Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

135 Physician two render medicine (*Medicus due reddunt*)

Physician. Two matters render natural medicine perfect, theory and practice, namely, knowledge and operation. So also, for spiritual medicine to know and to work, 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

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of the sick, on account of indisposition, Eccli. 10[:11-12]: “The physician cuts off a brief illness. And a long sickness is troublesome to the physician.” But also, how much of this, perseverance in sickness impedes the cure of the physician as shown 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 and the difficulty of the remedy. The first is there, “Great as the sea is your destruction.” The second is there, “Who shall heal you?” He calls destruction this breaking or 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 frivolous pursuits and perhaps through the erroneous will it flow 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, or breakage 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 of remedy when it is said [Lam. 2:13]: “Who shall heal you?” He does not refer here to the impossibility but the difficulty, that hardly anyone will heal you.

¶ For your fault is so old that it does not admit to a cure. For the process is from thought into love, from love into consensus, from consensus into work, 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 in wisdom, [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. About which says Chrysostom *Super Mattheum*,[[1]](#endnote-1) the secular man after sin easily returns to penance. Not occupied by neglect the secular man while he attends to scripture enough, they always see now things which are put into the scriptures. And when he hears something either about the glory of the saints or of the pains of sins which he hears as if new, he is afraid and reconciled, he hurries to penance. In truth the cleric, as if always attends to scriptures, if once he begins to contemn, he is never incited that he may fear.

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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.

¶ Again note that when health does not come forth, it can be an impediment either on the part of the one healing, or on the part of the infirm, or on the part of the medicine because either the physician is ignorant or the infirm one is negligent or the medicine is incompetent. Concerning the first Luke 4[:23]: “Physician, heal yourself.” Isai. 3[:7]: “I am not a physician.” Concerning the second, Eccli. 10[:11]: “A longer illness worries the physician.” Concerning the third Wis. 1[:14]: “There is no remedy for the banished.” And these matters are noted in Asa the king [2] Paral. 16[:12]: “He put his trust in the aid of the physicians, and he died.”

1. (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-1)