

of the executioner. There are lessons—and they are many—which civilized man might well learn from his naked brother, and one of those lessons is, that if faith and creed are to be held at all, they should be acted as well as believed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

PARACELSUS AS A THEOLOGICAL WRITER.¹

BY JOHN MAXSON STILLMAN.

UNTIL recently little notice has been taken of the very considerable activity of Paracelsus (1493-1541) as a thinker and writer on theology. To be sure, it was known from very early records that Paracelsus had written works of this character. Even the inventory of his personal effects recorded at Salzburg after his death makes mention of a collection of theological manuscripts presumably written by himself. So also Conrad Gesner in his *Bibliotheca Universalis* (1545) says of Paracelsus that he composed and dedicated to the Abbot of St. Gall, "I know not what theological works which I believe not to have been published."²

Moreover there exists on record a receipt signed by Johann Huser³ at Neuburg, October 10, 1594, for a collection of autograph manuscripts by Paracelsus upon theological subjects. The collection includes some twenty-five titles of works. Other lists of his theological writings are in existence dating from the latter half of the sixteenth century. In 1618 a publisher, Johann Staricius, issued a volume containing a few of these theological essays. In his preface the editor asserts that he knows a place where nearly a cart-load of the theological manuscripts may be found.⁴

Of all these manuscripts not one is now known to exist as autograph, though Sudhoff's search through the libraries of Europe has brought to light collections of copies in the libraries at Leyden, Görlitz, and elsewhere, some of these copies dating as early as 1564 to 1567, and many of them bearing titles included in the early list

¹ The following is a chapter taken from a book on Paracelsus by Professor Stillman which we intend to publish soon.—ED.

² Netzhammer, *Theophrastus Paracelsus*, p. 53.

³ Joh. Huser had just published the medical, philosophical, and surgical writings of Paracelsus (Basel, 1589-91).

⁴ Cf. Netzhammer, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

of autograph manuscripts as receipted for by Huser, or in other early lists.⁵

These manuscripts borrowed by Huser from the library at Neuburg were manifestly intended to be used in the published collection of his works. That they were not so used is easily explained by the tenor of the contents of such as have been in part printed or abstracted by Sudhoff.⁶ For they are very outspoken and indeed frankly heretical in their criticisms of many of the institutions and observances of the Roman Church. Huser was himself a Roman Catholic, and the publication of the works of Paracelsus by Huser was undertaken under the patronage and with the support of the Archbishop of Cologne. Though Paracelsus claimed allegiance to the Catholic Church and died and was buried at Salzburg as a Catholic, yet his views were so radical and so severely critical of many of the essential doctrines of the Church, that their publication could hardly have been possible under such support and supervision. Indeed it is evident that any wide circulation of his writings would have brought upon him the severest discipline of the Church. Even the Lutheran clerical party would have had little sympathy with his point of view. It is quite probable indeed that Paracelsus himself made no effort to print them but rather avoided their publication, preferring merely to place them in the hands of congenial thinkers or to leave them for posterity.

It is certain that the revolt of his contemporary Luther, and his countryman Zwingli, as well as the critical spirit of Erasmus exercised a great influence upon Paracelsus—predisposed by natural temperament to independent and free thinking and criticism of authority.

It should be kept in mind also that severe criticism of the orthodox Church, its observances and corruption was quite prevalent even before the time of the Protestant Reformation. Thus in Italy Macchiavelli writing about 1500 thus freely criticizes the corruption of the Church: "Should we send the Curia to Switzerland, the most religious and martial of countries, that experiment would prove that no piety nor warrior's strength could resist the papal corruption and intrigue. . . . The peoples nearest Rome have least religion. . . . We Italians have to thank the Church and the priests that we have become irreligious and corrupt."

⁵ For statements as to evidence of authenticity of many of these manuscripts, cf. Sudhoff, *Versuch einer Kritik der Echtheit der Paracelsischen Schriften*, Vol. II, Introduction.

⁶ *Versuch* etc., Vol. II.

⁷ W. Dilthey, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. IV, pp. 636-7.

