



In Touch with Jesus: Healing in Mark 5:21–43

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The biblical healing stories often trouble us as much as they tantalize us. The prospect of healing through the power of God or the touch of Jesus holds out promise to all, especially those in immediate distress or danger. Yet, the possibility of miraculous or even what seems to be magical cure seems elusive at best and, at worst, downright alien to much of what we have learned about God and Christian faith.

The two stories combined in Mark 5:21–43 evoke both responses. Who would not, like Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, do anything and go anywhere to bring life to a daughter at or beyond the point of death? Who would not, like the unnamed woman, whose twelve-year hemorrhage threatened her physical health and excluded her from much of religious and public life, do whatever it takes to secure release, even if this required surreptitious and possibly dangerous action?

But is it reasonable or even sane to expect the dead to live? Is Jesus such a source of magical power that merely touching him can bring healing? Both things seem troublesome, even quite impossible, to most twenty-first-century Western readers. What will we make of these claims?

THE MATTER OF TOUCH

We hear much these days about the power of healing touch, and, truth to tell,

Throughout history, medicine and therapy have always invited touch. So do the two healing stories in Mark 5. In the touch of Jesus, those with eyes to see and ears to hear are invited to witness the first glimmerings of the kingdom of God.

those conversations too are filled with both promise and puzzlement. Of course, touch (and these days we have to add, “healthy touch”) is welcome and necessary for humans to thrive, as serious touch deprivation studies make clear. But googling “healing touch” yields a variety of both serious programs of therapy and somewhat zany-sounding claims of contact with “auras” and “biofields” that others debunk as nonsense or worse.

But, throughout history, medicine and therapy have always involved touch, at least prior to the days of publicized abuse and subsequent litigation. Humans seek and require touch, so much so that an abnormal fear of touch is a named disorder (haphophobia, thixophobia) deemed worthy of treatment or therapy.

Both healing stories in our account ascribe to Jesus some kind of healing touch. Jairus begged Jesus to “come and lay your hands on” his daughter, “so that she may be made well, and live” (Mark 5:23); later, upon arrival, Jesus, in fact, “took her by the hand” and raised her up (vv. 41–42). But what is going on here: human compassion, some form of therapy, auras, magic?

In the case of the hemorrhaging woman, magic seems all too possible a designation: “She said, ‘If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well’”—which, indeed, works (vv. 27–29)! What are we to make of this?

Among his models for understanding religious healers, Ronald Kydd includes the “reliquary model,” the ascription of healing to mere contact with relics—body parts or objects associated with designated saints or other especially “holy” people.¹ The notion of healing through relics is alien to most Protestant Christians, as it was for the Reformers who decried its abuse, but we probably need to admit that healing through what seems to be magical touch is not absent from the biblical record. Our story seems to be one such example, as is the account in Mark 6:56, where those who “touch even the fringe of [Jesus’] cloak” are healed; but even more striking (bizarre?) is the claim of Acts 19:11–12 that “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.” One hardly needs a better “proof text” for the use of relics in Christian healing.

Magic? It can certainly seem so to us, and, if nothing else, these texts are a clear reminder that the biblical worldview differs markedly from our own. “Thaumaturgy” (Greek for “wonderworking”)—the notion that saints or magicians can perform miraculous deeds—was common in the ancient world, but does the “faith” in Jesus described in both segments of our text (vv. 34, 36) mean simply that people regarded him as a charismatic miracle worker who “excelled all other thaumaturges”?² As interesting and provocative as that might be, it hardly seems

¹Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Healing through the Centuries: Models for Understanding* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998) 114–140.

²So Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935) 79; see the discussion by David Tiede in *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972) 267–269.

worthy of inventing a Christology and soteriology around such a figure—which, as we will see, begins already in our narrative. Whatever may have been the background of these “tales” (Martin Dibelius’s term for stories like ours in Mark), in their present form they go beyond portraying Jesus only as “miracle worker,” as claimed by Dibelius.

