

# THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

Published by the  
Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States.

VOLUME II.



St. Louis:  
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE.  
1898.

## Practical Theology.

### MEDICINA PASTORALIS.

"*I am the Lord that healeth thee,*"<sup>1)</sup> said the God of Israel; and the Psalmist exhorts his soul: "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, . . . who healeth all thy diseases;*"<sup>2)</sup> and the Prophet prays: "*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.*"<sup>3)</sup> Especially was the Messiah foretold as a healer who should *bind up the broken-hearted.*<sup>4)</sup>

But the Lord, who, being himself the Good Shepherd, has appointed others to be *Pastors* under him, to *feed* his flock, *the church of God,*<sup>5)</sup> has also charged his ministers to serve under him as *curates*, healers of the sick and injured in his flock, and among his grievances against the neglectful shepherds are these: "*The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken.*"<sup>6)</sup>

Man is by nature dead in sin.<sup>7)</sup> Conversion or regeneration is the quickening into spiritual life.<sup>8)</sup> But the regenerate are not at once made perfect in holiness of life. Paul, who delights in the law of God after the inward man,<sup>9)</sup> sees another law in his members,<sup>10)</sup> and knows that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing.<sup>11)</sup> The church is in this respect the great hospital of God on earth, in which every inmate is under treatment. Some, or most of the patients are reconvalescents on a fair way of recovery. But in many cases, the welfare and even the life of the Christian is en-

1) Exod. 15, 26.

3) Jer. 17, 14.

5) Eph. 4, 11. Acts 20, 28; cf. Ezek. 34, 2. 3.

6) Ezek. 34, 4.

8) Ibid.

10) Rom. 7, 23.

2) Ps. 103, 2. 3.

4) Is. 61, 1; cf. Luke 4, 18.

7) Eph. 2, 5. Col. 2, 13.

9) Eph. 2, 5. Col. 2, 13.

11) Rom. 7, 22.

11) Rom. 7, 18.

dangered by acute or chronic maladies, by exacerbations and relapses, and unless the proper remedies be applied and take effect, the patient dies and must be laid with the dead.<sup>1)</sup>

Thus viewing the Pastor as a spiritual healer, Pastoral Theology may be fitly considered as *Medicina Pastoralis* under these heads: I. THE PHYSICIAN; II. THE PATIENT; III. THE TREATMENT.

### I. THE PHYSICIAN.

There is a truth in the saying that "physicians are not *made*, but *born*." Medicine is, like theology, a practical habitude, the aptness to ascertain the nature and circumstances of a case, and to determine and apply the proper means for the prevention, palliation, or cure of disease in the given case. The acquisition of this habitude presupposes certain natural qualities and faculties common to all men normally constituted. No amount of training can make a physician of an Orang Outang or a Chimpanzee. But there are certain faculties of a rational being which are of special importance in a medical student or practitioner, and the proper development and training of which constitute an essential part of the physician's preparation for the exercise of his profession. Such talents are the faculties of observation, discrimination, and combination. Again, the most brilliant natural endowments alone will not make a physician. The medical habitude also includes an amount of knowledge and dexterity acquired by study and practice, such as the knowledge of the human body, its organs and their functions, the various abnormalities to which man's physical nature is liable, both organic and functional, and the means, measures, and conditions of treatment such various abnormalities may demand.

Thus also the ability of the spiritual physician will largely depend on his natural endowments. In fact, there

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1) Matt. 18, 17. 1 Cor. 5, 13.

is no calling which affords as many and various opportunities for the exercise of all the mental faculties as that of a Christian Pastor. A ready and tenacious memory, a penetrating and discriminating understanding, promptness and circumspectness of judgment, firmness of will, tenderness and warmth of feeling, the sense of propriety called tact, the faculty of speech, are called out during every day of a busy Pastor's official life, and should be most carefully considered in training young men for the ministry. No boy of inferior talents should be encouraged to enter upon the course of preparation for this office, and those who pursue this course should enjoy the amplest opportunities for the harmonious development of all the faculties. This object alone, aside of the various advantages afforded by a liberal education, suffices to justify the study of languages, history, mathematics, and natural sciences, in our undergraduate colleges, from which the students of our theological seminaries should come with well trained minds to enter upon their special preparation for the pastoral office. Neglect in this respect is of the most deplorable consequence to the church. A minister whose mind is continually out of balance, who is hasty in his judgments, superficial in his investigations, cold and unsympathetic, void of tact, forgetful, slow and stubborn of comprehension—may in many cases do more harm than good.