ALTERIVS NON SIT QVI SVVS ESSE POTEST



AVREOLVS PHILIPPVS

AB HOHENHEIM,

Stemmata nobilium gentis PARACELSVS
quorum.

Qua vetus Helvetia claret Eremitus humo.
Sic oculos Sic ora tula, cum plurima longum
Discendi studio per loca ferit iter

I. Tintoret ad vnum pinxit



THEOPHRASTVS BOMBAST

DICTVS PARACELSVS

Lustro nouem et medium vixit lustro ante
Lutherum

Postque tuos lustro finctus, Erasme, rogos
Astra quater Jena Septembri luce subiuit:
Ossa S. Myburgae nunc cineresque jacent

F. Chauveau sculpsit.

PARACELSUS BY TINTORETTO (?).*

Engraved by F. Chauveau.

* May be by an artist of about 1520-25, when Paracelsus was in the Venetian wars. Tintoretto was born 1518.

So also Savonarola, the great Dominican monk—writing in 1493, the year of the birth of Paracelsus: "Go to Rome and throughout all Christendom: in the houses of the great prelates and the great lords, they busy themselves with nothing but poetry and rhetoric. Go and see, you will find them with humanistic books in their hands;—it will appear as if they knew how to guide souls by Virgil, Horace, and Cicero. With Aristotle, Plato, Virgil, and Petrarch they feed their ears and do not trouble themselves about the salvation of souls. Why do they not teach instead of so many books, that one in which is contained the law and the life." The prelates, said Savonarola, are sunk into ambition, shamelessness, and luxury, and the princes—"their palaces and courts are the refuge of all beasts and monsters of the earth, asylums for all rascals and criminals. These stream thither because they find there opportunity and incitement to give free rein to all their boundless desires and evil passions. . . . and what is worse, there also may be seen churchmen who join in the same accord."⁸

Whatever stimulus may have been given to the unorthodox theology of Paracelsus by the Protestant Reformation, it is evident that he was not less critical and unsympathetic toward the Lutheran interpretation than toward the Catholic. This is evidenced by many passages in his writings wherein he refers to the Protestant leaders of his day as false prophets, etc.

"Those who stand with the Pope consider him a living saint, those who stand with Arianus⁹ also hold him for a righteous man, those who hold with Zwingli likewise consider him a righteous man, those who stand with Luther hold him to be a true prophet. Thus the people are deceived. Every fool praises his own motley. He who depends on the Pope rests on the sand, he who depends on Zwingli depends on hollow ground, he who depends upon Luther depends on a reed. They all hold themselves each above the other, and denounce one another as Antichrists, heathens, and heretics, and are but four pairs of breeches from one cloth. It is with them as with a tree that has been twice grafted and bears white and yellow pears. Whoever opposes them and speaks the truth, he must die. How many thousands have they strangled and caused to be strangled in recent years."¹⁰

"They pray in the temples—but their prayer is not acceptable

⁸ Cf. Paulsen: *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, 2d ed., Vol. I, pp. 10-11.

⁹ Doubtless Arius, founder of the Arian heresy.

¹⁰ Sudhoff, *Versuch* etc., Vol. II, p. 411.

to God, for it means nothing, and they are altogether,—Papists, Lutherans, Baptists, Zwinglians:—they all boast that they are of the Holy Ghost, that they are founded on the Gospel. Therefore they cry ‘I am right,—the right is with me, I declare the word of God, here is Christ and his word as I tell it you,—follow me, I am he who brings you the Gospel.’ See what an abomination among Philistines this is.”¹¹

More specifically may be judged the extent of his departure from the doctrines of his own Church in such passages as the following:

“It is vain—the daily churchgoing and all the genuflection, bowing and observances of church rules by clericals and the wordly,—none excepted,—all a vain work with no fruits,—the will and service of the Devil,—opposed to Christ and the Holy Trinity. The reasons?—the Church is called in Latin *Catholica* and is the spirit of all true believers, and their coming together is in the Holy Spirit. These are all in the faith, that is in the *fides catholica*, and it has no place of worship. But *Ecclesia* is a wall” [i. e., the true Church is in the spirit, the corrupt Church worships in walled buildings].