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For Dibelius, the Jesus of these “tales” was precisely not seen “as the herald of the Kingdom of God,”³ but we may need to rethink that assessment. The claims for touch in these New Testament healing stories certainly do resonate with the spirit of the first century and its charismatic healers, but they also seem deliberately to pick up Old Testament healing accounts and relate them to Jesus. Might, for example, the confidence in the efficacy of touching Jesus’ clothes in our text and in Mark 6:56 point back to Mal 4:2 (“the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings”)—those “wings” now related to the “fringe” of Jesus’ cloak—making the story a sign of the breaking in of Malachi’s day of the Lord?⁴ Further, does not the power of Jesus’ touch invoke the memory of Elisha, that miracle worker of old, whose very bones, following his own burial, held power to resurrect another corpse subsequently thrown into his grave (2 Kings 13:20–21).⁵ Malachi points to the day of the Lord and Elisha anticipates resurrection, both keys to understanding our story and its apparent claim that now, in Jesus, a new age has dawned that recovers and goes beyond the power of God demonstrated of old. Jesus felt precisely this divine “power” (δύναμις) go forth from him with the woman’s touch (Mark 5:30)—a “power” first introduced by Mark in this verse, but one that we will see again in coming miraculous deeds (6:2, 5, 14; 9:39); more important, such “power” will be a sign of the coming of the “kingdom of God” (9:1) and the “Son of Man” (13:25–26; see also 12:24; 14:62). Much more is introduced in our narrative than mere magic. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear are invited to witness the first glimmerings of the coming of the kingdom.

³Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 80.

⁴Dale C. Alison Jr. provides convincing arguments for this—both exegetical and from the history of interpretation—in “Healing in the Wings of His Garment: The Synoptics and Malachi 4:2,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hayes*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 132–146.

⁵Many have pointed out that the evangelists view Jesus as something of a new Elijah or Elisha, performing now miracles similar to the ones done by those Old Testament men of God. See, for example, Mark Throntveit’s notes on 2 Kings in Luther Seminary’s online Scripture project, EnterTheBible.org, where Throntveit repeatedly draws parallels between the miracles of Jesus and those of Elijah and Elisha.

DEEPER TOUCH?

Touch, in our idiom, is not only about physical contact but also, and perhaps more profoundly, about personal interaction, emotional sharing, and mutual understanding. We can physically touch without being “in touch,” and one can remain “in touch” across miles or continents. That deeper sense of “touch,” involving words, communication, sharing, and insight, becomes an element of Mark’s healing stories as well.

Both stories involve unexpected twists that take the participants beyond what they anticipated in their initial approach to Jesus. To be sure, Jairus asked that his daughter be “made well” (v. 23), using a big word in the evangelists’ vocabulary: *σώζω*—to save, rescue, and liberate, as well as to heal and preserve. Jairus desires physical healing for his daughter, but he uses a word that signals to the reader that, for Mark, more is at stake: healing as being “saved”—the kind of saving that will come at the cross (Mark 15:30–31; compare John 3:17 and Romans 5:9–10).

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The hemorrhaging woman seeks the same in her own internal deliberation: “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well” (*σώζω*, Mark 5:28). Interestingly, however, she is not “made well”—at least, not directly, in Mark’s story—and that twist is particularly instructive for our understanding of the broader narrative. The woman does touch Jesus, and immediately “she was healed of her disease” (v. 29)—“healed” (*ἰάομαι*), but not “made well” or “saved” (*σώζω*).⁶ Only in conversation with Jesus; only in conversation that is open and honest, telling Jesus the “whole truth” (v. 33); only then, from the mouth of Jesus, is she “made well” (v. 34). This move is important to rescue the story from an interpretation that makes the healing automatic, dependent on physical touch alone (and unknowing physical touch, at that)—an interpretation that allows Jesus to be seen “merely” as miracle worker. “Wellness” or “being saved” comes only in the personal encounter with Jesus that involves words, communication, and promise.⁷

