

Man, the Best and Most Perfect of God's Creatures

A More Complete Exposition of this Medical Foundation for the Less Experienced Student.

Aristotle says that every form of every nature, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is produced by the power of matter, intrinsically, except the Human Soul, which, being of a different and higher nature than matter, is given, extrinsically, by the Prime Motor, God Himself. It is this thing concerning which, all theologians and physicians disputing, nevertheless mostly conclude the Soul of man to be not produced from a germ, but, as it were, to be inspired and poured into the foetus in its mother's womb, by God the Author of all life.

But, since two different things cannot be mixed or joined into one, and the Soul being a certain Divine light and substance, emanating immortal from Divine springs, so produced, incorporeally, that it is dependent on the virtue of the Agent, not on the bosom of matter, the same is a *primum mobile*, and, as they say, spontaneous and self-moving: And, on the other hand, the Body is wholly earthly matter, having its origin in gross, rank. Elementary matter, mortal of itself, unfit for motion, and therefore far inferior to the Soul; wherefore it can never be united to the Soul, so different from itself, except through a third, a medium participating in the nature of each, a quasi-body and quasi-soul, by which the Soul may be added and joined to the Body.

But such medium they suppose to be the Spirit or Soul of the World, i.e., what we call Fifth Essence, because it consists not of the four elements, but is a certain fifth one, above and beside them. Such Spirit necessarily requires, as it were, a binding chain, whereby Celestial Souls may bestow on grosser bodies strength and wondrous gifts; as also God and Man cannot be united except through a Medium, our Savior Christ, participating in the two natures, Celestial and Terrestrial, Divine and Human. But this spirit is of the same form in the greater world as in the lesser, i.e., the human body, our spirit, which arises from the former, and is with it one and the same spirit.

For, as the forces of our soul are through the natural spirit applied to the members, so is the virtue of the World's soul diffused through all things by the same spirit, or fifth essence. For the life and forces of all inferior species, which philosophers are wont to call souls or lives, are distributed by that ethereal or celestial spirit throughout all the elements, as it were, by the members, into the body of the Universal World, first by God Himself, then by intelligent beings, then by the stars, and lastly by the Sun, as it were the Heart of Heaven. And again, this Spirit being taken away, bodies return to that whence they came; and thus the Human Soul, according to the Platonic School, proceeding from Highest Heaven, from God Himself, is, by proper media, joined to our viler body. In that first descent, also, the soul is enfolded in the ethereal and ardent corpuscle which they call the ethereal vehicle of the Soul, while we name it the Spirit of the World and Fifth Essence. Through this medium, by command of God, Who is the Centre of the greater world, the Soul descends and is poured into the heart, which is the center of the lesser world (i.e., the human body), and from thence is diffused through all the parts and members of its body, when, joining its vehicle (or chariot) to natural heat, through the spiritual heat born in the heart, the Soul is immersed in the blood, and by it equally diffused in the members. Thus it is patent how the Immortal Soul is enclosed in this viler body, viz., by means of the ethereal vehicle. But when the bonds between the Celestial Soul and natural vital spirit are loosened by disease, then the Soul, withdrawing from the members, flows back to the heart, the first receptacle of Soul and Life. From the heart, the Soul, leaving the vital natural spirit, flies away with