Continuing, he condemns public prayers in the churches, church-festivals (“a dance of devils”)—“God wishes a humble and contrite heart and no devilish holiday observances, offerings, or displays.” Fasting in the “walled churches” is an invention of the Devil. The giving of alms in the churches “does not serve toward eternal blessedness,” and the giving of alms in the Catholic churches comes only from credulity and from no love from the neighbor nor for the neighbor. Pilgrimages, dispensations, “running to the saints” are all in vain and have no merit. The monastic orders, the religious orders of knighthood and the like are inventions of the Devil and maintained in his honor. Spreading the faith by the sword is from the Devil.

“Who can presume to consecrate and bless the earth? It is God’s earth, blessed to bring forth fruit; the water is blessed by God to quench thirst, to breed fish, to water the earth, not to sprinkle to banish the Devil as holy water.”¹²

Similar points of view are found expressed in his printed works though naturally with less of detail in his criticism.

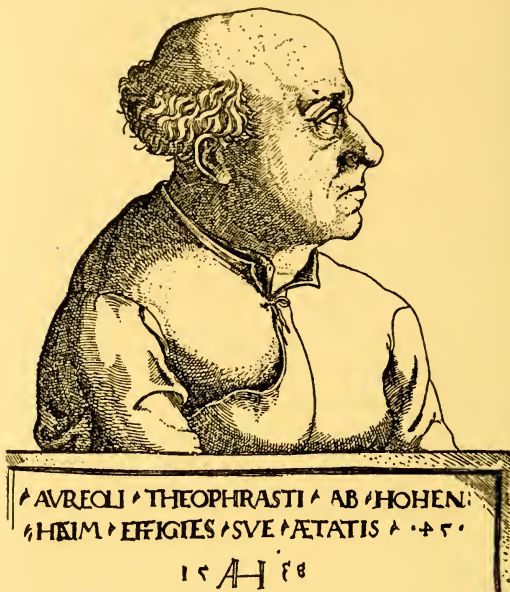
Thus from the *Paramirum*: “God will only have the heart, not ceremonies. . . . For every man is with God a neighbor and has

¹¹ Schubert-Sudhoff, *Paracelsusforschungen*, Heft II, p. 153.

¹² Sudhoff, *Versuch* etc., Vol. II, pp. 338ff.

full power to take up his affairs with God. But if a man gives this power out of his hands and does not keep what God has given

♦ ALTERVS NON SIT ♦ QVI SVVS ESSE POTEST ♦



*Theophrastus von Hohenheim,
Leinwand, der heiligen Schrift
und beider Arzneien Doctor*

PARACELSUS THREE YEARS BEFORE HIS DEATH.*

him, but surrenders it to another and seeks it again from that other, then he falls into ceremonies and depends upon despair.

* This portrait and the one following are by Augustin Hirschvogel (c. 1503-1569), engraved after sketches from life. The signature reproduced underneath reads: "Theophrastus von Hohenheim, der Heiligen Schrift und beider Arzneien Doctor."

For every ceremony is the way of despair....For if we have anything to receive from God it is our hearts he sees and not the ceremonies. If he has given us anything, he does not wish that we should employ it in ceremonies but in our work. For he gives it for no other purpose but that we should love God with all our heart and our might, and soul, and that we should help our neighbor.



PARACELSUS IN HIS LAST YEAR.

If that which he has given us helps toward that, all ceremonies will be forgotten."¹³

That such expressions as the above are not to be harmonized with the doctrines of the Church to which he claimed allegiance would appear obvious. The Rev. Raymund Netzhammer of the Benedictine order, one of the recent biographers of Paracelsus, thus expresses himself upon this point:

¹³ *Op. fol.*, I, 114-115, "Paramirum."

