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[Greek medecine in its relation to religion and magic - suite]

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PART TWO

is even the more common attitude at this time. For the deification of the individual organism is a modern and advanced idea in these centuries, one that is not yet generally accepted. Only a few individuals already visualize that "all things were arranged in the body, in a fashion conformable to itself, by fire, a copy of the whole, the small after the manner of the great and the great after the manner of the small."⁴³ And they are physicians. But others, just because they adore God, are aware of the contrast between Him and man, "the one being utterly corrupt, the other being perfectly holy,"⁴⁴ They are physicians, too.

That the nature of everything is divine, that every process can only be understood as regulated by divine agency, is a conception which becomes current among men only in later times through Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophy. It is, however, of the greatest importance that from the Hellenistic period on the religious rationalism is accepted by more and more scientists. For the mechanical and irreligious philosophy and science degenerated into avowed skepticism. The Epicureans do not care for a single and uniform explanation of the phenomena; they rejoice in manifold causes of the same event. The Empiricists refuse to explain anything because the human intellect cannot judge the causes and can discover only the proximate conditions. The Methodists deal only with the phenomena without considering causation at all. Scientific inquiry is restricted to dogmatic philosophers and scientists, who alone feel able to determine the causes and are interested in the understanding of facts. Galen says in his book on the Use of the Parts that "this is a sacred book which I composed as a true hymn of the God who has created us, in the belief that I am really pious not if I sacrifice many hecatombs of oxen to Him and burn thousands of talents of cassia, but if I first recognize myself and then explain also to the others the wisdom of God, His power, His excellence."⁴⁵ This statement is significant. The fact that Platonic, dogmatic philosophy recognizes the power of God in nature does not mean the end of science; it is rather

⁴³ Jones, I. c., IV, p. 247: πάντα διεκοσμήσατο κατὰ τρόπον αὐτὸ ἐνωτὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ σώματι τὸ πῦρ, ἀπομίμησιν τοῦ ὅλου, μικρὰ πρὸς μεγάλα καὶ μεγάλα πρὸς μικρά.

⁴⁴ Jones, I. c., II, p. 149: οὐ μέντοι ἐγωγε ἀξιῶ ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα μαινεσθαι, τὸ ἐπικηρότατον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγνωτάτου.

⁴⁵ Galen, De usu partium, III, 10, ed. G. Helmreich, I, 1907, p. 174, 6-13: ἱερὸν λόγον ὃν ἐγὼ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντίθημι, καὶ νομίζω τοῦτ' εἶναι τὴν ὄντως εὐσέβειαν, οὐχὶ εἰ ταύρων ἑκατόμβας αὐτῷ παμπολλὰς καταθίσαιμι καὶ τάλαντα μυρία θυμιάσαιμι κασσίας, ἀλλ' εἰ γνώσῃν μὲν αὐτὸς πρῶτος, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐξηγησαίμην ὅλος μὲν ἐστὶ τὴν σοφίαν, ὅλος δὲ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅποιος δὲ τὴν χρηστότητα.

GREEK MEDICINE—RELIGION AND MAGIC

the stimulus to perfection of scientific knowledge and empirical understanding. If God did not exist, the world would be governed by chance alone but not by intelligible laws or recognizable causation. Moreover, nature separated from God would not be capable of inspiring in man enthusiasm for scientific investigation. Dogmatic philosophy alone leads the philosopher to an understanding of the phenomena and the physician to an explanation of diseases by sun and air or by the nature of the body.

These considerations in themselves suggest that a belief according to which diseases are caused by demons cannot have had great bearing on Greek medicine. As a matter of fact there is, throughout antiquity, hardly one physician who accepts such a theory. The author of the book on the Sacred Disease, bitterly attacking those who trace epilepsy to the direct influence of a God or demon, does not give any indication that this opinion was held by physicians. He says that "those [men] who first attributed a sacred character to this malady were the same men who do it to-day, magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks."⁴⁶ A real physician apparently explained not even this disease by demons. The same thing is true of the fourth century A.D. when the physician Posidonius, very famous for his medical skill, is said to have denied that mania could be caused by a demon. There is no reason to suppose that this is a very unusual attitude; for the same opinion is expressed in Stephanus' Commentary to the Prognostics of Hippocrates.⁴⁷ And even in the seventh century A.D. physicians, it seems to me, no less than laymen, are convinced of the natural character of mental illnesses although at that time the demonological explanation is more and more emphasized.⁴⁸ And yet, concerning those affections the problem is at

⁴⁶ Jones, I. c., II, p. 141 (slightly altered): δοκέουσιν οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦτο τὸ νόσημα ἱερώσαντες τοιοῦτοι εἶναι ἄνθρωποι οἱ καὶ νῦν εἰσι μάγοι τε καὶ καθάρται καὶ ἀγύρται καὶ ἀλαζόνες. Cf. On the Diseases of Girls (Περὶ παρθενίων), Hippocrates ed. Littré, VIII, 1853, p. 468.

⁴⁷ On Posidonius cf. Philostorgius, Ecclesiastical History, VIII, 10 (GSS Philostorgius, p. 111, 12 sq. Bidez). Stephanus in Scholia in Hippocratem et Galenum, ed. F. R. Dietz, I, 1834, pp. 71 sq. Dölger (Antike u. Christentum IV, 1934, p. 106) assumes that the explanation of Posidonius is not a common one. He himself remarks that Origenes attacks physicians who explain mental diseases in a natural way (I. c., p. 96).

⁴⁸ Sophronius, Cyri et Joannis miracula, c. 54, Migne PG, 87, 3, 3624, says: τοῦτον δοκίμοις ἰατροῖς ὑπεδελκνουν, ἀπὸ πλήθους μελαγχολικῶν χυμῶν τὰς συνεχεῖς ἐπιληψίας ἐκείνας καὶ μακρὰς καρνηβαρίας συμβαίνειν οἰόμενοι· ἑκατέρας γὰρ ὡς ἐγνωμεν ἔπασχεν, τὰς μὲν συνεχέστερον, τὰς δὲ ἐντονώτερον καὶ μακρότερον· ἀλλ' ὡς μίαν πρὸς πάντων ἀπόφασιν