its vehicle into the Heavens, when, being followed by guardian genii and demons, they lead it before the Judge. Then, according to the Sentence, God joyfully conducts the good souls to glory, but a raging demon snatches away the bad to punishment. And the Body returns to the earth whence it came. Thus man dies. Hence it is plain that the daily preserving of the Soul in the body --- that is, our life --- and the avoiding of diseases, and that the greatest dissolution of Soul and Body, called death, depend on the vehicle of the Soul, viz., the Celestial and our natural Spirit, and so the same has been by various authors called by different names. Some term it Spirit or Soul of the World, others Celestial Fire, others again Vital Spirit, Natural Heat, by which nothing else is denoted than that oft mentioned Spirit of things celestial and inferior, the gluten of Body and Soul. On examining the thing more fully, this is simply the heat and humour of Sun and Moon, for we know the administration of the Heavens and all bodies under the Heavens to be appointed to the Sun and Moon; the Sun is the Lord of all virtues of the elements; the Moon, by virtue of the Sun, the mistress of generation, of increase and decrease. Hence Albumansar says that life is poured into all things through the Moon and Sun; and therefore they are called by Orpheus the vivifying eyes of Heaven. Whence also the saying --- the Sun and man generate man; for the Sun sits as a King among the planets, in magnitude, beauty, and light excelling all, illuminating all, dispensing virtue to them as well as to inferior things, and abundantly bestowing light and life, not only in Heaven and the Air, but also in the earth and profoundest depths of the Abyss. Whatever good we possess is from the Sun whence Heraclitus deservedly calls it the Fount of Heavenly Light, and many of the Platonic School have located the World's Soul principally therein, which Soul, filling the Sun's whole globe, pours its rays (or spirit) everywhere, throughout all things, distributing Life, Sense, and Motion to the Universe itself. And as in animate beings the heart rules the whole body, so does the Sun rule and govern Heaven and Earth and all that in them is. But the Moon, the Earth's nearest neighbor, by the velocity of its monthly course, is joined to the Sun and other planets, and receiving their rays and influences as in an espousal, and, as it were, bringing forth, communicates to and shed upon its near neighbor, the earth, all life and motion.

From these two founts arises that mundane, natural, and vital spirit, permeating all entities, giving to all things life and consistence, binding, moving, and filling all things, Immense Renewer in Nature's charge, through whom, as a mediator, every hidden property, every virtue, all life, are propagated in inferior bodies, in herbs, in metals, in stones, in things inanimate, so that, in the whole world, there is nothing wanting in a spark of this spirit. For it is in all things, penetrating through all; it is diffused in stones (being struck from the same by steel); it is in the water (which smokes in ditches); and in the earth (which heats springs and wells). It is in the depths of the sea (becoming warm when agitated by the wind), and in the air (which we often perceive to grow hot); also all animals and all things living are nourished by heat, and all sentient beings do live by reason of their latent heat. Whence Virgil says this inward principle nourishes heaven and earth, the sunlit plains, the glowing orb of the Moon, and the Tithonian Stars. The same is elsewhere called: That Vigour and Celestial Origin. Therefore this spirit, when whole and undiminished in our bodies, and not impeded by things extraneous, is our natural heat, by which everything is digested for the sustenance and multiplying of individuals.

For it digests man's food, generating good blood in all his members. Now, with pure blood there is a strong, pure, and healthy vital spirit of the heart, and thus the whole body is healthy. But if, by some impediment, it does its office less fully, there arises bad decoction of nutriment, whence generation of impure blood. By this the heart's vital spirit is weakened, whence arises old age and, at length, full extinction, consumption, and dissipation of that spirit, which is natural death. Therefore, to avoid this, the said spirit and natural heat, thus diminished, or impeded, must be increased and comforted that it may better and more strongly perform its functions. But as agents act not with inferiors but with equals, so also must

