225 Physician, Medicine, To Cure (*Medicus, Medicina, Mederi*)

Medicine is double.[[1]](#endnote-1) For some is curative of sickness, some conservative of health, but it impedes the efficacy of a cure.

First, torpor and negligence in looking after oneself while suffering, as to accept medicine on the point of death. Nothing after death does any good. The example in the opulence of the rich who sought a drop of water after death, Jer. 46[:11]: “In vain you multiply medicines, there shall be no cure for you.” Therefore Eccli. 18[:20]: “Before sickness take a medicine,” namely, penance, “and before judgment,” namely, death, “examine yourself,” so that you may prepare responses, for God prepares allegations, the devil punishments.

Second, rancor of anger impedes healing as for one’s neighbor, as for a man without preparation medicine is not given. This preparation the Lord teaches in Matt. 6[:14]: because if men “will forgive men their offences.” Eccli. 28[:4]: “He has no mercy on a man like himself, and does he entreat for his own sins,” as if saying, for in vain is the same case you wish to be heard and you do not hear.

¶ The example in Esau who did not find the place of penance although he sought for it with tears, Rom. 9[:13]. The reason is because he poured out teas from indignation not from compassion.

Third, the same arrogance of disobedience prevents a cure, Isai. 1[:5-6]: who despairs of the physician.

¶ The conservation of health is triple. First is frequent remembrance of the divine passion, just as seeing the gallows cautions from theft and homicide, Psal. [102:2-3]: “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” and it follows, “who heals all your diseases.”

¶ Second, is the due participation in the sacrament of the altar because that comforts the soul as food for the body, Eccli. 38[:4]: “The most High hath created medicines out of the earth,” that is, from the blessed Virgin.

Third, the continuation of good society. Example of the Prince who sought from two men what men might say about him, and one responded, “If you have a good society you eat well.” The other said, “If you eat well you will have a good society with you,” Eccli. [12:13]: “Who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent,” etc., or any that come near wild beasts?” That is, to sinners of whom some are light through pride, harmful through the world, some are dogs through wrath, some are moles through avarice, and some are wolves through gluttony, as if saying, with such a one, nothing is healed for according to Psal. [17:26]: “With the holy, you will be holy.”

Again, among these things it is to be known that two render medicine perfect in theory and practice, namely, knowledge and operation. So also to know and to work perfect spiritual medicine, Eccli. 38[:17]: “The doctor shall cure and shall allay their pains.” So does the prelate of the Church, Jer. 8[:22]: “Is there no balm in Galaad? Or is no physician there?” And when there are many who are not cured, not because the physicians are inexperienced or the medicine is ineffective, but because there is an impediment on the part of the sick, Wis. 1[:14]: “There is no poison of destruction in them.” And this happened for seven reasons of which the first is proud presumption, because they only believe about the physician that they do not cure these matters without which there is no health, 2 Paral. 16[:12]: “And Asa fell sick of a most violent pain in his feet,” and it follows, “but rather trusted in the skill of physicians.”

¶ In the exposition there that some thus confide in the antichrist of some saints because they neglect the Lord, Jer. 7[:16]: “Do not pray for this people, for I will not hear you.”

The second cause is frequent impatience which disturbs the heart and head, and heats the blood and anger causes this, Eccli. 28[:3]: “Man to man reserves anger, and he seeks remedy of God?”

¶ The third cause is chronic illness prevailing over the strengths of nature. And sloth cause this, Eccli. 10[:11]: “A long sickness is troublesome to the physician.”

The fourth cause is exterior anxiety inducing numbness and disturbing nature. Avarice does this, Luc. 5[:31]: “They that are whole, need not the physician.”

The fifth is an inordinate appetite which gluttony makes, Lam. 2[:13]: “Great as the sea is your destruction,” that is, abundance, “who shall heal you?”

The sixth is continuous desperation of nature and the continuous tide which is lust, Marc. 5[:25-26]: “And a woman who was under an issue of blood … and had suffered many things from many physicians … and was nothing the better,” but only God is the true physician of souls, [Eccli.] 38[:2]: “For all healing is from God.” If therefore health does not come forth, the impetus can be either from the part of the one healing because perhaps he is ignorant, or from the part of the sick one because he is negligent.

Concerning the first, Luke 4[:23]: “Physician, heal yourself.” Isai. 3[:7]: “I am no healer.”

Concerning the second, Eccli. 10[:11]: “A long sickness is troublesome to the physician” as is evident in Asa the king [2 Paral. 16:12]. That indisposition on the part of the sick impedes a cure is evident in Lam. 2[:13]: “Great as the sea is your destruction: who shall heal you?”

Here two are touched on, the gravity of the punishment when it is said “great” or the difficulty of remedy when it is said “who shall heal.” He calls “destruction” here a breaking dissipation of conserving grace. For there are some so broken that nothing remains whole for them because according to all their parts and potencies flow away. For the senses flow out through the noxious delights. The intellect flows out through the frivolous pursuits and perhaps through the erroneous will it flows away through sordid affections. The exterior members flow out through illicit works, about which “destruction” it is said in the Psal. [13:3]: “Destruction and unhappiness in their ways.”

This destruction, this construction Jeremiah [51:42] compares to the sea on account of the restless fluctuation, on account of the uncertain state, and on account of the multitude of monsters and it follows concerning the difficulty or remedy when it is said [Lam. 2:13]: “Who shall heal you?” he does not refer here to the impossibility but the difficulty of remedy, as if saying, hardly anyone will heal you. For your fault is so old that it hardly admits to a cure. For the process is from thought into love, from love into concession, from consensus into assistance, from works into frequentation, from frequentation into defense, from defense into hardening, from hardening into no cure and desperation.

