

*Paracelsus on the  
virtues of true physicians*



Dr. Franz Hartmann (*Comp., Tr. & Annot.*). *The Life of Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, Known by the Name of Paracelsus, and the Substance of His Teachings, concerning Cosmology, Anthropology, Pneumatology, Magic and Sorcery, Medicine, Alchemy and Astrology, Philosophy and Theosophy.* Extracted and translated from his rare and extensive works, and from some unpublished manuscripts. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co Ltd., Broadway House, 68-74 Carter Lane, E.C. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1932) Selections from ch. 7, "The Four Pillars of Medicine," and ch. 9, "Philosophy and Theosophy." Full text in our Buddhas and Initiates Series.

**ONE OF THE MOST NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS** for a physician is perfect purity and singleness of purpose. He should be free of ambition, vanity, envy, unchastity, pomposity, and self-conceit, because these vices are the outcome of ignorance and incompatible with the light of divine wisdom which should illumine the mind of the true physician; but our practitioners of medicine will not believe me when I say that it is necessary that a physician to be successful should be virtuous; because they imagine that success is due only to learning, and they cannot realise that all true wisdom and power is derived from God.<sup>1</sup>

There is a knowledge which is derived from man, and another one which is derived from God through the light of Nature. There are artificially made physicians and there are born physicians. The latter possess their talent from birth, and it may be unfolded and grow like a tree if it is properly nursed. He who has no natural talent to be a physician will never succeed. He who is not a physician in the spring of his life will not be one in the fall.

A physician should be faithful and charitable; he should have full and perfect faith, a faith which is not divided. Faith and Charity are essentially identical; they both spring from God, and God is one and cannot be divided. The faith of a physician is not manifested by making many visits to his patient, but by his ability to recognise and treat the disease. He should give to his patient his utmost attention, he should identify himself heart and soul with him, and this cannot be done without charity and benevolence. He who loves only himself and his own profit will be of little benefit to the sick, for he will neglect the patient. To recognise the disease of the latter and to be able to benefit him, entire harmony should exist between the physician and the patient; a physician who loves his art for its own sake will also be charitable towards the sick.

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<sup>1</sup> [i.e., Inner Wisdom]

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QUACKS AND TRUE PHYSICIANS

There is a true and a false philosophy. As the froth in new-made wine swims upon the top and hides the true wine below, likewise there is a froth of sophistry and pseudo-philosophy swimming at the top of true philosophy; it looks like knowledge, but it is the outcome of ignorance, gilded and varnished to deceive the vulgar. It is like a parasite growing upon the tree of knowledge, drawing the sap out of the true tree and converting it into poison. The intellectual working of the brain alone is not sufficient to give birth to a physician; the true physician is not he who has merely heard of the truth, but he who feels the truth, who sees it before him as clearly as the light of the sun, who hears it as he would hear the noise of the cataract of the Rhine or the whistling of the storm upon the ocean, who smells it and tastes it, it being sweet to him as honey or bitter as gall. Nature produces diseases and effects their cures, and where, then, could be found a better teacher than Nature herself? That alone which we see and feel and perceive constitutes true knowledge, not that of which we are merely informed in books and which is not confirmed by experience.”

