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Health Care Unlimited

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Health Care Unlimited

Head physician in charge: God our Father

Staff: All doctors, nurses, health-care workers, ministers, rabbis and priests.

Hours: Staff hours vary, but head physician is always available.

1.

The English words *whole* (meaning well or sound) and *holy* both derive from a single Anglo-Saxon root: *hāl*.

Hal basically suggests perfection; free from wound or injury, or recovered and restored; free of defect; integral, sound.

If applied to spiritual health, we say *holy*. If applied to mental and physical health, we say *whole*.

All the following English words derive from the same root, *hāl*.

1. "I'm feeling *hale* and hearty" (sound and healthy).
2. "*Hail*, fellow!" (an ancient exclamation wishing another health).
3. "A doctor alone *heals* no one" (makes whole).
4. "Our *health* is precious!" (wholeness).
5. "Pass the *wassail* bowl" (the toast was, in Anglo-Saxon, "*Waes Haeil!*" — "Be thou well!").

2.

Those most concerned with *wholeness* we call doctors, nurses, health-care workers.

Those most concerned with *holiness* we call priests, rabbis, ministers.

Both groups are pursuing the same end. Mutual cooperation is most efficient: a "holistic" approach.

3.

Both groups must understand they are mere *instruments* of the Divine Author of life (physical, mental, and spiritual life) and alone, without Him, they can do nothing (John 15:5). But this is their glory (their weakness). *His* power shines forth best in their weakness, as St. Paul knew so well (2 Cor. 12:9). God wishes that all men be *healthy*, whole, sound, saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Then why is there sickness and sin in the world that destroys *wholeness*? Is not the Author of life all-good and all-powerful?

4.

This is the great Mystery of Evil, the Mystery of Sickness in God's creation. It is not a *problem* (to be worked out and solved); like life, love death — all of life — it is a *Mystery*. It demands reverential awe and submission, as Job gave it.

5.

However, there are some things we can say and then be silent and wonder. Let us hold on to this fact first: God created and now sustains at every moment every bit of life, natural and supernatural. As told symbolically in Genesis, *God's exhalation is man's inhalation*. Then and now. For "Adam" and for me, at every moment, in the totality of my life, natural and supernatural. I cannot wiggle my little finger unless He gives me the power.

Nor, spiritually, can I make an act of faith, or even desire to, unless He gives me the power (1 Cor. 12:3 and Phil. 2:13).

If there is moral evil in the world, God must have given His children this power to devastate themselves and His creation. How could a loving Father do this?

6.

The reason He did this is that He *IS* a loving Father. His name is Love. He *IS* Love. He cannot help but love, and all His acts must be acts of Love. Since Loving is His nature, it is no wonder *He values Love above all*. He made many beautiful creatures: birds, fish, trees, sunsets, stars. Beautiful as they were (reflecting Him), they could not LOVE. How could He make a creature like Himself, in His own loving image, that could love Him back? *ONLY IF HE GAVE THAT CREATURE A FREE WILL*. But, if He gave this awesome gift, might not the creature misuse it and hurt himself? Yes, of course. Otherwise he would not be free. Unless the creature could sin he could not love.

And so He gave the gift, free will — the ability to love!

He foresaw the world wars, the agonies, the betrayals — all of the loathsome sickness. Sickness of soul, of mind, of body.

But he foresaw the love of many.

And *He valued that above all*. He values *your* love above all!

7.

According to Genesis, from the first misuse of free will all other physical evils entered the world (cf. Rom. 5:12-21). From the *un-holiness* came all the *un-wholeness* of body and mind.

8.

Because He is patient and loving, He sent one to heal by His power. That was His Son, the Wounded Healer. He healed through the power of the Father and the Son — we call that Power (who also is a person) the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Life, the Power of Love. And He dwells in the soul of every man Who will accept Him, listen to His prescriptions, and act. Although the sickness inherited by all men after the initial misuse of free will was bad, the remedy exceeded the power of the disease. The sickness was human; the remedy divine (Rom. 6:20).

9.

We might say that there is a "spiritual virus" in our systems since that primeval catastrophe when our forebears ate some tainted fruit! Every now and then this virus erupts if our spiritual health gets run down. We need a nutritious *diet* and *exercise* to keep down outbreaks of the poison in our systems. The *food* has to be God's word — from Scripture or from every event of life — and the *exercise* is reflection on and response to God, known in every experience of life.

10.

No one can get rid of this virus. It is now inherent in our human nature. Theologians call its seven varieties the roots of all our evil: the seven "capital sins" (which are not sins at all, but the roots of sin). Even if we are apparently sound and healthy, not committing sins that are overt and obvious, we have this *sinfulness*, this tendency within us. St. Paul refers to it as a "law that goes contrary" to everything he *knows* is right. But knowledge is *not* power as Plato thought. We are crippled in our *systems*. All we can hope to do is keep down major outbreaks. Even if we do, we are always prone to them, all of us.

11.

There is an intimate relationship between these three areas of wholeness: a) the body, b) the mind, c) the soul.

Those who minister to each ought to: a) realize their inability to heal (usually evidence is ample; b) do their best, humanly speaking; and c) rely completely for any results of their labor on the Divine Physician-Priest, God our Father. As with all medicine, the more they can bring their patients to understand the problem, the remedy and mode of procedure, the more the patient can actively participate in the restoral also.

12.

There is this strange and mysterious paradox (owing to God's power): sickness of *Body* and *Mind* can become sources of health for the *soul*. God can make all things work for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). Hence spiritual health is being a loving person. That is all that God requires. Bodily or mental ill-health may be the first steps toward "poverty of spirit," the deep conviction that one is desperately in need of God the Divine Physician. That is the beginning of spiritual *holiness*, despite physical or mental *un-wholeness*. Sickness can be a gift!

13.

On the other hand, sickness of *soul* can adversely affect health of body and mind, as everyone knows.

So, the conclusion of all we have said is:

Hal (health)
was given by our Father once,
but when our forebears lost it and passed on
a kind of "genetic sickness,"
our Father did not remove the virus,
but allowed us all to exercise our free will (daily) —
our God-given gift of being able to love —
in order that,
together with His curative and sanative Power
in us,
we might someday come to Him
whole, sound, *holy*, and happy
and know His joy
forever.

"He revives the spirit and brightens the eyes,
He gives healing, life, and blessing!"

— Eccles. 43:20

— Rev. John Bernbrock, S.J.
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