discussing the emergence of detention as a form of punishment, Foucault describes three principles to which punitive imprisonment adhered. For my purposes here, the third principle is apt: “A strict time-table, a system of prohibitions and obligations, continual supervisions, exhortations, religious readings, a whole complex of methods ‘to draw towards good’ and ‘to turn away from evil’ held the prisoners in its grip from day one.” Furthermore, Foucault tells us that in the penitentiary system, “one punishes not to efface crime, but to transform a criminal (actual or potential); punishment must bring with it a certain corrective technique.” And when describing the “apparatus of corrective penalty,” Foucault writes that

The point of application of the penalty is not the representation but the body, time, everyday gestures and activities; the soul, too, but in so far as it is the seat of habits. The body and the soul, as principles of behaviour, form the element that is now proposed for punitive

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66 Foucault, *Discipline*, 121.
67 Foucault, *Discipline*, 127.
intervention. Rather than on an art of representations, this punitive intervention must rest on a studied manipulation of the individual ... And, ultimately, what one is trying to restore in this technique of correction is not so much the juridical subject, who is caught up in the fundamental interests of the social pact, but the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him. There are two distinct ways, therefore, of reacting to the offense: one may restore the juridical subject of the social pact, or shape an obedient subject, according to the general and detailed form of some power.  

These habits, rules, and orders that must “function automatically in” the individual, according to Clement, are the commandments of Christ, and the “power” is that of God the Father and the Jesus Christ.

What is more, Foucault describes how the human sciences create the ‘norms’ by which people are measured, and that the establishment of what counts as ‘normal’ also creates the category of ‘abnormal’. For Foucault’s purposes, the “normal” represents the majority of people. That is, the ones who are obedient and follow the law. The smaller number of persons who think or act outside of these norms are ‘abnormal’ or ‘delinquents’. These delinquents, being separated from society and relatively small in number, are easy to manipulate, control, and supervise. Clement’s thinking is more of a reversal of these concepts. I understand him as seeing two types of norms: 1) the habits, thoughts, and actions of the general population or pervasive culture; and 2) the habits, thoughts, and actions of the philosophers and Clement’s brand of Christianity.

Clement saw an unrestrained, immoderate lifestyle as one of abnormality. For him, what was commonly accepted as the norm was in fact its opposite. The true norm was the Christian lifestyle (mediated through the discourse of medicine and philosophical ethics) that demanded a life of

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68 Foucault, *Discipline*, 128-129.
moderation, restraint, and an expiation of the passions. The healthy and purified human being is actually the natural, albeit rare, state of humanity, as we have already witnessed earlier.

For Foucault, governmentality is the ability to affect the actions of another. It is not the same thing as violence or force, which physically affect the body; rather power entails making a subject do something he would not have done otherwise. Power, therefore, is the manipulation of a person’s will to act, think, or speak. It is power that makes bodies “docile,” and it is through power that they “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.”

The fourth of Foucault’s “art of distributions,” that of “the rank,” is also present in Clement’s Paedagogus. At the top are the Christians who have been perfected by baptism. These are the people who continually follow the ethical precepts of the divine regimen; they are healthy ones who heed the admonitions described in Paed. 1.8 and in books 2 and 3. They are also the true Gnostics. Below these Christians would be the catechumens, who practice and learn to become Christians in order that they may achieve baptism. These persons are undergoing, presumably, the equivalent of a diagnostic preparatory period. They are not yet healed, but they have recognized and acknowledged their illness—the ‘surgery of refutation’. They are barred from participating in the eucharist because of their impure state. At the bottom of the hierarchy, below the catechumens, are those who are outside of Christianity and Clement’s school. They are the sick and infected people, the masses who represent the true abnormal state of humanity.

Foucault understands discipline to be the techniques that manipulate and control the operations of individual bodies. With military drills as an example, discipline coerces and arranges the

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69 Foucault, Discipline, 128-129
body’s movements and informs the individual’s experience of time and space. Furthermore, Foucault argues that discipline *creates* individuals *out of the mass* or collective, contrary to the common understanding of the process being the other way around.  

This individualized body is not one subjected to torture, but the power of discipline and control. And “The chief function of disciplinary power is to ‘train’.”

Furthermore, Foucault tells us, “Discipline ‘makes’ individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise.” (DP 170). In a way, the discipline of the divine regimen turns the mass of non-Christian bodies (“pagans,” to use the anachronism) into individuals, that is Christians. They are made individuals in part because they self-identify with an ‘abnormal’ religious identity, but also because they act out this religious identity by their strict discipline of following the divine regimen.

Disciplinary power, moreover, gains success from three elements: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. In fact, the divine pedagogue, Christ, could also, in some sense, function as the “single gaze” that sees everything. “As a central point,” he, “would be both the source of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be tuned.” Not only would Christ function as kind of ‘Panoptic Pedagogue’, God, too, shares in this omniscient gaze.