For Jairus, the twist comes not in vocabulary but in result. He asks that his daughter “be made well, and live” (v. 23), which both he and the reader take to mean that she not succumb to her illness. But, perhaps in consequence of Jesus’ tarrying with the hemorrhaging woman (not unlike the accusation of Mary and

⁶*ἰάομαι* is one of the more common words for healing in the New Testament, used only here in Mark, but 26 times elsewhere in the New Testament. Unlike *σώζω*, *ἰάομαι* is never used to describe the healing/saving event of the cross, with the exception of 1 Pet 2:24 (“by his wounds you have been healed”), necessary there because it appears in the LXX version of Isa 53:5, which Peter cites.

⁷This usage occurs also in the parallels to our passage. In both Matt 9:22 and Luke 8:48, only Jesus can or does pronounce the woman “well” (*σώζω*).

Martha at the death of Lazarus in John 11:5–6, 21, 32), we learn that his worst fears have come true: “Your daughter is dead” (Mark 5:35). This gives rise to Jesus’ promise that Jairus need not fear (v. 36) and his command to the girl that she “get up” (ἐγείρω, v. 41)—and immediately she “got up” (ἀνίστημι, v. 42). Both of these Greek words are employed frequently in the New Testament beyond their everyday use to speak of Jesus’ resurrection. The reader is made to understand that this is more than could be expected from a traveling miracle worker. The girl’s resurrection from the dead comes in anticipation of and with the power of the resurrection that is present in Jesus and that finally proves the basis for all his healings. Jesus is not just the best wonder worker in the neighborhood. In him, is the very power of God to create and re-create life—indeed, here, as in Gen 1, through a word: “Talitha cum” (v. 41).

TOUCH AND FAITH

As so often the case in the New Testament, here too faith and healing are related. It is important to acknowledge the connection, but equally important not to try to quantify it or examine it analytically. Faith and healing seem always to be related in the New Testament, but how they relate seems different in almost every case.⁸

Jairus demonstrates his faith in Jesus as healer by coming to him, falling at his feet, and “begging” his assistance. Roles seem reversed here, with the synagogue leader placing himself at the mercy of the itinerant teacher. Jairus clearly believes Jesus can help, and by asking that his daughter be “made well” (“saved”) either he or the narrator is already suggesting that more is possible in this encounter than mere physical healing. As we have seen, the two stories interact. The hemorrhaging woman is pronounced “well” (which Jairus had requested for his daughter), while Jairus’s daughter is given new life and participation in the resurrection. For the woman, Jesus explicitly relates her wellness to her faith (“Your faith has made you well”; v. 34), while Jairus is admonished, “Do not fear, only believe” (v. 36). Believe what? The story does not say directly, but the implications of salvation and resurrection suggest a faith in Jesus as Messiah and savior, bringing the end of Mark’s story back here into its early scenes. This connection is such that some have suggested that Jesus’ proclamation that “your faith has saved you” may be an early baptismal formula, read here back into the healing account.⁹ If this is the case, then the healing stories of both the woman (directly) and Jairus’s daughter (indirectly) are conversion narratives in which the participants become members of the believing community gathered around Jesus.

⁸The impossibility or even absurdity of trying to base healing on sufficient human faith is shown in the next episode in Mark where Jesus’ rejection in his hometown causes him to be “amazed at their unbelief” (6:6). Thus, we learn, that “he could do no deed of power there, *except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them*” (6:5, emphasis added)! Clearly, not human faith but Jesus’ own compassionate power motivates and effects Jesus’ healing.

⁹See the review of this argument by Joel Marcus in *Mark 1–8*, *The Anchor Bible 27* (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 361.

