Perhaps the first necessity in a discussion such as we now undertake is to examine and maybe to defend that respectable but equivocal term "supernatural." The word does not mean "preternatural", "unnatural", "anti-natural" or even "psychic". What does it mean?

The Christian tradition affirms that the life of man is in fact a double life, that it is lived on two levels or in two dimensions. In the third chapter of St. John's Gospel there is recorded a most significant conversation between Christ and an educated, professional man named Nicodemus. The point of the Saviour's remarks is the necessity for man of rebirth, but rebirth to a life from physical life. Man's first birth is from his mother's womb; the second is from above, it comes about through water and the Spirit. Our Lord underlines the distinction between the two births and consequently between the two lives: What is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. In various ways throughout the Gospels, but especially in John, Christ steadily distinguishes between the two levels of existence.

With His first recorded words Jesus sharply contrasts my Father with our Lady's "your father" (referring to St. Joseph). Speaking to the Samaritan woman (John 4) Christ distinguishes between two kinds of water; shortly after, with His disciples, He distinguishes between two kinds of food; in John 6 He distinguishes between two kinds of life, in the same place and elsewhere He distinguishes between temporal life and eternal life.

Taken up and repeatedly urged by St. Paul, as in the fifth chapter of Galatians; this theme of two distinct lives became standard Christian teaching. Natural life is that which we
health is a negligible factor in his life, that man's physical well-being is of no consequence so long as he is spiritually hale and hearty. As is abundantly clear, physical health and spiritual health are so intimately intertwined that one always - somehow acts upon and influences the other. From any point of view, however, it must be acknowledged that physical health is not an absolute. It is a high-conditioned aspect of the human being.

What was the Old Testament attitude toward health? Since, in the Old Testament, notions of an afterlife were extremely foggy, attention centered on well-being in the present life. Health, wealth, family contentment, abundance, security -- all the values that were summed up in the word shalom, peace -- represented the apex of desirability. The firm teaching was that all these blessings are direct gifts of Yahweh, and that they are divinely bestowed upon the god-man, the man who faithfully observed the Law. Old Testament writers struggled helplessly with the evident fact that good men suffered, and the wicked often prospered. Nevertheless, eternal well-being continues to draw admiration and recommendation, and the wisdom books in particular sing the praises of satisfaction in the here and now.

In the 38th chapter of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) we encounter a most interesting discussion of health and the doctor. The passage, with brief comments, as follows:

Honor the doctor with the honor (payment, probably) that is his due in return for his services; for he too has been created by the Lord. Healing itself comes from the Most High, like a gift from a king. The doctor's learning keeps his head high, he is regarded with awe by potentates. The Lord has brought medicines into existence from the earth, and the sensible man will not despise them. Did not a piece of wood once sweeten the water, thus giving proof of its virtue? (A reference to a Mosaic miracle recorded in Exodus 15: 23-25.) He has also given men (doctors) learning, so that they may glory in his mighty works. He uses them (medicines) to heal and to relieve pain, the chemist makes up a mixture from them. Thus there is no end to his (God's) activities, and through him health extends across the world. My son, when you are ill, do not be depressed, but pray to the Lord and he will heal you. Renounce your faults, keep your hands unsoiled, and cleanse your heart from all sin. Offer because a memorial of fine flour, and make as rich an offering as you can afford. Then let the doctor take over -- the Lord created him too -- and do not let him leave you, for you need him. Sometimes success is in their hands, since they in turn will beseech the Lord to grant them the grace to relieve and to heal, that Life may be saved.

The balanced position of this ancient wisdom-writer is remarkable. There is the pronounced supernatural view -- health comes from God, it is connected with virtue, health is an object of prayer -- but there is also the clear counsel to take your medicine and do what the doctor tells you. The learned writer regards the doctor as a fellow sage, and notice his assumption that the doctor too will beseech the Lord, begging the grace to relieve and to heal.
The most common designation of miracle (in the New Testament) is *dynamis*, power... This concept may be summed up in general in these terms: the Incarnation is the entrance of the power of God into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was constituted the Son of God in power (Rom. 1:4); indeed he is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24). His conception occurs when the power of God overthrows Mary (Lk. 1:35). This is not simply a power of working wonders; as the power of God, mysterious, supreme, and subject to no restraint, it breaks out in all directions... This outburst of power first resides in Jesus himself... It is a power to save not only from the evil of sin but also from ills of the body, a power to heal (Lk. 5:17). The power which resides in Jesus is communicated by him to his apostles (Lk. 9:1); and after the ascension the power of the kingdom of God (Mk. 9:1) resides in the Church in which he continues to live. The fullness of the power is communicated to the apostles by the reception of the Spirit at Pentecost... The apostles feel themselves full of the power of Jesus, which enables them to preach, to bear witness to him, to heal. The power exhibits itself also in the charismata which appeared in the primitive Church (1 Cor. 12:10)."