But the habitude of the spiritual physician also includes knowledge. The Pastor should be thoroughly familiar with human nature, both natural man and regenerate man, both the flesh and the spirit. He should be a habitual student of character, and able to discern the various psychical complexions, to distinguish not only between the bold and the timid, the obstinate and the pliant, but also between the bold and those who are only boisterous, the timid and the cowardly, the obstinate and such as are only slow of understanding, the pliant and the unprincipled. He should also be able to tell a temporary state or condition from the general

disposition of the patient, the effects of his propensities from the influence of his surroundings, his methods from his motives. In all these and many similar instances, to confound the one for the other may lead to a faulty diagnosis of the case and grave mistakes in its treatment.

It would be a grave mistake to suppose that the knowledge of man so needful to the Pastor must be acquired by many years of experience, and that to know the ways of sin he must have walked those ways himself. The Pastor's teacher of Anthropology and spiritual Pathology is the Holy Spirit in Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation we have not only an abundance of doctrinal statements on man's nature, faculties, propensities, general and particular sinfulness and natural impotence for good, but in Job, the Psalms, and all the historical books we have an inexhaustible source of information concerning the human heart and mind, the ways and works of the flesh, the frailties of God's children, the various categories of sin, and the stages and manifold forms of its development from the evil appetite hidden in the heart to the foul or atrocious deed covering a name or a nation with shame for ages. There is a wealth of knowledge and wisdom laid down in the portraiture of such characters as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaak, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Daniel, Peter, John, Judas, Pilate, Paul, Ruth, Esther, Mary, and hundreds of others, drawn from life by a Master before whom nothing is hidden and who is the Spirit of Truth. By assiduously searching the Scriptures in quest of enlightenment on these subjects, the student and the Pastor may secure a breadth and depth of psychological and hamartological information compared with which the experiences of a lifetime would be scanty indeed. We would not be misunderstood to underestimate the value of pastoral experience. Many congregations would enjoy better health if every one of us and more especially some of us were more ready to profit by every day's and year's lessons

of life. There would with growing experience be fewer experiments and more experts in pastoral medicine, fewer faults and failures in its practice. But what we would say and reiterate is that also in this province of Theology we *have a more sure word of prophecy*, whereunto we do well that we take heed,<sup>1)</sup> and whereby the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.<sup>2)</sup> This should be comforting assurance to younger Pastors and their congregations and individual patients, and an incentive to every minister to more extensive and intensive research also in the Old Testament.

But pastoral Medicine has not only its Physiology and Pathology, but also its *Materia Medica*; and with this also the Pastor should be familiar when he enters upon his work. The pastoral pharmacy is again the word of God. It comprises two compartments, that of the *Law*, and that of the *Gospel*. Of these, the former furnishes the mortifying agencies,<sup>3)</sup> the latter, the curative remedies.<sup>4)</sup> The Law can only bring out the disease and make it appear as in a stage of efflorescence,<sup>5)</sup> but it cannot work a cure.<sup>6)</sup> Properly and judiciously administered, it serves its purpose, but only its purpose; its injudicious application works mischief, hypocrisy and pharisaism or despair and recklessness. The utmost it can do aside of its mortifying and exacerbating effects and the conviction of the sinner<sup>7)</sup> is to work as certain palliatives in medicine, keeping down the gross outbreaks of sin,<sup>8)</sup> while leaving the malady itself untouched, and perhaps only turning its ravages in a different direction. The real remedy for sin is the Gospel, the word of our salvation, which is able to save our souls.<sup>9)</sup>

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1) 2 Pet. 1, 19.

2) 2 Tim. 3, 17.

3) Col. 3, 5. 2 Cor. 3, 6. 9. Gal. 3, 21.