I have argued elsewhere that the same thing happens with the Samaritan leper in Luke 17:11–19, another one of the four people in the Gospels who receive this word of assurance from Jesus (“Your faith has made you well”). The tenth leper’s turn away from his journey to the priests back to Jesus’ feet is also a conversion story, recognizing Jesus now as the source of both healing and saving.¹⁰ In addition to the hemorrhaging woman and the Samaritan leper, the four recipients of Jesus’ words include the woman named a “sinner,” who washes Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:50), and blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42).¹¹ Each of these people is, in some way, an outcast, ritually unclean (the hemorrhaging woman and the leper) or excluded from full participation in public life (the “sinner”) or the temple (the blind man; see Lev 21:16–24). But each is pronounced “well” by Jesus, thus providing not only physical healing but also social and religious “healing” that breaks down the barriers, which exclude them from the community, and more, a healing that ushers them into the kingdom of God.

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In our story, the breaking down of social barriers is seen also in the juxtaposition of Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, and the hemorrhaging woman, who may have been unwelcome in Jairus’s synagogue (opinions are divided about that), as she was in the temple. Graham Twelftree sees the interruption of the journey to Jairus’s home by the story of the unclean woman as a further example of Jesus’ disregard of “the station of Jairus” and the stories’ emphasis instead on “the priority of faith” for both protagonists.¹² The note that the woman “had endured much under many physicians” (v. 26) may do something similar. Rather than disparaging physicians per se (which many commentators find in this verse—unnecessarily, in my opinion), it takes us outside the realm of “respectable” medicine to the margins of society where only miracle workers remain to provide remedies. The woman apparently once had had money to spend on physicians, and presumably a leader of the synagogue could have done the same (as he probably did), but now both are thrown into the hands of Jesus as a “physician” of last resort. Both eventually end up at the feet of Jesus (vv. 22, 33), where finally all are equal. Here, as throughout the New Testament, the healing stories function at the edges of society, among those who know they “have need of a physician” (Mark 2:17), but for whom the

¹⁰Frederick J. Gaiser, “Your Faith Has Made You Well”: Healing and Salvation in Luke 17:12–19,” *Word & World* 16/3 (1996) 291–301.

¹¹Only Luke records all four episodes. Mark includes two: the woman in our passage and Bartimaeus; Matthew has only the parallel passage of the hemorrhaging woman (Matt 9:22).

¹²Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999) 73–74.

normal medical practice of the day was either ineffective or too expensive. These folks turn to Jesus, in whom they are “made well” in ways beyond all expectation.

This is the saving faith to which the formula refers (“Your faith has made you well”)—no longer merely the hopeful longing of the worried father or the desperate reaching out of the unclean woman (though both are present and significant in their own way), but faith in Jesus as he is known already in the Gospel as one who comes to proclaim “the good news of God” and the coming of the kingdom (Mark 1:14–15).¹³

IN TOUCH WITH JESUS

Now that we have read the new age and the coming of the kingdom into these early Markan stories, we might wonder whether they still have anything to do with “everyday” healing—or, indeed, with our healing. It’s a fair question. We are happy to be included in the saving work of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, but what, for us, are the healing dimensions of these stories, if any? Might we rather have simply the miracle worker?

Power and Weakness

Healing, we have seen, comes from being in touch with Jesus. We see in this text that Jesus has healing power, but what is the nature of that power? In some ways, the emphasis in our stories on the healing power of Jesus’ touch, even unknowing touch, is a bit of an embarrassment to the modern reader (Can we believe in magic? Should we?). Nevertheless, the stories do point unhesitatingly to the awe-full power of God and its presence in Jesus of Nazareth—a power (δύναμις), claims Mark, that can be passed on to Jesus’ followers (6:13), who continue to heal in Jesus’ name. As my former colleague Don Juel said so often regarding the tearing of the temple curtain in 15:38, God’s power is now loose in the world, so surprising things might well occur¹⁴—including healings that might surprise.