"Far more in the domain of theology than even in medicine, does Paracelsus, who sometimes calls himself Doctor of Sacred Scripture, seem to recognize no authority, but to consider his own thinking and philosophizing as authoritative for him. That with this principle of free investigation, denying every authority, even that of the Church, he departed from the foundations of Catholic doctrine every well-informed person knows. But not only by this principle as such, but still more through its practical development did he separate himself from the faith of his fathers: he combatted the hierarchical establishment of the Church, the power of the keys, its monastic orders, its ceremonies, its public prayers and devotions. He rejected preaching among Christians, who should teach themselves from the Scriptures, and banished the apostles and preachers to the heathen. . . . It must, however, not be denied, but on the contrary emphasized that Theophrastus possessed a very high, though unfortunately too mystical a concept of many doctrines and sacraments, as for instance of hereditary sin, of baptism with its inextinguishable symbols, and notably also of the communion. Baptism and communion are for him the two principal roads which lead to Heaven."¹⁴

The question as to his orthodoxy has been viewed differently by his biographers. His editor Huser mildly defends his Catholicism. "Some are inclined to hold him in suspicion on account of his religion, because in various places he speaks in opposition to certain abuses: in my opinion this is unjust, for, as concerns his faith, it is well known that he did not separate from the holy Catholic and Roman Church, but remained in obedience to it, as the Archbishopric and City of Salzburg can bear witness, where he died in the year 1541, a Catholic and Christian and was honorably interred."

Schubert and Sudhoff summarize the results of their studies into the life and character of Paracelsus thus:

"If we consider his attitude toward the religious parties of the time, we may perhaps find that in the years before 1531 he felt some inclination toward the Reformation of Luther and Zwingli, perhaps only in so far as he presumed in them who had broken in matters of faith with ancient tradition, a greater sympathy also with his reform ideas in the domain of medicine and natural science. . . . Later—after the year 1531—there is no further talk of sparing the Protestants. On the contrary, if he also combatted the Roman hierarchy, the external forms of worship and other

¹⁴ Netzhammer, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9.

ceremonials, he yet rejects all dissenting religious parties as 'sects,' almost even more violently."¹⁵

Though none of the theological papers of Paracelsus was published during his life, so far as is known, yet his views were more or less known, either from manuscript copies, or from his free oral expressions, and evidently brought upon him the displeasure and disapproval of Catholic authorities. Evidence as to this appears in a manuscript among the collection examined by Sudhoff and published in large part in his volume on the manuscripts of Paracelsus.

The extract translated below is so eminently characteristic of his point of view in theological matters and so well illustrates his relation at the time to the orthodox theology, that it forms one of the most interesting expressions of his spiritual experience.

"Your daily disputations and sharp attacks upon me on account of my truth-speaking, namely, that I have sometimes and several times in taverns, inns, and roadhouses spoken against useless church-going, luxurious festivals, vain praying and fasting, giving of alms, offerings, tithes, . . . confession, partaking of the sacrament, and all other priestly rules and observances, and have accused me of drunkenness on account of this, because this has taken place in the taverns, and the taverns are held to be inappropriate places for the truth;—and that you call me a corner-preacher;—Why do you do this to me at this time, when you were silent and well pleased when in the taverns I advised people to give offerings to you and to follow you and not speak against you? If that was proper in the inns and was of service to you,—then let it please you now that the truth is spoken in the inns. For then in the inns I was a believer in you, but now I am a believer in Christ and no longer in you. And if I came into the inns with you, then I would say to these same people, 'Guard yourselves against false prophets and deceivers who are sent by the Devil.' I would never again speak of giving to you, but of taking away from you, the usurped power which you have long exercised through the Devil's power. . . . Also you say of me that I have just sense enough to reason with peasants. . . . You say I should go amongst the doctors at Löwen [Louvain], Paris, Vienna, Ingolstadt, Cologne, where I should have real persons under my eyes, not peasants, not tradesmen, but masters of theology. Know then my answer to this: to those will come their own equals. If it be not I, it will be another, but my teaching and my witnessing for Christ will come forth and overcome them. Christ never came to Rome, yet Rome is His vicar; St. Peter never

¹⁵ Schubert-Sudhoff, *op. cit.*, Heft II, pp. 152-3.

came to Cologne, yet he is her patron saint, and if in the end I do not come that is not my fault. For the teaching is not mine, it is from Christ. He will send a Netherlands messenger if I cannot speak the language, and to those of Vienna and Ingolstadt he will send their countrymen, and the truth will be born amongst them and through them will come to light and not through me. And when I am dead the doctrine will live on, for it is of Christ, who dieth not. And if I were at Louvain and at Paris it is not me they would punish,—upon which you count,—they would but punish Christ and not me. Yet I believe that my speaking to-day will be heard by them as well as if I had spoken in their presence. For Christ does not let his word be lost at any time. Nor does he let it lie hidden, it must go forward. It is not for one alone, it must be spread abroad. Everything must be opened to it.