4) 2 Cor. 3, 6. Gal. 3, 2. 5.

5) Rom. 7, 7. 13; 3, 20.

6) Gal. 3, 21. Rom. 8, 3.

7) Rom. 3, 19. 20; 7, 7. 13.

8) 1 Tim. 1, 9. 10.

9) Eph. 1, 13. James 1, 21. Rom. 1, 16.

It is a true and the only true panacea, whereby God would heal all our diseases.<sup>1)</sup> In this Gospel-pharmacy God has made provision for all the various forms or types of sin and sinfulness, for spiritual blindness, deafness, dumbness, lameness, drowsiness, for the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, for the evil propensities toward rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying, falsehood and deceit, irreverence and insubordination, theft and dishonesty, for sinful desires, words, and deeds, false doctrine and incorrect practice, sins of commission and sins of omission, the sins of youth, of ripe manhood and womanhood, and of old age, so that there is no sinner in the world who, making application for treatment, would have to be turned away without relief, because there were no remedy for him; no one who must be told: "There is no balm in Gilead for you, and hence your health may not be recovered."<sup>2)</sup> But to administer the Law and the Gospel, each at its proper time and in its proper form and proportion, never and in no wise confounding the two, but rightly dividing the word of truth,<sup>3)</sup> giving to each patient at all times what his case requires, is a task to which no man is equal of himself or without due preparation and training. The curate must, therefore, be well versed in the Scriptures, the Law and its spiritual sense, the Gospel in its various bearings. His memory should be well stocked with *dicta* available for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,<sup>4)</sup> for comfort and assurance.<sup>5)</sup> He must be sound of doctrine<sup>6)</sup> and apt to teach,<sup>7)</sup> not only in the pulpit, but also in his private ministrations.

*Moreover, it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful.*<sup>8)</sup> This is not an intellectual, but an ethical or re-

1) Ps. 103, 3.

3) 2 Tim. 2, 15.

5) Rom. 13, 4.

7) 1 Tim. 3, 2.

2) Jer. 8, 22.

4) 2 Tim. 3, 16.

6) Tit. 1, 9.

8) 1 Cor. 4, 2.

ligious requirement. Faithfulness implies consciousness of duty, of allegiance to a person or cause, or of the sacredness of a trust. A Pastor who works with all diligence, by night and day, in his study and among his people, is not necessarily a faithful Pastor; he may apply all his energies and talents to his task chiefly or solely for the purpose of making his charge numerically, financially, and socially, a success and himself publicly and privately recognized; and this is certainly not faithfulness, but selfishness, which is at the bottom of all faithlessness. To be actuated by selfishness is proper to natural man; pastoral faithfulness is only found in a regenerate man. And while a selfish Pastor may be in several ways highly successful, there is one duty among others of which he will largely make a failure, and that is the care of his patients. He will lack that interest in and concern about the spiritual welfare of the individual soul,<sup>1)</sup> that conscientious sense of the responsibility he bears for every one of his wards,<sup>2)</sup> that fervent love of his Savior and that Savior's sheep and lambs,<sup>3)</sup> that transcendent joy over the one sinner that repenteth,<sup>4)</sup> in short, that faithfulness which will spontaneously prompt him at once to step in where sin threatens to destroy a soul committed to his care, and to do what can be done to save that soul. A faithful physician will fight disease and death until health is restored or life is extinct, and will be careful to verify either event before withdrawing from the case. It is truly touching to witness a medical man whose heart is in his work and with his patient, as he persists in his efforts, though the case be apparently hopeless, the patient sinking and, so to say, slipping away from him inch by inch; to observe the pains he will take to protect and foster and gently fan into flame even the faintest residuary spark of life. The well-known picture of "*the Doctor*" at the couch of a child of poverty, his

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1) Acts 20, 31.

3) John 21, 15—17.

2) Ezek. 33, 7—9.