this comforting take place through the spirit's equal, viz., through the celestial heat of Sun and Moon and other planets, or with those things in which the virtue of Sun and Moon are most potent, abundant, and least bound up with matter. For these things act more quickly and effectually; they generate their like more promptly, and from them is more easily obtained that Spirit or Celestial Fire whose properties are heat, not consuming like the elementary, but fructifying all things; and light, bestowing life on all things. But the properties of elementary and inferior fire are burning, consuming all things, and filling them with barrenness and darkness. Therefore is the same excluded, as also all other inferior and elementary subjects. For all these things of natural composition, and not freed from grosser matter, are subject to corruption and transmutation. Now, medicines ought, all the more, to be durable and free from corruption, since they are to cure the human body from corruption; otherwise they would do more harm than good. I add that it would be vain to preserve the corruptible body by a putrid and corruptible thing, or to attempt to heal an infirm nature with a thing inform, or yet to fashion a thing by deformity. For the corruptible, inform, and weak added to its like increases the corruptibility and does not diminish it. Thus we see many, and even most, of the physicians of our time in vain attempt to heal, and secure immunity from disease, by means of the crass and corporeal compositions of their medicaments. But this speculation goes farther. For all diseases which are spiritual, not corporeal, also demand spiritual medicines. Therefore, to those wishing to preserve that vital spirit in the young (which is the humid and warm radical), to restore the lost powers in old men and to bring them back, as it were, to youth, and to educe to their highest perfection the powers of man's life, I would say that such will do well to seek, not the Elemental, but that Celestial heat of the Sun and Moon, dwelling in a more incorruptible substance, under the Moon's intermittent orb, and to make this similar to our heat or spirit; so that, prepared as medicine and sweet food, when taken into the mouth it may immediately penetrate the human frame, greatly holding to itself every fleshly thing, increasing, restoring, and nourishing the incorrupt virtue and spirit of life, digesting the crude and undigested, removing the superfluous, making natural water abound, and augmenting, comforting, and inflaming natural heat or fire.

The above will be the duty of the true physician and sane philosopher. For thus will he be able to preserve our body from corruption, to retard old age, retain florid youth in full vigour, and, if possible, to perpetuate it, at least to preserve it from death and destruction. But here we speak of natural death philosophically, which is only a natural consumption of moisture and heat, as is demonstrated by a lighted lamp; not theologically, of that fatal death and last end of Nature destined by God for each one, by which we are compelled not only to pay our debts, but also, by reason of our sins, to suffer punishment. For we know that, for his sins, man must once die, Job saying: "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee; Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass", --- which text plainly sets forth that these bounds, once constituted by God, cannot be passed by human aid or skill; for which cause also Adam was driven forth from the paradise of Joy, lest, after the Fall, he should become equally as immortal as before by eating of the Tree of Life. Neither is it credible that, outside Paradise, God should have given Adam anything whereby he and his descendants might live for ever, when by the very expulsion he forthwith deprived Adam of access to the Tree of Life. Therefore no aid can be found, still less invented, beyond those last bounds set us by God. On the other hand, there is a remedy against many infirmities, and against the weakening of radical moisture and innate heat.

For Adam, created by God full of understanding and perfect knowledge of natural things, doubtless knew those which were capable of prolonging human life and securing immunity from disease. Doubtless he also taught the same to some of his descendants, and they again to others. Hence many of the fathers lived to the age of 700, 800, and more years; but some did not live so long, this secret not being revealed to all.

Therefore it is conceded that (on this side of that limit of death) there may be found something to restore our sick body. For just as man, through disease and other causes, often fails to reach to the appointed limit of life, so, on the other hand, by removing these impediments, he may prolong life to the very utmost limit set him.

But some may affirm that such a medicine cannot be found in the whole sphere of this nether world, because all things created, being either elements or composed and congenial with them, are therefore corruptible, and hence that this medicine and incorruptible root of life can nowhere be found. Those speaking thus learnedly, without having ever entered the Sanctuary of Nature, fail to consider there is in the elements something besides corruptible qualities. For the elements and their compounds, in addition to crass matter, are composed of a subtle substance, or intrinsic radical humidity, diffused through the elemental parts, simple and wholly incorruptible, long preserving the things themselves in vigor, and called the Spirit of the World, the one certain life, filling and fathoming all things, so that from the three genera of creatures, Intellectual, Celestial, and Corruptible, there is formed the one Machine of the whole world.

This Spirit by its virtue fecundates all subjects natural and artificial, pouring into them those hidden properties which we have been wont to call the Fifth Essence. We do not say that Medicine is quite as incorruptible as Heaven (or I could not in the stomach be converted into nutriment), but being generated from matter above all others and incorruptible with respect to them, and simply formed by the separation therefrom of all corruptible elements, it could be kept, if necessary, 10,000 years.