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70 Foucault, *Discipline*, 135-41; Cf.167.
71 Foucault, *Discipline*, 170.
72 Foucault, *Discipline*, 170.
73 Foucault, *Discipline*, 170-77.
74 Foucault, *Discipline*, 177-84.
75 Foucault, *Discipline*, 184-94.
76 Foucault, *Discipline*, 173.
When Clement describes the hypothetical Christian who supposes his sexual exploits are free from the view of others, he writes that he

hears not the voice of the Instructor, crying, “The man who ascends his bed, who says in his soul, Who sees me? darkness is around me, and the walls are my covering, and no one sees my sins. Why do I fear lest the Most High will remember?” Most wretched is such a man, dreading men’s eyes alone, and thinking that he will escape the observation of God. “For he does not know,” says the Scripture, “that ten thousand times brighter than the sun are the eyes of the Most High, which look on all the ways of men, and cast their glance into hidden parts.

(Paed. 2.10; ANF 262-63)

Even if someone does think that walls and the darkness of night conceal their sexual acts, we must not forget that a spouse, whether husband or wife, would also be another observer, ensuring that neither of them succumb to passionate sexual union, or engage in intercourse for reasons other than procreation. Furthermore, every Christian affiliated with Clement’s school could potentially act as agents of surveillance. This is entirely possible when we think of the mode of Lord’s loving discipline. It is likely that any incident of deviance would be called out by a witness (cf. “Accusation” or “Bringing one to one’s senses”), which may lead to the offending party acknowledging their wrong-doing and rebuking those actions and the passions that caused them. The presence of multiple sets of eyes surveying each other would likely act as a self-regulating system of checks and balances ensuring that everyone lives up their divinely ordained standards. Maier seems to be aware of this possibility, for he writes, “Under the watchful eyes of gnostic supervisors, the members of Clement’s church grow and develop and fight the flesh. He is disappointingly silent concerning the social setting of gnostic invigilation, but like Origen after him Clement and his gnostics most probably plied their trade of gnostic psychagogy in the households of the faithful.”

Moreover, much like Foucault’s example of the hospital building as an instrument of patient observation, Christian meetings and celebrations of the eucharist (while not intended to be so) could potentially function as instruments of observation by all members of the community, thus democratizing and multiplying these gazes. These gazes re-create and enforce the “small penal mechanism” of normalizing judgment.\footnote{Foucault, \textit{Discipline}, 177-78.} Any slight “micro-penalty” regarding attention, behavior, speech, the body can potentially be seen and addressed (either publically or privately).

\section*{The Devotion of Suppliants}

Returning briefly to the medicine of reproach—that Paeonian medicine that washes away sins and takes away transgressions—I wish to highlight another important element that lies latent in Clement’s explication of baptism earlier in \textit{Paed.} 1.6.26.1-2. Lest his audience forget the source of the drug’s power and efficacy, Clement is quick to remind them that washing merely cleanses one thoroughly of sins, but it is by “grace” that “the penalties accruing with reference to sinful actions are remitted.”

While efficacious to some degree, the washing itself fails to loosen up and remove all the built up “dirt” that has accumulated during one’s life. In order to be fully clean, the grace of God—his “gift”—is necessary; one’s salvation and adoption cannot be made or performed by mere human agency, for that would suppose humanity’s power over God.\footnote{Cf. Tertullian’s similar discussion in \textit{Bapt.} 8.} This distinction is made explicit in the original Greek. Clement uses four relative clauses in succession but changes the case for the pronoun concerning grace from that of the genitive to the dative:

\footnotetext[78]{Foucault, \textit{Discipline}, 177-78.}
\footnotetext[79]{Cf. Tertullian’s similar discussion in \textit{Bapt.} 8.}
And this work is called many things, grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing. Washing by which (ὅσιος) we are cleansed thoroughly of sins – but grace by which (χάρις) the penalties accruing with reference to sinful actions are remitted – and illumination by which (ὅσιος) that holy light – the saving (light) – is visited, that is, by which (ὅσιος) we see the God clearly.

(Paed. 1.6.26)

This emphasis on the deity’s decision and authority to grant or deny purification and healing is a common idea in antiquity. It was a common practice in the Greco-Roman world for suppliants to make “bargains” with the gods and promise to fulfil vows in return for their divine assistance. Suppliants commonly bestowed gifts or offerings to the gods after they have performed these favors successfully. These gifts are often locks of hair, small votive items, the crutches or canes no longer needed, or inscriptions. For example, one inscription from Thessalonica reads thus:

The old lame serving-woman, acquiring news of the healing water (ὕδατος παιωνίου), came limping with an oaken staff that propped her stricken body. Pity seized the Nymphs who dwelt on the skirts of bellowing Etna in the watery house of their father, eddying Symaethus. The hot spring of Etna restored the strength of her lame legs, and to the Nymphs, who granted her prayer that they would send her back unsupported, she left her staff, and they rejoiced in the gift.

(“Lacon or Philippus of Thessalonica,” trans. modified.)