4) Luke 15, 7. 10.



noble form inclined toward his unconscious little patient, his every thought centering in the object of his care, the attention of his great mind riveted in close observation as he watches the effect of the dose lately administered, while the stricken parents in the background tremble between hope and despair, is a sermon not only to the physician whose office it decorates, but also to the Pastor who may have dropped in to enquire after the physical state of a sick parishioner whose higher interests he has at heart. But we can point to greater examples. Paul was *made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some;*<sup>1)</sup> his *heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved,*<sup>2)</sup> and such was the *great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart in behalf of his brethren, that he could have wished to be accursed from Christ for them.*<sup>3)</sup> Moses said to the Lord, *Oh, this people have sinned a great sin; . . . Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.*<sup>4)</sup> And, behold, a greater than Moses and Paul is here: Jesus, the Savior, was drawn unto sinners, knowing that *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;*<sup>5)</sup> and to indicate his concern for those who have gone astray, he pictures himself as leaving the ninety and nine and giving all his care to the one stray sheep of the flock. He even *Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.*<sup>6)</sup> He has even for Judas, his betrayer, a deep and enduring concern, words of warning and admonition, and even at their last, fatal meeting an utterance, not of harshness and resentment, but of commiserating kindness, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"<sup>7)</sup> Foreseeing the fall of Peter, his denial of his Lord and Master, he prayed for

1) 1 Cor. 9, 20—22.

2) Rom. 10, 1.

3) Rom. 9, 2. 3.

4) Exod. 32, 31. 32.

5) Luke 6, 31; cf. Matt. 9, 12. Mark 2, 17.

6) Matt. 8, 17; cf. Is. 53, 4. 1 Pet. 2, 24.

7) Matt. 26, 50; cf. Matt. 26, 2 ff. Mark 14, 19 ff. John 17, 12.

him that his faith might not fail,<sup>1)</sup> warned him again and again,<sup>2)</sup> turned upon him that yearning look of reproach which was to remind him of those words of warning and loving concern in the very moment of his fall,<sup>3)</sup> and after his resurrection had the herald of his victory charge the women of Galilee with a message to penitent Peter.<sup>4)</sup> Thomas the doubter was cured by the risen Lord, and at the throne of the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous makes intercession, *if any man sin.*<sup>5)</sup> Here, then, we have the supreme, unrivaled model of pastoral faithfulness. Let every minister prayerfully study it, heed it, follow it, imitate it. When the Apostle exhorts all Christians: *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*<sup>6)</sup> Christ's ministers are certainly not excepted, but expressly included.<sup>7)</sup> And when St. Peter says: *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,*<sup>8)</sup> he makes special reference to the self-sacrificing love of Christ, *by whose stripes we were healed,*<sup>9)</sup> and that pastoral fidelity to which we owe it that, having been sheep going astray, *we are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,*<sup>10)</sup> and to which of all Christians the ministers of Christ and of his church should most earnestly strive to conform themselves and all their ways.

And here it appears once more that the Pastor as a spiritual physician, though he should from the beginning of his pastorate be properly qualified and prepared for such work, yet can never be said to have "completed his education." He must, as his years of service in the church are multiplied, continually increase, not only in knowledge by assiduous study and wider and deeper experience, but

1) Luke 22, 32.

2) Matt. 26, 34. Mark 14, 30.

3) Luke 22, 61.

4) Mark 16, 7.

5) 1 John 2, 1. Rom. 8, 34. Heb. 10, 24.

6) Phil. 2, 5.

7) Phil. 1, 1. *To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

8) 1 Pet. 2, 21.

9) 1 Pet. 2, 24.

10) 1 Pet. 2, 25.

also in spiritual wisdom and the virtues and graces of a truly spiritual life under the daily sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. The Pastor should, therefore, lead an eminently spiritual life,<sup>1)</sup> walking before God and with God in true godliness, abounding in fruits of the spirit, not only for his own sake, as every other Christian, but also for his ministry's sake and for the benefit of those whom God has entrusted to his care and keeping. In the Curate, *godliness* is in a peculiar sense and measure *profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come,*<sup>2)</sup> while, on the other hand, every flaw in the minister's inner life and every incorrectness of his conduct may put him at a disadvantage in his pastoral work. St. Paul's words to Timothy should be continually before every faithful minister, as an earnest admonition and a comforting assurance: *Take heed unto THYSELF and unto THE DOCTRINE; CONTINUE in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save THYSELF and them THAT HEAR THEE.*<sup>3)</sup>