Still, we do well to remember that the torn curtain happens only with Jesus’ death, which means that Christian healing will properly be understood only in the light of the cross. This, says Graham Twelftree, is one reason for the so-called “messianic secret” in Jesus’ admonition at the end of our passage that “no one should know this” (5:43). It is more than people can or should know at this point in the story, lest they misunderstand Jesus’ miracles as moments of unmitigated glory, unrelated to the Jesus of the cross and resurrection where the meaning of “saving” finally becomes clear.¹⁵

Already in our story, Jesus is “aware that power had gone forth from him” (5:30) at the woman’s touch—that is, the healer does not remain untouched in the

¹³Note that Luke adds the dimension of saving faith also to Jesus’ words to Jairus in the second half of the Jairus narrative: “Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved” (Luke 8:50).

¹⁴See, for example, Donald H. Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 35–36.

¹⁵Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 74.

healing process. More, the confusion of the disciples (v. 31) and the mocking laughter of the crowd (v. 40) may well prefigure the Passion Narrative, drawn back already into this story.¹⁶ The power of God is present in Christ, but the careful reader is made to understand already that in Jesus the power of God has entered the world of human mortality. The world will touch us just as it did Jesus, so any striving after miracle workers and utopian perfection will be out of place. Instead, like Jesus, we embrace this world, giving ourselves to vocation and to the neighbor. And it is precisely through such exercise of human vocation that those of us bound to the realities of earthly life see—primarily at least—the healing power of God in the world and in our own lives.

Still, the power of God in Christ is real. Our narrative, where just the touch of Jesus heals, is something of a mirror image of the earlier story of the transportation of the ark of the covenant, where, as we recall, merely touching that sacred object kills (2 Sam 6:6–7). Power kills; power makes alive—but it is the same power: the power of life and death, the power of God, now present in Christ. For the hemorrhaging woman, that power will at the same time heal her disease and nullify her uncleanness (Lev 12:2, 5): “Instead of uncleanness passing from the woman to Jesus, healing power flows from Jesus to the woman.”¹⁷

the power of God made present in the word of God—the weak and fully human word—is the central promise of the New Testament, present already in our story, and continuing into our own day, with its ongoing work of healing and saving

Real power. In both Old and New Testament accounts, however, that raw power is tempered by word—another way to be “in touch.” The story of the ark is followed quickly by God’s announcement that he will build a “house” for David—the original “messianic” promise (2 Sam 7:8–16). In our story, as we have seen, it is not finally physical (even magical) touch that makes the woman “well,” but only Jesus’ word of assurance.

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Word and Sacrament

But how is word a healing reality? We speak often of receiving the presence of Christ in word and sacrament, but does such “real presence” heal?

Certainly, if the word can create the world in the beginning (Gen 1), it can heal in the present. But how will it do that? For now, let the word of God for us be

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 130.

this passage itself. What does it do to us as we hear it? Each can answer that question for herself, but many will find, in its promise of God’s power in Christ and its surprising ability to draw Jesus’ cross and resurrection into the present, a word that changes reality as we know it, that transforms everything, that makes us see all things new—surely, a healing power, even if it cannot be quantified and measured.¹⁸

Others might focus on the stories’ emphasis on the breaking down of barriers between clean and unclean, between men and women, between the privileged (Jairus) and the marginalized (the woman), finding in that a kind of healing freedom for themselves and an impetus to work similarly for the breaking of barriers in our own society, to practice the kingdom into which Jesus calls the woman and the child, to be strengthened for their own acts of mercy and healing. The impoverishing cost of medical care for the woman in our story might encourage some to work for equitable and affordable health care now—and to do so in the name of Christ.

The sacraments, on the other hand, can serve as quintessential examples of the connection between touch and promise. Both Jairus and the woman sought Jesus’ touch, believing that it could heal and save (make “well”). Jesus gives this and more, including also his word of hope and promise. These, as we know, are precisely what we receive in the sacraments: the touch of water and hands received in baptism, the touch and taste of bread and wine received in communion—both combined with the word of promise that brings forgiveness, healing, and salvation.