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80 Cassius Dio provides an example of the gods refusing to aid the diseased: “[Caracalla] received no help from Apollo Grannus [in South Germany], nor yet from Asclepius [at Pergamum] or Serapis [at Alexandria], in spite of his many supplications and his unwearying persistence. For even while abroad he sent to them prayers, sacrifices and votive offerings, and many couriers ran hither and thither every day carrying something of this kind; and he also went to them himself, hoping to prevail by appearing in person, and did all that devotees are wont to do; but he obtained nothing that contributed to health” (Roman History 78.15.6-7, LCL). Nutton erroneously cites 77.15.6 for this passage in Medicine, 282.

81 The Greek Anthology, I.6.203. For other examples of epigraphers giving thanks to the gods for healing, see Greek Anthology I. 6. 146, 189, and 240. Cf. Greek Anthology III. 9. 418 for another account of Nymphs of the river.
Hot springs or ones with odd smells, tastes, or colors usually had their own deities. This idea was widely accepted in the Greco-Roman world, and by no means was it malign as δεισιδαιμονία or superstition by the upper classes and well educated.

I think this element of re-payment, or fulfilment of a vow, in return for a god’s services is latent in Clement’s medicinal soteriology, especially throughout the entirety of books 2 and 3 of the Paedagogus. The idea is that after catechumens become baptized Christians (thus receiving illumination, adoption as sons of God, perfection, and immortality from God), their end of the bargain must be greater than a promise of shorn hair or a trite inscription. Receiving spiritual health and immortality leaves a suppliant in a far greater debt to a god than one who is cured of only a bodily ailment. Reciprocity in return for such divine gifts can be nothing other than vowing to abstain from the evil excesses of the world and devoting one's life to maintaining a livelihood (“regimen”) worthy of such an undefiled and divine status.

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83 E.g., Seneca, Moral Letters to Lucilius 41.3: “If ever you have come upon a grove that is full of ancient trees which have grown to an unusual height, shutting out a view of the sky by a veil of pleached and intertwining branches, then the loftiness of the forest, the seclusion of the spot, and your marvel at the thick unbroken shade in the midst of the open spaces, will prove to you the presence of deity. Or if a cave, made by the deep crumbling of the rocks, holds up a mountain on its arch, a place not built with hands but hollowed out into such spaciousness by natural causes, your soul will be deeply moved by a certain intimation of the existence of God. We worship the sources of mighty rivers; we erect altars at places where great streams burst suddenly from hidden sources; we adore springs of hot water as divine, and consecrate certain pools because of their dark waters or their immeasurable depth” (trans. LCL, emphasis mine). See also Tertullian, On Baptism 5, in which he points to Jn. 5.1-9 as an example of an angel who was inclined to “stir the pool” at Bethsaida and affect healing.
The Care of the (Christian) Self

Michel Foucault describes the first two centuries of the Common Era as “a kind of golden age in the cultivation of the self.” This phenomenon, according to him, was particular art of life, a “technē tou biou.” Clement, too, is operating within this paradigm. He goes to great lengths to explain the proper manner in which to eat (Paed. 2.1), drink (2.2), dress (2.11, 12, 13; 3.3, 9), talk (2.6), behave at feasts (2.4), laugh (2.5), and exercise (3.10). Furthermore, on several occasions he lists which activities are acceptable to engage in (2.4, 7, 10; 3.5) and why certain kinds of jewellery should not to be tolerated (3.11).

In Paed. 1.6.29-30, Clement states that Christians “are washed from [their] sins, and are no longer entangled with evil,” and that their “character is not the same as before [their] washing.” “Character” (τρόπον) here can also mean a person’s ways, habits, temper, mode, manner, or style. All of these semantic possibilities make clear that after the catechumen becomes baptized into Christianity (thus being healed and adopted by God), their relationship to the self—that is, their new self in Christ—changes. Their character changes because the regimen of Christ requires a change in behavior in order to live a holy life that tempers the wicked passions of the soul. This care of the self—the Christian self—is formulated just like a dietetic regimen one would follow in order to maintain their health, but Clement’s Christians follow the regimen of Christ so that they can maintain a healthy bodily and spiritual life in anticipation of divine reward and in participation with their Lord and co-heir Jesus Christ.

84 Foucault, The Care of the Self, 45.
CONCLUSION

We have seen how entrenched Clement's conception of salvation is within the framework of Greco-Roman medicine. He employs the three-part method of surgery, pharmacology, and dietetics to describe the transformation of diseased, mortal humans into healthy, immortal sons of God. By surgically exposing the infection of sin (caused by the unnatural passions of the soul), the catechumen is prepared to receive the purifying medicine of baptism to break up and remove the effects of years of sinful actions upon the soul. By re-establishing the natural and pure state of the human soul, the body is set free from the effects of sin, and the Christian must follow the divine regimen of Christ in order to maintain their divine health for the remainder of their life. By doing so, Clement's Christians actively and truly remain “no longer entangled with evil” (Paed. 1.6.30).
Works Cited


