

13. This then is the first point in what we have said, which it is right for us to guard against: being found to be bad painters of the charms of virtue, and still more, if not, perhaps, models for poor painters, poor models for the people, or barely escaping the proverb, that we undertake to heal others (Luke 4:23) while ourselves are full of sores.

14. In the second place, although a man has kept himself pure from sin, even in a very high degree; I do not know that even this is sufficient for one who is to instruct others in virtue. For he who has received this charge, not only needs to be free from evil, for evil is, in the eyes of most of those under his care, most disgraceful, but also to be eminent in good, according to the command, "*Depart from evil and do good.*" And he must not only wipe out the traces of vice from his soul, but also inscribe better ones. . . He should know no limits in goodness or spiritual progress, and should dwell upon the loss of what is still beyond him, rather than the gain of what he has attained, and consider that which is beneath his feet a step to that which comes next: and not think it a great gain to excel ordinary people, but a loss to fall short of what we ought to be: and to measure his success by the commandment and not by his neighbours, whether they be evil, or to some extent proficient in virtue: and to weigh virtue in no small scales, inasmuch as it is due to the Most High, "*from Whom are all things, and to Whom are all things.*" (Romans 11:35)

15. Nor must he suppose that the same things are suitable to all, just as all have not the same stature, nor are the features of the face, nor the nature of animals, nor the qualities of soil, nor the beauty and size of the stars, in all cases the same: but he must consider base conduct a fault in a private individual, and deserving of chastisement under the hard rule of the law; while in the case of a ruler or leader it is a fault not to attain to the highest possible excellence, and always make progress in goodness, if indeed he is, by his high degree of virtue, to draw his people to an ordinary degree, not by the force of authority, but by the influence of persuasion. For what is involuntary apart from its being the result of oppression, is neither meritorious nor durable. For what is forced, like a plant violently drawn aside by our hands, when set free, returns to what it was before, but that which is the result of choice is both most legitimate and enduring, for it is preserved by the bond of good will. And so our law and our lawgiver enjoin upon us most strictly that we should "*tend the flock not by constraint but willingly.*" (1 Peter 5:2)

16. But granted that a man is free from vice, and has reached the greatest heights of virtue: I do not see what knowledge or power would justify him in venturing upon this office. For the guiding of man, the most variable and manifold of creatures, seems to me in very deed to be the art of arts and science of sciences. Any one may recognize this, by comparing the work of the physician of souls with the treatment of the body; and noticing that, laborious as the latter is, ours is more laborious, and of more consequence, from the nature of its subject matter, the power of its science, and the object of its exercise. The one labours about bodies, and perishable failing matter, which absolutely must be dissolved and undergo its fate, (Genesis 3:19) even if upon this occasion by the aid of art

it can surmount the disturbance within itself, being dissolved by disease or time in submission to the law of nature, since it cannot rise above its own limitations.

21. For these reasons I allege that our office as physicians far exceeds in toilsomeness, and consequently in worth, that which is confined to the body; and further, because the latter is mainly concerned with the surface, and only in a slight degree investigates the causes which are deeply hidden. But the whole of our treatment and exertion is concerned with the hidden man of the heart, (1 Peter 3:4) and our warfare is directed against that adversary and foe within us, who uses ourselves as his weapons against ourselves, and, most fearful of all, hands us over to the death of sin. In opposition then, to these foes we are in need of great and perfect faith, and of still greater co-operation on the part of God, and, as I am persuaded, of no slight countermanceuvring on our own part, which must manifest itself both in word and deed, if ourselves, the most precious possession we have, are to be duly tended and cleansed and made as deserving as possible.

22. To turn however to the ends in view in each of these forms of healing, for this point is still left to be considered, the one preserves, if it already exists, the health and good habit of the flesh, or if absent, recalls it; though it is not yet clear whether or not these will be for the advantage of those who possess them, since their opposites very often confer a greater benefit on those who have them, just as poverty and wealth, renown or disgrace, a low or brilliant position, and all other circumstances, which are naturally indifferent, and do not incline in one direction more than in another, produce a good or bad effect according to the will of, and the manner in which they are used by the persons who experience them. But the scope of our art is to provide the soul with wings, to rescue it from the world and give it to God, and to watch over that which is in His image, (Genesis 1:26) if it abides, to take it by the hand, if it is in danger, or restore it, if ruined, to make Christ to dwell in the heart (Ephesians 3:17) by the Spirit: and, in short, to deify, and bestow heavenly bliss upon, one who belongs to the heavenly host.

23. This is the wish of our schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24) the law, of the prophets who intervened between Christ and the law, of Christ who is the fulfiller and end (Hebrews 12:2) of the spiritual law; of the emptied Godhead, (Philippians 2:7) of the assumed flesh, (Hebrews 2:14) of the novel union between God and man, one consisting of two, and both in one. This is why God was united to the flesh by means of the soul, and natures so separate were knit together by the affinity to each of the element which mediated between them: so all became one for the sake of all, and for the sake of one, our progenitor, the soul because of the soul which was disobedient, the flesh because of the flesh which co-operated with it and shared in its condemnation, Christ, Who was superior to, and beyond the reach of, sin, because of Adam, who became subject to sin.

24. This is why the new was substituted for the old, (Hebrews 8:8-13) why He Who suffered was for suffering recalled to life, why each property of His, Who was above us, was interchanged with each of ours, why the new mystery took place of the dispensation, due to loving kindness which deals with him who fell through disobedience. This is the reason for the generation and the virgin, for the manger and Bethlehem; the generation on behalf of the creation, the virgin on behalf of the woman, (Genesis 2:7) Bethlehem

(Luke 2:7) because of Eden, the manger because of the garden, small and visible things on behalf of great and hidden things. This is why the angels (Luke 2:14) glorified first the heavenly, then the earthly, (1 Corinthians 15:49) why the shepherds saw the glory over the Lamb and the Shepherd, why the star led the Magi to worship and offer gifts, (Matthew 2:9, 11) in order that idolatry might be destroyed. This is why Jesus was baptized, and received testimony from above, and fasted, (Matthew 4:2) and was tempted, and overcame him who had overcome. This is why devils were cast out, (Matthew 10:7-8) and diseases healed, and the mighty preaching was entrusted to, and successfully proclaimed by men of low estate.