Fr. McKenzie adds: "In the healing miracles Jesus appears as Saviour, the power and will of God to save is not reserved to the preaching of the word and the forgiveness of sins, although these are great and fundamental, but it also operates to remove the consequences of sin, human infirmity and suffering."

Thus enlightened by an eminent Scripture scholar, we may in two ways qualify our impression of Christ's curative wonders. First, our Lord did not heal physical ills simply for the sake of physical well-being, although always be remembered that the sick people thom Jesus cured sub sequently died. Our Saviour's miracles were the manifestation of the power of God as it prevailed over the power and kingdom of evil; a power in the biblical view, sickness and death are among the consequent acts of sin and evil. Second, Christ did not cure all the sick people with whom he came in contact. We assume from the Gospel silence that St. Joseph, our Lord's foster-father, died during the Saviour's lifetime; Christ did nothing to prevent that death. In Acts 3 we read how Peter and John healed a man lame from birth who sat day by day begging, at one of the Temple gates. We cannot of course be certain, but it is possible that Christ had more than once seen that man. Matthew tells us (13:58) that when our Saviour visited his own town of Nazareth He did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

As we have seen, our Lord explicitly (Lk. 9:1) bestowed upon the apostles the power to heal. In Acts 5:16 we read that the people used to bring sick folk into the streets, and lay them down on beds and pallets, in the hope that even the shadow of Peter might fall upon one of them here and there, as he passed by, and so they would be healed of their infirmities. Further, St. Paul includes healing in his list of Christian, pentecostal charisms.

The New Testament word *charismata* (pl. *charisma*), which has now come into surprisingly common use, means, according to Fr. McKenzie, a particular type of spiritual gift which enables its receiver to perform some office or function in the Church." In the 12th chapter of the First Corinthian letter St. Paul twice provides a list of charisms. The two catalogues differ, but each contains nine items, and both include powers or gifts of healing. No details are given, and no instances cited. However, we do read in Acts of Paul's own exercise of the power of healing: in chapter 14 he heals a man crippled from birth; in chapter 28 he cures a case of fever and dysentery and then heals other folk in the island (Malta) who were suffering from infirmities; and in chapter 20 he restores to life a young man who had fallen out a third story window. It is a huge comfort to subsequent Christian preachers that the youth, sitting near the window, had fallen asleep during a Pauline sermon.

Such, in very brief survey, is the biblical story of healing from physical infirmity. What conclusions may we draw with regard to the contemporary problems of the right to health and the proper function of the Catholic physician?

From the religious point of view - as well as from the most pragmatic point of view - the right to health is a limited one. Religiously speaking, the right to health is limited by the mysterious decree of divine Providence. As is evident, there are numerous instances in which God simply does not bestow the blessing of health or does not restore it when it has been damaged. Anyone who wishes may pursue this theme, but he will find the effort no more rewarding than all the philosophers and theologians who have wrestled with the problem of evil from time immemorial. This world, according to one of the Church's theological prayers, is a "valley of tears", and although the declaration does not express the entire truth, it most certainly articulates a basic fact of life. In the amplitude and clarity of eternal bliss we shall not doubt achieve an understanding of God's plan for men, especially as it does not exclude what is most painful, the suffering of the innocent. For now, however, the mystery stands impenetrable. As someone has said, there is very little use in trying to explain a religious mystery in such a way that it will no longer be a mystery.

The right to health is further and most definitely limited by the fact of universal death. Medicine, that noble and most humane science, may and should battle death to a fare-thee-well. Exactly. Sooner or later comes the hour of fare-thee-well.