For this cause skillful physicians advise us to use less incorruptible (indigestible?) food. This thing has the same bearing with respect to the four qualities of our Body as Heaven has with respect to the four elements. For Heaven is called by philosophers the Fifth Essence with respect to the four elements, because Heaven is in itself incorruptible, immutable, not receiving foreign impressions, unless acting on the elements by God's command.

Thus the whole thing we seek is, in relation to the four qualities of our body, a Fifth Essence, incorruptible in itself, made by art. It is not hot and dry like fire, for it cools hot things, diminishing and expelling fevers; nor does it cool humid things like water, for it burns, which is repugnant to the element water. Nor, again, does it moisten hot things, like air, for it corrupts not like air, which is easily decomposed, as we see in the generation of spiders and flies; nor is it cold and dry like the earth, for it sharpens and warms. But it supplies to each a contrary quality, like unto the incorruptible Heaven, which, according to necessity, furnishes the hot, cold, moist, or dry quality, and just as Supreme Heaven does not by itself alone preserve the world, but through the virtue of the Sun, Moon, and other Stars, so also does this our Heaven, or Fifth Essence, wish and deserve to be adorned by a splendid, wondrous, and occult Sun, from which it has incorruptibility, virtue and heat.

But this is the root of life, i.e., the Fifth Essence, created by the Almighty for the preservation of the four qualities of the human body, even as Heaven is for the preservation of the Universe. Therefore in this Fifth Essence and Spiritual Medicine, which is of Nature and the Heat of Heaven, and not of a mortal or corrupt quality, is indeed possible the Fount of Medicine, the preservation of life, the restoration of health, and in this may the cherished desire for the renewal of lost youth and serene health be found. For, briefly, in the whole world there is no better medicine than this. Even as in every genus there is something holding the first rank in that genus, so also this medicine, being prepared from the most efficacious and incorruptible matter under Heaven, viz., from the Soul and Spirit of the World, containing within itself the virtues of all

things celestial and terrestrial, will hold first rank among medicines, and man, by using the same, together with other food, in moderation, may attain to the age of the Patriarchs. For of this composition, combining as it does the virtues of all things, there may truly be said that in one drop the whole world is present. It is this most famous medicine which philosophers have been wont to call their Stone, or Powder. This is its fount and fundament, and the Medicine whereby Aesculapius raised the dead. This is the herb by which Medea restored Jason to life. This is the secret substance brought from Colchis by the Argonauts under Jason with so much journeying and pains, and hence called the Golden Fleece; partly because this Science excels in virtue all others, as the Sun does the stars and gold the other metals; and partly because that Fleece was a Book written with golden letters (according to the testimony of Suidas, Historiographer of the Chemical and Medical Arts) and containing a full account of the preparation of the Medicine. For in that Book is the first material for the creation, restoration, and preservation of our most true Medicine.

Chemistry can be easily understood by the intelligent, and chemistry, i.e., altering metals, may properly be including in the teaching of the theory of the True Medicine aforesaid, both flowing from the same fount, namely, the World's Soul, which, being as it were, the only life of things, and the author of generation, will contain within itself the seeds of all inferior natures.

In harmonious order it rules, vivifies, and fecundates. But, for younger disciples, it has pleased us to describe somewhat more fully the principles of chemistry, which each one may easily prove for himself. For, when he has considered the matter, he will perceive that God would be compelled, perpetually and each moment, to create new creatures, lest the species of all things in that beautiful house, the universal world, should perish entirely, had He not, when breathing the breath of life into man and all other beings, at the same time given them the command: "Increase and multiply in the earth". By which breath and command He imparted unto them not only natural life, or a living soul, but also the power, which may be called the generative spirit, whereby every genus may preserve and perpetuate its race eternally. For everything which may generate is necessarily alive, as, on the other hand, that having life, unless prevented, will generate. Therefore, at the Creation the generative spirit began the order of continuous production which shall only cease with the world. Hence God commanded Noah to build so great an Ark that it might receive and save from destruction some of each species and both sexes, which, after the Deluge, should again propagate their kind.