"You complain much and loudly that I have made the peasants contumacious, so that they never make offerings and care little for you or not at all. Consider,—if my speech were from the Devil, they would follow you and not me. But as they follow me and not you believe no else than that the Holy Spirit is in them which teaches them to recognize your character, trickery, and great falsehoods. For I have not invented anything myself,—what I have said that is from the Holy Ghost. It is the Gospel....and has been the Gospel from the time of Christ till this day. But your trickery is more ancient—from Cain and from the old hypocrites and bishops. The new [Gospel] is true, the old false. The new condemns the old, not the old the new. Were the Old Testament from which you take all your deceptions fully good and true, Christ would not have renewed it again."¹⁶

The doctrines of theology which Paracelsus accepted appear not only from the above strong statement but consistently from numerous extracts throughout his works to be his own literal interpretation of the teachings of Christ. He asked for no intermediate authority to interpret to him their meaning, and entertained no doubts as to the correctness of his own rendering. That he was deeply impressed with the spirit of the teachings of Christ often shows itself, particularly in its practical relation to the service of man toward his fellow. Love and helpfulness for the neighbor, the poor, and the sick are frequent themes of his appeals.

Among the manuscripts which Sudhoff has reproduced is a sermon containing an autobiographical fragment, manifestly written

¹⁶ Sudhoff, *Versuch* etc., Vol. II, pp. 333ff. "De septem punctis Idolatriæ Christianæ."

in his later years, which is retrospective and introspective, and so completely in accord with the known facts of the life of Paracelsus, that it bears the strongest possible internal evidence of genuineness. The manuscript is at Leyden and is a copy made between 1590 and 1610. Copies of somewhat later date exist also in Copenhagen, Salzburg and the British Museum, the latter in a Latin version.

For the estimation of the personality and mental experiences of Paracelsus, it is too important to be omitted.

"As I have undertaken to write of the blessed life of Christian faith, it has not seemed proper to attempt to portray that without this introduction.... Therefore I have undertaken to write this preface to the blessed life of Christian experience that I may excuse my delay in writing this book, as I began working upon it in the twentieth year [1520]. Why I have so long postponed and delayed has not happened without reasons. One of these is that youth should not come forward before its proper time, as nothing should appear before its time, but should await the determined hour toward which we all progress. For another reason, not only my youth, but that other matters of my profession have prevented me, namely that astronomy, medicine, and works in philosophy had to be described, that is to say, that which concerns the Light of Nature, so that I had to leave for a later harvest the Sacred Writings;—that they might be well ripened, they have been postponed to the end and the lessser things completed first. These are two reasons that have strongly influenced me. But not only from these causes has the delay arisen, but much more from this that I was raised and grew up in great poverty so that my resources have not permitted me to act according to my desires.

"And even when I had nearly finished there arose in my affairs public and private, much opposition which has lain on my shoulders alone, and there has been no one to hold back and shield for me. For very strange kinds of people have persecuted and accused me and hindered me and discredited me, so that I have had little reputation among men but rather contempt. For my tongue is not built for chattering but for work and for the truth. That is the reason that I have not counted for much with the logicians and dialecticians in medicine, philosophy, and astronomy. Also their pomp and display and fine speeches for princes and the rich,—I have been nothing like that, and have therefore been forsaken. So also has greatly tormented me the winning of my bread [*der Pflug meiner Nahrung*]. For the world is not to be gained by astronomy, as it has little value except for itself, nor by medicine, as it has not power over all

[illegible]

BROADSIDE ON PARACELSUS (before 1606).