And then it is fulfilled what is said, [Prov. 18:3]: “The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins, contemns,” namely, the medicine for the fault. This malady cannot be cured except by true contrition and by confession to the priest made according to that of the [Psal. 87:11]: “Shall physicians raise to life, and give praise to you?”

But however in all such things there is a general difficulty of curing. In clerics however and church men there is a spiritual difficulty. Wherefore Chrysostom *Super Mattheum*,[[2]](#endnote-2) the secular man after sin easily returns to penance. In truth the cleric, imbued with scriptures, if once he begins to contemn, he is never incited that he may fear. And it follows there, Who ever saw a cleric quickly do penance? For if caught sometimes he humiliates himself, he does not therefore sorrow because he has sinned, he is disturbed that he has lost glory and reputation. Therefore it is aid concerning certain ones who ought to cure others, Luke 4[:23]: “Physician, heal yourself.” Lest thus the collapse occur through the house and neighbor of God, because according to Gregory, *Moralia* 30,[[3]](#endnote-3) many through gifts received are corrupted in the vice of pride. For the saints in their works ought to consider three things. Lest they do wicked things, lest they omit good things, and lest they swell over good deeds completed. According to Gregory *Super Ezechielem* book 2, homily 7.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Again, “Physician, heal yourself,” [Luke 4:23], lest there be in healing an undue order because according to Augustine, *Super Joannem*, homily 25,[[5]](#endnote-5) if a physician does not know the cause of sickness he does not cure it, although for a time it may seem cured. For with the cause remaining the sickness will be repeated. The cause of sicknesses is pride, Eccli. 10[:15]: “Pride is the beginning of all sin.” Therefore concerning pride and it will not be iniquity, therefore it is said to the teacher, “Physician, heal yourself,” [Luke 4:23], lest there be judging externally, arrogant ostentation, because according to Gregory, *Moralia* 24,[[6]](#endnote-6) such ones seek not to enlighten the listeners, but to show themselves off.

Therefore, “Physician, heal yourself,” [Luke 4:23], lest there be through contrary works the destruction of teaching. For when actions and words are dissonant, they destroy the truth according to the Philosopher in *Ethica*.[[7]](#endnote-7) Because thus it would be one hand building, that is, the word, and the other destroying, that is, the operation. Therefore, we prove ourselves and examine the corners of the hearts, lest there be in us reprehensible things, and thus if they are, we are cured, and if they are not, we take care lest they be there. The wall of the heart is dug up if by chance may be seen “the great abominations” [Ezech. 8[:6]. And because the physician ought to be among the sick in reputation and veneration, in love so that if he may believe, honor and love, and thus more easily can heal. Let him not omit anything about things being held together so that he may guard his reputation.

About which see above, c. [134] Fame (*Fama*).

Medium (*Medium*) see below. fol. [69v], [c. 232].

1. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg*, Compendium theologicae Veritatis* 6.5 (8:204b Medicina vero corporalis quadruplex est, scilicet curativa, conservativa, preservativa, et meliorativa. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 40 ex cap. 21 (PG 56:852): Secularis homo post peccatum facile ad poenitentiam venit; nam occupatus negligentia saeculari, dum Scripturs non satis attendit, semper ei quae in Scripturis posita sunt, nova videntur. … Propterea clericus, qui semper meditatur Scripturas, aut omnino obsrvaturus est, et erit perfectus; aut si semel coeperit illas contemnere, numquam excitatur in ilis, ut timeat. Quis aliquando vidit clericum cito poenitentiam agentem? Sed etsi deprehensus humiliaverit se, non ideo dolet quia peccavit, sed confunditur quia perdidit gloriam suam. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gregory, *Moralia* 33.12.25 (PL 76:688): Nonnulli enim per accepta dona virtutum, per impensam gratiam bonorum operum in superbiae vitium cadunt, sed tamen quo ceciderint, non cognoscunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Gregory, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 1.7.6 (PL 76:843): ne aut prava agant, aut recta quae praecepta sunt non agant, aut bonis actibus expletis, in suis cogitationibus intumescant. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelius Tractatus* 25.16 (PL 35:1604): Medicus quando aegritudinem discutit, si curet quod per aliquam causam factum est, et ipsam causam qua factum est non curet, ad tempus videtur mederi, causa manente morbus repetitur. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Gregory, *Moralia* 24.15.39 (PL 76:309): Sicut enim superius dictum est, non illos appetit erudire, sed se ostendere; [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 10.1 1172a35 (Barnes 2:1853): For arguments about matters concerned with feelings and actions are less reliable than facts: and so when they clash with the facts of perception they are despised, and discredit the truth as well.

Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sententiis*, lib. 4 d. 19 q. 2 a. 2 qc. 2 arg. 6: Praeterea, philosophus dicit in 10 Ethic., quod sermones qui sunt de moribus, cum dissonant his quae videntur secundum sensum in eo qui eos dicit, contemnuntur, et veritatem interimunt. Sed in peccatore qui corripit alterum de peccato, ea quae videntur de ipso ad sensum, dissonant sermonibus. Ergo interimit, inquantum in se est, veritatem. Sed hoc est peccatum. Ergo talis corripiendo peccat. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)