Do the sacraments “heal” in anything like an everyday sense? The church has long considered this, including the early designation by St. Ignatius of the Lord’s Supper as the “medicine of immortality, the antidote preventing death, but leading to life in Jesus Christ forever.”¹⁹

Luther, too, ascribed a this-worldly benefit to the sacraments, saying, for example, with regard to communion:

But those who feel their weakness, who are anxious to be rid of it and desire help, should regard and use the sacrament [of the altar] as a precious antidote against the poison in their systems. For here in the sacrament you are to receive from Christ’s lips the forgiveness of sins, which contains and brings with it God’s grace and Spirit with all his gifts, protection, defense, and power against death, the devil and every trouble.²⁰

The connection between the healing of the body and the saving of the soul is difficult to ascertain but impossible to deny, given all we know now about the unity

¹⁸It is important to note that all of the many studies now that attempt to verify and measure the healing power of faith and religion do not and cannot “measure” the value—and certainly not the truth—of Christian faith in particular. They do not claim to do that, but rather to assess the healing dimensions that come through faith, religion, and ritual as human exercises. Our concern here is different, to appreciate and proclaim the transforming power of the word of God as a gift that comes from outside ourselves. This will always be received through faith, not proved by scientific studies (be those ever so valuable to measure other things).

¹⁹Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians* 20:2; translation in William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 95.

²⁰Martin Luther, *Large Catechism* 5:70, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 474.

of what we call body and soul, or mind and body, and all we know about God's concern for the whole person and the whole world. God has entered our world, and surprise is possible. Still, like the relation between healing and faith, the connection between healing and saving will be impossible to calculate, difficult to prove, and will never guarantee a fair or pain-free life to the believer.

PRAYER AND POSSIBILITY

Prayer plays an important role in our story, as it continues to do for all who seek healing in the midst of distress. Jairus prays his own version of "Come, Lord Jesus..." (v. 23), imploring Jesus' help. The woman enacts her prayer, coming to Jesus rather than asking him to come to her. Both prayers begin a healing conversation with Jesus—and in both cases the outcome is different from what the pray-er requested and anticipated. This, too, can be instructive for us.

healing in the light of Christ is not to be untouched by pain and suffering, but to participate in Christ's own "greater love," giving ourselves for others and sharing their suffering in response to Christ who bore the suffering and the diseases of all

Believers who are in distress rightly pray expectantly for God's deliverance and healing—expectantly, because we are assured that God wills good for us (Mark 1:32–34; Luke 12:32; John 10:10). Still, pray-ers might be surprised, as were the characters in our story—either positively, receiving more than we could have thought to ask for, or negatively (in an initial estimation), being given not the cure we desire but a different kind of healing that brings peace and blessing even in the midst of illness. Healing in the light of Christ, which we see foreshadowed already here in Mark's narrative, is not to be untouched by pain and suffering, but to participate in Christ's own "greater love" (John 15:13), giving ourselves for others and sharing their suffering in response to Christ who bore the suffering and the diseases of all (Matt 8:17).

As Matthew Skinner notes, it is not the case that, in Mark's Gospel, "Jesus carries out two *separate* messianic ministries (one of healing and power followed by one of suffering and defeat). The paradoxical yoking of Jesus' acts of powerful liberation and his self-giving powerlessness invite us to consider the way of the cross as a logical conclusion or necessary consequence of a life lived in commitment to the kingdom of God."²¹

We can, in closing, turn to a prayer from the seventh-century Mozarabic Office for the Sick that calls Christ both doctor and medicine—the doctor who has

²¹Matthew L. Skinner, "Denying Self, Bearing a Cross, and Following Jesus: Unpacking the Imperatives of Mark 8:34," *Word & World* 23/3 (2003) 323. Skinner finds this "yoking" to begin in the transition passage Mark 8:27–38.

been given power to “heal the diseases of body and soul,” but also God’s own medicine, given to humankind to “cure us” and bring us into “heaven’s kingdom.”

Christ, medicine of the heavenly Father
and truest doctor of the human family’s health,
to the humble prayer of thy provident people
in thy power grant favor.²² ⊕

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²²Cited in Charles W. Gusmer, *And You Visited Me: Sacramental Ministry to the Sick and the Dying*, rev. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) xvi.