Engraved by Balthasar Jenichen after originals by Hirschvogel.

diseases, nor by philosophy [i. e., natural philosophy] likewise, as it is held in contempt, but by tradesmen's wealth and courtly manners. That has been a cross to me and still is to this day.

"Nor has all this been the least: . . . The other [reason] is so great that I can hardly describe it,—that is the greatest cause which has hindered me from writing,—that I have not been considered a true Christian,—that has troubled me severely. For because I am a creature of God, redeemed by His blood and through it have received food and drink in the new birth,—that has seemed sufficient to me to make me a true Christian.

"But there has arisen against me another crowd and faction who say, 'Thou as a layman, as a peasant, as a common man, shouldst not speak of such things as pertain to the Sacred Scriptures, but shouldst listen to us—to what we tell you and hold to that, and shouldst listen to no others nor read anything except us alone!' I was thus forced into a delay,—I hardly dared to stir, for they were powerful in this world,—I had to endure it as one who must lie under the stairs.

"But nevertheless when I read the cornerstone of Christendom and heard the preaching and disputations of the others (it was like a miller and a coal-heaver against each other), it became necessary for me and manifest that I should accept rather the truth than lies, rather righteousness than unrighteousness, rather light than darkness, rather Christ than Satan. When I perceived the difference I let the opposition go without contradiction and accepted for myself the Christian cornerstone. As I then found that in the layman, in the common man, in the peasant (which name they employ when they would abuse their opponents most scornfully), the perfection of the blessed Christian life most abides, and not at all in those others, then I began to write of the truth of the life of Christ. When I had then finished the writing and concluded with much hope, there broke out the division of the kingdom of this world as it now is [i. e., the Reformation?]. So I delayed and took pause—postponed it till another autumn and harvest. It has now seemed good to me to make an end, and so to close with these books, the fruits of the seed which has been with me from the beginning.

"Therefore I have included in one work the relation of Christians to the blessed life and likewise the relation of Christians to the unblessed life. . . . Those in the unblessed life are great, are arrogant,—they own the world, it is theirs,—they are the children of the light of the world. But the blessed—they have not the

world—but they have their kingdom which is not of this world but of the Eternal, and with the Eternal: where two of the blessed life are together, there is Christ the third. Those are the riches that they have in this world. And although those who have opposed me have greatly hindered me, they have not suspected what has lain in my pen;—I have kept my mouth closed, that the storm and the thunderbolt should not strike me to earth. Thereby I have brought it forward till this day and have not troubled myself about them, but have held companionship with the common people of whom they are ashamed and have myself therefore been despised. This has been my preparation for this work.”¹⁷

THE TALMUD ON DREAMS.

BY JULIUS J. PRICE.

THE human mind has at all times sought to arrive at some explanation of what on the surface appears mysterious or wonderful. Man through the centuries of his development has endeavored to account for these strange phenomena of his sleeping hours that we call dreams.¹ The suspension of the will-power clothes the ideas with reality; and, as a result, one man acts many parts.² The phenomenon of dreams has not only occupied the minds of the superstitious, but it has engaged the careful attention and earnest study of the scientist³ as well as the scholar,⁴ by reason of its points of contact⁵ with other mental conditions.⁶ A scientific study of dreams proves that there is a similitude between the suspension of the higher mental activities known as the dreaming state, and the instinctive state of human development observed in the lower orders of human and animal life.

But though these phenomena might seem to the average man of to-day to be but a “state of mind,”⁷ yet we find that even such

¹⁷ Sudhoff, *Versuch* etc., Vol. II, pp. 406-408.

¹ Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum*, V, 2, pp. 904f.

² Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, VIII, 21; cf. also Cicero, *De divin.*, I, 30-63.

³ Aristotle, *De insomniis*, II.

⁴ Æschylus, *Prom.*, 485f.

⁵ Hesiod, *Theog.*, 211; also Euripides, *Iph. Taur.*, 1262.

⁶ Maimonides however regarded dreams as a form of prophecy; see *Guide of the Perplexed*, tr. by M. Friedländer, p. 240.

⁷ Cf. *Odyssey*, XIX, 562f. tr. by Butcher and Lang.