And everyone attentively observing the universal world will doubtless perceive this perpetual order of generation everywhere, not only in these crass, inferior, elementated bodies, but also in the simple celestial bodies and in the elements themselves. Elements generate their own kind, as we are taught by the infallible rule of daily experience. A fire converts the matter it consumes into its own nature, viz., fire, thereby augmenting itself. Air does likewise, easily corrupting things and dissolving them into air like itself. Earth, foul and dissolved, becomes water; the latter through heat made gross and dense, becomes earth; but evaporated by heat, is changed into air, and this again, by overheating, into fire. Fire, when extinguished, returns to air, cooled air becomes water, and that again, by coagulation, earth. But the natural order of generation is more plainly perceived among inferior and composite bodies, which philosophers have divided into the three orders: Animals, Vegetables, Minerals. For these have their own seed, implanted by Nature herself, by which they manifestly and visibly produce similar fetuses, thus augmenting their kind by propagation, From horse, man, bull, are respectively generated horse, man, and bull. Likewise all vegetables, herbs, trees, shrubs, cast their own seeds on to the ground, which, in course of time, produce species similar to themselves. Indeed, the minerals and metals lying hid in the very center of the earth have also undergone the same changes, although their seed and generations are not visibly shown, as in the

preceding orders --- for, by reason of the great mass of the earth concealing the hidden, contained seed, the same is by many believed neither to grow nor to generate.

But the attentive observer of Nature, its origin, increase, and incrementation, will certainly not dispute its possession of vital spirit and generative power, by which it not only originates and has nutriment, life, and consistence, but also must be admitted to possess the power of generating its kind. For everything increasing, originating, growing, and receiving nourishment has vegetative life, hence propagating power. And the reason of the generation of minerals being so patent to the eye as that of vegetables and animals, is the earth's great and abundant fecundity, its vast mass, by which that spirit is restrained and impeded as in a prison and chains, by which it can less perform its functions and generate its kind. The same when freed by art from its terrestrial house and sepulcher, doubtless, like others, sharers of generative virtue, will be able to bring forth fruit by its seed, and thus metal will produce metal and gold generate gold.

From this it is manifest that the generation of metals, and especially of gold, is not only permitted by God, and possible to Nature, but also to human art. Consequently the Art of Chemistry is not fictitious, not detestable, not base, as today it is falsely called by many, but true, admirable, holy, and well proven. For by natural means seeding out the invisible, impalpable, generative spirit, elsewhere called the Seed of Metals, it so treats the same that it bears fruit similar to itself, etc. Therefore, many philosophers, moved by this argument, have sought that golden seed in gold itself; and having found what they wished, have cut out, or extracted, the same from a mass of gold. As it were, from the stones placed by Nature about it, which, being thus separated, and afterwards applied by them to anything of a similar nature --- i.e., any metal --- has immediately changed the same into gold and silver. Hence they have proved by experiment that gold can generate its like, but have thereby gained no lucre or emolument. For this spirit, or seed, of gold, when mixed with any of the other metals, can convert into gold only a quantity equal to the gold whence the seed was extracted, and not more. Hence the process was a tedious and most difficult one, requiring much time and a large outlay. That, therefore, this generation and manufacture of gold might be carried on more easily and abundantly, with less expense and yet more profit and utility, the Ancient Sages were compelled to relinquish common gold, and, with the spirit of which we in this place treat, viz., the generating spirit of all creatures, were forced to seek a method of making gold elsewhere; in respect of which they spared neither labour, nor time, nor expense, and at length arrived at one thing in which all their wishes were fulfilled, for they obtained a nature, or body, or certain compound, in which the metallic, gold-producing spirit was unlimited and unstrained, not limited in quantity proportionate to the matter, but so intense, exuberant, possessing more of form (essence) than of matter, that, by artificial fire, it may be reduced to its greatest purity, and may be so treated, diffused, extended, and multiplied that, after completion, it is a thousand thousand times stronger than bodies naturally perfect, i.e., gold and silver. --- For the more form a thing has, the more entity, virtue, and operation it has. Those things in which the idea (which is the form) is least merged into the body, or matter, have the most potent virtues, because being the most formal (spiritual), they can with very little matter effect very much. This matter thus formed and taken possession of by all sons of this science, lest it should become known to the unworthy, and equally that it might be known by the worthy, we read of as described by the sages in divers enigmatical ways only to be understood by the initiated. The following are some of the principal circumlocutions designed indirectly to make known this great secret: What is the strongest creature in the whole world, the most conservative, most penetrative, most volatile, the most unalterable and fixed in fire? The thing that fire has not touched is accessible and known to all men, of much superfluity, to be found everywhere, and by all. It is a part of man, begets and is begotten by man, is heavy in weight, soft (or at least not hard) to the touch, not rough, sweet to the taste but of a sharp nature, sweet to the smell but at the same time having a fetid and sepulchral odour, pleasant to