But while he is ever mindful and heedful of this admonition, the faithful curate should never forget that the same Apostle says: "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament.*"<sup>4)</sup> The means whereby God would work this sufficiency and make his ministers more and more able are the means of grace, word and sacrament. A Pastor is in some danger of neglecting his own spiritual life in his occupation with the word of God, as in the preparation of his sermons and preparation for his catechizations. His mind may be so taken up with the interests of his hearers that he forgets his own spiritual interests. He may be so busy in dispensing food to others that he will forget to eat for himself. He may, like a physician with a large practice,

1) 1 Tim. 3, 2-7; 4, 12; 6, 11. 2 Tim. 2, 22-25.

2) 1 Tim. 4, 8.

3) 1 Tim. 4, 16.

4) 2 Cor. 3, 5. 6.

be too much occupied with the diseases of others to take care of his own health. This should not be. A Pastor should study every text with a view to his own edification as well as for the benefit of his congregation. It is eminently proper that during synods or conferences a special sermon, known as the "Pastoral sermon," is preached chiefly to the assembled ministers, though in the presence of the congregation, and the benefit of that sermon alone should be sufficient inducement to every Pastor to attend the conference. It is, furthermore, highly proper that every minister should have his stated confessor, a brother in the ministry to whom he may look for pastoral attention to his spiritual wants. The Visitors appointed by our Synods should deem it one of their duties, as they make the rounds of their circuits, to impart to the ministers such spiritual advice as circumstances may demand or recommend, and the ministers on their part should not be backward in seeking such advice. The doctrinal discussions at pastoral conferences should also be turned to advantage for the personal edification of the members, and attendance upon such conferences should be looked upon as a duty and a precious privilege. And there is one more duty and privilege which the Pastor must not neglect. This is *prayer*. A minister should live in daily intercourse with God from whom his sufficiency must come as a free gift of divine goodness. He should begin his daily work in his study with supplication to God for his guidance and blessing, and with a prayerful heart he should go from task to task in the performance of his various duties. Satan and the flesh will assail him; let him meet the enemy with the word of God and with prayer for vigilance and strength and final victory. Jesus not only preached, but also prayed.<sup>1)</sup> Paul not only prayed, by himself and with other ministers of the church,<sup>2)</sup> but also solicited the prayers of the congregation in his behalf, "that utterance might be

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1) Matt. 14, 23. Mark 6, 46. John 17.

2) Phil. 1, 4. al. Acts 20, 36; coll. v. 17.

given unto him, that he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of Christ.''<sup>1)</sup>

Finally, it may not be amiss to add a word or two concerning the physical health of the Pastor in this connection. A healthy body is an inestimable blessing and affords great and various advantages in whatever calling a man may pursue, and the Pastor is no exception. Of course, the performance of pastoral duties does not, except in peculiar cases and emergencies, demand great muscular power. What is of greater importance in a minister's physique are the digestive and the respiratory organs, and, above all, the nervous system. A minister should be a person of great physical endurance, not readily affected by inclemencies of the weather, the influence of climate, loss of sleep, irritating events, the strain involved in protracted mental application and accumulations of business. The demands made upon the physical constitution of a minister of a large congregation, or of a missionary in an extensive territory, are far in excess of what most of our laboring men would be able to endure. It is, therefore, but reasonable that the minister's health should be a matter of concern not only to the minister himself, but also to the congregation. The minister should economize his physical energies, avoid unnecessary exposure and avoidable irregularities of diet and regimen, and not deny himself the necessary rest and recreation. The congregation should see that the minister be provided with an appropriate dwelling and the means of obtaining proper and sufficient food and raiment and the common comforts of civilized life, not only because *the laborer is worthy of his reward,*<sup>2)</sup> but also because the Pastor's physical well-being is a condition of his full measure of usefulness in the spiritual service of the congregation and all its members.

A. G.

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1) Eph. 6, 19. 20.

2) 1 Tim. 5, 18.

(To be continued.)