What the right to health evidently means is that all men, so far as is humanly possible, should have access to the ordinary means to health. Negatively, the principle means that no one should be barred, by reason of race or religion or even poverty, from the normal remedies, care and procedures that maintain or restore health. Positively, the title to physical well-being extends only to the ordinary or generally accepted means to health. It can scarcely be maintained that every cardiac ought to have a heart-transplant. Thus understood, the right of every man to health is real and God-given, and every responsible element in human society must conspire with every other for the actual implementation of that right.

The physician who is also a convinced Christian will consider that he is the inheritor of the Pauline charism of healing. He will regard this authentic gift of God in a double light.
sick is not without its limitations. A
grim sergeant. Second, the administra-
tions, and sometimes, inevitably, his
ministrations will fail. Not only will he
not always defeat death, but he himself
will someday surrender to that
grim sergeant. The insistance of the
individual person stands in
agreement with traditional Christian
teaching. It can be an enlightening
experience to ride (for example) the
crowded New York subway and pass
the time looking about you with some
thoughtfulness. Here are many people,
some old, some young, they are black
and white and brown, they speak in
even dirty, most seem tired,
the time looking about you with some
listening toward eternity as they ride
the real but symbolic subway. God
created each one of these; He loves
each one with an infinite love; for
each, as if alone, Christ laid down His
life; each has an eternal destiny. To
fastidious human eyes these people,
collectively and individually, may not
seem like much; in God's view, each
one of them is precious beyond all
description, and for each one of them
God intends, finally, only what is best.

As often as it has been soundly, the
warning may and must be repeated of
all men, the doctor and the priest must
battle the demon of disillusionment.
As the years pass and the rosy
optimism of youth fades, it becomes perilously easy for the priest and
doctor, whose joint business is the
essential well-being of men, to lose
faith in men. The process may be
subtle, and only half acknowledged.
We all remember the declaration of
one of the characters in the celebrated
Charley Brown comic strip: I love
mankind. I just can't stand people. If,
in addition to cynicism about the
human animal, the Catholic doctor or
the Catholic priest begins to suffer
dissuasionment with regard to his
Church, he will stand, professionally,
in a kind of double jeopardy.

In one word, that one word which
will survive all abuse and misuse, the
doctor, like the priest, must love. The
task is not easy; often it will be carried
out in despite of the most unreason-
able human reluctances. For the
Christian doctor, one most concrete
exercise of that love will be a sustained
effort to see to it that as far as in him
lies, every man's right to health,
properly understood, be implemented,
and to capacity. Therein the grace of
God will not be wanting; and anyone
who believes in Christian charism be-
lies in grace.

A Right To Health—An Epilogue

At the outset, we were committed to raise questions rather than definitively to
answer them. I think that our essays have contributed greatly to that purpose.
More clearly defined are three questions central to the issue of the right to health
care: viz., (1) what is connoted by the term "A Right to Health Care", (2) what is
the legitimacy of the citizens, demand for health care, and, (3) what ought be the
action of the Christian humanist physician?

Professor Buckley, interpreting, analyzing and developing the thought of the
ordinary magisterium of the church makes a strong case for a relative right to
health care. Professor Cohen confirms this thinking from a public health point of
view.

Further light could have been shed on the interpretation of a right to health
care by those in government but unfortunately two of our prospective authors,
for reason of prior commitment were unable to complete their essays in time for
publication. The nature and the extent of the ethical and juridical relationships of
government to the citizen who through no failure of his own has not the means
available to protect his life (nee, health; née, health care) has been left unexplored
in this discussion.

Dr. Griffin comes to grips with the problem from the vista of a practicing
physician and christian. Reading between the lines, one visualizes a struggle in Dr.
Griffin's thinking between an overt, unlimited, Franciscan type contribution to
society and the maintenance of the physician's continued personal identity and
freedom to exercise his profession.

Dr. Leithart recognizes and stresses the rights of the individual physician. He is
concerned to emphasize that the physician too is a citizen whose welfare ought be
equally the concern of the governed and those governing. Implied is that the
physician is a person and not a thing to be utilized simply for the need of the
community, however important that need may be.

The very nature of the service which the physician provides is such that the
physician's right to be sole judge of where, when and how this service is disposed