sight and hearing, yet of obtuse sound, not the less fire for being almost wholly earth, nor yet simply water, neither very acute nor obtuse but mediocre in quality, revealed by reflection, various in colour, white, black, and last red, most easily fusible, and also of metallic fusion, without much sound, in action animal, vegetable, and mineral. It is a thing which the earth produces and which descends from Heaven, both active and passive, masculine and feminine, consisting of Soul, Spirit, and Body.

It is the one subject of everything wonderful in Heaven and Earth, without which neither Alchemy, Medicine, nor Natural Magic can exhibit their complete aim. It is also the first and last, greatest of all creatures, by most commonly called red, or Adamic Earth. From these and similar attributes, or circumstances, and in no other way, may this matter be known and prepared by a proper, natural method, at length excelling in that naturally desired by all, and pursued by all with great eagerness, viz., daily and healthy life, without all infirmity, until natural death. And it will further afford gold, silver, pearls, gems, and such precious things, as well as all that is necessary to the honest sustenance of life, abundantly and affluently. Thus the object of Chemistry is identical with that of Medicine, the same Spirit, same Heat, same Quintessence, the same Soul, Medium of Nature, which permits one thing to be converted into another; finally there are the same uses, rewards, and emoluments for the disciples of either science who shall have known how to separate this Quintessence from its defilements and impurities, and to reduce it to pure simplicity. For he who shall have been able, from its impure and manifold elements, to convert it to purity and simplicity, discerning the nature, virtue and power of these elements in their number, degrees and order, without division of substance, the same is truly a Physician, natural Magus, and consummate Philosopher. For by the same heat of Sun and Moon, the same Spirit of the World, by which human bodies are healed from infirmities and accidents, he can restore imperfect or impure metals to True Health --- which is Conversion into Gold --- and thus he will have thoroughly discovered the whole virtue of Nature's occult operations, and will easily obtain a perfect knowledge and grasp of all natural and celestial secrets. On the other hand --- if ignorant of all these things --- he can attain to no knowledge of such wonderful agencies.

Hence it is plain that this art, and most secret of Nature's secrets is in vain attempted and sought by those who daily join themselves to princes and magnates, and immediately attempt Hermes' Stone, the Sacred Stone, Philosophers' mercury, all kinds of furnaces and burnings, strong waters, King of Antimony, perpetual fire, and many more inept things of that sort, and, with this gullible art in their mouths, [promise whole mountains of gold; knowing, nevertheless, not a single word of Latin, and still less having tasted a single drop from Nature's hidden fountains. For unless one be instructed in the discipline of the great arts, he can become but little proficient therein. Wherefore the above has been collected from Natural, mathematical, and Supernatural Precepts, etc.

<http://bookofaquarius.forgottenbooks.org>